

Exhortations and Conclusion (5:25-6:18)

by C.I. Scofield

The sermon emphasizes the importance of living a spiritual life, restoring one another in the spirit of meekness, bearing one another's burdens, and sowing to the Spirit to reap life everlasting.

Scripture: Romans 8:4

Topics: "Holy Spirit", "Christian Freedom"

Description

C.I. Scofield preaches on the final division of Galatians, emphasizing the contrast between living in the Spirit and walking under the law. He explains that the righteousness of the law is fulfilled in those who walk in the Spirit, allowing the Spirit to work in them what they could never do under the law. Scofield highlights the practical outworking of grace in believers' lives, focusing on the ministry of restoration among believers and the importance of bearing one another's burdens. He concludes by exalting the cross of Christ as the source of redemption, freedom from the world, and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

Transcript

We come now to the sixth and final division of this great epistle, and in it we shall find the outworking in life of the principle of grace as contrasted with the principle of law--of the walk in the Spirit as contrasted with the walk under the law.

The division begins with verse twenty-five of the fifth chapter: "If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit." Legalism would say: "Live in the Spirit by all means, but walk under the law." Not so the Scripture. Life and walk are alike "in the Spirit."

Has it seemed to you, friends, that Paul's great discussions in this epistle have been somewhat theologic, somewhat academic, somewhat doctrinal? Have you been saying: "But how does all this work out--what kind of Christians shall we be in walk and service if we let go the state of nonage, the rule of the pedagogue, and live in the Spirit?" If this question has been in your hearts, then I want to say two things about it.

And first, that it partly misconceives the case. For the righteousness of the law is fulfilled in us (a very different thing from by us), who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit (Rom. 8:4). What we never could do in respect of the law, the Spirit does in us.

And secondly, the outworking of the new principle is indicated in the very exhortations and instructions before us. Let us look at this beautiful picture of a spiritual, as distinguished from a legal, life.

It begins in that which lies nearest--the brotherhood of believers, and our first concern is to be the ministry of restoration: "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted" (Gal. 6:1).

What is to be done in case a Christian shall sin? That surely is a test case. And it is the very case the nomolaters, or law-worshippers, would put. "Your grace doctrine," they say, "tends toward looseness of life--toward sin. What resource have you in such a case?"

We answer that first of all the Scripture says that it is not grace but law which is the "strength of sin" (1 Cor. 15:56; Rom. 7:8); and again that we know what the law says about sinners: "The soul that sinneth, it shall die.... Moses said that such should be stoned." But what does grace say? "Ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness."

There is something just under the surface here which is very sweet. The word rendered "restore" is a surgical term, and is used for resetting a dislocated limb. What happens when a believer sins? Is he cast out of the body? By no means; but he is dislocated as regards service and fellowship. If your arm is dislocated at the shoulder it no longer obeys your will. You may command it to pick up a book, but it hangs, inert, unresponsive. Furthermore, your arm is thoroughly uncomfortable--as we might say, unhappy. Use and blessing are suspended, but your arm is still a member of your body.

Now this, we are told, is a very dangerous doctrine. Amazing statement! Because your arm is not lost, therefore you will be utterly careless about mere shoulder dislocations! I have been so foolish as to suppose that those whose limbs have suffered dislocation became exceedingly careful about such risks ever after.

Ah, friends, the renewed heart which, through sin, has suffered the loss of communion with that heart's Beloved; which has learned in darkness the loss of the light and comfort and joy of His fellowship, ever after walks more softly with God.

But for such the spiritual have a ministry so difficult as to test every quality of the fruit of the Spirit. Oh, what love and long-suffering and gentleness and meekness and goodness and faith the ministry of restoration requires! The law has no resource for resetting dislocated members. It is work, indeed, which taxes the utmost resources of grace. For no one is so hard to get on with, no one is so critical, so unreasonable, as a saint out of communion. But, thank God, love can do it. A most practical outcome this, of the walk in the Spirit.

And the next instruction is very like the first: "Bear ye one another's burdens" (verse 2). If you will have law, there is law for you; but you will never find it in the ten commandments--it is "the law of Christ." Truly, we "are not without law to God, but inlawed to Christ" (1 Cor. 9:21). If you want an interpretation of that saying here is one: "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ." And here is another: "Hereby perceive we the love of God, because He laid down His life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren" (1 John 3:16).

Burdens! What a burdened world we live in! Poverty is a great burden. "But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his tender mercies from him, how dwelleth the love of

God in him?" (1 John 3:17). Ah, but he is imprudent, and shiftless, or he would not be poor. Brother, listen: Did it never occur to you that shiftlessness and improvidence are themselves amongst the heaviest of life's burdens? Your brother's poverty is due to shiftlessness, lack of energy, of forethought, say you? Well, then, be thrift and energy and forethought for him.

What a burden a tarnished name is! The man is saved, he is your brother, but he brought to Christ a bad record. Every now and again it will block his way, will be brought up against him. Yes; no doubt. Brother mine, let you and me go apart a moment, where all these people cannot hear, while we read: "Some men's sins are open beforehand, going before to judgment; and some men they follow after" (1 Tim. 5:24).

And there are burdens of sorrow--oh, how sympathy lifts them! Yes, it is a burdened world in which we live.

And what shall I, who am under grace, do with my own burdens? Bear them myself, if no one comes to my help: "For every man shall bear his own burden" (6:5). I am to remember that, however sorely I am burdened, some one bears a still heavier load, and I am not to go about burdening the burdened with my burden. But if a brother comes cheerily to my side, and if he says, "Brother, let me get underneath your heavy load and lift with you," then I may welcome him, and rejoice that he is fulfilling the law of Christ.

There is a weak and unworthy shifting of our burdens, and of that we will not be guilty; but neither will we churlishly refuse the most Christly help and comfort and cheer of a brother. So there is no conflict here. The second and the third instruction harmonize.

The fourth instruction is the one upon which we who labor in the Word find it difficult to touch: "Let him that is taught in the Word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things" (6:6).

Bear just here with a word or two. At no point of holy living is the average saint so flatly, wilfully disobedient as just at this point. For example: We are gathered here at a Bible Conference. Unless it is wholly different from other Bible Conferences, the expense of it, and whatever fellowship there may be with teachers, will be participated in by very few. It is so in the churches. Now Scripture speaks, in grace, very plain words about this:

"Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the Gospel should live of the Gospel" (1 Cor. 9:14).

"If we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great thing if we shall reap your carnal things?" (1 Cor. 9:11).

Observe how personal this is: "Let him that is taught communicate unto him that teacheth." In that very personal touch of thoughtfulness, sympathy--in a word of fellowship--lies all the grace and sweetness of it. Who wants to have "fellowship" with a collection box? But enough! Just read what follows, and let that suffice. But remember that the Spirit is not speaking here to sinners about their sins, but to saints about their meanness: "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."

How vitally true that is! No man, able to fellowship the Gospel, ever yet omitted it and took away a blessing from a teaching meeting. He may have taken away some of that knowledge which puffeth up; but never yet a blessing.

And this brings us to the great law of spiritual husbandry. The two facts--"flesh" and "Spirit"--abide. Every act, every expenditure of thought, strength, or money, is seed sown in one or the other of these soils.

Mr. Moody used to tell of his astonishment when once in a great conservatory in England he saw a gardener take out his sharp knife and cut down a most flourishing branch of a rose bush, leaving only a small shoot to grow. In explanation the gardener told Mr. Moody that it was a grafted rose bush. The shoot cut down was the worthless old stock; it was the other shoot from which the gardener expected roses fit to lay upon his master's table. "Well," said Mr. Moody, "this is a splendid illustration of Galatians 6:8." (This verse reads: "For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.")

What follows is more personal, but is most touching: "Ye see with how large letters I have written unto you with mine own hand" (6:11).

The Apostle was, it appears from many considerations, afflicted with ophthalmia, a common disease in the Orient, to the point of almost total blindness. Ordinarily, therefore, he availed himself of the services of an amanuensis, simply adding his superscription. But here, having no scribe at hand, but feeling the urgency of the danger of his dear Galatians, he has written--we cannot know with what of pain and difficulty--with his own hand.

What a gentleman Paul was! He cannot send the letter without a word of apology for the "large letters" his difficult vision compelled him to use! Do you see, friends? How does grace work out, you ask? Well, Paul is not thinking of his "large letters" and the pain and difficulty of his service as illustrating the outworking of grace, but we may. There is nothing in the ten commandments to require prisoner Paul to strain his aching eyes to write of grace to the Galatian churches. "The love of Christ constraineth" to that kind of service.

No, Paul will not glory in himself, but nothing shall hinder his glorying in the cross: "But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world" (verse 14). We need not go outside this very epistle to learn why Paul gloried in the cross:

1. Paul gloried in the cross because there the Son of God "gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil age" (1:4). In that cross Paul saw God Himself take up the whole question of his sins and so deal with his guilt that it no longer existed before the face of heaven. So dealt with his sins that now he could fling out his triumphant challenge to the universe: "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect?" (Rom. 8:33). Is not that something to glory about?

2. Paul gloried in the cross because he had himself died there with Christ: "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me" (2:20). The law in slaying Christ there had slain him: "For I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God" (2:19). Henceforth he was become dead to the law. The law having slain him had exhausted its demand. "The law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth" (Rom. 7:1), but no longer. Now Paul could do what he could never do under the law--he could "live unto God." So he will glory in the cross that set him free.

3. Paul would glory in the cross because there Christ had redeemed him from the curse of the law at the awful cost of being made a curse for him: "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree" (3:13). He had been "of the works of the law," and the law had cursed him: "For as many as are of the works of the law are under the

curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them" (3:10). But Christ had come and lifted that dreadful curse from Paul, that Paul might be redeemed.

4. That cross was at once the manifestation and measure of the personal love of Christ for him, Paul: "... the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me" (2:20). Here, friends, is something so wonderful that I would we might all enter into it. It is more wonderful, even, than the cloud on Sinai into which Moses entered. It is this: In His death Christ not only saw and loved us all, but He saw and loved each of us. This is distinctly stated by Isaiah: "When thou shalt make His soul an offering for sin, He shall see His seed ... He shall see of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied" (Isa. 53:10, 11). The death pangs of Christ were the birth pangs of the new creation, each member of which is born separately and redeemed separately. Of that great compensatory vision, each of us may say, He saw me, and gave Himself for me.

5. Paul gloried in the cross because by it he was redeemed from "under the law," that he might receive the placing as a son (4:5). The cross did not redeem Paul from the curse of the law only to leave him still under that which not only had righteously cursed him, but must continue righteously to curse "as many as are of the works of the law" (3:10).

6. Paul gloried in the cross because it made possible his mightiest blessing next to deliverance from the curse--the indwelling of the Holy Spirit: "And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father" (4:6). Paul well knew that the holy anointing oil could come only upon atoning blood (Ex. 29:20, 21), and that only because of the cross could he ever have received the Spirit. What a new reason for glorying in the cross!

7. And Paul would glory in the cross, finally, because it made an end of things between him and the world: "... the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world" (6:14). Ah, friends, here is something very searching. It is one thing to glory in the cross because by it we are become dead to the law--are we as ready to exult in that by the cross we also are become dead to the world, and the world dead to us? Let us remember--and it is most solemn--that it is perfectly possible to glory in the cross in an utterly mistaken and carnal way. Are we willing to see in the cross only what might gratify self? Do we so degrade and misinterpret the cross as to imagine that Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law, and from the law, only that we might enjoy this present evil age? To Paul the cross stood not only between him and the wrath of God, but between him and this great world-system of ambition, greed, and mere pleasure. Do we glory in this, too?

There is a closing word, at once austere and difficult: "From henceforth let no man trouble me: for I bear in my body the stigmata (the marks) of the Lord Jesus" (6:17).

What does this mean? We may not dogmatize. Two interpretations are suggested: Paul had, like his Master, been cruelly scourged. Doubtless his body, like Christ's scarred body, bore the marks of the scourge. In this sense then, the Apostle bore the stigmata of Christ. But from the earliest stages it has been believed that upon Paul's flesh had been supernaturally imprinted the scars of the nails. There seems little if any room for historic doubt that St. Francis of Assissi, whom even Protestants have called "the Christliest man since Paul," also received, in this sense, the stigmata. It is a very, very sacred, a very tender subject. Let us leave it so.

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