

Jesus died for us that he might do two things—that He might purify us and that He might *possess* us. In our guilty polluted condition we could not answer His purpose any more than a filthy robe would suit the purpose of the master of a wedding-feast. Even as a new owner cleans out a dirt-defiled house which has been in bad hands, in order that he may come and live in it, so doth Christ cleanse our hearts that He may make them His own dwelling-place. A cottage may become royal when the King enters it; a believer is said to be even a "temple" of the Divine Spirit. Do not let us cheapen our heart-house: much less degrade it into a show-room of selfishness, or a den of impurity.

We are not our own. We are Christ's property. Commonly we may say that a man has a right to himself, to his time, to his faculties and his talents, and may employ them just as he may choose. But this is not true of a redeemed Christian. If I am Christ's, I am not my own. He secured the title-deed when He ransomed me from death and hell. My soul belongs to Him. He has a right to teach me, and I must believe what He tells me. He has a right to guide me, and I must go where He bids. He has a right to my supremest affection, and woe be to whatever puts itself above Christ Jesus in my heart. If the idols get crushed, it is because they are where they ought never to be.

Christ's ownership of us entitle Him to do with us just as pleases His loving will. The bit of ground attached to my house is so entirely mine that I may put plough or hoe into any square foot of it. So may my Master run the plough-share of trial even into the flower-beds of my heart if He sees that I need such tillage. What pride calls flowers, He may call weeds. I do not ask permission of my cherry-trees to prune them, or to cut off unsightly limbs. Neither doth my heavenly Owner ask my consent when He lops off the selfish growths that are absorbing the best sap of the soul. Brethren, if it cost our Lord a great price to make a Christian out of an unclean sinner, so it costs a great deal to be a faithful and fruitful Christian: let us cheerfully pay our part in the process.

If Jesus possesses you and me, then what has He a right to expect from us? Certainly quite as much as we may expect from our gardens. All the fragrant flowers that my garden can produce and all the succulent vegetables that it can yield are but its rightful revenue. Now turn to the fifteenth chapter of John's gospel,

and read our blessed Master's words—"Ye did not choose Me, but I chose you, and appointed you that you should go, and bear fruit, and that your fruit should abide." Herein is my Father glorified—He also tells us—in that ye bear *much* fruit. Depend upon it that whatever fruits of holy living and benevolent activities you can produce will not only enrich the Master, but will enrich you also. They will be a part of your treasures in Heaven.

But what thieves some professed Christians are! They profess that they belong to Christ and hope to be accounted His at the last day, and yet they greedily lay hands on almost everything. They steal a large slice of their Master's Sabbath from the moment when they open their Sunday daily newspaper and cram their souls with secularities, on to the evening when they begrudge an hour to God's house. They steal so much of Christ's money for their own luxuries that they turn Him off with a beggarlyittance. In all weathers they are ready for business or social parties or amusements; but how often does their selfishness mutter out the thought, "It is too cold or stormy to serve Christ to-night; I pray thee have me excused." If such unprofitable servants would only reflect how badly they are cheating themselves when they cheat their Lord, they might repent of their larcenies, and "steal no more."

For one cheering thought I must find room. If we are Christ's personal property He will take care of us. No need is there of warning about to-day's duties or to-morrow's cares. He knoweth them that are His; no man can pluck us out of His hands. The sweetest antidote to care, the richest comfort in adversity, the mightiest help in life's hard conflicts is the Heaven sent truth: "I am Christ's personal possession; and where he is, I shall be also."

## FATHERS PROVOKE NOT YOUR CHILDREN.

BY REV. A. A. E. TAYLOR, D. D.

This caution appears both in the Epistle to the Ephesians and in that to the Colossians. In the latter place the reason is added, "Lest they be discouraged."

There is then such a thing as parental discouragement of right doing.

An incident connected with a bright boy who does not live a thousand miles from New York may serve as a practical commentary upon this text.

Charlie S.—was a high spirited, fun-