

Abiding and Walking with Christ

By Elder Gregg Thompson

“He that saith he abideth in him, ought himself also to walk even as he walked;” – 1 John 2:6.

In this discourse I propose to be practical and experimental, but at the same time I wish every thought and word to be consistent with sound doctrine. The doctrine of the Bible is not a dry theory that produces no change in the heart, affections, life, and practice of those who in truth receive it and believe it. But none thus receive it, except those who have the Spirit of Christ in them, and are born of God; (John 1:11-14). To all others it is foolishness, and they will not receive it, neither can they know it; (1 Corinthians 2:14). “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works;” (2 Timothy 3:16,17). The man of God is evidently the Christian, the man who has been born of God, who has the Spirit of God, and is prepared to know and understand the things of the Spirit. These were the characters John was addressing in this epistle; for these owe obedience to the laws and ordinances of Christ’s kingdom, and taste and feel the blessed reward connected with obedience, about which the world can know nothing. The Christian, who has the Spirit that was in John inspiring and moving him to write this epistle, can read it and be instructed by it. In this chapter he may find various marks by which the man born of God, the man interested in Christ may be known; amongst which my text presents a principal one. Some heretics have taught that men might have communion with God in sin, as well as in duty; that they can be as good Christians out of the church as in it; and be as good children, and as worthy of the smiles of their Father in disobedience as in obedience. In direct contradiction to this

the apostle asserts the necessity of conformity to Christ, a Christ-like life and conversation. All who claim union with Christ, and an interest in his atoning blood, should give evidence in their life that Christ lives in them.

Our text supposes a character of this kind – “He that saith he abideth in him” - or this expresses a real union with Christ, an interest in him, and communion with him. When Christ speaks of his union with the Father he says, “I am in the Father, and the Father in me;” (John 14:11); and when he speaks of his union with his people he says, “I in them, and thou in me;” (John 17:23). This is a real union and communion with Christ, and it is put in opposition to those temporary and transient effects sometimes visible under the preaching of the gospel, as referred to by the Savior; (Matthew 13:20-22); which, like the morning dew, soon disappear; as a sudden excitement produced by sympathetic words, that vanishes as soon as the voice ceases to be heard. In this expression, “abiding in Christ” is implied a solid and effectual work of the Spirit, regenerating the soul, purging the conscience from dead works and circumcising the heart to love the Lord God. Such an one is a new creature in Christ, has passed from death unto life, and is free from condemnation; he is dead to sin, and can live no longer therein. Let no man think that he abides in Christ, or is in vital union with him when he can live in sin and take delight in gratifying fleshly lusts. It is by walking “even as he walked” that we have our claims warranted and our Christian evidences brightened. Our text clearly teaches the necessity of imitating Christ, or walking as he walked, if we abide in him, and enjoy sweet communion with him. These words evidently refer to those ordinary works of Christ in doing good, administering to the comfort of the poor and afflicted, and in his daily life and conversation, and his obedience, to the Father. It is not expected, neither is it required of us to imitate the extraordinary and miraculous works of Christ, or those purely mediatory, for that we have no power or ability to perform, which belong to him alone as the Son of God, the Mediator between God and men. God has called us to a

life of holiness and virtue, and it must be the care of all who profess and claim an interest in Christ, and union with him, to follow him in evil as well as good report, in suffering as well as prosperity, in trials and persecutions, "so to walk as he walked." John has made this word so a very important word in the text; the emphasis seems to rest on it. This evidently means that the imitation should be exact, that Christ should be truly and faithfully exhibited and imitated in our life and conversation. It should be sincere, prompted by divine love in our hearts, leading us to follow Christ in all the paths of holiness and obedience; in all of his examples, precepts, and commands, according to the grace we have received, and the teaching of his word.

This word so, or, even as he walked, clearly shows that the life of Christ is a copy to be imitated by all his disciples; and as children at school learning to write should look at the copy before them, and then carefully try to imitate it, and make every letter just like the letter in the copy; so with the Christian; he has the copy before him, and he should keep his eyes upon it, and labor to draw every letter, every word, and every line of his life just like the copy. Keep the copy before you, and look nowhere else for a copy; Jesus is your copy, the one you are to "hear," and to imitate in all things. Live daily and hourly, "looking unto Jesus, the author," (beginner,) "and finisher of our faith;" (Hebrews 12:2-4).

I hold that every one who professes union with Christ, and to be a servant and follower of his, is bound by the law of love, written in the heart by the Holy Spirit, to imitate him in his holy life, walk in his statutes, and keep his commandments, under the penalty of forfeiting his claim to Christ, or fellowship with his brethren. If his life is the copy or pattern we are to follow, and his commandments the rule to govern us in life; if our spiritual comforts in this life, and communion with Christ and his people, are

inseparably connected with our obedience to him, how careful we should be to keep our eyes on the pattern, and as dear children, be followers of him, imitating him in a holy life and conversation. This life of strict obedience may bring upon us the hatred of the world, and of all antichristian powers; but in this we are suffering nothing but what our Lord suffered before us, and we should keep his example in sufferings before us, and try to imitate him in bearing the reproaches of the world. The author of our text says, "Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you." It is God's enemy, and your open and avowed enemy, so that you should never be led away by it. The devil is your enemy, and a cunning, artful one; and when he sees that persecutions and tortures will not destroy you, but that you grow and prosper under them, he will clothe himself as an angel of light, and come to you claiming to be a humble follower of Christ, whose soul is full of love for the blessed cause; and he wants to see the standard of Immanuel planted in every land, and the world converted to the religion of Jesus; and to effect this, we must have a system of cooperation through which we can concentrate all our forces and means; and we will soon see the world converted, and the millennial glory ushered in upon us. You love Christ and want the glorious gospel preached to all the world, and ask him, how is this to be effected? He answers you: "By forming a great national convention, and then State conventions; and let your churches, associations, and State conventions be auxiliary to the national convention. Let memberships, life memberships, and directorships be sold to raise money; let salaried officers be appointed to transact the business, and let salaried agents be appointed to travel all over the country to raise funds for this glorious purpose, and then the world will soon be evangelized." When you have heard all this, go to your copy, and see if you find it there; hunt for the agents Christ sent out to collect money from the people; look, and find if you can, where a great convention, and auxiliary conventions were formed; and find, if you can, where he ordered that members, director ships, etc., should be sold for money. If you find nothing of the kind in your copy, shun it as you would the devil; for it is one of his devices to lead you away from Christ; and by following it you will forfeit your

communion with Christ and his church. I shall not speak of all the institutions gotten up by men, called benevolent, and claiming your fellowship and support, as efficient means of grace for the conversion and salvation of sinners. Not one of their agents, or missionaries have ever yet said, "I am full and abound;" but their covetous hearts are forever crying, "Give, give; we must have more money, or our cause will perish;" and to raise the funds, church festivals, oyster, or strawberry suppers, sham post-offices, etc., are gotten up, and tricks of deception practiced. Dear child of God, look at your copy, and ask yourself the question, Can I live in fellowship with these things, and practice them, and say, "I abide in Christ, and walk as he walked?"

To follow Christ and keep his commandments is solemnly enjoined on his disciples by many express commands in the gospel. "But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation;" (1 Peter 1:15). "Be ye therefore followers of God as dear children, and walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us;" (Ephesians 5:1,2). If we bear the name of Christ, that name should be honored by us; but it cannot be honored by us in following the traditions and teachings of men, or by substituting worldly inventions as auxiliaries to his divine institution. But he is honored by us as we daily imitate him by holiness of life and daily obedience to his commands. "For to me to live is Christ." The Christian honors Christ when his life is in exact conformity to him, and when every word and action of his reflects the graces of the Spirit, and gives evidence that Christ lives in him.

Walking in Christ implies obedience to him, following him, taking him as our leader, and our pattern in all things. In thus walking in Christ, no Christian walks according to the dictates of his own will, or wisdom; for no man in, and of himself has wisdom enough to direct his steps, or govern himself in divine things. If the Christian, in and of himself had this wisdom,

his own will would be the rule of his action, and he would have no use for the example of Christ; it would be of no force, and the divine prerogative would be set aside, which is the case whenever we get up institutions, and practice things not commanded by Christ. "I know, O Lord, that the way of man is not in himself; it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps;" (Jeremiah 10:23). It could be no more presumptuous in the Christian to pretend to be his own guide, than it would to pretend to be his own maker. If the Christian's own will was to be his own guide, the Catholic dogma of church infallibility would be established; for it would be impossible for him ever to err, or walk wrong. The Christian who professes union with Christ, and desires to maintain that union and fellowship with his church, must hear Christ in all things, and be guided by him in all he does, and keep his eye steadily upon him, and look nowhere else for a pattern or guide; so that, if any say, "Hear me; hear me;" or, "Here is Christ," he can answer, "I will neither hear you, nor ask you to hear me; but I will hear Christ, and follow him, and follow no other." Talk not to me about the defects in the pattern Christ has set for us, or that it will not meet the times, or the fashions and tastes of the world. His life was one of unspotted holiness, goodness, and love; it is a perfect copy for all followers, and he is most honored by them when they imitate it to the letter.

This walking in Christ clearly implies that the Christian is not his own guide, so he should not pretend to be the rule for others; but Christ should be his guide, and to him he should look for wisdom to guide him in every step of the way. It is true, as the apostle tells us, we should be followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises; (Hebrews 6:12). Again; "Take, my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience;" James 5:10. Paul was, perhaps, filled with as great a measure of the spirit of wisdom and holiness as any mere man ever was, and had as much right to set himself up as a rule or pattern for others as any more man could have,

but he goes no higher than this: "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ;" (1 Corinthians 11:1). I am but a frail, imperfect man at best, and am only right when Christ rules me, and I follow him. In Christ is perfect freedom from error and defects; his life, examples, and laws cannot be improved by any; and the nearer we live like him, the brighter our Christian light will shine. Paul commends the Thessalonians, because they "became followers of us, and of the Lord;" (1 Thessalonians 1:6). The Bereans were called noble, because they searched the Scriptures, and tried the teachings of the apostles by them. No man, council, or convention of frail, fallible men has the right to prescribe doctrines, or rules to govern the practice or conscience of their fellow men in things of religion, or their duty to their God; in all this Christ is their sovereign Lawgiver, and they are to hear and obey him in all things. There is to be no adding to or taking from; no changing or altering to suit the flesh, or accommodate the world, or to make proselytes. Thus we have it from the mouth of the Lord; "Teaching them to observe all things, whatsoever I have commanded you;" (Matthew 18:19,20). This is a specific command and expresses the whole duty of the gospel preacher, and obedience to this covers the whole duty of the Christian; it directs him to hear Christ, to look to him, strictly obey in all things his commands, and learn of him, and find rest to his soul. The command is specific, and forbids any thing not commanded by Jesus to be taught or practiced by the church of Christ. It is therefore gross and wicked rebellion against the King for his church to teach or practice any thing not commanded by him; and gross and criminal disobedience to change or alter his laws, or to say or teach that some other way will do as well as his commands, or the examples set by him. Here is a test of our love for Jesus, and of our loyalty to him as our King and Lawgiver. To the humble Christian, whose heart has been circumcised to love the Lord God, the thought would fill him with fear and trembling, and he will pray with David, "Give me understanding, and I shall keep thy law." O Lord, make me to remember thy name, and keep thy law; "Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law;" (Psalms 119:18).

Abiding and walking in Christ are fruits of the Holy Spirit, and good evidences that the sinner has been quickened into divine or spiritual life, born of God, and made a new creature in Christ Jesus; that his old pleasures have passed away, and that he now loves the things he once hated. That a great change must be wrought in the heart and affections of the sinner to prepare him for the service of God, is plain, for God hath said, "And I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within you; and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them an heart of flesh; that they may walk in my statutes, and keep mine ordinances, and do them;" Ezekiel 11:19,20. "And I will give them one heart, and one way, that they may fear me forever, for the good of them, and of their children after them;" Jeremiah 32:39. This is God's work wrought in the sinner independent of all human means or agencies; and it is called by Paul a creation in Christ Jesus; Ephesians 2:10. And it is this creation, this being quickened into spiritual life, and born of God, that prepares them to walk in good works, and be followers of God as dear children.

This abiding in Christ, or walking as he walked, teaches us another profitable lesson; for it shows conclusively that the Christian is not left to his own fancies, or to what he may think expedient, or to what human wisdom may dictate would advance the good cause; but we must look to Christ, and ask the question: Has he set the example, or left the precept or command? Things may look good to us, and our carnal reason may say, There is nothing wrong in them, and no evil can come of the partaking of them; but if they are not taught by Christ, either by example or precept, they are forbidden, and we are told to "taste not, touch not, and handle not." All humanly devised institutions, forms, and ceremonies connected with the church of Christ are like the idolatrous temple of old; they draw our minds away from Christ; they lead our feet away from his holy examples and footsteps. Thus the house of God, that should be a place of prayer, is

desecrated, and turned into a house of fairs, festivals, tableaux, and vain amusements, to gratify our carnal lusts, and to gather money to fill the pockets of a graceless clergy, who will never say, We have enough. These things are all put in the list with profaneness, licentiousness, and carnal lusts, and are forbidden by the gospel; and every one who lives according to them should be rejected by the church of Christ, and every claim he may set up of being in Christ regarded as false; for it is written, "Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity;" 2 Timothy 2:19. "They that are in the flesh do mind the things of the flesh;" and the inventions of men, and the societies and institutions gotten up by men will please them; for they are the fruits of the flesh, and according to carnal wisdom. Such as these should put off the name of Christian, for they do not follow Christ. No man can abide in Christ and the fellowship of the Spirit, and follow these things. Let no man say that he abideth in Christ, unless he himself walketh even as he walked.

For the Christian to "abide in Christ, and walk as he walked," gives evidence of his gracious state, and that the love of Christ dwells in his heart, and that he esteems Christ greater in holiness than all his creatures, and the only object worthy of imitation; for only that which is first and best in every respect is worthy to be the rule and' measure of all the rest. It should be the constant desire, and the highest object in the saint's ambition to be made conformable to Christ. This was Paul's desire: "That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death;" Philippians 3:10.

Christ has a perfection of being above any of God's creatures; "For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens;" Hebrews 7:26. And he was perfect in all his works. He was perfect in his priesthood, perfect in

his offerings, so that by one offering he put away sin, and "obtained eternal redemption for us." His was a life of perfection, for God bore testimony and said, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." His life was, therefore, a perfect rule, a pattern to be imitated by all his followers. No error, no mistake could be found therein, for he was "holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners." O Christian! is it true that your conformity to Christ is your test of union with him? The nearer you live to him, and conform to the pattern he has given, the nearer you thus approach to perfection, and the clearer will be your evidences that you are a child of God, and a joint-heir with Christ. What manner of person, then, should you be in all holy conversation?

The evidences of our regeneration, justification, and interest in Christ are felt in our souls as we abide in Christ, and walk as he walked; full assurance of this is never attained and enjoyed by us in disobedience. "As many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and upon the Israel of God;" Galatians 6:16. If we grow careless, vain, and worldly, and live after the flesh, we shall die to our Christian peace and consolation; our consciences testify against us, and we walk in gross darkness. "Our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world;" 2 Corinthians 1:12.

Dear child of God, rest assured you are deceived, when you talk about feeling the comforts of the Spirit, its witnesses in your heart, and the light of the Lord shining along your path, while you are walking in disobedience, according to the course of this world, and disregarding the commands of the Savior, and not walking as he walked. "But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed;" James 1:25. "The

fruit of righteousness shall be peace, and the effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance forever." It is not bought by our obedience, but it is found in the way of holiness and obedience, in walking as Christ walked.

If the sweet and blessed comforts and enjoyments of our Christian life are inseparably connected with our obedience to Christ, with deep and heart-felt interest we may inquire, What things in the life of Christ are all Christians bound to obey? We regard the life of Christ as a living law, a perfect rule of conduct, and we should be governed by it as such. All the graces of the Spirit were represented in him in their full glory and perfection, in his walk, conversation, and works of mercy on earth. We can only imitate him imperfectly. Never man spake as he spake; none ever lived as he lived. "We beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth;" John 1:14. In the life of Christ there is a purity and holiness which make it a glorious pattern for the saints to imitate; and it is said, "As he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation;" 1 Peter 1:15; in all your words and actions, at every point, that your light may shine before men. We must not forget that there is a two-fold holiness in Christ; holiness of nature, and holiness of practice. Our blessed Savior in his nature was pure, holy, undefiled, and free from the stain of sin, as it is said of him, and made higher than the heavens. "That holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." In this we can never be like Christ; for he is called "the only begotten of the Father;" and no created being can ever be the Son of God, in the same sense that he was God's Son. Of his conception it is said to Mary, "And behold, thou shalt bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God shall give him the throne of his father David; and he shall reign over the house of Jacob forever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end. Then said Mary unto the angel, how shall this be? And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest

shall overshadow thee; therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God;" Luke 1. Again; "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth;" John 1:14 Paul testifies of him that he was God manifest in the flesh; that the fullness of the Godhead dwelt in him. And Christ says, "He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father." This Son was the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person; in him were all the perfections of God himself, for he was God manifest in the flesh.

We, as the chosen seed of Christ, children given to him in the covenant of grace, are the children of Adam, have descended from a corrupt and sinful nature, so that we cannot make ourselves holy, nor impart holiness to others. But our Lord Jesus is essentially holy, that is, he makes others holy. Therefore his sufferings and blood are called a fountain opened for sin and for uncleanness, to cleanse men's souls, to purge the conscience; Zechariah 13:1. His blood cleanses us from all sin. In this work we cannot imitate him, neither are we required to try to do so; for we cannot make ourselves or others holy. The giving of eternal life, the regenerating of the man, the resurrection of the sinner dead in sin, and imparting holy desires and affections in his soul, cleansing him from all guilt and sin, so that he stands justified before God, are the works of Christ, and have never been delegated to any inferior being, in whole or in part. Proud nature will not relish this truth, it is too humiliating; I must in some way have a hand in my own eternal salvation, and the eternal salvation of others. Abasing and humiliating as it is, it is nevertheless true, that we can as well create ourselves men, as make ourselves saints, "new creatures in Christ."

Christ is God, not a distinct person in the Trinity, but the whole Trinity; and when born of the virgin, he was called, IMMANUEL-God with us. He is

therefore infinitely holy, and there can be no measure or bounds set to his holiness, as the Mediator of the New Testament, and the Redeemer of his people; "for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him;" John 3:34. It is only by covenant relation, and by imputation that the righteousness of Christ can be ours, for it is written, "But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.: that, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord;" 1 Corinthians 1:30,31. Christ was, without simulation, truly and sincerely holy, and this appeared in the greatest trial of truth and holiness ever made in this world. "The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me;" John 14:30. When he was passing through the greatest temptation, like pure gold tried in the fire, his divine goodness and purity only shone the brighter. When his soul was exceeding sorrowful, and he sweat, as it were, great drops of blood, falling to the ground, no dregs or dross appeared, but he said in humble submission, "Father, thy will be done." While hypocrites and false professors, make more show of holiness than they really have, there was more holiness in Christ than ever appeared to the view of men, and more than they in their wisdom could see or comprehend.

There was perfect inward beauty and holiness in Christ, for God dwelt in him; and when divine light shines in the heart of the poor sinner, he can see that glory in the face of Jesus Christ; 2 Corinthians 4:6. If Christ be in us, and our hearts have been purged from an evil conscience, we should "put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness." or holiness of truth; Ephesians 4:24. Our purity of heart we receive from Christ; it is his work in us, and must be sincere and real, shining with inward beauty towards God, rather than towards men. We may deceive men by outward actions; but God sees our hearts and knows what prompts our actions. But internal beauty and holiness will be manifested by our external actions; and in various respects his holiness of life is presented as examples to be followed by us; and for us to neglect them, is on our part

criminal disobedience, and must bring upon us the chastising rod. With this truth in his heart, the apostle teaches that, "we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest ` at any time we should let them slip. For if the word spoken by angels"-that old covenant that was imperfect and faulty-"was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward; how shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him?" Hebrews 2:1-3. The Christian can bring no valid excuse for disobeying the commands of Jesus. A sense of his own unworthiness will not do, for Christ came to save sinners, and the chief of sinners. A fear that he will reproach the cause that is dearer than life to him is no excuse, for he has the promise that he shall be kept by the power of God. The frowns, contempt, and persecutions of the world are no excuse, for Christ endured all these things for you, and he is not ashamed of you, but owns you as his brethren. The frailties and shortcomings of others are no reason why we should live in disobedience; we have no right to consult the world, or the flesh, or to learn of men our duty, but to learn of Christ; and be not hearers of his word, but doers, if we expect to escape his chastenings, and to enjoy the blessings of the new covenant.

Christ was uniformly holy, at one place as well as another, at one time as well as another, in one company as well as another. He was all the time like himself, for the same tenor of holiness ran throughout his whole life. So ought it to be with his brethren, "holy in all manner of conversation." O, my brethren, look to your copy, and be sure to imitate Christ. Foolish talk and jestings are not comely, and do not reflect the life of Christ who never used vain and foolish words. Let not one part of your life be heavenly, and another earthly; or, as one expresses it, "Now a heavenly rapture, and by-and-by a worldly broil." Look at your own Leader; he was a pattern of holiness to all that came nigh him, and conversed with him. O Christian,

imitate Christ in this, and be not conformed to this world, or drawn into its wicked amusements, or vanities, even if they should put on the garb of Christianity, and name themselves "BENEVOLENCE." O, my Christian brother, or sister, imitate Christ; take his life and examples for your guide, and turn not to the right hand or to the left to please men, the world, the devil, or his angels that come dressed in the garb of angels of light, and with a great show of religion would lead you away from Christ and the pattern he has given you. It was this abiding in Christ, and walking as he walked, that was the commendation of the Thessalonians, and made them ensamples to all that believed in Macedonia and Achaia, so that in every place their faith to Godward was spread abroad; 1 Thessalonians 1:7,8. "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven;" Matthew 5:16. So walked our primitive brethren, when they were persecuted, imprisoned, and put to death, because they would not listen to the world, or follow the many "lo heres" and "lo theres." Paul says, "Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample;" Philippians 3:17. If our life and conversation be uniform, and patterned after Christ no one can associate with us and not be benefited; our holy example will have a restraining influence on the wicked, and exhort the confession that there is a reality in the religion we profess. But, on the other hand, what holy influence do church festivals, parties, and gaudy shows have on the minds of any? By them you may collect money to feed graceless preachers, and put into the mouth of the infidel the argument, that the morality of the church is no better than the morality of the world. O, my brethren, stop and reflect; let the love you have for Christ constrain you to look at him; mark the holiness there presented, and withdraw from all these things; follow Christ, your great and glorious pattern, and stop the mouths of infidels.

Christ was so strictly holy that he could say to his enemies who were watching him with envious eyes, that they might find a flaw in some of his

words or actions, "Which of you convinceth me of sin?" O, my brethren, so ought we, in this life, to imitate Christ in our words and actions, "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 this world;" Philippians 2:15. Thus it becomes you and me, and thus shall the mouths of gainsayers be stopped by the professed followers of Him who walked circumspectly in the world. "For so is the will of God, that with well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men;" 1 Peter 2:15.

Dear Christian, if you will keep your eyes on Christ, you will learn perseverance; for Christ was perseveringly holy in his obedience to his Father, even to his last breath on the cross. So he began. So he finished his course on earth in holiness and obedience to the will of his Father. Think of this, treasure it up in your hearts, and be governed by it in your life and actions, for he is the great pattern, and should be imitated by us. It is shameful and unbecoming in any who profess Christ, to begin in the Spirit and end in the flesh; "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;" Romans 8:13. "For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace;" Romans 8:6. It is in persevering in a life of obedience that we enjoy much of the love of Christ; for he says, "If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love;" John 15:10. O my Father's children, it is a great thing to abide in Christ and his word, for to such he says, "Ye shall ask what ye will and it shall be done unto you;" John 15:7. If ye do these things ye shall be blessed in your deed, and find rest to your souls; Matthew 11:29.

The obedience of Christ to his Father's will should be studied by all Christians; it is a pattern for us that we should be careful to imitate. It is

said of Christ that he learned obedience by the things which he suffered; Hebrews 5:8. We sometimes feel that our sufferings are great, and feel within a murmuring Spirit, but if we could keep our eyes upon our glorious pattern, we should feel that our light afflictions are nothing compared with what he suffered for us. I have been upon the battlefield, and have seen the wounded, dying soldier, struggling in the arms of death. I have heard his piteous groans as he breathed his last, in an enemy's land, without a tender mother or kind friend to speak a tender word, or wipe the tear from his eyes; but in all this agony I never saw a drop of blood run from the unbroken skin. O, what must have been the sufferings of Jesus when he sweat, as it were, great drops of blood falling to the ground! These are sufferings beyond any thing ever suffered by any other one in this world; but he bore it all, and said to his Father, "Thy will be done." Dear saint, look to your pattern who learned obedience by the things he suffered, and never complain if you too have to suffer for him; for our present sufferings are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us. They that wear white robes in glory are they that have come up through great tribulation.

Of self-denial, one of the great duties of the Christian, Christ has said, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me;" Luke 9:23. To deny ourselves is not only to deny all our wicked and sinful lusts, propensities, and practices; but it is to deny, cast away, and surrender up all our self-confidence, all our hope of ever obtaining heaven, or immortal happiness by any works of righteousness which we can do, and come as a sinner justly condemned with nothing good to bring, home to Christ, as expressed by the poet:

**Nothing in my hand I bring,
Simply to the cross I cling;**

**Naked, come to thee for dress;
Helpless, look to thee for grace;
Black, I to the fountain fly;
Wash me, Savior, or I die.**

This is denial of yourself, and all that self has ever trusted in for salvation, before coming to Christ. Self-denial is gloriously, and most impressively taught in the life of Christ, and that the conformity of believers to it is their indispensable duty, for it is said, "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus; who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient unto death even the death of the cross;" Philipians 2:5-8. Jesus Christ for the glory of the Father, and the love he bore to his people, denied himself all the delights and pleasures of the world. "The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many;" Matthew 20:28. He was all his lifetime "a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief;" Isaiah 53:3; more unprovided for in earthly comforts than the birds of the air, or the beasts of the earth. "Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head;" Luke 9:58. Yet this was not all. He left the bosom of his Father with the ineffable delights he there enjoyed, to drink the bitter cup of his Father's wrath for our sake. O, my brethren, look to your pattern, and imitate your self-denying Jesus. Read your copy; study it well. It is full of comfort, and will teach you to bear hardships as good soldiers of Jesus Christ, while pilgrims and strangers in the world; and to count your sufferings but light. The reproaches of Christ are greater honors than the world can give. The world may hate you, persecute you, and speak all manner of evil against you falsely; but remember you have the precious promise, and shall inherit his kingdom. If your road through this world is dark and thorny, and you are

tempted to say, "My sufferings and labors are all in vain, my prayers have been but empty words," believe it not, while it is written, "They that sow in tears shall reap in joy. He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him;" Psalms 126:5,6. As Christ looked over Jerusalem, that wicked city whose people had stoned the prophets, and killed them that were sent unto them, and would soon nail his hands and feet to the cross and pierce his heart with a spear, he loved and pitied them, and wept, knowing the awful calamity that would come upon them from a just God, and cried, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!" Matthew 23:37. O, Christian, can you imitate your Savior, as you look over a world lying in wickedness, blinded by sin, and fearlessly traveling the broad road to endless destruction and misery? Do you not from your very heart weep for them, and in the spirit of your Master, when he was suffering the pains of death on the shameful cross pray, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do?" As I stand in this pulpit, I look over the crowd before me, and can see the young, the gay, the giddy, and the scoffer at religion. I see those who have been nursed in the lap of pious mothers; have been warned of the dreadful end to which sin leads, and have been pointed to Calvary, to the bleeding, dying Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world, but it has all been as a sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal; your hard hearts have not been moved, it has had no charms for you. Often, perhaps, you have bowed at the family altar, and listened to the prayers of your father, and have seen the tears drop from his eyes as his prayer went up to God in your behalf. But your hard heart could feel nothing; you are beyond the reach of the preacher's voice, or a father's prayer. Nothing but the power of God will melt your hard and stony heart.

I see a sister weeping; I know her, and can understand the meaning of those tears that flow so freely from her eyes; her heart is burdened; she feels that her sorrows are more than she can bear. I can look into the face of the daughter, for whom those tears are flowing, floating upon the stream of time to the ocean of eternal destruction and misery, thoughtless and unconcerned. For you those tears are shed; for you those prayers are rising up to the throne of mercy. O, blessed Jesus! was thy sympathizing heart moved with compassion at the tears of bereaved sisters at the grave of a dead brother, and wilt thou not hear the cries of these thy saints, whose hearts are broken with grief, as they look upon their beloved ones dead in sin, and realize in their hearts that thou alone canst give life to the dead, and break the fetters that bind their captive souls, and set the prisoners free? Thou canst save; thy word is spirit, and it is life. My dear brother, you tremble like a leaf shaken by the wind. I know thy feelings, I can read thy heart; for I, too, have shed the tear of sorrow, and drank the bitter dregs you are now drinking. O, how sad it is to feel and know that our words cannot reach or move the hearts of those we love!

But there is a "Friend that loveth at all times;" his eyes are upon his children, his ears are open to their prayers, he knows the meaning of every groan, of every tear, and is touched with the feelings of our infirmities. You may sow your seed, weeping; you may water it with your tears; you may look upon a sinful, guilty world, who, after the hardness of their impenitent hearts, "treasure up unto themselves wrath against the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God;" Romans 2:5. You may fear that all your labor is in vain; but the day of singing will come; for he that blessed a praying, wrestling Jacob, and spoke out of the burning bush to him who had fled from his kindred, an exile and wanderer, will hear your groanings, as he did Israel's of old; he will water, and cause the seed to grow. His almighty power will prepare the soil to receive the seed, and cause it to bring forth fruit, so that you shall see the ransomed of the Lord return,

and come to Zion with songs; your tears of sorrow will be turned into sweet smiles of rejoicing; your sad groans into songs of praise. Fear not; the set time to favor Zion shall come, when "His servants take pleasure in her stones, and favor the dust thereof." Be strong, trust in the Lord; for "in the Lord JEHOVAH is everlasting strength." He has promised it, and confirmed it with his comforting SHALL. "The ransomed of the Lord SHALL return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads; they SHALL obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing SHALL flee away;" Isaiah 35:10. I emphasize the shalls; they are sweet and comforting words in this dark day of Zion; they give the assurance that not one of the redeemed shall ever perish. If like sheep, they have all gone astray, and wandered from their God, they SHALL return in the affections of their souls to God from whom they have wandered; and then they will go to Zion, the city of God, his dwelling place, and the home for his children, "with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads." The day of rejoicing shall come, when tears of sorrow shall be wiped from our eyes, and the singing of birds shall be heard in the land. The day will come when sorrow and sighing will flee away forever, when we shall enter into our house above, that brighter land, where God and the Lamb shall be the light of the place, and there shall be no more night, no more doubts and fears; for "we shall know as we are known," and forever dwell in that happy place, where there is no sin, and no sorrow.

**This glorious hope revives
Our courage by the way;
While each in expectation lives,
And longs to see the day.**

**From sorrow, toll, and pain,
And sin, we shall be free,**

**And perfect love and friendship reign,
In blessed eternity.**

Dear saints, while here as strangers and pilgrims in this world, let us live looking to Jesus; let us never take our eyes from him; let us follow him in the ways of obedience, and in his holy conversation. O, let us take him for our pattern in all things; for it is written, "He that saith he abideth in him, ought himself also so to walk even as he walked."

Careless, thoughtless sinner, to you I wish to speak a few words; and what shall I say? You have sat quietly and listened to my imperfect description of what the blessed Savior suffered for poor sinners; you have heard of his tender compassion for his murderers, when he prayed, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do;" you have witnessed this day in his children the same loving, sympathizing spirit; you have heard their groans and prayers. Is all this to you as the chattering of a bird, or as music in the ears of the dumb adder? O how sad is thy condition! and how hard must be thy heart, when the dying groans, and the dying prayer of the Savior of sinners will not melt thee to tears! Can you sit unmoved, while you witness tears flowing from many eyes in this house? O that you could realize your true condition, and see the slippery place upon which you stand, and the fiery billows beneath you! Are your eyes so blinded by sin that you cannot see, and your heart so hard that you cannot feel? This, to me, and to these saints who are weeping and praying for you, is a sad thought. O that God may this day give you to see your condition, and feel the need of a Savior! Our arms are too short to reach you, we know; we feel it; and our words are too feeble to arouse your fears, or change the hard and stony heart.

Can aught beneath a power divine,

A stubborn will subdue?

`Tis thine, eternal Spirit, thine,

To form the heart anew.

Our tears and prayers can never wash your sin and guilt away; none but Jesus can save from sin, cleanse the guilty sinner, and save him from sinking down into the pit of endless woe! and all I can do is to close this feeble address with the humble prayer, God be merciful to sinners.

`Tis thine the passions to recall,

And bid them upward rise;

To make the scales of error fall

From reason's darkened eyes;

To chase the shades of death away,

And bid the sinner live;

A beam of heaven, a vital ray,

`Tis thine alone to give.