

EXPOSITION.

"Not that I have already attained, or am already made perfect: but I press on if so be that I may apprehend that for which also I was apprehended by Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself yet to have apprehended: but one thing I do, forgetting the things which are behind, and stretching forward to the things which are before, I press on toward the goal, unto the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded."—PHIL. iii. 12-15.

Most Christians interpret this much-quoted and apparently puzzling passage so as to be in harmony with their individual experience. And, indeed, we presume that that is about our attitude toward it. The fact that Paul both disclaims and claims perfection in the same paragraph apparently invites such license in its criticism.

Nothing can be clearer than the fact just noted, viz., that the apostle maintains that he is not perfect, and then assumes that he is. Hence it is absolutely certain that the word "perfect" cannot have the same definition in either case, for this would be tantamount to claiming the impossible, yes, even the unthinkable.

This fact at once rules out the passage as to its ability to teach dogmatic theology on the subject of Christian perfection. It is like adding the same quantity to both sides of an equation—the equilibrium is retained, the one part still offsets the other, and nothing is gained.

But when we pore over the passage, looking for identities or correspondences to our own walk with God, then there is both utility and beauty in the apostle's testimony. Like him, we can rejoice in being consciously perfect, that is, walking in the righteousness of the law blameless, and yet always realizing that in comparison with what is yet to be revealed, as we are being changed from glory to glory by the Spirit, that we know nothing perfectly, but are ever on the stretch to grow up into Him, our Living Head, in all things.

This comparison, or rather identification, of experience, we maintain, should exist between the apostle and the weakest follower of Christ. It does always exist when the believer, like Paul, accepts

the Holy Ghost in the New Testament sense and walks in Him from year to year as his teacher, empowerer and guide in all things.

DIVINE GUIDANCE.

BY REV. JAMES HARRIS.

The Christian needs guidance. He who could undertake to walk the road from the land of darkness to the home in heaven without daily feeling his need of, and earnestly seeking the guidance in all things of his Heavenly Father, would be presumptuous, and would certainly make many a misstep.

Divine guidance promised: "I will instruct thee, and teach thee in the way," says Jehovah. The guidance of His children is so precious to Him and so vital to them, that He will delegate the work to no inferior being. The promise indicates the mode in which He will do it. Instruct, teach, counsel—leave thee free, yet always give thee counsel. There shall be no compulsion. It shall not be as the pilot guides a ship, which has no will. Nor as the rider guides the horse, by bridle and by whip; but as the loving father guides his trusting child—by instructing, teaching and counselling. This promised divine guidance will be unintermitted, "With Mine eye upon thee." It will be special, or it will be ordinary, as we may need. There are times and circumstances when *special* divine guidance is not needed; when the faculties with which our Heavenly Father has endowed us are sufficient, or the light already shining on us or around us ample, for our guidance. The man who every day for many years has journeyed from his home in the country to his place of business in the city, needs not to seek a guide every time to accompany him in order to keep him from going astray. And worse than foolish would it be for him to close his eyes and refuse to use his power of observation because a friend had promised to be his guide whenever he needed one. Persons would say of such a one: Instead of seeking a guide, thou oughtest thyself to be a guide to others.

1. A Christian will not need special guidance about those things which God has already given plain directions in His Word. For instance, in reference to divorce or polygamy He cannot tell us to do, by His Spirit shining upon our hearts, anything which He has specially forbidden us to do by the same Spirit in His Word. If a man, therefore,