

PROPER CHRISTIAN DAILY LIVING.

TITUS 2:1-15. – NOV. 25.

"We should live soberly, righteously, godly, in this present world."

THE APOSTLE PAUL penned the words of our lesson, instructing Titus, an overseer (bishop) of the Church – ministering to the believers in the island of Crete. The instructions are not intended for, nor applicable to others than consecrated believers, and refer specifically to six classes in the Church at Crete. (1) The elderly men – not merely the aged, but rather the advanced, the matured, who doubtless oftenest would be also advanced in years. (2) The aged women – advanced, matured. (3) The younger women. (4) The younger men. (5) Those who, tho freemen in Christ, were bondmen according to the flesh, – servants. (6) To Titus himself. (7) The lesson ends with an exhortation applicable to all classes in the Church.

Titus, as a preacher, should have before his mind a certain standard or ideal in respect to each class in the Church, and should as a wise workman labor to the attainment of that ideal, which the Apostle here brings clearly to his attention, – intimating that instructions along the lines here laid down are in fullest accord with "sound doctrine." It has been claimed by some that the people of Crete were specially degraded and lacking of good character, and that this thought is necessary to the Apostle in giving such an exhortation to those who had left the world and joined themselves to the Lord as his Church. We shall see, however, that every word of the exhortation is quite applicable to the Lord's people today, even tho they live under the most enlightened conditions.

The Elderly Men, the advanced, were to be sober, grave, temperate (moderate) – not light, frivolous and excitable. Not only their years of natural life, but also their years of experience in Christian life, should bring them to conditions of maturity and sobriety. These three qualities would belong to a large extent to their mortal bodies, exercised and

influenced by their new minds; but in addition to these there should be three other graces, characteristic of their new natures; *viz.*, soundness in the faith, and in love, and in patience. It is of intention that the Apostle here emphasized (in the Greek) *the* faith, *the* love and *the* patience, for there are various faiths, various loves and various kinds of patience, and he meant to be understood as inculcating the faith, the love and the patience which are of God, and respecting which he is instructing his people through his Word, as it is written, "They shall be all taught of God."

It was not by accident that the Apostle placed "sound in the faith" before "sound in love," for since love is one of the fruits or graces of the spirit of truth, and since one cannot receive much more of the spirit of the truth than he receives of the truth itself, therefore the importance of the truth, in the having of *the* sound faith.

Often we are told it matters not what a man *believes*, but matters all how he *does*; but to this we answer that a sound faith is all-important, not only in shaping conduct, but also in inspiring it. It is only in proportion as we have the truth that we have the sanctifying power: in proportion as we hold errors which vitiate or nullify the truths which we hold, in that same proportion we will be lacking and deficient in the sanctifying power; and hence deficient also in the sanctification itself. We should ever remember and cooperate with our dear Redeemer's prayer to the Father on our behalf, "Sanctify them through thy truth; thy word is truth."

Neither was it by accident that the Apostle placed love before patience; because, altho patience may be cultivated from a natural standpoint, as, for instance, in the interest of worldly aims and desires, nevertheless, such patience does not affect the heart, but is merely a forcing or curbing of the outside life, and when the force is removed there is a rebound as of a spring, to the original condition of impatience. The patience which will last and become an integral part of

character [R2722 : page 333] must result from a change of heart: the mainspring of love must first replace the mainspring of selfishness.

How grand the characters thus portrayed! We could not wish for more amongst the Lord's people of any place today than that the matured brethren should be sober-minded, dignified and moderate, with their new minds well stored with the sound faith of God's Word, and their hearts full of love, manifesting forth all of the various good qualities represented by this word, – kindness, meekness, gentleness, all of which might briefly be summed up in the word *patience*. We exhort all of the advanced brethren in the truth everywhere to note well this likeness of a matured man of God, well grown up into Christ, the living Head, and well conformed to his image; and we exhort that we all keep this image well before our minds, and make it our ideal in our Christian course.

The Aged Women, matured, developed, have also a model set before them by the Apostle. They should be "reverent in demeanor" (Revised Version). They are supposed to have professed holiness, full consecration to the Lord, full desire to know and to do his will, and such consecration is to show out in their lives. The Apostle proceeds to mention a few of the ways in which it would be manifest. They will not be "slanderers" (Revised Version) – neither false accusers nor accusers in any slanderous sense of the word. On the contrary, as the Apostle shows further on, they will be examples in the matter of minding their own business. They will not be enslaved to much wine, but be teachers of that which is good, by precept as well as by example, to all with whom they have an influence. Naturally their influence will be greatest over the younger women, and it should be exercised as becometh women professing godliness, professing to be guided by the Word of the Lord, the spirit of the truth.

The Younger Women should find ensamples in their elder saintly sisters, the influence of whom will not be in the direction of insubordination and a battle between the husband and wife in the home;

and their advice will very rarely be, "Stand up for your rights;" "Give him a piece of your mind," etc. On the contrary, they will be peacemakers, and assist the younger women with such advice as will help to make home happy by obedience to the directions of the divine Word. Instead of helping to cultivate in the younger women the spirit of selfishness, which inheres naturally in every human being, through the fall, they will assist them, by both word and example, to cultivate the opposite spirit, the spirit of love – "to love their husbands and to love their children."

If love were thus inculcated as the first law of every home, the chief of the Christian graces to be developed and practiced, it would indeed make a wide distinction between Christian homes and others; and thus, perhaps, better than in almost any other manner, the Christian mother can preach the glorious gospel of salvation, and illustrate in her own life and home its power to deliver from the bondage of sin and selfishness, even in this mortal state.

They will learn from them also to be discreet, or sober-minded – not too emotional; – to do some sober thinking along sober lines, and thus to cultivate both heart and head, and to increase their own joys in the Lord as well as to prepare themselves the better for their family duties and privileges. Chastity, modesty, purity, should also be learned – an instruction deep and powerful in its influence for good; not only to the younger women themselves, but also in their families. They should learn to be "keepers at home," or "workers at home," as the Revised Version renders it, appreciating the fact that the duties of a wife and mother **[R2724 : page 333]** are chiefly home duties; that the home is her workshop and her pulpit, where her influence should be greatest and most valuable.

They should also learn to be "obedient to their own husbands," or, as the *Diaglott* renders this, "*submissive*" – not attempting to usurp the place of the husband in the home, not keeping up a continual strife and battle about life's affairs, so that the husband will have one battle of life

to win their daily bread and another battle while they eat it. By "obedience" and "submission" we do not understand the Apostle to mean *blind* obedience or *dumb* submission, nor in any sense of the word that the wife shall not enjoy fully all proper liberties and privileges; but that while enjoying these she shall use them with propriety, so as to make life a blessing and not a burden to her husband, with whom lie chiefly the responsibilities of the home, according to both divine and human law.

As a Christian wife she should have a judgment respecting the Lord's will, as presented in the Lord's Word, respecting the affairs of the home, and all the interests of the family, and these views she should express, in love and moderation, and kindly, however emphatically; but having expressed her judgment respecting the Lord's will in the matter and the reasons therefor, she should be "submissive" to the decision of the husband (in all matters not involving her conscience); because, according to divine arrangement, the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the Head of the Church – the final arbiter respecting family affairs.

Should the Christian wife at times find that the pursuance of this Scriptural course had brought her disadvantages or were about to work ill to the general interests of the family, let her protest kindly, and point out to her husband, without "harping," what she foresees to be the results, and urge a change; pointing out (especially if the husband be not a Christian) that the responsibilities of the transaction lie wholly in his hands: and let her then console herself with the thought that she, at least, is following the divine direction, and that the ultimate result is sure to be a *spiritual* blessing, in harmony with the Lord's promise that all things shall work together for good to them that love him – and who demonstrate their love by obedience. Let her take the matter to the Lord in prayer, and "bear a song away." As the Apostle points out, this course is the one least likely to bring reproaches upon the cause we love and to which we have consecrated even life itself.

To the Young Men of the Church the Apostle sends [R2724 : page 334] an exhortation that they be sober-minded – not rash, thoughtless, conceited – that they exercise self-control. And then, in view of the fact that Titus himself was a young man, he exhorts that he shall be a pattern to all the young men of the Church, and thus incidentally he exhorts all of the young men of the Church to note carefully and to be exercised by the qualities and considerations then urged upon Titus.

Upon Titus the Apostle urges that he shall be a model man, a pattern of good works and soundness of doctrine; not permitting his teachings (doctrine) to be corrupted either with vain imaginations of his own or those of other people. He urges upon him, and thus incidentally upon all young men also, gravity, the opposite of frivolity, levity: as Christians we have something to occupy our minds that the world has not; and the greatness and grandeur of their hopes and ambitions, based upon the exceeding great and precious promises of the divine Word, should give to their lives and general conduct a weight which, like a good cargo in a vessel, would keep them from being top-heavy and prepare them to outride the storms and difficulties of life through which they must pass to reach the desired haven.

Sound speech, with which no fault could be found, is another of the qualities that Titus and all of the Lord's people, especially the young men, are to strive for. Not merely sound speech in the sense of accurate and grammatical expression, but sound speech especially, in the sense of having their conversation and the influence which one exerts through conversation, of a truly helpful, strengthening kind – to mind and heart and character. Alas, how much of the conversation of even Christian young men is anything but sound, anything but helpful to themselves and their companions. Young men in Christ are to be copies of God's dear Son, so that by their common conversation as well as by their general demeanor they shall continually preach Christ and properly represent before the world his noble characteristics, – truth, righteousness, purity, gentleness, goodness, love. Sound speech cannot be condemned by anybody, friend or foe, heathen or Christian, saint or

sinner; and, as the Apostle suggests, such a course will be a constant reproof to those enemies who must always be expected; in the face of such noble living they of the contrary part must surely be put to shame eventually.

To Servants the Apostle sends a message also; and it was a very different message from what some of God's dear children, less wise than the Apostle in their understanding of the divine plan, would have given. Many of God's people of today, instead of being peace-makers are peace-disturbers, because of a failure to see properly the principles which underlie the Gospel, and their proper application in the present time. They exhort servants to "strike," to "stand up for their rights," to see that they are not "tramped upon," to "demand justice," and see that they get it. The Apostle, on the contrary, understanding God's plan, knew not to expect full justice, not to expect human rights or any others to have great consideration in the present time, because we are still in what he designates "this present evil world [dispensation];" because "the prince of this world [dispensation]" is Satan, and because his Kingdom of the present time is based upon neither love nor righteousness, but upon selfishness. – Gal. 1:4; John 14:30.

The Apostle knew not to expect the wrongs to be righted and justice to be dispensed under Satan's administration, and hence in all of his teachings he points the believers to the coming time when the Lord, the righteous King, shall take possession of earth's governments, and fulfil that petition of our prayer, "Thy Kingdom come; thy will be done on earth as it is done in heaven." Then justice may be expected, because justice is done in heaven; then all rights will be respected, as all rights are respected in heaven; but before that glorious condition shall obtain Emmanuel's Kingdom must be established and Satan, the prince of this world, must be bound, that he should deceive the nations no more, and that his rule of unrighteousness and selfishness shall be set aside, supplanted by the laws of him who shall lay justice to the line and righteousness to the plummet. – Rev. 20:1-3; Dan. 2:44; Isa. 28:17.

The Apostle's exhortation to servants is in harmony with this, that they be obedient to their masters, and seek to please them *well*. They were not to be shiftless, careless, indifferent as to the prosperity of their masters' interests and the care of their masters' goods. They were to take as much interest in those things as tho they were their own; – as the Apostle elsewhere expresses it, they were to do their work as tho they were doing it to the Lord himself, faithfully, well. (1 Cor. 10:31.) Such service rendered to an earthly master "as unto the Lord," and because of a desire to please the Lord, and because of the indwelling of his truth and its spirit, will undoubtedly be accepted of the Lord as tho it were some service done directly in the interest of his cause, should the conditions of the servant hinder him from doing any work more particularly in the Lord's service and the service of the truth.

Not only were servants to endeavor to please their masters and to please them well, but this *in all things* – in the little things as well as in the great affairs; and thus Christian servants would be recognized, wherever they might be, as different, distinct from others, too many of whom are "eye-servants," faithful merely under the eye of their employer. Such Christian servants will come to be recognized as jewels even by those who have no sympathy with their religious convictions, and possibly would constitute the most weighty sermons these could deliver. They might obey their masters and yet continually protest and complain; hence the Apostle adds a word on this point, saying, "Not answering again" – not gainsaying nor quarreling with the master over his methods and ways and work; not complaining of sharing the common lot of other servants, whatever that might be; preferably, indeed, letting others complain, and holding their peace, rather than stirring up strife, – and rather than have the cause they love and seek to serve ill thought of.

Not purloining – secretly appropriating to themselves the master's goods, etc., contrary to his known wishes. And it might be not inappropriate here for us to remember that if the master should desire the servant to engage in some work that would be dishonest, morally

wrong, this would be a proper ground upon which the servant should object and protest. His conscience must be preserved in every matter that properly [R2725 : page 335] belongs to his conscience; but he may not busybody himself with the master's affairs in matters which belong to the master's conscience, and with which the servant has nothing to do. By his own strict integrity even in the smallest things he shall do his preaching and exercise his influence upon his master, "showing all fidelity," faithfulness to his master's interests.

The effect of all knowledge is to render the intelligent restive under restraints, and as Christian knowledge is the highest form of knowledge, it more than any other tends to restlessness. It inculcates the thought that however widely different the conditions between the king and the peasant as respects men and earthly things, they really are on a par as respects morals, – on the same level from the standpoint of divine justice. This thought once received into the humblest mind destroys very much of the veneration which otherwise might be felt toward those in earthly authority. It is an uplifting thought to the poor, that before the great King of all the earth they stand on the same footing with the richest, the most learned and the most powerful of earth; – that whether rich or poor "A man is a man for all that." It causes them to realize that a man has a man's rights, and that these are more than animal rights, that they include liberty of mind and conscience and certain liberties of conduct.

It is this very enlightenment which Christianity has brought to the world which is about to cause it the great convulsion and revolution which shall overthrow all present institutions in anarchy. The Christian servant is to be more than merely an enlightened man: he is a man *consecrated to God* as well; one who has surrendered his "*rights*" to the will of God, and who, having placed himself in the Lord's hands to be taught of God, and to be fitted and prepared for the heavenly Kingdom, is full of faith that the Lord is both able and willing to keep the trust, to safeguard his interests, and to permit nothing to

come upon him that shall not be overruled for his spiritual development and welfare.

The true Christian servant (and all Christians must be servants if like their Master – Phil. 2:7) thus consecrated, realizes that under divine providence he is not to expect his rights in the present time, nor to strive for them; but that, on the contrary, he sacrifices them to the will of God – to the doing of the Lord's will so far as he may have opportunity, and to the having of the Lord's will done in him according to the Lord's wisdom and providence. If oppressed and dealt with unjustly, he will look to the Lord for deliverance, and whatever way it shall come will accept it as of divine arrangement; and whatever God does not provide in the way of deliverance along reasonable and just lines he will accept as the rulings of his providence, and render to the Lord thanks for his watch-care and seek to learn the lessons of patience and experience and long-suffering, which these trials may inculcate; recognizing in such a case that these trials, from whomsoever they come, are permitted of the Lord if not ordered by him, and intended for his welfare and spiritual development.

Such Christian servants, and such Christians in any walk of life, are the only ones who know what contentment really is. Others are striving for the attainment of rights and for the correction of wrongs, and are only cultivating more and more the spirit of selfishness in their own hearts, and generally causing themselves the more trouble and discontent. Only the Christian can say,

"Content, whatever lot I see,

Since 'tis God's hand that leadeth me,"

and he can only take this position by the exercise of a living faith, and can only exercise such a living faith in life's affairs after he has made a consecration of himself to the Lord, and can only make such a consecration of himself after he has come to some knowledge of the divine character and plan. Such servants, the Apostle assures us, adorn

the doctrine of God our Savior. They show that it is not a doctrine of strife, but of peace and of good-will toward men, not a doctrine merely of personal rights and of selfish strife for their attainment, but a doctrine of love, joy and peace in the holy spirit.

WHY THE CHRISTIAN SHOULD LIVE SEPARATE FROM THE WORLD.

After recounting to us as above the proper course for the various classes in the Church, the Apostle proceeds to give the logical reason for the above advice, saying: "For [because] the grace of God hath appeared, bringing salvation to all men." – Revised Version.

When did God's grace appear thus? We answer, not until the Gospel began to be preached after our Redeemer's death and resurrection. For four thousand years the grace of God did not appear, was not manifest in any sense of the word. The Law Covenant was to the Jew only, and it was not of grace but the reverse – of law and of justice. At very most this "grace of God" was prophesied of, that it would appear later, and that blessings would follow upon all the families of the earth. It has not yet appeared to all men, but more properly this would be rendered "*for* all men," since God's grace is intended to apply to every man – as widely as did the curse apply.

In the present time the majority of mankind do not see the grace of God, – it does not *appear* to them. More than four-fifths of the human family are totally blind to this grace, in heathen darkness, today, and of the one-fifth who have seen something of this grace divine, the vast majority have seen it so obscurely, so dimly, as not to be able to discern its beauties or appreciate its value. Blessed are our eyes if they have seen. In the Apostle's day, and still in our day, this grace of God has appeared "*to* all men," in the sense that it is no longer in any sense of the word confined *to* the Jew, but is now open *to* Jew and *to* Gentile alike, the middle wall of partition having been broken down, as the Apostle explains.

In what does this grace of God consist? We answer with the Apostle, It is God's *favor* that has been announced and manifested as the basis of reconciliation – not man's righteousness. God tells us through his Word that he himself has provided the great sacrifice for sins, demanded by his own law, that Jesus has met the penalty in full on our behalf; and that as a result we may be reconciled to God now, and he can justly and without violence to his laws receive us whom he had previously condemned to death. And this receiving of us signifies a restoration of his favor; and the restoration of his favor, if rightly received by us, will, under his providence, bring us to such conditions as will effect our salvation, our full delivery from sin and [R2725 : page 336] death, and imperfection, into the full life and perfection and liberty of the sons of God.

This applies to the Church being elected from the world during this Gospel age, and the same will apply to the world of mankind in general as they shall be blessed of God through the elect Church in the Millennial age. God's grace in the present time is manifested in connection with the "high calling" to the divine nature and the life immortal connected therewith. His grace in the Millennial age will be manifested in connection with the "restitution" blessings which will be offered to all mankind, and the earthly life-everlasting which will be granted to all those who then come into harmony with the terms of that grace.

What has the grace of God to do with us? And why should it lead to such a revolution in our conduct and character as the Apostle has just intimated? Because, says the Apostle, this grace of God, by which we are called to salvation, *teaches* us something: it teaches us that the way of reconciliation back to God's favor is a way of self-denial, – denying everything that is ungodliness, everything that is contrary to our highest conception of the divine character and will; the denying also of every worldly love or desire or ambition – ambition for worldly influence, for the riches of this world; and that instead of aiming and striving for these things, we who desire the salvation which God promises are to live to

the contrary of these, "soberly, righteously, godly [God-like], in this present world" – not expecting worldly honors and advantages under the reign of "the prince of this world," who not only had no interest in our Master, but likewise no friendly interest in any who follow in his footsteps.

But if we are thus to live self denyingly in this world (age) that we may attain to the grace of God in the next world (age) – "the world to come" – what are we to have before our minds in the nature of a prospect or hope toward which we are to look with longing and interest and comfort of heart? Ah! the Apostle tells us what. He holds up before us the grand consideration toward which all of our ambitions are to turn, in which all of our hopes are to centre, and in which our hearts are to find their treasure, outweighing and outvaluing every earthly consideration. He thus describes this hope, –

LOOKING FOR THAT BLESSED HOPE AND THE APPEARING OF THE GLORY OF OUR GREAT GOD AND SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST. – Revised Version.

This is to be the centre of our expectations. We are not to hope for blessing this side of the manifestation of God's Kingdom. We are to note that this Kingdom must come before God's will can be done on earth as it is done in heaven. We are to know that this Kingdom must bind Satan and overthrow his institutions, based upon selfishness, before it can supplant these with new institutions of justice and truth based upon the grand principle of love. Whoever, therefore, has been blessed with the grace of God, and has had the eyes of his understanding opened by the Word of truth, and its spirit, finds its teachings to be that these blessings of salvation are to be "brought unto us at the revelation of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" (1 Pet. 1:13), and that our chief object in the present life is to fight a good fight against self and against sin, and in defence of righteousness and in the assistance of the household of faith; and not to fight for earthly rights nor to strive for earthly honors and riches, – the warfare and strife in which the whole world, except ourselves, is

almost exclusively engaged. If the Lord's saints possess talents or influence or wealth, these are not their treasures, but merely their servants, and they are not the possessors [R2726 : page 336] of these, but merely the stewards, whose privilege it is to use them as best they may know how, in the Master's service, and to the forwarding of the interests of righteousness in the preparation of themselves and others for his appearing and Kingdom.

The Apostle speaks of our Lord Jesus as "our great God and Savior," and this is in full accord with the general teachings of the Scriptures. Our Lord Jesus is a mighty one, a great one amongst the mighty ones, and as our Lord himself declares, all should "honor the Son even as they honor the Father." – John 1:1; 5:22.

The Apostle presents in another consideration why we should be exercised by this blessed hope of the Lord's second coming and our gathering together to him as his elect Church. It is not merely that we should think of life everlasting and glory in which we might share; but that we should think also that this One coming in glory, and to whom we hope to be joined everlastingly, as members of the Bride, to the Bridegroom, – is no other than he who gave himself for us, who sacrificed his own life in our redemption. We are to remember, too, that he not only redeemed us from the penalty of sin, death, but that the redemption which he purposes and provides is more than a redemption from iniquity, from sin. We are to remember also that this purging away of sin and the instruction and cleansing which the Word of truth is to do for us, as the Apostle has foregoing set forth, is to the intent that by these means the Lord may "purify unto himself a peculiar people" – a people different from others, possessed of a special love for that which is just, that which is pure, that which is noble, that which is good; and who, despite the imperfections of their mortal bodies, are striving to cultivate these graces more and more in their hearts, and to keep their bodies in subjection. Moreover, says the Apostle, these peculiar people will be "zealous of good works," earnestly desirous and striving to do

good unto all men as they have opportunity, physically, mentally, morally, – and especially to do good to the household of faith.

The Apostle's exhortation, in conclusion, is that Titus shall speak and exhort the Church along these lines which he has laid down, reproving them, whenever necessary (in love and gentleness, and yet with full authority, not doubting as to the meaning of the divine instruction). He was to let no man despise him, in the sense that he was to declare these principles of righteousness governing the Lord's people in a plain, positive and authoritative manner. He was to speak with authority and not as with uncertainty and questioning. And so let us speak, each and all, to ourselves and to others, setting forth the principles of the salvation which has appeared to us, with no uncertain sound, that thus we may minister grace to the hearers and glorify our Father in heaven and our Redeemer and Deliverer.
