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## “For Me to Live is Christ. (Phil. 1:21).

THESE were no empty words. The Apostle Paul boasted of nothing save the cross of Christ; there was no empty profession, no veneering Christianity with him, no sham religion, or formal Churchianity for respectability's sake.

No, with the Apostle Paul, Christ was a reality. He had seen Jesus, he had been convicted of a wrong course, the respectable religion of that day to which he had belonged had been proved wrong. The ceremonies of Judaism had become unacceptable to God; Israel, because of unbelief, had become blind. God in His mercy had laid His hand on Paul and stopped him in his zeal in persecuting the followers of Christ, and revealed to him the error of his ways. He was struck blind by the brightness of Christ, who appeared to him in the way. Paul was not disobedient to the holy vision; he was ready as ever to serve God, and, therefore, to join the persecuted followers of Christ. “Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?” What a dilemma he was in. There as a captain of a band he had been sent by the authorities to bring any who preached Christ, bound to Jerusalem, and now God had shown him that Jesus whom he persecuted was indeed the Messiah. What a position to be in! There was no vacillation with Paul, for all he needed was to see the truth and to know God's will, and his mind and heart were determined, and he at once began to witness that Jesus whom he had persecuted was indeed the Christ, through whom alone salvation was attainable.

What an example we have. He did not take long to count the cost. There could be nothing to weigh in the balance against what was right, what was truth. “Truth at any price,” should be the principle of every man and woman, irrespective of whom it would please or offend, or what it might cost. Paul was a man of such principle, and as soon as he was convinced that Jesus whom he had persecuted as an imposter was indeed the Christ, his energies were turned to support as strongly as he had previously opposed. Indeed, it would seem he felt much forgiven, and so he loved much and would seek, if possible, to make up for the damage he had done the cause.

Such a course we can understand from any honest, good human heart, but there was something deeper than this that came into Paul's life. He was at once ready to obey the will of Christ, “Lord, what will Thou have me to do?” The Lord did not explain such detail to the Apostle, for evidently it was good that he should suffer blindness for a day or two, during which time he could meditate upon the new aspect of things and count the cost, not just of standing up for what was right and true, which every one should do, but of yielding his whole heart and soul to God. The Lord used human instrumentality, a humble follower of Christ, who no doubt would have been one of the victims of Paul, had not the conversion taken place. Ananias explained the Christian way, and Paul was ready to present himself a living sacrifice to God, to take up his cross and deny himself, to give up all his hopes and prospects of position and influence in Israel and join the cause of the despised Nazarene—to be dead. with Christ.

When we read some of Paul's epistles in which he makes the Christian pathway so clear, and when we read of his life and how he demonstrated his teachings in his faithful zeal and sacrifice, so that he counted not his life dear unto him, one wonders how the millions of professing Christians can reconcile their easy going respectable religion with the contrast of his life, and his plain statements regarding the sacrifice involved in undertaking to be true followers of the Lamb. The usual thought is so different from what Jesus and Paul and the other Apostles taught; as though heaven is gained by a mere profession of Christ, or a simple act of faith, or by a confirmation service.

How necessary it is to have our pure minds stirred up along the lines of our consecration, and what it involves.

In reading the history of the ancient Grecians, one is struck with the strict and thorough vow which the young men were required to make if they would be recognised as members of the State—"I will never dishonour the profession of arms, nor save my life 'by a shameful flight. I will fight till my last breath for the religion and civil interests of the State in concert with other citizens or alone if needs be, etc.'" Here was a consecration to the State which involved one's life, if necessary, -and the.. necessity very frequently arose and the vow was wonderfully carried out.

How well the Apostle expressed the matter when he said, "For me to live is Christ He had so much entered into the life of sacrifice and zealous service that he could say that, "If in this life only we have hope, then are NYC of all men most miserable." He had sacrificed name and fame, position and, honor; and, wearied in the sufferings and experiences of foes without and false brethren within, he could hardly say whether he preferred to still live and serve the cause, or to die and rest in the sleep of death until the clay of Christ, when the dead in Christ should rise first. his determination, however, was that Christ should be magnified in his body, whether it be by life or by death. For himself he would long to be at rest, and yet for the sake a the Church- he was pleased to abide in the flesh. One thing he was decidedly desirous of, and that was for the clay of the Lord's return, When the dead in Christ would be loosened from the tomb and be forever with the Lord.

Probably a good many of God's people as they get along in life and find that the "ties that bind them to a world like this" are becoming fewer and fewer, and may be experiences are disappointing, trusted friends have failed, hopes we had have vanished, the work in hand seems different from what had been expected; and there seem, maybe, few, if any, who can sympathise with our hopes and aims. It would seem that a good many of the Lord's people reach some such condition and get almost like Elijah, who had been so valiant in God's service, and then, wearied and lonely, requested that he might die.

Paul had no flowery bed of ease to carry him to the paradise of God. His zeal brought him great hardships; shipwrecked, hungry, stoned and left for dead, beaten with forty stripes save one, and besides all his journeying and hazards,. he had experiences among false brethren, and yet he felt the responsibility of all the Churches. No wonder he felt a longing to 'be at rest and waiting for that happy awakening at the presence of the Lord.

Yet he was beautifully submissive to the Lord's will, ready still to battle on and trust and wait and work. Earthly hopes had perished, his life was hid with Christ in God. If it be the Lord's will that I still remain, then it will not be for self that I shall live, it shall be for Christ. That is, his life was entirely devoted to God in Christ's service,.

It is no use our trying to find an easier Way . the heavenly .prize: "If 'any man will follow Me, let him deny himself and' take up. his cross." Sometimes we hear of people having self-denial. weeks.: That is they will deny themselves little comforts, and. some things which are considered .necessities. Is that what the. Master meant by denying oneself no, it is much more than that. It really means to deny that one's —self-has any rights, to deny one's own existence for oneself. It mean, that we made a covenant with God to be dead, to sin, and that. henceforth our life should be lived for Him. We signified this in the water of baptism; it was a funeral of self, and a raising up to a new life, as a new creature, dead to human hopes and aims, alive as a spiritual being begotten of God's holy spirit, and so .able to grasp . heavenly truths and promises, and to rejoice in .things not seen. This is what Paul means when he says,. "I -died, yet I live, yet not-I, but Christ liveth in me." "For me to live is Christ".

Such is the Christian walk, and how far are we living up to it. How far are we allowing earthly interests of home, and .?'business, of . friends, and socialities, of pleasures and. pastimes; -16 usurp our time and attention. How far are we living up to our consecration vow to the Lord?"

We wonder if any can just feel that they. have kept their vows fully,. and are inclined to think that we all realise how much we have come short. The things of earth; especially the tender ties of human loves, of home and children and other relationships, are difficult to keep in their place. They come so tenderly, pleading for a little more attention. The loving heart longs to please, and, oh, how easy it is to forget that, "for me to live is Christ." All I have and all I am, I handed over -to the Loud, and now only hold as a stewardship, so that it is not a matter whether I like to do so and so, to please even a loved one, it is; "What would Christ do? What would God have me to do?"

Such is the Christian way. The only way to the crown is by bearing the cross. If we do not like to bear the cross, then the crown "will ne'er be won.. This position is not new to us, but we are so apt to be 'affected by the influences about us this day that we need to be continually reminded and -to watch and pray lest we enter temptation.

There is, however, a joy in faithfully hearing the cross. It is the Adversary that would try to make us think contrariwise. Let us keep the end in view. Let us ever remember the Divine purpose for us, that God has chosen us to -be members with Christ, members of His elect, and how He is overruling the circumstances of our .lives so that the way

of the cross may mould our characters and make perfect. Let us try and note any little good effect in ourselves as a result of our trials or denials or zeal, and we shall count it all joy to be dead with Christ, to bear the cross and to despise the- shame.

So we must bear the cross cheerfully. We must not try to make everybody know that we are bearing the 'cross. We can expect our brethren in Christ to appreciate it, but those of the world, good as they may be as men and women, cannot understand the position at all therefore, all they need to know, is that we have determined to be true Christians, and we are to- try and prevent our sacrifices from affecting others. A Wife may be just as good and better a wife, and a husband a better husband. Mother.. father, son or daughter, employer or -employed can all meet the reasonable responsibilities of such relationships better than ever as Christians, still doing all as for the Lord. \_ Yet there must be a definite, firm stand against anything that the Lord would not do or allow, for "for me to live is Christ."

This is to be the rule of the Christian's life, not only in contact with our fellow-members in Christ, - but in every affair of our lives in the daily contact with people of the world. We must remember that we are to do all things in the name of Christ, as stewards of God, not only in all honourable dealing, but we must manifest God's spirit, Christ's spirit, in all patience, gentleness and consideration of others' interests and feelings. It is thus that we must let our light shine that others may glorify our Father which is in heaven.

All, our words or preaching or Christian works or profession will count for nothing unless our lives accord. the most powerful witness for Christ and the truth will be our manner of life if we live the Christian life and manifest the Christian spirit.

It is surely a most important matter to continually keep in mind, for while it is so plain in the New Testament, it is easy to allow the day by day concerns to make us forget, that we are' dead and our lives are hid with Christ in God.

What a splendid motto for life. It was Paul's motto, it is our motto, if we are walking the same 'road as Paul. No earthly love can have precedence, our love to God and to Christ must be supreme. If we allow love to our dearest loved ones to intervene .we shall not gain the prize. of the high calling. We may deceive ourselves even in this respect, and fail to -see that we are allowing some earthly love to influence us and interfere with our Christian privileges of the service of .God and witnessing for- the Truth, or our assembling together not only for our own building up in faith and hope, but to encourage and help others in the way. Each member in the body of Christ must do its part to edify the body. We have such a- responsibility which we cannot shirk 'and be true to our. consecration. "For me to live is Christ."

The Christian life is a practical life: as the Christian faith is logical and reasonable. Christ left us. an example that we should walk as He walked, in His steps. "He who was rich yet for -our sakes' -became poor that we through His poverty might 'be • made rich." Is that the way that He is our example?. Is that the life we must Live as His followers. Surely it 'is, "because He bath laid down His life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren:" Only by walking the same way in the same spirit, learning the same lessons of obedience and developing the same ' loving;' zealous, perfect character can we hope to share. the same reward. So, then, as Christians, we are consecrated' to be dead with Christ.' "I died; yet I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me," "For me to live is Christ."

The question may arise, Is it not right that we love our loved ones who are members in Christ more than other members in Christ? We are reminded of our Lord's statement, "My mother and my brethren are those who do. the will of my Father in heaven." We must love as Christ loves. Does Christ hive Our son or daughter, .or father or mother, more than some other member's son, daughter, father or mother? No, we are all one in Christ Jesus. If we are dead to all human things and risen with Christ, "our lives are hid with Christ in God." If it is that "for me to live is Christ," then we will try to view matters from God's viewpoint, from- the same aspect as our Lord. Probably all know these things, only we forget, and earthly loves are apt to creep in and hinder our way. They must be kept in their proper place. Our love must be to God and Christ supremely.

Take my life and may it be Lord, acceptable to Thee ;

Take my will and make it Thine It shall be no longer mine;

Take myself—I wish to be Ever, only, all for Thee.

## Christmas Convention.

The Melbourne Friends are again looking forward to their Annual Convention Season, and take the opportunity of making this preliminary announcement, assuring the brethren from other parts of a very hearty invitation, and a season of happy fellowship.

The meetings (D.V.) will be held at Molesworth Chambers, 450 Little Collins Street, Melbourne, and a syllabus setting forth the days and order of meetings will shortly be prepared, and • further particulars announced in a later issue.

Meanwhile, we will be pleased to hear from any of the Friends who anticipate making the visit, as this will facilitate matters regarding the completion of the necessary arrangements respecting the programme, accommodation, etc.

Kindly address all communications to The Secretary, Melbourne Class, c/o Berean Biblical Institute, National Bank Chambers, Hawthorn, E.2, Melbourne.

“Love is sweet in any guise,

But its best is sacrifice;

He who, giving, does not crave Likest is to Him who gave Life itself the loved to save.

Love, that self-forgetful gives,

Sows surprise of ripened sheaves Late or soon its own receives.”

—Whittier.

PEOPLES PAPER.

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While it is our intention that these columns be used for teachings strictly in accord with the Lord's Word, we cannot accept responsibility for every expression “se& either in the correspondence or in the sermons reported.

A Cross (a) on the wrapper indicates that the Subscription to “Peoples Paper” is overdue.

## EXCERPT FROM PITTSBURGH CONVENTION.

ONE of the brethren has told of Brother Russell's implicit confidence in God's leading and that in even the little things of his service of the truth and the brethren he was looking for and taking the experiences of life, and even the thwarting of his plans as from God—His providential dealings. I, too, noted this characteristic of faith. At breakfast in the train one time travelling from New York to Pittsburgh I asked him if he thought the sermons in the newspapers were reaching and deeply interesting many people. He replied that he did not know surely, that we had to take that by faith, and added, "Faith is a good thing to have, anyway." How true that is: Faith in a miracle-working God makes miracles possible even to-day in our own lives, for He is still working miracles in those who have faith. Just think of our infinite minuteness compared with the creator of the universe, of the 125 millions of worlds scientists claim they can see or account for, and by whose infinite wisdom all these are ordered in their relation to one another. And then beyond that utter smallness we are not even perfect in our own sphere, but "born in sin and shaven in iniquity," weak and imperfect and subject to death.

Yet it is still true "according to your faith 'be it unto you.'" God is more willing to give His own infinite spirit to us than a good earthly parent is willing to give gifts to his child. What can we not do when that spirit works in us? More and more I see that the Christian life is not primarily what we can do for God, but the acceptance of what He will do for us, if we constantly ask for an increasing measure of His spirit, which will in fact make us more than conquerors. Many things are impossible with us; but "with God all things are possible," and "He will work in us to will and to do His good pleasure," if we "but 'Humble ourselves under His mighty hand'" and become as Jesus was, "a broken and emptied vessel" for Him to fill and use. How beautifully Jesus illustrates this attitude in saying "of Mine own self I can do nothing, but," as I hear I speak, "the words are not Mine but His that sent Me," and "the Father than dwelleth in Me. He death the works."

Again when the ruler came to Him and said, "Good master, what must I do to inherit eternal life?" Note well the reply, "Why callest thou Me good? There is none good but God." What a glorious thought is here suggested—that all the beautiful qualities of character which we see in Jesus, and in smaller measure, learn to depend on and to enjoy in our friends, brethren and relatives, all that makes life and its relationships interesting and desirable, in any degree, all good is from God, the "giver of every good and perfect gift," and the perfect expression of every good quality. We only need to see Him clearly to love Him with all our hearts and to love and desire His blessed and holy will in all the avenues of life. The most successful prayer I have ever offered is that I might see Him more clearly as He really is. I am continuing to make that the burden of all my petitions.

## FROM SOUTH AFRICA.

THE pamphlet has now been printed in the Zulu language. It comprises 16 pages, containing the matter which has appeared in the "People's Paper," entitled "God's great plan of Salvation and Restoration," prefaced by a chart of the Ages.

It will now be the endeavour of the friends to have these placed in the hands of those natives able to read Zulu, and especially those having some interest in Christianity. We pray and trust that it may be the means of leading some of this noble race to a clearer perception of the Divine purpose concerning mankind and a better understanding of the Bible apart from sectarian teachings. The cost has 'been great, but it is hoped that the visit here has 'been also of some benefit to the South African friends. The amount contributed by the Australian readers amounted to £61/1/6.

Travelling expenses to South Africa, local fares, postages, etc., amounted to		.. £281	0
Translating and printing 5000 copies ...	22	10	0
Leaving towards personal expenses further and travelling ...		10	6
		£611	6

As throughout the world, there are lots of religions in this dark continent, and all sections of Christendom appear to be represented. It must be confusing to the native mind, when awakened to the faith of Christ, to find so many divisions all professing to be in some way superior, and often claiming to be the only true religion. Our pamphlet, as will be seen from its English Version, makes no appeal of a sectarian nature. Its purpose is simply to state the Divine plan of salvation, as shown in God's Word, preaching Christ and Him crucified and risen, and in due time to "see of the travail of His soul (as "a ransom for all") and be satisfied. We have endeavoured to "water" the seed that others have sown, and now leave the results in the hands of Him Who can "give the increase" according to His Own will. With those who contributed to make this effort possible we rejoice that we have done what we could, and pray and hope for a blessing upon the work, together with those who will distribute the pamphlets "free and without price" to God's glory.

## PRESENT DAY CONDITIONS.

ALL nations are faced with great problems to-day. Each country has its own particular difficulties to overcome, while finance and unemployment seem to be the lot of nearly every State.

The earth itself is beautiful, and produces abundant supply, but it seems clearly impossible for man in his present fallen and selfish condition to devise a system of economy whereby every one may have the opportunity of doing his share in the productive work and receive his proper supply of the things needful so that all might enjoy the good things provided for mankind.

The troubles afflicting the so-called Christian nations to-day are mostly the natural consequences of careless and unsound government, and personal indifference to the principles of justice and economy.

The world has run wild since the war. Instead of seeking the simple life, which is the healthiest and really the most enjoyable, it has plunged into extravagant living and careless expenditure on things satisfying only to pride and selfish desire for luxuries and pleasures.

In order to satisfy these unnatural desires and ambitions, both governments and people have become involved in a system of credit, - and have thus lived beyond their means, and the only possible conclusion to such a course is now evident.

So it is that mankind, both nationally and individually, automatically bring upon themselves the necessary punishment or correction. The sooner the lessons are learnt the better. The sowing has been to the wind, and the reaping will be the whirlwind. There can be no lasting prosperity, no lasting happiness of nation, or people, apart from the principles of righteousness. There can be no successful government apart from providence. In of his own volition, however good may be his intention, cannot evolve a perfect system. Much 'better could have been done, however, in the past ten years had simple justice been the aim of legislation. On the contrary, however, most enactments of Parliaments seem influenced by partisanship, selfish interest, and absolute indifference to expense or thought as to where the money was to come from.

Just such conditions are what the Scriptures would lead us to expect. Man's period of opportunity in trying to formulate a good government in his own way and by his own power is terminating, and it will terminate in a way clearly demonstrating his utter failure, in his fallen state, and apart from Divine aid, to govern himself successfully.

The automatic consequences, in the time of trouble ensuing, will prepare mankind to look to the only source of help, "The Desire of all Nations," the promised remedy for earth's woes.

It would seem that as Pharaoh was specially raised up to the Egyptian throne, that God's power in delivering Israel from bondage in Egypt might be manifested (Romans 9:17), so to-day certain types of leaders of nations and governments are being permitted to lead the world to a breakdown of the present order of things, resulting in chaos and "trouble such as never has been nor will be."—Dan. 12:1; Matt. 24:21.

Satan has so far been the "prince of this world." His wicked spirit of selfishness, pride, ambition, lust and strife has led the world, and the time of trouble is the natural outcome. Mankind choose to serve Satan instead of God, and this is the result.

Then it will be that Christ will depose Satan and take control of the world's affairs. He will speak peace to the people, relieve the oppressed, and put righteousness to the line and justice to the plummet.

Instead of the wicked prospering as a green bay tree, as has been the case up to now, the "righteous shall flourish as the palm." Instead of every man's hand being against his fellow in selfish ambition and lust of power, Christ's sweet spirit will prevail, the spirit of love, joy and peace and goodwill towards all. Thus it is that we see "The bright shining that there is in the clouds."

## “And He Went as He Was Wont to the Mount of Olives.”

Luke 22:39.

THE mountains are Nature's monuments. Like the islands they dwell apart, and like them they give asylum from a noisy and irreverent world. In their silence many a meditative spirit has found leisure for the longest thought, and in their Patmos-like seclusion the brightest visions and largest projects have evoked; Whilst by a sort of over-mastering attraction they have usually drawn to themselves the most memorable incident which variegates our human history. And, as they are the natural haunts of the highest spirits, and the appropriate scenes of the most signal occurrences, so they are the noblest cenotaphs. Far off they arrest the eye; and though their hoary chronicle tells its legend of the past, their heaven-pointing elevations convey the spirit onward towards eternity.

We do not wonder that excited fancy has sought relics of the Ark on the top of Ararat; and in the grim solitude of Sinai, it is solemn to remember and easy to believe that the voice of God has spoken here. Elijah has made Carmel all his own, and the death of Moses must be ever Pisgah's diadem. The words of Jesus seem still to linger on the hills of Galilee, their lilies forbidding "thought for raiment," and their little birds twittering "No thought for to-morrow," whilst every grassy tuft and scented flower is breathing its own beatitude. But though heavenly wisdom spake on that mountainside, and excellent glory lighted up the top of Tabor, there is another height to which discipleship reverts with fonder memory, and which it treads with softer step—that mountain where beyond any spot in Palestine "God was manifest in flesh"—where the great Intercessor was wont to pray, where Jesus wept over Jerusalem, on whose slopes He blessed the Apostle-band, and sent His message of mercy to mankind—the mountain at whose base lay Bethany and Gethsemane—on whose gentle turf His feet last stood—the Sabbatic, pensive and expectant Mount of Olives."

## Applying the Truth to One's Self.

TO be established in the present Truth signifies that I have carefully studied and thoroughly proved it by the law and the testimony (Isa. 8:20), and that as a consequence I am\* convinced of its verity, so that my faith is steadfast and immovable.—1 Peter 5:9; 1 Cor. 15:58.

That I know in whom I have believed.—2 Tim. 1:12. 'That I have tasted and seen that the Lord is good.—Psa. 34:8.

That I have partaken of the sweets of fellowship with Him.—1 John 1:3-7\*.

That I have partaken of His spirit of meekness, faith and godliness to such an extent as to be led into a joyful realisation of the fullness of His grace as manifested in the wonderful divine "plan of the .ages."—John 14:26; 16:12-15; 1 Cor. 2:10-16.

That I have been permitted to see not only the .various features of that Plan the Worlds and Ages, Permission of Evil, Restitution, Kingdom .of God with its Human and Divine Phases, Second 'Death, Great Time of Trouble, Times and Seasons, Second Presence of Christ, Harvest and Its Work, etc., but also the necessity and reasonableness of, its various measures in -order to the full accomplishment of its glorious outcome in the fullness of the appointed times.

. This 'is what it is to be established in the present Truth. It is indeed a most blessed condition, bringing with- it such peace and joy as the world can neither give nor take away.

But though I be thus established in the present truth, there are quite a number of •

### THINGS WHICH I MUST REMEMBER.

That my election to the high position to which I am called is not yet made sure—the race for the 'prize of My high calling is still before me.

That I am yet in the enemy's country, surrounded by many subtle and powerful foes.

That if I would be successful I must fight the good fight of .faith:

That the weapons of my warfare are not carnal, but (God's .truth is) Mighty to the pulling- down of the strongholds. of

error, superstition and inbred sin. 2 'Cor. 10:4.,

That I wrestle not with flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.—Eph. 6:12. . .

. That it is in view of the warfare before me—the subtlety of my temptations, the weaknesses of the flesh—that the faithful Peter urges all -diligence in the cultivation of .the Christian graces, and a continual calling to remembrance of the precious truths I:have learned—that I may be strengthened for the conflict, and thereby able to make 'ailing and election sure.

That faith is a good thing (without which I cannot please God, I cannot be justified, I cannot maintain my justification or have: .into the' additional. favor, I cannot be an overcomer; yet faith. without. virtuous works is dead; and to hold the truth in unrighteousness is worse than never to have received it.

That the truth is given to me for its sanctifying effect upon my heart and life—it should have; free course and be glorified—its precious fruits should appear more and more from day to day.

That I must add to my faith, virtue-true excellence of character that will mark me as separated from the world and its spirit.

That in me the world should see those moral qualities which. they must approve—however they may oppose (the objects of) my faith. • That I must acid sterling honesty, truth and fair dealing. in all business. relations; moral integrity in all social relations; manifestly clean hands, and a pure heart, and a bridled tongue that 'works no ill to a neighbour.

That all of these the world has a right to expect froth me .and all others who call ,themselves Christians; and that- all of these are indispensable features of that virtuous character which must be added to my faith.

That if my hands be clean, they will not dabble in any= thing that is not virtuous—they, will have nothing to do with unrighteous schemes or projects in. business.

That if my heart be pure, it will not devise evil .things, or harbour evil thoughts, or -plot mischief.

That if my tongue 'be bridled, it will not be given to evil-speaking, but will hold its peace when it cannot speak well and wisely. -

That the promptings of-virtue go. further than merely these negative features which refuse to do anything which would work ill to a neighbour—they incite not only to passive, but also to active, goodness—in benevolent charity which seeks to alleviate suffering; to' sympathise with sorrow, to comfort those in distress, and to, elevate and bless others; to assist "all men as 'I' have opportunity."

That I must gain a knowledge of God's character in order that I may the more thoroughly imitate it, and of His truth, that I may more fully conform to its teachings. . That I must exercise temperance—or self-control—in all things, letting my moderation be known unto all men, and- taking care not to be hasty, hot tempered, rash or thoughtless; but endeavouring to be evenly 'balanced, thoughtful and considerate.

That my whole manner should be characterised by that carefulness which would indicate that I am ever mindful of the Lord's pleasure, of my responsibility to Him as His representative, and of my influence upon my fellow-men to see that it always be for good, never for evil.

That I must let "patience have her perfect work, that I may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing."

That this grace smooths the way for. every other because all must be acquired under the process of patient and continuous self-discipline; and that not a step of progress can be, gained without the exercise of this grace. . That not one of the graces more beautifully adorns the Christian character, wins the approval of the world's conscience or glorifies the God of all grace, whose truth inspires it.

. That it. is long suffering meekness earnestly striving to stem the tide of ,human imperfection- and weakness, and endeavouring with painstaking. care to regain the Divine likeness.

That it: is slow. to wrath and-plenteous in mercy.; quick to perceive the paths of truth and righteousness, and prompt to walk in them; mindful of its- own imperfections, and sympathetic with the imperfections and shortcomings of others.

That I must acid to “patience, godliness.” I must carefully study and imitate the .divine character as presented in the Word.

That I must exercise brotherly kindness towards my fellowman.

That I must add, to brotherly kindness, love.

That kindness may be manifested where but little love exists toward the subject of such kindness; but I. cannot long persevere in such acts of kindness before a sympathetic interest is awakened; and by and by that interest, continually exercised, deepens into love, and even though the subject may be unlovely in character the love of sympathy for the fallen and the degraded grows, until it. becomes tender and solicitous. and akin. to that of a parent for an erring son.-

That Peter describes a most amiable character—one which cannot be acquired in a day, nor a year, ‘but the. whole life must be devoted to it.

That day by day, if I am faithful, I will be able to realise a measure of growth in grace and development of Christian character.

That it is not enough that I know the truth—nor should I be contented to hold it in. unrighteousness. . I must see to it that the truth is having its legitimate and designed effect upon the character.

That if I receive the truth into a good and honest heart, I have the assurance of the Apostle that I shall never fall,. and that in due time I shall be received into the kingdom of- my Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

That I should see the necessity of ever keeping the instructions and ‘precepts of the Lord fresh in my mind, and of drinking deep into their inspiring spirit—although I am already established in the faith.

That to be established in the faith is one thing, and to be established in Christian character and in all the graces of the spirit is quite another.

In claiming to be a divinely recognised child of God and a follower of His dear Son, I stand before the world as God’s representative; and, presumably, all my words and actions are in harmony with His indwelling Spirit.

I stand as a guide-post in the midst of the world’s dark and uncertain way; and if I am not true to my profession, I am a deceitful sign-board, causing the inquirer to lose the right way and to stumble into many a snare. Therefore, to take the name of God, claiming to -be His son, a Christian, a follower of Christ, without a fixed determination, and careful effort to fairly represent Him, is a sin against God of which I will not be held guiltless!

I realise that to undertake the Christian life is to engage in, a great warfare against iniquity; for, though the grace of God abounds to me through Christ to such an extent that my imperfections and short-comings are not imputed to. me, but robed in Christ’s imputed righteousness I am reckoned holy and acceptable to God, I am not, says the Apostle (Rom. 6.:1, 2) to continue in sin that grace may abound; for by my covenant with God I have declared myself dead to sin, and that I have no longer any desire to live therein. But having made such a covenant with God, and having. taken upon myself His holy name, if I continue in sin, or cease to strive against sin, I am proving false to my profession (Rom. 6.:1, 2, 11, 12). This means a great deal. It means a constant warfare against the-easily besetting-sins of my old nature; and-the struggle will be long and constant until the power of sin is broken; and then only constant vigilance will keep it clown.

If I ‘be true .to my. profession, I will daily strive to realise an increasing mastery over sin in myself, and will be able from time to time to-distinguish some degree of advancement in this direction. I will grow more. like Christ—more self-possessed, more meek and gentle, more disciplined and refined, more temperate in all things, and more fully possessed of the mind that was in Christ Jesus. My old temper and unlovely disposition will disappear, and my new mind will assert its • presence and power. And thus -the silent example of- a holy life will reflect honour upon that holy name which it is my privilege to ‘bear and to represent ‘before the world, as a living epistle, known and read’ of all men with whom I come in contact. -I -realise that the formation of such 4- noble- and pure character is the legitimate result of the reception Of truth into a good and honest heart. ‘ Or; rather; such the’ transforming power of

divine truth upon the whole character, when it is heartily received and fully submitted to. “Sanctify them through thy truth: thy Word is truth,” was the Lord’s petition on the Church’s behalf; and may I not fall into the error of some, of presuming that the sanctifying work can go on better without the truth than with it? -2 Pet. 1:4; I John 3:3; John 15:3; 17:17; Eph. 5:26; Rom. 12:2; 2 Cor. 3:18; 7:1; Psan. 19::7-14 ;, 1 Tim. 4:16. -

- I need the instruction and guidance and inspiration of the truth for holy living, and our Lord’s words imply, that all the truth that is necessary to this end is in the Word of God, and that, consequently, I am not to look for any further revelations through visions or dreams or imaginations of myself or others. The Word of God, -says the Apostle (2 Tim. 3:16, 17), is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness (Heb. 4:10), that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works. It reveals to me the spirit, mind or disposition of God, and exhorts me to let the same mind dwell richly in me; and in conjunction with the study of the mind of God as revealed in His Word and communion with him in prayer, I receive the blessed influences of His spirit, which brings me more and more into conformity ‘with His perfect will. I realise that to live a holy life:is not to do some great and wonderful things; it is to live from day to day a life of quiet unostentatious conformity to the will of God—of secret communion with Him •in my closet, devotions, and daily work, and of zealous activity to the extent’ of my ability and opportunity in His service. I have named the name of Christ (2 Tim. 2:19), it is my determination—God helping me—to depart (more and more) from iniquity and apply my heart unto instruction, confident that I shall be led of God into green pastures and beside still waters: my table will be richly and bountifully spread, and my cup of blessing and joy and gladness will overflow; while the wrath of God will in due time be revealed against all who take His hallowed name in vain, however they may band themselves together, and however loudly they may proclaim themselves heaven’s appointed messengers.

## DAVID’S KINDNESS.

2 Sam. 9:1-13.

“Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love.”—Rom. 12:10.

IN considering the incident of this lesson we are reminded of the words of the Apostle James (5:10), “Take, my brethren, the prophets who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example.” What examples they present—of faith, humility, meekness, obedience, patience, endurance, brotherly kindness, love. We call to mind Moses’ devotion to God and His cause, his tireless zeal and loving ministry through long years of extreme trial; we mark also the obedient faith of Abraham, of Jacob, of Samuel, of David, and of all the noble list of ancient worthies who fought the good fight of faith with unabated energy to the end of their course.. While we consider these worthy examples of loyalty and faithfulness to God and to His truth and righteousness, • we remember that these characters were developed under only the moonlight of the law-dispensation; and in this view of the matter, reason suggests what the Apostle Peter also calls attention to: “What manner of person ought we to be in all holy conversation and godliness?” (2 Pet. 3:11)—we who are the recipients of the much more abundant grace of this gospel dispensation.

The kindness of David, to which attention is directed in this lesson, is another mark of noble character. David was now well established and prosperous in his kingdom. The way to it since his anointing had been a rough and stormy one; and in one of the seasons of severest trial, the remarkable friendship between himself and Jonathan, Saul’s son, was thoroughly proved and strongly cemented.

And while Jonathan freely submitted to the will of God which intercepted his own succession to the throne of Israel and gave it to David, he desired and received of David the assurance that when he should be thus established in his kingdom he should always show kindness to him and his posterity. See 1 Sam. 20:14, 17.

When the days of his prosperity came at length, years after Jonathan had gone to his rest, David, remembering his covenant, began to inquire if there were yet any left of the House of Saul to whom he might show the kindness of God. He found but one, the only surviving son of his friend Jonathan, and upon him he lavished the affection and kindness which it would have been his pleasure to bestow upon Jonathan himself, had he survived. Gratefully he remembered the love of his friend, and lovingly he endeavoured to requite it to the extent of his ability.

There is really no more worthy trait to adorn a righteous character than that of gratitude. It is gratitude that returns to God that filial affection which is due from the creature to the Creator. It is gratitude that encourages and sweetens the cup of loyal devotion between friend and friend. It is always the due reward of loving service, and especially of self-sacrificing service, though it is not always the reward rendered. The spirit of the world is, alas! so far removed from this that even loving and self-sacrificing service is more frequently rewarded With cold, thankless indifference, and not seldom with reproachfulness or persecution. Those, therefore, who will live godly and cultivate the graces of a godly character must not be disappointed in failing of their reward here, and in meeting the rebuffs that are sure to

come to them in the line of duty. Let them duly appreciate their opportunity of proving their devotion to righteousness and truth by taking patiently and bearing with humble fortitude whatever of reproach or ingratitude may be the present reward, content to await God's time and God's way for giving to righteousness its due reward. Such overcomers who count not their lives dear unto them are of the David (beloved) class.

The text of this lesson needs no comment except the exhortation that we should each more and more endeavour to put it in practice, and to see that with each passing year we are able to note some degree of advancement in this element of godlikeness, not overlooking that sure proof of brotherly love mentioned in the last clause—"in honour preferring one another," remembering also the similar counsel of the same Apostle on another occasion, "In lowliness of mind, let each esteem others better than themselves" ( Phil. 2:3), If we merely say that we love one another and yet pursue a steady course of self-seeking, wherein is the love manifest? Let us not love in word only, but in deed and in truth.-1 John 3:18.

When there is some secret foe which claims you for a prey, Fierce becomes its dread approach, it fills you with dismay

Just wing your flight to Jesus, for with Him alone is rest, He'll show the way to conquer, and grant you your request.

—Psalm 19:12-14; Matt. 11:28.30.