

1 Corinthians - Commentaries by Charles Henry Mackintosh

Short Papers, What Is a Castaway? (9:27)

“ But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection; lest that, by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.” 1 Cor. 9:27.

This passage has perplexed and troubled many an earnest heart. Many have argued thus, while pondering the above solemn scripture, “ If such an one as Paul was uncertain as to the issue of his course, who, then, can be sure?” But was he uncertain as to the issue? By no means. The verse immediately preceding teaches us the very opposite: “ I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air” Paul knew quite well how the whole matter was to terminate, so far as he was concerned. He could say, “ I know whom (not merely what) I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.” (2 Tim. 1:12.) And again, “ I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” Rom. 8:38, 39.

These scriptures are amply sufficient to prove that Paul had not so much as a shadow of a doubt as to his eternal security. “ I know-” I am persuaded” There is nothing like doubt or uncertainty in such utterances. Ah, no! Paul knew better. His foundation was as stable as the throne of God. Whatever of certainty Christ could afford, that Paul possessed. He, surely, had not abandoned all that this world could give for a doubtful salvation—a doubtful prospect—a doubtful future. Had he done so, Festus might truly have said, “ Paul, thou art beside thyself.” We are fully convinced, that, so far as Paul was concerned, from the moment, in which the scales dropped from his eyes in the city of Damascus, until he was offered up in the city of Rome, his heart never once harbored a single doubt, a single fear, a single misgiving. “ He was troubled on every side, yet not distressed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed.” Yea, in the midst of all his conflict and trouble, he could say, “ Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.” 2 Cor. 4:17.

Paul had no doubts or fears, as to the final issue. Neither should any one, who has truly come to Christ, inasmuch as He Himself has said, “ Him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out.” (John 6:37.) No one, who is really cast upon Christ, will ever be cast away from Him. This is a divine axiom—a fundamental truth—an eternal reality. Christ is responsible for every lamb in the flock. The counsels of God have made Him so—the love of His own heart has made Him so—the Holy Scriptures declare Him to be so. Not one of Christ’s blood-bought lambs can ever be lost, not one can ever be cast away. They are all as safe as He can make them—as safe as Himself.

But what, then, does Paul mean when he says, “ Lest I myself should be a castaway?” If he does not mean to convey the idea of uncertainty, as to his personal security in Christ, what then does he mean? I believe the expression applies not to his future prospects, but his present service—not to his heavenly home, but his earthly path—not to his eternal privileges, but his present responsibilities. Paul was a servant as well as a son; and he exercised himself, and kept his body in subjection, “lest that by any means he might be disapproved of.” 1The body is a good servant, but a bad master; and, if not kept down, will altogether disqualify the servant of Christ for the discharge of his high and holy responsibilities. A person may be a child of God, and yet be “disapproved” as a servant of Christ. To be an efficient servant of Christ involves self-denial, self-judgment, self-emptiness, self-control. I do not become a child of God by these exercises; but, most assuredly, I shall never be a successful servant of Christ without them.

This distinction is very plain and very important. We are too prone to think, that the question of our personal security is the only one of any moment to us. This is a mistake. God has secured that; and He tells us so, in order that, with free hearts, we may run the race, carry on the warfare, fulfill the service We do not run, fight, or work for life; we have gotten life-eternal life, ere we take a single step in the Christian race, strike a blow in the Christian warfare, or perform a single act of Christian service. A dead man could not run a race; but a living man must run “lawfully,” else he cannot be crowned. So, also, in reference to the servant of Christ. He must deny himself; he must keep nature down; he must keep his body in subjection, else he will be disapproved of and set aside, as a servant unfit for the Master’s work, a vessel not “ meet for the Master’s use.” A true believer can never, by any possibility, lose his relationship to Christ, or the eternal dignities and privileges connected therewith; but he can lose his present meetness for service. He may so act as to be disapproved of as a workman. Solemn thought!

We have, in the person of John Mark, an illustration of the principle laid down in 1 Cor. 9:27. In Acts 13:5 he was counted worthy to be associated with Paul in the ministry. In Acts 15:38 he was disapproved; and in 2 Tim. 4:11 he was again acknowledged as a profitable servant. Now, John was as truly a child of God, a saved person, a believer in Christ, when Paul rejected him as a co-worker, as when he at first acknowledged him, and finally restored him to confidence. In no case was the question of his personal salvation raised. It was altogether a matter of fitness for service. It is very evident, that the influence of natural affection had been allowed to act on John’s heart, and to unfit him, in Paul’s judgment, for that great work which he, as the steward of Christ, was carrying on.

If my reader will turn to Judg. 7 he will find another example, which strikingly illustrates our principle. What was the great question raised with respect to Gideon’s company? Was it as to whether a man was an Israelite—a son of Abraham—a circumcised member of the congregation? By no means. What then? Simply as to whether he was a fit vessel for the service then in hand. And what was it that rendered a man fit for such service? Confidence in God, and self-denial. (See ver. 3 & 6.) Those who were fearful were rejected (v. 3). And those who consulted their own ease were rejected (v. 7). Now, the thirty-one thousand seven hundred, that were rejected, were as truly Israelites as were the three hundred that were approved; but the former were not fit servants, the latter were.

All this is easily understood. There is no difficulty, if the heart be not careful to make difficulties for itself. Many passages of the Word, which are designed to act on the conscience of the servant, are used to alarm the heart of the child; many that are only intended to admonish us, in reference to our responsibility, are used to make us question our relationship.

May the Lord increase in us the grace of a discerning mind, and enable us to distinguish between things that differ, so that while our hearts enter into the sweetness and tranquillizing power of those words, "Him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out" our conscience may also feel the solemnity of our position as servants, and recoil from everything that might cause us to be set aside, as an unclean vessel, which the Master cannot take up and use.

May we ever remember that, while as children of God, we are eternally safe, yet as servants of Christ, we may be disapproved of and set aside.

Christian Lifestyle: February 2014, Self-Denial, Not Self-Indulgence (9:19-22)

"Though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more. And unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law; to them that are without law, as without law, (being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ,) that I might gain them that are without law. To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some" (1 Cor. 9:19-22).

This teaches us the exquisite lesson of self-denial in order to meet the condition of others with a direct view to their salvation. This passage is frequently used for the direct opposite — namely, for self-indulgence and mixing ourselves up with all sorts of wrong things, under the plea of being "all things to all men," and in result, instead of gaining them and delivering them out of the evil and folly in which they are involved, we fall under the power of these things ourselves, to the great dishonor of our Lord and the serious damage of souls.

C. H. Mackintosh

Answers to Correspondents: From Things New and Old 1858-1863, 25. 1 Corinthians 8:11 (8:11)

A correspondent in Edinburgh desires to know the meaning of 1 Corinthians 8:11. "Through thy knowledge shall the weak brother perish for whom Christ died." The difficulty felt in reference to this and kindred passages arises, in a great degree, from a want of proper attention to the context and also from a desire to introduce some idea quite foreign to the object of the Spirit in the passage. If I read such passages as John 15:6, Romans 14:15 and 1 Corinthians 8:11, with a certain question in my mind as to the eternal security of all God's redeemed, I shall assuredly be stumbled and confounded, because no such question is raised. We should always seek to ascertain the real scope and design of the inspired writer, in any passage which may present a difficulty to our minds. Thus much as to the general rule of Scripture interpretation. Let us now apply it to the passage which seems to perplex our correspondent.

The grand object of the Apostle in 1 Corinthians 8 and Romans 14 is to maintain the integrity of personal faith, and the sacred right of individual conscience. Each one is directly responsible to Christ, as his Lord and master. No one has any right to intrude upon that hallowed domain, where conscience acts in immediate reference to the claims of God. The conscience may be weak; but, weak or strong, enlightened or unenlightened, its reference must be to God, and not to man. If I "embolden" a man to do what his conscience condemns, though I may be perfectly free to do it myself, I, so far as in me lies, destroy him. His eternal salvation is not in question, for that can never be destroyed by anyone. The words "destroy" and "perish" are both from the same root, and can only be interpreted in the light of the context. I cannot destroy eternal life. Such a thing is not thought of, either in 1 Corinthians 8 or Romans 14. But I can destroy him as to the principle of his walk, by leading him to act beyond his light. If I lead a man to eat meat, when he thinks it a sin to eat anything but herbs, I destroy him in a most important matter; namely, his conscientious walk before the Lord, according to his measure of light. This is very solemn. Conscience is a very tender and very sacred thing; and we commit a grievous sin against Christ when we trifle with its rights. There is a vast difference between tenderly instructing an ignorant conscience, and thoughtlessly emboldening a sensitive one.

Answers to Correspondents: From Things New and Old 1858-1863, 107. 1 Corinthians 7:14 (7:14)

"J. B.," Otley. 1 Corinthians 7:14, teaches that Christianity does not, like the Mosaic economy, demand the putting away of an unbelieving wife, or the offspring of a mixed marriage. (Compare Ezra 9).

Answers to Correspondents: From Things New and Old 1858-1863, 22. Sanctification (1:30)

The case of our correspondent "W. H." is by no means an uncommon one. Numbers have passed through his painful experience, from not having fully and unreservedly accepted Christ, and cast themselves, in simple, artless trust, on Him, as their "wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption." I am as thoroughly cast upon Christ for the control of an irritable temper, as for the pardon of all my sins. I could no more govern my tongue, or my temper, for five minutes, than I could create a world, or work out a righteousness for myself, in the sight of God. Christ must be all in all to me every moment. Apart from Him, I can do nothing. It is easy to say this; but oh! to live in the

habitual sense of it. This is the secret of peace and power. "The just shall live by faith." We not only get life by faith, but also live, moment by moment, hour by hour, day by day, by faith. Here is just where hundreds break down. They are truly converted. They find peace and pardon in the precious blood of Christ, where alone they can be found. They are filled with joy for a time. But by and by indwelling sin, in some one or other of its ten thousand shapes, begins to work. Then the grand and important question of sanctification, or practical holiness, is raised in the conscience, and they know not how to answer it. This is a solemn crisis in one's spiritual history; and, if we understand our correspondent's case, he failed at this crisis.

Now, what is the answer to this question of sanctification? Simply this, Christ is "made of God unto us sanctification" (1 Cor. 1:30). True, it is by the Spirit, and through the word, that we lay hold of Christ, whether for sanctification, or righteousness, or anything else; but, then, it is Christ that is our sanctification. We are as completely cast on Him for sanctification, as for wisdom, righteousness, or redemption. As I get one, so I get all. I do not get righteousness in one way, and sanctification in another. I get both by simple, naked trust in Christ. The Holy Spirit teaches us this, out of the Bible, else we could know nothing about it; but what does the Holy Spirit teach us out of the Bible? That Christ is made of God unto us sanctification. He sends us to Christ for all. Am I doing away with, or dishonoring the work of the Holy Spirit, because I look for sanctification where He tells me to look? Clearly not. It might just as well be said, that I dishonor the Holy Spirit, by looking to Christ for righteousness. It is impossible, in the face of 1 Corinthians 1:30, to separate the two things. Many do separate them. We think our correspondent separates them. It is just here he has failed. If he had looked to Christ, He would have subdued his irritable temper, as thoroughly as He blotted out his sins. Here is the mistake. People bring their sins to Christ, but try to control self, partly in their own strength, and partly by praying for the influences of the Spirit. Thus, they break down, again and again. We must be brought to see that we are as completely "without strength" in the matter of "sanctification," as in the matter of "righteousness." The apprehension of this by the Spirit, is the real spring of holiness and happiness.

We earnestly pray, that our correspondent may be led to the end of self, in every shape and form, and find Christ as his all. Then, but not until then, he will find all he really needs. Then he will know the true blessedness of victory over his lusts, passions, and tempers. Christ, by His Spirit, will work in him, "to will and to do of His good pleasure," and God, in all things, will be glorified.

The Mackintosh Treasury: Vol. 1, Sanctification: What Is It? Part 2 (1:30)

We trust that no one will accuse us of entertaining a desire to lower the standard of personal holiness, or to weaken the soul's earnest aspirations after a growth in that purity, for which every true believer must ardently long. God forbid! If there is one thing above another which we desire to promote in ourselves and others, it is intense personal purity—an elevated tone of practical sanctity—a whole-hearted separation from moral evil, in every shape and form. For this we long, for this we pray, in this we desire to grow, daily and hourly.

But then we are fully convinced that a superstructure of true, practical holiness can never be erected on a legal basis; and hence it is that we press 1 Cor. 1:30 upon the attention of our readers. It is to be feared that many who have, in some measure, abandoned the legal ground, in the matter of "righteousness," are yet lingering thereon for "sanctification." We believe this to be the mistake of thousands, and we are most anxious to see it corrected. The passage before us would, if simply received into the heart by faith, entirely correct this serious mistake.

All intelligent Christians are agreed as to the fundamental truth of "Righteousness without works." All freely and fully admit that we cannot, by any efforts of our own, work out a righteousness for ourselves before God. But it is not just so clearly seen, that righteousness and sanctification are put upon precisely the same ground in the word of God. We can no more work out a sanctification than we can work out a righteousness. We may try it, but we shall, sooner or later, find out that it is utterly vain. We may vow and resolve; we may labor and struggle; we may cherish the fond hope of doing better tomorrow than we have done to-day; but, in the end, we must be constrained to see, and feel, and own, that, as regards the matter of sanctification, we are as completely "without strength" as we have already proved ourselves to be in the matter of righteousness.

And, oh! what sweet relief to the one who has been stumbling along the path of personal holiness to find, after years of unsuccessful struggle, that the very thing he longs-

for is treasured up in Christ, and is ready to his hand this moment, even a complete sanctification to be enjoyed by faith! Such an one may have been battling with his habits, his lusts, his tempers, his passions; he has been making the most laborious efforts to subdue his flesh and grow in inward holiness, but, alas! he has failed. He finds, to his deep sorrow, that he is not holy, and yet he reads that "Without holiness no man can see the Lord." (Heb. 12) Not, observe, without a certain measure, or attainment, in holiness; but without the thing itself; which every Christian has, from the moment he believes, whether he knows it or not. Perfect sanctification is as fully included in the word "salvation," as is "wisdom, righteousness, or redemption." He did not get Christ by effort, but by faith; and when he laid hold on Christ, he received all that is in Christ. Hence, therefore, he has only to look to Jesus by faith, for the subjugation of his lusts, passions, tempers, habits, circumstances, and influences. He must look to Jesus for all. He can no more subdue a single lust than he could cancel the entire catalog of his sins, work out a perfect righteousness, or raise the dead. "Christ is all and in all." Salvation is a golden chain which stretches from everlasting to everlasting, and every link of that chain is Christ. It is all Christ from first to last.

All this is as simple as possible. The believer's standing is in Christ, and if in Christ for one thing, he is in Christ for all. I am not in Christ for righteousness, and out of Christ for sanctification. If I am a debtor to Christ for righteousness, I am equally a debtor to Him for sanctification. I am not a debtor to legality for either the one or the other. I get both by grace, through faith, and all in Christ. Yes, all-all in Christ. The moment the sinner comes to Christ, and believes on Him, he is taken completely off the old ground of nature; he loses his old legal standing and all its belongings, and is looked at as in Christ. God only sees him in Christ, and as Christ. He becomes one with Christ forever. "As he is, so are we in this world." (1 John 4) Such is the absolute standing, the settled and eternal position, of the very feeblest babe in the family of God. There is but one standing for every child of God, every member of Christ. Their knowledge, experience, power, gift, and intelligence may vary; but their standing is one. Whatever of righteousness or sanctification, they possess, they owe it all to their being in Christ; consequently, if they have not gotten a perfect sanctification, neither have they gotten a perfect righteousness. But 1 Cor. 1:30 distinctly

teaches, that Christ "is made both the one and the other to all believers. It does not say that we have righteousness and "a measure of sanctification." We have just as much Scripture authority for putting the word "measure "before righteousness as before sanctification. The Spirit of God does not put it before either. Both are perfect, and we have both in Christ. God never does anything by halves. There is no such thing as a half justification. Neither is there such a thing as a half sanctification. The idea of a member of the family of God, or of the body of Christ, wholly justified,, but only half sanctified, is at once opposed to Scripture and revolting to all the sensibilities of the divine nature.

It is not improbable that very much of the misapprehension which prevails, in reference to sanctification, is justly traceable to the habit of confounding two things which differ very materially, namely, standing and walk, or position and condition. The believers standing is perfect,, eternal, unchangeable, divine. His walk is imperfect, fluctuating, and marked with personal infirmity. His position is absolute and unalterable. His practical condition may exhibit manifold imperfections, inasmuch as he is still in the body, and surrounded by various hostile influences, which affect his moral condition, from day to day. If, then, his standing be measured by his walk, his position by his condition, what he is in God's view by what he is in man's, the result must be false. If I reason from what I am in myself, instead of from what I am in Christ, I must, of necessity, arrive at a wrong conclusion.

We should look carefully to this. We are very much disposed to reason upwards from ourselves to God, instead of downwards from God to us. We should bear in mind that

God can only think and speak of his people, and act toward them, too, according to their standing in Christ. He has given them this standing. He has made them what they are. They are His workmanship. Hence, therefore, to speak of them as half justified would be a dishonor cast upon God; and to speak of them as half sanctified would be just the same.

This train of thought conducts us to another weighty proof, drawn from the authoritative and conclusive page of inspiration, namely, 1 Cor. 6:11. In the verses preceding, the apostle draws a fearful picture of fallen humanity, and he plainly tells the Corinthian saints that they had been just like that. "Such were some of you." This is plain dealing. There are no flattering words-no daubing with untempered mortar-no keeping back the full truth as to nature's total and irretrievable ruin. "Such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified, in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God."

What a striking contrast between the two sides of the apostle's "bat!" On the one side, we have all the moral degradation of man's condition; and, on the other side, we have all the absolute perfectness of the believer's standing before God. This, truly, is a marvelous contrast; and, be it remembered, that the soul passes, in the twinkling of an eye, from one side to the other of this "but." "Such were some of you: but ye are" now, something quite different. The moment in which they received Paul's gospel, they were "washed, sanctified, and justified." They were fit for heaven; and, had they not been so, it would have been a slur upon the divine workmanship.

This is divinely true. The most inexperienced believer is "clean every whit," not as a matter of attainment, but as the necessary result of being in Christ. "We are in him that is true." (1 John 5) Could any one be in Christ, and, at the same time, be only half sanctified? Assuredly not. He will, no doubt, grow in the knowledge and experience of what sanctification really is. He will enter into its practical power; its moral effect upon his habits, thoughts,, feelings, affections, and associations; in a word, he will understand and exhibit the mighty influence of divine sanctification upon his entire course, conduct, and character. But, then, he was as completely sanctified, in God's view, the moment he became linked to Christ by faith, as he will be when he comes to bask in the sunlight of the divine presence, and reflect back the concentrated beams of glory emanating from the throne of God and of the Lamb. He is in Christ now, and he will be in Christ then. His sphere and his circumstances will differ. His feet shall stand upon the golden pavement of the upper sanctuary, instead of standing upon the arid sand of the desert. He will be in a body of glory instead of a body of humiliation; but, as to his standing, his acceptance, his completeness, his justification, and sanctification, all was settled the moment he believed on the name of the only-begotten Son of God- as settled as ever it will be, because as settled as God could make it. All this seems to flow as a necessary and unanswerable inference from 1 Cor. 6:11.

It is of the utmost importance to apprehend, with clearness, the distinction between a truth and the practical application and result of a truth. This distinction is ever maintained in the word of God. "Ye are sanctified." Here is the absolute truth as to the believer, as viewed in Christ, and as the fruit of an eternally-perfect work. "Christ loved the church, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify it." (Eph. 5:25, 26r) ' ; And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly." (1 Thess. 5:20.) Here we have the practical application of the truth to the believer, and its results in the believer.

But how is this application made, and this result reached? By the Holy Ghost, through the written word. Hence, we read, "sanctify them through thy truth." (John 17) And again, "God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth." (2 Thess. 2:13.) So also, in Peter, "Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit." (1 Pet. 1:2.) The Holy Ghost carries on the believer's practical sanctification on the ground of Christ's accomplished work; and the mode in which He does so is by applying to the heart and conscience the truth as it is in Jesus. He unfolds the truth as to our perfect standing before God in Christ, and, by energizing the new man in us, He enables us to put away everything incompatible with that perfect standing. A man who is "washed, sanctified, and justified," ought not to indulge in any unhallowed temper, lust, or passion. He should "cleanse himself from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit." It is his holy and happy privilege to breathe after the very loftiest heights of personal sanctity. His heart and his habits should be brought and held under the power of that grand truth that he is perfectly "washed, sanctified, and justified."

This is true practical sanctification. It is not any attempt at the improvement of our old nature. It is not a vain effort to reconstruct an irretrievable ruin. No; it is simply the Holy Ghost, by the powerful application of "the truth" enabling the new man to live, and move, and have his being in that sphere to which he belongs. Here there will, undoubtedly, be progress. There will be growth in the moral power of this precious truth-growth in spiritual ability to subdue and keep under all that pertains to nature-a growing power of separation from the evil around us-a growing meetness for that heaven to which we belong, and toward which we are journeying-a growing capacity for the enjoyment of its holy exercises. All this there will be, through the gracious ministry of the Holy Ghost, who uses the word of God to unfold to our souls the truth as to our standing in Christ, and as to the walk which comports with that standing. But let it be -clearly understood that the work of the Holy Ghost in practical sanctification, day by day, is founded upon the fact that believers "are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once." (Heb. 10:10.) The object of the Holy Ghost is to lead us into the knowledge, the experience, and the practical exhibition of that which was true of us in Christ, the very moment we believed. As regards this, there is progress, but our standing

in Christ is eternally complete.

“Sanctify them through thy truth i thy word is truth” (John 17:17). And again, “The very God of peace sanctify you wholly.” (1 Thess. 5:23.) In these passages, we have the grand practical side of this question. Here we see sanctification presented, not merely as something absolutely and eternally true of us in Christ, but also as wrought out in us, daily and hourly, by the Holy Ghost through the Word. Looked at from this point of view, sanctification is, obviously, a progressive thing. I should be more advanced in personal holiness in the year 1860 than I was in the year 18.09. I should, through grace, be advancing, day by day, in practical holiness. But what, let me ask, is this? What,, but the working out in me of that which was true of me in Christ, the very moment I believed? The basis on which the Holy Ghost carries on the subjective work in the believer, is the objective truth of his eternal completeness in Christ.

Again, “Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.” (Heb. 12:14.) Here, holiness is presented as a thing to be “followed after “-to be attained by earnest pursuit-a thing which every true believer will long to cultivate.

May the Lord lead us into the power of these things! May they not dwell as doctrines and dogmas in the region of our intellect, but enter into and abide in the heart, as sacred and powerfully influential realities! May we know the sanctifying power of the truth (John 17:17); the sanctifying power of faith (Acts 26:18); the sanctifying power of the name of Jesus (1 Cor. 1:30; 6:11); the sanctifying power of the Holy Spirit (1 Pet. 1:2); the sanctifying grace of the Father (Jude 1).

And, now, unto the Father, and unto the Son, and unto the Holy Ghost, be honor and glory, might, majesty, and dominion, world without end. Amen.

The Mackintosh Treasury: Vol. 1, Sanctification: What Is It? Part 1 (1:30)

It has been our earnest desire, since we commenced to issue this Magazine, that God would be pleased to make use of it, first, in the conversion of souls; and, secondly, in ministering peace and comfort to those who, though truly converted, have not laid hold of a full Christ, and who, as a consequence, are not enjoying the liberty of the gospel. It is the second of the above objects which we have in view in furnishing our readers with an article on the important and deeply interesting subject of sanctification. We believe that very many of those whose spiritual welfare we desire to promote, suffer materially from defective, or erroneous, ideas on this vital question. Indeed, in some cases, the doctrine of sanctification is so entirely misapprehended as to interfere with the truth of the believer's perfect justification before God.

For example, we have frequently heard persons speak of sanctification as a progressive work, in virtue of which our old nature is to be made gradually better, and, moreover, that until this process has reached its climax-until fallen and corrupt humanity has become completely sanctified, we are not fit for heaven.

Now, so far as this view of the question is concerned, we have only to say that both Scripture and the truthful experience of all believers are entirely against it, The word of God never once teaches us that the Holy Ghost has for His object the improvement, either gradual or otherwise, of our old nature-that nature which we inherit, by natural birth, from fallen Adam. The inspired apostle expressly declares that, “The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.” (1 Cor. 2:14.) This one passage is clear and conclusive on the point. If “the natural man” can neither “receive “nor “know ““ the things of the Spirit of God,” then, how can that “natural man” be sanctified by the Holy Ghost? Is it not plain that, to speak of “the sanctification of our nature “is opposed to the direct teaching of 1 Cor. 2:14? Other passages might be adduced to prove that the design of the Spirit's operations is not to improve or sanctify the flesh, but there is no need to multiply quotations. An utterly ruined thing can never be sanctified. Do what you will with it, and it is ruined; and, most assuredly, the Holy Ghost did not come down to sanctify a ruin, but to lead the ruined one to Jesus. So far from any attempt to sanctify the flesh, we read that, “The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other.” (Gal. 5:17.) Could the Holy Ghost be represented as carrying on a warfare with that which He is gradually improving and sanctifying? Would not the conflict cease so soon as the process of improvement had reached its climax? But does the believer's conflict ever cease so long as he is in the body?

This leads us to the second objection to the erroneous theory of the progressive sanctification of our nature, namely, the objection drawn from the truthful experience of all believers. Is the reader a true believer? If so, has he found any improvement in his old nature? Is it a single whit better now, than it was when he first started on his Christian course? He may, through grace, be enabled to subdue it more thoroughly; but it is nothing better. If it be not mortified, it is just as ready to spring up and show itself in all its vileness as ever. “The flesh” in a believer is, in no wise, better than “the flesh “in an unbeliever. If this be forgotten, it would be hard to calculate the result. If the Christian does not bear in mind that self must be judged, he will soon learn, by bitter experience, that his old nature is as bad as ever; and, moreover, that it will be the very same to the end.

It is difficult to conceive how any one who is led to expect a gradual improvement of his nature can enjoy an hour's peace, inasmuch as he cannot but see, if only he looks at himself in the light of God's holy word, that there is not the smallest change in the true character of his own heart, that his heart is as deceitful and desperately wicked as when he walked in the moral darkness of his unconverted state. His own condition and character are, indeed, greatly changed, by the possession of a new, yea, “a divine nature,” and by the indwelling of the Holy Ghost, to give effect to its desires; but the moment the old nature is at work, he finds it as opposite to God as ever. We doubt not but that very much of the gloom and despondency of which so many complain may be justly traced to their misapprehension of this important point of sanctification. They are looking for what they can never find. They are seeking for a ground of peace in a sanctified nature instead of in a perfect sacrifice -in a progressive work of holiness, instead of in a finished work of atonement. They deem it presumptuous to believe that their sins are forgiven until their evil nature is completely sanctified, and, seeing that this end is not reached, they have no settled assurance of pardon, and are therefore miserable. In a word, they are seeking for “a foundation “totally different from that which Jehovah says He has laid, and, therefore, they have no certainty whatever. The only thing that ever seems to give them a ray of comfort is some apparently

successful effort in the struggle for personal sanctity. If they have had a good day-if they are favored with a season of comfortable communion-if they happen to enjoy a peaceful, devotional frame, they are ready to cry out, "Thou hast made my mountain to stand strong; I shall never be moved." Psalm 30

But ah! these things furnish a sorry foundation for the soul's peace. They are not Christ; and, until we have Christ, we have nothing; but when we get Him, we get all. The soul that has really got hold of Christ is desirous indeed of holiness; but if intelligent of what Christ is to him, he has done with all thoughts about sanctified nature. He has found His all in Christ, and the paramount desire of his heart is to grow into His likeness. This is true practical sanctification.

It frequently happens that persons in speaking of sanctification mean a right thing, although they do not express themselves according to the teaching of holy Scripture. There are many also, who see one side of the truth as to sanctification, but not the other; and, although we should be sorry to make any one an offender for a word, yet it is always most desirable, in speaking of any point of truth, and especially of so vital a point as that of sanctification, to speak according to the divine integrity of the Word. We shall, therefore, proceed to quote for our readers a few of the leading passages from the New Testament in which this doctrine is unfolded. These passages will teach us two things, namely, what sanctification is, and how it is effected.

The first passage to which we would call attention is 1 Cor. 1:30, "But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption." Here we learn that Christ "is made unto us" all these four things. God has given us, in Christ, a precious casket, and when we open that casket with the key of faith, the first gem that glitters in our view is "wisdom;" the second is "righteousness;" the third is "sanctification;" and the fourth is "redemption." We have them all in Christ. As we get one, so we get all. And how do we get one and all? By faith. But why does the apostle name redemption last. Because it takes in the final deliverance of the body of the believer from under the power of mortality, when the voice of the archangel and the trump of God shall either raise it from the tomb, or change it, in the twinkling of an eye. Will this act be progressive? Clearly not. It will be done, "in the twinkling of an eye." The body is in one state now, and "in a moment" it will be in another. In the brief point of time expressed by the rapid movement of the eyelash, will the body pass from corruption to in corruption; from dishonor to glory; from weakness to power. What a change! It will be immediate, complete, eternal, divine.

But what are we to learn from the fact that "sanctification is placed in the group with "redemption? "We learn that what redemption will be to the body, that sanctification is now to the soul. In a word, sanctification, in the sense in which it is here used, is an immediate, a complete, an eternal, a divine work. The one is no more progressive than the other. The one is as immediate as the other. The one is as complete and "as independent of man as the other. No doubt, when the body shall have undergone the glorious change, there will be heights of glory to be trodden, depths of glory to be penetrated, wide fields of glory to be explored. All these things shall occupy us throughout eternity. But, then, the work which is to fit us for such scenes will be done in a moment. So also is it, in reference to sanctification, the practical results of the thing will be continually developing themselves; but the thing itself, as spoken of in this passage, is done in a moment.

What an immense relief it would be to thousands of earnest, anxious, struggling souls to get a proper hold of Christ as their sanctification! How many are vainly endeavoring to work out a sanctification for themselves! They have come to Christ for righteousness after many fruitless efforts to get a righteousness of their own; but they are seeking after sanctification in a different way altogether. They have gotten "righteousness without works;" but they imagine that they must get sanctification with works. They have gotten righteousness by faith; but they imagine that they must get sanctification by effort. Thus it is they lose their peace. They do not see that we get sanctification in precisely the same way as we get righteousness, inasmuch as Christ "is made unto us" the one as well as the other. Do we get Christ by effort? No; by faith. It is "to him that worketh not;" (Rom. 4:5.) This applies to all that we get in Christ. We have no warrant whatever to single out from 1 Cor. 1:30, the matter of "sanctification," and place it upon a different footing from all the other blessings which it unfolds. We have neither wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, nor redemption in ourselves; nor can we procure them by aught that we can do; but God has made Christ to be unto us all these things. In giving us Christ, He gave us all that is in Christ. The fullness of Christ is ours, and Christ is the fullness of God.

Again, in Acts 26:18, the converted Gentiles are spoken of as "receiving forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith." Here, faith is the instrument by which we are said to be sanctified, because it connects us with Christ. The very moment the sinner believes on the Lord Jesus Christ he becomes linked to Him. He is made one with Him, complete in Him, accepted in Him. This is true sanctification and justification. It is not a process. It is not a gradual work. It is not progressive. The word is very explicit. It says, "them which are sanctified by faith which is in me." It does not say, "which shall be sanctified," or, "which are being sanctified." If such were the doctrine it would have been so stated.

No doubt, the believer grows in the knowledge of this sanctification, in his sense of its power and value, its practical influence and results, the experience and enjoyment of it. As "the truth "pours its divine light upon his soul, he enters into a more profound apprehension of what is involved in being "set apart" for Christ, in the midst of this evil world. All this is blessedly true; but the more its truth is seen, the more clearly we shall understand that sanctification is not merely a progressive work wrought in

us by the Holy Spirit, but that it is one result of our being linked to Christ, by faith, whereby we become partakers of all that He is. This is an immediate, a complete, and an eternal work. " whatsoever God doeth, it shall be forever: nothing can be put to it, nor anything taken from it." (Eccles. 3:14.) Whether He justifies or sanctifies, "it shall be forever." The stamp of eternity is fixed upon every work of God's hand; "nothing can be put to it," and, blessed be His name, "nothing can be taken from it."

There are passages which present the subject in another aspect, and which may require fuller consideration hereafter. In Thess. v. 23, the apostle prays for the saints whom he addressed, "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit, and soul, and body, be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." Here, the word is applied to a sanctification admitting of degrees. The Thessalonians had, along with all believers, a perfect sanctification in Christ; but as to the practical enjoyment and display of this, it was only accomplished in part, and the apostle prays that they may be wholly sanctified.

In this passage, it is worthy of notice, that nothing is said of "the flesh." Our fallen, corrupt nature is always treated as a hopelessly ruined thing. It has been weighed in the balance and found wanting. It has been measured by a divine rule and found short. It has been tried by a perfect plummet and proved crooked. God has set it aside. Its "end has come before him." He has condemned it and put it to death. It is crucified, dead, and buried. To adduce proofs would demand a volume. Are we, then, to imagine for a moment, that God the Holy Ghost came down from heaven for the purpose of exhuming a condemned, crucified, and buried nature, so that He might sanctify it? The idea has only to be named, to be abandoned forever by every one who bows to the authority of scripture. The more closely we study the Law, the Prophets, the Psalms, and the entire New Testament, the more clearly we shall see that the flesh is wholly unmendable. It is, absolutely, good for nothing. The Spirit does not sanctify it, but he enables the believer to mortify it. We are told to "put off the old man." This precept would never have been delivered to us if the object of the Holy Ghost were the sanctification of that old man."

(To be continued, if the Lord will.)

Short Papers, Divine Anathema, The (16:22)

" If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maranatha." 1 Cor. 16:22.

The position which this solemn anathema occupies is truly remarkable. In the course of his lengthened epistle, the apostle had to rebuke and correct many practical evils, and doctrinal errors. There were divisions amongst the Corinthians. They were puffed up for one against another. There was fornication amongst them. They went to law one with another. There was gross disorder at the Lord's Supper. Some of them called in question the grand foundation truth of the resurrection of the dead.

These were grave errors and formidable evils—errors and evils which called forth the sharp and stern reproof of the inspired apostle. But, be it carefully noted, that when, at the close, he pronounces his solemn " Anathema Maranatha," it is not directed against those who had introduced the errors or practiced the evils, but against " any man who loves not the Lord Jesus Christ." This, surely, is well worthy of serious thought. The only security against all manner of error and evil is genuine love to the Lord Jesus Christ. A man may be so strictly moral, as that no one could put

The word "Anathema" signifies anything devoted to death; and " Maranatha " signifies the Lord cometh to judgment. His finger upon a single blot in his character—a single stain in his reputation, and, underneath that strict morality, there may be a heart as cold as ice, so far as the Lord Jesus is concerned. Again, a man may be so marked by a spirit of noble benevolence, that his influence is felt throughout the entire sphere in which he moves; and, all the while, his heart may not have a single pulsation of love to Christ. Finally, a man may possess, in the region of his understanding, a perfectly orthodox creed, and he may be devotedly attached to the ordinances and observances of traditional religion, and be wholly without affection for the adorable Person of the Lord Jesus Christ. It may even happen that all these things, namely, lofty morality, noble benevolence, sound orthodoxy, and devoted attachment to religious forms, exist in one and the same individual, and that individual be wholly void of a single spark of genuine affection for the Lord Jesus Christ, and, as a solemn and startling consequence, stand exposed to the burning Anathema of God the Holy Ghost. I may be moral, through love to self. I may be benevolent through love to my fellow. I may be orthodox, through a love of dogmas. I may be religious, through a love of sect. But none of these things can shield me from the merited judgment which is denounced by the Holy Ghost against "any man" no matter who or what, who " loves not the Lord Jesus Christ."

This is a deeply solemn and most seasonable word for the present moment. Let the reader deeply ponder it. Let him remember that the only basis for true morality—the only basis for genuine benevolence—the only basis for divine orthodoxy—the only basis for " pure religion" is love to the Lord Jesus Christ, and where this love exists not, all is cold, sterile, and worthless—all exposed to death and judgment by the " Anathema Maranatha " of the Holy Ghost. If the heart be really touched with the vital spark of love to Jesus, then every effort after pure morality, every struggle against our hateful lusts, passions, and tempers, every opening of the hand of genuine benevolence, every sound and truthful principle, every act of devotion, every pious aspiration, every fervent breathing, every outgoing of the soul, is precious to the Father—precious to the Son—precious to the Holy Ghost—all is fragrant with the perfume of that dear Name which is the theme of heaven's wonder— the center of heaven's joy, the object of heaven's worship.

And, my beloved reader, should we not " love the Lord Jesus Christ? " Should we not hold Him dearer to our heart than all beside? Should we not be ready to surrender all for Him? Should not our bosoms swell with emotions of sincere attachment to His Person, in heaven, and His cause on earth? How could we trace Him from the bosom of the Father to the manger of Bethlehem— from the manger of Bethlehem to the cross of Calvary— and from the cross of Calvary to the throne of the majesty in the heavens—how could we "consider" Him as "the Apostle and High Priest of our profession," and not have our whole moral being brought under the mighty constraining influence of His love?

May the Holy Ghost so unfold to our souls His matchless glories and peerless excellencies, that we may " count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord."

Short Papers, Workman's Motto, A (15:58)

" Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord." 1 Cor. 15:58.

Here we have an uncommonly fine motto for the christian workman—and every Christian ought to be a workman. It presents a most valuable balance for the heart. We have immovable stability linked with unceasing activity.

This is of the utmost possible importance. There are some of us such sticklers for what we call principle that we seem almost afraid to embark in any scheme of large-hearted christian activity. And, on the other hand, some of us are so bent on what we call service, that in order to reach desired ends, and realize palpable results, we do not hesitate to overstep the boundary line of sound principle.

Now, our motto supplies a divine antidote for both these evils. It furnishes a solid basis on which we are to stand with steadfast purpose and immovable decision. We are not to be moved the breadth of a hair from the narrow path of divine truth, though tempted to do so by the most forcible argument of a plausible expediency. "To obey is better than sacrifice; and to hearken, than the fat of rams."

Noble words! may they be engraved, in characters deep and broad, on every workman's heart. They are absolutely invaluable; and particularly so in this our own day, when there is such willfulness in our mode of working, such erratic schemes of service, such self-pleasing, such a strong tendency to do that which is right in our own eyes, such a practical ignoring of the supreme authority of holy scripture.

It fills the thoughtful observer of the present condition of things with the very gravest apprehensions to mark the positive and deliberate throwing aside of the word of God, even by those who professedly admit it to be the word of God. We speak not now of the insolence of open and avowed infidelity; but of the heartless indifference of respectable orthodoxy. There are thousands, nay millions, who profess to believe that the Bible is the word of God, who, nevertheless, have not the smallest idea of submitting themselves absolutely to its authority. The human will is dominant. Human reason bears sway. Expediency commands the heart. The holy principles of divine revelation are swept away like autumn leaves, or the dust of the threshingfloor, before the vehement blast of popular opinion.

How immensely valuable and important, in view of all this, is the first part of our workman's motto! "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast and immovable" The "therefore" throws the soul back upon the solid foundation laid in the previous part of the chapter in which the apostle unfolds the most sublime and precious truth that can possibly engage the Christian's heart—truth which lifts the soul completely above the dark and chilling mists of the old creation, and plants it on the solid rock of resurrection. It is on this rock we are exhorted to be steadfast and immovable. It is not an obstinate adherence to our own notions—to some favorite dogma or theory which we have adopted—or to any special school of doctrine, high or low. It is not aught of this kind; but a firm grasp and faithful confession of the whole truth of God of which a risen Christ is the everlasting center.

But then we have to remember the other side of our motto. The christian workman has something more to do than to stand firmly on the ground of truth. He has to cultivate the lovely activities of grace. He is called to be "always abounding in the work of the Lord." The basis of sound principle must never be abandoned; but the work of the Lord must be diligently carried on. There are some who are so afraid of doing mischief that they do nothing; and others, who rather than not be doing something will do wrong. Our motto corrects both. It teaches us to set our faces as a flint, where truth is, in any wise, involved; while on the other hand, it leads us to go forth, in largeness of heart, and throw all our energies into the work of the Lord.

And let the christian reader specially note the expression, "The work of the Lord" We are not to imagine for a moment that all that which engages the energies of professing Christians is entitled to be designated "the work of the Lord." Alas! alas! far from it. We see a mass of things undertaken as service for the Lord with which a spiritual person could not possibly connect the holy name of Christ. We do not attempt to go into details; but we do desire to have the conscience exercised as to the work in which we embark. We deeply feel how needful it is in this day of willfulness, laxity, and wild latitudinarianism, to own the authority of Christ in all that we put our hands to in the way of work or service. Blessed be His name, He permits us to connect Him with the most trivial and commonplace activities of daily life. We can even eat and drink in His holy name, and to His glory. The sphere of service is wide enough, most surely; it is only limited by that weighty clause, "The work of the Lord." The christian workman must not engage in any work which does not range itself under that most holy and all-important head. He must, ere he enters upon any service, ask himself this great practical question, "Can this honestly be called 'the work of the Lord?'"

Short Papers, Five Words (14:19)

(1 Cor. 14:19.)

It is often very wonderful to mark the way in which the words of scripture seize upon the heart. They are, indeed, "as goads, and as nails fastened by the masters of assemblies." At times, some brief sentence, or clause of a sentence, will lay hold upon the heart, penetrate the conscience, or occupy the mind, in such a way as to prove, beyond all question, the divinity of the book, in which it stands. What force of reasoning, what fullness of meaning, what powder of application, what an unfolding of the springs of nature, what an unveiling of the heart, what point and pungency, what condensing energy, we meet with up and down throughout the sacred pages! One delights to dwell upon these things, at all times; but more especially at a moment like the present, when the enemy of God and man is seeking, in such varied ways, to cast a slur upon the inspired volume.

The foregoing train of thought has, not infrequently, been suggested to the mind by the expression which forms the title of this article. "I had rather," says the self-emptied and devoted apostle, "speak five words with my understanding, that I might teach others also, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue." How important for all speakers to remember this! We know, of course, that tongues had their value. They were for a sign to the unbelieving. But, in the assembly, they were useless unless there was an interpreter.

The grand end of speaking in the assembly, is edification, and this end can only, as we know, be reached by persons understanding what is said. It is utterly impossible that a man can edify me, if I cannot understand what he says. He must speak in an intelligible language, and in an audible voice, else I cannot receive any edification. This surely is plain, and well worthy the serious attention of all who speak in public.

But, further, we would do well to bear in mind that our only warrant for standing up to speak, in the assembly, is that the Lord Himself has given us something to say. If it be but "Five words," let us utter the five and sit down. Nothing can be more unintelligent than for a man to

attempt to speak “ Ten thousand words “ when God has only given him “ Five.” Alas! that something like this should so often occur! What a mercy it would be, if we could only keep within our measure! That measure may be small. It matters not; let us be simple, earnest, and real. An earnest heart is better than a clever head; and a fervent spirit better than an eloquent tongue. Where there is a genuine, hearty desire to promote the real good of souls, it will prove more effectual with men, and more acceptable to God than the most brilliant gifts without it. No doubt, we should covet earnestly the best gifts; but we should also remember the “ more excellent way,” even the way of charity that ever hides itself and seeks only the profit of others. It is not that we value gifts less, but we value charity more.

Finally, it would greatly tend to raise the tone of public teaching and preaching to remember the following very homely rule, “ Do not set about looking for something to say, because you have got to speak; but speak because you have got something that ought to be said.” This is very simple. It is a poor thing for a man to be merely collecting as much matter as will fill up a certain space of time. This should never be. Let the teacher or preacher attend diligently upon his ministry—let him cultivate his gift—let him wait on God for guidance, power, and blessing—let him live in the spirit of prayer, and breathe the atmosphere of scripture; then will he be always ready for the Master’s use, and his words, whether “ Five” or “ Ten thousand,” will, assuredly, glorify Christ and do good to men. But, clearly, in no case, should a man rise to address his fellows, without the conviction that God has given him somewhat to say, and the desire to say it to edification.

The Lord's Supper, Nature of the Ordinance of the Lord's Supper, The (11:20-21)

First, as to the nature of the ordinance of the Lord’s Supper, this is a cardinal point. If we understand not the nature of the ordinance, we shall be astray in all our thoughts about it. The Supper, then, is purely and distinctly a feast of thanksgiving — thanksgiving for grace already received. The Lord Himself, at the institution of it, marks its character by giving thanks. “He . . . took bread: . . . when He had given thanks.” Praise, and not prayer, is the suited utterance of those who sit at the table of the Lord.

True, we have much to pray for, much to confess, much to mourn over, but the table is not the place for mourners: Its language is, “Give strong drink unto him that is ready to perish, and wine unto those that be of heavy hearts. Let him drink, and forget his poverty, and remember his misery no more.” Ours is a “cup of blessing,” a cup of thanksgiving, the divinely appointed symbol of that precious blood which has procured our ransom. “The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?” How, then, could we break it with sad hearts or sorrowful countenances? Could a family circle, after the toils of the day, sit down to supper with sighs and gloomy looks? Surely not. The supper was the great family meal, the only one that was sure to bring all the family together. Faces that might not have been seen during the day were sure to be seen at the supper table, and no doubt they would be happy there. Just so it should be at the Lord’s Supper: The family should assemble there, and when assembled, they should be happy, unfeignedly happy, in the love that brings them together. True, each heart may have its own peculiar history — its secret sorrows, trials, failures and temptations, unknown to all around, but these are not the objects to be contemplated at the Supper: To bring them into view is to dishonor the Lord of the feast and make the cup of blessing a cup of sorrow. The Lord has invited us to the feast and commanded us, notwithstanding all our shortcomings, to place the fullness of His love and the cleansing efficacy of His blood between our souls and everything, and when the eye of faith is filled with Christ, there is no room for anything beside. If my sin be the object which fills my eye and engages my thoughts, of course I must be miserable, because I am looking right away from what God commands me to contemplate; I am remembering my misery and poverty, the very things which God commands me to forget. Hence the true character of the ordinance is lost, and, instead of being a feast of joy and gladness, it becomes a season of gloom and spiritual depression, and the preparation for it and the thoughts which are entertained about it are more what might be expected in reference to Mount Sinai than to a happy family feast.

If ever a feeling of sadness could have prevailed at the celebration of this ordinance, surely it would have been on the occasion of its first institution, when, as we shall see when we come to consider the second point in our subject, there was everything that could possibly produce deep sadness and desolation of spirit. Yet the Lord Jesus could “give thanks”; the tide of joy that flowed through His soul was far too deep to be ruffled by surrounding circumstances; He had a joy even in the breaking and bruising of His body and in the pouring forth of His blood which lay far beyond the reach of human thought and feeling. And if He could rejoice in spirit and give thanks in breaking that bread which was to be to all future generations of the faithful the memorial of His broken body, should not we rejoice therein, we who stand in the blessed results of all His toil and passion? Yes; it becomes us to rejoice.

But it may be asked, Is there no preparation necessary? Are we to sit down at the table of the Lord with as much indifference as if we were sitting down to an ordinary supper table? Surely not — we need to be right in our souls, and the first step toward this is peace with God — that sweet assurance of our eternal salvation which most certainly is not the result of human sighs or penitential tears, but the simple result of the finished work of the Lamb of God, attested by the Spirit of God. Apprehending this by faith, we apprehend that which makes us perfectly fit for God. Many imagine that they are putting honor upon the Lord’s table when they approach it with their souls bowed down into the very dust, under a sense of the intolerable burden of their sins. This thought can only flow from the legalism of the human heart, that ever-fruitful source of thoughts at once dishonoring to God, dishonoring to the cross of Christ, grievous to the Holy Spirit, and completely subversive of our own peace. We may feel quite satisfied that the honor and purity of the Lord’s table are more fully maintained when the blood of Christ is made the only title than if human sorrow and human penitence were added to it.¹

However, the question of preparedness will come more fully before us as we proceed with our subject. I shall therefore state another principle connected with the nature of the Lord’s Supper, that there is involved in it an intelligent recognition of the oneness of the body of Christ. “The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? For we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread.” Now there was sad failure and sad confusion in reference to this point at Corinth; indeed, the great principle of the church’s oneness would seem to have been totally lost sight of there. Hence the Apostle observes that “when ye come together . . . into one place, this is not to eat the Lord’s supper, for . . . every one taketh before other his own supper” (1 Cor. 11:20-21). Here, it was isolation, and not unity; an individual, and not a corporate question: “His own supper” is strikingly contrasted with “the Lord’s supper.” The Lord’s Supper demands that the body be fully recognized: If the one body be not recognized, it is but sectarianism; the Lord Himself has lost His place. If the table be spread upon any narrower principle than that which would embrace the whole body of Christ, it is become a sectarian

table and has lost its claim upon the hearts of the faithful. On the contrary, where a table is spread upon this divine principle, which embraces all the members of the body simply as such, everyone who refuses to present himself at it is chargeable with schism, and that, too, upon the plain principles of 1 Corinthians 11. "There must," says the Apostle, "be heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you."

When the great church principle is lost sight of by any portion of the body, there must be heresies, in order that the approved ones may be made manifest! And under such circumstances it becomes the business of each one to approve himself, and so to eat. The "approved" ones stand in contrast with the heretics, or those who were doing their own will.²

But it may be asked, Do not the numerous denominations at present existing in the professing church altogether preclude the idea of ever being able to gather the whole body together? And, under such circumstances, is it not better for each denomination to have its own table? If there be any force in this question, it merely goes to prove that the people of God are no longer able to act upon God's principles, but that they are left to the miserable alternative of acting on human expediency. Thank God, such is not the case. The truth of the Lord endures forever, and what the Holy Spirit teaches in 1 Corinthians 11 is binding upon every member of the church of God. There were divisions, heresies and unholiness existing in the assembly at Corinth, just as there are divisions, heresies and unholiness existing in the professing church now, but the Apostle did not tell them to set up separate tables on the one hand, nor yet to cease from breaking bread on the other. No; he presses upon them the principles and the holiness connected with "the church of God," and tells those who could approve themselves accordingly to eat. The expression is, "So let him eat." We are to eat, therefore: Our care must be to eat "so," as the Holy Spirit teaches us, and that is in the true recognition of the holiness and oneness of the church of God.³ When the church is despised, the Spirit must be grieved and dishonored and the certain end will be spiritual barrenness and freezing formalism, and although men may substitute intellectual for spiritual power, and human talents and attainments for the gifts of the Holy Spirit, yet will the end be "like the heath in the desert." The true way to make progress in the divine life is to live for the church and not for ourselves. The man who lives for the church is in full harmony with the mind of the Spirit and must necessarily grow. On the contrary, the man who is living for himself, having his thoughts revolving around and his energies concentrated upon himself, must soon become cramped and formal and, in all probability, openly worldly. Yes, he will become worldly, in some sense of that extensive term, for the world and the church stand in direct opposition, the one to the other, nor is there any aspect of the world in which this opposition is more fully seen than in its religious aspect. What is commonly called the religious world will be found, when examined in the light of the presence of God, to be more thoroughly hostile to the true interests of the church of God than almost anything.

But I must hasten on to other branches of our subject, only stating another simple principle connected with the Lord's Supper, to which I desire to call the special attention of the Christian reader; it is this: The celebration of the ordinance of the Lord's Supper should be the distinct expression of the unity of all believers and not merely of the unity of a certain number gathered on certain principles which distinguish them from others. If there be any term of communion proposed, save the all-important one of faith in the atonement of Christ and a walk consistent with that faith, the table becomes the table of a sect and possesses no claims upon the hearts of the faithful.

Furthermore, if by sitting at the table I must identify myself with any one thing, whether it be principle or practice, not enjoined in Scripture as a term of communion, there also the table becomes the table of a sect. It is not a question of whether there may be Christians there or not; it would be hard indeed to find a table among the reformed communities of which some Christians are not partakers. The Apostle did not say, "There must be heresies among you, that they which are Christians may be made manifest among you." No, but, "That they which are approved." Nor did he say, "Let a man prove himself a Christian, and so let him eat." No, but, "Let a man approve himself," that is, let him show himself to be one of those who are not only upright in their consciences as to their individual act in the matter, but who are also confessing the oneness of the body of Christ. When men set up terms of communion of their own, there you find the principle of heresy; there, too, there must be schism. On the contrary, where a table is spread in such a manner and upon such principles as that a Christian, subject to God, can take his place at it, then it becomes schism not to be there, for by being there and by walking consistently with our position and profession, we, so far as in us lies, confess the oneness of the church of God — that grand object for which the Holy Spirit was sent from heaven to earth. The Lord Jesus, having been raised from the dead and having taken His seat at the right hand of God, sent down the Holy Spirit to earth for the purpose of forming one body. Mark, to form one body — not many bodies. He has no sympathy with the many bodies, as such, though He has blessed sympathy with many members in those bodies, because they, though being members of sects or schisms, are, nevertheless, members of the one body. But He does not form the many bodies, but the one body, for "by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit" (1 Cor. 12:13).

I desire that there may be no misunderstanding on this point. I say the Holy Spirit cannot approve the schisms in the professing church, for He Himself has said of such, "I praise you not." He is grieved by them — He would counteract them; He baptizes all believers into the unity of the one body, so that it cannot be thought, by any intelligent mind, that the Holy Spirit could sustain schisms, which are a grief and a dishonor to Him.

We must, however, distinguish between the Spirit's dwelling in the church and His dwelling in individuals. He dwells in the body of Christ, which is the church (1 Cor. 3:17; Eph. 2:22); He dwells also in the body of the believer, as we read, "Your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God" (1 Cor. 6:19). The only body or community, therefore, in which the Spirit can dwell is the whole church of God, and the only person in which He can dwell is the believer. But, as has already been observed, the table of the Lord, in any given locality, should be the exhibition of the unity of the whole church. This leads us to another principle connected with the nature of the Lord's Supper.

It is an act whereby we not only show the death of the Lord until He come, but whereby we also give expression to a fundamental truth, which cannot be too strongly or too frequently pressed upon the minds of Christians at the present day, that all believers are one loaf — one body. It is a very common error to view this ordinance merely as a channel through which grace flows to the soul of the individual, and not as an act bearing upon the whole body, and bearing also upon the glory of the Head of the church. That it is a channel through which grace flows to the soul of the individual communicant there can be no doubt, for there is blessing in every act of obedience. But that individual blessing is only a very small part of it can be seen by the attentive reader of 1 Corinthians 11. It is the Lord's death and the Lord's coming

that are brought prominently before our souls in the Lord's Supper, and where any one of these elements is excluded there must be something wrong. If there be anything to hinder the complete showing forth of the Lord's death or the exhibition of the unity of the body or the clear perception of the Lord's coming, then there must be something radically wrong in the principle on which the table is spread, and we only need a single eye and a mind entirely subject to the Word and Spirit of Christ in order to detect the wrong.

Let the Christian reader now prayerfully examine the table at which he periodically takes his place and see if it will bear the threefold test of 1 Corinthians 11, and if not, let him, in the name of the Lord and for the sake of the church, abandon it. There are heresies, and schisms flowing from heresies, in the professing church, but "let a man [approve] himself, and so let him eat" the Lord's Supper. And if we ask what the term "approved" means, the answer is that it is in the first place to be personally true to the Lord in the act of breaking bread. In the next place, it is to shake off all schism and take our stand, firmly and decidedly, upon the broad principle which will embrace all the members of the flock of Christ. We are not only to be careful that we ourselves are walking in purity of heart and life before the Lord, but also that the table of which we partake has nothing connected with it that could at all act as a barrier to the unity of the church. It is not merely a personal question. Nothing more fully proves the low ebb of Christianity at the present day or the fearful extent to which the Holy Spirit is grieved than the miserable selfishness which tinges, even pollutes, the thoughts of professing Christians. Everything is made to hinge upon the mere question of self. It is my forgiveness — my safety — my peace — my happy feelings, and not the glory of Christ or the welfare of His beloved church. Well, therefore, may the words of the prophet be applied to us: "Thus saith the Lord, . . . Consider your ways. Go up to the mountain, and bring wood, and build the house; and I will take pleasure in it, and I will be glorified. Ye looked for much, and, lo, it came to little; and when ye brought it home, I did blow upon it. Why? saith the Lord of hosts. Because of [My] house that is waste, and ye run every man unto his own house" (Hag. 1:7-9). Here is the root of the matter. Self stands in contrast with the house of God, and if self be made the object, no marvel that there should be a sad lack of spiritual joy, energy and power. To have these, we must be in fellowship with the Spirit's thoughts. He thinks of the body of Christ, and if we are thinking of self, we must be at issue with Him, and the consequences are but too apparent.

The Lord's Supper, Lord's Supper, The (11:23-26)

"I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, that the Lord Jesus, the same night in which He was betrayed took bread: and when He had given thanks, He brake it, and said, Take, eat; this is My body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of Me. After the same manner also He took the cup, when He had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in My blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of Me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till He come" (1 Cor. 11:23-26).

I desire to offer a few, brief remarks on the subject of the Lord's Supper, for the purpose of stirring up the minds of all who love the name and institutions of Christ to a more fervent and affectionate interest in this most important and refreshing ordinance.

We should bless the Lord for His gracious consideration of our need in having established such a memorial of His dying love, and also in having spread a table at which all His members might present themselves without any other condition than the indispensable one of personal connection with and obedience to Him. The blessed Master knew well the tendency of our hearts to slip away from Him and from each other, and to meet this tendency was one, at least, of His objects in the institution of the Supper. He would gather His people around His own blessed person; He would spread a table for them where, in view of His broken body and shed blood, they might remember Him and the intensity of His love for them, and from whence, also, they might look forward into the future and contemplate the glory of which the cross is the everlasting foundation. There, if anywhere, they would learn to forget their differences and to love one another; there they might see around them those whom the love of God had invited to the feast and whom the blood of Christ had made fit to be there.

However, in order that I may the more easily and briefly convey to the mind of my reader what I have to say on this subject, I shall confine myself to the four following points:

The nature of the ordinance of the Lord's Supper.

The circumstances under which it was instituted.

The persons for whom it was designed.

The time and manner of its observance.

The Lord's Supper, Preface (11:26)

The institution of the Lord's Supper must be regarded, by every spiritual mind, as a peculiarly touching proof of the Lord's gracious care and considerate love for His church. From the time of its appointment until the present hour, it has been a steady, though silent, witness to a truth which the enemy, by every means in his power, has sought to corrupt and set aside, namely, that redemption is an accomplished fact to be enjoyed by the weakest believer in Jesus. Many centuries have rolled away since the Lord Jesus appointed the bread and the cup as the significant symbols of His broken body and His blood shed for us, and notwithstanding all the heresy, all the schism, all the controversy and strife, and the war of principles and prejudices which the blotted page of ecclesiastical history records, this most expressive institution has been observed by the saints of God in every age. True, the enemy has succeeded, throughout a vast section of the professing church, in wrapping it up in a shroud of dark superstition — in presenting it in such a way as actually to hide from the view of the communicant the grand and eternal reality of which it is the memorial, in displacing Christ and His accomplished sacrifice by a powerless ordinance — an ordinance, moreover, which by the very mode of its administration proves its utter worthlessness and opposition to the truth. (See note to page 28.) Yet, notwithstanding Rome's deadly error in reference to the ordinance of the Lord's Supper, it still speaks to every circumcised

ear and every spiritual mind the same deep and precious truth — it shows “the Lord’s death till He come.” The body has been broken and the blood has been shed once, no more to be repeated, and the breaking of bread is but the memorial of this emancipating truth.

With what profound interest and thankfulness, therefore, should the believer contemplate the bread and the cup! Without a word spoken, there is the setting forth of truths at once the most precious and glorious: grace reigning—redemption finished — sin put away — everlasting righteousness brought in — the sting of death gone — eternal glory secured — “grace and glory” revealed as the free gift of God and the Lamb —the unity of the “one body,” as baptized by “one Spirit.” What a feast! It carries the soul back, in the twinkling of an eye, over a lapse of hundreds of years, and shows us the Master Himself, in “the same night in which He was betrayed,” sitting at the supper table, and there instituting a feast which, from that solemn moment, that memorable night, until the dawn of the morning, should lead every believing heart at once backward to the cross and forward to the glory.

This feast has ever since, by the very simplicity of its character and yet the deep significance of its elements, rebuked the superstition that would deify and worship it, the profanity that would desecrate it, and the infidelity that would set it aside altogether. Furthermore, while it has rebuked all these, it has strengthened, comforted and refreshed the hearts of millions of God’s beloved saints. It is sweet to think of this — sweet to bear in mind, as we assemble on the first day of the week around the Supper of the Lord, that apostles, martyrs and saints have gathered around that feast and found therein, according to their measure, refreshment and blessing. Schools of theology have arisen, flourished and disappeared; doctors and fathers have accumulated ponderous tomes of divinity; deadly heresies have darkened the atmosphere and rent the professing church from one end to the other; superstition and fanaticism have put forth their baseless theories and extravagant notions; professing Christians have split into sects innumerable—all these things have taken place, but the Lord’s Supper has continued, amid the darkness and confusion, to tell out its simple yet comprehensive tale. “As often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show¹ the Lord’s death till He come” (1 Cor. 11:26). Precious feast! Thank God for the great privilege of celebrating it! And yet is it but a sign, the elements of which must, in nature’s view, be mean and contemptible. Bread broken, wine poured out — how simple! Faith alone can read, in the sign, the thing signified, and therefore it needs not the adventitious circumstances which false religion has introduced in order to add dignity, solemnity and awe to that which derives all its value, its power and its impressiveness from its being a memorial of an eternal fact which false religion denies.

May you and I enter with more freshness and intelligence into the meaning of the Lord’s Supper and with deeper experience into the blessedness of breaking that bread which is “the communion of the body of Christ” and drinking of that cup which is “the communion of the blood of Christ.”

In closing these few prefatory lines, I commend this treatise to the Lord’s gracious care, praying Him to make it useful to the souls of His people.

Do All to the Glory of God, Do All to the Glory of God: Part 2 (10:31)

1 Cor. 10:31

Part 2 | Co 10:31

Let us look at the Master Himself, our great Exemplar, and inquire how did He carry himself toward the men of this world? Did He ever find an object in common with them? Never. He was always feeding upon and filled with one object, and of that object He spoke. He ever sought to lead the thoughts of men to God.

This, my beloved reader, should be our object too. Whenever we meet men, we should lead them to think of Christ; and if we do not find an open door for that, we should not certainly suffer ourselves to be carried into the current of their thoughts. If we have business to transact with men, we must transact it; but we should not have any fellowship with them in their habits of thought or conversation, because our Master never had; and if we diverge from His path as to this, we shall soon sink into an unsanctified tone of spirit. We shall be as “salt that has lost its saltness,” and thus be “good for nothing.”

I cannot doubt but that much of that lack of settled peace, of which so many complain, is very justly traceable to the light and trifling habits of conversation in which they indulge; to their reading of newspapers and other light works. Such things must grieve the Holy Spirit; and if the Holy Spirit is grieved, Christ cannot be enjoyed; for it is the Spirit alone who, by the written word, ministers Christ to the soul.

I do not mean to deny that very many feel this lack of peace, who do not engage in such things; but I say that these things must, necessarily, be productive of serious injury to our spiritual health, and must induce a condition of soul which is most dishonoring to Christ.

It may be, that many who have long been accustomed to high teaching, will turn away from such plain, practical principles as these; but we must expect this. It will be pronounced legalism; and the writer may be accused of seeking to bring people into a sort of bondage, and of casting them upon themselves. I can only say, God forbid.

If it be legalism to direct attention to the matter of conversation, then it is the legalism of the Epistle to the Ephesians; for there we find, that “foolish talking and jesting” are among the things which are not to be “once named among us, as becometh saints.”

The word which is rendered “jesting” takes to what is commonly called “wit,” “humor,” “punning,” and such like. It is well to remember this. The word “jesting” would let a great deal pass which should come under the edge of the original word, which is a compound of two Greek words, signifying “to turn well.”

Again, we read,

"Let your conversation be always with grace, seasoned with salt." These are plain statements of Scripture- statements found in immediate connection with some of the most elevated doctrines of inspiration; and it will be found, that where those plain statements are not allowed their full weight on the conscience, the higher truths are not enjoyed. I can neither enjoy, nor walk worthy of my "high vocation," if I am indulging in "foolish talking and jesting."

I quite admit the need of carefully avoiding all affected sanctimoniousness, or fleshly restraint. The sanctimoniousness of nature is fully as bad as its levity, if not worse. But why exhibit either the one or the other? The Gospel gives us something far better. Instead of affected sanctimoniousness, the Gospel gives us real sanctity; and, instead of levity, it gives us holy cheerfulness. There is no need to affect anything, for if I am feeding upon Christ, all is reality, without any effort. The moment there is effort, it is all perfect weakness. If I say I must talk about Christ, it becomes terrible bondage, and I exhibit my own weakness and folly; but if my soul is in communion, all is natural and easy, for "out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks." It is said of a certain little insect, that it always exhibits the color of the leaf on which it feeds. So it is exactly with the Christian. It is very easy to tell on what he is feeding.

But it may be said by some, that "we cannot be always talking about Christ." I reply, that just in proportion as we are led by an un-grieved Spirit, will all our thoughts and words be occupied about Christ. We, if we are children of God, will be occupied with Him throughout eternity; and why not now? We are as really separated from the world now, as we shall be then; but we do not realize it, because we do not walk in the Spirit.

It is quite true, that in entering into the matter of a Christian's habit of conversation, one is taking low ground; but, then, it is needful ground. It would be much happier to keep on the high ground; but, alas we fail in this; and it is a mercy that Scripture and the Spirit of God meet us in our failure. Scripture tells us we are "seated in heavenly places in Christ Jesus" (Eph. 2:6); and it tells us not "to steal." It may be said that it is low ground to talk to heavenly men about stealing; yet it is Scripture ground; and that is enough for us. The Spirit of God knew that it was not sufficient to tell us that we are seated in heaven; He also tells us how to conduct ourselves on earth; and our experience of the former will be evidenced by our exhibition of the latter. The walk here proves how I enter into my place there.

Hence, I may find in the Christian's walk a very legitimate ground on which to deal with him about the actual condition of his soul before God. If his walk is low, carnal, and worldly, it must be evident that he is not realizing his high and holy position as a member of Christ's body, and a temple of God.

Wherefore, to all who are prone to indulge in habits of trifling conversation, I would affectionately, but solemnly say, look well to the general state of your spiritual health. Bad symptoms show themselves- certain evidences of a disease working within- a disease, it may be, more or less affecting the very springs of vitality. Beware how you allow this disease to make progress. Betake yourself at once to the Physician, and partake of His precious balm. Your whole spiritual constitution may be deranged, and nothing can restore its tone, save the healing virtues of what He has to give you.

A fresh view of the excellency, preciousness, and beauty of Christ is the only thing to lift the soul up out of a low condition. All our barrenness arises from our having let Christ slip. It is not that He has let us slip. No; blessed be His name, this cannot be. But, practically, we have let Him slip, and our tone has become so low, that it is at times difficult to recognize anything of the Christian in us, but the mere name.

We have stopped short in our practical career. We have not entered, as we should, into the meaning of Christ's "cup and baptism"; we have failed in seeking fellowship with Him in His sufferings, death, and resurrection. We have sought the result of all these, as wrought out in Him; but we have not entered experimentally into them, and hence our melancholy decline, from which nothing can recover us, but getting more into the fullness of Christ.

(Concluded)

Do All to the Glory of God, Do All to the Glory of God: Part 1 (10:31)

1 Cor. 10:31

Part 11Co 10:31

It is most needful, when about to offer a word of admonition, to set forth the proper ground on which such a word can be received.

Now, as to the position of the believer, as set forth in the New Testament, it is one of the most complete- justification and acceptance "Justified from all things." "Complete in Him who is the head of all principality and power." "Accepted in the beloved."

These are some of the expressions used by the Holy Spirit to set forth the believer's position before God- a position founded on the accomplished work of Christ, and not upon anything the believer has done. God's grace has assigned it to him; the blood of Christ has fitted him to occupy it; and the operation of the Spirit has led him into the enjoyment of it. His being in it, therefore, is the fruit of the combined action of the divine three in one; nor can aught in him ever interfere with that action. The believer's justification, and acceptance, are as independent of himself, and everything in him, as is the position of the sun in the heavens. There it is; but who set it there? God. There and thus is the believer; but who set him there? God. Hence one is as independent of him as the other, for both alike are founded on what God is.

We may think it all too good to be true: and too good it would assuredly be, were its truth in any wise dependent upon us; but not when its truth depends entirely on God. It might be too good for us to get; but not too good for God to give. This makes all the difference. When God gives, He gives like Himself. The blessedness of the gift must depend upon the giver, and not upon the receiver. He gives perfect justification. He gives complete acceptance. To whom? To sinners. On what ground? On the ground of Christ's accomplished sacrifice. For what purpose? That they might be to the praise of His glory. (John 17:2; Acts 13:39; Rom. 5:6:23; Eph. 1:6; Col. 2:10; Eph. 1:12.)

Hence it is clear that no warning or exhortation can involve or interfere with the believer's position and relationship. So far from this, the very fact of our being addressed in such a way proves, in the clearest manner, God's gracious recognition of our relationship. If God gives me a command, the fact of His doing so proves that He recognizes in me a principle of life and power, whereby I can both hear and obey. He would not call upon one "dead in trespasses and sins" to do anything. His command to such an one is to repent and believe the Gospel. But when one is born again, has entered into an eternal relationship, based upon redemption, then, and not till then, is he addressed in the language of warning and exhortation; and on his due observance of such language depends much of his present blessing and usefulness.

We are prone to confound two things: namely, our eternal relationship to God as His children; and our present responsibility to Christ, as His servants and witnesses. The former is the result of the action of the Divine will and power; as we read in James,

"Of His own will begat He us by the Word of truth, that we might be a kind of first-fruits of His creatures."

The latter, on the contrary, is a thing devolving upon us daily, and calling for much holy diligence in the prayerful study of the Word, and waiting upon God.

Many of us fail in answering to our responsibility to Christ, in manifesting Him in our ways, and in our practical testimony for Him; but this, blessed be God, does not touch our eternal relationship with Him, though it may and does interfere with our enjoyment as children of God; yea, to talk of one without the other is to be "deceived by vain words."

This train of thought leads us naturally to the immediate subject of Christian intercourse- a subject of much more importance than might at first sight appear.

By Christian intercourse, I do not mean that intercourse which we have when gathered, on solemn occasions, for worship or edification. The intercourse to which I allude is of a much more familiar character; and, for that very reason, it needs much more solemn watchfulness, lest in it the enemy should betray us into anything unbecoming the elevation which ought to mark the character and path of those who profess to be members of Christ's holy body, and temples of His Holy Spirit.

It is sometimes painfully humbling to observe the character of intercourse which prevails among those whose professed principles would lead us to look for very different results. While marking the intercourse, and the conversation which frequently obtains among professing Christians of the present day, one feels disposed to ask, Is it possible that these people really believe what they profess? Do they believe that they are "dead and risen with Christ"- that their calling is a heavenly one- that they are part of Christ's body- that they are crucified with Christ- that they are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit- that they are pilgrims and strangers- that they are waiting for God's Son from heaven?

It may be, that these weighty principles are items in the creed to which they have given a nominal assent; but it is morally impossible that their hearts can be affected by them. How could a heart, really under the power of such stupendous truths, take pleasure, or even take part in vain, frivolous, empty talk- talk about people with whom they have nothing whatever to do-talk about every passing trifle of the day? Could a heart full of Christ be thus occupied? It is as impossible as that noon could intermingle with midnight. Yet, professing Christians, when they meet at the dinner-table, and at their tea-parties, are, alas! too often found thus occupied.

Nor is it only in our intercourse with our fellow-Christians that we forget ourselves, or rather forget the Lord; but also in our intercourse with the world. How often, when we meet with unconverted people, do we slip into the current of their thoughts, and find a theme in common with them! Sometimes this is mourned over, sometimes it is defended, and the defense is founded upon an erroneous view of the Apostle's expression,

"I am made all things to all."

This, surely, does not mean that he entered into the folly and nonsense of worldly men. By no means. This would be to assert too much. What then does the expression mean? It means, that Paul denied himself among all classes of men, in order that he might "by all means save some." His object was to bring sinners to Christ, and not to please himself, by entering into their habits of conversation.

(To be continued)

clickbible.org