

Walk in the Spirit

Gal. 5: 16.

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"Out of the eater came forth sweetness" has been the test of divine providence exemplified in all ages of the world. Sin, with all its misery, brought Jesus. In the church at Corinth the misery of the flesh disclosed many a secret. If the eater had not gone to Corinth, a stronger than he had not gone after him, nor out of the eater such sweetness come forth to us; nor in the Colossians such fulness of the Lord Jesus.

But the Galatians eminently show forth how the eater had gone in and given occasion for a blessed expression of the sufficiency of the Lord Jesus, and the blessedness of a simple-hearted acquaintance with the Son of God. Oh! what a blessed profession it is when we profess the Son of God and none but the Son. No epistle is more fervent taking its character of fervency from a fresh delight in Jesus, a fervency well accounted for by the thought of Jesus defending (not merely fervency in defence of impugned truth, but) the fervency of a soul given to taste afresh the virtues and divine perfection of the Son. And what would you covet but this in these days when the world is on every side challenging the rights of the Son, bringing in man's religion, edifices, and ceremonies, and ordinances? The strong man enters in to challenge the claims of the Son of man; and shall we see it and be without the fervency of Paul?

Let us turn to Galatians 1 where we find the first virtue of the Son revealed to his soul, making him entirely independent of flesh and blood; let us read verses 15 and 16. Having got the Son, Paul had got all, Jerusalem was nothing, even apostles were nothing; standing as a sinner brought entirely home, he wanted nothing besides. How fine is this fervency thrown in the face of Galatian error! The moment the Son was revealed, he conferred not with flesh and blood. Those rights of the Son, so divine, so supreme, only let them be understood; and I ask your convicted conscience whether they are not claims so exclusive, that nothing else can be thought of. We cannot see Jerusalem, in one sense, cannot see even brethren, cannot confer with flesh and blood: can we each of us throw ourselves open to be read? Mark how Paul did. The moment the Son was revealed he went not to Jerusalem, nor to the apostles but into Arabia, independent of all belonging to flesh and blood, With what emphasis he reads out the first virtue of the Son in that divine independency of everything short of Himself! And ought not each of us to go about showing to the world and all about us this precious independency of all but the One revealed to our souls? Imputed righteousness is as much ours as it was Abraham's; Paul had not a richer profession than mine. O let this divine independency be read in us by all! The claims the Son had on Paul's conscience instantly made him independent of everything. If Jerusalem, the apostles, brethren, and all the claims of flesh and blood, be put together in the balance of a conscience: put the Son in one scale, with all this in the other and would it not be as the fine dust in the balance?

In Galatians 2 we have not only independent Paul, but bold Paul. Peter had been the companion of the Lord Jesus, when Paul was the enemy of Jesus Christ; and if anyone could have intimidated Paul, this Peter must have been able to do so, But the man in Arabia was not to be intimidated by flesh and blood. Oh for more of Paul's boldness to show we have been on the road to Arabia with the Lord! Do we ever make in private an essay of what we have in Jesus? Are there any to whom we give place? Read vers. 4, 5: there Paul's soul was making an essay of all he had in Jesus; and beautiful is his independence of flesh and blood. And yet this is the man who could have his heart broken by other's

tears, who could ask for the prayers of saints as one feeling need of help!

But now it is another style altogether. Had he then ceased to be feeling and gentle? Not a bit! but the claims of the Son are abroad, he cannot withstand them; and when he meets Peter it is with the boldness of a lion. If flesh and blood could make him tremble, it was in Peter. Did he tremble? No! but withstood him to the face, and yet Peter was serving Christ. But Paul had that in him that could not suffer for a moment the dissimulation of the flesh in Peter. And this is the spirit we want in this day when the claims of the Son are so challenged by the Galatian spirit on many a side. Paul teaches us how to have this boldness, and he does not merely teach, but shows it is our property as well as his. If the Son has been revealed in me, I want nothing but Himself: churches and ordinances can do nothing for me. If I have the Son, I have everything.

We see in Paul the fervency and the sensitiveness of love: he could not allow the claims of the Son to be touched or to be soiled for a moment. It was the revelation of God, and was deep in his soul; and that is what you want. Give the deeper parts of your soul to Jesus and will you be any other than independent? Get Jesus deep down into your soul, and you will have Paul's spirit to whom God had given the Son, and He was deep in his soul. I want Christ to be so revealed as to make me independent of all flesh and blood, of everything but Himself Who puts each one and thing in its due place.

In Galatians 3, having traced Christ revealed in the independent man of Arabia, the bold man of Antioch, we shall now find him as a son in the Father's house in the presence of God.

Read Galatians 4. Observe he would have you there with himself in the same liberty. "I beseech you be ye as I am" is the happy freedom of a son in the Father's presence, (the spirit of Isaac, laughter, not Hagar gendering to bondage). He will not have a bit of bondage, he has the Spirit of the Son in his heart. And Oh what manner of people has the Spirit of God made us! how entirely setting us free from the claims of flesh and blood, and nothing less than a Father's house! Is there anything beyond that wanted to set you free? Happy, if happy, because brought into relationship with the Father; and nothing can make you happy but that; nothing does for the heart personally but the sense of relationship; and this is what He has brought me into, calling me to His kingdom, and giving me a home there. If you look round in the sense of relationship, cannot you feel you have a home on high? You are not only a son, but an heir, of God through Christ. The excellency of the gift I will never challenge, nor let others. I want all that the Son is to me deep down in my soul, but oh! let me have the simple childlike mind that knows I have a home up there. The son of the bondwoman has no more right to be in the Father's house than Peter with his subtleties had to bring the children of the free woman into bondage. Is not this Epistle as a whip of small cords to drive out all such things from amongst the children of promise? To know the presence of God as a sanctuary and home for my soul, this is what I want. J. G. B.