

ADORNING THE GOSPEL

A SERMON
 INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD'S DAY, JUNE 9, 1895.
 DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,
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“That they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in all things.”
Titus 2:10.

I AM afraid that there are some Christians who would hardly like the best preaching that they could ever have. The best doctrine that could ever be delivered would be like that of our Lord Jesus Christ, Himself; eminently ethical, full of precepts and words of wisdom for daily life. I verily believe that if some stern doctrinalists had heard some of Christ's sermons, they would have said that they had not the gospel in them! He did not preach, every time He spoke, those grand doctrines which plainly show the way of salvation, but He frequently proclaimed those important precepts which show us the *fruits* of salvation and which help us to judge whether we have been saved or not.

You will notice that it was often the same in the preaching of the apostles. Although Paul, himself, is a master of doctrine and, in the Epistle to the Ephesians, gives us a whole system of theology in miniature; though he never shrinks from the most profound doctrine, going to the very depths of the doctrine of election and to the very heights with the doctrines of justification by faith and the final preservation of the saints; yet he is preeminently practical in his teaching and often deals with the details of ordinary life. Exceedingly noticeable is this in his Epistle to Titus. As you know, Titus was a teacher of teachers. He had to set in order the things that were needing and to show other preachers how they were to preach. He was told to bid the aged men to “be sober, grave, temperate, sound in faith, in charity, in patience.” Further, he was to instruct “the aged women, likewise, that they be in behavior as becomes holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things.” This was very close dealing with most practical matters! These aged women, in their turn, were to be instructors, “that they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the Word of God be not blasphemed. Young men, likewise, exhort to be sober minded.” You see how much of the Epistle is taken up with the affairs of ordinary life and matters of holy practice. So let our preaching be and let Christian people learn to receive joyfully such instruction! God will assuredly bless it, not only to its own great end of promoting holiness, but also as the means of convincing men of sin wherein they deviate from these blessed precepts; and thus, by conviction of sin; leading them to feel their need of a Savior and thus, incidentally, driving them to the cross where all hopes of salvation must alone be fixed!

I feel glad that my text is so practical and I am not ashamed to preach the practical precepts of our holy faith. Yet I want you to notice how continually and how wisely Paul interweaves his practical exhortations with the doctrines of religion. He would have the bondservants to be obedient, honest and faithful towards their masters for this reason, “that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in all things.” Ah, you who despise doctrines, who turn upon your heels if there is a doctrinal sermon, where are you, now, when the true motive for which holiness of life is to be carried out is to be found here, “that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in all things”? It is the fashion, nowadays, to talk much about preaching Christ, but not His doctrines. I neither understand nor wish to understand what that expression can mean. Christ without His doctrine? The great Teacher without His teachings? The Lord without His commands? The Christ without His anointing? Jesus, the only Savior, without His precious blood of atonement? This is Judas-like, to betray the Son of man with a kiss, to set up an engraved image in the place of Christ, a stuffed idol from which everything is absent that is vital to the true Christ of God! Dear friends, we love “the doctrine of God our Savior” with all our hearts! We have received it to the joy of our spirit and in it we find the mainspring of motive which leads us to love our God and to walk in obedience to His precepts.

There are two matters upon which I am going to speak as the Holy Spirit shall guide me. First, *here is a name of adornment for the gospel*: “the doctrine of God our Savior.” And, secondly, *here is a meth-*

od of adornment for the gospel. These poor slaves were bid to so act that they should adorn the doctrine of God their Savior in all things.

I. First, here is A NAME OF ADORNMENT FOR THE GOSPEL. Let us think it over for a few minutes: “the doctrine of God our Savior.”

Dear friends, our misery was great, otherwise we had never needed a Savior who should be called, “God our Savior.” For a little sin, or for a sin however great, which had but little of evil in its consequences, we might have been saved by some finite being! But if God, Himself, must leave His high abode and sojourn here to be our Savior, then was our ruin terrible in the extreme! It is part of the doctrine that we have learned from the Bible that man is lost and utterly undone by nature and by practice, too. And we could not fully preach “the doctrine of God our Savior” if we did not show, first, how awful is the gulf which is open before us; which none but God could fill. To proclaim aright the remedy for sin, we must declare how desperate was the disease, which none but God could heal, nor even He, except by shedding of His own blood! Surely this is a grand doctrine; that we need a Divine Savior, and that there is such a Savior provided; but that apart from Him there is no salvation!

It is also a very precious thought to us that while our ruin is evidently great, yet it is most sure that the remedy is equally great, or even greater, for we have a Savior whose name is, “God our Savior.” He is the one door of hope for the most despairing and desponding of men, “God our Savior.” Further down in this chapter, Paul calls Him, “the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ.” He that has come from heaven to save us is a man and feels for us with all the sympathy of a man, but He is also God and, therefore “able to save to the uttermost them that come unto God by Him.” It is the best news that was ever published among the sons of men, that He whom we have offended has, Himself, become our Savior!

When no eye had pitied; when, even had it pitied, there was still no arm that could have sufficed for our rescue; His eye pitied and His arm was made bare for the salvation of the sons of men! This was the doctrine that, in Paul’s days, was whispered about everywhere, from Nero’s palace, down to those horrible holes where the slaves had to sleep at night. Afterwards, in the catacombs and in the caves of the earth, this was the story that the poor people came together to hear; that God was a Savior, that the Most High had, Himself, interposed to save the fallen and ruined sons of men! When it could be preached in the streets, it was so preached. When it might be proclaimed in the public synagogue, or in a school where philosophers gathered, or on Mars Hill at Athens, it was so preached. But when it could not be spoken in public, it was *whispered* and told privately from one to another of those who believed. Even the slaves passed on the message of hope to their fellow slaves, so that this grand doctrine: “the doctrine of God our Savior”; was scattered abroad as the light is spread when the sun rises in the East and hastens on his course till the whole round globe is lightened by his golden rays!

“The doctrine of God our Savior.” Once more, my dear friends, *this doctrine is, in itself, divine*, for there is an idiom here by which we are made to understand that it is not only a doctrine which speaks of God our Savior, but it is *the* doctrine of God our Savior! It is His breath; the doctrine is, itself, the very breath of God! This divine teaching, this revelation, this doctrine of salvation by a Divine Savior, has a divinity about itself! Let us, therefore, proclaim it wherever we have the opportunity and let us not attempt to conquer the world with any other weapon but “the doctrine of God our Savior!” Let us take it as David took Goliath’s sword from Ahimelech and say, “There is none like that; give it to me.” I do not believe in the science of comparative religions. No! There is but one true religion, all the rest are lies! There is but one faith of God’s elect. There is “one Lord, one faith, one baptism.” There is but one faith that comes from God! Paul once wrote the words, “another gospel,” but, directly, as if afraid somebody would catch at the expression and think there might be two gospels, he recalled the words, and said, “which is not another, but there are some that trouble you and would pervert the gospel of Christ.” There is but *one* message of salvation and that concerns the one and only Savior; and: “there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.”

This will be thought by some people to be very narrow-minded talk, but we are not at all afraid of being thought narrow-minded! We are a great deal more afraid of running in the broad way with the multitude to do evil and excusing others in the doing of it! No, the Word of Christ, Himself, still stands: “He that believes on the Son has everlasting life: and he that believes not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him. For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world, through Him might be saved. He that believes on Him is

not condemned, but he that believes not is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only-begotten Son of God.”

So, you see, this wonderful teaching of Paul’s reminds us of the greatness of our misery, of the divine nature of our Savior and implies that the doctrine, itself, is of a divine order. I think I ought, also, to say, dear friends, that these things being so, our safety is great! Our salvation, because we have God for our Savior, is great, indeed! In his Epistle to the Hebrews, Paul asks the question which has never been answered: “How shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation which, at the first, began to be spoken by the Lord and was confirmed to us by them that heard Him; God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to His own will?”

You can never think too much of this great salvation! When you desire it, prize it as a beggar might prize gold. When you have it, grasp it as the pearl of great price! We have, indeed, a great salvation; it is salvation from spiritual death, salvation from the rule and government of Satan, as well as from the manners and customs of an ungodly world. And it is also salvation from the guilt of sin, salvation from the dread of hell, salvation from the fear of death and, it shall ultimately be perfect salvation from the least spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing! Our salvation to the fullest will only be revealed in the day of Christ’s appearing, when the body, also, shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption, and all the surroundings of this poor sin-smitten earth; and the creation, itself; through this great salvation, shall be brought into the liberty of the glory of the children of God.

“The doctrine of God our Savior”; the more I think of all that is meant by these words, the more it seems to be an ornament of the rarest kind for the neck of the gospel! “The doctrine of God our Savior.” Turn the words over in your minds; see what a gospel it is that you have received, see how great it is, see how divine it is; prize it so as to rejoice in it day by day and so as to defend it, if necessary, with your lives! Rejoice in it so that when you come to die, it shall be the light that shall remove the darkness of the last dread hour!

Let us make a little further inquiry into this doctrine of God our Savior. Why is the gospel called by this name? Well, first, because *God, our Savior, is the Author of the doctrine, and the Author of the salvation which it brings*. It all comes from Him. It seems to be thought, nowadays, that the gospel which we have received has been evolved from man’s inner consciousness and that there are to be further evolutions which will blot out the present as the human race keeps rising, from platform to platform, till, one of these days, it will get up; God, alone, knows where; but certainly far beyond any necessity for such a gospel as the martyrs died for and the apostles declared! With such views we have no sympathy, whatever, and we entertain towards such erroneous notions the most determined opposition! We believe in a revelation from God and we believe that it is woe unto him who adds to or takes from that revelation. We do not think the Church will have a particle of enthusiasm left in it; and it has none too much now; if ever people should get the idea that the gospel is not a divine revelation, but only the product of human thought. Dear friends, the doctrine that we believe and teach, and by which we have been saved, is, “the doctrine of God our Savior” because it came from Him; He is the Author of it.

And next, it is “the doctrine of God our Savior” because He is the substance of it. If you take the whole truth of the gospel and compress it till you get the very essence of it, you will find that it is, “Jesus only.” The very substance of the gospel is Jesus Christ, Himself; His person, His work, His glorious offices. It is, indeed, “the doctrine of God our Savior.” Beware that you hear no doctrine but that which exalts Him! If there is any teaching which puts Him into a corner, you get into a corner as far as you can from it! If there is any teaching that does not lift Him up, how can it be blessed of the Holy Spirit, since it is the Holy Spirit’s work to reveal Christ to His people and to make Him great in their thoughts?

*“None but Jesus, none but Jesus,
Can do helpless sinners good”*

and therefore to this gospel we must adhere with all our hearts! It is the doctrine of God our Savior, for He is the substance of it!

Yet again it is the doctrine of God our Savior because *He is the object of it; it all points to Him*. If you hear a real gospel sermon, it directs you to look to Jesus Christ. That teaching which leads you to think of the priest and to think of the church, whatever there may be about them that is good, is not “the doctrine of God our Savior.” “To Him give all the prophets witness,” to Him the gospel continually points and this is the preacher’s one cry, “Behold the Lamb of God, which takes away the sin of the world.”

This “doctrine of God our Savior” is simplicity, itself, and yet no man ever understood it except by the Holy Spirit’s teaching, for no man can rightly say that Jesus is the Christ but by the Holy Spirit.

Simple as it is, it seems to me that it is the most wonderful thing that was ever revealed, if I think of the effect it has upon the hearts of men! When Paul began to preach it and when he wrote these words to Titus, this simple teaching was being carried all over the known world by enthusiastic spirits, some of them able to speak in strange tongues and with words of eloquence, but the great mass of them, poor people, servants, *slaves*! Yet, wherever they went, they that were scattered abroad, spread this doctrine everywhere and it burned away until the great Roman Empire simmered like a pot on the fire, and after a while, boiling over and scalding many with its scum. The great ones of the earth, of course, ridiculed this “doctrine of God our Savior”; it was “foolishness” to them; and he that received it was thought to be an idiot; he had forsaken the gods of his fathers, so he must be a fool. Yet the doctrine still went on spreading and then they tried to put out the fire and to quench it with blood, but men bravely died for it rather than deny it! They pressed to the judgment seats, so determined to avow their faith in Christ that Roman governors had to write home to know what they were to do. The more they put the Christians to death, the more Christians there were! Further cruelties were committed; unspeakable tortures of all kinds were invented; but, for Christ’s sake, His followers endured all! They seemed to come on with an almost omnipotent force to make a huge hecatomb of victims! They appeared to press onward through martyrdoms of a most horrible kind and all the while, this “doctrine of God our Savior” had a wonderful power among men!

And, dear friends, you who are conversant with church history know how often this doctrine has broken all the bands that wicked men tried to fasten around it. I often wondered, until I understood the *supernatural* reason for it, what made the French Protestants, for instance, meet together in the desert, towards the South of France, while they were being dragooned by the king’s soldiers, and while multitudes of them were being hunted to death. How was it that, in the dead of night, in lonely places, they came together to hear the gospel? What is there about this gospel that seems to touch the soul of man and makes him quite another creature; makes him joyous instead of sad, and makes him so mighty that he dares to defy death and hell in defense of it? The reason is because this doctrine cures the woe and misery of the *soul*; and brings light, comfort, happiness and hope to it! It is made by God, on purpose, to touch the heart of man and stir it to its very depths!

As for the new doctrine that many are teaching; it has not enough in it to make even a mouse enthusiastic! It has not enough in it for them to bait a mousetrap of their own; and the only way in which they can make any progress at all is by sneaking into our churches, obtaining a hearing and winning attention, and then, traitors as they are, speaking against the very truths of God that has built our houses of prayer! They cannot build their own places of worship; there is nothing in their teaching that can make anybody generous and there is nothing in it that can make anybody glad. No, it is “the doctrine of God our Savior” that Paul insists upon, and he says to Titus, “having adorned it as well as I can with my preaching, now you take care that you and your people adorn it with your lives.”

II. That is to be the second part of my subject, A METHOD OF ADORNMENT FOR THE GOSPEL.

Let us inquire, first, *who were the persons* who were to “adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in all things”? They were, according to our translation, “servants,” but the correct word would be serfs, or slaves. These Christian slaves were to adorn the doctrine of God their Savior. Some of these slaves; the women slaves especially; spent much of their time in adorning their mistresses. I will not attempt to repeat the terrible stories that are told of Roman women and their cruelty to their handmaids. Certainly the poor slaves had to spend hours upon hours in the adornment of their mistresses, and some of the male “swells” of the Roman Empire wasted a great deal of the time of their slaves; the men, I mean; in the adornment of themselves. So that these slaves would have a pretty good idea of what was meant by the ornamenting or adorning of the gospel, and it must have struck them as a very wonderful thing that they should be selected to adorn the gospel!

The word is not applied to the masters, to the princes, or to any of the great ones of the earth; but to those, who, in addition to being poor, were not even owners of themselves! Slaves in Paul’s days were simply goods and chattels, but they were regarded as goods and chattels of the very lowest kind; they were as often and as freely sold as the sheep in the market. Think of how they used to be treated, when, for instance, for making a slight mistake in waiting at table, a slave was thrown into the fishpond to be eaten alive by the fish; the thing was frequently done. The most fearful punishments were executed on them, and you might have seen in Pompeii the wretched places by the doorway where the slave, who was the porter, had an iron collar and a weight about his neck, and where he slept under the stairs, as a dog might do in a kennel, and perhaps for years never left his miserable den. Yet *these* were the kind of

people who were to adorn the gospel! Paul did not think badly of them. Everybody else did, but he set the task of adorning the gospel by making it lovely and beautiful in the eyes of men; to even the very poorest and worst-off as to their position! Is it not wonderful to think of, and yet, such is the literal fact?

Paul also told them *how they were to adorn the gospel*. I do not think, for a moment, Paul believed that the practice of slavery ought to exist. He believed to the fullest extent that the great principles of Christianity would overthrow slavery anywhere and the sooner they did so, the better pleased would he be, but, for the time being, as it was the custom to have slaves, they must adorn the doctrine of God their Savior in the position in which they were.

Slaves in those days were constantly rebelling. At one time they rose up and, for a while, they kept all Rome in fear and alarm, for the masters thought they would all be killed by their rebellious slaves. So Paul exhorts them, first, "to be obedient unto their own masters." Then the man's master, however wicked he might be, would say, "Whatever has come over my slave? My orders are exactly carried out; all I could wish to have done is done, and done well. He is not an eye-servant or a mere man-pleaser, but he does his work heartily and I have heard him say that he does it out of love to one, Jesus, who is his God and Savior." The slave was to put aside all his selfishness and, finding himself a slave, to determine that he would so serve his master that he might recommend his religion to his master!

The slaves were also to be "well pleasing" to their masters: "to please them well in all things." They were not to be always quarrelling, grumbling and complaining about this, and that, and the other, but to wear a contented spirit. Then the master would be sure to ask, "What can have come over my slave?" And, by the way in which he acted, the slave would be a practical missionary to his master!

Paul added, "not answering again." Of course, the slaves were usually sharp in their retorts to their masters. They did not care whether they lived or died, and they said hard things. Paul says let the quiet patience of the Christian slaves make their masters and mistresses wonder what it is that has made such a difference in them. He also added, "not purloining." Slaves and servants in Paul's time were all thieves. In the writings of secular authors of that period, you constantly meet with the declaration that, "to multiply servants is to multiply thieves." Of course the poor creatures helped themselves whenever they could; if you treat a man like a dog, should you be surprised if he acts like one? But the *Christian* slave might be trusted with untold gold! And obedience to this precept, "not purloining," was the way in which he adorned the doctrine of God, his Savior.

He was also to be faithful to his master: "showing all good fidelity." There were Christian slaves who had bad masters, who, nevertheless, were faithful to them in guarding their interests, and it was such a marvel that the rich heathen who despised the name of Christ, yet coveted to buy Christian slaves, for they found them to be the most faithful of mankind and wondered what it was that made them so! This is what Paul meant when he said that they should adorn the doctrine of God, their Savior, in their sad and low estate, by not being degraded by it, but standing up in the grandeur of their Christian liberty, determining that they would not be the slaves of sin; and this was a wonderful adornment for the gospel!

You and I are not slaves! We have been saved from that degradation by this gospel of God our Savior, for our fathers were as much slaves as these poor people were, but we are free. *What can we do to adorn the gospel of God our Savior?* Well, first, remember that the adornment of the gospel of God our Savior is not to be esthetic. We cannot adorn the gospel with music, with painting and with architecture. When you stand beneath the blue sky and see how God has decked His world with many flowers beneath your feet, and all around you hear the birds singing. And when, in the still and silent night, you gaze upon the silver stars, you feel that there is nothing we can build and nothing we can make that is in the least worthy of the great God. You remember how Stephen said of the temple at Jerusalem, "Solomon built Him an house," and then added, "Howbeit the Most High dwells not in temples made with hands. As says the prophet, heaven is My throne, and earth is My footstool: what house will you build Me? says the Lord: or what is the place of My rest?" As much as to say there was nothing in all that material grandeur, for, from the very day in which Solomon built the temple with all its splendor, religion declined and decayed throughout all Israel! You cannot "adorn the doctrine of God our Savior" with anything tangible and material; it is to be adorned in quite another way.

Neither can you adorn the doctrine by anything peculiar in your garb or your mode of speech, as some have tried to do. The gospel is not any the better for a broad brim to your hat. It will not be any the worse for the color of your coat. Neither can it be adorned by any ecclesiastical addition whatever! Neither can it be adorned by the flowers of rhetoric. What grand speeches are sometimes made about the gospel! Yet, somehow, they do not seem to fit it. The gospel is best adorned when most unadorned! In

her native beauty she is altogether unrivalled, she is then a queen; but when you deck her out, as they do who come from Rome, with meretricious garments; her true splendor is marred and hidden.

How, then, can we ornament the gospel? An ornament should always be suitable. Nothing is really ornamental that is not suitable to the person upon whom it is placed. Then, what is appropriate to the gospel? Well, *holiness* suits the gospel. Adorn it with a holy life! How pure, how clean, how sweet, how heavenly the gospel is! Hang, then, the jewels of holiness about its neck and place them as rings on its hands. The gospel is also to be adorned with *mercifulness*. It is all mercy, it is all love, and there is no love like it: "God so loved the world." Well, then, adorn the gospel with the suitable jewels of mercifulness and kindness! Be full of lovingkindness to others, for you have tasted of the lovingkindness of the Lord! The gospel is also the gospel of happiness. It is called, "the glorious gospel of the blessed God." A more correct translation would be, "the happy God." Well, then, adorn the gospel by being happy—

*"Why does your face, you humble souls,
Those mournful colors wear?"*

Adorn the gospel by a cheerful countenance and a happy life!

Men of business, adorn the gospel by the strictness of your integrity. Ours is a just gospel, for God is Just, and yet the justifier of everyone that believes in Jesus. The gospel makes abundant provision for justice to all men, so I pray that you may be so exact, so particular about everything, that when men speak of you, they will not be able to say that you make a profession of religion, but it has not much effect upon your life. Never let it be so said truthfully; be so strictly just that people will not need to count money after you, for in that way they will see what is the meaning of the expression, "adorning the doctrine." A person asked me, one day, "Is not such-and-such a person Baptist?" I replied, "I do not know him." He said, "He is a fellow who says a very long grace before his dinner and he goes to such-and-such a chapel." "Well," I answered, "if he goes there, he certainly attends a Baptist chapel." Then he said, "He is as big a thief as there is out of prison anywhere." I said, "I hope he is not a Baptist. At any rate, he is not a *Christian* if he is what you say, for a Christian is an honest man." Unless we are strictly so, we do not adorn the doctrine of God our Savior.

Adorn the gospel, next, by your *unselfishness*. If you are always looking to your own interests. If you have no thought but for your own personal comfort. If your religion can live and die within your own heart, you have not any that is worth having! If you would adorn the gospel, you must love others, love them intensely and make it one objective of your lives to make other people happy, for so you will then be acting according to the spirit and genius of the gospel, and you will be adorning the doctrine of God our Savior in all things!

Again, let a spirit of *quick forgiveness* be upon you. Resent no injury. Remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how He said, "But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you." Thus you will have a fine set of jewels to adorn the doctrine of God our Savior!

Next, *have patience under trouble*. Be not afraid of sudden fear. Be not carried away into grumbling or murmuring in the time of your poverty or pain. A patient woman, one who can bear up and bear on under all kinds of adversity, is one of the greatest ornaments of the gospel!

A *placid and steady calm* is also a great adornment for the gospel. One has seen such gentleness of spirit in some Christian matrons that we have felt that they have been an ornament to the doctrine of Jesus Christ. May we learn that holy calm and may the Spirit of God so dwell in us that in all we say, and all we do, and all we are, we may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in all things! May the Lord add His blessing upon this discourse, for Jesus Christ's sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: *TITUS 2:6-15; 3.*

Titus 2:6. *Young men, likewise, exhort to be sober minded.*

They are full of spirits, they are very sanguine, they are apt to be carried away with novelties; exhort them to have that which is thought to be a virtue of age, namely, sobriety. Let them be old when they are young that they may be young when they are old.

7. *In all things showing yourself a pattern of good works.*

Titus was, himself, a young man. He must, therefore, be a pattern to young men, and as a pastor or evangelist, he must be a pattern to all sorts of men.

7, 8. *In doctrine showing incorruptibility, gravity, sincerity, sound speech that cannot be condemned; that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you.*

It is a pity when the truth of God suffers at the hand of its own advocate, and perhaps the very worst wounds that truth has received have been in the house of its friends. You must be careful, therefore, “that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you.”

9. *Exhort servants to be obedient unto their own masters.*

They were mostly slaves in those days. A sad condition of society was that in which service meant slavery, yet even slaves were “to be obedient unto their own masters.”

9, 10. *And to please them well in all things; not answering again; not purloining.*

Not practicing petty thefts, as, alas, some servants do even now;

10. *But showing all good fidelity; that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in all things.*

The life of the Christian, even if he is a servant, is to be an ornament of Christianity. Christ does not look for the ornament of His religion to the riches or the talents of His followers, but to their *holy lives*, “that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in all things.”

11, 12. *For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world.*

Christians are not to run out of the world, as monks and hermits sought to do, but to live “in this present world.” Yet, while in the world, we are to be godly; that is, full of God! That kind of life which is without God is not for Christians! Those worldly desires, the pride and ambition which are common to worldly men are not to have power over us. We are to deny them and to live soberly. This word relates not only to eating and drinking, but to the general sobriety of a man’s mind: “Denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world.”

13, 14. *Looking for that blessed hope and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.*

See what Christ died for? See what Christ lives for? See what we are to live for; that we should not only be a people purified, but purified unto Himself! We are not only to have good works, but we are to be *zealous* of them; we are to burn with zeal for them, for zeal is a kind of fire; it is to burn and blaze in us until we warm and enlighten others!

15. *These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no man despise you.*

As I have already reminded you, Titus was a young man, and people are apt to despise the pastoral office when it is held by a young man. Yet they ought always to *respect* it, whether it is held by a young man or an old man. God knows best who is most fitted for the work of the ministry; and those of us who are getting old must never look with any kind of scorn or contempt upon those who are commencing their service, for we, too, were once young. You cannot measure a man’s grace by the length of his beard, nor by the number of his years.

Titus 3:1, 2. *Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work, to speak evil of no man, to be not brawlers, but gentle, showing all meekness unto all men.*

Gentleness was not reckoned a virtue among the Greeks. I do not suppose that the people in Crete had ever heard of it before Paul wrote this Epistle to Titus. Among the Romans and the Greeks, it seemed to be a virtue to stand up for your own, to be like a gamecock who is always ready to fight, and will never miss a chance of fighting. But this Christian virtue of gentleness is a most amiable one, and greatly adorns the doctrine of Christ. The world has run away with this word, gentle, and now calls many a person a gentleman who has no right to the name. I wish that every gentleman were, indeed, a gentleman! It is very significant that Moses, the type of the Lord Jesus under the law, was the meekest of men; should not Christians, therefore, excel in gentleness under this milder dispensation?

3, 4. *For we ourselves, also, were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another. But after that the kindness and love of God, our Savior, toward man appeared.*

“The philanthropy of God” would be a good translation, or rather, a sort of borrowing from the Greek itself. “After we had seen the philanthropy of God”;

5-8. *Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Spirit; which He shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior; that being justified by His grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life. This is a faithful saying.*

It would be worthwhile for you to turn to the other places in which this expression, “This is a faithful saying,” occurs.

8. *And these things I will that you affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable unto men.*

They are saved by *faith*; let them be careful to maintain good works. “These things are good and profitable unto men,” that is, to those who practice and observe them.

9. *But avoid foolish questions, and genealogies, and contentions, and strivings about the law; for they are unprofitable and vain.*

There are hundreds of questions which are thought, by some people, to be very important, but which have no practical bearing, whatever, either upon the glory of God, or upon the holiness of man. We are not to go into these matters; let those who have time to waste take up these questions; as for us, we have not time enough for things that are unprofitable and vain.

10, 11. *A man who is an heretic, after the first and second admonition, reject; knowing that he that is such is subverted, and sins, being condemned of himself.*

When it comes to unbelief of fundamental and vital doctrines, we who are like Titus, set in office over a church, must deal with such deadly evils with a strong hand.

12, 13. *When I shall send Artemas unto you, or Tychicus, be diligent to come unto me to Nicopolis: for I have determined there to winter. Bring Zenas the lawyer, and Apollos on their journey diligently, that nothing be wanting unto them.*

Paul had already told Titus to bid the saints in Crete to abound in good works. Now he is commanded to take care of certain traveling Christians and to speed them on their way. It was the custom in olden times, when traveling was very different from what it is now, when the Christians passed from one town to another, to find the church, and to be entertained and speeded on their journey by their fellow believers. Thus they kept up a practical fellowship of love to all the saints.

14, 15. *And let our people, also, learn to maintain good works for necessary uses, that they be not unfruitful. All that are with me salute you. Greet them that love us in the faith. Grace be with you all. Amen.*

May that final benediction drop like the dew upon this whole company! “Grace be with you all. Amen.”

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