

THE RACE COURSE OF THE
SONS OF GOD
SERMONS ON PHILIPPIANS
BY A. S. COPLEY

"Know ye not, that they who run in a race, all run; but one winneth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain"-- I Cor. 9:24.

Foreword

With delight we come to our friends with the third edition of this book of Philippians. The notes on the other epistles of Paul have proved to be of great profit to many of God's people. Our books on the epistles are not complete without this book. We are sure that the readers will get great gain from these lessons. They have been a blessing to our congregation and to many hundreds of others. Following the titles of the Apostle's other letters, we entitle this one, The Race Course of the Sons of God. We trust that these messages will constrain others to get on the race track, and the present racers to run faster.

INTRODUCTORY

MACEDONIA WAS ONE OF THE SOUTHERN-MOST COUNTRIES OF EUROPE. ACHAIA (GREECE) JOINED IT ON THE SOUTH. It was east of Italy and west of Asia Minor. Two small seas, like two up-stretched arms, reach up from the Mediterranean Sea on each side of the country. It is now known as Turkey in Europe. Hence, it lay several hundred miles northwest from Palestine.

Philippi was the chief city of Macedonia. Paul was very definitely and powerfully led to that country. He wanted to stay in Asia; but God wanted him in Europe also. As his custom was, he went directly to the center and worked out from there. As we learn from Acts 16, he founded the Church in Philippi. He experienced his first imprisonment there, where also God wrought a great miracle to deliver him and Silas. His obedience in going to that city affords some valuable lessons for us. God sees the end from the beginning. He knows what lies ahead of our acts of yieldedness to Him. Therefore, we should not question when the Lord orders our steps in a certain direction. To obey will mean everything for good to us and to others; for Jehovah is back of us. "The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord, and he delighteth in his way."

The word Philippi means "lover of the horse." Hence, the name of that city very fittingly indicates the gist of this epistle. It speaks of the Christian race and race-course. Let us look upon this Letter as a Handbag of four apartments, or pockets, full of invaluable instructions for runners on this race-course.

Four Pleasing Pockets

Christ, the Life of the Racers -- Pocket 1.

Christ, the Pattern for the Racers -- Pocket 2.

Christ, the Prize for the Racers -- Pocket 3.

Christ, the Ample Strength for the Racers -- Pocket 4.

Chapter One

The first chapter falls nicely into seven subdivisions or seven smaller pockets in the one. Let us peer into these in detail.

1. Paul's salutation -Vs. 1, 2. Notice how differently the Apostle opens this epistle from his other epistles. "Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called an apostle," are the first words to the Church at Rome. In this letter, he terms himself "a servant of Jesus Christ," omitting the title of apostle; because he is to be viewed here chiefly as an example. In his Epistles to the Corinthian Church, he says, "Called an apostle of Jesus Christ"; but to the Churches at Ephesus and Colosse, he says boldly, "Paul an apostle of Jesus Christ." His relation to Christ is that of "bond-servant;" but his relation to the people is that of "Apostle," both of which facts stand at the very portals of his great, comprehensive, basic epistle to the Romans. He who announced himself "an Apostle," with emphatic boldness in his last letters, stands before us here as a "servant of Christ." This letter is more weighty because the chiefest Apostle, as imitating Jesus Christ, is our example in running the Christian race. His spirit and manner of running comfort and encourage us to press on. As the Apostle, he writes; as a servant, he runs. Let us heed his instructions; let us follow his example; let us lay hold of Christ in the four-fold manner herein outlined.

Timothy is associated with Paul in writing this Letter, because he was with him in founding the Assembly at Philippi. He was saved on Paul's first missionary tour, and on the second, he joined him at Derbe. Timothy is one of the three imitators of Christ mentioned in this Letter. Who is the

third? - Chap. 2:25.

"Bishops and deacons" is a couplet peculiar to this Epistle. The word bishop occurs six times in the New Testament. Its meaning and use are similar to those of elder, which occurs many times. The chief thought of bishop is that of caretaker or overseer. Elders are overseers and some are teachers of the Word also. A deacon is any one who serves others, a messenger, a waiter. (Consult our tract, "Phoebe's Sphere," for light on deacons.) Some people would say, "The Church at Philippi was organized." No, it was not organized; for that would give it legal authority, or power thru the court of the land. God's Church, or Christ's Body, is a spiritual company, which does not admit of such a relationship. That Church was set in order scripturally for spiritual purposes. That was all, and that is all any Body of saints should be; but they should be all that. Chapter 3:20, "Our citizenship (politeums, Gr.), or commonwealth, exists (huparchei, Gr.) in heaven," is positive proof against the Church being organized.

There is a suggestion here that not everybody will appreciate this letter. Only Philippian saints will appreciate it; that is, only people who love the Christian race-track; only those who are willing to wear the racer's harness and be hitched to the racer's sulky and made to run at the racer's speed and eat the racer's fare, will enjoy this epistle. Therefore, it is addressed to the saints at Philippi, or lovers of the race. If there is anyone here that is not running this race, I trust that you will slip on the harness and leap into the ring today.

"Grace is unto you, and peace from God our Father and from our Lord Jesus Anointed." This is Paul's invariable form of greeting in all his epistles, except to the Hebrews. All God's grace flows thru Jesus Christ, and is con-centered on the Church of this dispensation. Jews can enjoy this fulness of grace today only by coming to God thru His Son and admitting that the Gentiles are fellowheirs with them of the gospel. So much for the salutation.

2. Paul's thanksgiving -Vs. 3-7. "I thank my God upon every remembrance of You." It is good to learn God so that we can say truly, "My God," I am acquainted with "My God," tho I do not know other gods. I give my God all the glory for what has been done in me, and thru me to the Philippian saints, exclaimed the Apostle. That was such a dearly beloved assembly to Paul. They caused him no pain. He prayed for them "all," and "with joy."

Yes, Paul prayed for them. If they were such a good assembly, so blameless and wonderful, why did he pray for them? Why did he not pray rather for the poor, wretched and blind? Paul prayed for all the saints, but he offered special petitions for those who were whole-hearted for God. You will find special prayers in his epistles that we are exhorted to offer up in behalf of particular saints for special purposes. They are dearer to his heart than others. We must remember that there is a love of pity for sinners; but far beyond that is a love of fellowship between saints. Then there is a love of supreme interest for supreme saints, and we cannot help that it is that way. Nor does that make us indifferent to the needs of others, or the salvation of the lost. It is just that way with the Lord Jesus Christ. While He loves all His followers, yet certainly He has a bridegroom love for those who shall constitute the Bride of the Lamb. Them He calls, "My darling" - Psa. 22:20 and 35:17. Every true bridegroom loves his own wife as he cannot love other women, be they ever so noble and good.

"Making request with Joy." Here we learn how to pray. Joy bells jingle at the very threshold of this epistle. We read of joy and rejoice fourteen times thru-out its pages. Tho the Apostle is in prison, yet when he speaks about supplicating the throne of grace, he does not wear a long face and impress us as having a heavy heart; but he shows a shining face, a buoyant spirit and a melodious voice. Joy stretches forth two arms -- one of faith toward God, the other of hope toward his spiritual children. He was confident that what God had begun in them, He would complete to the end. See verse 6.

But why did Paul pray with joy for the Philippian saints? "For (that is, on account of, epi, Gr.) their fellowship in the gospel." How was that fellowship expressed? By their liberality. In 2 Cor. 8 and 9, his symposium of their unspeakable liberality, we read that they were willing to give beyond their ability. They gave freely out of painful poverty with abounding joy, even "praying him with much entreaty to receive" their offerings. These saints were second to none in the grace of giving. In Chap. 4, he declares to them, saying, "When I departed from Macedonia, no church communicated with me concerning giving and receiving, but ye only." On the basis of that fact, he made to them the rare promise "My God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus" -- Chap. 4:19. People who give of their substance to spread the gospel have a mighty leverage on God, even Phil. 4:19. May we indeed be imitators of those

Macedonian saints. It will accrue to us present and eternal revenue.

He prayed for them because of the future prospects concerning them, as the following verse declares - "Being confident of this very thing, that He who hath begun a good work in you will perform (complete) it until the day of Jesus Christ." This verse has been a great comfort to me for many years. Like many other scripture citations, this one has stood out in bold relief when some people opposed the doctrine of "eternal life" (frequently called, "eternal security"). However, this verse does not refer primarily to finishing our security, but our race. Only those who now possess "eternal life" can enter the race. We are now running for the Prize. God, who put us on the race track, will enable us to "so run that we may obtain" the Prize. We receive life by believing on the Savior. We gain the Prize by running like Paul the racer. We learn to run by running. We mount over obstacles, or push them aside. Our speed accelerates. We run more easily and gracefully. We run not in vain, but with increasing assurance of being first at the goal.

"Until the day of Jesus Anointed." Yes our racing is in view of the "day of Christ." We are no longer thinking simply of getting to heaven when we die, but of seeing Jesus and of being like Him and of enjoying Him to the uttermost. Heaven is our home; but Christ is our "exceeding great reward." It is not stated that the Apostle knew how far distant was the day of Christ; for distance is not reckoned in the purposes of God for His own. The vital question is, What has God planned for us? Before this Epistle is finished, we shall know the answer, one of superlative interest and glory. This verse also indicates that the Philippian believers were not limited to the beginning of the age. They did not all live in Paul's time. They were supposed to be living and running thruout this entire Church period. That is why we may enjoy this Epistle today. It was written to us, if we will receive it. We have as much right on this Christian race-track as the Apostle Paul. Glory to God!

When Satan comes at us with his taunts, we can fling this verse into his fiendish face. God began a good work in me. He will also complete it. Here it is written, I can put my finger on the very verse, and elsewhere it is written, "God is no respecter of persons." I have a right to wax bold in faith against the foe. "Resist the devil" by God's word, and "he will flee from you."

"Even as it is meet for me to think this of you all, because ye have me in your heart, inasmuch as both in my bonds and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel, ye are partakers with me of my grace" - V. 7. The second clause of this verse may be read either way; but the sense requires the marginal reading; for it was already evident that he had them on his heart. He names three proofs that they had him in their hearts - bonds, defense, and confirmation, they shared with him. Paul was imprisoned in Rome, and Timothy was there with him. Paul was under sentence and waiting for the decision of the court. That Church shared his trial. In spirit, they were "in bonds" with him. They sent him financial aid thru Epaphroditus. He required special grace to endure imprisonment, and they needed the same special grace to suffer with him. They became fellow-partakers of prison grace. They had fellowship in suffering with Paul and Timothy. The second proof of having him on their hearts was their "defense of the Gospel." They did not let down because their shepherd and apostle was incarcerated. They faithfully defended his glad tidings of grace. They stood for it. They fought for it. They witnessed to it privately and publicly. The meeting in Philippi went on, "going and growing," in spite of the Apostle's absence. Those bishops and deacons and the whole assembly stood fast for the truth. What a clear evidence that they took in with all the heart the full gospel of grace. No wonder that they were termed, Philippians, "lovers of the horse," or racer. They became partakers of Paul's defending grace. Thirdly, they "confirmed" the gospel. That is, they showed forth the practical power of the gospel in their daily lives. If the word of grace is not practical, there is not much to it. Our labor is in vain - I Thess. 3:5. True saints not only witness to the message of grace, but live in the victory it promises. A victorious life here is the sparkling adornment of the gospel. It is the abiding proof of the reality of the gospel. Thus those Philippian believers became fellow-partakers with Paul in confirmation grace.

I want you to see this, my friends, "Ye all are fellow-partakers of my grace," remarks the Apostle. God's favor was bestowed upon Paul. By their fellowshiping his sufferings, his bondage, his persecutions and limitations; they came into the same favor with God which he enjoyed. They became joint-sharers with him of divine grace. Is that not wonderful? Beloved, do you see it? Because they supplied his needs in prison; because they entered deeply and practically into his bondage; because they defended the glorious gospel of grace with their testimony and teaching and confirmed it by a walk and work of victory; God counted them in Paul's rank, as on the same

spiritual plane, as running the race side by side with him, and therefore sure to win the same glorious Prize at the end. Oh, dear saints, God's people generally do not understand their superlative privileges in Christ. They do not see the bottomless, topless, boundless riches we have in Him. Hence, there are so many namby pamby, sickly, pusillanimous believers in the Church. Oh, thank God! we are actually co-sharers with "the chiefest Apostle" in the favor of God, if we actually appropriate this gospel of grace and glory.

Let us defend "our gospel" with all the heart and soul. Let us witness to it, teach and preach it, without fear or favor from men. Let us prove to the uttermost the unstinted fulness and unlimited power of the gospel by taking Christ as our victory always. Let us take Him for our Strength, for our Wisdom, for our Healer, and Health. Let us take Him definitely, persistently, and constantly as our Victor over the devil and the flesh, and especially over the sluggishness and lightness of half-hearted believers. Thus God's supreme favor will rest upon us and we will make a bee-line to glory by the enabling of the mighty grace which Paul and Timothy enjoyed.

3. Paul's supplication -Vs, 8 to 11. "For God is my record, how greatly I long after you all in the bowels of Jesus Christ; and this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and all discernment." In the original, the language is very forceful -- "my witness is God." Oh, what a yearning the apostle had for that congregation. He longed after them because of the deep fellowship and interest they showed toward him. And he declares that God is his witness to the depth of that longing. He yearned to see them again. The Revised Version reads thus - "I long after you all in the tender mercies of Christ Jesus." It seems to me, that weakens Paul's meaning. It sounds pretty; but it does not express it. Joseph's conduct on meeting his brethren is a fine sidelight here. He wanted to show his feelings toward Benjamin, but he could not do so then. The record says, "His bowels yearned over his brother Benjamin." His whole being heaved with loving emotion and devotion toward his brother. That is the meaning here. That is the way Paul felt toward his Philippian brethren. "Tender mercies" fails to convey the depth of his love for them. Observe the exact language - "in the bowels of Jesus Christ." It was not his own yearning, but the very Christ in him, that longed to meet them face to face again, that by his ministry of the word they might abound in the things of God. Hence, we read further, "And this I pray"; and he prayed with his whole, deep, Christ-filled being. His burning heart travailed with groanings and sighs for them, tho mingled with dancing joys. The Apostle knew how to travail in spiritual pain in behalf of other saints. Reader, have you learned that lost art? Hear him. "And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment" (or intelligence). What a prayer! You would have thought that Church had reached the top notch. Nothing is recorded against it. Instead, their faith and love and hope are highly commended. Yet he prayed that their love might abound. That word abound literally means to outnumber, be over and above, pass all around and go beyond all others. Can you comprehend such an increase of anything? Remember that Paul prayed thus for Christian racers. Therefore, we learn here what it means to be a scriptural runner on the spiritual race-track.

That is not a fanatical, or fanciful sentiment; but actual, practical love. Hence, he fences it with "knowledge and all intelligence." The famous D. L. Moody filled his love-pocket by searching the word on the theme of love. His soul became aflame with the love of Christ, and he was enabled to proclaim with exceptional power the word of grace, with the intelligence of divine simplicity. Let us profit by the Apostle's petition. It was offered in our behalf, that we may thus abound in this basic fruit of the Spirit. For knowledge to increase without a corresponding increase of love is an unhealthy condition; hence, he desires their love to abound. Real love toward God calls for a knowledge of His word. Then also that love will flow out toward men thru the knowledge thus obtained. Intelligent proclamation is the result of loving information.

There is a purpose in that abounding love, a three-fold purpose - "That ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ." You see, not everything is excellent. Some things are good; some things are better, and some things are the best. On the other hand, some things are bad. If we are going to win the Prize, we must differentiate between the bad and the good, and we must see the difference between the good, the better, and the best. A love-abounding understanding of God's precious word is the only safe road to differentiation. Anything less than the very best will never satisfy fully. Poor apples are apples, but they do not satisfy. Futhermore, poor food induces a viciated appetite. Let us have the best.

The Apostle assigns a reason for differentiating - "that ye may be sincere and without offence."

How much insincerity there is today, even among God's people; religious shallowness and make-believe abound. Ignorance of the Word stunts the new life, and the religious self-life, which cannot be sincere, predominates. The word "sincere" is made up of two Greek words, "eile" the sun's heat and "krino," to examine or test. Therefore, sincere ones are those who have been tested under the hot rays of the "Sun of righteousness," who is walking with scrutinizing eyes amidst the churches-Rev. 1:14 and 2:1. He observes whether we search, believe and enjoy the Word with a heart of love for Himself, or whether we read it for our own selfish advantage, as many certainly do. True saints say what they mean and mean what they say. They are sincere. They purpose to know and do God's will and do what they purpose, Christ being their enabling. Such saints are "without offence." They walk in the light, in the plain path of faith and obedience; hence, they do not kick the toe and stumble, which offence means. Nothing hinders them; nothing daunts them; nothing retards their running; nothing turns them aside from the race-track. "Great peace have they that love thy law (will), and nothing shall offend them (they shall have no stumbling block)"-Psa. 119:165. If we yield to hurts and flings, taunts and criticisms, and do not get quick victory over them, but pout and stay away from the meeting where the Lord has put us; it is evident that we have not grown much. We need to fill up on God's dear Word till our hearts burn with abounding love.

How long may this praiseworthy state continue? "Unto the day of Christ." Is that possible? Yes, it is not only possible; but it is incumbent in order to win the race. A victorious career lies ahead of all who avail themselves of the equipment provided for it. The route is pointed out. The signposts are plain. The rules of racing are Clear and explicit. The goal and the Prize are held in sight to faith's eyes. The wisdom and strength are furnished freely and abundantly to all who apply, so that finally we may exclaim with Brother Paul, "I have fought a good fight; I have finished my course; I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give me at that day."

Behold the present accompaniments of such racing - "Being filled with the fruits of righteousness which are thru Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God." Saints who run effectually for the Prize at the end of the race, not only win that Prize then, but they are of superlative value to God here and now while they are running. That Philippian Church was not only filled initially with the Spirit, but also with the fruits that result from walking in the Spirit and keeping filled practically with the Spirit. "The fruit of the Spirit, love, joy, peace. etc." (Gal. 5:22), should not be confounded with "the fruits of righteousness" mentioned here. The former expresses what a real Spirit-filled believer is; this expresses what he actually does. Of course they cannot well be separated.

Those saints not only were good, but they did good. They built up one another in Christ. They witnessed of the living Savior to a dying world. They gave of their meager substance to enrich others in divine things. It is always so with fulfilled believers. They live for the profit of others. Such a life glorifies God. It proves the reality and power of Christ's redemption and of the Holy Spirit's working in the lives of men. God is seen in them, delivering the wicked from the power of Satan and in healing sick and maimed bodies. The Christ life is displayed thru those who appropriate Him. Real saints live "unto the glory and praise of God." What a wonderful place we have! We are God's representatives on earth. With our voices we can minister comfort and instruction to our fellows. With our voices we can call down divine blessing upon the people. Indeed we are here as God. Our attitude to men is His attitude. When we offer them salvation or healing or help of any sort, God grants it to them; for we are here in His stead. Thus we are filled daily with the fruits of righteousness and bring glory to His name.

4. Paul's consolation - Vs. 12 to 19. The Apostle was in prison in Rome when he wrote this epistle. Therefore, he speaks of his "bonds in Christ." Surely he needed consolation; but he is the one who gives to us the words of consolation. He shows that his imprisonment had "fallen out unto the furtherance of the gospel." First, his "bonds in Christ are manifest in all the palace and in all other places." It was evident that Paul was in prison for Jesus' sake. The original wording is clearer. "So that my bonds appear in the Anointed One to have become before all in the judgment hall and to all others." Paul manifested Christ. He was the "prisoner of Jesus Christ" (Eph. 3:2) rather than of Rome. Everywhere, the people saw God's Anointed One in the Apostle, whose very presence was the manifestation of the gospel of divine grace. The prophecy of Acts 9:15 was there fulfilled. Wherever he went, he lived Christ and proclaimed Christ; for Christ was his life. Hence, he was comforted in spite of his bonds.

Second, "many of the brethren in the Lord, waxing confident by my bonds, are much more bold to

speaking the word without fear." They who were free, hearing of the Apostle's courage and undaunted faithfulness to the truth, and the power it was displaying in Rome, were emboldened to proclaim the glad tidings. Two classes, prompted by two widely diverging motives, were thus encouraged by his imprisonment. "Some indeed preach Christ of envy and strife. These preach Christ of contention, not purely, thinking to super-add affliction to my bonds." Such a motive for preaching is unthinkable. Such a spirit in a minister of the gospel is unbelievable. The writer has been convinced by painful experiences with selfish men that Paul has many envious rivals today. They are against his sons as they were against him. They envy our secret power. For example, one of them said, "What will that old fogey do?" That "old fogey" went on in the strength of Christ, grew and prevailed. The fellow who opposed him went into defeat and oblivion. "Be not deceived; God is not mocked." Yes, the envious announce great meetings, advertise famous speakers with catchy titles, employ trained orchestras, draw large crowds, report fabulous success, and thus make Paul's followers feel bad because they are not free to preach as some do. But we know that they compromise and do not proclaim all the truth. That makes us sad. Any real success they may have, any giving out of the true gospel does not grieve Paul's sons. They are never envious. If "Christ is preached (note exactly his words), I therein do rejoice; yea, and I will rejoice," said Paul.

And yet, honest hearts will exclaim, Can a saved man preach out of envy and strife, and cause contention? Yes, beloved, he can. The old self (not Satan) in a believer is the worst old man under the sun. When saints do not learn the scriptural way of victory over the self-life, if they do not yield to discouragement, they become unbearable and self-assertive. Then especially if they have an official place, they exert their supposed authority, strut out with pomp and pride, and make a display of their natural gifts and power. It is the nature of the old man to hold his own and go one better than his fellow. They think to do God's will in their carnal methods.

On the other hand, thank God, there are some who preach Christ "of good will, of love." Of these, we like to think and speak. They love God with all the heart. They love the truth fervently. It is their daily fare. They "die daily" for it. Their lives are poured out continually for the gospel, tho they may not be so well known, and of course are not popular. They love the Apostle Paul and his great, super-excellent gospel of grace and glory. They are emboldened to proclaim Christ in all His fulness, "knowing (he says) that I am set for the defence of the gospel." God "set" him. Some men set themselves to preach. Some are set by other men. God placed Paul. Whether in Jerusalem, in Philippi, or in Rome; whether in liberty or in bonds, he held that he was "set" by the Lord. Self-sent and self-set preachers adjust their message to suit the tastes of the people. We must get the crowd, they say. Paul cried out, "I am set for the DEFENCE of the gospel." He had no nice religious theory to defend, but the gospel. By the "gospel," he meant "all the counsel of God." He proclaimed Christ "in truth." God forbid that I should be any other kind of preacher. God forbid that any of our young people who expect to be in the work should do otherwise than "preach Christ," the whole Christ, the whole gospel, without compromise, "out of good will, of love, purely" - that is, for the glory of God. God forbid that any of us should utter one word, or make one move out of strife, or contention, or intrigue, or envy. Why should we? We have THE Gospel of "the unsearchable riches of Christ" as our message. We have the infinite power of Jehovah as our backing and enabling to declare it. We have inexpressible consolation here and now and an unbounded reward in the ages to come. What incentives to believe and publish the gospel. What further motives could we want? And with our beloved Apostle, we rejoice if Christ is preached, no matter what the motive; for no one "can do anything against the truth but for the truth" - 2 Cor. 13:8.

Paul's final fact of consolation is, "I know that this shall turn to my salvation thru your prayer and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ." The Apostle was in prison awaiting trial before the Romans here, he has no reference to the salvation man tribunal. By the word, "salvation," of the soul. He had no fear that he might be lost. Nay, but he hoped to be pronounced innocent of the charges that caused his imprisonment, and be set free. All the facts just noted before would be used of the Lord to deliver him. But he solicited the leverage of the prayers of the saints that the chain-breaking "Spirit of Jesus Christ" might be supplied to that end. He had no faith in any legal arguments that an attorney might use. Christ was his Attorney. He must plead his cause. If he was there as "a prisoner of Jesus Christ" (Eph. 3:1), He must loose him. Thank God for such surrendered faith.

5. Paul's expectation - Vs. 20-26. "According to my earnest expectation and hope, that in nothing

I shall be ashamed; but that with all boldness as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether by life or by death." Those words, "earnest expectation," mean earnest watching with outstretched head. That was the way Paul looked for things from his God. He counted that all his ministry was going to turn out for his deliverance from the Roman prison. But if he should not be delivered, he would not be defeated; he would have no cause to be ashamed. If he lived, he lived unto the Lord; and he lived such an earnest, loyal, spiritual life while in prison, that Christ was magnified thru him. "With all boldness as always," he proclaimed Christ. He did not let down in his ardor. He was just as bold in prison as out of prison. What an example for ministers and all saints today! Hence, if the government would not release him, but execute him, he still refused defeat. If he died, he died unto the Lord. "Whether we live therefore or die, we are the Lord's" - Rom. 14:8.

Fellow Christian, is that the way you are living? Is it all the same to you and to the Lord whether you live or die, only so that you are in God's perfect will? That is the attitude to hold in order to be delivered from any trouble. That is the quickest way to obtain healing from the Lord. A sister thought one night that she was dying. In her agony, she turned and called to her husband to pray for her. He awoke sufficiently to quote Romans 14:8 - "If we die, we die unto the Lord, etc." - and fell fast asleep again. His apparent indifference and the power of the word he quoted filled her with laughter, and in a few moments she was wonderfully healed. The center of God's will is the surest way to keep well. "I pray above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health even as thy soul prospereth" - II John 2. That is the way to live, have such simple faith in Jesus Christ and be swung out so from everything

and everybody that we will magnify Christ wherever we are and whatever may befall us. That is success. Thank God, that was not possible for Paul only, but for us also, every one of us. We may be so out and out for God and all His truth, and be so rooted and grounded in His love, that like Paul, we will steadfastly defend the Gospel and thus magnify Christ at all times. If we purpose in our hearts to do the perfect will of God, the Holy Spirit will see to it that we learn that will and enable us to do it.

"For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." This verse connects immediately with the preceding one, and continues to emphasize Paul's purpose to magnify Christ. He means to say, If I live, it is gain for Christ; if I die, it is gain for me. If I live, I magnify Christ, because He is my life and He operates in me and thru me. My living here is Christ living here; for I am here on His behalf. My controlling passion is to magnify my Lord. To die is my gain, because I will be delivered from my toils and troubles and will be with my Lord. The next three verses are an expansion of this thought. Study the translation we here give of verses 22 to 24 - "But if to live in flesh, this (magnifying Christ) is fruit of labor to me; yet what I shall choose I know not; for I am constrained by two (desires), having the desire for to depart and to be with Christ (which is) very much better (for me), and (a desire) to remain in the flesh (which is) more needful for you." I thank the Lord for this simple rendering of these verses.

Let us examine it a little closer. First, hold in mind that the Apostle's supreme desire was to "magnify Christ, whether thru life or thru death." However, if he consulted his own personal interests, his chief desire was to depart and be with Christ, out of trouble and sorrow, and up into glory. But the needs of the saints aroused another desire, viz., to remain here. Two strong desires locked horns in his bosom. He was constrained; he was in a strait; he was hard pressed. Shall I go? methinks he cried in his private prayer meeting, or shall I stay? What settled the question? Which desire conquered, and how? Verse 25 gives the answer. "And having been persuaded of this, viz. that to remain is better for the saints, I know that I shall continue with you all for your advancement and joy of the faith."

Oh, think of a heart like that. How unselfish. Beloveds, do you see that he had the privilege to choose to go or stay? He might have folded his hands and said, "Here I am in prison, helpless and little hope of being set free. I am bitterly persecuted. The more abundantly I love, the less I be loved - II Cor. 2:15. I will just go on and be with Jesus. He says that I can come to Him if I wish to do so." But no; that father heart yielded to the needs of the Church. He chose to abide, and doubtless he was released from that imprisonment.

Friends, this is a profound lesson to me. We too can have the same unselfish spirit of wanting to live only for the highest welfare of the people and the glory of God. We too may have one supreme purpose to magnify Christ. It need not be a question of living or dying, but of magnifying our Lord. When we know that we can live longer and magnify Him more, which will result in

greater gain to ourselves and to others, we certainly should seize upon the opportunity to glorify our Lord. We ought to lay out our lives for others. That is the way to run on the race course. That is the way to win Christ as the Prize. That is heeding the Apostle's words, "So run that ye may obtain."

"That your glorying may be more abundant in Jesus Christ on account of me, by my presence with you again" - V. 26. The Apostle expected to be released from prison, and return to Philippi and minister the Word to them again. Thus they would have reason to glorify God more than ever. Paul was always exceedingly hopeful. He never entertained the slightest tinge of discouragement or feeling of defeat. Victory adorned his life and triumph crowned it.

6. Paul's exhortation -Vs. 27, 28. "Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ." The Greek reads thus - "Only worthily of the gospel of the Anointed One, act as citizens" (politico). The same word for conversation (citizenship) occurs in chap. 3:20. If our citizenship is in heaven, we should conduct ourselves down here as indeed citizens of the heavenly country; for such conduct alone is worthy of the glad tidings of Christ. That is, we have no interests here. We have nothing in common with the people of this world. All our interests and ambitions are in heaven. We are pilgrims and strangers here. We seek a country, even the heavenly country - Heb. 11:9, 13-16. Christ, our Prize, is in that country. The Apostle adds his reason for exhorting the saints to act thus, saying,

"That whether I come and see you or be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind (or soul) striving together for (or by) the faith of the gospel." The old adage, In union is strength, is Paul's instruction here. When believers are divided, they cannot grow or accomplish much. Though we may not all apprehend the truth so clearly, yet our spirits must maintain the right attitude toward God, "endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Eph. 4:3) and our minds must be held in a teachable attitude toward the word. The phrase, "for the faith," should be, "by the faith," as in Rom. 5:2. We need not strive together for the faith, but for the gospel, by the faith. Neither need we to "contend for the faith (Jude 3), but for the gospel, "by the faith," that is, by the faith of God. Faith is our chief defensive and offensive weapon. Study Heb. 11, the Bible treatise on faith-ology. Faith needs no defending; but it is our instrument of defense. The gospel, the truth, needs and demands defending; therefore, Paul said, "I am set for the defense of the gospel" - Phil. 1:17. Jesus said to His disciples, "Let not your heart be troubled"; in which words, He regarded them as one, using heart in the singular. So the Apostle exhorts that we run together, side by side, as "one spirit," one heart, one soul; for the bride company must not be one in name only, but in fact. If we contend for the gospel by the faith of God, our striving together will not be cold, severe, and rigid, but in love and tenderness.

"And in nothing terrified by your adversaries." We should not be afraid of anybody. We are God's children. Tho we are in an enemy's country, and simply passing thru; yet we need not yield to any fear. God said to Israel, "Rise up, take your journey and pass over the river Arnon. Behold I have given into thine hand Sihon the Amorite (the talker), king of Heshbon and his land. Begin to possess and contend with him in battle. This day (the day that you act your faith in God's word) will I begin, to put the dread of thee and the fear of thee upon the nations under the whole heaven, who shall hear report of thee and shall tremble and be in anguish because of thee" - Deut. 2:24, 25. Our foes are afraid of us. Hence, they try to hinder and harm us by their opposition. The fear which is actually on them, they attempt to put on us. Their efforts are only bluff-te-busters of which they finally get tired if we stand fast by faith in God. "No evil shall happen to the just," saith the Lord.

What is the meaning of their opposition? It means their destruction. It is to them an evident token of perdition. Why do they not profit by the token and repent? Because the devil, "the god of this world, blinds their minds." But what does their antagonism mean to us? It proves that we are of God and that we are moving in His will. It shows that we are wise in running to gain the place which Satan now occupies in heaven; "for we wrestle not against flesh and blood (our conflict is not really against earth-dwellers), but against principalities, against the authorities, against the world-rulers of the darkness of this age, against the spirits of the wickedness in the heavenlies" - Eph. 6:12. By the faith of God, we are fighting for our rights in Christ; we are possessing "our commonwealth which is in heaven" - Chapter. 3:20. "So run that ye may obtain."

7. Paul's participation -Vs. 29, 30. The reason the Apostle assigns for the exhortation of verses 27 and 28 are expressed in the last two verses of the chapter, viz., "For unto you it was given on the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on Him, but also on His behalf to suffer, (you) having the

same conflict which ye saw in me and now hear to be in me." If we go the Jesus way, we will share in His sufferings. If we run with Paul, we may expect Paul's agony to be ours also. The world had no use for Jesus and no place for Him when He was born into it, but sought again and again to get Him out of it. The world's attitude to His faithful followers is just the same. If we purpose to win the Prize with Paul, we must be willing to suffer along side of Paul. The cross was the price of our salvation, which we experience by faith; but suffering is the cost of the throne. "If we suffer with Him, we shall also reign with Him; if we deny Him (our willingness to suffer), He will also deny us" (the right to reign). Therefore, we are simply paying our throne dues when we receive buffetings from wicked men and our names are cast out as evil. Men may blackball us here; but there will be no fiend in heaven to blackball us and hinder us from our throne rights. Hallelujah! Blessed prospect! Glorious hope! We are partakers of Paul's grace, mutually suffering the same persecutions and heart-pangs; therefore, we shall enjoy mutually with him the glittering throne-room of our Beloved Bridegroom in the sky.

ENOCH WALKED WITH GOD

Mary M. Bodie

He "walked with God." Could greater words be written?

Not much of what he said or thought,

Nor even where or what he wrought

Is mentioned. He was not laid in sod.

O words of fadeless gold. "He walked with God."

How many souls he succoured on the journey,

With his prayers and faith and cheer.

How many hearts he helped thru the year,

We are not told. We do not even know

But this, he "walked with God" while here below.

And after the long years of holy walking

One day he walked far, God said, "Come.

Come my Son, you're weary. Come home.

Haste to your blest abode, in home above

Enter into My rest, dwelling in love."

Christ, The Pattern Racer

Sermon Two

"If there be therefore any consolation in Christ; if any comfort of love; if any fellowship of the Spirit; if any bowels and mercies: fulfill ye my joy" - Vs. 1, 2. We have before us in this chapter a great and important portion of Scripture. It falls naturally into four parts. We could with profit give a message on each part. For your full edification and God's highest glory, I wish to read slowly and speak fervently and scripturally. "He that believeth shall not make haste."

1. Christ's condescension - Vs. 1-8. Having the preceding chapter as a background, the Apostle begins this portion by saying, "If," because of what has been said before, "there be any consolation in Christ, etc., fulfill ye my joy." If Christ is the life of the racer, which fact must afford consolation; "if any comfort of love," that is, no doubt, the love of God toward the racers; "if any fellowship of the Spirit," that is, the Holy Spirit; and "if any bowels and mercies" on my part (See note on chap. 1:8), thru the threefold encouragement of the triune God; then prove that you are profited thereby. Fill up my joy to the full by "having the same love" for others that I display; love as God and Christ love. Be "of one accord," or be joined in soul; be "of one mind," or mind the one thing, viz., wholeheartedly look after the good of others.

"Let nothing be done thru strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind, let each esteem other better than himself." Is it possible for a saint to testify or pray or sing out of strife? Yes. Is it possible that any saint could attempt to serve God for vainglory? Yes, indeed. If believers do not judge the old man in themselves, so that the Christ-life only can act, they certainly will do religious things from selfish motives. Why should I pray? Why should I testify? In order to outdo my brother? or to provoke my brother? Nay; but to encourage my brother. We should partake in the service of the Lord that sinners may be convicted, that saints may be edified, comforted and strengthened, that the whole company of believers may be inspired and built up, and thus that God and Christ may be glorified. "And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; knowing that

of the Lord ye shall receive the reward" - Col. 3:23, 24.

Quite often saints are prompted by a secret self-glory, which of course is vain. Hence, they do not act in the Spirit, and therefore, they pray or speak unwisely. They talk about the bride or Bridegroom to sinners and to carnal believers. It is not enough to be full of knowledge; we need to be full of wisdom also. If we seek only the will of God and yield to the Holy Spirit, who is the "Spirit of wisdom," we will say the right thing in the right manner and at the right time, and cease when we have done His will. Less than that or more than that will bring us only a partial reward, because it renders only a partial benefit to the people and brings partial glory to God.

What is meant by esteeming others better than ourselves? The very next verse gives the answer. It is both negative and positive. "Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others." Most people look out for No. 1. Paul looked out continually for No. 2.

OTHERS was his chief concern. By living unselfishly, we fill up his cup of joy. If you want to make the Apostle Paul dance with delight on the plains of glory (for he is now with His Lord), forget your own interests, your own trials, your own weaknesses, and run out to bless someone else. Some people imagine that ministering to others is just for a select few; but the Apostle says, "Every man" should serve others. Do you want me to tell you how to begin? Give the best pew to your brother. See that your sister has a hymn book; do not wait for the ushers to do it. Hand your suffocating neighbor a fan. Practice seeking the comfort of others. Make the strangers welcome by reaching them a full, warm hand. Then do not limit your kindness to the meeting house; but visit your fellow saints, not to gossip, but to lift up those who are down, or pray for those who are sick, or relieve a weak mother who is burdened with a large family. For all this, Paul gives us an invincible background and example in our unselfish Lord. He says,

"Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus." Let this self-forgetting mind, this self-sacrificing heart, this wholehearted looking out for others, which was in our Savior, be in you.

"Let." Do you notice how often that word occurs? Such an unselfish mind will possess us if we just "let" it; for the Holy Spirit strives to give us such a mind. He seeks to stir us up in behalf of our fellows. How often we hear people say, "That is what I thought, but Yes, the Holy Spirit plants the unselfish thought in the renewed mind; and Satan whispers, "But," and some saints are always yielding to that satanic "BUT" instead of the divine, "LET." What if Jesus had not let the will of the Father prevail in Him? There would have been no salvation for mankind. But He forgot all and left all in the heavens. He came out from His Father's bosom, from the purest and highest and sweetest fellowship to a world of sin and rebellion. The next three verses declare the Seven Surpassing Steps

of His amazing condescension. They are unthinkable. No mere human mind could ever comprehend such a coming down. Only by divine revelation can we grasp it in some measure. Let us study closely and prayerfully each downward step by itself. But before we do so, we must note His exact state in heaven, as expressed by verse 6.

"Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God." The Son of God sought nothing higher or greater; because He was already in the form of God; because He was equal with Him, for He was God. Because He announced Himself to be "equal with His Father," and said, "I and my Father are one," thus making Himself God, the Jews tried to kill Him - John 5:18 and 10:30-33. Therefore, when He came to the earth, He was not grasping after something; for He already possessed everything. Literally, "He esteemed not equality with God a thing to be seized with a hook"; but He

1. "Made Himself of no reputation." This is the first solemn step downward. That is, He "emptied Himself." All things were created by Him and for Him; but He emptied Himself of His strength, saying, "The Son can do nothing of Himself" - John 5:19. "He was crucified thru weakness" -- 2 Cor. 13:4. He emptied Himself of His wealth, saying, "The Son of Man hath not where to lay His head" - Matt. 8:20. Thruout the gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke, Jesus is called "the Son of Man" almost invariably, because He "made Himself of no reputation" as to His Deity. This emptying is expressed in Paul's words, "Tho He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that thru His poverty ye might become rich" - 2 Cor. 8:9. He was rich in power and honor and place and ownership and holiness, but He voluntarily emptied Himself of it all for the sake of mankind. Therefore, He

2. "Took upon Him the form of a servant." This is simply unthinkable. How could the high and holy Son of God, in debt to no one, not even to His Father, and needing nothing -- how could He take a slave's place and form? What an exchange! The holy Son of the most high God volunteered to

exchange "the form of God" for the "form of a servant." Reader, do you grasp it? The Sovereign of the universe stepped from the loftiest place of absolute authority and power down to the low, menial place of slave.

3. "And was made in the likeness of men." If our Lord had taken on the form of a servant simply as the Son of God, His condescension would not have seemed so wonderful. If He had remained in heaven and served His Father and the Holy Spirit only, we might not marvel; but He became man. He took upon Him human flesh. He who fills immensity, assumed the limitations of a human body. It is simply an incomprehensible wonder. An elephant could never condense himself so as to occupy a thimble; but the eternal Son of God could clothe Himself with a man's body. Reason dashes its brains into atoms at this stupendous miracle; but faith lays hold upon it and turns a sinner into a saint, makes him a "partaker of the divine nature" and transfixes him finally from earth to heaven.

4. "And being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself." The Son of God did not only become a man, but He took a lowly place as a man. He did not assume to be the chief master, but the chief slave. Study verse three again - "In lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than himself." Exactly that is what our Lord did in humbling Himself, or taking a lower position. Again we are amazed. We stand speechless before such majestic condescension. Each downward step of Omnipotence adds to our wonder, but also strengthens our faith and augments our love for Him.

5. "Became obedient." In the glory, He had unbounded authority to give orders to angels and archangels. Now He takes orders. Indeed He does not make a move of His own accord. "I have kept my Father's commandments," He declares - John 15:10. He refused to assert His rightful authority. Therefore, He announced, saying, "All authority is given unto me in heaven and in earth" - Matt. 28:18. Mark you, that is not the authority which belonged to Him as the Son of God, but that which His Father has delegated to Him. As Man, Jesus Christ will be obedient eternally to His Father.

6. "Unto death." Here is another long stride downward. He became obedient, not only in service, by healing the sick, raising the dead and by giving unparalleled instruction, all of which brought Him great honor; but He became "obedient unto death." When the Lord returned from His victorious conflict with Satan in the wilderness, "there went out a fame of Him thru all the region round about, and He taught in their synagogues, being glorified of all" - Luke 4:14, 15. Never man spake like this man," exclaimed the officers -- John 7:46. Nevertheless, He voluntarily laid down that recordbreaking life at His Father's behest. He calmly declared, "Therefore doth my Father love me because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me; but I lay it down myself. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father" - John 10:17, 18. His obedience reached into death.

7. "Even the death of the cross." Oh, marvel of marvels! And bear in mind, Jesus did not die as a martyr for some great cause which He championed. He died as a criminal. "He was numbered with the transgressors, and He bare the sin of many" -- Isa. 53:12. "He who knew no sin was made sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him" - 2 Cor. 5:21. The death the Son of God died was than most shameful death then known. The worst criminals and outlaws were punished by execution on a cross. The ignominy of Christ's death is expressed by the facts that He was hanged in the place of Barabbas, who was an insurrectionist, a robber, a murderer, and between two thieves. Oh, the language fails to express the condescension of Christ. With most people, the real meaning of Christ's death is not understood; therefore, its value is not worthily appreciated. It was in the darkest moment of His life, that He cried out, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Because Jesus hung on the cross, dying in the sinner's stead, dying as if He were indeed the guilty sinner, upon whom holy justice cannot look with favor; for that reason, He was accursed of God. The God of justice and holiness could not look upon Him. That is the meaning of the words, "He tasted death for every man." By that act, "He put away sin." He died as a transgressor, that we who believe on Him might live as righteous ones. He was accursed for us, that the curse might be lifted from us the moment we believe. He wore a crown of thorns, that we might wear crowns of glory. He bore the eternal weight of our sins, that we might share with Him "an eternal weight of glory." The darkness of His hour of death and the depth of His unbearable suffering of soul, determine the brightness of the eternal light and the height of unmeasured joy that the saints may possess forever. "Oh, the unspeakable riches of

His grace!"

Seven Surpassing Upward Steps

"Wherefore also God hath highly exalted Him and given Him a name which is above every name" -- V. 9. Jesus did not stay in the grave. He did not abide in the embrace of death. It was not possible that He should be holden of it - Acts 2:24. As there were seven steps downward in Christ's humiliation; so likewise there were seven steps upward in His exaltation. Let us consider these in detail. We ought to be deeply interested in these amazing truths; for as His condescension was in our behalf, so is His exaltation. In other words, as Christ went down in shame with us and into death for us; so He came up for us and we shall be exalted with Him forever. Hence, note the ascending steps.

1. "God raised Him up" - Acts 2:24. While that sacred body lay in the tomb, in His spirit, He went and preached to the spirits in prison, or Abraham's bosom, announcing to all Old Testament believers who had died in the faith, that the long promised redemption had been accomplished - I Pet. 3:18, 19. The third day of His interment, He came forth from the grave and from His subterranean mission of gladness in fulfillment of Psa. 16:9, 10 and Acts 2:2, 27 - "My flesh shall rest in hope; because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell (hades, the place of departed spirits), neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One (Christ's body), to see corruption" (in the grave). That was the wonderful beginning of His exaltation.

Note also that when "Christ was quickened in spirit" (I Pet. 3:18) in view of His resurrection, "God also quickened us together with Christ, and raised us up together with Him" - Eph. 2:5. Let us see this clearly. Christ died for all men, and in His death all men died and paid their penalty; but those who believe on Him are counted as having been raised with Him. This is a great and important truth, of which most saints are ignorant. May we ever bear in mind the depth to which He took us; then we will appreciate the power of His resurrection for us and our resurrection with Him.

2. "God set Him at His own right hand" -- Eph. 1:20. This is the second step in Christ's exaltation. He had come out from the bosom of His Father, dwelt for thirty-three years amidst His foes, poured out His holy life for a ruined race, and annulled him that had the power of death, that is the devil. Then His Father called Him back home to His bosom again. His ascension was the invincible proof to the whole universe that He had fully and satisfactorily performed the heroic task which His Father sent Him to do. Now for two-thousand years, He should enjoy full fellowship with His Father, while the Holy Spirit would serve Him by gathering out a people to His dear name and reward His sufferings by building for Him a Bride. Oh, what a mystery! And not only were we provisionally raised up together with Christ; but God also "made us sit together in the heavenlies with Christ Jesus" - Eph. 2:6. Study the five references to the heavenlies in Ephesians. This is still more of the mystery; but by faith we may understand in a deep degree. If you wish to enter deeply into fellowship with the Father and with His Son; if you desire to know the Lord deeply, and understand the hidden things of God, you must needs take your place in the heavenlies by faith. Count yourself where Christ's ascension has put you. Here also is where your conflict with the flesh will cease, and your conflict will be with Satan, and you will learn his power and subtilty and the way of victory over him - Eph. 6:12.

3. "And given Him a name" - V. 9. Study this vital point in Christ's exaltation. The next verse shows that His common name "Jesus" is the highly honored name mentioned here. Notice that this was His given name, the name which God the Father gave Him. That was His name as man, not as God. Bear that in mind. If people divide the word of truth rightly they will not fall into gross errors. There is no ground here for unduly exalting the personality of Jesus at the expense of the personalities of the Father and of the Holy Spirit. The Father was still the Father after He gave His Son the name "Jesus," and He will be the Father forever. The Father will never be Jesus; neither will the Holy Spirit ever be Jesus. Their personalities will be distinct forevermore. Likewise their offices have been different and always will be, even as their respective names and titles indicate, tho there is absolute harmony among them in every minute detail. The word "Jesus" means "Savior," and we must not attempt to make it mean anything else, less or more. The angel said to Joseph, "Thou shalt call His name JESUS; for He shall SAVE His people from their sins" - Matt. 1:21.

4. "Above every name" - V. 9. Certainly this given name is not above the name of God or the Holy Spirit. These are titles of the Deity; but Jesus is His name as a man. This name given to the Son of God is not above any name or title of Deity; but above every creature name. Therefore it is an offence to Jesus to call Him the Father or to call Him the Holy Spirit, and it is an insult to both the

Father and the Spirit. The greatness of the name Jesus began in this, that He, "the Son of Man hath authority on earth to forgive sins." When He used this authority, "the multitudes marveled, and glorified God which had given such authority unto men" - Matt. 9:6, 8. His Father gave this authority to Jesus. This is the amazing feature of redemption, that a Man was found able to save sinners. Therefore, we may shout it everywhere, "The Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost" - Luke 19:10. Glorious news indeed! The greatness of Christ's name culminates in the three following climacteric facts.

5. "Every knee shall bow" - V. 10. Only a few now bow the knee in actual reverence and worship in Jesus' name. Men bow their knees to other men. It is a time of man-worship. Poor, ignorant people bow before religious magnates who know nothing of divine salvation. Wealth commands homage. Learning commands homage. Position, official station, religious prowess command reverence. The heathen bow down to wood and stone. Catholics deify the pope. Very soon, "the whole world (except those few in heaven and on earth who believe on Jesus) will wonder after the beast (a devil-endowed usurper) and worship his image" - Rev. 13. Idolatry will reach its climax. But then suddenly, He whose right it is to reign, will overthrow every false religious system and false god, and compel men to bow to His absolute sovereignty. How much better to humble oneself by choice now and walk in God's will and fall in love with Jesus now and escape the awful fiery judgments that are coming upon the earth.

6. "Every tongue shall confess" - V. 10. Now only a few tongues confess Christ. Now men generally take His name in vain and swear carnally and devilishly by it. The name of Jesus today is a blasphemous plaything on the tongue of wicked men. There is scarcely any name used more in so called civilized lands than the name Jesus Christ; but it is in ridicule and mockery and blasphemy. Thank God, that day is nearly over. Thank God, soon, yea very soon, the dear and mighty name of Jesus shall be upon every tongue. What a day that will be! Every knee in heaven; every angel and saint; every knee on earth whether saved or not; every knee under the earth - all shall bow. And every tongue in heaven and on the earth, and beneath -- all tongues shall confess.

7. "Jesus Christ as Lord" - V. 10. The saints will confess Him gladly and gloriously. The wicked will acknowledge His Lordship by compulsion. Even the devil will have to bow before the mighty Conqueror, Jesus. By the facts of his expulsion from heaven, his imprisonment in hell for a thousand years and his banishment to the lake of fire, Satan will acknowledge the Sovereignty of the Son of Man.

In that day, the Man Jesus will be called, "Wonderful, Counselor, the Mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of peace" - Isa. 9:6. It is He who will speak, saying, "There is no God else beside Me, a just God and a Savior; there is none beside Me" - Isa. 45:21, 22. Therefore from His millennial throne, He will exclaim, "look unto Me and be ye saved, all ye ends of the earth; for I am God, and none else. I have sworn by myself; the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, That unto Me every knee shall bow; every tongue shall swear. All that are incensed against Him shall be ashamed. In Jehovah, shall all Israel be justified and shall glory." The grand culmination of Jesus' deserved exaltation will be that He will be acknowledged as the Mighty God for a thousand years.

Satan sought the supremacy over Jehovah thousands of years ago; but he failed. At the beginning of man's fall, the devil instilled into his sinful mind the ambition of getting into the heavens and of sitting upon the throne of universal empire. This was exactly the spirit of the tower builders in Noah's time, when they said one to another, "Go to, let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven, and let us make us a name" - Gen. 11:4. Fifteen hundred years later, we find the same devilish ambition in the beast of the king of Babylon. It is written (Isa. 14:11-15), "Thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven. I will exalt my throne above the stars of God. I will be like the Most High." But it is clear, as intimated above, that Satan was back of that purpose, and he still aims to dethrone God; for God will say to him, "How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! Thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit." Satan and his stars have sought the place which belongs to Jesus Christ. Therefore, the climacteric glory of our dear Redeemer and Savior is this, that He as the Man will occupy the throne in the air and be known as the Sovereign of the heavens and the earth for a thousand years. And the climacteric glory of saints will be this, that they will reign with Jesus. Man will sit as God supreme for a thousand years. Jesus, by His ignominious death on the cruel cross, purchased for Himself and for us the right to reign. Those saints who suffer with Him now,

shall reign jointly with Him then. His sufferings were meritorious. By them, He bought the throne. Our sufferings fellowship His. By them, we are qualified to reign. The greater and more responsible the office that anyone is to fill, the severer and more intricate must be the training. Beloved, will you let Christ give you the training for that highest-priced place in the ages to come? By His grace, methinks I hear you say.

Again let us note the five titles which Jesus shall bear in that day. Isa. 9:6 sweeps His entire career. "Unto us a child is born," introduces His first advent and His humiliation. "Unto us a Son is given," tells us of His resurrection. Those are past. The following statements are altogether future. "He shall be called, Wonderful, etc." Isaiah's five titles ascribed to Jesus must wait His coronation. To call Jesus the Mighty God and Father now, as some do, is saying too much. That is robbing the Father of His place as God Supreme, and giving Christ a place that is not His today. He is sitting today, not as Sovereign, but at the right hand of the Father, interceding for us and thru the Holy Spirit, is gathering out of the Gentiles a people for His name. He must have all those people, called out to His name, with Him in the glory, before those five great titles can really be ascribed to Him.

Joseph's dominion over Egypt was a beautiful picture of Christ's dominion over the universe for a thousand years. Pharaoh stayed in the background. Joseph was the Pharaoh in name. He was the acting Pharaoh; but he was not Pharaoh in fact. He ruled in the stead of the king of Egypt; because the latter chose to put Joseph on his throne. All the people of Egypt and its dependencies regarded Joseph as the ruler over Egypt. Every problem, every interest was referred to Joseph for solution and settlement. Just so it will be when Jesus Christ shall be crowned King of kings and Lord of lords. Man will be exalted to the place and honored with the authority that belongs to God only. But Jesus Christ as Man will never actually be the Mighty God and the Everlasting Father, any more than Joseph ever became actually the Pharaoh. God the Father will stay in the background, and let His dear, precious Son, the Son of Man, reign as if there were no Father at all. He will certainly deserve it. Praise be to His name!

The Father Never Forgotten

"To the glory of God the Father" - V. 11. The Holy Spirit omits nothing. No demons or men will ever be able to say that God the Father was robbed of any honor or glory belonging to Him. Nay; for the Father gave His dear Son to redeem a lost world. He sustained Him every moment of His blessed and bitter career on earth. He directed His every step. The Holy Spirit served the Father in enabling the Son to pass thru the dark shades of the death of criminals and down into the subterranean regions and witness to the sainted dead, that the redemption for which they hoped had been accomplished - I Pet. 3:19. Jesus' exaltation is the Father's bestowment upon Him. He acknowledged and declared, saying, "All authority is given unto me in heaven and on earth" - Matt. 28:18. Therefore, the final statement concerning our Lord's exaltation and our exaltation with Him is "to the glory of God the Father." After the thousand years of successful and glorious dominion, during which time, "all rule and all authority and all power will be put down;" "then shall the Son also Himself (as Man) be subject unto Him (the Father) that put all things under Him, that God (the triune God) may be all in all" - 1 Cor. 15:24-28.

Imitators of Christ

Sermon Three

"Wherefore, my beloved, even as ye always have obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, with fear and trembling, work out your own salvation"- Chap. 2:12. I love to read the letter to the Church at Philippi. That was such a model church. There was no blame attached to those saints. Today they would be called the Philadelphia church. As to experience, they were the Smyrna saints of that day. What a unique bouquet the Apostle throws at them in saying, "Ye have always obeyed." What true pastor would not like to have such an assembly? But what made them such an obedient flock? Ah, it was the obedience of their spiritual father, first of all; for Paul obeyed the voice of the Spirit and Word to the letter in "shunning not to declare" unto them, as to all others, "all the counsel of God." Then the obedience of Epaphroditus, their pastor apostle (v. 25) contributed greatly toward leading them on to obedience. Our great need in Christendom today is shepherds who are whole-hearted enough to acquaint themselves with God's holy Word, that they may feed the flock of Christ. Ezekiel 34 and Zechariah 11 record scathing rebukes against the shepherds in Israel. We ought to profit thereby today.

Note the yet more remarkable encomium of that church. "Not in my presence only, but much

more in my absence." Were they wont to lean on the apostle a little when he was present? We are to learn from others, but lean wholly upon the Lord as our Head. They are good children indeed who obey best in the absence of their seniors. I wonder if our people are more obedient to the truth in the absence of their shepherds. If so, it is because they are taking in the truth with the heart when we are present. I praise God that He has given us a good assembly, and we appreciate them. We love their fellowship and cooperation in the truth and service of the Lord. We note marks of growth in grace and in the knowledge of the Lord. We are ambitious that this meeting be a real Philippian church, an example to all Christendom. Our purpose and aim is to be true racers, truly and vigorously imitating Paul, Timothy and Epaphroditus; and we yearn for our people also to be scriptural racers, running to win the Prize. Thus the Great Shepherd can make us unitedly very profitable to Christians the world around. Praise the Lord! He is doing this very thing.

What is Paul's leverage to exhort to such strenuous obedience? All that he has just recorded of Christ's condescension and exaltation in verses 5 to 11 above. The word, "wherefore," or "so that," connects those facts with what we are now reading. Jesus, by coming down from heaven and going down into dark death, put our incorrigible old man to death forever. Simple faith in that settled fact holds our individual self-life in an inactive state. We can shout aloud, "It is no longer I that live; for I was crucified with Christ." Then by His resurrection and ascension, He brought into being a new, obedient, heavenly life, which we obtain by faith in the same Jesus. Hence, we can shout again and exclaim, "Nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." Any wonder that those Philippian saints were obedient, having such a wonderful Gospel? Nay, we should wonder if they were not obedient. Likewise, with such a living Gospel at hand, with such an Intercessor on high, with such an obedient Life within, strengthened with might by the Holy Spirit, it should be a marvel if we did not obey. Paul has a right to press his exhortation to obedience. And the saints have a tremendous impetus to strive for the mastery.

There is the Prize, Christ Himself as Bridegroom, looming high at the end of the race. There are those other racers running without compromise or discouragement. The afflicted woman who sought to touch the hem of the Master's garment, pushed aside everything and everybody. She pressed her way through the throng. She must touch Him; and she did. Therefore the Apostle says, the way to win the Prize is, "Work out your own salvation." Many believers have a misconception of this verse altogether. They think that it is addressed to sinners, and that they get saved by working. No, no. Paul writes here of a salvation already possessed. You must have it before you can call it "your own." How could he exhort people to get saved who were already walking in obedience? Nay, he here exhorts to work out that which has already been worked in. The next verse explains this one. "For it is God who works in you" two things. He works in you "to will and to work (energein, Gr.) according to His good pleasure." He first plants in us an active life. He works in us. Then by the power of the Holy Spirit, we cause that life to flow out in blessings upon others. As we run, we bless.

The Disposition Of Racers

"Do all things without murmurings and reasonings" -- v. 14. This is the spirit in which we are to work. Some duties are difficult and painful; but we should not murmur. The old self-life would sometimes lie down on the job; but we must not yield to its complaints. We may not always understand the behests of the Lord; they may seem unreasonable. Therefore, we must obey without disputing, or reasoning with the Lord. The Christian life is a life of faith. We run by faith, and not by sight. God has said, "Come; let us reason together"; but He does the reasoning. We must accept His conclusions. A controversy with Infinite God is dangerous and destructive. Most all wrong reaching and practice arise from human controversy over divine truth. Men reason away the expressed will of God; because their fleshly mind does not want to do His will. There are plenty of contradictory arguments and interpretations if men do not want to obey. But real racers for the Prize desire to know all the instructions concerning successful running; for they want to win.

The "all things" here do not mean all you may think you ought to do, but what the Lord bids you do. They do not mean what other people tell you to do, but what God instructs you to do. We learn to get the mind of God, which, of course, often comes thru other saints. And "all things" mean ALL THINGS, and not only some things, or the things that suit our fancy, or are easy for us. The divine purpose of this spirit of obedience is expressed in the next verse.

"That ye may be blameless and harmless, the children of God without rebuke" - V. 15. Oh,

exclaims someone, that is a terrible high standard. Yes, it is; but not any higher than Jehovah, nor too high for Him to work in us and enable us to work out. The responsibility is really with Him who has begun a good work in us and purposes to finish it - Chap. 1:6. One text says, "Blameless and simple." The first means perfect so as to merit, no blame. The second means unmixed, pure, guileless, simple, fresh, active. Most people invite complexity. They do not like simplicity, "the simplicity there is in Christ." How we need to take Christ by vigorous, persistent faith to make good in these respects. The whole tide, even the religious tide, is squarely against such Christ-like perfection and purity. These constitute the double root, expressed further in the following words - "the children of God without rebuke," or blameless, unblamed. The Apostle seems to struggle for adequate words to express his meaning or the vision he has of the state he wishes to set before us. The surrounding conditions are such a bold contrast that his thought is thereby made clearer. Note his words - "a crooked and perverse nation" which is the direct opposite to a "blameless and guiltless church. Then Paul climaxes his standard by adding, "Among whom ye shine as luminaries in the world." Jesus said to His own people in the flesh, "Ye are the light of the world; ye are the salt of the earth." But they ceased to shine nationally; therefore, the Lord was compelled to introduce another light, even the Church of Christ. We are not simply reflectors. We are lights; because Jesus Christ, "THE Light of the world," dwells in us. He shines out from us by filling us with Himself. And yet, the Holy Spirit denominates us the world's only light.

It is also a solemn truth that only here and in Eph. 5:8, do we read the believers are the Lord's luminaries to the world. The overcomers are the only true, safe, brilliant lights. Ephesian saints, they who have accepted the proffered seat in the heavenlies with Christ, are the effectual lights in the world. The real runners for the Prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus are the authorized luminaries. As they run, they are "holding forth the word of life," which throws light on the pathway of other people, turning them from darkness unto light, and from Satan unto God. The true saints of God are all the light that this dark world has. Of course, we are not to be occupied with our shining, but with Jesus, looking unto Jesus the Author and Finisher of the faith." He will see to it that our shining is effectual. What motive prompted Paul to thus exhort the saints? Note his words -

"That I may boast in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither labored in vain." The Apostle Paul was running for the Prize, and he longed for others to follow his fervent example. He was not satisfied that he alone should win. He was not selfish in his pursuit. He wanted other saints also to share the high honor and glory of the Bridehood. Not only did he run as an example for others; but he labored to bring the gospel of the glory in all its fulness before all saints. He labored more than all other laborers. And he longed that his toil should be effective. He could not bear to work in vain. I thank God that he ran and labored for us also, and we too can run and labor in behalf of other believers today, that we may have a boast coming.

"But if also I am poured out with a view to the sacrifice and public service of your faith; I rejoice, and rejoice together with you all" - v. 17. This is a profound statement. The real meaning is not on the surface. Closely compare the translation we give with the common version. The word translated "offered" means literally, "poured out as a drink offering" - see R. V. It occurs in only one other place - 2 Tim 4:6: "I am now ready to be offered up," or literally, "I am already being poured out." Note that in both instances, Paul was in prison in Rome when he makes use of the word, both in writing to the Philippian assembly and to his spiritual son Timothy.

The Greek preposition, "epi" translated "upon" in our Bibles, also means "for an object or purpose, with a view to." Hence, Paul's meaning is more easily understood if we let him say, "I am poured out for the purpose of, or with a view to the sacrifice and service of your faith." The authorized version makes Paul say that the faith of the saints causes him to pour out his life; but the correct rendering makes him say that his poured-out life makes self-sacrificing faith rise in others, that his life was poured out in order that others also might believe God so vigorously as to serve Him with their whole heart. And indeed, this is just the effect that his gospel and his "daily dying" career had upon that Church. The "sacrifice and service of their faith" is set before the church in Corinth and before all believers as a striking example. The Apostle said of them, "that in a great trial of affliction, the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality" - 2 Cor. 8:2. They laid out their lives for others, spurred on by his laying out his life for them. Paul was poured out in being imprisoned. His great, fiery soul yearned to be free to publish far and near the gospel of grace and glory; but, like a caged lion of God, he could

not. He roared out in prayer, only to hear the echo of his defeated cry. He groaned and wept bitter tears. He was "dying daily." Even the shadows of the cruel ax block were hovering over him, as 2 Tim. 4:6, 7 implies. But that poured out life was thus overcoming. He was dying for all the church, "filling up the sufferings of Christ," and for all those who run for the Prize. Therefore, he exclaims, "I rejoice." If his faith, his zeal, his suffering, his running encouraged others to a like unselfish and separated career, he rejoiced, knowing that his running and his labor were not in vain. And the faith that gave birth to such a unique, poured-out life, looked beyond and saw the glorious results thereof of a company of saints who should reign with Christ. He saw "a crown of righteousness" for himself and for his fellow racers - 2 Tim. 4:8.

Paul says also, "I rejoice together with you." The running is mutual. Likewise, the reward and rejoicing are mutual. He loved the assembly of the saints. He suffered in fellowship with their suffering. He was glad when they were glad. His rejoicing was not only because of their present running; but he rejoiced also in hope of the unspeakable glory which he and we shall enjoy together forever. Yet, with these statements, he is not content, but he adds, "For the same cause also do ye rejoice, and rejoice together with me." Jabin the reasoner would say that this is tautology, or that he was saying the same thing in another way. But have you noticed how love apparently repeats things? It delights to put great emphasis upon its words and deeds. This apparent repetition shows the deep love and mutual fellowship of our beloved brother Paul toward his followers. And his profound love and interest is shown further.

Importance Of Our State

"But I hope in the Lord to send Timotheus shortly unto you, that I also may be of good comfort when I know your state" -- v. 19. Many people are bothered about their standing in Christ. They are not sure that they are saved. Some think and teach that they can be saved and afterwards be lost forever. They publish boldly that one can "have eternal life and lose it." All this is because they do not "know the Scriptures nor the power of God." The Apostle Paul was never alarmed about the standing of those who once really believed with the heart unto salvation. Neither were the other apostles. With childlike simplicity, they all believed the words of Jesus Christ that "he that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but is passed out of death into life" - John 3:36 and 5:24. Also, "I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any one pluck them out of my hand, etc." - John 10:28, 29. They who today accept God's word without reasoning about it, have no trouble about their salvation. If preachers would preach only the word of God and not the words of men, what rest their ministry would bring to the hearers.

The great concern of all New Testament writers was always that the saints might bring their state up on a level with their standing. They were born right in the new birth; now then they should live right. They should walk in full harmony with their new birth. Most Christian people, tho born of the Spirit, walk in the flesh. They have a supernatural beginning by accepting Christ; but they live in the natural, "walk as men." Therefore, the concern of the Apostle was, that his followers should walk as a new creation, as united to the Last Adam, Christ; "walk in the Spirit;" live like God lives: not that they might be saved, but that being saved they might receive a reward. He was not content that they should be saved from hell only, but that they might grow up into Christ and become sons with Him. As sons we may hope for an inheritance and for a reward for service rendered to our heavenly Father. Hence, he purposed to send Timothy, who was then with him in Rome to Philippi to visit the saints there, saying, "I have no man like-minded who will genuinely care for your state." How he loved that Philippian church, and how highly he esteemed Timothy. Observe that Paul stood squarely and boldly against lasciviousness. He never once said, as some say today, "No matter what we do, we will be saved anyway. God does not look at our faults; He sees us in Christ. The new man is not responsible for the conduct of the old man." All such talk is baby talk. Such people do not want victory over the flesh. They want their own way. The self-life, the carnal mind, the old nature is in the saddle. "Sin in the flesh" is not being judged. They live loose lives and bring shameful discredit upon the sweet message of divine grace and its faithful, loyal advocates and participants. Not so, the purpose of redemption. Nay, nay; never, never. "For the love of Christ constraineth us, because we thus judge, that if one (Christ) died for all, then all died; and He died for all, that they which live (only those who are born again live) should NOT henceforth live unto themselves, but unto HIM which died for them and rose again" -- 2 Cor. 5:14, 15. It is plain then, that they who live for themselves, do not love the Lord, tho they are saved by His wondrous grace. Such saints break the heart of the Apostle. They cannot make

him glad. He cannot rejoice over them and with them. Oh, heart-rending pity, and pity 'tis true!
Timothy and Epaphroditus

Paul sets these two ministers over against those who "seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's" -- V. 21. Whole-hearted believers cannot comprehend how any man, who claims to be God's appointed and anointed servant, can seek his own interests in Gospel work. How a man can preach and teach the Gospel, not for the Gospel's sake or for the good of souls, nor for God's glory, but for his own comfort and advantage and glory, would be impossible for some of us to believe if we did not see it demonstrated before our eyes. What will the harvest be for them? But not so Timothy. He was "as a son with the father," dutiful, faithful, loyal, blameless son. Paul knew him by years of companionship. He said of Timothy, "He hath served as a bondman with me in the Gospel." His going to Philippi would be equivalent in large measure to Paul's own visit. He would go with the same warm affection and unselfish interest as would Paul. He too was an overcomer, running loyally and not uncertainly for the Prize. He too was an example to other saints on the race-course. Paul knew that he would take the right word of instruction and comfort to them at Philippi and bring back the correct report concerning their state in Christ, the one thing that Paul especially longed to know. Paul's estimate of Timothy is brought out especially in his two epistles to him. He desired that Timothy, rather than any other Christian worker, should be his immediate successor in the chief oversight of the churches.

Not all who were saved under Paul's ministry and learned the truth from him showed the same unselfish interest in other saints. Timothy was an exception. Alexander, Hymenaeus, Phygellus and Hermogenes, for example, turned aside from the truth and the way. They caused great pain to the Apostle's loyal heart. Are ministers any better today? Nay, there are all sorts of workers today even as then. Nevertheless, Paul was concerned for the state of the people. How were they walking? How were they running in the race? How were they living? Was their state on a level with their standing? Were they moving according to their privileges? A little stray waif was picked up from the street by a philanthropist, taken home and given something to eat. Later he was put into a bedroom with a nice white bed inviting him to a warm, comfortable rest for the night. But instead of creeping under the cover into the bed, he slept under the bed. The poor, needy, ignorant child lay down beneath his privileges. He refused the comfort which was offered to him, because he did not know for what that beautiful object was intended.

That is just where many saints are to be found. They live beneath their blood-bought privileges. Some are spiritually asleep beneath their privileges. They do not enjoy the deep, sweet rest and peace which is really theirs in Christ. That is why we continually emphasize our place and wealth in Christ. We want the people to know what they may possess and enjoy as Christians. Then, like the Apostle, we are eager for believers to take hold of what they see. We want them to measure up to the privileges which they behold. That is, we exhort the saints and stir them up into more aggressiveness. We want to see them running for the Prize. We want them to keep their state on a level with their standing.

"As a son with the father, he hath served with me in the gospel." Note this word "served." There are several Greek words in this chapter translated serve, or minister. This one means to "serve as a bondman." Timothy served as a slave with Paul, like as a son with a father. Tho he was an apostle, yet he was so in love with Jesus and the truth that he labored as a bondman with Paul. Several persons have left this assembly because they were afraid that they would become bondmen of brother Copley. Ah, nobody needs to feel bound to me except by the bond of love, "which is the bond of perfectness," that held Timothy to Paul. He was a slave, not to Paul, but to the Gospel and the Christ which Paul preached. They both had their ears bored and pinned to the door post of God's will. Hence, they had perfect fellowship with each other. Both were bondmen to the same Slave-holder, Christ—a serfdom of perfect love. No one becomes of much use to God until he learns to be subject to older saints, willing to be guided by them, cautioned and warned. We are living in a time of laxity and lawlessness. People do not distinguish between liberty and license. Too many want their own way. They seek to instruct their divinely ordained instructors. They get impressions, have visions, receive messages in tongues, etc., and without consulting the Scriptures or reliable saints, they launch their hallucinations only to be defeated and humbled thereby, and bore others therewith. And what is still sadder, some never learn their mistakes, or if they do learn them, they never confess them. Hence, they never become real racers and of course will never win any thing but the withered wreath of shame and failure. Ah, Timothy did not feel humbled by serving as a bondman with Paul; nor by being sent on an errand

for God by Paul. Neither will he be ashamed at the sounding of the trumpet, nor be humiliated by having a back seat in glory when the rewards shall be granted. Thank God! he will not have a back seat.

"So soon as I shall see how it will go with me." Doubtless there were intimations that the Apostle's unjust trial would soon come off. Then it would be determined whether he was exonerated, or not. That statement implies that Paul was released; for we know that Timothy was released and went to Philippi. His question in his letter to the Hebrews, which was written after this letter to Philippi, indicates the release of them both. "Know ye that brother Timothy is set at liberty, with whom, if he come shortly, I will see you?" - Heb 13:23. Evidently, the Apostle's imprisonment, which resulted in his execution, was a later one than this. The following verse of hope agrees with these reflections. "But I trust in the Lord that I also myself shall come shortly." Everywhere we behold with interest the Apostle's dependence upon the Lord, whom he held as his Head and His Wisdom. How tender these words of hope. He loved those racing saints deeply. He had said before (chap. 1:24) that for him to abide in the flesh was more needful for them. In order to make that word good and be to them the greatest blessing, he longed and hoped to minister to them again in person. This he expressed in the above words. "Yet I esteemed it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother and fellow-laborer and fellow-soldier, also your apostle and minister of my need"- V. 26. The Apostle suggests a five-fold relationship as the reason for sending this man to Philippi. We dare not take space here to dwell upon them all. Let us consider the last two. The word "messenger" is "apostolon" in Greek; that is, apostle. He spoke to them of him as "your apostle." Thus we note that apostles had different spheres of operation in the church. Paul was an apostle to the whole Church, or to all the assemblies everywhere; but Epaphroditus was an apostle to the church in Philippi only. His ministry was local, even like that of a pastor. The apostleships of Timothy and Titus also were more extended; for they were evangelists.

In 2 Cor. 8:23, the phrase "messengers of the churches" should read, "apostles of the churches." From these two citations and from others (Acts 14:14; I Cor. 4:9; I Thess. 2:6), we gather that there were at least six apostles in the church in Paul's day, who were in full fellowship with him. We name Barnabas, Timothy, Apollos, Silas, Titus and Epaphroditus. The relative meanings and uses of pastor, minister, shepherd, apostle and evangelist are indeed an interesting study. Paul termed Epaphroditus "a minister of his need." Why did he record these facts about him? Not to throw bouquets at his spiritual brother for selfish ends, that he might use his influence in his behalf after he should be released from prison. No, Paul never resorted to flattery, or wire-pulling to get work or an office in the church. He looked to Christ only, the Head of the Church. And every minister today fares best who imitates him. Shame on the intrigue to which men resort in order to get a hearing, even Spirit-anointed men. There is evidently something radically wrong with themselves or with their message or both. They do not know with the heart the divine oracles.

Why was Epaphroditus sent? He was sent for the saints at Philippi; while Timothy was sent for Paul's sake -- see V. 19. Being their apostle, he longed after them all and was full of heaviness because they had heard that he had been sick, even nigh unto death. Yet I see a deeper purpose in it, and in writing these facts about him. He was exceedingly unselfish and self-sacrificing, and was set forth as an example with Paul and Timothy to Christian racers for this whole church period. He is an example to me and to you. To be less zealous and untiring than he, I am ashaaned. Are you? Verse 30 shows why he became so very ill. "Because for the work of Christ, he was nigh unto death, not regarding his life, that he might fill up your deficiency of service toward me." He did not take care of himself, but of his brother and father Paul. He loved his own people at Philippi so deeply that he was glad to work with his own hands to render to the Apostle who had brought him the truth and the light, even the help that his assembly longed to give to Paul; for they were willing beyond their power to minister to him of their carnal things. Comp. 2 Cor. 8:3, 5. Where can we find such a Gospel minister today? Note chap. 4:18.

Paul and Divine Healing

There is another glorious truth here. God does not forget nor neglect the whole-hearted, "daily dying," extremist, that lays down his life without reservation for Christ and His people. Nay. "God had mercy on him." Did the Apostle invite Dr. Root-remedy on the scene? Nay, he invited Him who Provided the blood cure. Some fellows, without conscience toward God, have dared to declare that Epaphroditus was not healed. But we believe Paul who declares that "God had

mercy on him." Furthermore, how could the Apostle dare to send him to Philippi if he were not cured? What cause of rejoicing (V. 28) would they have to meet a sick man, one ready to fall into the tomb any moment? How could Paul's sorrow be assuaged if his brother were not delivered? Instead, he exhorts them to "receive him therefore (because, he is coming well and happy) in the Lord with all joy, and hold such in honor;" for his illness was not in any sense due to carelessness or worldliness. The request, "hold such (a one) in honor," teaches us that not only was Epaphroditus to be received thus, but all ministers like him. They are rare and should be highly prized.

A certain publisher, who opposes divine healing, tries to disprove the deliverance of Epaphroditus. His ignorance of dear Paul's life and Gospel is expressed in the following ridiculous words - "So long as the apostle was proclaiming Christ according to the flesh, he was not outdone by anyone in the gift of healing. But when the most glorious administration of the mystery began to dawn, which had hitherto been a secret, he himself suffered bodily infirmity and his closest friends suffered likewise." Surely, that is a revelation (?), that Paul proclaimed Christ according to the flesh. Maybe some men have such a revelation, not from God, but from the devil, who tries to rob Jesus of the glory of healing our bodies and give them to infidel doctors. Oh, shame on the carnal audacity, that one who claims to know the Bible should write so flippantly (akin to blasphemy) about the self-sacrificing Apostle Paul. Public service at one's own expense which Paul rendered for thirty years, is an unusual trait, and Pauline ministers only render such. "Brethren, be ye imitators of me," said Paul, even as were Timothy and Epaphroditus. Brother, are you still running for the Prize?

GOD CANNOT FAIL

'Tis not to fail, tho it appear
That life has lost its zest and cheer,
And all the days you prayed with tears
Are counted now as wasted years.
Tho men deride and at you rail;
Keep trusting on; God cannot fail.
'Tis not to fail, tho men may say
That you are down and out today,
And all your work has been in vain.
Do not despair; there's golden grain,
Which you have sown on hill and dale.
Keep trusting on; God cannot fail.
'Tis not to fail, to do your best,
And give your all at Christ's behest
His recompense is greatest gain.
The bow of promise follows rain;
And spring's soft winds the winter's gale.
Keep trusting on; God cannot fail.

Christ, The Prize for Racers SERMON FOUR

"Hence forward, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things to you, to me indeed is not irksome, but for you it is safe" - V. 1, R.V. In our lesson today, we see a contrast between the gains of the two Adams. Over against the highest possible profit from being in the old creation, or first Adam, Paul sets the profit possible from being in Christ, the Second Adam. This is profoundly interesting and wonderful. May the Spirit enable us to grasp and enjoy it. Likewise this chapter shows the crux between believers, even as God has said, "I will judge between cattle and cattle" - Ezek. 34:22. The cross of Christ is the ridge pole, the dividing line, between the old and the new creations, or between the first Adam and the Last Adam, Christ. The cross is the dividing line also between believers and believers. This the Apostle declares in verses 17 and 18 of this chapter. It is a solemn fact, that "many walk" (of course they are believers, but they are) "the enemies of the cross of Christ"; because they refuse to appropriate all that Calvary has purchased for them. Having set forth Christ (in Chap. 1) as the Life of Christian racers, and (in Chap. 2) as the Pattern Racer, Paul now encourages us "to rejoice in the Lord," that is, rejoice in

hope of running well to the end and of gaining the Prize which he is about to exhibit in this chapter. At the threshold, he gives a necessary caution. It is not so pleasant to do so; it does not afford any particular joy; yet it is not irksome to him, but safe for us. To observe this caution will add to our well-being.

"Beware of the dogs; beware of the evil workers; beware of the concision"- V. 2. In running the Christian race, we meet with three religious opponents which are named here. There is a trinity of hinderers against the Triune God who is working in us and leading us on to certain victory.

"Dogs." Who are they? Not four-legged dogs, but two legged dogs, those against which Christ prayed, saying, "Deliver my darling from the power of the dog" -- Psa 22:20. Dogs are religious fellows, but not born again. Dogs are not sheep, and never were sheep, tho they pretend to bleat like sheep. They never really bleat, but bark and growl and bite. Hence, they turn to their own vomit again (2 Pet. 2:22), which is proof positive that they never were saved. Believers have a dual nature. If the old dog nature is not judged, it may "bite and devour and consume" other saints. See Gal. 5:15.

"Evil workers." And who are they? There are two classes. First. Every unconverted preacher is an evil worker. Second. Every converted preacher who does not judge the old man in himself becomes an evil worker, because he will not teach the whole truth, whether for fear of place, or pride of race, or lack of grace. Laborers only who let Christ rule in them, do the good works which were ordained for us to walk in (Eph. 2:10), and do them in the right spirit. Evil workers seek their own advantage and glory. They never wholly seek the good of their fellows and the glory of God.

"The concision." And who are they? The Greek word "katatomen" means a cutting into, outward, fleshly circumcision, a cutting in pieces. It is used in no other place in the New Testament. This is very significant; for it is directly opposite to the real, inward, scriptural separation set forth in the verse following this. "The concision are those who attempt to cut off the self life by their own efforts; hence, refuse the truth of our death with Christ. Law-keepers, so-called, are the "concision" to which Paul refers.

"We are the circumcision," exclaims the Apostle. "Peritome" is the Greek word, from the verb "peritemno," which means to cut around, clip round about, to cut off. Circumcision refers to the cutting off of the old creation thru Christ's death on the cross. Circumcision under the old covenant had the cross in view. By being circumcised, Abraham acknowledged that he had no strength to be useful and fruitful, but that God had to intervene for him supernaturally. That was the fact exactly. Not till Abraham and Sarah were past the reproductive age was Isaac born, a type of the new creation which is wholly supernatural and spiritual. Col. 2:11 is a clear and invincible explanation of circumcision. "In whom (Christ) also ye were (past tense, note) circumcised (cut off) with a circumcision (a cutting off) not made by a hand, in the putting off of the body of the sins of the flesh in the circumcision (cutting off) of Christ." This must mean the death of Christ; for the next verse declares boldly that "God raised Him from the dead," and raised us up with Him.

When Jesus died, we all died with Him. When He was circumcised (or cut off) for us, we were cut off too. Therefore, Paul writes that "we are the circumcision." It is this absolute, complete, irrevocable, eternal cutting off of the old man, however good, lovely and pious he may seem to be, that some religious people do not want to admit. Hence, they cannot go by the route of this third chapter of Philippians. Nevertheless, this is the truth and the only triumphant way is here outlined. Praise God forever! "The humble hear thereof and are glad." The conduct of the real "circumcision" is expressed as three-fold, or in three praiseworthy acts. Two are positive and one is negative.

"They worship God in spirit and glory in Christ Jesus and trust not in flesh." The dogs worship, but their worship is in the flesh. Evil workers serve, but their ministry is in the flesh, and they glory in themselves or in the flesh of others. The concision practice a cutting off, but it is only flesh cutting of flesh, which boasts in its own cutting off. They are separatists indeed and keep aloof from everybody who does not literally subscribe to their religious tenets and adopt their shibboleth. They despise and disdain all others, while glorying in what they claim to be and think they accomplish. They will not admit their death with Christ; for then they would have nothing in which to boast save the cross. The "concision" were the Pharisees of that day. But it is that way today; many saints are more or less pharisaical, because they do not see, or at least accept the doctrine of our death with Christ. They are not willing to be classed with "the circumcision," the true, spiritual separatists, the scripturally cut-off ones. They are not willing to be actually,

practically separated unto God alone. They still insist on having their finger in some religious pie, if not in the world's pie. They must have the carnal joy of "pulling out a plum" (if it is a plum), and of shouting, "What a good boy am I!"

Thank God for those who love the true, separated way. They do not worship or serve in the flesh, but in the Spirit. They never boast of their own holiness or works. They love to glory in what Christ has done for us and in what He is doing in them and for them day after day. Their confidence is always and only in the Holy Spirit who dwells in them and walks in them. Their faith is never in the first Adam; never in his natural gifts or traits or attainments or goodness; but wholly in the Last Adam. The new creation "was enriched in Christ in all utterance and in all knowledge" - I Cor. 1:7, R.V. They lay hold of their wealth in Christ and love to glory alone in Him. "We are the circumcision, which worship God in spirit and rejoice in Christ Jesus and have no confidence in flesh" -- V. 3. The Triune God operates in and thru our threefold being, bringing us into full harmony with Him. We worship; we rejoice; we trust. Our spirit worships; our soul rejoices, and as David exclaimed, our "flesh crieth out for the living God" - Psa. 84:2. God is the supreme object of our adoration; because He is "the God of all grace." His Son is the occasion of our joy and thanksgiving; because "He died for our sins and was raised for our justification." And the Holy Spirit is the Person on whom we depend for our daily sanctification and for all things. In this verse as in a nutshell, the whole Christian life, as an overcoming life, is couched. It is a pen-picture of winning racers. On the other hand we do not worship, or deify men, which is the spirit of the age. We do not glory in ourselves, our goodness, our righteous walk, our achievements. We lose confidence in the wisdom of the natural man. We cease to trust in natural gifts, attainments and qualifications. The intellectual, the social, the wealthy, the religious, the famous old creation has lost its charm. The last sentence of this verse connects closely with the first sentence of the next; hence, they should read together thus, "We have no confidence in the flesh, tho I have had confidence in the flesh" in the past. The rest of verse 4 Introduces

Points Of Contrast

"If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof to trust in the flesh, I more?" In the following two verses, Paul states seven reasons for boasting in the flesh more than any other man, if any man has a right to boast in it at all. Then over against these seven paramount reasons for boasting beyond the highest boast of all other men; over against the very best and most perfect product of the natural man, he heaps up arguments to prove the abounding super-excellency of the products of the supernatural, or the new creation. He shows that the finished work of redemption far surpasses the highest achievements of the natural man. For this purpose, God chose Saul of Tarsus sovereignly and allowed him to experience the seven things named in verses 5 and 6. Let us study these seven pillars of the flesh.

"Circumcised the eighth day;

Of the stock of Israel;

Of the tribe of Benjamin;

A Hebrew of the Hebrews;

Concerning the law, a Pharisee;

Concerning zeal, persecuting the church;

Concerning the righteousness which is in the law, having become blameless."

The first four of the above traits were national. They refer to his standing in the old creation. The last three were religious, and refer to his state in the natural. The first was both national and religious. The first three were entirely independent of Saul's volition. As to the others, his will was the chief factor. They were the results of his own efforts.

First. When a child was eight days old, he was Circumcised in harmony with the instruction that God gave to Abraham. He was reckoned as cut off from all other nations, and judicially cut off from the whole old creation. As we saw before, circumcision was the mark of death to the flesh. Therefore, Paul could glory in the fact of being separated from the world from his infancy. But after he learned the real meaning and power of circumcision, he wrote thus - "He is not a Jew which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh; but he is a Jew which is one inwardly, and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God" -Rom. 2:28, 29. Yet as to the outward, if there was a difference between flesh and flesh, he was born of the best flesh, as the next pillar would indicate.

Second. The Israelites were distinctively the people of God. This trait was the direct opposite of

the first named. As circumcision meant the cutting off from all others, or death; so being of the stock of Israel meant a separation unto God, as it were "life from the dead." Note their distinguishing features in Rom. 9:4, 5 -- "To them pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises, and of whom as concerning the flesh, Christ, the Messiah, came." Thus Paul had no ordinary national parentage. They were the greatest people of the world, because they were the people of the living and true God. After bringing Israel out of Egypt, the Lord said to them, "I bare you on eagle's wings and brought you unto myself" - Ex. 19:4. That people were typical of the new creation, or spiritual Israel, whom Paul explicitly terms "the Israel of God" -- Gal. 6:16. Therefore he could glory in the further fact that he was separated unto God, with those who were a peculiar treasure above all people upon the earth" - Ex. 19:5.

Third. In several respects, the tribe of Benjamin were superior to the ten tribes. They were a warrior tribe, known for their dexterity on the battlefield. Being associated with the tribe of Judah, they were loyal to God after the ten tribes had gone away from Him. Benjamin means, "son of my right hand," as if joined to the Lord. Thus Paul had a tribal boast as well as a national boast. He was of the faithful few in Israel.

Fourth. The word Hebrew means, "one passing thru." Abraham was the first Hebrew. All his descendants were Hebrews, or journeymen, professedly. They were a pilgrim race, typically passing thru this wilderness world, as not belonging to it. Paul was not a pilgrim, or Hebrew, in name only, but in fact as to his race. His relatives were outwardly extreme in practicing the pilgrim life. They showed this out by sending their son from Tarsus, his birth-place, to Jerusalem to be taught by Gamaliel. Thus Paul also had a racial boast. He was not only of the greatest nation (Israel), but also of the choicest race (a Hebrew), a Hebrew indeed.

These four reasons for glorying, which Paul had as to his natural lineage, or his standing in the old creation, were shadows only of his later spiritual lineage, or his standing in Christ. He was actually circumcised, or cut off in the death of Christ. That was his basic boast in the new creation. He was raised again in the resurrection of Christ, a new creation indeed, one of "the Israel of God" in truth. Hence, he was a true Benjamite, being born of God thru Christ, the Son of His own right hand. Thus, in the supernatural, he became a Hebrew, or pilgrim in very deed and set the pace for all New Testament journeymen. As to his standing in the new creation, or spiritual realm, the Apostle had a fourfold ground for glorying, that far eclipsed his highest glory in the natural.

Paul's State In The Natural

"As touching the law, a Pharisee; concerning zeal persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless" -- Vs. 5 and 6. These three items of Paul's testimony express his religious state in the natural. . As nearly as was possible, he brought his state up to his standing. If he was an Israelite in name, he should be such also in actual practice. That he sought to be, but of course all in his own strength.

First. "As touching the law, a Pharisee." The word Pharisee means "separate." The Pharisees were the largest of several Jewish sects. They were noted for their self conceit and long prayers and for fasting often. They paid unimportant tithes, made broad their phylacteries, loved the uppermost rooms at feasts and the chief seats in the synagogues. They held the traditions of the elders to be equal with the law of Moses, and because of their zeal for these traditions, they considered themselves more holy than others, and hence separated themselves from all others -- Matt. 23:2-7. Saul of Tarsus was one of that sect. This was his first and fundamental boast as to his state in the religious old man -- Gal. 1:14. He himself declared that "after the straitest sect of our religion, I lived a Pharisee" - Acts 26:5.

Second. "Concerning zeal, persecuting the church." The Jews slew God's Son because they believed not that He was the promised Son. Study John 5:18 and 10:33. If He were not, he was an imposter, and according to their own law (Lev. 24:16), they had a right to kill him. Upon this very ground, Saul persecuted the saints by putting them in prison and by executing them. His own language indicates the bitterness of his hatred against Christ in His people. He says, "Beyond measure I persecuted the church and wasted it" (Gal. 1:13), "being exceedingly mad against them" - Acts 26:11. His was no common, ordinary persecution, but a systematic, scripturally founded (as he supposed), untiring, uncompromising pursuit of the saints, in view of wiping them off the scene, and putting the "sect of the Nazarenes" to an utter end. He did that presumably for God's glory. No one could glory in religious zeal like he.

Third. "Touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless." No one could find any fault with Saul as to his outward walk. He even outdid his own religious sect. Jesus said of the Pharisees, "They say and do not; for they bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne and lay them upon men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers" - Matt. 23:3 and 4. Not so with Saul. He actually did the things that others professed to do. He "paid all his honest debts," as the saying goes. He never missed the mark as to his straight-laced observance of the Mosaic code and the traditions of the elders. He did not commit adultery, nor bear false witness, nor steal (as to his outward conduct). His slaying of the saints was not counted as killing, because he thought himself observing Lev. 24:16. He claimed that the law of Moses pronounced him righteous so far as his exterior life was concerned. That was the climax of his glorying. No one had ever excelled him in his pious devotion to God's commandments, all of which were done in his own strength, of course. Afterward, however, when the same law struck his inward parts, he informs us that "sin revived and I died." He who "was alive once without the law" (Rom. 7:9), found himself greatly mistaken; for he did not actually heed Ex. 19:17, "Thou shalt not covet"; for he could not. These seven boasts placed Saul of Tarsus on the pinnacle of religious fame and on the high water mark of official prospects among his nation, the Jews. As to his standing, there was nothing higher. And that came in divine providence, independently of his volition. As to Saul's state, there was none more perfect. He had done his best. He seemed not to need God. He brought his walk up to God's will, as to his outward actions. But this very fact made him "the chief" of sinners. Therefore, he wrote, saying, "For this cause, I obtained mercy, that in me as chief, Jesus Christ might show forth all longsuffering for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on Him to life everlasting" -- I Tim. 1:15, 16. With such a state of perfection attained, no marvel that Jehovah had to smite him with blindness and weakness. His unflinching madness and colossal conceit had to be halted suddenly.

Paul's Loss And Gain

"But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ" - Chap. 3:7. We have been pondering Paul's seven paramount points of excellence in the natural. Now by spiritual arithmetic, we learn that all of those items of gain in the old creation have no weight in the new creation. However perfect and great they were, he counted them loss; he discarded them from the program that he might win Christ. The basis for this reckoning is found in one statement in verse three - "We are the circumcision." The first point of excellence in the natural was, that he was "circumcised the eighth day." But that was only a shadow of the real circumcision - his cutting off in the death of Christ, who died for us.

If all those points of gain were in the old creation, and if the old creation was cut off, or slain at the cross; it follows plainly that they should all be counted out to make way for the new order of things. By glorying in the fact of being of the Israelitish nation, and of the old creation, would thwart the very purpose of the new creation. Likewise, with all the other items of gain. In a word, dependence upon natural relationships and attainments, or boasting in them, invariably hinders growth and usefulness in the Lord.

On the other hand, the Apostle's gain in the natural was a shadow of an actual, substantial and eternal gain in the spiritual. He was actually cut off from the world and separated unto God. He became "an Israelite indeed," one of "the Israel of God" in the truest sense -- Gal. 6:16. He had power with God and prevailed. Thru faith in Jesus, he became a spiritual Benjamite, a son of God's right hand. He became also a new Hebrew, not passing thru the country only, but passing thru this wicked world in victory over it all. He was an overcomer indeed.

Neither did he come short in the three points pertaining to his state. He was a separatist in very deed, being in the world, but not of it. He mingled with men, but was not contaminated with their carnality. He lived unto God without being a hermit, or recluse. As to zeal, Paul was very much like his lord. The zeal of God's house ate him up. He hazarded his life for the gospel. He spared not his own life. When he had the privilege of going home to his Master, which is far better than staying here and suffering heart aches and anguish, he loved the saints so deeply that he chose to remain a while longer -- Chap. 1:23-25. Finally, as touching the righteousness which is in the law, he experienced what he taught. He "walked in the Spirit," and thus "the righteousness of the law was fulfilled in him" day by day - Rom. 8:4. What he seemingly did outwardly in the natural, he actually did inwardly and outwardly in the supernatural. He obeyed God and did His will with a perfect heart; for he was a new creation, moving in the liberty and power of the Holy Spirit. And all that is the normal state of a Pauline Christian today. The following profound words show in

detail the glorious items of gain in the new creation.

Estimate Of The Old Creation

"Yea doubtless, and I count all things loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord" - V. 8. Paul saw his family lineage traced back to Genesis, cut off by Jesus' death, because of its shameful failure. Henceforward, he gloried in a spiritual lineage traced back to Jehovah.

Therefore, he could no longer be interested in biographies and birthday parties and family reunions. My friend, can you? If you can, you are yet "carnal and walk as men." Jesus Christ refused to recognize human relationships. When some one came to Him, saying, your brethren desire to see you, He asked them, saying, "Who is my brother and my sister and my mother?" Then He answered His own question, saying, "Whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother and sister and mother" - Matt. 12:50. Let us agree with God and with Paul. "All flesh is grass." Let us act and talk like we believed it.

If we dote on any excellency in the natural, we rob Christ of the excellency that is in Him, and rob ourselves and others of the enjoyment thereof. If we magnify the old creation, we are not counting it dead; we are minifying the new creation. If we add anything to the old, we detract from the new; we rob ourselves; we rob Christ. If we add to Christ's honor by exulting in His excellencies, we add to our gain for time and for eternity. This is a truth which very few saints understand. Here is a lesson which few believers ever learn. They imagine that God is dependent upon natural gifts and attainments. Hence, people of bright minds and fluent speech usually hinder their own growth in grace and their own real usefulness. If they let the Holy Spirit take absolute control of their minds and all that they are, He will operate thru their natural makeup.

For this reason, some saints who are mentally dull, but take Christ as their life, saying, "I have the mind of Christ," surprise and excel all others by their knowledge of God and His word. And some who are slow of speech in the natural, excell in utterance by taking hold of I Cor 1:4, 5 - "In everything ye were enriched in Him (Christ), in all utterance and in all knowledge." (R. V.) Oh, how little the "knowledge of Christ Jesus" is appreciated. There is nothing to be compared with it. The Apostle saw "the excellency" of the knowledge. Hence, he sold all, that he might gain all in the new creation. He prized it above rubies. He even declares, saying, "On account of whom, I suffered the loss of All things." It hurts to give up natural gifts and prospects if we have them.

They who do not have them, often bemoan the fact and become disheartened as to their future. Tho Paul received a revelation of Christ and His glory and excellencies, it was not easy to forego all that he possessed as to his standing and state in the old creation. He had the prospects of being great and renowned in the old realm. Can I let it all go for Christ? no doubt he soliloquised. Can I bear the separation and ostracism from relatives and friends? Must I endure the pangs of reproach? I will be known "as the offscouring of all things," a fanatical follower of that poor, despised Nazarene. Can I stand it? I will be cut off forever both religiously and nationally. I will have no prestige either among my own people, the Jews, nor in the world. Can I suffer it?

Yes, he even goes so far that there is no return. He exclaims, "And I do count them dung, that I may gain Christ." Beloved, do you grasp that statement? Is it possible that anyone can have the place, prowess and prospects that Paul had, and then count it all as worth no more than a heap of refuse? Modern consecration so-called is not to be compared with that of the Apostle. It makes one feel ashamed of our professed yieldedness to God. If he termed his super excellent gains in the natural but "dung," how can we cling to our gifts and attainments and lineage? Am I an American? That goes on the dung-heap. Am I a Methodist, or a Pentecostal? That goes on the dung-heap. Do I possess wealth and influence? All must go on the dung-heap. Have I a college education? Have I a long, honored standing as an efficient pastor, or evangelist? Have I had success in the Lord's work? Am I highly respected in my community or church? All must go, that I may gain Christ in the fulness of His excellencies. All this is set forth in Paul's Seven Significant Mile-Posts.

In looking up along the race track, the Apostle beheld an object of surpassing attraction to be reached. That entrancing vision was his incentive to turn away from the very best of the old creation. The seven following mile-posts comprise the absolute requirements for arriving at that glorious goal. He points them out to us that we too may know how to run that we may win the Prize. We will consider these mile-posts one by one.

1. "That I may gain Christ" - V. 8. Is Paul here seeking salvation? No. He was saved over twenty-five years before he wrote this letter. Well, is he backslidden and now seeking to be reinstated? Perish the thought. He knew no backsliding. For over twenty-five years he had preached a

victorious Christ and planted assemblies in many places. And the Philippian assembly was flourishing and spiritual, able to take in the deep things of God. Well, what does he mean by gaining Christ? Answer -

Jesus Christ has different offices. These express His various relationships to mankind. Note particularly the following-Teacher, Shepherd, King. He might be these for personal profit or for hire, without any special interest in the people. Then note others-Redeemer, Savior, Bridegroom. These last bring Him much closer to humanity. He gave His own life-up to a cruel death to redeem men, which proves His love toward us in the past. He saves us by His very life, which proves His perpetual love toward us. "Having loved His own, He loved them unto the end" (John 13:1), because He has "loved us and loosed us from our sins in His own blood" - Rev. 1:5. As Intercessor, Jesus shows His unceasing care. Finally, the deepest and sweetest relationship, the most intimate and intricate, is that of Bridegroom. The glorious Champion of the new creation must have a Bride, a lover like unto Himself, who will truly reciprocate His profound, divine human affection and satisfy Him to the uttermost forever. Paul saw by the Spirit that it was his privilege to be one of that favored company. Therefore, he exclaimed, "I gladly forego all things, counting them refuse, that I may gain Christ as my Bridegroom and Prize." That is the meaning of Paul's untiring pursuit. All the other items named enter into winning Christ as the Prize.

2. "And be found in Him." Paul had learned what he might gain in the first Adam; but he saw surpassing gain in the Last Adam, Christ. To be in any measure in the first Adam would mar the beauty of his dwelling in Christ. Therefore, he purposed that no one should be able to find him anywhere other than absolutely in Christ. The Greek word "euretho" means found out, discovered, scented with the nose." He purposed to so live and move in the Spirit that the keenest discernment would discover him only in Christ, wholly and always in Christ, and never in the flesh, or old Adam. He speaks here of his state. The next mile post helps to clarify this one.

3. "Not having my own righteousness which is of the law, but that which is thru the faith of Christ, the righteousness of God by faith." There was no doubt in Paul's mind as to his standing before God; but he did not want one trace of self effort to be seen in going on to perfection. All must be of grace. He had repudiated forever his former legal righteousness, to which he had attained in the old creation. Now he purposed that only the righteousness of God should be seen. To be clothed manifestly with this divine righteousness is the meaning of "found in Him." This righteousness, absolutely of grace, not in any sense of law, absolutely by faith, not at all by works, is indeed a discovery of supreme gain. In short he refused to be found in the flesh. The Apostle insisted that his righteous state should be by grace thru faith, as well as his standing. He emphasized this truth in Gal. 3:1-5. One question there in particular shows this. "Are ye so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit are ye now made perfect by the flesh?" As those Galatian saints were, so are many today. They receive Christ and the Spirit by simple faith in the word; but attempt to perfect themselves by their own efforts. They hope to make the old flesh obey and receive training by rigorous rules of order and daily crucifixion, keeping days and observing feasts, etc. Paul taught that any growth, any progress, any improvement by carnal means (which some seem to experience) is not in Christ, but in the first Adam. Such does not count with God, be it ever so lovely and pious. All growth, etc. must be by the Spirit thru faith in the abounding grace of God. Feeding on Christ by believing simply the plain word of the Lord enables the new life to grow, while the old Adam, or self life is counted dead and nothing. Therefore, Paul refused to be found in any sense in the first Adam, or to bear any semblance to human righteousness.

We can scarcely emphasize this truth too strongly. We are surprised at the frequent references made to the mystics of the past. Their supposed attainments are set up as standards of Christian perfection. Their rules and strivings are put before us to be observed. Many aspire after Adamic perfection. Even as some men teach, they long to "come to Adam's perfection, into that image of God, that righteousness and holiness that Adam was in before he fell." What profit if we experienced no greater perfection than Adam did? We might fall again and be lost. Who then would redeem us? Most people do not seem to understand that Adam the first was neither righteous nor holy (tho he was sinless). If he had been holy, he would not have sinned. Thank God, Christian perfection is as much greater than Adamic perfection than Christ is greater than Adam. Christ was not only pure and free from sin, but He was also righteous and holy by Himself. When we are saved by His power, we obtain His righteous and holy life. When we grow unto perfection by scriptural rules, we enjoy His perfection. The following testimony is dangerous, because it is a false standard, having no warrant in God's word. We are in a body of humiliation

till we get our glorified bodies. This oft-quoted writer said, "I could neither desire one thing or another, but was content with whatever fell out." Jesus had His personal desires and so did Paul, but they were yielded to the will of the Father. Salvation does not destroy us. The writer continues, "The Lord took all sensibility which I had to the creatures, or created things, even in an instant, as one takes off a robe, in such a sort after that time I had none for any whatsoever. Paul terms such a state, "without natural affection." Here is more of it. "The will being perfectly dead to all its appetites, was become void of every human inclination, both natural and spiritual." Such statements sound very pious; but they are injurious. They are unscriptural, and create a striving in people after an impossible experience. They induce self effort. Sad indeed; but all aims at Adamic perfection, or at Christian perfection by carnal means, are because of ignorance of Paul's plain, victorious gospel.

4. "That I may know him" - V. 10. It is not enough to know that our sins are forgiven and that we have received the Holy Spirit. Paul sought a personal acquaintance with Him who bestowed these blessings. As if he said, I know about Jesus Christ. I know that He is an Israelite, of the seed of David. I know that He died for my sins and was raised for my justification; but I want to know Him. I can relate many facts about His parentage, etc, about His mighty miracle-working life; but I need to know Him Himself. I must have personal dealings with Jesus, which will bring me into vital, enjoyable fellowship with Him. I long to get on the inside of His very heart of love and pity and compassion, and experience His deep, personal love for me. I want to think His thoughts, feel as He feels, love as He loves, hate as He hates, move as moved by His very life. I must know the deep, hidden secrets of His tender and sweet union and fellowship with the Father, that I too may enjoy the Father somewhat as Jesus enjoys Him.

That the saints also may thus know the Lord Jesus, we teach as we do. Each of us may have personal experiences with Him and come to know Him. Indeed this is why Paul wrote his deep epistles. And by a knowledge of his writings, we are aided in becoming intimately acquainted with Jesus now, and learn how to run so as to win Him as the Prize.

5. "That I may know the power of His resurrection." The resurrection of Jesus Christ stands out distinct as an event of very special value and power. The existence and perfection of the new creation depend upon it. As by an extraordinary stroke of divine dynamics, God raised Him up "According to the working of His mighty power" - Eph. 1:19. Of course, His resurrection was the resurrection of all believers - I Cor. 15:20 -22. The Apostle was not yearning here to be raised from the dead. He was fully persuaded of that. He fervently desired to know, not the fact and time of our resurrection, but the "dynamite of Christ's resurrection." He does not write as one who knew nothing about it, but as desiring to know its power to the uttermost. In 2 Cor. 1:8-10, we learn that he had experienced something of that power. When pressed out of strength, above measure, with the sentence of death in him, Paul trusted in God who raises the dead. Therefore, his career was one of repeated deliverances. His was a poured-out life. He "died daily." That is, by yielding to God and seeking His glory and the highest good of mankind, he was continually put to it. He always had more to do than was possible for him to do. He needed superhuman wisdom and strength to perform the will of God and suffer the attendant pain and disappointments and anguish of soul. Did he not need resurrection power to "fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ for His Body's sake?" - Col. 1:24. How could he ever have endured what he did save by divine enabling? Impossible!

What a profound truth lies here. All those who run with Paul to win in this race must run in the same way as did he. It is a career of life out of death, dynamite out of weakness. We too "die daily," but live perpetually by the risen life of Another, even Christ. This is exactly the meaning. By moving in God's perfect will in pursuit of the Prize, we live a life which could not be lived in this fragile body apart from supernatural enabling. We live as if we were dwelling already in our resurrection bodies for these bodies are counted dead because of sin. We have the same marvelous truth in Rom. 8:11 - "If the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from among the dead dwell in you; He that raised up Christ from among the dead shall also quicken (make alive) your mortal (dying, subject to death) bodies thru His Spirit that dwelleth in you." The very glorious power which will burst the tombs of the saints is our only and ever ready enabling to do and suffer and run victoriously in this Spiritual race.

6. "And the fellowship of His sufferings." Points four to seven are an inseparable quadruple. In suffering with Christ and becoming conformed to His death, we learn the power of His resurrection. Jesus was misunderstood by His own chosen disciples. They sought to instruct Him

and correct Him. When His cross was in sight and He should have had their deepest sympathy and concern, they fell into a strife as to who should be the greatest after He would leave them - Luke 22. Their carnal notions and ambitions caused Him deep anguish of spirit.

As Paul went on with the Lord, he suffered similar trials. The persecutions from the world were not the most painful sufferings. The indifference, carnality, selfishness, make-believe, fleshly boasting, envy, strife and unholy ambitions of his own people wrung his heart. Thru these things, he had fellowship with Christ in His sufferings. Indeed he filled up the afflictions of Christ for the sake of the Church, His Body. Likewise all we who go the Pauline route, have the same distressing, heart-breaking experiences. Jeremiah "sat alone;" but he was in God's perfect will. Paul wrote, "All they in Asia have forsaken me." It is the same way today. The small few are absolutely out for Jehovah and stand firmly for all the truth and His perfect will. "He that is spiritual discerneth ALL things, but is discerned of NO man." And he suffers with Christ to the extent that he discerns. "The Wife of the Lamb" will be exactly like the Lamb Himself; therefore, the racers for the Prize must be.

7. "Made conformable to His death." Jesus died to everything and everybody. He died daily, being in jeopardy every hour, even as Paul said of himself. But for divine intervention, He would have been slain over and over. And more; Jesus experienced inward pain and sorrow during His life down here which would have ended His days had he not been sustained by the Father. Consider His temptation in the wilderness. It was so terrible that the angels had to come and minister to Him. That was not the only fight He had; for Satan left Him only for a season. Study Jesus' garden agony. His "sweat was as it were great drops of blood, falling down to the ground." His agony was so great that it seemed as if He were sweating His very life away in crying to God that He might not be made sin for men. The Apostle went this route to know the power of Christ's resurrection. And you and I will go the same route if we learn it. Surely if we walk in the Spirit, we will need to make heavy and frequent drafts on Christ's resurrection life and power. Otherwise we will succumb. The frivolous lightness of religious people overwhelms us. The shallow success of the famous tends to discourage us. The response of the many to fleshly demonstrations rather than to the simple, sweet Word of God, grieves us. The sluggish lack of activity on the part of those who receive the Spirit breaks our hearts. The opposition of "false brethren;" the criticism and malignity of those who should be in fellowship with us and praying for us wound us beyond healing except by divine ointment. The falling away of some from light and truth, once enjoyed, pains us unspeakably. Truly, we are being conformed to the death of Christ, and thus are coming to know the dynamite of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings. By drinking continually of the reigning life now and living above all the present vicissitudes, we are being fitted to reign with Jesus Christ forever and forever. "The righteous shall hold on his way and grow stronger and stronger," "being persuaded of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ."

PAUL'S FINAL AIM

"If by any means, I may arrive into the resurrection out from among the dead" - chap. 3:11. Thank God for the race course, and for the victorious racer. I thank the Lord for the words of the Apostle Paul concerning the racers and the race course. I praise God for the Holy Spirit who has opened the eyes of some saints to understand these wonderful truths and who has wrought in their hearts a desire to run for the Prize. Now we must take somewhat of a review of our last lesson in order to get the connection. The fellow that makes a big jump, first takes a hop and then a step, and those two movements enable him to make the final leap. Last month, we had the hop and the step, and today we want to make the leap. The four items relating to Paul's standing in the natural and the three items relating to his state in the natural as a religious man, were his seven gains. He says, I count those seven things and all things loss on account of the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord. No matter how poor a thing you have, if it has some value you cannot count it loss unless something better is offered in its stead. If a baby has a glittering razor in its hand and thinks it to be beautiful, that baby will fight for that razor and possibly take its own life in holding to it, unless the mother can offer something more glittering and attractive to induce that child to drop the dangerous article. Hold up a bright, shining apple or orange and the baby will let the razor drop without any harm. Just so, God is holding up to us some glittering attractions from the skies to induce us to drop the world's razors with which men are cutting their throats all the time. In reality, those gains were only razors to Saul of Tarsus to cut him away from Christ and His glory. When he saw the greater and more wonderful things, they all dropped. Of

course, those gains were not razors, as to the natural; therefore, he gave them up reluctantly. He suffered the loss of all things and counted them refuse that he might win Christ and be found in Him.

People give different interpretations to chapter 3. The legalist and the fellow that does not know the Bible tell us that Paul was running to obtain eternal life. They claim that he was seeking by all means to so live that he would be saved at the end of his career. I flatly contradict that statement. Paul never was running for something that he was already enjoying. He had already obtained eternal life thru faith in Jesus Christ. Only he who is really enjoying life eternal can step out upon this race track. Only the citizen of an oriental country, either by birth or by legal adoption, could enter upon the race course in those times. Only a citizen of the heavenly country, or of the kingdom of God has any right or privilege to enter upon this heavenly race course. By the new birth, we are introduced to the race, being born of racing stock; therefore, we may choose to run. Paul was looking forward to a resurrection, not only out from among all the dead, saved and unsaved, but out from among the sleeping saints. There are two resurrections. "The first resurrection" (Rev. 20:6) includes all the believing dead and will culminate at the beginning of the millennium. I Cor. 15 tells us about this resurrection, but records nothing about the wicked dead. The wicked dead will be raised at the end of the millennium- Rev. 20:5. Paul saw the possibility of coming up from the tomb ahead of the other saints of the Church, and for that he was running, and that hope he sets before us in this lesson. That hope was confirmed to him by the out-resurrection of certain Old Testament saints from among all Israel. Comp. Matt. 27:52, 53 with Heb. 11:35.

The Greek word, "exanastasin," translated "resurrection" in verse 11, is built out of three words -- "ex," meaning out of, "ana," meaning up, and "histemi," to make to stand, to place. Hence, the word in its fulness means, "standing up out of, or out from among." The Greek word, "katanteso," rendered here "might attain," means may arrive, which implies a journey. Therefore, Paul persisted in running so that if by any means he might arrive into the out-resurrection, up from among other sleeping saints. He too refused deliverance that he might "obtain a better resurrection." Some men admit the correctness of this translation; but would persuade us that Paul was running to be raised ahead of his Jewish friends. That is simply foolish. He did not write this letter to his Jewish friends as Jews; but he wrote this letter to a congregation that was believing on Jesus Christ, whether made up of Jews or Gentiles; because "in Jesus Christ there is neither Jew or Gentile."

"I press toward the goal for the Prize of the high (upward) calling" -- V. 14. If the Apostle had run only to be raised ahead of his Jewish people, he would have said, I press toward the goal for the high calling, instead of the prize of that calling. There was no question about his resurrection with the Church. His standing in Christ, the fact that he enjoyed God's eternal salvation, assured him of that hope. He was certain of being a partaker of the "calling on high." But oh, that super excellent, glittering splendor in the corridors in glory - that was his untiring quest. He knew that he would be raised ahead of the Old Testament saints, because he was a member of the Body of Christ. Earth-dwelling Israel will not be members of that Body. Paul was after the Prize. In order to obtain that, he must reach a certain goal. That goal is the glorious, ahead-of-time out-resurrection from among the whole of the Church which sleeps in the grave, as to the body. Not all believers are after the Prize. Some do not know about such a reward. Nevertheless, they will be rewarded for their faithfulness. Others know about it, but, as is sometimes said, they are not willing to pay the price. They do not care to run. A slow, leisurely pace is fast enough for them. Running is too strenuous an exercise. It brings out the perspiration and demands invigoration. It requires a clean-cut separation and a whole-hearted determination. Why not? Christ as the Bridegroom is set over against all that is good and great and beautiful and wonderful in this world, even in the religious world. Is He not worth forsaking all and running after, with all the heart and soul? Is He not worth counting all things loss? Is He not worth every effort to arrive at the out-resurrection, a better resurrection? Not every one has been entranced by the love sparkle in our Lord's lovely eyes. Not every one has been wooed by His sweet voice and tender love touch.

Paul in Pursuit

"Not that already I received, or already have been perfected; but I am pursuing if also I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended by Christ Jesus" - V. 12. Christ laid hold of, or apprehended us for the Prize. The Apostle was persuaded of this fact. He said to the Corinthian

congregation, "I espoused you to one Husband, that I might present a chaste virgin to Christ" -- 2 Cor. 11:2. Therefore, he started in pursuit of the Prize, and is striving to induce others to follow him. Here is wise caution expressed by Paul's attitude. Often saints are heard to say, I know that I will be in the Bride. Our beloved brother Paul did not say that. No one can really so speak while still running in the race. He dared not say that he had received the Prize; for he had not yet reached the goal, that is, the out-resurrection. Neither can any of us say it till after the trumpet blows and it becomes a fact.

We have heard people say that they already have their glorified bodies. Paul said, I have not yet been perfected, raised from the dead. Jesus had said, "The third day I will be perfected" - Luke 13:32. He was perfected thru suffering death, which implied His resurrection - Heb. 2:9, 10. Of course, we know that when people claim to have a resurrected body, either they are demented or dishonest. Their wrinkles, artificial teeth, need of food and, sleep, etc., prove that they are miserably mistaken. On the other hand, we may join the Apostle with unswerving earnestness and say, "But I am pursuing," since there is a possibility of me winning in the race. If Christ has laid hold of me for the Prize, I purpose to run that I may lay hold of Him as the Prize. What Paul may obtain, I also may obtain if "so run."

"Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended," -- V. 13. Why does the Apostle repeat this statement about not having apprehended? First, because of the presumption into which some plunge in claiming to be sure of the reward already. Second, he dares to say that he has laid hold of "one thing," even the perfection mentioned in verse 15. His heart was perfect toward God. He had fully apprehended the fixed purpose of an undivided heart to meet every condition to gain the Prize. Daniel purposes in his heart that he would not be defiled with the king's meat. They who enter upon the race course with a question mark after their steps will not win out. This fixed purpose, this perfect heart, is indicated by the next three expressed attitudes-forgetting, stretching, chasing after.

"Forgetting the things which are behind," is a rare attitude. Very, very few actually, practically, persistently, joyously FORGET. A good forgettery toward all the things behind is absolutely essential to successful racing. This is the climacteric attitude toward past things. He had already counted all his natural gains loss for Christ. He had suffered deeply in thus counting. He went a step further, which would seem like the uttermost step, and reckoned all things dung that he might gain Christ. But here, discovering that he still has a memory and by-gone things clamor for attention, he finds it necessary to exercise a new faculty, even his forgettery. We know the real value of this exercise, or attitude, by putting it in practice. Beloved, are you really forgetting the things which are behind?

"And stretching forward to the things which are before." The Apostle employed the strongest word to express his thought. He was stretching out and up to the uttermost by his God-given enablings to the things before him. What things are before the racer? What did Paul see ahead? We learned in verses 9 and 10 that he suffered the loss of all natural gains that he might gain Christ with His many excellencies. That seven-fold gain may be enjoyed on earth. Evidently those gains are among the things that lie along the racetrack. He was stretching out and up after them in view of obtaining the object of pursuit. The things before, of course, far exceed the things behind. The contrast between the two is indescribably great.

"I press toward the mark for the Prize" - v. 14. The words "follow after" in verse 12 are the same as the words "Press toward" in this verse. They mean to pursue, to hunt, to seek after, to run for with unflagging earnestness. When a lad, I went with my brother at nights in pursuit of game. Sometimes we had to climb over high fences, make our way thru underbrush, or swampy places, or dense forests. We would watch around a tree for hours lest the coon would descend and escape. Or we would fell the tree to catch the game. Often this continued till after midnight. We were determined to seize hold of the objects of search. And to do so, we had to forget work, rest and sleep and press thru or over every obstacle. We had to be overcomers. And what did we gain? Coon or skunk; that was all. How much more should we gladly push past every obstacle, rise over or tread down every hindrance to gain eternal spoil! The last four verses of Rom. 8 give us a bird's eye view of the strenuousness of the pursuit. The Apostle asks, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" This question has no reference to losing our salvation. It does not say, Who shall separate us from the power of Christ? But who shall hinder us from winning the highest reward? is the meaning. He answers by a sevenfold detailed query - "Shall tribulation, or anguish, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?" Then he brings from the

Old Testament a flesh-cringing statement - "For Thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter." Indeed, the race for the highest heavenly reward is a daily dying route. But hearken to the certain note of the triumph of faith - "Nay, in all these things, we do more than overcome (Gr.) thru Him who loved us." Some declare that no one overcomes, thus making Satan stronger than the Lord. Others would be satisfied if they did overcome; but Paul exclaims, "We do MORE than overcome." Then with holy eloquence, the Apostle challenges all time and all space to produce any successful obstacle. He shouts, "For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creation, SHALL BE ABLE to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

The Goal And The Quest

"I pursue toward the goal in quest of the Prize." What is the goal? We have before seen that the out-resurrection is the goal, or mark to be reached. That is the end of the race. Hence, Paul said, "I have not yet been perfected." I have not arrived at the out-resurrection. The "first resurrection," the resurrection of all believers, is not the goal. No saint has to run in this life to be raised with the rest of all the saints. Our salvation by Christ guarantees our rising from the dead in Christ. "As in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all (believers) be made alive, but every man in his own order" - I Cor. 15:22. Paul purposed to be raised with those who will be in the first order, or rank.

Therefore, he had said before, "I am pursuing, if by any means I may arrive into the resurrection out from among the dead," that is, be raised before the other saints are raised. He so ran that he might be raised in Christ's rank; for "Christ, the first-fruit of them that sleep" was "raised from among dead ones" - I Cor. 15:20, Gr. The out-resurrection, then, is the goal for the full overcomer. "I pursue toward the goal in quest of the Prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" - v. 14. This verse confronts us with three outstanding thoughts - the goal (which we have considered), the Prize and the high calling. Observe now that the object sought is not the high calling, but the Prize of that calling. This is a very important distinction. To understand this distinction clearly is to appreciate more deeply what has been said before, especially about the goal. The entire Church of Christ shares in the high, or upward calling. That is, the Church, the Body of Christ, is called to dwell in the heavens; while Israel is called, to dwell only upon the earth. On account of this upward calling, Paul exhorts the Ephesian saints, "Walk worthily of the vocation (calling) wherewith ye were called" -- Eph. 4:2. Also to the Colossians, he said, "Set your minds on things above (on high), where Christ is" - Col. 3:1, 2. The Apostle was not running in quest of the calling. He was certain that heaven would be his eternal destiny and home. He entertained no fear that he might be an earth-dweller. But there was a high point in the high calling which caught his eye of faith and hope. That was the object of his pursuit. That is none other than Christ as the Bridegroom. There could be no loftier and fuller reward than to be the Bride of the Man in the glory. He will be the most attractive figure in the universe; for the Father has already highly exalted Him and given Him a name that is above every name. He has given Him to be Head over all things in behalf of the Church, which is His Body. That Body will culminate in glory in three distinct companies - 1st. The four living ones and twenty four elders, representing the highest order, or rank - Rev. 4 and 5. 2nd. The countless company of Rev. 7. 3rd. The manly son of Rev. 12. The first group named is evidently the Bride group, for they bear certain marks of super excellence above the others. They have eyes before and behind; that is, they are full of discernment. They lead and excel in worship. They are seen in and around the throne. They wear crowns. They share in the most responsible acts performed in closing this age and in bringing in the next age. In a word, the four living ones and twenty-four elders (one company, shown in the two aspects of worship and rulership) occupy the place with the King which only a Bride could have. They must "meet the Lord in the air," when He descends to set up His throne "in the sides of the north" (Isa. 14:13), as John saw it - Rev. 4:1-6. Therefore, they must be caught away before Jesus assumes control of the affairs on earth, symbolized by His standing on land and sea - Rev. 10. The out-resurrection and out-translation are imperative.

Study the next section closely, and

Heed The Exhortation --

"Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded" - v. 16. Paul knew that he maintained "a single eye to God's glory." He had the witness of the Holy Spirit in his own heart that he was well-pleasing to God in his walk and work. Like Enoch (Heb. 11:5, 6), he believed God concerning this special favor which He offered to him. And he had evidences that some of his

people also were whole-hearted and were running side by side with him for the Prize. And some saints are perfect today as to their attitude of heart to the Lord.

There is an important reason for the exhortation to "be thus minded," to forget the things that are past, stretch forth toward the things that are set before and pursue persistently unto the goal. The warnings of I Thess. 5 prove the importance of the exhortation. "Ye are all sons of light and sons of day; we are not of night nor of darkness." The Apostle cannot be speaking here of all believers; for most believers are not sons in experience, but children only. Hence, he adds, "Therefore, let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober." The "others" who sleep are careless children of God. Sinners are not asleep; they are "dead in trespasses and sins." We know that many believers are not watchful; neither are they sober, but drunken with pleasures or the cares of this life. The "day" and the "light" really end when Jesus takes His throne in the air, for "the times of the Gentiles" will close when He, the Jew, will set His one foot on the land and the other on the sea, thus asserting His authority to reign over the earth - Rev. 10. From that moment on will be "night" and "darkness." The nations' conduct will be absolutely out of divine order. The kings will rule as usurpers, because it will be time for Jewish dominion. Even the saints, who still will be on earth, will not be in God's perfect will. They ought to be gone from the earth before the Jewish times begin. Of course, it will be the time of Daniel's last week of seven years; but that too will be an intrusion. That week was fulfilled from the resurrection of Christ to the conversion of Saul of Tarsus; but the Jews did not accept it. Jesus, thru Stephen, offered them the kingdom and stood up ready to return, if they had received Him - Acts 7:54-67. For this reason, Dan. 9:27 is a prophetic announcement of what will happen, not as being in the will of God, but because His will was rejected. That will be a period of nearly seven years of unparalleled trouble and sorrow, of darkness and anguish, because the whole world will be in rebellion against Jehovah.

Note I Thess. 5:8, 9 R.V. -- "We being of the day should be sober, having put on a breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet, salvation's hope; because God has not set us into wrath, but into obtaining salvation thru our Lord Jesus Christ." Does "salvation" here refer to deliverance from sin? By no means. Paul is writing to and of those who have been saved from sin. He is referring to salvation from the night and darkness of that dreadful time of the culmination of man's rebellion. All the Church should escape it; but some will not escape, because they sleep and are drunken. They are drowsy toward God's highest will, and indifferent to His counsels. Paul's warnings are meant to help all the saints to escape that time of "wrath." Consequently, because the Church generally refuses to heed the Apostle's loving and earnest entreaties to be prepared to hear the first trumpet blast, they will remain here during the period of trouble and wrath. The great majority of believers will "come out of the great tribulation" that is, the seven years, or "hour of trial" (Rev. 3:10 and 7:14); but to Philadelphia saints, Jesus says, "Because thou hast kept (gave heed to) the word of my patience, I also will keep (give heed to) thee out of the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world to try them that dwell upon the earth." Should we wonder at the exhortation that follows from His lips? "Behold, I come quickly; hold fast what thou hast that no man take thy crown." Oh, what precious, comforting words to the whole-hearted believers. No one need fail to run the race victoriously.

A Precious Proviso

"And if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you!" -- V. 15. How easy the Holy Spirit seeks to make the racing for us. Every detail of qualification is provided for. It pleased God to reveal to us thru Paul the highest purpose of redemption, even a Bride for His dear Son. He has revealed the plan by which we may become a part of that company. Then He vouchsafes to reveal every minute item necessary for our perfection. Anything, small or great, that might interfere with speedy running; anything that will add to the smoothest and swiftest running, will be revealed to us. Thank God! This has been a decided comfort to me for a long time. As long as my heart is fixed on knowing and doing the will of God, I have nothing to fear or question. Satan cannot worry me with thinking whether I am "measuring up," or not, especially when it may seem that I am making no progress, or when I am passing thru a sore trial. The Apostle says, "Yea, I examine not mine own self; for I know nothing against myself; yet I am not hereby justified; but He that examineth me is the Lord" - I Cor. 4:4. We should maintain the same stand. Then, if our Examiner finds a kink in our racing anywhere, He will notify us in due time.

"Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule (canon), let us mind the same thing" -- V. 16. How tenderly our beloved brother Paul entreats us, reminding us

continually that he is in the race with us, by saying, "Let us." This is a gracious verse, full of encouragement, especially after understanding the deep meaning of some of its words. The word "attained" means "to come in first, to outstrip." It is altogether a different word from "attained" (received) in verse 12. The word "walk" means "to stand in line, or rank, to walk straight." Hence, the Apostles really say to what extent we have already out-stripped others, or come in ahead, let us continue to walk in our rank by the same rule of outstripping. Then note his vigorous exhortation.

"Brethren, be ye imitators together of me." Certainly, Paul must have known that he was in God's perfect will in holding up this high standard for Christians to imitate. What flaw can any honest man find in his life? Even brother Peter had to record to Paul's credit the highest honor (2 Pet. 3:15, 16), tho Paul reproved him once for letting down concerning the grace of God - Gal. 2:11-15. Not only so, but he admonishes us to "mark those who walk around," and contrast them with himself. The Greek for "walk" in verse 16 is "stoichein," to walk straight; but in verses 17 and 18 it is from "Peripatio," to walk about, to stroll, to discuss philosophy, like Aristotle. What a dark picture of such walkers in verse 18.

"For many are strolling around, of whom I often told you, and now even weeping, I tell you; they are the enemies of the cross of Christ." This speaks of believers who are not walking with Paul, hence, are not running for the Prize. He met them everywhere. No doubt some of them were converts under his own ministry, and that is what caused him to weep. If he were here today, he would still have occasion to weep; for there are many such perambulators here now. What does Paul mean by "enemies of the cross of Christ"? He means that, by their conduct, they belie the power of Christ's death. They profess to be Christians, but live like the world. By His death on Calvary, Jesus put away our sins; therefore, we, who profess His name, should have victory over them. We are thus known as the friends of the cross. The God of the Bible, of the prophets and apostles, is the overcomer's God; but he who is overcome, yields to the flesh; he lives to eat and frolic, or make money. His God is his flesh. Even his religious activities are for his own ends, giving out his own theories, getting to himself a name, denying the power of Christ to keep. In a word, he "minds earthly things." Of course, "his end will be destruction." If he is saved, his work will be burned. His glory will be a heap of "shame." It is sad, but true, that they who deny divine healing for the body and turn to human doctors, to that extent are enemies of the cross; for "by His stripes we were healed." They who reject the Gift of the Holy Spirit are its enemies also; for Christ's death purchased the anointing for us. To reject any blessing which Christ's death has made possible for us is to prove that we are enemies of the cross in that respect. A full-fledged friend of Calvary accepts all that it has purchased.

"For our commonwealth exists in the heavens, from which also we are awaiting, as Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our body of humiliation that it may become conformed to the body of His glory, according to the working of His power even to subdue to Himself all things" -- Vs. 20,21, R.V. This verse connects directly with verse 17, verses 18 and 19 being parenthetical. What a glorious ending to this matchless race-course chapter. It began by an exhortation to "rejoice in the Lord;" but culminates with being with the Lord and like Him. Hallelujah! Not simply our "citizenship, or commonwealth" (Greek, politeuma) exists where our Lord dwells. Knowing this, we can well afford to be poor down here. If this be true, and no spiritual saint can doubt it, then racers for the heavenly Prize have no desire to hold civil offices nor help others to be elected. Indeed, they do not wish to be cumbered with any kind of an office that the Scripture does not impose. They "lay aside every weight" - Heb. 12:1.

Overcomers wait for one object only- the Lord from heaven. He is their chief concern, so that they persistently refuse to be concerned or interested in anything that does not interest the Lord.

"What wilt Thou have me to do?" is their habitual attitude of heart. "Christ pleased not Himself," but His Father - Rom. 15:3. How much more should we seek to "please God, who trieth our hearts" - 1 Thess. 2:4. How can we please Him more than by believing in His coming and by listening for the first trumpet blast? Jesus offers a special reward to those who "keep the word of His patience." He will "keep them from the hour of (worldwide) trial" - Rev. 3:10.

Thank God! He will not take us to heaven in our present physical condition. He will transform us and make us fit for that upward abode. The phrase, "vile body," does not express Paul's meaning here. The Greek is not "atimia" (Rom. 1:26), or "hruparos" (Jas. 2:2), but "tapeinosis," meaning low estate, abasement, humiliation. We are now cumbered with infirmities. We have to eat, and sometimes the food hurts us. We must sleep, and sometimes our sleep is unavoidably disturbed.

We grow weary in mind and body, and need rest. There is a limitation to our years on earth. Even Methuselah's longevity came to an end. Sometimes we forget, or we say the wrong word, or do not hear quite correctly. We are burdened with imperfections as to the body. Certainly we could not wish to be borne aloft with our imperfections and weaknesses; nor need we. Our Lord will change our form,

"And fashion us like unto (Gr. summorphon) the body of His glory." What wonderful hope! Pause and consider. Bear in mind that this hope is not for the careless believer. Paul said, "Our body," or rather, "our humiliation," referring to himself and those moving in his rank according to the rule of out-stripping - V. 16. In this body of low estate, overcoming saints "die daily, killed all the day long, death working in them." They are constant miracles of existence, tho not so known generally, because they do not trumpet their trials and toils abroad. They live by the life and wisdom of Another, even Jesus who is their life. "We have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the surpassingness of the dynamite may be of God and not out from us; in all things oppressed, but not straightened; perplexed, but not utterly at a loss; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed; always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus (dying daily similarly to His), that also the life of Jesus may be manifested in our body" - 2 Cor. 4.

Out of all that and as a reward for it all, our glorious Lord will deliver us and give us a glorified body compensating us for our pains and anguish on earth. It is written (I Cor. 15:41) that there is "one glory of the sun and another glory of the moon and another glory of the stars." Is not the glory of the material sun the exact reflection of the glory of the Son of righteousness? And will not His glory excel in greatness and splendor all other glories Ah, yes. If then, our bodies shall be fashioned like unto the body of Christ's glory, what sort of glorified body will full overcomers possess, but the highest order of glory? Their dazzling splendor and brilliant radiance, will eclipse the sun in the sky, tho it shine seven times brighter than before, during the millennium. Therefore, the holy city will have no need of the sun; for the "Lord God and the lamb are the light thereof." This glorious hope is to be entertained steadfastly without any question, because it shall be accomplished, not according to our infirmities, but "according to the working of His might even to subdue to Himself all things." Being able in Himself to "arrange under" Himself all things, He is fully competent to place the full overcomers nearest to Himself and make them just like unto Himself and grant them to share with Himself the crown of His eternal glory. Amen and amen! The last two verses of this chapter refer to the out-translation of full overcomers who will be alive when the trumpet shall sound. The Apostle was not occupied with the out-resurrection, but with the Prize. Hence, "Whether awake or asleep" (living or dead - I Thess. 5:10), he purposed to meet Christ in the air. Verse 14 suggests the out-translation; for why does he repeat himself in speaking of his persistence in running? Indeed, when describing the manner of the catching away of the saints (I Thess. 4:16, 17), he implies the hope of being alive when Jesus comes; for he says, "We which are alive," etc. Thank God, the victors who are asleep in Jesus -- the Smyrna saints -- will rise first; then the Victors who will be alive - the Philadelphia saints - will be changed, and both together ascend to meet the Lord in the air. The former will enjoy the out-resurrection, and the latter, the out-translation; and both be clothed with "a body like unto His glory."

This I Know

Mary M. Bodie

I know not what the days may bring
Of sorrow, loss or pain.
But this I know what'er betide
'Twill be for me a gain.
I know not where my path may lead
Thru strange or winding way,
But this I know - the end will bring
The Christ, and perfect day.
I know not what tears I'll shed
In days that loom before,
But this I know - His grace will be
Same as in years of yore.
I know not as I journey on
What storms may menace me,

But this I know - He will not fail,
Who calmed the troubled sea.
I know not when life's day will close,
At morn or night or noon;
But this I know - He will take me
Far up beyond the moon.
CHRIST, THE STRENGTH FOR RACERS
SERMON FIVE
Chapter Four

"Therefore, my brethren, dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, thus stand fast in the Lord, dearly beloved" - V. 1. We have seen that Christ is the necessary Life of Christian racers; for without His life in us, we could never enter upon this race course. We saw also Christ, as the Pattern Racer, whom we should imitate if we would reach the goal in due time. Then we beheld with wonder that Christ is the super-glorious Prize for which all real racers run. Based upon these three facts, amplified in the three preceding chapters, the Apostle offers the exhortations and reflections in this chapter. Hence, the chapter begins with "Therefore." And here we behold Christ as our Strength, or sufficient Enabling, to run successfully.

Note the deep tenderness with which Paul addresses his fellow-racers. Twice in this chapter, he calls them "brethren." Twice in the first verse, he terms them "dearly beloved." Did he aim to flatter them by regarding them as his "joy and crown"? Oh, no. They had proved such a steadfast comfort and inspiration to him up to that time, that he held fast to his faith expressed in chap. 1:6. They had already become so deeply rooted and highly built up in Christ, that he entertained no fears of their finale. He simply admonished them to "stand fast," not in their own wisdom and strength, but "in the Lord," even as they had done hitherto.

There are nine admonitions in the first nine verses, and a final one in verse 21. He gives this church a complimentary word, such as he could give to no other, because of their very special concern for him. Then he assures them of God's very special care of them, witnessing to God's faithfulness in his own behalf, as an evidence thereof. The Christ who had been his ample wisdom and might for faithful warfare and racing, would also "be to them the same. Twelve strengthening and comforting statements which we will consider, grace this chapter and crown the Epistle.

Euodias and Syntyche

Evidently these two women were active and responsible sisters in the assembly. The Apostle's words imply that there was some difference between them. The meanings of their names indicate different gifts and activities, which doubtless occasioned mutual criticism. Euodias means a good journey, a sweet scent. She represents the prayer life of a Christian, which emits a perfume pleasing to the God of grace. Syntyche means to meet and speak with, and represents an active life of ministering to others. The former speaks of worship; the latter speaks of service. The former is Godward; the latter is manward. Acts 6:4 expresses both of these ministries - "We will give ourselves continually to prayer (Euodias) and to the ministry of the Word (Syntyche). These two qualities combine to make a well balanced Christian. An active believer who does not pray, is not likely to act in the right way. A praying believer is certain to become a working believer; for real, effective service flows out from real worship toward God. Euodias and Syntyche should be seen in every saint.

.... "True yokefellow." And who is he? The inference is that he was the pastor of that flock in Philippi. The Epistle is addressed to all the saints and bishops and deacons -- Chap. 1:1. Here Paul turns abruptly and speaks to his "true yoke fellow." Consider also that each of the singled-out seven churches of Asia were invariably addressed by John thru "the angel," or pastor of that congregation - Rev. 2 and 3. The nature of the exhortation indicates the same thought. "Those women, which labored with" Paul, were possibly some, or all of the eight women mentioned in Rom. 16; for example, Phoebe and Priscilla. They assisted him in various places, and it is probable that some of them were toiling in the gospel in Philippi when Paul wrote this Epistle. Certainly there is no Scripture warrant for speaking flippantly about women's work in the church, as many do. Why does the Apostle here require for them equal care with Clement and others of his fellowlaborers if they are not in divine order?

Again we ask, who is a true yokefellow? Anyone who takes upon his neck the other end of the

same yoke and bears the full Gospel of matchless grace to a needy world. Anyone who stands shoulder to shoulder with the Apostle Paul in his arduous, self-sacrificing ministry of prayer and service. Indeed the entire Philippian assembly were true yokefellows; and so may we be also, by divine enabling. Who will deliberately put his neck under the other end of Paul's yoke? The phrase, "labored with," scarcely expresses the full weight of the toil of those co-workers when the yokefellow was admonished to aid. The verb, "sonathelo," Gr., means to "contend along with, to share, or take part in a contest;" therefore, rather they "strove together" with Paul against the enemy of the cross. He was "set for the defense of the Gospel," and they were set thus with him. Labor is never as strenuous as a contest. Toil may be heavy; but fighting is fierce. "The book of life" is that which God has written, and which He calls "My book" - Ex. 32:32, 33. It is "the book of life of the Lamb" (Rev. 13:8 and 17:8), from whose pages no names can ever be erased. Can any power obliterate what has been engraven upon the palms of His hands? - Isa. 49:16.

"Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say, Rejoice" - V. 4. We observed Paul's mutual rejoicing with the saints -- Chap. 2:17, 18. We saw that chapter 3 was introduced with an exhortation to "rejoice in the Lord," especially because of our deliverance from legality and carnality. Here he adds always, and emphasizes the admonition to rejoice. Surely, one of the most essential features of winning the Prize is rejoicing continually in the Lord. We dare not exult in our victories, nor achievements, nor blessings; but we should ever rejoice in Christ Jesus and have no confidence in the flesh.

"Let your moderation be known unto all men." The word moderation is forbearance, or gentleness, in the Revised Version. It is also rendered yieldedness, or clemency. "The Lord is at hand," to enable us to maintain a victorious and winning attitude toward others as we run on the race course. For this reason, we are admonished to be "anxious for nothing." Martha was "careful (anxious) and troubled about many things; but one thing is needful," said Jesus -- Luke 10: 41. Many things arise, not only personal and family affairs, but important matters pertaining to the Lord's work. Nevertheless, "be anxious for nothing;" for anxiety is not faith. Anxiety really leaves God out; but "prayer and supplication" find Him on hand. Prayer (Gr., proseuche) here means worship, while supplication (Gr., deesai) means a cry, or entreaty because of need. To call upon the Lord "with thanksgiving" shows that we really expect an answer. "Faith is the victory," not loud words, repeated over and over again and again. Many people have the wrong conception of prayer. Supplication does not mean that we must coax the Lord, or persuade Him; but it means that we actually lay hold of the supply set before us, not in a halfhearted way, but by vigorous, persistent faith that knows no denial. Furthermore, prayer and supplication plant their feet upon the fact of Christ's death and resurrection, by which God has put His infinite resources at the disposal of our faith. On this ground, Jesus exclaimed, "Ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you." The "importunity" of Luke 11:8 has its root in the redemption of Christ. God will rise and pardon Israel and fully supply their national need because Jesus has redeemed them. For the same reason, or on the same basis, He meets us when we make our requests known unto Him "with thanksgiving." The answer desired may not come at once; but a greater thing will be granted, as witness the following verse.

"And the peace of God, which passeth understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus." The word keep is "phrouresi" in Greek, which means to guard, or garrison by trained soldiers in military array. Compare 2 Cor. 11:32. Israel was thus kept or guarded under the law (Gal. 3:23), a stern, relentless soldiery. Thru faith, we are now garrisoned by the power (dynamite) of God, awaiting Jesus' coming -- I Pet. 1:5. And Paul declares that our soldiery is a garrison of peace, standing guard around our hearts and thoughts, (R.V.). Surely we need such divine military guardianship; for often we are perplexed, cast down, beset by Satan, persecuted by men, our frail castle being storm-driven and bombarded from every side. Thank God, we are "in Christ Jesus," and shall there be safely guarded by "the peace of God." That peace surpasses all understanding, because it is divine.

"Whatsoever things are true, etc., think on these things" - V. 8. Here is employment for busy brains. Six "whatsoevers" of rarest value engage the consideration of racers who purpose to run to the end and gain the glorious Prize. We may expect to find all these six things in what we "have learned and received and heard and seen in" dear Paul. Hence, he boldly exhorts us to "DO" those things. Paul's doctrine and practice are our only safe rule of running on the Christian race course. Therefore, he adds, "And the God of Peace shall be with you." Not only shall "the peace of God" guard us in military fashion, but the Author of that peace, as the great Captain of

His invisible army that garrisons our hearts and thoughts, shall be ever on the battlefield.

Complimentary Words

"But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now at last your care (thinking) of me hath flourished again, wherein ye were also careful (thoughtful), but ye lacked opportunity." The Macedonian saints are set before all Christendom as the most commendatory examples of liberality. Their spirit of giving is the basis of a splendid symposium on the use of money, which all believers do well to study - 2 Cor. 8 and 9. And here he remarks, "When I departed from Macedonia no church communicated with me as concerning giving and receiving, but ye only" - V. 1.6. "Not that I speak in respect of want." Paul kept his personal needs to himself. He blew his trumpet up to the Lord only, not to the people. He practiced verse 6. Oh, that Christian workers would study his life, and cease to be chronic beggars at the doors of poor, hard working saints. What a burlesque that any of us should nudge up to the rich, tickle their chins, flatter them and give them place and prominence in order to get their financial aid. Of course, if you start out in dependence upon the flesh, you must keep it up. Not so with Paul. Not so with all Christ's ministers. Brother Paul said, "I have learned in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content." Very few learn that important lesson. Further he said, "I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound." Note the order of Gospel schooling. If we do not learn the former, we will never know the latter. God cannot trust us with plenty, till we know how to get along with nothing. Be content with little, and we are being fitted to be entrusted with much. The writer of these pages has gone this very route. My heart bubbles up with deep thanksgiving to God for leading me this way, and for showing me why. But note the Apostle's further experience.

"Everywhere and in all things, I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need." The word, instructed, means literally "to be initiated into the mysteries." Indeed, it is profoundly mysterious how one can have nothing, and yet rejoice like a millionaire. It is also a greater mystery how one can have abundance and not waste it on the flesh, but lavish it on the salvation of others; not grow careless and independent, big and boastful; but hold it all humbly and gratefully at God's disposal. Indeed it is a secret pleasure to possess money, gifts, ability, etc., but spend them so unceasingly that Satan can get no advantage over us. "Take this five dollars before the devil gets it," a brother said to me several times. Any wonder that the Apostle could exclaim, "I can do (lit., I am well and strong for) all things in Christ Jesus who empowers me"?

Friend, do you observe that Paul is not speaking here primarily of service, but of suffering, or endurance? Oh, it is easy to serve and toil; but oh, to serve under privation; that tests one's metal. To toil on scant rations; to sleep on the soft side of a board; to be content with bacon and molasses; to know that you have to move on, and you have no conveyance, nor carfare; to preach and labor, because God has ordered it, yet knowing that you are not wanted. That requires a secret empowerment that few modern pastors and evangelists possess. Let that be the program, and the people will not be bored with so many religious runabouts, or globe-trotters. Yes, to have an incorrigible companion, who forbids you going to meeting, or giving your substance to the gospel; to have several children to feed and clothe, and neither food nor raiment in sight; to know that others have work and plenty, and we have none. Such conditions test our surrender and faith. We have ample opportunity to prove whether, or not, we are overcomers. Can we run now? Will we still shout, "I am well and strong for all things in Christ, who empowers me"? Yes, by God's grace, for He says, "My grace is sufficient for thee."

"Not that I seek after the gift; but I seek after the fruit that abounds to your account" - v. 17. Do you know any Christian workers today who are as unselfish as was Paul? He did not beg for money. He did not teach his people to give because he wished to be enriched in carnal things. Nay, but he desired that the saints would learn the joy of giving, and of the certain reward that awaits liberality. His instructions on giving were for their sake, and not his own. He longed that they might be enriched in spiritual things for God's glory. Our hearts ache because of the mercenary spirit that pervades Christian work today.

Verse 18 is the Apostle's receipt for the bountiful contribution which the Philippian saints had sent him thru Epaphroditus. Observe his warmhearted comment on that offering. He terms it "an odor of a sweet smell" (a perfume of a sweet scent), "a sacrifice, acceptable, well pleasing to God." Oh, if saints could see the art of giving in that light, what a joy they would realize in turning their substance over to the Lord. Those saints gave out of their penury; and were willing beyond their ability. It was a financial loss to them to give. That is why it smelled sweet to Jehovah. That was

what made it so acceptable and well pleasing to Him. Oh, to do that which pleases God. I want you to see that the sacrifice of such giving is akin to the sacrifice of Christ in our behalf. When Noah offered "burnt offerings" unto God, "the Lord smelled a sweet savor" (a savor of rest) -- Gen. 8:20, 21. Real gifts to Him from the heart, have in them redemption value in His sight. It is on this ground that the following verse was penned by Paul.

"And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus." This verse is quoted frequently; but rarely do people understand it. Not every one can make it his own. It has a particular background. Philippian believers only can claim its fulfillment. They who give at a sacrifice; they who love to lavish their means for the furtherance of Christ's cause; they who suffer when they have nothing to give, or are not allowed to give when they do have it; to them is this encouragement spoken. If you are penurious, do not expect this mantle to cover you. If you withhold your substance from the Lord, do not expect Him to arise to your help in time of need and scarcity. If you let God's cause be pinched when you could relieve it, be not surprised if He lets you be pinched worse some day.

Yes, and a still deeper truth lies couched herein. The phrase, "all you need," has especial reference to spiritual wants. Why are so many of God's children lean in their souls? It is because they hang on to their money, or waste it on the flesh, or hoard it up on the earth. "There is that maketh himself rich, yet hath nothing" - Prov. 13:7. Oh, how sad. Such people never grow in grace and in the knowledge of the Lord. They get angry if a word is said about their carnal substance. On the other hand, "there is that maketh himself poor, yet hath great riches." Such are the Philippian believers always. Jesus put on record a potent question -- "If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches?"-Luke 16:11. I love Prov. 11:24, 25 -"There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth." I have proven this by experience, to the uttermost, and have never known it to fail with others. "And there is that withholdeth more than is meet; but it tendeth to poverty." Do not be surprised if the bank fails, in which you have your gold deposited. If you do not let the lord have your earnings, He will let the devil or the flesh get it. But thank God! "The liberal soul shall be made fat; and he that watereth, shall be watered also himself."

"Now unto God and our Father be the glory into the ages. Amen." What an appropriate benediction. It has a particular setting here; for it is the conclusion of the Apostle's comforting words about giving. It is not the end of the Epistle, but of that interesting part of the Epistle. "Salute every saint in Christ Jesus." That is, salute every saint as being indeed in Christ, and never as in the old Adam. We cannot really have a salutation, or greeting of fellowship, for the old creation. We know no man after the flesh. "The brethren which are with me greet you." The seven brethren named in Acts 20:4, and Luke went to Rome with Paul. Evidently they are those to whom he refers. Verse 22 needs no comment. The Epistle is concluded with Paul's usual benediction of grace. The words added in fine print -- "written from Rome by Epaphroditus" -- are an interpolation. The Epistle was written by Paul while in Rome and sent by Epaphroditus, as noted in chapter 2:25.

This document was created with Win2PDF available at <http://www.daneprairie.com>.
The unregistered version of Win2PDF is for evaluation or non-commercial use only.