

February 10

Be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity. 1 Timothy 4:12

EVERY Christian should strive to be a pattern worthy of imitation—a pattern of earnest, faithful endeavor to copy Christ in his daily life, and of active zeal in His ser-

R3329 *"Whatsoever ye do, in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus."*--Col. 3:17... Imagine a maiden from the lower strata of society married to a prince of royal blood. We can imagine a true wife under such circumstances extremely careful... From the moment of her espousal the thought of her husband's high position and of her responsibility as his helpmate and family representative, would lead her to guard particularly her every action and word. From the time that she assumes his name, or acknowledges that she is espoused to him, whatever she does or says must of necessity be either to the credit or the discredit of his name... This picture very accurately represents our present responsibilities to the great name which our heavenly Bridegroom has granted us permission to use as his espoused. What an honor to be his representatives in the world! and what a responsibility to bear his name!

R3329 *"Whatsoever ye do, in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus."*--Col. 3:17... With some the tendency is that, whatsoever they do, whether in word or deed, they shall do all in their own name--for their own credit, for their own glory. This is a spirit and disposition contrary to those which the Lord is seeking, and he who maintains such a disposition will surely not be accounted worthy of any place in the Kingdom..."

2Cor 5:20 "We are ambassadors for Christ"

(1Cor 10:31 KJV) "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God."

R4007 on 1 Cor 10:31 "More than thirty years ago this text was so impressed upon the mind of the writer that he had it beautifully painted on glass and it still greets the eyes of visitors to the WATCH TOWER office, the Bible House parlor and the Editor's study. It is difficult to imagine a more comprehensive statement of the Christian's liberty and limitations than is expressed in these words... A dear brother now deceased told us on the occasion of our first meeting that for years he had been a nominal Christian..."

His inquiry was, "Brother Russell, can you explain to me the change which has come over my life: I do not understand it myself. My friends used to hand me tracts in opposition to wine and tobacco, etc., but I pooh-poohed them and said in effect, '...mind your own business and let me mind mine. I am violating no law, I am merely exercising my personal liberty.' But, Brother Russell, since I read MILLENNIAL DAWN, Vol. 1, a change has come over me, and those practices which I once considered my liberty I now esteem to be my snares and avoid them. The matter came about in this way: I first asked myself, Is that time spent with the rector playing cards

vice. Patterns of perfection, of the ultimate moral glory and beauty of holiness, we cannot expect to be in the present life. Such a pattern we have only in Christ our Lord. In no such sense did Paul ever say, Follow me, or Follow us; but he did say, "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ." (1Corinthians 11:1) The apostle was a grand

a profitable use of my time? Are you doing it to the glory of God? And as for the wine, do you use that to the glory of God? I was obliged to answer both questions in the negative and discontinued both practices. It was not long after this that I found myself striking a match and about to light my usual cigar. The thought of doing all things to the glory of God came to my mind afresh and I said, "Can you smoke that cigar to the glory of God?" It took a little time to decide the question, for I had been in the habit of smoking on an average ten cigars a day. That match went out and I struck another while still thinking. I finally decided that I could not smoke the cigar to God's glory and I threw it away... Conscious that the thing that had influenced me to this course was the reading of the DAWN I reexamined the volume carefully, but could find in it no tirade against the practices I had just discontinued--no recommendations even along sumptuary lines. I want to ask you what it was in the DAWN that effected such a revolution in my life." We replied that the DAWN, instead of attacking the branches of evil, followed the Scriptural course of laying the ax to the root of the tree. Whoever realizes the true meaning of his consecration vow, the true significance of his begetting of the holy Spirit, the true meaning of the perfect law of liberty under which he has come, the law of love, will find it ample for the regulation of all of life's affairs, for he must seek thereafter that whether he eats or drinks or whatever he does all shall be to the glory of God.

"BE THOU AN EXAMPLE OF THE BELIEVERS"

R5860 "LET YOUR LIGHT SO SHINE"

"Be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in faith, in purity."--1 Timothy 4:12.

WE RECALL that St. Paul was the writer of these words, that they constitute a part of his first Epistle to Timothy, a promising young Elder in the Church, one who had labored much with the Apostle in his work of the ministry... On account of his youth he may not have realized his responsibility. He might have felt that many others in the Church were older than himself and would therefore be better examples to the brethren and better representatives of the Lord before men.

But the Apostle here exhorts Timothy to be an example of what a true believer should be. He urged him to "flee youthful lusts," to "stir up the gift of God" which was in him. Timothy was to make a special use of the talents and opportunities which were his. And in so doing he would be a worthy example—not only to believers, but of believers, so that not only might the Church see his life and general course, but others, those of the world, might also see this, and thus have greater interest in the Lord's Cause."

example of earnest endeavor to attain perfection, but not of the ultimate perfection which was in Christ only; and it is his zeal and intense earnestness in striving to copy Christ and to accomplish His will that we should imitate. Z. '95-251 R1886:1

R5493 "THE IMPORTANCE OF EXAMPLE" *"Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity [love], in spirit, in faith, in purity."*--1 Timothy 4:12.

WE REMEMBER that Timothy was an Elder in the Church, though young in years. Therefore, it was appropriate that St. Paul should impress upon his mind that He should be an example of the believers, an example to all the Church; and such instruction is implied in other parts of the Epistle. But note that the Apostle, in our text, does not say: Be thou an example to the believers, but, "Be thou an example of the believers." How different!

Being an example of believers means that one should show forth not only to his fellow-workers in the Gospel, but especially to the world, what believers stand for—what they believe, what they teach, how they live."

"IN WORD"

R5860 "This example was not to be the wearing of a particular shape of coat or a particular cut of collar... His example was to be in his Christlike character. He was to glorify the Lord in his words--in what he would say, in how he would say it--in wisdom of speech. "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." Whoever would be careless in his language would reveal a careless heart. If Timothy had been careless in his words, others might have said, "You see that he thinks that he knows everything. See how he is always intruding himself." This would be especially unbecoming in one who was young. Thus he would have been despised as an example of believers, and others would be offended rather than helped."

R5493 "We should see to it that we are setting such an example in word, as the Apostle enjoins, in the character of our language when declaring the Message of Truth. We are not to be merely smooth-tongued and unctuous; we are not merely to use kind words; but the kindness and interest manifested should be genuine—from the heart. All of the Lord's people are thus to be examples, striving to show forth the praises of our Master."

"IN CONDUCT"

R5860 "Not only in word, but in his entire conversation was he to be an example. The word conversation, at the time our common version was translated, had the significance of conduct, manner of life. This advice is the counsel of wisdom in reference to us all as children of the Lord! The Apostle admonished Timothy with regard to his intercourse with the Church and with the world--Whether you eat or drink, whether you buy or sell, whatever you do, be a worthy exponent of the doctrine of Christ and of the effect of His Spirit in the heart."

R5493 "St. Paul further urges: "Be thou an example in conversation." This word *conversation* does not refer merely to language, as it is now used: the original meaning of this word is *conduct*. Our conduct relates to our manner, to the way we walk, to the way we act, to our general deportment, and not to our words alone. We are to be an example in our gentleness of demeanor. We should not slam doors, nor be boisterous, nor uncouth, nor thoughtless of others. In every way we are to be gentle and kind and considerate, and not rude.

"LET YOUR LIGHT SHINE"

Those who are begotten to the new nature should strive to be examples to everybody of what Christians ought to be. The kind of work we are engaged in should be honest. It may be secular work, yet it should be done as unto the Lord, carefully, faithfully, not merely as men-pleasers, but in singleness of heart, as servants of God; "for we serve the Lord Christ."

IN AGAPE LOVE

R5493 "The walk of the Christian should be in charity—love—in sympathy, in benevolence, in kindness of word and conduct. A generally sympathetic spirit should pervade his words and deeds, his entire behavior. The Heavenly Father loved mankind; while they were yet sinners He so loved the race that He gave the choicest Treasure of His heart for man's recovery. And He still loves the world, and is fitting the Church to be the blessers of the world in the future. So any begotten of the Lord's Spirit should have a transforming influence at work in his life—an influence that will manifest itself even to those who are out of the way, those who have not yet been blessed with the Light of God."

R5860 "In his charity, his love, Timothy was to be an example. This would include the ordinary thought of the word as now generally used, in the sense of dispensing largess. We do not know that Timothy had very much of this world's goods to distribute; but he could have charity in the sense of love, which is the comprehensive sense, the Bible sense, of the word. Love would not wish any harm to his neighbor, but would manifest interest in everybody, and even in the brute creation—wishing to do right, to be kind.

Love would serve the interests of others in spirit; it would come from the heart, from the inward disposition, not be merely in word or in outward conduct. Kindness and good-will would not be feigned from a sense of duty or to appear polite and thoughtful. It would be genuine. The spirit in which a thing is said or done has a great deal to do with its effect upon others. One who had wounded another might say, "There was not a word in what I said to which you could object." Ah, well! but it was the spirit in which it was said or done—the animus of it. This is an important matter to all the Lord's people. We are to remember the spirit of the Master—the spirit of consideration, of self-sacrifice, of righteousness, of love."

"IN SPIRIT"

R5493 "Our text also reads: "Be thou an example in spirit." This phrase, "in spirit," is

not found in the original, but the thought seems proper enough: we are to show kindness of spirit, of disposition, to all. The spirit that animates us at all times should be the spirit, the mind of the Lord."

"IN FAITH"

R5493 "We are exhorted to be examples "in faith." The Apostle's exhortation applies to us all. The Christian's faith is also manifested to others in his conduct, his words, his course in life. If he is full of faith, he will not be murmuring against the experiences of life as they come, against the providences of the Lord. The Almighty has accepted us as His children; we should have continual and implicit confidence in Him, and whoever has true faith has this confidence. If any of us lack faith in God we shall not manifest faith to others, nor inspire faith in them."

R5860 "In faith, also, Timothy was to be an example to all with whom he came in contact. Of course the Apostle would mean here his manifestation of faith. One must have faith before he can manifest it. We have known Christians who, if they have a doubt about a certain feature of Truth or a weakness of faith, would discuss their doubts in the presence of those who were weak in the faith or who were of the world. This is a great mistake and productive of much harm. One never knows when a weak one may be present who might be greatly injured by words of doubt or distrust. Whoever is troubled by such doubts should go promptly to the Lord for help, that his faith may be firmly established; he should not discuss his doubts and fears with others unless as mentioned above, with the One who alone can help him. The Lord's people should not boast of how much faith they have -- not so -- but we should manifest our faith to others, our confidence in the Lord, by our peace under trial and difficulty. We should not merely say that we have faith, but should manifest it in our lives."

"IN PURITY"

R5860 "Timothy was counseled to be an example in purity. "Be ye clean that bear the vessels of the Lord." (Isaiah 52:11)... Whoever is not pure in his thoughts is very apt to be impure, unclean, in his actions, his words. Out of the heart proceeds the impurity. One person of impure mind might poison the minds of many.

Impurity may be given a broad or a narrow view, as circumstances may indicate. In the broad sense, it would be uncleanness, dishonesty, insincerity, in general. But in every sense St. Paul would have Timothy be a worthy example, so that all who took note of him would see how they ought to deport themselves."

R5493 "We are to be examples "in purity." There is a purity that goes with all that pertains to God and to His Word—a loftiness of standard, which is not to be found elsewhere. There are people in heathen lands who live more or less chaste lives, but there is nowhere so high a standard as in the Christian religion. Everything impure is contrary to God. Purity is one of the component elements of Christian character. As the Apostle said on another occasion, we are to be "first *pure*, then peaceable, gentle."

"BE THOU AN EXAMPLE OF THE BELIEVERS" CONTINUED

R5860 "The Apostle expressed the same desire concerning Timothy that he expressed concerning all the Church—that he walk as the Apostle himself walked, that he be as self-sacrificing as he saw St. Paul to be. This was not a Pharisaical attitude—"I am holier than thou." But the Apostle demonstrated those principles of righteousness in the life that he lived, and he wished that Timothy should do the same.

Those qualities of character here enumerated by the Apostle should be shown forth—not merely by the Elders and the teachers of the Ecclesia, but by all who have made the same profession of being disciples of Christ. So far as our standing with God is concerned, we are all brethren one of another; and each of these brethren should seek to copy the Elder Brother, our Lord Jesus. Each one should seek to be a pattern to the whole flock of God."

R5494 "LIVING EPISTLES, KNOWN AND READ

In all these ways each of God's people should be living lessons, living epistles, wherever they go; they should be examples to the world. Whether the world believe what we preach or not, we should manifest these qualities which they cannot but approve and respect. This example will bear fruitage in due time, if not now. Every Elder, like Timothy, should be especially careful of his conduct, his words, his example. The Church has declared by choosing such a one Elder that they believe him to be an example of the fruitage of the grace of God in the heart.

The Apostle's counsel to Timothy: "Let no man despise thy youth," should be looked upon as advice not only to Timothy, but to all Elders of the Church who are young in years, that they so conduct themselves as to be examples of the Flock, that their deportment and ability to "rightly divide the Word of Truth" be such that none will have cause to slight the Message they bring, or to think of them as immature and unfit to lead the Flock of God.

Let every child of God, the younger as well as the older, strive to be an example worthy of imitation—an example of earnest, faithful endeavor to copy the Master in his daily life, a pattern of active zeal in the service of our God. We shall not be able while in the flesh to be examples in the full sense of the ultimate glory and beauty of holiness which will be ours beyond the veil: we cannot expect this in the present life. Our Lord alone was such a Pattern.

The Apostle Paul urged, "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ." (1 Corinthians 11:1.) St. Paul was a noble example of earnest endeavor to attain the perfect likeness of Christ, and his love, his zeal, his intense earnestness in striving to copy the Master and to accomplish His will should be an inspiration to us all. Let each of the Lord's children, individually, realize his or her personal responsibility. We are as "a city set upon a hill." Let each ask himself the question: Am I "an example of the believers"?"

(2 Cor 3:2-3 KJV) "Ye are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read of all men: (3) Forasmuch as ye are manifestly

declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart."

R5967 "THE EPISTLE OF CHRIST..."

"We are God's workmanship." (Ephesians 2:10.) Wherever there is a true Christian--not merely spirit-begotten, but spirit-developed in the character-likeness of the Savior in meekness, gentleness, patience, long-suffering, brotherly-kindness and love--we have the evidence of the power of God at work in him...

Bibles are invaluable, indispensable. So are books that are really helpful in Biblical interpretation; so are hymn books and tracts... But the best Epistle -- even more valuable than the Bible, as respects reaching the hearts of men--is the life of a true Christian...

The Editor and all of the Pilgrims and the Elder Brethren in the Church have in St. Paul a noble example of faithfulness and loyalty. He did not preach himself; he did not preach enticing words of men's wisdom and science, falsely so called. (1 Corinthians 2:1-5; 1 Timothy 6:20.) Giving himself up to the Lord's service, and seeking not his own glory, but to do the Lord's will, the Apostle became more and more an able and qualified minister, or servant, of the Lord. The Lord used him more and more in the presentation of the glorious Message of

God's Love, as revealed in the great Divine Plan of the Ages...

WHY ELDERS SHOULD BE CAREFULLY CHOSEN

...Let us not forget that we shall not know how to write in the hearts of others what we have not already had written in our own hearts. Hence the propriety of great caution in the choosing of Elders -- to find those who already have the writing of the Lord in their hearts, and who therefore will be competent assistants, under the Holy Spirit's guidance, for the writing of the Lord's character-likeness in the hearts of the younger brethren."

R3673 "WHO IS SUFFICIENT FOR THESE THINGS?" ...2 Cor. 2:15-17...

To be faithful ambassadors for Christ--faithful representatives of the truth and faithful proclaimers of it -- requires great humility and simplicity of heart. It necessitates the complete ignoring of all worldly ambitions and aims, and the cultivation of a brave spirit of endurance which will not shrink from any reproach which fidelity to the truth may bring. And such service, the Apostle here shows, is acceptable to God as sweet incense, no matter what may be the effect upon those to whom we minister, whether they accept or reject the message of divine grace. What God is looking for in us is loyalty to him and devotion to his cause; and this condition of heart he appreciates,

regardless of our success or failure to secure large results. What a comfort it is amidst all discouragements to know that under all circumstances the spirit of Christ in us is as sweet incense to God. And the reward of his constant approval is richer than all the unwholesome sweets of ambition gained by corrupting the Word of God.

To the hearer of this Gospel, the message must prove either a savor of life unto (or tending to) life, or a savor of death unto (or tending to) death. His responsibility is great: there is no neutral ground...

How responsible then is the position of those who are building character in themselves and in others! Remember that our characters are manifested by our habits of life; and each act, even the smallest, tends to form some new habit, or to confirm one already established... It is indeed a solemn thing to live, a solemn thing to think, and to act; and it behooves us to guard well our words, our thoughts and our actions, and ever to bear in mind our responsibility to God, both for ourselves and for others as ambassadors for Christ.

"And who is sufficient for these things?" Surely none of us in our own strength. We need first of all to give ourselves to the Lord without reserve, and then daily to drink in more and more of his spirit by communion with him through his Word and in prayer; and constantly to watch and pray lest we enter into temptation."

1884 (From Harvest Truth Database V5.0)

PRESSING TOWARD THE MARK

"I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."--Phil. 3:14.

THESE were the words of one of the most earnest and faithful runners for the prize of the high calling of the Gospel Church. The speaker was a man of faith, a man of understanding, a man of fixed and unwavering purpose and of dauntless courage--a wise man in the Scriptural sense, though a fool in the world's estimation. His course, as well as those of the other eleven apostles, we are assured was a successful one; for the Revelator in describing the heavenly Jerusalem says, "And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb." (Rev. 21:14.) And at the end of his course, the Apostle, in the full assurance of faith, left us this triumphant testimony: "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day." And then, ever mindful of the other members of the body still in the race, he added, "And not to me only, but unto all them that love his appearing."-- 2 Tim. 4:6-8.

In reviewing the course of the successful runners of the past, there is much of encouragement and helpfulness to all those who are still endeavoring to make their calling and election sure; for even the Apostle Paul, strong and daring as he was, reminds us that he was a man of like passions with ourselves; that while still in the strife of the Christian warfare he counted not that he had already attained the mark for the prize, nor that he was already perfect. He tells us that he realized, as we all do, a law in his members warring against the law of his mind, and that he found it necessary to exert his will continually to keep the body under.--Acts 14:15; Phil. 3:12; Rom. 7:23; 1 Cor. 9:27.

If Paul and all the other apostles and beloved saints of the early church were men of like passions with ourselves, and similarly compassed with infirmities and adverse influences, besetments and allurements; and if they too were frequently assailed with temptations and trials which summoned all their fortitude to enable them to overcome, then, in their overcoming, we have the assurance that we also may overcome through the grace promised to us, as well as to them, if, like them, we avail ourselves of it.

So assured was the Apostle of his own continuous faithfulness, and of that of the other apostles, and of his co-laborers, that he could say to the church, "You have us for examples."--Phil. 3:17; 2 Thes. 3:7-9; 1 Cor. 4:9.

Noble examples they were--of faithfulness, of zeal, of patience, of endurance, and of true Christian fortitude and heroism. While many of those in more obscure positions in the church were doubtless as faithful in their spheres, the Apostle Paul, as a leader and pioneer of the faith among the Gentiles, comes very prominently to view. At the very beginning of his Christian course, the Lord said, "I will show him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake." (Acts 9:16.) Paul was not long in proving the truth of this prediction; but, instead of allowing the prospect of continual tribulation to depress him, he only rejoiced in the privilege thus afforded of testifying his love to the Lord. "And now," he says, "I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there, save that the holy Spirit witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me. But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I may finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God."--Acts 20:22-24.

Hear the Apostle's testimony of his own experience-- "In labors abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons frequent, in deaths oft. Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep; in journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; in weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. Beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches. Who is weak, and I am not weak? who is offended, and I burn not?"--2 Cor. 11:23-33.

Through all these tribulations the Apostle pressed toward the mark for the prize of the high calling. The mark to be attained was holiness--that holiness which brings *every thought* into captivity to the will of God, the mind of Christ. (2 Cor. 10:5.) That was the grand ideal which Paul steadily pursued; and surely in his life he gave evidence of constant growth in grace. Under tests of great and ever-increasing severity his character developed into most graceful and beautiful proportions. The same is also manifest in the characters of the other apostles and saints, though their record has not come down to us as complete as that of the Apostle to the Gentiles.

But it is specially important that we should observe *how* our beloved Brother Paul was enabled to run so steadily in a race so difficult. How was he able to steer so clear of the temptations and besetments to which he, as a man of like passions with us, was necessarily subject? His answer is--"Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark," etc.

Here are four considerations which we do well to ponder most carefully:--

First. The Apostle made a humble, sober estimate of his spiritual standing and strength. He did not feel puffed up at being a chosen vessel of the Lord to bear his name before the Gentiles. He did not consider himself *the Great Apostle*, nor vaunt himself in any way. And so far was he from boasting of his spiritual attainments, that he humbly reminded the church of the possibility of himself being a castaway, even after he had preached to others, unless he continued to stand fast in his integrity and to grow in grace. (1 Cor. 9:27.) And while he held up before them Christ as the power of God and the wisdom of God, and the model for their imitation, he humbly declared that he, with them, was striving to follow the pattern, Christ, while trusting alone in the merit of his sacrifice to make up his own shortcomings. Thus he was relieved of that greatest hindrance to spiritual development--self-satisfaction; for ⁽¹⁾if any man considers that he has attained a satisfactory spiritual state, from that very moment he may date the beginning of his spiritual decline. No present attainments can be satisfactory to a sincere follower of Christ who studiously endeavors to copy the perfect pattern. It is only when we turn our eyes away from Christ that self-complacency can be exercised; for, in full view of the pattern, our shortcomings are ever manifest. And if in pride of heart we do lose sight of them ourselves, they only become the more manifest to others. Only in the realization of a continual growth into the likeness of Christ should the Christian find satisfaction. Like the Apostle, let him consider, not that he has already attained, neither that he is already perfect, but that he is still in the race and making progress towards the goal. And no doubt it was the considering of himself as not having attained perfection, and as still subject to frailty, that led the Apostle to seek the Lord's grace, that kept him always in a humble attitude of mind and that gave him compassion for the weaknesses and failings of others. It is those who become high-minded and self-sufficient that strain to pull out the mote from their brother's eye and forget the beam in their own.

Secondly, ⁽²⁾we observe the Apostle's singleness of purpose -- "This *one thing* I do." He did not try to do several things: if he had, he would surely have failed. He devoted his life to the one purpose to which he was called, and to that end dropped every other aim in life. He did it, too, in view of the fact that all through the present life his chosen course would bring certain loss, privation, toil, care, persecution and continual reproach. In this singleness of purpose he was relieved of many temptations to turn aside to enjoy some of the good things of this present life, or to pursue some of its illusive bubbles.

Thirdly, we observe that he determined to forget the things behind. Had he allowed his mind to return again and again to con over the treasures of the past which he had given up; to reconsider how great the sacrifice which he had made in thus devoting himself to the cause of the despised and crucified One, he might have been tempted first to despondency, and later to return and seek to recover the things behind. On the other hand, he might have carried before him the picture of his persecutions of the Christians and his consenting to their martyrdom, wondering whether the Lord had forgiven him, and continually condemning himself for his blindness, thus forfeiting his peace of mind and interfering with his usefulness. But, having accepted forgiveness in Christ, he put that away also, though he frequently referred to the matter with contrition, and the thought seemed to influence his whole life so that he labored the more diligently to testify to his appreciation of the grace bestowed, and to be long-suffering with others as God had been with him. (1 Cor. 15:9,10; Phil. 3:6; Eph. 3:8; Gal. 1:13; 1 Tim. 1:12-16.) Wise indeed was he to forget the things behind!

Fourthly, he reached forward to the things that were before,--his faith took hold of the promises of God with such tenacity that to him they were living realities, inspiring zeal and faithfulness. Upon the heavenly themes he allowed his mind to dwell, as he also advised others, saying, "Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things

are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue and if there be any praise, think on these things." (Phil. 4:8.) This is the way he reached forward to the things before; and thus also we must gather our inspiration to holiness and our courage to endurance and preserving faithfulness, even unto death. ⁽³⁾The Christian's *habit of thought* has much indeed to do with his spiritual progress or retrogression, as it is also an index of his spiritual state, and good habits of thought need to be very carefully cultivated.

By "habit of thought" we mean that normal condition to which the mind habitually returns in the moments of mental leisure. While engaged in the active duties of life we must of necessity bend our mental energies to the work in hand, for if we do any thing merely mechanically and without concentrating thought upon it, we cannot do it well: yet, even here, Christian principle, well established in the character, will unconsciously guide. But when the strain of labor and care are lifted for a time, the established habit of thought, like the needle to the pole, should quickly return to its rest in God. "Return unto thy rest, O my soul; for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee." (Psa. 116:7.) Let not the mind thus temporarily released grovel and revel in earthly things, but let it return to its rest and refreshment in the contemplation of "whatsoever things are pure and lovely and of good report" --upon that beauty of holiness which is the mark or goal or end of our high calling, the attainment of which will be rewarded with the "prize"--glory, honor and immortality. As the poet has beautifully expressed it,--

⁽⁴⁾"Now let our thoughts on wings sublime
Rise from the trivial cares of time,
Draw back the parting veil, and see
The glories of eternity."

Let thoughts of God and Christ and the worthy saints of the past and present, of the heavenly inheritance, of the blessedness of our future work in cooperation with Christ, of the magnitude and benevolence of the divine plan, and of the glory and blessedness of our gathering together unto Christ when our work of the present life is finished, fill our minds and inspire our hearts. And to these contemplations let us also receive the additional comfort and blessedness of personal communion and fellowship with God through prayer and the study of the Word and the assembling of ourselves together for worship and praise.

Fifthly, we note the Apostle's energetic zeal, which not only reached forward in contemplation of and desire for the beauty of holiness and the heavenly glory, but also earnestly pressed toward the mark for the prize. It is not enough that we consider and desire these things, we must also run for them, strive to attain them, and study and endeavor by the grace of God to so run as to obtain. In this connection we see a fresh beauty in the Apostle's admonition in another place--"*strive* [i.e., endeavor, labor] to enter into *rest*." The harder we work to accomplish the Lord's will in ourselves and that part of his work committed to us, the greater is our peace and true rest. Let all the faithful take courage, and also take instruction from the example and teaching of the faithful Apostle to us Gentiles, who himself ran so successfully to the end of his course; for the same grace is promised also unto us.

There is one other thought suggested by the above words of the Apostle which we would do well to consider, and that is, that as his faithful and successful course was a worthy and safe example to the Church, so likewise should each disciple of Christ in turn consider that his example will have its influence upon others. ⁽⁵⁾Every Christian should strive to be a pattern worthy of imitation--a pattern of earnest, faithful endeavor to copy Christ in his daily life, and of active zeal in his service. Patterns of perfection, of the ultimate moral glory and beauty of holiness, we cannot expect to be in the present life. Such a pattern we have only in Christ our Lord. In no such sense did Paul ever say, Follow me, or Follow us; but he did say, "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ." --1 Cor. 11:1.

The Apostle was a grand example of earnest endeavor to attain perfection, but not of the ultimate perfection which was in Christ only; and it is his zeal and intense earnestness in striving to copy⁽⁶⁾ Christ and to accomplish his will that we should imitate. Let us mark all such worthy examples while we also "press toward the mark [of character] for [the attainment of] the prize of our high calling."

⁽³⁾ Feb. 9 Manna, Psa. 116:7

⁽⁴⁾ Jun. 13 Manna, Psa. 17:15, Hymn 193

⁽⁵⁾ Feb. 10 Manna, 1Tim. 4:12

⁽⁶⁾ Hymn 256

⁽¹⁾ June 11 Manna, Phil. 3:13

⁽²⁾ Jun. 12 Manna, Phil. 3:13