

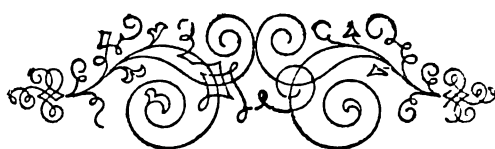
A SHORT SUMMARY
OF THE
EPISTLE
TO THE
PHILIPPIANS,

BY A. P. C.



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A Short Summary

OF THE

EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS.



Philippi was the first city in Europe where the apostle Paul preached Christ. It was there he was carried by the ship after he had received the vision of the man of Macedonia imploring him to come over and help them. See Acts xvi. 9-12. There he waited till the Sabbath to get the mind of God as to his work. There he attended the Jewish women's meeting by the side of the river. There Lydia's heart was opened to hear the word of God. It was there also that he and Silas got persecuted, beaten and put into prison, for exposing Satan's wiles, and casting the devil out of a woman who brought great gain to her master by her soothsayings. There the Philippian jailor who guarded the prison was converted, and baptized with his whole family. There the Philippian assembly was planted in weakness, amid suffering and persecution, and Paul and Silas immediately after had to leave and to go to other places. See Acts xvi. 12 to end.

Two households seem to have composed the assembly at first, but though the apostle had to leave, yet these dear Philippian hearts were ever after continually knit to him, the great instrument of their conversion, and they sent again and again

money for his necessity, thus proving indeed that theirs was a faith which was not barren or unfruitful, but which worked by love, a love that had taken hold of their hearts, and produced in them a new nature, whose character was indeed love. This mutual love between the Philippians and Paul seems ever to have continued. Their love followed the apostle to his prison in Rome, and Epaphroditus, their messenger, was the means of conveying to him the proof of it. See chap. iv. 18.

It is very blessed to see in this epistle the yearnings of Christ among the early Christians, and in a day when those holy affections have grown cold and well nigh dried up among many, how sweet to be brought back to the word of God and to hold in our hands a letter from the apostle Paul were these blessed affections of Christians are reproduced, so that our cold hearts may be warmed up by them. Divisions and worldliness in the church have well-nigh destroyed these affections. What can reproduce them but the apprehension over again of the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ as the source of all unity and fellowship (Eph. 1. 3.) Christ as the head and centre of it (Eph. i. 19-23) and the Holy Ghost as the bond of power and unity among the members of Christ one to the other (Eph. ii. 22. iv. 3-4). The Lord will then gather those who have come to the apprehension of these blessed truths, back to Himself at the Lord's Table where the outward symbol of unity, the one loaf is exhibited (1. Cor. x. 16-17), and we shall there seek to walk together in love showing that love to every member of Christ's body wherever they are, only remembering that real love is tested by our keeping His commandments. (2 John 5.)

In Philippians i. we have before us Christ for life and service, as also fellowship with Him in that

life and service and sufferings; in Phil. ii. we see Christ come down to the earth to die, as our pattern, and we are called to fellowship with His mind thus exhibited. In Phil. iii. we see Christ in glory as our object in view: and here we are called to fellowship with Paul, who is the great example as to this mind; a man of like passions to us. See chap. iii. 15-17. In chapter iv. we see Christ for joy and strength, and a man (Paul) lifted up above all circumstances through fellowship with Him in that strength.

The great subject, then, of the epistle is Christ put before us practically for our life and walk; and the secret of happy fellowship among saints is to be followers of Him, and of his His servant Paul. It is the epistle, then, for our walk, the very highest kind of walk. As remarked by another, sin is not mentioned in the epistle, the flesh once, and then as good flesh and not bad flesh. The man who is walking at a Philippian level is a man above sinning, at least habitually in practice, and above circumstances. Paul was in prison but could rejoice that the counsels of God in regard to His Christ were furthered thereby. Death stared him in the face, but he could say, to depart and be with Christ is far better, and truly such a stream of truth flowed out of that prison that has comforted and established the church through all the years since. It was the same with Luther: the enemies headed by the Pope thought to kill him. He was in consequence shut up in the castle of Wartburg by his friends, but forth from that retreat flowed the long pen that the Elector of Saxony had seen in his dream, and spread the Gospel truth of justification by faith far and near. There also the German translation of the Bible went fast ahead which has brought life and liberty to the nation ever since.

The apostle joins himself with Timothy in his

address to the Philippians—they were the servants of Jesus Christ. The Philippians are addressed as saints, or those set apart for God's use, as holy vessels in His sanctuary, separated from Jew and Gentile, according to their position in Christ Jesus. For He was the true saint, God's separated man. There on high in God's heavenly sanctuary that golden and silver vessel shines, and it is in Him as partaking of the same life, nature and position, that Christians get their place as saints. It is the common place and title of all believers. In each assembly it was the apostolic custom to appoint elders and deacons, as those qualified to oversee, rule, and minister to the temporal needs of the flock. See 1 Tim. iii. Titus i. Acts xiv. Men with the necessary qualifications were chosen by the apostles to the offices. There were evidently several of these men in every assembly, as here at Philippi. What a different office to that of the present bishop of a diocese! One man is now set over several assemblies instead of several bishops being in one assembly. Elders and bishops were evidently the same office. See Acts xx. 28. The Holy Ghost had made the Ephesian elders bishops of the flock. It was only when men began to usurp power in the church, that the title "bishop" began to be applied to the head man of the assembly, and he naturally began to be looked up to by all the country assemblies around. Thus the power of the bishop of Rome began.

But at Philippi and in most* of the primitive assemblies there were several bishops and deacons in one assembly—and they were by no means addressed apart from the whole body of saints, in fact they are put second here.

* I say most, for we do not read of any such men in the assembly at Corinth.

The apostle after saluting the saints with the usual salutation of grace and peace, bursts out in praise to God for his dear Philippians. I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine for you all making request with joy, for your fellowship in the gospel from the first day till now. See chap. iv. 15, 16. They had shown their love and fellowship with him in the work from the very first, after his first memorable visit to them. Thus was the good work that God had begun in their souls, manifest by its fruits, and this encouraged the apostle to have hope in the reality of the work, which would assuredly be completed in the Philippians, by the faithfulness of God, at the day of Jesus Christ. Blessed confidence for the servant of Christ for his children in the faith!

It was just for him to think this of them all, because he had them in his heart,* inasmuch as in his bonds, as well as in the defence and confirmation of the gospel they were all partakers of the same grace. There was perfect fellowship between the apostle and the Philippians in life, service, and sufferings. How could he feel otherwise than encouraged on their behalf?

The love of Christ, expressed in verse 8 by His "bowels," was burning in his heart toward them, and thus he prayed that their love, (fellowship again) might abound yet more, in knowledge and in all judgment, that they might try things that

* Or rather "Ye have *me* in your hearts," as the corrected versions give it. This would indicate more than personal regard; it would be valuing the apostle of "the mystery"—the church in a day when already many were slipping away from his truth, and God's ground, and would be all the more noteworthy, and precious to the apostle, and to the Holy Ghost.—(Ed. S. W.)

differed, so as to be sincere* and without offence, till the day of Christ, being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which was from Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God. This shows how love needs to be regulated by that knowledge of Christ, which, bringing Him in, causes true discernment between good and evil, and prevents love from degenerating into mere fleshly affection. Sincerity and unblameableness would be the result of this test.

This letter thus begins with expressions of thanksgiving, confidence and prayer, which brings out, too, the perfect fellowship the apostle had with these beloved saints, in life, service, love, and suffering. He now proceeds to comfort their hearts by assuring them that what had befallen him in Rome, (namely, in his being put in prison,) had all turned out for the furtherance of the gospel; so that his bonds in Christ were manifest in Nero's palace and in all other places. And is it not wondrous to see the power of God's grace working in a poor prisoner's heart, so that in the most dismal place, when all that earth holds dear was shut out from him, and nothing but death stared him in the face, this wondrous vessel of God's grace could send forth from his prison letters full of praise, thanksgiving, and heavenly joy, for the comfort of others. He knew the Philippians had been grieved when they heard of it, and indeed it was a solemn and sad thing to all appearance for the minister of a dispensation of God, this present dispensation, to be shut up in a prison. But "no," says the apostle, "do not be grieved, these things have turned out for the furtherance of

* *Ειλικρινεις*, from *ειλη*, sunshine, and *κρινω*, I judge, examined by the sun's light, tested and found sincere.

the gospel." The testimony was carried on by other hands, some indeed might preach Christ of contention supposing to add affliction to the apostle's bonds, others of love, knowing that he had been set in defence of the gospel. What then? Notwithstanding every way, Christ is preached, and therein I rejoice, and will rejoice. For Christ to be preached everywhere, even in the imperial palace of Rome, was no small advance surely, and yet the chief instrument was in prison. How God overrules everything to the advancement of the glory of His Son.

And this gave the apostle confidence, instead of disturbing him. He knew that it would all turn to his salvation through the fellowship of the saints' prayers, the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ according to his own expectation and hope, that in nothing he would be ashamed, but that as always so now Christ might be magnified in his body either by life or death. For him to live was Christ, to die gain.

Let us pause now, dear reader, one moment, and consider these words. The apostle, as we have seen, was already in prison awaiting his trial before Nero, the Roman emperor. There was apparently nothing but death before him, recantation or death, and yet it was his earnest expectation and hope that in nothing he would be ashamed. He had faced human rulers before, had had their scourges on his back, and yet through it all had found Christ's sufficiency. He trusted then for the future as for the past, and more, he trusted that that Christ who had carried him through the prison house at Phillippi, and the hatred of the Jewish nation would be magnified in his body, whether by life or death. He seems as if he had been introduced to our modern telescopes and mic-

rosopes, and to put himself in the place of these instruments, so that if only men would come in contact with him and look through the instrument, they would see a Christ very far off to them, or very dimly seen, brought quite near like a magnifying glass magnifies distant objects. And, indeed, dear reader, ought it not so to be with us? Should we not seek so to manifest Christ that He might be magnified in our bodies before our fellow men whether in life or death? The one object of our life to live not ourselves but Christ, to die, gain.

And is it not gain, dear believers? Let us encourage one another by the words of Scripture, for we are none up to the mark as we ought to be as to our actual realized state. Is it not gain to be with Christ, is it not real gain to lose these sinful bodies the only thing that hinders our full enjoyment of Him?

The apostle now seems in a maze; he has here the fruit of his labor, that Christ should be magnified in his body—to live Christ; he has on the other side the prospect of being with Christ; he does not know what to choose, to depart to be with Christ was far better, to remain was more necessary for the saints, and having this confidence, he knew he should remain for their furtherance and joy of faith, that their rejoicing might be more abundant in Jesus Christ for him by his coming to them again.*

Only he desired that the Philippians' general deportment might become the gospel of Christ, that whether present or absent he might hear of their affairs that they stood fast, in one spirit, with one

* Is this confidence of abiding the "I know" "and salvation" he alludes to in v. 19?

soul, striving together for the faith of the gospel and in nothing terrified by their adversaries, which to them was a manifest token of perdition; but to the Philippians of salvation and that of God. For unto them it was given on the behalf of Christ not only to believe on His name, but also to suffer for His sake, having the same conflict (in fellowship) which they saw in the apostle and now heard to be in Him. Blessed fellowship in life, service and suffering.

CHAPTER II.

Now what the apostle was proving in prison was that their *was* consolation in Christ, the comfort of God's love and the fellowship of the Spirit of God, which gave him power in the most dismal circumstances to be a man totally above them. Christ sympathized with him in all the power of that life that had been through every kind of scorn, ridicule, trial, suffering and death, and risen victorious over it all. The love of God had placed him in union with that Christ in glory, who had communicated to him His own victorious life over sin and death, and the Holy Ghost was his companion in these sufferings, and trials, and griefs. It was all reality to the apostle. If there was any such then, the apostle would have the Philippians fulfil his joy that they might think the same thing, having the same love, the same soul. He would have them be followers together with him, in enjoying the consolation in Christ, comfort of love, fellowship of the Spirit, bowels of mercies. It is all fellowship in practical life and walk. The great hindrance to this was in unjudged self. He besought them then that nothing might be done in strife or vain-glory, but in lowliness of mind to esteem each one better

than themselves; not to look only on their own things, but the things of others.

How necessary this warning to us, dear reader. How apt we are to let self drive the thin wedge in; then, as far it is allowed, it will have the first place, and think of its own things, instead of the things of others.

The secret for the true maintenance then of this blessed enjoyment of fellowship is what follows, vs. 5-12. "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus." Christ come down here as the dependent and obedient man, is put before us as our pattern; and fellowship in this practical mind, and following in His path, is what the apostle desires for his dear children in the faith. We have three fine examples of following in His mind and footsteps later down in the chapter, in the apostle Paul, vs. 17, 18; Timothy 19-23; and Epaphroditus 25, 29, and he desired the same mind for the Philippians, vs. 12-16. Wondrous chapter! but easier to take hold of with the intellect than to be held by the heart.

In one sense we can say we have the mind of Christ (see 1 Cor. ii. 16). The faithful have learned that at the cross all their human wisdom and strength have been judged (1 Cor. i. 22-29), that Christ glorified is their wisdom, and that they are *in Him* as to their standing in grace (1 Cor. i. 30, 31). The Holy Ghost, too, has been the revealer and communicator to them of this Christ, the wisdom of God, so that they are in actual connection with the mind of the heavenly man (1 Cor. ii. 6-16). They have the mind of Christ. But this is Christ's practical mind manifested here below, a mind that manifested itself in absolute subjection to God's will, that was manifested in a perfectly dependant and obedient man, even unto death; and

it was on account of this humility, dependence, obedience and subjection that God has highly exalted Him, and given Him a name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father. He got the Lordship as man after he had manifested His absolute subjection to the Father's will.

He being in the form of God, it is said, thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but emptied Himself and took upon Him the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men. This was His first grand step down. He became a man; He took the place of dependence as a man. But to do God's will in reference to sin he must take a further step, he must be obedient, and *obedient unto death*, the death of the cross. 1st. He who was God became man, taking the place of dependence. 2nd. As man, perfect in every way, yet He was obedient unto death; that death the death of the cross, the most shameful death in existence. So it is on this ground that He is exalted, and that every tongue shall confess Him Lord as now exalted, whether things in heaven or on earth, or in hell. Everything will finally bow and own His authority as Lord. And now, my dear reader, have you bowed to the Lordship of Christ? You say, Why should not I; He is my Saviour. Why I rejoice to bow to Him as my Lord. Thank God, then you are saved; only remember the path and your profession will be tested. But anyhow, if any do not bow to the Lordship of Jesus now, they will be obliged to do so in hell. But, oh think of the awful agony of conscience, to think you might have been saved, but it is now too late.

I would have my reader mark that the whole subject here is subjection to Jesus as Lord, and following Him in His path of subjection to God's will. It is not the reconciling of an enemy to God. That subject is treated of in Rom. v. 1-11; 2 Cor. v. 16-21; Col. i. 19-23; Eph. ii. 11-18. Reconciliation extends to all things in heaven and earth in the world to come, and it is never spoken as a present thing except in reference to the church (comp. Col. i. 20, 21), never that Christ has reconciled the world by His work. It is a deceit of Satan, and the foundation of the lie of universalism. God was in Christ reconciling the world when He was down here (2 Cor. v. 19,) but the world would not be reconciled, and the message still goes on "Be ye reconciled" (2 Cor. v. 20.) Why so, if the world is reconciled? Do you find it so, dear believing reader? Is your next door neighbor who is unconverted reconciled to God? Is he at peace with God, or does he hate God? It is all a monstrous delusion of Satan! But the truth is, people do not know what reconciliation is, who talk like that, which is simply an enemy towards another who loves him being turned to be at peace with the same person, who, of course, now rejoices over him as now reconciled, but who always loved him. This loving Being is God, of course; the enemy, man. He believes the gospel of God's love and is reconciled, the other rejects and is damned.

But here, as we have seen, the subject is *subjection*. The whole teaching is that way; Christ is an example for us here, which He could not be in reconciliation. He stands alone in making atonement, the foundation of reconciling sinners to God; we cannot follow His example there. But here He is a dependent, obedient man, subject to the will of God even unto death, and the same mind is to be

in us that was in Him. He is now exalted, and every tongue is to confess Him Lord to the glory of God the Father. May God give to us increasing fellowship in His mind. It is exactly the opposite of what Adam did. He became independent of God and disobedient, and death was the consequence. He also wanted to be God, whereas He who was God became man, and the only man who had a right to do His own will, became obedient unto death, the death of the cross.

Now these dear Philippians had obeyed in measure in following Christ in this wondrous path. Paul had been with them, and they had obeyed as in his presence, but now he would have them prove the reality of their obedience; and now much more in my *absence*, he says, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, knowing that it is *God* that works in you, both to will and do of His good pleasure. He would have them rise in simple faith to the truth of God's presence in each of them and among them corporately. What if Paul departed to be with the Lord, they had God there working in them. That is the great point pressed here. As to the salvation here, I take it in the fullest sense as to the past, present and future. He could not say to the Philippians *your own* salvation, unless it was a present possessed thing by them. Besides I cannot *work out* a thing unless it is mine first to work out, but then I work it out actually in the trials and difficulties of the road, and it is not accomplished as to the body till Jesus comes. Thus it embraces the past, present and future; I work it out, too, on the basis that God works in me both to will and to do everything that relates to the working out of that same salvation. Consequently the spring and prime mover of the working out of salvation in the christian, is God. The believer's

place is to be perfectly dependent and obedient in regard to the God that dwells in Him.

But I must dwell a little longer on this passage, for people are so ignorant of the word of God, ordinarily, and many will not read it for themselves. What I wish to say is, that this passage is only addressed to Christians. It is no question of showing a sinner the way of salvation. These words are addressed to the saints in Christ Jesus at Philippi, (see chap. i, 2), to those who were already saved. It does not say, "*Work for your own salvation*," that would be to put salvation verily on the ground of works; but it says, "*Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling*, for it is God that worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure."

Now God was the spring even of Christ's holy life, and dependence and obedience was the expression of it, and so He is of the Christian's life, and blessed be God for it; as the little hymn says:

"And now I cannot please Him
In aught I say or do,
Unless He daily helps me
His glory to pursue.
Still helpless and still feeble
On His strong arm I fall,
My strength is pressing onward;
Yes, Christ must do it all."

Thus we see how God is the true spring of all that is Christ in us, but there is also the flesh there, consequently the warning, "Do all things without murmurings and disputings, that ye may be blameless, and harmless, the sons of God without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world, holding forth the word of life, that the apostle might

rejoice in the day of Christ that he had not run in vain nor labored in vain."

Thus the Philippians are, as it were, seen in the same path as the Lord Jesus, and energized with the same life. He was the Son of God; they the sons of God. He was blameless, harmless, and without rebuke in the midst of a perverse nation; they were to be the same. He shone as the light of the world; they were to shine as lights. He held forth the word of life; they were to do the same.

Ver. 17. Paul now presents himself as willing to be offered up as a sacrifice unto death upon the sacrifice and service of their faith. And he would have them rejoice in this same thing in which he could rejoice. Blessed, unselfish devotedness to God!

But he trusted in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy shortly to them, that he might be of good comfort when he knew through him of their state. There was no one the apostle had with him like-minded who would naturally care for their state. All sought their own, not the things of Jesus Christ. Sad state of things for the early church of God to have got into! Alas, how much worse is it now. Oh, my dear reader, which is it with you? Christ first and self second, or self first and Christ second; or, still better, which is it, I say again, Christ all and self nothing, or self everything and Christ nothing? Or is it half and half? Wretched, lukewarm, Laodicean indifference to Christ!

The apostle then commends Timothy to his dear Philippians (verses 23, 24), and then speaks of sending Epaphroditus, another brother, and fellow-workman and fellow-soldier of the apostle. Besides, he gives him the honorable title of being the apostle of the Philippians, the minister to the

apostle's temporal wants from the same saints of God. He assured them how this blessed man was following Christ in the same lowly path; apparently in seeking out the apostle, or on his journey to him he had got sick nigh unto death. He was the conveyer to the apostle of the Philippians' love gift of money, their token of fellowship in the gospel (see chap. iv.) This the apostle calls the work of Christ. For that work, he says, he was nigh unto death, to supply the Philippians' shortcoming of service towards the apostle.

Thus, though self was quickly manifesting itself and its claims over again in the early church, it is blessed to see men like Paul, Timothy and Epaphroditus, and many doubtless among the Philippians themselves following in the lowly, downward, subject path of Christ. But, dear reader, it is the true way of exaltation. He that exalteth himself shall be abased, but he that humbleth himself shall be exalted. Satan thought to exalt his throne above the stars of God, to be like the Most High, and fell from his first estate. From the heavenlies he shall fall to the earth (Rev. xii.), from the earth to the bottomless pit (Rev. xx.), from the bottomless pit to hell (see chap. xx). Man followed suit, listened to his lie, thought to be as God, but, in consequence, became disobedient unto death. Oh, what an opposite path to that described in this chapter! Reader, which is best?

CHAPTER III.

We now pass on from the consideration of the blessed Lord's lowly and subject path here below, to His position of exaltation in the glory. There He was last seen in chap. ii. 9-11. The christians are now finally exhorted to rejoice in that same Lord, once humbled, but now exalted; to rejoice in

Him where He is, for He is now at the end of the path. Ah, dear reader, that is the real spring of joy, and when you see that this same Lord of glory who has gained the end of the path has apprehended you for the same thing, that thought will fill you with joy. It was needful to press the same truths on the saints though they knew them, on account of the evil workings of the enemy around.

“Dogs,” who took the place of shepherds, that could not bark or warn any one of danger, that went to sleep, lazy do-nothings, that cared nothing for the flock, greedy dogs which would feed themselves on the saints and their love and make themselves rich by them; of such the saints were to beware (Isa. lvi. 10, 11). False professors, too, false teachers, perhaps, who had once made a great show of religion, and now turned away from it, like dogs to their vomit again, and sows to their wallowing in the mire. Of such the saints were to beware (2 Pet. ii. 20–22.)

“Evil workers,” too, who would build wood, hay, stubble in the walls of the house of God, bringing in unconverted people, gaining large accessions as they would say to the church, such, too, they were to shun (1 Cor. iii. 12–15). Of those too who would practice austerities on the flesh, and talk of mortifying it, with the idea of making it better, without putting it off as an evil thing altogether; of such also they were to beware. These were the “circumcision,” chiefly the Judaizers of that day.

The apostle would not give such people the name of the circumcision. True circumcision was the putting off the body of sin altogether for faith, by the death of Christ (see Col. ii. 11). It was *death* to the old man (*not so concision*), and christians were now the true circumcision with these three blessed marks on them: First, Worshipping God

in spirit. Second, Boasting in Christ Jesus. Third, Having no confidence in the flesh. For Paul and christians, according to him, the old man was dead, buried and gone in the death of Christ. Christ risen and in glory was all their boast; the Holy Ghost come down from heaven gave them their christian place and character and power for worship.

Paul then sets himself before the Philippians as an example of a man having no confidence in the flesh, taken hold of by Christ in glory, and running forward to win Him there. As we have seen in chap. ii., the subject is Christ come down here as the christian's pattern and example, but in chap. iii., it is Christ risen and glorified as his object to win. Of this latter, Paul is the great example to us (see verses 15-17).

From verses 4-6 he goes through all his natural advantages in the flesh that he might have trusted to as a man.

Verse 7. Everything is counted loss for Christ.

Verses 8, 9. He counts everything as a present thing loss to win Christ as his object, and be found in Him, not having his own righteousness, but that which is of God by faith. This is the objective side of his course. He runs forward to win Christ as his object, and be found in Him in that day with the righteousness of faith as his covering.

Verses 10, 11. This is the subjective side of his desires; first, he desires to know Christ; second, the power of his resurrection as applied practically to him as a present thing as he runs; third, the fellowship of His sufferings; fourth, conformity to His death, if by any means he might attain unto the resurrection from among the dead, that is when the power of resurrection would be applied to his body. It is the subjective side of Paul's race.

Verses 12-14. He shows that he did not count himself as having attained, in fact he had nothing, only Christ had apprehended him for the glory, and he was running on if he might apprehend* that for which he had been apprehended of Christ Jesus. He waited to take hold of one after another of the many things that he had been apprehended for by Christ. And is not this, beloved reader, what real christian attainment is? It is just taking hold, as it were by bits, of that glory of Christ for which we have been apprehended. It is all ours already in Him; all assured to us, but how little of the many parts of God's wonderful counsels of grace have the best of us taken hold of? Many are as yet but mere babes in the knowledge of God, and may not verse 14 be a special reward to those who have made special attainments in the knowledge of Christ. If so, first, there is the objective side of the race, Christ to win. Second, There is the subjective side (verse 11), the resurrection from among the dead to attain. Third, There is the prize of the high calling of God in Christ. There is a reward held out as well as Christ and salvation. He would have as many of the Philip-pians who were perfect to be thus minded; to have one aim, one object, like he had, namely, to win Christ in glory. The "perfect" were those who understood what Christ had apprehended them for, and He would have such to be like minded with himself, and if in anything they were otherwise minded God would reveal this to them too; but whereunto any had already attained, whether perfect in their apprehension of their standing and calling for the glory or not, He would have them walk by the same rule, and mind the same thing.

* The word means to take hold of, seize hold on.

Christ was the rule, and according to their several apprehensions of His glory so he would have them walk, having Him as the only rule.

He would have the saints then to be followers of him, and to mark those that walked, so that they had Paul and his companions in ministry before them as an example. For many walked of whom he had told them before, and now told them again even weeping, that they were the enemies of the cross of Christ, whose end was destruction, whose god was their belly, whose glory was in their shame, who minded earthly things. Alas, these people had already got a foothold in the church of God! But the christian's citizenship was in heaven, from whence he looked for the Saviour the Lord Jesus Christ, who should change his body of humiliation that it might be fashioned like unto His body of glory, according to the power whereby Christ was able to subdue all things to Himself. Blessed ending to the path of the saint who made Christ as his pattern, and Christ in glory as his object to win. We look for the Saviour, blessed be God, not for the Judge, and His whole power will be exercised in that day in fashioning our bodies to be exactly like His own.*

CHAPTER IV.

The thought of the Lord's return, and its glorious results seems to have filled the apostle's heart with fresh affection for his dear children in the faith. He calls them his dearly beloved, and longed for, his joy and his crown, and exhorts them to stand fast in the Lord. Further down he

* NOTE.—Salvation, when looked at as future, is always linked with the thought of the coming of the Lord for His saints. He first comes for them, then returns as Judge to the earth with them.

would have them *rejoice in the Lord*. And, dear reader, it is no small matter for saints to stand fast in the Lord, in the full sense of what true christianity is. For christianity is not the systematic order of things we see around us. There is what is true in it, but mixed up with much that is false. What the faithful have got to do is to stand separate from all evil, and to be witnesses only to what is good and true, and that is Christ. But to witness for Christ only as Saviour, that is not the whole of Christianity. There are many individual witnesses to this in Christendom, which was the grand truth revived at the Reformation. The grand truth of justification by faith without works was then restore! But is this all the truth of Christianity? Did Christ merely come down here that sinners might be justified and go to heaven instead of to hell? Was that all the thought of God in regard to His Christ? Surely not, and so He has exalted the Man who has done this blessed work with the purpose of making Him the *centre* of all His purposes of glory.

Yes, *Christ* Himself and His glory, is the thought and purpose of God. To have a heavenly family for Himself is another thought of our Father, and this heavenly family He is now calling out. To call out a Bride for His Son is another of His chief thoughts, then to clear these heavens and earth of sin, and hand them over to the dominion of Christ, is all in the thought and purpose of God. All these things are in the mind of God, and He wants a witness to these things in this world. The church was to have been that witness, but alas, Christ's glory has been well nigh forgotten. His present position at the right hand of God, as head of His body, the church, has well nigh been lost. His lordship claims have been quietly laid aside, and a

new order, system and rule, reigns in the professing bride of Christ on earth, who ought to be entirely separate from the world, and awaiting the Lord from heaven. Where do we see on earth a corporate body, acting together as if testifying that its only living link of union with Christ in heaven is by the Holy Ghost? Where is the witness that for the church the only bond of union between its members and the Head in heaven is the *Holy Ghost*? Where is the waiting together in the expectation of the return of the Bridegroom from heaven, as a living reality? These were the grand truths witnessed to by the church when first set up on earth. It was a witness to Christ being its head, the Holy Ghost in the assembly witnessed to His lordship, and ruled in the house of God; and all the saints were looking forward with longing expectation for the return of the Bridegroom, knowing that their hopes were linked with that return, and that then God's glory would be fully manifested, in Christ having His heavenly Bride with Him, and in Christ taking the kingdom over Israel and the nations in this world, after first clearing it by judgment on the wicked.

It was in view of such truths that the saints at Philippi were to stand fast. They were to stand fast, not only as justified ones, but as those that had a position in connexion with the Lord in glory, who was head of His body, the assembly. They were *in the Lord*, the Holy Ghost gave them that place, constituted them heavenly men, as the world said, whose citizenship is in heaven. They were to stand fast as rejected by this world, and in the heavenly Man, who was the last Adam, the Quickening Spirit. This means that I am to hold fast my union with Christ. I am to stand fast realizing continually my position *in the Lord*, as no

longer in the flesh. This is of all importance for the saints. And I cannot rejoice in the Lord continually unless first I stand fast in the Lord. If two saints, for instance that have been quarrelling like Euodias and Syntyche,* give up their position at the Lord's table, were the saints manifest that they are members together of the one body of Christ, these are not standing fast in the Lord; at least certainly not before the saints. They give up the place where the manifestation of their full standing in grace is manifested; for the sake of a quarrel. The result is worse departure. But the apostle would have these saints be of the same mind in the Lord, and submitting themselves to the rule of the Holy Ghost to bring them to the same mind. He intreated also, a true yoke-fellow to help certain women who labored with the apostle in the gospel, with Clement also, and other of Paul's fellow laborers, whose names were in the book of life.

Finally he would have the saints rejoice in the Lord always. This is more than the boasting in Christ Jesus of chapter ii. 3. The latter was one of the essential marks of true christianity. But this is the result of walking with the Lord, and communion with the Father; only that here the Lord is the object. It is the privilege of obedient christians to rejoice in the Lord always; to rejoice in what He is for us, and in union with ourselves, to rejoice in His Person in all that the Father finds to delight in Him. In this chapter it may be in His all sufficiency for all the circumstances through which we are passing as christians, giving us power to rise superior to all. Compare 1 John i. 3; John xv. 2, as to joy being the result of fellow-

* NOTE.---I do not mean that Euodias and Syntyche did do this. I only bring it forward as an illustration for the benefit of the saints in the present time.

ship and obedience. Boasting in Christ Jesus (Phil. iii. 3) is the portion and mark of every true christian.

The apostle would have the saints' gentleness known unto all men. The Lord was at hand, about to descend into the air, as He had alluded to in chap. iii. 20, 21. In view of that day, he would have the saints careful for nothing. Not to let opposing circumstances and trials through which they were passing trouble them, but on the contrary, making them all an occasion of putting all these troubles in the hand of God, in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, to make their requests known to God, and then the peace of God would keep their hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Blessed result of casting our cares on God, of putting everything that troubles us into His hands, and then even though He should not deliver us from the trouble, yet having left the trouble with Him, His peace takes possession of, garrisons our hearts. For, indeed, God is not troubled by every little thing as we are. He sees the end from the beginning, is perfect love and overrules everything for His glory and the good of His own dear children. The reader must not confound this peace here with Rom. v. 1. There it is a certain unalterable state we are introduced into toward God, as the result of being justified by faith. But here it is God's peace taking possession of our hearts as the result of our casting our cares upon Him. All saints have peace with God, but all saints do not have God's peace garrisoning their hearts, unless they fulfil the conditions of Phil. iv. 6, 7.

But the saints were not only to put their trouble and cares, the result of passing through a world of evil, into God's hands, the apostle would have them

occupied with what was good. (Verse 8.) "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue and if there be any praise, think on these things." It is not well for us to be occupied with evil ever; we have to be, if it is there, in order to judge it and keep separate from it, but to be occupied with good and that is Christ. There is nothing good out of Him, and everything true, honest, pure, just, lovely, and of good report, was of Him. Those things also which the saints had learnt and received and seen in Paul, he would have them do, and then the God of peace would be with them, for He was the source of all the truth, which had been communicated to them through the apostle, a special line of truth as has been remarked before, so that Paul could even set himself before the saints, an example to be followed. The God of peace was the source of the good, the new creation; to be occupied with the things that related to the Lord Jesus Himself, and the truths specially connected with the ministry of the apostle Paul, in regard to the new creation and the church, and the consequent practice resulting from it, would have as its result that they would have the God of peace as their companion. He would be with them.

And now beloved reader, let me ask you, do you habitually take every care to God, putting it into His hands, and leaving it there, so that His peace keeps your heart? and do you seek to be occupied with what is good around you, to follow out Paul's doctrine and practice, so as to have consciously the God of peace as your companion. What a wondrous result of walking with God! God's peace keeping the

heart, the God of peace our companion. O! for more reality! What can more glorify God than for a saint walking through a scene of trouble, ruin and death, yet walking superior to it, and occupied with good, occupied with Christ. Reader, remember the little words: 1st. Stand fast in the Lord. 2d. Rejoice in the Lord. 3d. Be careful for nothing, &c. 4th. Whatsoever things are true, &c., think on these things. Then you will be a man above circumstances like the apostle.

He takes occasion to bring this out in the following verses in reference to the care the Philippians had been showing him, in reference to sending him money to supply his need. He rejoiced greatly in the Lord that their care for him had flourished again, wherein also they had been careful, but they had lacked opportunity to send the help. But he did not speak in respect to want, for he had learnt, in whatever state he was in to be therewith content. He knew how to be abased, and how to abound; everywhere and in all things he was instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. He could do all things through Christ that strengthened him. He could rejoice in the Lord even in a prison. With death staring him in the face, Christ was his joy, Christ was his strength. The Lord had passed through all the circumstances he had been passing through, and had triumphed over them all, finding in them all the joy of His Father as His strength, so it was with the apostle. Christ was his life, and Christ lived in Him, the power and strength that had gained the victory and proved itself superior to all adverse circumstances was his, and thus the apostle practically triumphed as he realized it. Blessed, indeed, if any of us realize it just a little. Perhaps we would not quote the passage so often as applied

to our little victories over circumstances, if we realized the great victories the apostle had gained, and was gaining.

He then reminds his dear Philippians of their care of him from the beginning; when he departed from Macedonia no assembly had helped him but them; even when he was in Thessalonica they had sent once and again to his necessity. He said these things not because he desired a gift, but he desired that fruit might abound to their account. Blessed unselfishness to be manifested among the saints of God! The apostle for himself had all and abounded; he was full, having received of Epaphroditus the things the Philippians had sent, which were an odor of a sweet smell, a sacrifice well pleasing to the Lord.

But Paul's God would supply all their need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus, to Him, the Father, be glory forever. Amen. Precious comfort for the saints of God! To all appearance often unable to make ends meet, perhaps without a crust of bread in their houses, but the God of Paul who had helped him, supplied all his need, would supply their need, not according to it, but according to *his riches* in glory by Christ Jesus. He sends his greetings to every saint in Christ Jesus. The brethren who were with Paul saluted them, as well as all the saints in Rome, some even of Cæsar's household, such was the manifest progress of the gospel. He ends up by writing that the grace of the Lord Jesus might be with them.





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