

Shiloh Christian Library  
Author and Title

# **Discipleship**

by

G. Campbell Morgan

## AUTHOR'S NOTE

THIS booklet is not intended to be a contribution to theology, nor is it addressed to theologians as such. Not that the writer undervalues them or their work. They, of varied schools, have placed him under a debt to them, that he is unable to discharge.

It is intended to be, along practical lines, an aid to the disciples of Jesus, and that, by endeavouring to show in some measure the eminent practicability of being a Christian, in the power of the life communicated by, and sustained in Christ, through the Holy Spirit.

It is further intended, to reveal the actual effect on this present life, for ennobling it in all its relations, and filling it with all joy and beauty, of the ultimate intention of the Master for all His disciples.

To the glory of God, and the help of fellow-disciples, it is therefore prayerfully sent forth on its mission.

G. CAMPBELL MORGAN.

## INTRODUCTION

**T**HE author of this book reminds me that it was written at my suggestion. This gives added weight to his request that I should write a few words of introduction.

No one can read these pages with a desire to learn in what discipleship really consists, without discovering that it means a great deal more than to be a Christian in the low conventional sense of that much-abused word. The great crowds which followed the Great Teacher on one occasion convinced Him that there was a misunderstanding between Himself and them, for discipleship rightly apprehended will not be the concern of the multitude (Luke xiv.).

He therefore lifts His voice to reveal this false situation, and in deeply searching words tells the light-minded crowd what true discipleship means. It is to abandon what is dearest and most vital, and to accept what is most painful. It is to give up our wrongs, without which *we* cannot be saved, and to give up our rights, without which others cannot be saved. A disciple is one who shares his Master's thoughts, imitates His deeds, walks

in His footsteps, bears His reproach, represents Him worthily among men, and continues His work in the world. We may bear His name, but except on these conditions we cannot be His disciples. To many of Christ's scholars this is a time of testing and examination. They will instinctively turn to what the author has to say about the disciple in sorrow. We shall be greatly surprised if those words do not prevent many a one from being turned back to learn their lesson again. Many break down in these crises in their spiritual history through failure to understand the divine purpose. In this text-book they will learn that

“ The ills we see—  
 The mysteries of sorrow deep and long,  
 The dark enigmas of permitted *wrong*—  
 Have all one key.  
 This strange, sad world is but our Father's school ;  
 All chance and change His love shall grandly overrule.”

**May** the Great Teacher stamp with His royal approval this first literary effort of my beloved friend the author.

**J. GREGORY MANTLE**

# DISCIPLESHIP

## I

### *BECOMING A DISCIPLE*

“ At the feet of Jesus  
Is the place for me ;  
There, a humble learner,  
Would I choose to be.” -P. P. **BLISS.**

DISCIPLES” is the term consistently used in the four Gospels to mark the relationship existing between Christ and His followers. Jesus used it Himself in speaking of them, and they, in speaking of each other. Neither did it pass out of use in the new days of Pentecostal power. It runs right through the Acts of the Apostles. It is interesting also to remember that it was on this wise that the angels thought and spoke of these men : the use of the word in the days of the Incarnation is linked to the use of the word in the apostolic age by the angelic message to the women, “ Go-tell His *disciples* and Peter ” (Mark xvi. 7).

It is somewhat remarkable that the word is not to be found in the Epistles. This is to be accounted for by the fact that the Epistles were addressed to Christians in their corporate capacity as churches, and so spoke of them as members of such, and as the "saints," or separated ones of God. The term "disciple" marks an individual relationship ; and though it has largely fallen out of use, it is of the utmost value still in marking the relationship existing between Christ and each single soul, and suggesting our consequent position in all the varied circumstances of everyday living. It is to that study we desire to come in this series of papers.

(i.) The word itself (*μαθητής*) signifies a taught or trained one, and gives us the ideal of relationship. Jesus is the Teacher. He has all knowledge of the ultimate purposes of God for man, of the will of God concerning man, of the laws of God that mark for man the path of his progress and final crowning.

Disciples are those who gather around this Teacher and are trained by Him. Seekers after truth, not merely in the abstract, but as a life-force, come to Him and join the circle of those to whom He reveals these great secrets of all true life. Sitting at His feet, they learn from the

unfolding of His lessons the will and ways of God for them ; and obeying each successive word, they realise within themselves the renewing force and uplifting power thereof. The true and perpetual condition of discipleship, and its ultimate issue, were clearly declared by the Lord Himself “to those Jews which believed on Him.” “If ye abide in My word, then are ye truly My disciples ; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free ” (John viii. 31, 32).

Before considering the glorious enduement the Teacher confers on every disciple, and the stern requirements that guard the entrance to discipleship, it is very important that we should have clearly outlined in our minds the true meaning of this phase of the relationship which Jesus bears to His people.

It is not that of a lecturer, from whose messages men may or may not deduce applications for themselves. It is not that of a prophet merely, making a divine pronouncement, and leaving the issues of the same. It certainly is not that of a specialist on a given subject, declaring his knowledge to the interest of a few, the amazement of more, and the bewilderment of most. It is none of these.

It is that of a Teacher-Himself possessing full

knowledge-bending over a pupil, and for a set purpose, with an end in view, imparting knowledge step by step, point by point, ever working on towards a definite end. That conception includes also the true ideal of our position. We are not casual listeners, neither are we merely interested hearers desiring information ; **we are** disciples, looking towards and desiring the same end as the Master, and therefore listening to every word, marking every inflection of voice that carries meaning, and applying all our energy to realising the Teacher's purpose for us. Such is the ideal.

(ii.) Now let us consider the privileges that the Teacher confers upon those who become His disciples.

(1) The first is the establishment of those relations which make it possible for Him to teach and for us to be taught. The question of sin must be dealt with, and that which results from sin-our inability to understand the teaching. Christ never becomes a Teacher to those who are living in sin. Sin as actual transgression in the **past** must be pardoned, and sin as a principle of revolution within must be cleansed. So, before He unfolds one word of the divine law of life, or reveals in any particular the line of progress, He



deals with this twofold aspect of sin. To the soul judging past sin by confessing it and turning from it, He dispenses forgiveness, pronouncing His priestly absolution by virtue of His own atonement on the cross. To the soul yielded to Him absolutely and unreservedly, consenting to the death of self, He gives the blessing of cleansing from sin. This statement of His dealing with us is not intended to mark an order of procedure from pardon to cleansing. It is rather the declaration of the twofold aspect of the first work of Christ for His disciples, the bestowment of the initial blessing. In practical experience men constantly, though not invariably, and not necessarily, realise the first-named first in order. That is the result of the overwhelming and largely selfish desire for personal safety, a desire which is the natural and proper outcome of the divinely imparted instinct of self-preservation. Nevertheless they ought at once, for the higher reason of God's glory, to seek to realise the deeper side of the one blessing, that of cleansing. But His patience is manifested in our folly. He forgives and graciously waits. When we look at Him again, and say, "Master, there is more in Thy cross than pardon," then He makes us conscious of His power to cleanse. Certain it is that there

can be no real discipleship apart from the realisation of the twofold blessing. Beyond this there lies the dulness of our understanding, our inability to comprehend the truths He declares. This He overcomes by the gift of the Holy Spirit, who makes clear to us the teaching of the Master. What a priceless gift this is! The dullest natural intellect may be, and is, rendered keen and receptive Godwards, by the incoming of the Holy Spirit.

So He Himself provides for and creates the relationships of communion through cleansing, and intelligence through the indwelling of the Spirit, which constitute our condition for receiving what He has to teach.

(2) The other great privilege to be remembered is, that the school of Jesus is a technical school. He provides opportunities for us to prove in practical life the truths He has to declare. This is a great essential in His method, with which we shall deal more fully in a subsequent chapter. It is another evidence of His abounding grace, that the proving in technical details of the lessons He teaches is just as much under His personal guidance and direction as the truth in theory is received directly from Him.

(iii.) Now, upon what personal conditions may

I become a disciple ? I fain would have this enduement of pardon, cleansing, and illumination. How may this be ? No school of man was ever so strictly guarded, so select as this; yet none was ever so easy of access. No bar of race, or colour, or caste, or age stands across the entrance. Humanity constitutes the essential claim. And yet, because of the importance of the truths to be revealed, and of the necessity for the application of every power of tho being to the understanding and realisation of these truths, Jesus stands at the entrance, forbidding any to enter, save upon certain conditions. Let us hear His threefold word. (a) "If any man cometh unto Me, and hateth not his own father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be *My disciple* " (Luke xiv. 26). (b) " Whosoever doth not bear his own cross, and come after Me, cannot be *My disciple* " (Luke xiv. 27). (c) " Whosoever he be of you that renounceth not all that he hath, he *cannot be My disciple* " (Luke xiv. 33).

The new relationship must be superior, in the urgency of its claims, to the claim of any earthly relationship; it must be considered and answered before any claims of the self-life. The Teacher

demands that we take up the cross and so follow on, even though the progress be through pain. More -we must, take the deep spiritual vow of poverty, renouncing all as possessions, counting every word He shall speak, and every truth He shall reveal, through whatsoever methods, as our chief and only wealth. In short, we must not be held, either by being possessed by others or possessing aught. There must be a clean severance from all entanglement, and an utter uncompromising abandonment of ourselves to Him. Unless this be so, we cannot be His disciples. If this be our attitude, then to us He gives pardon, cleansing, light; and so, becoming by relationship His disciples, and entering His school, we are ready for, and enter upon our course of instruction.

If these conditions seem hard and severe, let it be remembered what depends upon them. Character and destiny depend upon this question of discipleship. Not to impart information, and to satisfy curiosity, is Jesus the Teacher. It is because the truth sanctifies and makes free that He reveals it, and because, apart from the revelation He has to make, there is no possible way of realising God's great purposes for us. Compare Himself and His teaching with the

most sacred and beautiful of earth's loves and possessions, and these are unworthy of a moment's thought. They must all come from between Him and ourselves, that so we may know and do His will. Such attitude does not rob us of the enjoyment of all these things, so far as in themselves they are right. It rather adds to our joy.

*Self* renders it impossible to know Christ when other loves and interests intervene, and breeds dissatisfaction with all else, and makes that very self sad and weak. Christ absolutely lights the whole being with His love and joy and beauty, and shines on other loves to their sanctification, and so the abnegation of self is self's highest development.

So let us enter the school of Jesus, and, receiving His gifts, await His teaching.

## II

### FIRST LESSONS

“Saviour and Master,  
These sayings of Thine,  
Help me to make them  
Doings of mine ;  
Words that like beams  
Of humanity shine,  
By them let me build up  
The holy, divine.”—PAXTON HOOD.

THE Sermon on the Mount-as it is popularly styled, though the title always seems inadequate and poor-was delivered specially to the disciples. The first and second verses of the fifth chapter of Matthew very clearly declare this :“ And seeing the multitudes, He went up into the mountain ; and when He had sat down, His disciples came unto Him : and He opened His mouth and taught *them*, saying.” The multitude followed and gathered round this little group of Teacher **and** taught; but the teaching was for the disciples only-that is, for such as were brought into those necessary relations of which our first chapter spoke, and so could follow and in some measure

receive the wondrous words. In actual experience the teaching of this sermon is very far in advance even of this advanced age. Men have hardly begun to guess at the glory and beauty of this wonderful ideal, but in relation to the Teacher it is elementary and initial. All the wealth of His knowledge-knowledge that He is waiting to impart-lies beyond anything said here. Here He deals with the first ideals of true life, and reveals to men the divine purpose for them to-day. These are His *First Lessons*. Any exhaustive dealing with all the wonderful and delicate detail is impossible, and it is not indeed the purpose of this study. A general analysis of the whole, that we may catch its sweep and scope, and obtain an outline of the system, is what is possible and necessary. We shall now proceed to this consideration, noticing seven points of importance. This study should be taken with your Bible as your companion, tracing the teaching therein.

(i.) *Supremacy of Character* (Matt. v. 1-12).—The very first word that falls from His lips is a revelation of the will of God for man. “Blessed.” “Happy.” That is the divine thought and intention for us. Sorrow, tears, pain, disappointment—all these may be and are of inestimable value

in the Father's discipline ; but they are means to an end, made necessary by man's sin. The end, in the purpose of God, is blessedness. Happiness is that after which all men in every age seek, and the first note in the Saviour's teaching reveals it as what God is seeking also. How then is it to be realised? This section contains the Master's answer. Men hold two views of what happiness consists in, viz., having, and doing. To possess much, or to do some great thing, constitutes the sum of human blessedness according to popular theory. Our Teacher sweeps these conceptions away by absolutely ignoring them. No "blessed" of His lights up for man either the "having" or "doing" of men. *Being* is everything. A man's happiness depends upon what he is in himself. These "blesseds" of Jesus touch human life in its lowliest phases, and reveal the highest possibilities even for such. Henceforth, for the disciples of Jesus themselves, and for a basis of their estimate of others, character is to be supreme. There is infinite tenderness in this on its positive side, and it is stern and inexorable on the negative. Such teaching will produce lives running contrary to all worldly estimate and custom, and discipleship will mean persecution; and so the Teacher adds a "blessed" for those who suffer through character,



(ii.) Influence *the* Intention. (vers. 13-r 6).-This grows out of the former, and is at once the statement of a fact and the declaration of an intention. The fact is that character tells upon others. If a man live in the atmosphere of the beatitudes of Jesus, his life being of ~~the~~ character described, he will, apart from any effort along the line of actual work, exert certain influences. This is not only a fact, it is part of the divine intention. Salt savourless, light under a bushel, are worse than useless; this is, however, the statement of an impossible hypothesis. Salt savourless ceases to be salt. Light under a bushel goes out. This the Master intends us to understand, and hence the terrific force of His figures of speech.

These symbols mark for us distinctly the influence that the blessed life exerts. Salt is antiseptic, pungent, preventing the spread of corruption, and making that portion where health borders on disease, smart. Remember, absolute corruption never smarts. When men smart under the influence of the antiseptic life of righteousness it is a sign for which we should be thankful : conscience is not altogether dead, they are not "past feeling." The disciples, then, are to be salt, preventing corruption, and arousing the dormant sense of health. Light is here used, I think, in

its sense of guidance. Men are groping after God in this age with no light of their own by which to find Him. Your life is to be a light, by the aid of which men come to glorify God. Let no man whose life fails to be antiseptic, and never helps another Godward, imagine himself living within the circle of beatitudes.

(iii.) *The New Moral Code* (vers. 17-48).—Having thus seen the supremacy of character as the secret of happiness and the source of influence, we ask, What are the laws which govern the development of such character? The new code of ethics is startling. The Mosaic law of conduct was easy to obey when compared to this. The former is done away in the sense in which the less is included in the greater. Greater it surely is. Let this section be carefully read, remembering the following points :-(1) The righteousness of the disciples is to exceed that of the Pharisees as inner purity exceeds external whiteness. (2) Gifts on the altar do not expiate wrong-doing. (3) To look on sin with desire is sin; in other words, suppression of sin is still sin, because it recognises the presence of a principle antagonistic to God and excuses it. (4) Retaliation is forbidden, and love is to be the one law of relative life. No one can reverently study this ideal of life without

seeing the necessity for the fulfilling of the conditions of entrance to discipleship.

(iv.) *Self-Stricken* (vi.).-This chapter may, and undoubtedly does, contain very much teaching along other lines, but the underlying principle is that of self-abnegation. Note how the injunctions run counter to every popular idea of life :- (1) Alms are to be given privately, not blazoned abroad (2) Prayer is pre-eminently a matter betwixt the soul and God; certainly not to be a means of advertising self's piety. (3) Men are still to fast, but with glad face, not “ appearing ” so to do, so that self is to have no glory for its denial of itself, (4) Wealth is not to be held save on trust. (5) Self is to be so smitten that anxiety concerning necessities cannot exist. Surely never were self-consideration and self-consciousness so smitten hip and thigh as here.

(v.) *Relative Charity* (vii. 1-5).-The consideration of my brother's fault is to drive me to self-examination rather than to the passing of judgment on him. I am ever to count my fault a beam and his a mote.

(vi.) *The Open Treasure-House* (vii. 7-14).—With what light and glory of tender love does this section come to us! Just as one's spirit is in danger of being overwhelmed with the sense of

the impossibility of realising such ideals, He reveals to us the wealth that lies at our disposal in the love and power of the Father, and in simplest and best understood words He reveals our privilege in that matter. " Ask." " Seek." " Knock." For daily help remember the acrostic here. Take the initial letters A, S, K, and reflect that the words for which they stand reveal the secret combination that admits us into the treasure-house of love, where there is stored for us all that we need for the realisation of the ideal.

(vii.) *Warning* (vii. 15-23).—What solemn words of warning are these! Siren voices will seek to lure us. No teaching but His can produce the true character. The truth of every message is to be tested by the life of the teacher, and if failure is found there we are to know him for "false," no matter how cleverly the sheep's clothing conceals the devouring wolf. How careful we need to be lest all should be marred by our being drawn aside by specious teaching which is contrary to His will!

These lessons are all initial, lying at the very foundation of all Christ has to teach men. In proportion as they are realised He is able to lead us forward to deeper truths. An English bishop said that this Sermon on the Mount could not be

applied to the State. Whatever the bishop intended, there is a side on which he **was** perfectly correct. These principles cannot be carried out in any State save where the **Kinghood** of Jesus is recognised, and men are His disciples. None save disciples can understand, much less obey His teaching. The crowds leaving the mountain were impressed with the authority of the teaching, but they were not captivated with its beauty, for all this was beyond their comprehension. Christianity did not come by force of arms, nor could it. Christianity will never come by Act of Parliament. The wisest of earth's scholars, and the most astute of her politicians, can lift no finger to help the kingdom of God, save by coming into the school of Jesus, and learning of Him by the inshining of the Holy Spirit. That lonely, labouring soul in back court, or isolated village, or far-off heathen hut, who is spelling out under the unique Teacher the lessons of this great deliverance, and so building character on these sayings of His, is doing more to realise on earth the kingdom of God, **and so** to bring the Golden Age, than all the company of diplomatists and politicians who are forgetful in all practical things of the Nazarene. To the learning of these first great lessons let us set ourselves with all submission of spirit and surrender of life.

**B**

### III

#### *THE METHOD OF ADVANCEMENT*

“ No matter how dull the scholar whom Ha  
Takes *into* His school, and gives him to see;  
A wonderful fashion of teaching He hath,  
And wise to salvation He makes *us* through faith.  
The wayfaring men, though fools, shall not stray,  
His method so plain, so easy His way.”

- CHARLES WESLEY .

THE subject of this paper is not intended to suggest the idea that all the First Lessons with which the last chapter dealt are to be realised to the full, and that not till then progress may be made beyond. The thought is rather that of advancement in those first great lessons. They contain a statement of the full possibilities of character in these days of probation, and therefore it would be impossible to go beyond them in this respect. At the same time, it must be remembered that Jesus said very much beyond this to His disciples, giving them to know and understand many of the things of God that had to do with their ultimate destiny and the divino purposes for the

race; and after all His teaching, at the last He had to leave them, saying, "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit, when He, the Spirit of Truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth." The teaching of the First Lessons is for the creation of that character to which the deeper things of God become intelligible, and advancement in the understanding and realisation of these, fits us for receiving and understanding whatever else may be beyond. The consideration of this paper includes both these things, though directed principally to the former. How, then, can we advance?

(i.) *Right Relationships with the Teacher must be maintained.*—Failure to understand this is perhaps one of the subtlest dangers to which the disciple is exposed. The idea is common that at some set time, through some special season of blessing, one enters into right relationships with Him, and that therefore, through all the coming days, these relationships abide. It is absolutely false. There is nothing in all the realms of life more delicate, more **easy** to interfere with than these relationships. **As** the most tremendous forces of which man knows anything are set in operation by simplest methods, and may be hindered by means equally

simple, so in relation to this greatest of all forces -the cleansing and illuminating force of contact with Jesus. By the simple method of cessation of activity I come into living contact with it, and by a moment's self-assertion I may hinder its working. Hence the need for living daily and hourly and every moment at the very place of beginnings, ever as a child depending upon Him, and ever as one of the weakest of those who love Him, abiding in Him.

It is a glorious thing to know that my cleansing and illumination depend upon Him, and that the whole of my responsibility in this matter is marked by my maintaining personal relationship with Him. This, however, is inexorable, Daily personal communion there must be, and the means of such, study of His Word, waiting upon Him in prayer, the cultivation of close fellowship by telling Him everything--joys as well as sorrows-and the periods of silence in which the soul simply waits and listens in the stillness for His voice-those cannot be neglected without a film, a veil, a cloud, a darkness coming between the soul and Himself, and so hindering the possibility of advancement.

All this specially needs emphasising in an age characterised by its rush and unrest, its loss of



the old spirit of meditation and quiet, a **characterisation** that applies to Christendom to-day, as evidenced by over-organisation, never ceasing rounds of societies, meetings, doings, and the lessening of the seasons of retirement and true worship. Personal relationship cannot be maintained in crowds. The Master and I alone must be a perpetual need, and for its realisation opportunity must be made.

(ii.) *The Truth taught must become Incarnate in the Disciples.*-As we insisted at the outset, discipleship is not a condition for amassing information. Every doctrine has its issue in some clearly defined duty ; every theory taught reveals a practical application and responsibility. To the soul in right relationship with the Teacher, He reveals some new aspect of truth, and straightway there occurs some circumstance in which that doctrine may be tested by duty; and as we are most real in ordinary circumstances-our true selves appearing then, rather than in the heroic and extraordinary days of life-it is in the simple and commonplace experiences that these testing-places are mostly to be found.

All the circumstances and surroundings of the disciples are in the hands of the Supreme Lord who teaches, and these He manipulates and

arranges for the purpose of the advancement and development of His own. This is a great comfort. He knows the capacity and weakness and strength of every one in His school, and His examinations do not consist in a common testing for a common standard, and so are not competitive. They are rather individual, special care being taken with each one ; and Peter will learn the supreme lesson of love with John, but the opportunity for manifesting it as a force in life will be separate and special in each case.

Now, advancement is dependent always on our obedience in these hours of testing, in our manifesting in actual practice the power of the truth we have heard in theory. No lesson is considered learned in the school of Jesus which is only committed to memory. That lesson only is learned which is incarnate in the life and becomes beautiful in its realisation and declaration in that way ; and until this is so there can be no progress. " If any man willeth to do His will, he shall know of the teaching " (John vii. 17). This is so, because the teaching of Jesus is cumulative and progressive. To attempt to learn the lessons of to-morrow without knowledge of to-day's would be the utmost folly. Just as no boy can intelligently do a problem in Euclid until he knows the definitions

and accepts reasonably the axioms, and takes each successive step to the one in hand, so surely no disciple can possibly make progress in the truth of God, save as the first steps are taken. You cannot leave first principles and go on unto perfection, save as these first things have become principles and not merely theories.

Here we touch the secret of much of the failure in Christian living to-day. The powerlessness in service, the unattractiveness in life-what do they mean? Has the system of Jesus failed in these lives? Have the great lessons He came to teach humanity broken down in their application to human life? Take any single example-it may be that of your own experience. When you first became a disciple your days were days of delight and joy, the words and will of the Master thrilled and comforted you, and you walked in His ways with a joy and gladness that filled the days with song. The people you touched in daily life saw the beauty of Jesus in you. Gentle, long-suffering, strong, and pure, you incarnated His lessons, and your heart was glad, and other lives were influenced Godward. All has changed. Prayer is a duty. The Scriptures are dull and burdensome. You have no quick sense of the Lord's will, Your Christianity has become a restriction

through which you would like to break, an encumbrance of which you would fain be rid. These are confessions you never make, but they tell the true inner story of your life. Now what does this really mean ? Just this. Somewhere back in the past you will find a day when the Teacher gave you some new vision of truth that straightway revealed an opportunity for you to know the glory of that truth in the pathway of obedience-something to be given up ; something to be done; some word to be said. You paused, argued, disobeyed. No other lesson has been given nor can be. Every other depended upon that. That was not final-it was preparatory; and until that is learned by obedience there can be no advancement, and so for weeks, perchance months, aye, even years, you have been a disciple making no progress, and there is no wonder that you are weary of it all.

The Teacher's love is marked in your case by His fidelity to Himself and His own lessons. Time after time, in meetings, in conversations, in loneliness, He brings you back to that old point, and reiterates with a persistence and a patience passing all human understanding-" If any man willeth *to do* His will, he shall know of the teaching."

I have known all progress hindered for years because a letter was not written, and I saw the face of the disciple the day after that letter was despatched. The old light was restored, and the old joy returned as the great Teacher again began to reveal His will.

(iii.) Advancement can only be within *the Limit of Divine Purpose*.—While it is true that God has for an ultimate purpose some place of high service far on and out of sight, a glory and fruition beyond these days of learning and probation, a being and a doing for which all the teaching and discipline of to-day are preparing us, it is also true that, as part of His great progressive movement, He has an immediate purpose in every life, something for us to accomplish for Him here and now. It is to-day we are workers together with Him. There is no waste of time or material in the divine methods. Every step He takes us, every word He speaks to us, every testing He permits us, contributes something toward the development and progress of all. Joseph sold into slavery, David exiled from his kingdom, Job crouching under the whirlwind, Paul bearing the buffeting of Satan's messenger—all are examples. These experiences were dark and mysterious for the time, and while they

formed part of the individual training of these men, they were also in each case a necessary part of the divine dealing with the larger circle. At the time the principal consciousness was that of limitation, and consequent longing for larger revelation ; but at last they all came to understand that, for the sake of others, they suffered and bore, and that was to them more than compensation for all the restriction and waiting. There are many things we know not now, because the greater issues would be hindered by our knowing. So what is best the Teacher holds in reserve, that we may moment by moment bear our share in this march of God to ultimate triumph and light.

This section of our study is a most solemn one. So many disciples in name have ceased to be taught of Jesus, and we are all in such perpetual danger of slipping out of the real circle of discipleship, that we ought to ask ourselves the questions suggested by these three points on the subject of advancement. These questions should be asked regularly, and always in the hour of loneliness with the Master.

(i) Am I in right relationship with the Teacher to-day? Do I still live at the *cross*, and know the power of its cleansing moment by moment,

and so am I walking in the light, without which all the words of Jesus are dark sayings, and His testings crosses, burdens out of which I can only gather reasons for murmuring ?

(2) If I am not in this place of maintained fellowship, when did I depart therefrom ? What word of His have I disobeyed ? To that point let me return, whether it be but an hour ago or years, and there let me absolutely surrender, at whatever cost, and do what He requires, however small, or however irksome it appears to be.

(3) Am I content to wait when His voice does not speak- and I cannot find the reason in myself-until He has accomplished His present purpose in me, even though I understand it not just now ?

With matchless patience and pity, and tender love beyond all attempts at explanation, this Teacher waits, and stoops, and woos us, and ever for our highest good and deepest peace. Let us then, by consecrated watching, maintain the attitude of advancement, and so, line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little and there a little, as we are able to bear, **He** will lead us on, until we come to the perfect light, and life, and love of God.

## IV

### *THE DISCIPLE AT HOME*

**“Thus is it with the homely life around—  
There hidden, Christ abides ;  
Still by the single eye for ever found  
That seeketh none besides.**

**Where hewn and shaped till self no more is found,  
Self ended at Thy cross ;  
The precious freed from all the vile around,  
No gain, but blessed loss,**

**Then Christ alone remains—the former things  
For ever passed away ;  
And unto Him the heart in gladness sings  
All through the weary day.”—II. SUSO.**

So far we have considered the great essential facts of discipleship. There is a sense in which we hold most tenaciously that view of Christianity which is spoken of to-day as “ other- worldly.” Man’s destiny lies beyond this life of probation, and towards that great issue the Master is ever working as He teaches us the lessons of His love. Yet it has ever been the glory of Christianity that it is intensely practical, touching the present life at every point with healing and beauty,



sweetening all the streams by purifying the sources. In this and the following papers it will be ours to trace the effect of discipleship on the common relationships of life.

•        •        •        •

We begin, then, with Home, because of its paramount importance. Perhaps there is no side of life more in danger of being neglected in this busy, many-sided age, than that of home; and certainly there is no side which we can less afford to neglect. No service for God is of any value which is contradicted by the life at home; neither have we any right to neglect home on the plea of multiplied engagements outside.

The home of the disciple may be conducive to progress in grace, or it may be quite the reverse, and of course the duty will vary accordingly.

Let us first look at the great ideal of the Christian home presented in the New Testament, and then make particular application of the same.

(i.) To the follower of Jesus Christ there are certain central and unalterable facts which will touch and influence all the home relationships. Let us look first at these.

(1) The New Authority stands in the forefront. The Teacher has claimed an absolute

and unvarying supremacy over the life. That initial condition of discipleship now enters into every question, and from it there can be no deviation-no, not for a single moment. This authority is one that will set up the ideals of life, and declare the standard of action in all the larger and more important matters of the days, and in the most simple and trifling details of the passing moments. This authority becomes the gauge and measure of all other government. The rightness or otherwise of any rule of life imposed on the disciple by any other person is to be tested by the will of the Master. So my obligation to any person as a disciple is limited or enforced by my supreme obligation to Jesus. My responsibility to Him is higher than that of wife to husband, or child to parents, or servant to master. These are all relationships of His approving, but His claim is first, and if any of these clash with that, they are to be sacrificed, this to abide.

(2) Then comes the New Attitude created towards others. The relationship of the disciple to Christ, as we have seen, is that of life. Now, this life is the life of Christ, and what it is in itself must now become the governing force, and so give now character to my feeling and acting towards others.

His life is love. That life, regnant in me, creates the disposition of love towards all. The old scheme of life was that of a pre-eminent sense of the importance of self, and all other interests were made subservient to that, and all other persons loved or disliked as they ministered to or interfered with that. Now, love governing, each will "esteem other better than himself," and the need of the outsider will become the touchstone of life. The light of Christ's presence will reveal the shortcomings of myself, and the hitherto unrecognised excellences of others. So the attitude of the disciple will become like that of his Lord --the attitude of one who waits not to be ministered unto, but to minister; and the bearing of the cup of cold water to the thirsty will be the delight of all the days, opportunities for which will not be waited for but sought.

Out of these essential considerations there grows a new sense altogether of what home really is. It is to be the first, and perhaps the most simple and beautiful manifestation of the authority of Jesus. Every member of the home, recognising that supreme Kingship, will find their relationship towards each other ennobled and purified as they live in the great realm of His love: each willing to sink personal aims for the sake of the

realisation of the highest good of all; no one desiring to gratify any part of their own desire at the expense of another; self-abnegation, the individual law that realises the general peace and restfulness, makes home at its highest and best. So the manifestation of the beauty of the kingdom of Jesus in realisation of His beatitudes in the home being the supreme desire of each and all, personal blessedness is also realised, and every sacred tie of home becomes in itself more delightful and satisfying, for Christ's mission amongst His disciples is ever the fulfilling, and never the destruction of all high and noble ideals. The real music and beauty of home are only known to those who are simple and faithful disciples of Jesus.

(3) What a glorious picture is presented of a true home in the writings of the Apostle Paul ! Himself a man who for the highest reasons never perhaps knew the joy of such life, he nevertheless understood its beauty; and if you will take the different words he writes in his Epistles as to the true position and duty of husband, wife, parent, child, master, servant, you will see the vision of the perfect home life. At the principal points let us look.

(a) Take first the husband and wife in their

relation to each other, and as parents towards their children. What more wonderful ideal than this can there be ? “ Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave Himself for it.” That is true love-absolute self-abnegation, the one overmastering passion being that of the highest good and greatest happiness of the wife. How impossible in such love, the thousand little neglects which mar the life of women, and render them heavy with disappointed hope ! How far more impossible the selfish brutality that too often has made home infinitely more like hell than heaven ! Again, “ Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord.” That can only be obeyed when the husband is loving with the Lord’s love. When that is so, see how beautifully there is *recognised* here the true view of *woman’s* love, as that which finds its highest manifestation in submission. Then the revelation of Paul’s writings concerning the relation of parents to children is a remarkable one, and sorely needs restating in these days. It is that of the father’s responsibility. It is he who is to train them ; and see how tenderly this is to be, not by the methods that will provoke anger, but in (‘nurture and admonition of the Lord.’

(b) Then the position of the child, simply marked by that one thought of obedience. What a glorious and tender thought it is ! It implies an authority provided, which frees the tender life from the responsibility of thinking and planning, and provides that it shall make advancement towards perfection within the realm of a very definite and direct government. How grand a provision that is, perhaps we never fully realise until we have passed beyond it ; and amid the strife of life, with its oft-recurring crises, when we are sore bewildered as to which path we ought to take, we long for the days of childhood again, when we could ask father, mother, and when in obeying them, we knew we were doing that which pleased the Lord. That view of obedience as the Lord's tender provision for their safety and development should ever be presented to our dear disciple-children. What a responsibility it entails upon us parents that we seek our laws for them from the King!

(c) Then there is the presence in the home of those who help and serve. The position of these is made very sacred in the school of Jesus. Most distinctly is it laid down that they can do "all things " as unto the Lord, and that expression includes and lights up the most trivial

duties that they are called upon to render. It is of such that the wonderful possibility is declared, that they may "adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour." How beautiful is the life of some, we know full well. Towards them the Christian master is to exercise the patience of his Master towards himself, making demands on eager, loving service, not by threatening, but by loving Christly recognition of the holiness of their service and its value to the Lord Himself.

(ii.) This is a glorious picture. No such ideal of home has ever been presented to the world. It has been realised in a large measure over and over again. No truer fore-glimpse of the heavenlies can be found than that of the Christian home, with all its deep love, quiet peace, and constant brightness and merriment. Discipleship has often to be maintained in vory different home surroundings. The husband, wife, parent, child, servant, may either of them be the only disciple, and their relationship to Christ looked upon with pity, contempt, or even open opposition. The position of such is a very difficult one; but for this, as for all other circumstances, the grace and power of Christ are sufficient. When this is so, there is a twofold responsibility resting upon the Christian

(1) Remembering the great ideals, there must be a realisation of the Master's will for the individual case. The Christ-life of love must govern and manifest itself towards others, even though there be no return on the part of the dearest earthly friends.

(2) Then, if that manifestation bring contempt and persecution, there is to be an absence of the revengeful spirit, and the presence of loving patience, that so the unbelieving may be won by the behaviour of the **believing**.

. . . . .

The creation of true Christian homes is the splendid possibility of young discipleship. The question of marriage lies at the base of this. Unequal yoking together of the disciples of Jesus with unbelievers is one of the most disastrous matters for the Church and the world; and there should be no alliance of life, even between believers, unless the Lord's will be so clearly revealed that there can be no mistaking it.

. . . . .

The ideal Christian home will ever have a door open to welcome the homeless ones of our great centres of population, that its atmosphere of love may help to guard and form the life of such.



## V

### *THE DISCIPLE AT BUSINESS*

“Yea I we know that Thou rejoicest  
O'er each work of Thine ;  
Thou didst ears and bands and voices  
For Thy praise design ;  
Craftsman's art and music's measure  
For Thy pleasure  
All combine.”—F. POTT.

THERE is no more common mistake, or more dangerous, than that work is in some way connected with the curse. Man was created for work. It is one of the very first laws of his being. Unemployed man is a contravention of the divine purpose. Hence, before man fell, we see him, in all the strength of his perfect being, at work. “ And the Lord God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it” (Gen. ii. 15). Sin brought weariness and disappointment, which made work a burden, but work itself is a divine arrangement for the gladdening of life.

This law abides under the Christian dispensa-

tion. No word Christ spoke can be construed into a word revoking it. It is rather taken up and enforced by Christ Himself and the apostles. In the Sermon on the Mount the Lord recognises the power to work as a special gift which raises us above the level of birds and flowers. Of the fowls He said, "Are not ye of much more value than they?" (Matt. vi. 26); and of the flowers, "If God doth so clothe the grass ... shall He not much more clothe you?" (vi. 30). In each case the teaching is not that we should neither "sow" nor "reap," and neither "toil" nor "spin," but that, having these powers and using them, how much more likely it is that our need should be supplied, rather than that of fowls or flowers! The philosophy of the situation is, that Christ recognises all gifts and callings as from God, and looks upon them as the channels through which God will supply our need. Paul is most clear in his exposition of the will of God in these matters. In writing to the Thessalonians (2 Thess. iii. 10) he makes working the condition of eating; and in writing to the Ephesians (iv. 28) he places working in antithesis to stealing, and reveals the larger social responsibility when he says that a man is to work, not merely for his own support, but

“ that he may have whereof to give to him that hath need ;” and in his first letter to Timothy (v. 8) he declares that, “ if any provideth not for his own, and specially his own household, he hath denied the faith, and is worse *than an unbeliever.*”

Recognising the great truth of the solidarity of humanity, that each person is part of the whole, that the whole is incomplete in the incompleteness of any, it is evident that all the great and increasing needs of humanity for this life are provided for by God in the gifts He has bestowed, to every man severally as He will, His mill ever being the well-being and happiness of the creature. Every ability to do something which will be for the support of the worker, and at the same time contribute to the legitimate needs of others, is a divine gift, a divine calling. Capacity for brain work, dexterity of fingers, are each, and in every variety of application, divinely bestowed. To dig — whether with spade, or plough, or shaft and machinery for metals-is a calling of God. To construct with wood, or stone, or iron, for permanence or locomotion, is a divine gift. To see a vision and paint it, to hear music and translate it, to catch glimpses of truth and

embody them in form poetic-these and all the thousands of various gifts bestowed upon men are *of God*. On every individual some gift is bestowed, save perchance upon those who, in these days of humanity's sin and sorrow, are from their birth limited in their powers. Not only the preacher, but every man, has a calling of God; and the duty of each man to God, to the community, to himself, is to find that calling, and therein to abide (see 1 Cor. vii. 20-24).

This is the great divine ideal from which humanity has wandered, to its sorrow, shame, and undoing; and as discipleship means a return to divine ideals through the teaching and power of Jesus, we must now apply these principles to the disciple as he or she enters business.

(i.) The first serious question, then, for the disciple is, "What is the gift bestowed upon me, the calling of God for me?" The answer to that is to be found within, rather than without. A gift ever means fitness. To every man God intends to make watches, He has given the necessary fineness of touch and nerve patience. To every woman He designs to teach, He has given the attractive force and lucid gift that fits her to hold and teach the children. Discipleship

means facility for discovering the gift of God. The trouble is, that so many have thought that when we begin to touch these things our Teacher is uninterested, and so we have made the greatest blunders of our lives in choosing our occupation, rather than setting ourselves to discover the divine calling. To the young disciple who reads this article, and who has not yet decided on life's work, let me say, in all simplicity and confidence: Seek to find your right place in life by telling your Lord your sense of need, and asking for His direction.

In this matter an enormous responsibility rests upon parents, that they seek to discover the Lord's purpose for their boys and girls, and then train them for that position. This can only be done by patient watching for the manifestation of the God-bestowed powers of each life separately, and this *cannot be*, when in *tender years we send our children out of our homes to live, and so transfer our responsibility to others than those by God appointed*

(ii.) The gift being discovered, now follows the necessity for persistent application for the most perfect development thereof. The disciple of Jesus, recognising his calling in life as of God, cannot possibly treat it carelessly or with any

measure of indifference. Every power of the will **must** be brought to bear on the application of the mind to the mastery of the subject in hand. A Christian carpenter will master the use of every tool, and lay himself out to embody in his work the very spirit of the Christ. A Christian doctor will leave no department of the great science neglected, or will devote himself with perfect consecration to that department for which God has given him the gift of a specialist. The great advantage of discipleship is to be found in the fact that, if I recognise my calling as a divine one, then I am sure that He who bestowed the gift understands it, and all my personal application to its mastery will be in the spirit of dependent prayer. Christian mechanics, tradesmen, professional men, should be the finest in the world, and would be if they lived in the power of their relationship to Christ.

(iii.) Fully equipped for qualified service, the disciple now faces the sterner work of the years, and under the present conditions of life this is mostly done as the servant of others. Again, referring to Paul's words in I Cor. vii. 22-24, we see how that the disciple is to consider his higher relationship to God. He is "the Lord's free man," and is "to abide with God" in his

calling. Now, how does that affect his work ? It lights it up with the glory of the divine goodwill to men, so that each piece of work becomes a part of the divine contribution to the need of the community ; and if I measure cloth, or sell groceries, or paint a picture, or play an instrument, or set a limb, or anything that is an exercise of a divine gift, I do it, not as a means of livelihood first, but as part of God's work, and so I become, down to the smallest detail of everyday life, "a worker together with Him." Hold but that view of life's work, and there can be no more "scamping" of work-no, *not even to be in time* for a *prayer-meeting*.

How does abiding with God in my calling affect my relation to my employer ? It makes me treat him as though he were in my place and I in his. Hear the Teacher's own words : "All things therefore whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, even so do ye also unto them" (Matt. vii, 12). To that nothing can be added.

(iv.) Finally, the disciple in business on his own account lives and acts within certain very clearly defined principles. He ever remembers that he is a steward of his Master. He possesses nothing, but holds on trust all he has, and is responsible to Christ for the way he gets, the way he uses, and

the measure of his getting or holding. No disciple of Jesus can amass a fortune simply for the sake of possession. He may be prosperous in his undertakings, but his prosperity must ever mean increased opportunity for divine service. No disciple can oppress the hireling in his wages. That wage should be, not merely the measure of keeping his servant's body and soul together, it should include provision for the culture of all that his being demands. A "living wage," in the common acceptance of that term, is not the measure for a Christian paymaster.

A Christian cannot consent to enrich himself by taking advantage of the downfall or misfortune of another man. That man who strikes a bargain to his own profit which takes advantage of some pressing need on the part of another is none of Christ's. No Christian can take part in the monopolies of the day, which have as the very basis of their operations the enrichment of the few to the detriment of the many. There is nothing perhaps more devilish in commercial life to-day than the great monopolies. America is cursed by them, and England is threatened. No disciple of Christ can touch them and abide in the teaching of Jesus. The twofold law of life enunciated by our Teacher will purify commerce throughout, and nothing



short of that will ever do it. “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. ... Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself” (Matt. xxii. 37, 39).

. . . . .

These are said to be impossible ideals for business life to-day. We reply that the very essence and genius of discipleship **is** the realisation of the impossible. It is just because the Church of Jesus Christ has stood in the presence of His teaching and said “impossible” that she has become so weak and forceless in all the affairs of this busy age. Let us have a few men and women again who, like the early disciples in Pentecostal days, believe in Jesus and in the eternal wisdom of all His teaching, and who are prepared to **suffer** the loss of all things rather than disobey, and the potency and possibility of His ideals will begin to dawn on the world again as in those days, breaking up dynasties, revolutionising empires, and turning the world upside down.

Nowhere is such work more needed than in the realm of commerce, and nowhere can we make better investment for the Master’s kingdom to-day than by purifying rigidly that corner of the great realm which we touch.

Let every disciple find his gift from God, cultivate it for God, exercise it abiding in God, and he will not only secure his own highest success, but will contribute his quota to the preparatory work of this dispensation, for the coming of the King, and the establishment of His kingdom on earth.

## VI

### *THE DISCIPLE A T P L A Y*

“ In that new childhood of the earth  
Life of itself shall dance and play,  
Fresh blood in Time’s shrunk veins make mirth,  
And labour meet delight half way.”

—J. RUSSELL LOWELL.

So far there has seemed to be no contradiction of terms in the subjects which have come under our consideration. Among all sections of Christians there would be a consensus of opinion as to the rightness of considering “ The Disciple at Home ” and “ The Disciple at Business.” I do not anticipate any conflict of opinion concerning any subsequent division of this subject. I can, however, imagine that there may be a doubt in the mind of some with regard to the title at the head of this chapter; and yet it is of such enormous importance that to omit it were not only to render the study incomplete, but to do positive injustice to the follower of Christ who, upon this of all subjects, is feeling his or her need of direct and

wholesome teaching. The fact that large numbers of young people lose their spirituality here is due, not to the inconsistency of play, but rather to lack of clear teaching, and therefore of failure to understand the true position of the child of God in reference thereto. Let us apply ourselves to a twofold consideration—firstly, as to the fact of play in the life of discipleship, and then to the limits which are marked off for those who are learning of Christ in this as in all matters.

(i.) The very first truth to be understood and kept in mind is that of the purpose of Christ in the present probationary stage of human life. I have already emphasised the fact that the Master is preparing us for an end which is beyond the present life altogether. By that I abide. It must, however, be remembered that, while in Christ I gain more blessings than my fathers lost, the very first business of the great scheme of redemption and instruction is the restoration of man to the divine ideal of human life here. The man who most truly manifests the beauties of human life in all its bearings, most truly proves his progress towards and preparation for the glory that has not yet been revealed. A human being developed on one side of his nature, to the damage or contraction of another, is by so much thwart-

ing a divine purpose, damaging a divine ideal. This we readily admit in some cases-such, for instance, as the development of flesh to the injury of spirit. It is true of a man who loses his power for stern work in his abandonment to play. It is equally true of a man who cannot play because his power to do so has become deadened by unceasing toil. The power to laugh, to cease work, and frolic in forgetfulness of all the conflict, to make merry, is a divine bestowment upon man, and its absence in any case is as sure a mark of the blighting effects of sin as is the frothy life of the devotee of miscalled pleasure who never contributes anything to the work of his generation. This power is based upon the wisdom of God, and His knowledge of the needs of the creatures of His hand. To this all scientific statement bears witness. Every medical man knows the enormous value of prescribing change, exercise, cessation of toil, and pure amusement, in order that there may be better work, harder blows, more clear thinking, and that the sum total of the life may be of a higher order : and what is true medical science, but a discovery of the laws of God for the wellbeing of the creatures of His love ? Now Jesus did not come to contradict or set aside any great law of human life, and

most certainly not that which thus provides for the highest development of man. He has come to interfere here, as everywhere else, and to restore play to its 'proper place in every life ; and though He gave His followers no set of rules, He has given them in His teaching great principles, which will adjust these matters as perfectly as all others.

Before turning to consider them, let me state with perfect clearness, that especially in this age of ceaseless activity, which is over and over again more worldly than godly, and in the whirl and rush of which every man, whether he be a Christian or no, is necessarily caught up and carried forward, it is an absolute necessity, and therefore a solemn duty, that the follower of Christ should learn how to play within proper limits, that so he may be the stronger man for the stress of the age, and to confront its rush, and restlessness, and weakness with his testimony to the peace, and quietness, and tremendous force, of the life possessed by, and matured in God. Perhaps I may put this most forcefully by a personal illustration. I find no final preparation for the delivery of the messages of God on Sunday-messages for which I must first solemnly have sought, not only by prayer, but also by stern application to study and

thought—equal to a Saturday afternoon in company with some fellow-disciple, with my bag of clubs, “driving” a golf ball over, and sometimes into “bunkers,” “teeing up” and “holeing out ;” and I can stride over the grass and through the heather and sand, singing with perfect sincerity-

“ I feel like singing all the time ;  
 My tears are wiped away ;  
 For Jesus is a friend of mine :  
 I'll serve Him every day.”

(ii.) Now as to the limits of play for the disciple. They are found, by natural sequence, in that condition of life in which I never for a moment forget that I am Christ's, and my loyalty to Him is unquestioning and constant. How will that one great principle affect my play ? In two ways: firstly, in the realm of my personal realisation of His purpose for me, and, secondly, in my relationship with Him for the accomplishment of His purpose in all those with whom I come in contact.

(i) As we have seen, the purpose of Jesus is the perfecting of my being. It follows, therefore, most clearly that my play must ever be *recreative* in character, and never *destructive*. Further, the complexity of human life must be considered. Man is neither body, soul, nor spirit separately.

**He** is body, soul, and spirit, and between these different sides of his complex nature there is the closest and most subtle inter-relation, so that I cannot possibly do injury to either side without injuring myself as a whole. To destroy my physical power is to weaken my mental, and that is for to-day, at any rate, to limit the opportunity for the culture of the spiritual. Any form of play, then, that injures my physical powers, or dwarfs my mental vigour, or takes away my spiritual sense, is impossible for me as a disciple of Christ. That play, and only that, which recreates, and so fits for larger service, is legitimate.

(2) Then, further, I cannot in the power of the Christ-life live only for myself. I am not to seek recreation by any means which involves injury to my fellow-being, even though the doing thereof may seem to be of direct benefit to me. Let me not be misunderstood. I do not say that, because one man abuses lawn-tennis by waste of time thereat, I am not to play. I **do** say that if I see lawn-tennis has such a fascination for a friend of mine as to make him liable to neglect his sterner work, I am to be "narrow" enough to refuse to play with him, unless he is playing upon the very conditions which make for his development only,



as I play upon for mine. The relative law is that I only have fellowship, even in play, with a fellow-being upon the principles which are highest and best for him, and never upon what he sets up for himself, if they are lower than the highest. Neither can I consent to be amused in any form by that which is debasing the life of those who amuse me. I have purposely avoided naming any forms of play, save those that would be looked upon as legitimate in proper time and place by almost every Christian. This avoidance has been due to the fact that I very strongly desire in this, as in every detail of life, to throw the disciple upon the Master for direct guidance, and this because I am persuaded there is no other ~~safe~~ safe course, because there is no other unfailing and infallible authority. Jesus makes a speciality of every individuality, and He alone can do this. That which may be perfectly lawful and right for me may be a sin to my brother, and that which I dare not do at the risk of losing my spiritual force, he may find conducive to his highest advancement. Let each one seek the Lord's direct pleasure, and be true to that, and there can be no mistake ; but by following human examples, or making others the standard of what one may or may not do, one will be constantly liable to get

into places of positive danger. These principles in application will be found most drastic, and yet will bring us into the air of perfect liberty. There are some forms of worldly amusement debasing and injurious in themselves, and some which are procured at the cost of the degradation and ruin of others. Against all these the disciple by word and life should be a constant protest. One of the surest ways to combat them, is to manifest in our lives the joyousness of discipleship, and that, in our power to play purely and perfectly, as surely in the light of the divine love as when we pray or preach.

---

## VII

### *THE DISCIPLE AS A FRIEND*

“ I would joy in your joy : let me have a friend’s part  
In the warmth of your welcome of hand and of heart,—  
On your playground of boyhood unbend the brow’s care,  
And shift the old burdens our shoulders must bear.”

—J. G. WHITTIER.

**O**F all the words in our language which have been undergoing change of meaning, perhaps none have been more abused than this word “friend.” Having as its root idea the thought of love-for it is really the present participle of the old Anglo-Saxon verb “freon,” to love-it marked in old time the close union of two persons, other than relatives, in the bonds of sincere love for each other-love that made each care for and desire to serve the other better than himself. It is now used too often in a loose way. A man is my friend to-day if ho be but a passing acquaintance, or if we are on speaking terms. I want to write of the disciple as a friend in the older sense of comradeship —close heart-companionship. The

word is a Bible word, and comes by translation both from the Hebrew and the Greek, from words conveying this thought. The Hebrew word translated, friend signifies an associate, and comes from the root "to pasture." So a friend is one of the flock, feeding together, sharing the very sustenance of life. The Greek word is the word "lover," and so is in perfect harmony with the thought of the English word used for its translation.

Man, by virtue of his humanity, all the world over, seeks for friendship. The life of the hermit, the recluse, is abnormal. It is contrary to the very genius of human nature for a man to live alone. This desire for friendship grows out of the deepest necessity of his nature, he being created for others as well as for himself. Sympathy, love, service, are the very essentials of human nature at its best, and these demand an object. So, in the largest and most general sense, man is not intended to be alone. Coming into a closer consideration of this great law, we find among men this further necessity for personal friendship. Every man could not be a close companion of every other. We have to do with the selective law of affinity. That is the subtle, almost undefinable somewhat, which draws two people together in a brotherhood, sometimes closer than

the brotherhood of blood. We say undefinable, because it is often difficult to know why two particular persons are such friends. Affinity may mean conformity, agreement, resemblance ; it is also the union of bodies of a dissimilar nature in one harmonious whole. This law of personal friendship has held in all time. David and Jonathan have had their forerunners and successors throughout the generations of human kind. Now in this, as in all other matters, Christ comes to fulfil, and not to destroy. He sent His disciples out two by two, as I believe, on a recognition of this great necessity in human life, and to this time, in all Christian service and Christian living, the strength and joy of a strong personal friendship is almost beyond computation,

(i.) Facing the disciple in this matter of friendship is a great limitation. He cannot enter into any close bond, save with those who are, like himself, submitted to Jesus Christ. This is the highest law of all to him, and nothing that can possibly interfere with his relation to his Lord must be tolerated for a moment. The claim itself looks hard and arbitrary, but the infinite wisdom and love thereof has been evidenced by the sad results accruing to those who have disregarded it, and have formed friendships with

the world which have proved to be enmity against God. The reason is perfectly clear to those who have a true conception of what discipleship really is, and how radically it differs from all other life.

(ii.) Remembering this, now for a moment consider how discipleship is in itself a perfect qualification for the highest form of friendship. Given two disciples of Jesus, drawn towards each other by the natural law of affinity, and see how His work in them fits them for a friendship of the strongest and most lasting kind.

(1) There is the self-denial which He has enjoined upon them as the way of entrance upon discipleship, and the condition of its continuity. If self be smitten to the death, the one most prolific source of dissension and the breaking up of friendship has gone. With what strength we can love and serve if we have lost our hold on self, with all its unceasing demands.

(2) Then the common consecration of the life to the Kingship of Jesus. Two people, loving each other, and each able to say, "That life which I now live in the flesh, I live in faith" (Gal. ii. 20), have the will and the impulse of one, and that one, in way and work, is ever love.

(3) Then, yet further, there is communion of interest. It is written of the hosts that gathered

to Hebron, that they were of "one heart to make David king." That common cause made a people, a nation solid and strong. So with friendship in Jesus. The disciple has nothing to live for but by word, and deed, and prayer to bring on the day of his Lord's crowning; and when two of these are brought into comradeship by natural law, and their friendship becomes hot with the common fervour of a great purpose such as this, how strong and lasting must such friendship be!

(iii.) Remembering the limitation and qualifications of friendship, let us now proceed to consider the friendship of disciples in itself. Each will cherish for the other a very high ideal of life, character, and service-no less than the will of God in each. The prayer of Epaphras for the Colossian Christians, "that ye may stand perfect and fully assured in all the will of God" (Col. iv. 12), is a delightful statement of the desire that disciple-comrades ever cherish for each other, and the friendship is ever looked upon as a means to that end. So the very heart of the golden rule is reached in such friendship, for each does to the other what he would the other should do to him. When this is so, there comes that delightful sense of rest and naturalness in each other's company which is the very essence of friendship.

Some years ago a friend gave me a quotation which I copied into my commonplace book. It was from Mrs. Craik's "Life for a Life," and I give it here as very beautifully expressing that thought. "Oh, the comfort, the inexpressible comfort of feeling safe with a person, having neither to weigh thoughts nor measure words, but pour them all right out just as they are, chaff and grain together, knowing that a faithful hand will take and sift them, keep what is worth keeping, and then with the breath of kindness blow the rest away!"

That is the abiding condition of friends of Jesus. All necessity for reserve and hiding is gone, in the absolute confidence born of the certainty of high unselfish love. This laying bare of each to each produces the true vision of each to each. I shall thus be able to recognise quickly all the excellences in the character of my friend which perchance other persons may be slow to discover. He will see with clearest vision the points of my shortcoming and failure. Love is never blind, and we shall know each other more deeply and truly in that life of mutual love than it is possible for man to know man by careful calculation or closest critical observation. It has been said that "love will stand at the door and knock long after



self-conscious dignity has fallen asleep," which is only another way of expressing Paul's great word, "Love suffereth long and is kind"; and because this is true the clear vision of friendship ever makes demands on eager, consecrated service. The good recognised will be developed by fellowship, and, where that good is costing my friend much sacrifice and suffering, by encouragement and fidelity. The shortcoming will be matter concerning which the friend will mourn and pray in secret, and of which he will speak in such tones of tender love that his brother will be won to the higher surrender, which ever means victory and advancement. So together, and by the reciprocity of this holy comradeship, there will be a building of each other up, and a several growth in grace.

There is no higher or more wonderful description of the possibilities of true friendship in Jesus than that contained in Paul's words to the Romans (xii. 15), "Rejoice with them that rejoice; weep with them that weep." That is true sympathy, and perfect sympathy between two is friendship. The word "sympathy" has too long been robbed of its glory by the narrowing interpretation which has considered it only as the power "to weep with them that weep." That is the smaller and easier part of true sympathy.

Sympathy is the power that projects life outside the circle of personality and shares the life of another, feeling the thrill of the other's joy and the pain of the other's woe. That can only be realised when the friendship is in Jesus. There it can be and is. Is my friend in trouble, in difficulty, in temptation ? I am his companion still, and the sorrow, the perplexity, the anguish are mine also. Leave him now he has fallen ? Impossible. When he fell I fell, and I shall not feel erect ~~again~~ until he has made even that fall a "stepping-stone to higher things." Is my friend in joy, in prosperity, in victory ? I am yet with him; and the rapture, the success, the triumph are mine because they are his. Be jealous of his promotion ? Again impossible. If he rises, so do I; and all his advancement is my greatest progress, for we are one,

Blessed is the man that hath such a friend. It is impossible to have many. I do not believe that it is the divine ideal that we should. It is questionable whether any person, apart from the higher realm of relationship, ever has more than one. Such friendship cannot be separated. Oceans and continents may divide. The mutual love laughs at these, and in daily service, prayer, and meditation each is still with the other, and thinks,

and plans, and works under the old influences. This friendship knows nothing of conventionality's little axioms, but abides in the great realm of love, and does things strange to the outside beholder. Such friendship cannot be broken. Death is but a pause, wherein the one hears from the great silence the old voice, and feels drawing him thither the old love; and the other waits in the splendours of that silence, with the Lord, for the coming of the fellow, whose song will add to heaven's music. Friendship is always beautiful; but the friendship of disciples, based upon the law of affinity, and conditioned and consummated in Christ, is peerless.

## VIII

### *THE DISCIPLE A T WORK FOR THE MASTER*

**“Thou shalt tell Me in the glory  
All that thou hast done,  
Setting forth alone : returning  
Not alone.**

**Thou shalt bring the ransomed with thee;  
They with songs shall come  
As the golden sheaves of harvest  
Gathered home.”-T. P.**

**This** is preminently the “fussy” age. Every one must be doing something. Nothing more clearly reveals the spirit of the age than the contrast between the attitude of the thought of men towards work now, and, say, fifty years ago. Then the busiest endeavoured to make it appear that they did nothing. To-day the laziest are most eager for their friends to think of them as overworked. Personally, taking the largest outlook, I think this is a decided improvement, for it is an approximation to the Pauline ideal that a man must work or starve. It has touched the

Church, however, and *there* has wrought a great deal of mischief, if some good. There never was such a day of organisations, and meetings, and societies. Why, the alphabet is nearly exhausted in giving signs that stand for societies. We preachers are in danger of bewilderment as we give out notices concerning Y.M.C.A., Y.W.C.A., I.B.R.A., P.S.A., P.M.E., Y.P.S.C.E., S.S.U., and so on. Now, let no unkind word be said of any branch of service. All the honest and consecrated work represented by these very letters I have quoted we welcome with delight and thank God for. Yet this very multiplication of work has in it an element of danger, and one of the perilous sides to it, has been the setting of unsanctified and even unconverted persons to work. Side by side with this demand for workers has come a rebound from that view of a "(vocation" which culminated in priestism, and the fitness of a caste only for holy service. As is so often the case, the rebound has gone beyond proper limits. We have *rightly* contended for the rights of all believers to familiarity with the things of God, and freedom to serve. We have wrongly extended to those outside the discipleship, the opportunity of helping in the work of the Master. This has been to

their detriment, giving them a sense of security to which they had no right, and it has also been to the serious injury of the **work** itself. We must return to first principles. Personal relation to Christ, is vocation for service. Apart from it there can be none. On that occasion when the crowds, having come by sea to Capernaum “seeking Jesus,” asked Him, “What must we do that we may work the works of God?” He said, “This is the work of God-that ye believe on Him whom He hath sent” (John vi. 24-29). Of that saying Dr. Westcott writes: “This simple formula contains the complete solution of the relation of faith and works. Faith is the life of works ; works are the necessity of faith.”

It cannot be too strongly insisted on, or too frequently urged, that they, and they only, who are disciples of Jesus, are called to, and fitted for, fellowship with Him in the great work to which He is pledged. If I am a disciple I am perforce a worker, for the new life which creates my personal discipleship is the very life of Christ -compassionate, mighty, victorious. If I am not a disciple, I cannot do the work of God, for I am devoid of that life which alone is the divine compassion for man, and the divine energy for accomplishing the purposes of God.

So much being granted, and the view gained that the disciple at work for the Master is really the Master working through the disciple—that is, that there is oneness, we may now proceed to consider the aim, the methods, the strength, and the issue of the disciple's work by a contemplation of the Master's.

(i.) Christ makes a great statement in John ix. 4: "We must work the works of Him that sent Me." This "we" of the Revised Version teaches us that Christ identifies us with Himself in His work; and we shall best understand the force of these words by gaining a clear understanding of their setting. Take the paragraph chapters viii. and ix. In chapter viii. 1-11 we have the account of Christ's dealing with the woman taken in adultery; in chapter ix. 6 and on, that of His giving sight to the blind man. Now, examine the part that intervenes. The opening statement (viii. 12) and the closing (ix. 5) are identical. Growing out of that statement in chapter viii, we have a long controversy on inherited religious privileges and divine Sonship. In chapter ix. the disciples' question is in the same realm, though it deals with the other side, that of inherited sin. Christ dismisses their speculations, and announces the fact of His work, and

proceeds to illustrate it by another example, which at once answers their quibbling and reveals that work. This blind man is, as every man is, a revelation of human condition, and an opportunity for the display of the work of God. What, then, is the work of God? The remedying of the limitation and evil that is in the world, and the restoration of the natural—that is the divine purpose. The illustration is simple, The underlying revelation is sublime. The divine rest of Gen. ii. 1, 2 was broken by man's sin, From that point God has been at work. "My Father worketh even until now, and I work" (John v. 17). This is not a small thing. It grasps all in its compass. It cost all in its effort. The cross is the supreme expression of that divine work, and that is only understood when it is seen as the eternal force by which man's ruin and limitation are overtaken, and the first divine ideal for humanity realised. In the disciples of Jesus there moves that great life that works with ceaseless and unconquerable energy. "Thy will be done, Thy kingdom come," is the disciple's prayer; it is also the aim of all his life and work. In the home, the business, the civic relation, national life, the Church, we are "workers together with Him," opening blind eyes, loosing prisoners, heal-



ing humanity's wounds, toiling ever on towards the morning without clouds, in which God will rest in the accomplishment of His purposes.

(ii.) If our aim is identical with that of the Master, it follows necessarily that our methods must be identical also. By reading carefully and in conjunction John v. 17-19 and xiv. 10, we find that all His works and words were done and spoken, not on His own initiative, but on the will of the Father. That is to say, Jesus not only worked towards the same great consummation as His Father, but along the same lines, by the same methods. How very wonderful are these words: "The Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He seeth the Father doing;" "The words that I say unto you I speak not from Myself"! From this position the enemy directly and indirectly perpetually sought to allure Him, and, thanks be to God, uniformly and absolutely failed. In the wilderness He declined the kingdoms of this world, even though for these He had come, on any condition, or by any method save the divinely marked. It is just here where the evil of the "mixed multitudes" in our churches is manifest. The true disciple must be as particular about the methods of work as about the final issue; but so many have caught some faint idea

of the divine intention, and now are prepared to adopt any method that seems politic and likely to achieve the end ; and so the things that are worldly, sensual, devilish, are being pressed into the service of the Churches-choirs of professionals, who give performances for their own glory-entertainments which approach as nearly as possible to the world ; bazaars-too often another name for illicit trading. The devil's most prolific move is the secularising of the things of God—tempting men to seek to possess the kingdom of Christ by falling down and worshipping him. The disciple worker will not expect to find any “near cuts ” to success, any more than his Master did, but will travel ever by the way of the Cross of Offence and the Resurrection of Power. The methods for the disciple are threefold, as it seems to me :-

( 1) The example of the life, in all its details loyal to the Master.

(2) The influence exerted by the character that is perpetually growing in grace, by unbroken attention to the lessons of the Teacher, and the resultant incarnation of those lessons.

(3) The specific urging of the claims of Christ upon others, so that no day passes in which an effort is not made to win a soul for Christ,