

CHRISTIAN HUMILITY

Paul J. Goodwin

Words are inadequate to define this sweetest of Christian graces. We may be conscious of it in others, but not in ourselves. It cannot be assumed for it springs from the heart. Seeking to manifest it is more childish than searching for the end of the rainbow. God begets it in men's hearts. Christ revealed it in His life, and we may pray earnestly for it, and "humble ourselves under His mighty hand," knowing that "God resisteth the proud but giveth grace to the humble."

Well may we pray that this beautiful Christian grace be made the keystone, yes, the very foundation of our great church—and she will grow greater as she grows more humble. May it be the dominant characteristic of her ministry; may it permeate the atmosphere of her places of worship like the fragrance of the rose of Sharon; and may the adornment of her laity be not the extravagance of this world; but rather that of "a meek and quiet spirit."

Real humility means unselfishness, it means simplicity—it means tears. "He that goeth forth and weepeth, shall come." God has little use in His vineyard for the self-opinionated, but He takes "the weak things of this world to confound the mighty."

God is not out seeking talent or genius or brains—He doesn't need them especially—but He is looking for that one who thinks so little of self that he will yield all unreservedly to God and be nothing but a mere "vessel of clay in the hands of the potter."

There are two blessed instruments to humility. One is prayer, the other is trial. One is human, the other is divine.

1. Trial is God's way of keeping us in the vale of humility. It is His instrument by which He lowers us to the humble plane of the greatest usefulness. My brother, let us not get discouraged when the very fumes of hell seem to envelope us and the poisoned darts of the enemy fly thick and fast; when the flesh is worn and the mind seems dull, and we can almost cry out in our pain, in the words of the Master, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" The great interrogation point rises amid the fog of our bewilderment—"why Father dost thou so chastise Thy child?"

This is the supreme test of our love toward Him. It is the same test of the child yielding to paternal chastisement which is by him but little understood. True the battle is hot, true we seem almost surrounded by foes, but right here is the real test of our loyalty. Shall we "fail of the grace of God" as the apostle feared some would? Shall we turn back, or shall we hold steady and trustful and yielded in Father's hands until the more complete revelation of His divine purpose is evident?

But why this darkness, why this trial? Ah, here we find the secret. Christ unfolded it on his own cross. Darkness just before dawn, conflict before victory, humiliation before exaltation. He might have come as a king wielding the sword of conquest, but God ordained that he should come in the

lowly manger and meet death in the gloom and obscurity of Golgotha's rugged cross, be counted as a common thief, as the offscouring of earth—why? Ah, that He might be able to assume the most important position this wide universe could ever know—mediator between a holy God and sinful humanity.

Beloved, did we ask why those humiliating trials, why are we sunk in the obscurity of that lowly place? Out across the inclement hills of tribulation, just beyond the rough hewn cross, up past the mist of temptation and suffering, the divine mind is planning, achieving, preparing for our now humbled spirits wider and more effectual fields of usefulness that we have ever dreamed. Hear the words of the man who fainted beneath the cross, who bore the crown of thorns and meekly accepted the revilings and scourgings and torments of a cruel, devil-possessed crowd. "He that humbleth himself shall be exalted." Praise His precious name!

2. But there is the human instrument to humility. That instrument is prayer. Not five-minute, bedroom-prayers but the fervent, soul wrestling, that regardless of flesh and blood, continues through the long hours of the night until the answer comes. It is the prayer that makes preacher and people realize the utter uselessness of formal service preparation unaccompanied by the divine presence in conviction and liberty. It is not a brief little talk with Jesus, but it is such close communion with Him that He speaks to us. It is the kind of prayer that grasps, that moves, that rifts the very heavens and lets down a deluge of divine unction.

Praying men are humble men and humble men are the greatest men. Great, not because of anything of self, but rather because they have prayed until they are little enough in their own eyes to completely abandon all to the coming of God's Spirit.

Alone in our closets or in the temple, upon our knees, is where we see the Lord sitting upon a throne high and lifted up; where, if we are un sanctified, like Isaiah we feel ourselves undone and unclean; where we make a complete consecration and yield our all to him; where the coal of fire falls upon our lips and we are cleansed from all sin. Here we reach the depths of self-humiliation and Christ becomes "all and in all."

This is the birth chamber of Christian humility—the closet of prayer—or if surrounded by multitudes, still must it be alone, individual vision and experience. In the secret place of prayer is the nursery of humility. Here the vale across the inner shrine of our being is drawn aside and in those sacred moments we commune with our enthroned lover and Lord. We may not see him face to face, but as the spirit reveals his beauty, his unchanging love, we are lost to the world about us, to self, to all—we are consumed by his wondrous personality and unconsciously His own life is made part of ours. And when we walk out among men, all unknown to us, in our eyes, in our face and actions there is apparent to the world that rare and beautiful grace that comes by personal, conscious contact with the lowly Nazarene—and this grace we call Christian humility. It is begun in heart perfection, it is honored and sought by God through His instrument of trial, and it is cultivated; it grows richer and deeper in the school of prayer.

A TRIBUTE TO THE MEMORY OF DEACON BAIRD.

I. A. J. Ward

Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints.—Ps. 116:15.

Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord.—Rev. 14:13.

In the passing of our dear Brother Baird a year ago we lost from our town a man of many striking qualities that few possess. In our Church work which he loved so well we have missed him beyond words. His godly life as he mingled with men in many of the pursuits of life won for him respect, and many were heard to say, (before his passing and many after) that he was a good man. This was only putting it mildly, as we have many good men from a worldly viewpoint, but we can say of him, who knew him best, that he was a good man, full of faith and of the Holy Ghost.

A few weeks before his passing he was a great sufferer, but was patient and cheerful to the end.

Many of the good men of all ages have not had the blessings from sources that they should have and from whence you would expect them to come oftentimes, just the reverse; but hold on, thank God, its coming. Some of God's dear children are not very precious in the sight of many good people, but hold on, they are, and will be precious in the sight of the Lord. WHICH COUNTS FOR MOST?

I have been thinking much of late on what constitutes a blessed man. Brother Baird was never very demonstrative, but his testimony, prayer and life were always an inspiration and blessing. I fear that too many dear good and well meaning people think that they are not blessed unless they can shout, jump or have a tear in their eyes or have some outward manifestation, but we often can have all these and many more and still be void of one spark of blessing, unction or glory that true blessedness brings. The person that is entirely given up to the Lord and goes through the tests and the thousand and one things that may come his way, if he keeps true he is a blessed man.

In this life we have to die to sin to be blessed, die daily to keep blessed and then when we die physically (if we die in the Lord we shall be blessed). Read the Bible's definition of a blessed man. Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity and in whose Spirit there is no guile. Ps. 32:1-2. Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the Lord and in His law doth he meditate day and night. Blessed is he that considereth the poor, the Lord will deliver him in time of trouble. The Lord will preserve him and keep him alive and shall be blessed upon the earth.

Blessed are the undefiled in the way who walk in the law of the Lord.

Blessed are they that keep his testimonies and that seek him with the whole heart.

Blessed is every one that feareth the Lord; that walketh in his ways.

Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God.

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HOLINESS

C. V. Fairbairn

"Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." (2 Pet. i. 21)

The inspired writers of the New Testament show perfect familiarity with the various places which were the scenes of many of Christ's miracles. They recall that it was fifteen furlongs from Jerusalem to Bethany; that it was three score furlongs from Jerusalem to Emmaus; that it was a Sabbath's journey from Olivet to Jerusalem. They remember and record that the little lad had five loaves and two fishes; that there were twelve baskets full of fragments left; that where the multitude sat down to eat "there was much green grass in the place."

They remember and mention every detail of the transaction which took place at the tomb of Lazarus, the rolling away of the stone, the tears of Jesus, the exact words, "Lazarus, come forth," the other words, "Loose him and let him go." They noted that in the empty tomb the napkin was lying not with the linen clothes, but wrapped together in a place by itself. We are told that there on the shore of the sea of Tiberias, when Jesus said to Peter, "Lovest thou more than all these?" lay "one hundred and fifty and three great fishes; and for all they were so many; yet was not the net broken." They record that when the Holy Spirit fell on the waiting ones, Peter, who had never before seen the Baptism fall on any one, who had no one to teach Him, but the great self-interpreting Holy Ghost, leaped to his feet and cried, "This is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel." (Acts ii. 16). Yet, the same inspired writers never say one word about Jesus, during the forty days, performing the most stupendous miracle that was ever wrought in all their lives, the entire sanctification of their whole spirit and soul and body. Why? That is an easy question to answer. This work was not done prior to Pentecost. When Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Peter, James, Jude and Paul, are all silent, it is evident, especially when you remember that they were inspired by the Holy Ghost, that no great epochal work was wrought until the day of Pentecost was fully come.

The disciples were not sanctified before the crucifixion. They were not sanctified during the forty-day sojourn of the risen Saviour. They were, therefore, not sanctified wholly prior to the Pentecostal prayer meeting.

But when the day of Pentecost is fully come, a change takes place; and men who were always so faithful to detail, now express themselves, under inspiration, as faithfully as before. "And," says Peter, "as I began to speak, (to the household of Cornelius) the Holy Ghost fell on them, AS ON US AT THE BEGINNING." (Acts xi. 15) A further comment on the same event, by the same apostle, is more explicit—"And God, which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, (the household of Cornelius) giving them the Holy Ghost, EVEN AS HE DID UNTO US; and put no difference between us and them, PURIFYING THEIR HEARTS BY FAITH." (Acts xv. 8-9). Here we find the answer to the prayer of Jesus, "Sanctify them." "Faithful was he who called them, and he also did perform it."

Another proof that they were not sanctified prior to Pentecost, and that they were then, is found in the difference between the pre-Pentecostal commission and the post-Pentecostal commission.

In Luke xxiv. 46-48, we find the pre-Pentecostal commission. "And he said unto them, Thus it is written and thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day; and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations beginning at Jerusalem. And ye ARE WITNESSES OF THESE THINGS. And behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye . . . until ye be endued with power from on high." "Ye shall receive holy dynamite when the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me." (Acts i:8).

This commission stated those things of which they were already witnesses—(1) the sufferings and resurrection of Christ; and (2) repentance and remission of sins: Number (2) constitutes the forgiveness of sins; we repent; He forgives and casts our sins into the sea of forgetfulness; they are remitted. So far as the sin question is concerned that, according to this commission, is all that they were witnesses of. But that is only the first part of the post-Pentecostal commission.

They tarry as commanded. The great Gift is given. Away they speed to herald the good news. WHAT NEWS? (1) "Repent, and be baptized for the remission of sins, and (2) ye shall receive THE GIFT of the Holy Ghost." Number (1) they had known before, but number (2) is a new revelation, the GIFT OF THE HOLY GHOST AS A SUBSEQUENT, A SECOND BLESSING. The Spirit had come and had guided them into this new field of experimental truth; and this is now added to the pre-Pentecostal commission.

In Acts xxvi. 16-18 we find the post-Pentecostal commission—"I have appeared unto thee to make thee A MINISTER AND A WITNESS; delivering thee from the people and from the Gentiles: unto whom now I send thee, to open their eyes, to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive (1) forgiveness of sins, and (2) inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me." This was given by the Lord to Paul, after the fuller revelation of the Holy Ghost had been given. This sent them forth to preach (1) forgiveness of sins (repentance and remission of sins), and also (2) "that they might receive inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me."

Before Pentecost they could not witness to the experience of entire sanctification. Jesus said that they could only witness to the forgiveness of sins, i. e., repentance and remission of sins.

Commanded to tarry for the fuller revelation, yea, for the Teacher, the Guide to lead them into all truth; they obeyed. He came. A new truth appears. Now they are to witness to men that they can (1) BE FORGIVEN, and (2) ENJOY THE INHERITANCE OF THE SANCTIFIED, or be sanctified wholly. They are to witness for Jesus that He can bestow the first blessing—repentance and remission of sins; and also the second blessing—entire sanctification. That was the commission given Paul, the

post-Pentecostal type. Peter, under the inspiration of the fuller revelation, cries out to the great throng at that first inquiry meeting, "Get the first blessing—repent and be baptized, every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and then you shall receive the second blessing—the Gift (not gifts primarily) of the Holy Ghost."

Was Peter inspired to preach at variance with Paul's commission? Nay, verily, there is a harmony here. The first blessing is the forgiveness of sins: Jesus said so; Peter says so; and the Lord affirmed the same to Paul. The second blessing is the Gift of the Holy Ghost: the Holy Ghost told Peter so; Peter told the inquirers so; and the Lord Himself told Paul that this second blessing was entire sanctification. This they did not enjoy before Pentecost and so was not mentioned by Christ in the first commission. Kingston, Ontario.

HUMILITY, THE BEAUTY OF HOLINESS.

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and self. If we feel that this life is too high for us and beyond our reach, it must be the more urge us to seek it in Him; it is the indwelling Christ who will live in us this life, meek and lowly. If we long for this, let us, meantime, above everything, seek the holy secret of the knowledge of the nature of God, as He works every moment all in all; the secret of which all nature and every creature, and above all, every child of God, is to be the witness—that it is nothing but a vessel, a channel, through which the living God can manifest the riches of His wisdom, power and goodness. The root of all virtue and grace, of all faith and acceptable worship is that we know that we have nothing but what we receive, and bow in deepest humility to wait upon God for it.

It was because this humility was not only a temporary sentiment, wakened up and brought into exercise when He thought of God, but the very spirit of His whole life, that Jesus was just as humble in His intercourse with men as with God. He felt Himself the servant of God for the men whom God made and loved. As a natural consequence, He counted Himself the servant of men, that through Him God might do His work of love. He never for a moment thought of seeking His honor, or asserting His power to vindicate Himself. His whole spirit was that of a life yielded to God to work in. It is not until Christians study the humility of Jesus as the very essence of His redemption, as the very blessedness of the life of the Son of God, as the only true relation to the Father, and therefore as that which Jesus must give us if we are to have any part with Him, that the terrible lack of actual, heavenly, manifest humility will become a burden and a sorrow, and our ordinary religion be set aside to secure this, the first and the chief of the marks of the Christ within us.

Brother, are you clothed with humility? Ask your daily life. Ask Jesus. Ask your friends. Ask the world. And begin to praise God that there is opened up to you in Jesus a heavenly humility of which you have hardly known, and through which a heavenly blessedness you possibly have never yet tasted can come in to you.