

CHAPTER VI.

THE GLORY OF THE CROSS.

IN the last part of the fifth chapter, and in the sixth, we learn the practical character of the entire Epistle. Hasty readers are likely to think that there is a division in it, and that the latter part treats of practical, spiritual life, while the first part is devoted to theoretical doctrines. This is a great error. No part of the Bible is theory; it is all fact. There is no part of the Bible that is not spiritual and practical. Moreover, it is all doctrine. Doctrine means teaching. Christ's talk to the multitudes on the mount is called doctrine, because "He opened His mouth and taught them." Some people express a sort of contempt for doctrine; they speak slightingly of it, as though it belonged to the realm of abstruse theology, and not to practical, every-day life. Such ones unconsciously do dishonor to the preaching of Christ, which was nothing else but doctrine. That is to say, He always taught the people. All true doctrine is intensely practical; it is given to men for no other purpose than to be practiced.

Sermonizing Not Doctrine.

People are led into this error by a wrong use of words. That which they call doctrine, and which they speak of as impractical, is not doctrine, but sermonizing. That is impractical, and {231} has no place in the Gospel. No preacher of the Gospel ever "delivers a sermon." If he does, it is because he chooses for a time to do something else besides preach the Gospel. Christ never delivered a sermon. Instead of that, He gave the people doctrine; that is to say, He taught them. He was "a Teacher sent from God." So the Gospel is all doctrine; it is instruction in the life of Christ.

The object of this Epistle is clearly seen in this closing portion. It is not to furnish ground for controversy, but to silence it by leading the readers to submit themselves to the Spirit, whose fruits are love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness. Its purpose is to reclaim those who are sinning against God by "trying to serve" Him in their "own weak way," and to lead them to serve indeed "in newness of Spirit." All the so-called argument of the preceding portion of the Epistle is simply the demonstration of the fact that "the works of the flesh," which are sin, can be escaped only by the circumcision of the cross of Christ,—by serving God in Spirit, and having no confidence in the flesh.

"Brethren, even if a man be overtaken in any trespass, ye which are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of meekness; looking to thyself, lest thou also be tempted. Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ. For if a man thinketh himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself. But let each man prove his own work, and then shall he have his glorying in regard of himself alone, and not of his neighbor. For each man shall bear his own burden. {232}

"But let him that is taught in the Word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things. Be not deceived; God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth unto his own flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth unto the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap eternal life. And let us not be weary in well-doing; for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not. So then, as we have opportunity, let us work that which is good toward all men, and especially toward them that are of the household of the faith.

"See with how large letters I have written unto you with mine own hand. As many as desire to make a fair show in the flesh, they compel you to be circumcised; only that they may not be persecuted for the cross of Christ. For not even they who receive circumcision do themselves keep the law; but they desire to have you circumcised, that they may glory in your flesh. But far be it from me to glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world hath been crucified unto me, and I unto the world. For neither is circumcision anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature. And as many as shall walk by this rule, peace be unto them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God.

"From henceforth let no man trouble me; for I bear branded on my body the marks of Jesus.

"The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit, brethren. Amen." Galatians 6, R.V. {233}

A Radical Change.

When men set out to make themselves righteous, pride, emulation, vainglory, boasting, criticism, fault-finding, and backbiting, leading to open quarrels, are the result. So it was with the Galatians, and so it will ever be. It can not be otherwise. Each individual has his own conception of the law,—for, having determined to be justified by the law, he reduces it to the level of his own mind, so that he may be judge,—and can not resist examining his brethren, as well as himself, to see if they are up to his measure. If his critical eye detects one who is not walking according to his rule, he at once proceeds to "deal with the offender," who, if humble submission—not to God, but to his judges—be not tendered, must be turned out of the church, lest the robes of "our righteousness" be defiled by contact with him. The self-righteous ones constitute themselves their brother's keeper, to the extent of keeping him out of their company, lest they should be disgraced. In marked contrast with this spirit, which is all too common in the church, is the exhortation with which this chapter opens. Instead of hunting for faults, that we may condemn them, we are to hunt for sinners, that we may save them.

"Sin Coucheth at the Door."

To Cain God said, "If thou doest not well, sin coucheth at the door; and unto thee is its desire, but thou shouldest rule over it." Gen. 4:7, R.V., margin. Sin is a venomous beast, lurking in secret, watching every opportunity to spring upon {234} and overcome the unwary. Its desire is to us, but power has been given us to rule over it. "Let not sin therefore

reign in your mortal body." Nevertheless it is possible (not necessary) for the most zealous ones to be overtaken. "These things write I unto you, that ye may sin not. And if any man sin, we have a Comforter with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous; and He is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the whole world." 1 John 2:1, 2, R.V., margin. So, even though a man be overtaken in any trespass, he is to be restored, and not thrust further away.

The Gospel Means Restoration.

"For the Son of man is come to save that which was lost. How think ye? if a man have an hundred sheep, and one of them be gone astray, doth he not leave the ninety and nine, and goeth into the mountains, and seeketh that which is gone astray? And if so be that he find it, verily I say unto you, he rejoiceth more of that sheep, than of the ninety and nine which went not astray. Even so it is not the will of your Father which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish." Matt. 18:11-14. Christ is now in the heavens "until the times of restoration of all things."

Save the One.

The Lord represents His work by the case of the shepherd who seeks after the one sheep that has gone astray. The work of the Gospel is an individual work. Even though under the preaching of the Gospel thousands accept it in one day, as the result of one discourse, it {235} is because of its effect on each individual heart. When the preacher, in speaking to thousands, addresses each one individually, then he is doing the work of Christ. So if a man be overtaken in a fault, restore such an one, in the spirit of meekness. No man's time is so precious that it is wasted when devoted to the salvation of one single person. Some of the most important and glorious truths that we have on record as uttered by Christ, were addressed to only one listener. He who looks after and cares for the single lambs of the flock, is a good shepherd.

The Ministry of Reconciliation.

"God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto [put into] us the word of reconciliation." 2 Cor. 5:19. He "His own self bare our sins in His own body." 1 Peter 2:24. He did not impute our trespasses to us, but took them all on Himself. "A soft answer turneth away wrath." Christ comes to us with gentle words, not harshly chiding us, in order that He may win us. He calls us to come to Him and find rest; to exchange our galling yoke of bondage, and heavy burden, for His easy yoke and light burden.

In Christ's Stead.

All Christians are one in Christ. There is but one seed—all are embraced in Christ, the Representative Man. Therefore "as He is, so are we in this world." 1 John 4:17. Christ was in this world as an example of what men ought to be, and of what His true followers will be

when wholly consecrated {236} to Him. To His disciples He says, "As My Father hath sent Me, even so send I you," and to this end He clothes them with His own power through the Spirit. "God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through Him might be saved." John 3:17. Therefore we are not sent to condemn, but to save. Hence the injunction, "If a man be overtaken in a fault, . . . restore such an one." This is not to be limited to those who are associated with us in church capacity. We are sent as ambassadors for Christ, to beseech men, in Christ's stead, to be reconciled to God. 2 Cor. 5:20. The whole universe provides no greater work; no higher office can be found in heaven or earth than that of ambassador for Christ, which is the office of even the lowliest and most despised soul that is reconciled to God.

"Ye Which Are Spiritual."

Only such ones are called upon to restore the erring; none others can do it. The Holy Spirit alone must speak through those who would reprove and rebuke. It is Christ's own work that is to be done, and only by the power of the Spirit can anybody be a witness to Him. But would it, then, not be great presumption for anybody to go to restore a brother? Would it not be as much as claiming that he himself is spiritual. It is indeed no light matter to stand in Christ's place to any fallen man; and the design of God is that each one should take heed to himself, "considering thyself lest thou also be tempted." It is plain that the rule here laid down is calculated to work a revival in the church. {237} As soon as a man is overtaken in a fault, the duty of each one is—not straightway to talk to somebody about him, nor even to go directly to the erring one himself, but—to ask himself, How do I stand? Am I not guilty, if not of the same thing, of something equally bad? May it not even be that some fault in me has led to his fall? Am I walking in the Spirit, so that I could restore him, and not drive him further away? This would result in a complete reformation in the church, and it might well be that by the time the others had got into condition to go to the faulty one, he might also have recovered himself from the snare of the devil.

Bound in Heaven.

In giving directions how to deal with one who has committed a trespass (Matt. 18:10-18), the Saviour said, "Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." Does this mean that God pledges Himself to be bound by any decision that any company of men calling themselves His church may make?—Certainly not. Nothing that is done on earth can change God's will. The history of the church, as we have it for nearly eighteen hundred years, is a record of mistakes and errors, of self-aggrandizement, and of putting self in the place of God. Who can read the history of the councils of the church, and say that God was in any of them, or that He either prompted or sanctioned any of their decrees?

What, then, did Christ mean?—Just what He said. His instruction shows that He meant that the church {238} should be spiritual,—filled with the spirit of meekness,—and that every one who spoke should "speak as the oracles of God." Only the Word of Christ should

be in the heart and mouth of all who deal with a trespasser. When this is the case, it follows, since God's Word is settled forever in heaven, that whatever is bound on earth must necessarily be bound in heaven. But this will not be the case unless the Scriptures are strictly followed in letter and in spirit.

"The Law of Christ."

This is fulfilled by bearing one another's burdens, because the law of Christ's life is to bear burdens. "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all." Isa. 53:6. "Surely He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows." Whoever would fulfil His law must have His life in him, still doing the same work for the strayed and fallen.

"In all things it behooved Him to be made like unto His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that He Himself hath suffered being tempted, He is able to succor them that are tempted." Heb. 2:17, 18. He knows what it is to be sorely tempted, and He knows how to overcome. Yea, although He "knew no sin," He was made even to be sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him. 2 Cor. 5:21. He took every one of our sins, and confessed them before God as His own. Even so He comes to us. Instead of upbraiding us for {239} our sin, He opens His heart to us, and tells us how He has suffered with the same infirmity, and that He knows all the hardship, the pain, the sorrow, and the shame. Thus He draws us to Himself, and wins our confidence. Knowing that He has passed through the same experience, that He has been down into the very depths, we are ready to listen to Him when He talks about the way of escape. We know that He is talking from experience.

The greatest part, therefore, of the work of saving sinners is to show ourselves one with them. That is to say, it is in the confession of our own faults that we save others. The man who feels himself without sin, is not the man to restore the sinful. He who goes to one who is overtaken in any trespass, and says, "How in the world could you ever do such a thing? I never did a thing like that in my life, and I can't see how anybody with any sense of self-respect could do so," might far better stay at home. God chose one Pharisee, and only one, to be an apostle, but he was not sent forth until he could acknowledge himself to be the chief of sinners. 1 Tim. 1:15. It is humiliating to confess sin. That is true, but the way of salvation is the way of the cross. It was only by the cross that Christ could be the Saviour of sinners. Therefore if we would share His joy, we must with Him endure the cross, despising the shame. Remember this fact: It is only by confessing our own sins that we can save others from their sins. Only thus can we show them the way of salvation; for it is he who confesses his sins that obtains cleansing from them, and so can lead others to the fountain. {240}

Man Is Nothing.

"If a man thinketh himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself." Mark those words, "when he is nothing." It does not say that we should not think ourselves

to be something until we are something. No; it is a statement of the fact that we are nothing. Not merely a single individual, but all nations, are nothing before the Lord. If we ever at any time think ourselves to be something, we deceive ourselves. And we often do deceive ourselves, and thus mar the work of the Lord. Remember the law of Christ. Although He was everything, He emptied Himself. He obliterated Himself, that the work of God might be done. "The servant is not greater than his lord." God alone is great; "every man at his best state is altogether vanity." God alone is true, but every man a liar. When we acknowledge this, and live in consciousness of it, then we are where the Spirit of God can fill us, and then God can work through us. The "man of sin" is he that exalteth himself. 2 Thess. 2:3, 4. The child of God is the one who humbles himself.

Bear Your Own Burdens.

"For every man shall bear his own burden." Is this a contradiction of verse 2?—By no means. When the Scripture tells us to bear one another's burdens, it does not tell us to throw our burdens on one another. Each one is to cast his burden on the Lord. Ps. 55:22. He bears the burden of the whole world, of all mankind, not in mass, but for each individual. We cast our burdens on Him, not {241} by gathering them up in our hands, or with our mind, and hurling them from ourselves to one who is at a distance. That can never be done. Many have tried to get rid of their burden of sin and pain and care and sorrow, but have failed, and have felt it roll back upon their own heads heavier than ever, until they have well-nigh sunk in despair. What was the trouble?—Simply this: they regarded Christ as at a distance from them, and they felt that they themselves must bridge the gulf. It is impossible. The man who is "without strength" can not cast his burden the length of his arm, and as long as we keep the Lord at arm's length, we shall not know rest from the weary load. It is when we recognize and confess Him in us, as our sole support, our life, the One whose power it is that makes every motion, and so confess that we are nothing, and sink out of sight, no longer deceiving ourselves, that we leave the burden resting on Christ. He knows what to do with it, and yoking up with Him we learn of Him how to bear the burdens of others.

Then how about bearing our own burden?—Ah, it is the Divine "power that worketh in us" that bears it! "I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." It is I, and yet it is not I, but Christ. Now I have learned the secret. I will not weary somebody else with the story of my burden, but will bear it myself, yet not I, but Christ in me. There are people enough in the world who have not yet learned this lesson of Christ, so that every child of God will always find work to do in bearing burdens for others; his own he will {242} intrust to the Lord, to find whom he has no further to go than to his own heart. Is it not blessed to have "One who is mighty" always under the burden which falls upon our shoulders?

This lesson we learn from the life of Christ. He went about doing good, for God was with Him. He comforted the mourners, He bound up the broken-hearted, He healed all that were oppressed of the devil. Not one who came to Him with a tale of sorrow or a distressing

malady was turned away without relief; "that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses." Matt. 8:17. And then when night sent the multitude to their beds, He sought the mountain or the forest, that in communion with the Father, by whom He lived, He might find a fresh supply of life and strength for His own soul. "Let every man prove his own work." "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?" 2 Cor. 13:5. "Though He was crucified through weakness, yet He liveth by the power of God. For we also are weak with Him, but we shall live with Him by the power of God." Verse 4, margin. So if our faith proves to us that Christ is in us,—and faith proves to us the reality of the fact,—we have rejoicing in ourselves alone, and not in another. We joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, and our joy does not depend upon any {243} other person in the world. Though all should fail and be discouraged, we can stand, for the foundation of God—Christ—standeth sure.

Therefore let no one who calls himself a Christian be content to lean on somebody else, but let him, though he be the weakest of the weak, be a burden-bearer,—a worker together with God,—in Christ bearing quietly and uncomplainingly his own burdens, and those of his neighbors also. He can discover some of the burdens of his uncomplaining brother, and bear them, and the other will do likewise. So the rejoicing of the weak will be, "The Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song; He also is become my salvation."

Communicating Good Things.

"Let him that is taught in the Word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things." There can be no doubt but that this refers primarily to temporal support. "The laborer is worthy of his hire." If a man gives himself wholly to the ministry of the Word, it is evident that the things necessary for his sustenance must come from those who are taught. But this by no means exhausts the meaning of the injunction. The one who is taught in the Word must communicate to the teacher "in all good things." Mutual help is the burden of this chapter. "Bear ye one another's burdens." Even the teacher who is supported by those who are taught, is to assist others pecuniarily. Christ and the apostles, who had nothing of their own—for Christ was the poorest of the poor, and the disciples had left {244} all to follow Him—nevertheless distributed to the poor out of their little store. See John 13:29.

When the disciples told Jesus to send the hungry multitudes away, that they might buy themselves victuals, He said, "They need not depart; give ye them to eat." Matt. 14:16. He was not trifling with them; He meant what He said. He knew that they had nothing to give the people, but they had as much as He had. They did not perceive the power of His words, so He Himself took the few loaves and dealt out to the disciples, and thus they did really feed the hungry people. But His words to them meant that they should do just what He did. How many times our own lack of faith in Christ's Word has hindered us from doing good and communicating (Heb. 13:16), the sacrifices which please God.

As the teachers contribute not only the Word but temporal support as well, so those who are taught in the Word should not confine their liberality merely to temporal things. It is a mistake to suppose that ministers of the Gospel never stand in need of spiritual refreshment, or that they can not receive it from the weakest in the flock. No one can ever tell how much the souls of teachers are encouraged by the testimonies of faith and joy in the Lord, which come from the mouths of those who have heard the Word. It is not simply that the teacher sees that his labor is not in vain. The testimony may have no reference whatever to anything that he has done; but a humble soul's joyful testimony to what God has done for him, will often, through the refreshment it gives the teacher of the Word, be the means of strengthening the souls of hundreds. {245}

Sowing and Reaping.

"Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." A simple statement of fact, that can not be made plainer by any amount of talk. The harvest, which is the end of the world, will reveal what the sowing has been, whether wheat or tares. "He that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting." "Sow to yourselves in righteousness, reap in mercy; break up your fallow ground; for it is time to seek the Lord, till He come and rain righteousness upon you." Hosea 10:12. "He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool," and equally foolish is he who trusts in other men, as is seen from the next verse: "Ye have plowed wickedness, ye have reaped iniquity; ye have eaten the fruit of lies; because thou didst trust in thy way, in the multitude of mighty men." "Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm," whether it be his own flesh or that of some other man. "Blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is." Jer. 17:5, 7.

Everything enduring comes from the Spirit. The flesh is corrupt, and it corrupts. He who consults only his own pleasure,—fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind,—will reap a harvest of corruption and death. But "the Spirit is life because of righteousness," and he who consults only the mind of the Spirit, will reap everlasting glory; for "if the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit {246} that dwelleth in you." "For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die; but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live." Rom. 8:11, 13. Wonderful! If we live, we die; if we die, we live! This is the testimony of Jesus: "Whosoever will save his life shall lose it; and whosoever will lose his life for My sake shall find it." Matt. 16:25.

This does not mean the loss of all joy in this present time. It does not mean undergoing a continual deprivation and penance, going without something that we long for, for the sake of getting something else by and by. It does not mean that life in this present time shall be a living death, a long-drawn-out agony. Far from it. That is a crude and false idea of the Christian life—the life that is found in death. No; whoever comes to Christ and drinks of the Spirit, has in himself "a well of water springing up into everlasting life." John 4:14. The joy

of eternity is his now. His joy is full day by day. He is abundantly satisfied with the fatness of God's house, drinking of the river of God's own pleasure. He has all that he longs for, because his heart and his flesh cry out only for God, in whom is all fullness. Once he thought he was "seeing life," but now he knows that he was then but gazing into the grave, the pit of corruption. Now he begins really to live, and the joy of the new life is "unspeakable, and full of glory." So he sings:—

"Now none but Christ can satisfy,
None other name for me;
There's love, and life, and lasting joy,
Lord Jesus, found in Thee."

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A shrewd general always seeks to seize upon the strongest positions; so wherever there is a rich promise to believers, Satan tries to distort it, so as to make it a source of discouragement. Accordingly, he has made many believe that the words, "He that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption," mean that they must all their lives, even after being born of the Spirit, suffer the consequences of their former life of sin. Some have supposed that even in eternity they would have to bear the scars of their old sins, saying, "I can never hope to be what I should have been if I had never sinned."

What a libel on God's mercy, and the redemption that is in Christ Jesus! That is not the freedom wherewith Christ makes us free. The exhortation is, "As ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness;" but if the one who thus yields himself to righteousness must always be handicapped by his former bad habits, that would prove that the power of righteousness is less than that of sin. But that is not so. Grace abounds over sin, and is as mighty as the heavens.

Here is a man who for gross crimes has been condemned to imprisonment for life. After a few years' imprisonment he receives a free pardon, and is set at liberty. Some time afterward we meet him, and see a fifty-pound cannon-ball attached to his leg by a huge chain, so that he can move about only with the greatest difficulty. "Why, how is this?" we ask in surprise. "Were you not given your freedom?" "Oh, {248} yes," he replies, "I am free; but I have to wear this ball and chain as a reminder of my former crimes." One would not think of such "freedom" as that very desirable.

Every prayer inspired by the Holy Ghost is a promise of God; and one of the most gracious of these is this: "Remember not the sins of my youth, nor my transgressions; according to Thy mercy remember Thou me for Thy goodness' sake, O Lord." Ps. 25:7. When God forgives our sins, and forgets them, He gives us such power to escape from them that we shall be as though we had never sinned. By the "exceeding great and precious promises," we are made "partakers of the Divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust." 2 Peter 1:4. Man fell by partaking of the tree of knowledge of

good and evil; the Gospel presents such a redemption from the fall, that all the black memories of sin are effaced, and the redeemed ones come to know only the good, like Christ, "who knew no sin."

Yes; they that sow to the flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption, as we have all proved in ourselves. "But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you." The Spirit has power to free us from the sins of the flesh, and from all their consequences. Christ "loved the church, and gave Himself for it; that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the Word, that He might present it to Himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blem- {249} ish." Eph. 5:25-27. "By His stripes we are healed." The memory of sin,—not of individual sins,—will be perpetuated in eternity only by the scars in the hands and feet and side of Christ, which are the seal of our perfect redemption.

Be Not Weary.

How naturally the exhortation follows, "Let us not be weary in well-doing; for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not." It is so easy for us to get tired doing good, that is, when we are not looking to Jesus. We like to have little intermissions, because constant doing good seems too much of a strain. But that is only when we have not fully learned the joy of the Lord, which is the strength that enables us to keep from getting weary. "They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; they shall walk, and not faint." Isa. 40:31.

But that which is especially referred to here, as the context shows, is not simply the resisting of temptation in our own flesh, but the helping of others. Here we need to learn a lesson from Christ, who "shall not fail nor be discouraged till He have set judgment in the earth." Though nine out of ten whom He relieved never showed the least sign of appreciation, it made no difference with Him. He came to do good, and not to be appreciated. Therefore, "in the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand; for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this or that, or whether they both shall be alike good." Eccl. 11:6. We can {250} not tell how much we shall reap, nor from which of the seed that we sow. Some may fall by the wayside, and be snatched away before it has time to take root, and other may fall on stony ground, where it will wither, and still other may fall among thorns, and be choked; but one thing is certain, and that is that we shall reap. We do not know whether the morning sowing or the evening sowing will prosper, or whether both shall alike be good; but there is no possibility that both can be bad. One or the other alone may prosper, or else both may be good. Isn't that encouragement enough for us not to be weary in well-doing? The ground may seem poor, and the season may not be favorable, so that the prospect for a crop may be most unpromising, and we may be tempted to think that all our labor is wasted. Not so; "in due season we shall reap, if we faint not." "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord." 1 Cor. 15:58.

Make No Difference.

"As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith." In this we see that the apostle speaks of temporal help, for it needs no special exhortation to preach the Word to those who are not of the household of faith; they are the ones to whom it is specially to be preached; but there is a natural tendency—natural, I say, not spiritual—to limit charities to those who are called "deserving." We hear much about "the worthy poor." But we are all unworthy {251} of the least of God's blessings, yet He showers them upon us continually. "If ye do good to them which do good to you, what thank have ye? for sinners also do even the same. And if ye lend to them of whom ye hope to receive, what thank have ye? for sinners also lend to sinners, to receive as much again. But love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest; for He is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil."

Seek the Opportunity.

Note especially the beginning of the tenth verse. "As we have therefore opportunity," let us do good unto all men. Doing good to others is to be considered a privilege to be enjoyed, and not an irksome duty to be discharged. Men do not speak of disagreeable things as opportunities. No one says that he had an opportunity to injure himself, or that he had an opportunity to lose some money. On the contrary, a man will speak of an opportunity to make some money, or to escape from some threatened danger. It is thus that we are to consider doing good to the needy. But opportunities are always sought for. Men are always on the lookout for an opportunity to get gain. So the apostle teaches us that we should be seeking opportunities to help some one. This Christ did. He "went about doing good." He traveled about the country on foot, searching opportunities to do somebody some good, and He found them. He did good, "for God was with Him." His name is Immanuel, which means, "God with us." Now, as He is with us all the days, even to the end of {252} the world, so God is with us, doing good to us, that we also may do good. "We then, as workers together with Him, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain." To this end, "receive ye the Holy Ghost."

Closing Words.

We come now to the close of this most wonderful letter. Even as the whole of the Gospel is contained in the greeting, so we find it in the end. The apostle literally knew nothing else save Jesus Christ and Him crucified. He could not greet his friends without mentioning it. In every chapter of this Epistle, but especially in the last two, do we see how directly it is addressed to us. Everybody uses verses 1, 7-10 as applicable now, without any thought of the Galatians; but just as surely as these verses mean us, just the same as though the Galatians had never lived, so does the entire Epistle.

The consuming zeal of the apostle Paul in writing it is seen in the fact that, contrary to his usual custom, he seized the pen and wrote the Epistle with his own hand. Verse 11. As

intimated in chapter 4, the apostle suffered from weak eyes, which hindered him much in his work, or would have hindered him but for the power of God resting on him; so that it was necessary for him always to have some one with him, to minister unto him, and to serve as amanuensis. From the Second Epistle to the Thessalonians (chapter 2:2) we learn that some took advantage of this fact to write letters to the churches in Paul's name, which troubled the brethren; but in the close of that Epistle (chapter 3:16-18) Paul indicated to {253} them how they might know an epistle that came from him. No matter by whom the body of it was written, he wrote the salutation and the signature with his own hand. So great was the urgency in this case, however, that he wrote the entire Epistle himself.

Only a Show.

We can not deceive God, and it is useless to deceive ourselves or others. "The Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart." 1 Sam. 16:7. The circumcision in which the "false brethren" were seeking to induce the Galatians to trust, meant self-righteousness, instead of righteousness by faith. They had the law only as "the form of righteousness and of truth." With their works they could make "a fair show in the flesh," but it was only an empty show; there was no reality in it. They could seem righteous without suffering persecution for the cross of Christ.

They did not indeed keep the law; not by any means; for the flesh is opposed to the law of the Spirit, and "they that are in the flesh can not please God." But they desired converts to "our faith," as so many call the particular theories which they hold. Christ said, "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves." Matt. 23:15. Such teachers glory in the flesh of their "converts." If they can count so many as belonging to "our denomination," so much "gain" in the past year, they feel virtuously happy. Numbers and appearances count for much with men, but for nothing with God.

Real and Lasting Glory.

"God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ." Why glory in the cross?—Because by it the world is crucified to us, and we to the world. The Epistle ends where it begins,—with deliverance from "this present evil world," and it is the cross alone that accomplishes the deliverance. The cross is the symbol of humiliation, therefore we glory in it, because in humility is exaltation.

God Revealed in the Cross.

Read the words of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah: "Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches." Jer. 9:23.

Why should not the wise man glory in his wisdom?—Because so far as it is his own wisdom, it is foolishness. "The wisdom of this world is foolishness with God." "The Lord

knoweth the thoughts of the wise, that they are vain." 1 Cor. 3:19, 20. No man has any wisdom in which to glory, for his own wisdom is foolishness, and wisdom which God gives is something to cause humility instead of pride.

What about might? "All flesh is grass." Isa. 40:6. "Every man at his best state is altogether vanity." Ps. 39:5. "Men of low degree are vanity, and men of high degree are a lie; to be laid in the balance, they are altogether lighter than vanity." But "power belongeth unto God." Ps. 62:9, 11. {255}

As to riches, they are "uncertain." 1 Tim. 6:17. Man "heapeth up riches, and knoweth not who shall gather them." "Riches certainly make themselves wings; they fly away as an eagle toward heaven." Prov. 23:5. Only in Christ are found unsearchable and abiding riches.

Man, therefore, has absolutely nothing in which to boast, for what is there left of a man when he has nothing that can be called wealth, no wisdom whatever, and absolutely no strength? Everything that man is or has comes from the Lord. Therefore it is that he that glorieth is to glory in the Lord. 1 Cor. 1:31.

Now put this text with Gal. 6:14. The same Spirit inspired them both, so that there is no contradiction. One text says that we are to glory only in the knowledge of the Lord; the other says that there is nothing in which to glory save the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. The conclusion, therefore, is that in the cross we find the knowledge of God. To know God is eternal life, and there is no life for mankind except through the cross of Christ. So again we see most clearly that all that may be known of God is revealed in the cross. Aside from the cross, there is no knowledge of God.

This shows us again that the cross is seen in all creation, for the everlasting power and divinity of God, even all that may be known of Him, are seen in the things that He has made. The power of God is seen in the things that are made, and the cross is the power of God. 1 Cor. 1:18. Out of weakness God brings strength; He saves men by death, so that even {256} the dead may rest in hope. No man can be so poor, so weak and sinful, so degraded and despised, that he may not glory in the cross. The cross takes him just where he is, for it is the symbol of shame and degradation, and reveals the power of God in him, and in that there is ground for everlasting glory.

The Cross Crucifies.

The cross cuts us off from the world. Glory! for then it unites us to God, because the friendship of the world is enmity with God; "whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God." James 4:4. Through His cross Christ has destroyed the enmity. Eph. 2:15, 16. "And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof; but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever." Then let the world pass away.

"Fade, fade, each earthly joy,
Jesus is mine;
Break every tender tie,
Jesus is mine.

Dark is the wilderness;
Earth has no resting-place;
Jesus alone can bless;
Jesus is mine."

The Cross Elevates.

Jesus said, "I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me." This He said signifying what death He should die, namely, the death of the cross. He humbled Himself to death, even the death of the cross; "wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name." Phil. 2:8, 9. He descended "first into the lower {257} parts of the earth. He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that He might fill all things." Eph. 4:9, 10. It was through death that He ascended to the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens. It was the cross that lifted Him up from earth to heaven. Therefore it is the cross alone that brings us glory, and so it is the only thing in which to glory. The cross, which means derision and shame from the world, lifts us away from this world, and sets us with Christ in the heavenly places; and the power by which it does this is "the power that worketh in us," even the power that works in and upholds all things in the universe.

The Cross Creates.

"For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature." That is, neither circumcision nor uncircumcision has any power. Salvation does not come from man, whatever his state or condition, or whatever he may do. In an uncircumcised state he is lost, and if he be circumcised he is no nearer salvation. Only the cross has power to save. The only thing that is of any value is a new creature, or, as indicated in the margin of the Revision, "a new creation." "If any man be in Christ, there is a new creation;" and it is only through death that we become joined to Him. Rom. 6:3.

"Nothing in my hand I bring;
Simply to Thy cross I cling."

The cross makes a new creation, so that here again we see a reason for glorying in it; for when the new {258} creation came from the hand of God in the beginning, "the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy." Job 38:7.

The Sign of the Cross.

Put together all the texts that we have read, which show: (1) That the cross of Christ is the only thing in which to glory; (2) that whoever glories must glory only in the knowledge of God; (3) that God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the mighty, so that none might glory save in Him; and, (4) that God is revealed in the things that He has made, and that creation, which manifests God's power, also presents the cross, because the

cross of Christ is the power of God, and God is made known by it. What have we?—This, that the power it took to create the world, and all things that are in it,—the power that is exerted to keep all things in existence,—is the power that saves those who trust in it. This is the power of the cross.

So the power of the cross, by which alone salvation comes, is the power that creates, and that continues to work in all creation. But when God creates a thing, it is "very good;" so in Christ, in His cross, there is "a new creation." "We are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God afore prepared that we should walk in them." Eph. 2:10, R.V. It is in the cross that this new creation is wrought, for its power is the power by which "in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." This is the power that keeps the earth from utter destruction under the curse; which brings about the {259} changing seasons,—seed-time and harvest,—and that will at last renew the face of the earth, so that "it shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and singing; the glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it, the excellency of Carmel and Sharon; they shall see the glory of the Lord, and the excellency of our God."

"The works of the Lord are great, sought out of all them that have pleasure therein. His work is honorable and glorious; and His righteousness endureth forever. He hath made His wonderful works to be remembered; the Lord is gracious and full of compassion." Ps. 111:2-4.

Here we see that the wonderful works of God reveal His righteousness, and His grace and compassion as well. This is another evidence that His works reveal the cross of Christ, in which infinite love and mercy are centered.

But "He hath made His wonderful works to be remembered;" or, "He hath made a memorial for His wonderful works." Why does He wish men to remember and declare His mighty acts?—In order that they may not forget, but may trust in, His salvation. He would have men continually meditate on His works, that they may know the power of the cross. It is in the works of His hands that we triumph. Ps. 92:4. So when God had made the heavens and earth, and all their host, in six days, "He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had made. And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it; because that in it He had rested from all His work which God created and made." Gen. 2:2, 3. {260}

The cross conveys to us the knowledge of God, because it shows us His power as Creator. Through the cross we are crucified unto the world, and the world unto us; that is, by the cross we are sanctified. But sanctification is the work of God, not of man. Only His divine power can accomplish the great work. In the beginning God sanctified the Sabbath, as the crown of His creative work—the evidence that His work was finished, the seal of perfection, and therefore He says, "Moreover also I gave them My Sabbaths, to be a sign between Me and them, that they might know that I am the Lord that sanctify them." Eze. 20:12.

So we see that the Sabbath—the seventh day—is the true sign of the cross. It is the memorial of creation, and redemption is creation,—creation through the cross. In the cross we find the complete and perfect works of God, and are clothed with them. Crucified with

Christ means the utter giving up of self, acknowledging that we are nothing, and trusting absolutely in Christ. In Him we rest; in Him we find the Sabbath. The cross takes us back to the beginning, into "that which was from the beginning." The resting upon the seventh day of the week is but the sign of the fact that in the perfect work of God, as seen in creation,—in the cross,—we find rest from sin.

"But it is difficult to keep the Sabbath; my business will suffer;" "I couldn't make a living and keep the Sabbath;" "It is so unpopular." Oh, yes; nobody ever said that it was a specially pleasing thing to be crucified! "Even Christ pleased not Himself." {261} Read the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah. Christ was not very popular, and least so of all when He was crucified. The cross means death; but it means also the entrance into life. There is healing in Christ's wounds, blessing in the curse that He bore, life in the death that He suffered. Who dare say that he trusts Christ for everlasting life if he dare not trust Him for a few years or months or days of life in this world? Accept the Sabbath of the Lord, and you will find that it means the cross to a degree that you never before dreamed of, and therefore "a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory."

Now say once more, and say it from the heart: "Far be it from me to glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world hath been crucified unto me, and I unto the world." If you can say that in truth, you will find tribulations and afflictions so easy that you can glory in them.

"Hallelujah, what a Saviour!"

The Glory.

It is by the cross that everything is sustained, for "in Him all things hold together," and He does not exist in any other form than that of the crucified One. But for the cross, there would be universal death. Not a man could breathe, not a plant could grow, not a ray of light could shine from heaven, if it were not for the cross. Now "the heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth His handiwork." Ps. 19:1. They are some of the things that God has made. No pen can describe and no artist's brush can depict the wondrous glory of the heavens; yet {262} that glory is but the glory of the cross of Christ. This follows from the facts already learned, that the power of God is seen in the things that are made, and that the cross is the power of God. The glory of God is His power, for "the exceeding greatness of His power to usward" is seen in the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead (Eph. 1:19, 20), and "Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father" (Rom. 6:4). It was for the suffering of death that Jesus was crowned with glory and honor. Heb. 2:9. So we see that all the glory of the innumerable stars, with their various colors, all the glory of the rainbow, the glory of the clouds gilded by the setting sun, the glory of the sea, and of blooming fields and green meadows, the glory of the spring-time and of the ripened harvest, the glory of the opening bud and the perfect fruit,—yea, all the glory that Christ has in heaven, as well as the glory that will be revealed in His saints when they shall "shine forth as the sun in the

kingdom of their Father," even "as the stars forever and ever,"—is the glory of the cross. How can we ever think of glorying in anything else?

The Israel of God.

"As many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God." The rule of glory! what a grand rule to walk by! Are there two classes here mentioned?—No; that can not be, for the Epistle has been devoted to showing that all are one in Christ Jesus. "And ye are complete in Him, which is the Head of all principality and power; in whom also ye are circumcised {263} with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ; buried with Him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with Him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised Him from the dead. And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath He quickened together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses." Col. 2:10-13. "We are the circumcision, which worship God in the Spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh." Phil. 3:3. This circumcision constitutes us all the true Israel of God, for this is the victory over sin, and "Israel" means an overcomer. No longer are we "aliens from the commonwealth of Israel," "no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner-stone." Eph. 2:12, 19, 20. So we shall join the throng that "shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven."

The Marks of Christ.

"From henceforth let no man trouble me; for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus." The Greek word rendered "marks" is the plural of "stigma," which we have incorporated into our own language. It signifies shame and disgrace, even as of old it meant a mark branded into the body of a culprit, or of a recaptured runaway slave, to show to whom he belonged. Such are the marks of the cross of Christ. {264} The marks of the cross were upon Paul. He had been crucified with Christ, and he carried the nail-prints. They were branded on his body. They marked him as the bond-servant, the slave of the Lord Jesus. Let no one, then, interfere with him; he was not the servant of men. He owed allegiance to Christ alone, who had bought him. Let no one seek to get him to serve man or the flesh, because Jesus had branded him with His mark, and he could serve no other. Moreover, let men beware how they sought to interfere with his liberty in Christ, or how they treated him, for his Master would surely protect His own. Have you those marks? Then you may glory in them, for such boasting is not vain, and will not make you vain.

Ah, what glory there is in the cross! All the glory of heaven is in that despised thing. Not in the figure of the cross, but in the cross itself. The world does not reckon it glory, but then it did not know the Son of God, and it does not know the Holy Spirit, because it can not see Him. May God open our eyes to see the glory, so that we may reckon things at their true

value. May we consent to be crucified with Christ, that the cross may glorify us. In the cross of Christ there is salvation. In it is the power of God to keep us from falling, for it lifts us up from earth to heaven. In the cross there is the new creation, which God Himself pronounces "very good." In it is all the glory of the Father, and all the glory of the eternal ages. Therefore God forbid that we should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus. {265} Christ, by which the world is crucified to us, and we unto the world.

"In the cross of Christ I glory,
Towering o'er the wrecks of time;
All the light of sacred story
Gathers round its head sublime."

Therefore —

"Since I, who was undone and lost,
Have pardon through His name and Word;
Forbid it, then, that I should boast,
Save in the cross of Christ, my Lord."

"Where'er I go, I'll tell the story
Of the cross, of the cross;
In nothing else my soul shall glory,
Save the cross, save the cross;
And this my constant theme shall be,
Through time and in eternity,
That Jesus tasted death for me,
On the cross, on the cross."