

## AN ADDRESS TO THE DISCIPLES OF CHRIST.

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"For even Christ pleased not himself."—ROM. xv. 3.

I. St. Paul exhorts the Christians at Rome to the pleasing of others, by the example of Christ's *self-denial*; but he limits this complaisance to that which is for his neighbor's "good," "for his edification," or building up, as a temple of God.

To gratify another, at *his expense*, is selfishness of the worst kind, and wholly opposed to Christ's life and doctrine.—At the risk of reproach, and ill-will and ill-usage,—regardless of personal consequences, and without respect of persons,—He "*reproved and rebuked.*" His Father's glory, His brethren's good, he lived for; and for these he endured all things, fulfilling the words of prophecy—"the reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me;" Ps. lxxix. 9.

This pleasing another, for his good and to his edification, it would seem, from the context, is *opposed* to our *self-pleasing*; else Christ's self-denial would not be quoted for our learning. It is "the strong" condescending to "the weak"—to the infirmities, the wants, even the defects of others, at the *cost of their own personal feelings and gratifications*; which St. Paul would teach:—"Let no man seek *his own*," i.e. *at the expense of another*; "but every man *another's* wealth."

These words evidently teach—

*First*, That the good of others is to be consulted before our own pleasure; and that—*second*, When any other's good and edification *compete* with our gratification, our self-pleasure must give place—we must deny ourselves, if of us, as of Christ, we would have written in the book of

God's remembrance,—*he pleased not himself.*

II. You will perceive that a vast field of Christian morals, by these words, is opened to our view. Here are duties implied for all sorts and conditions of men to practise, whilst aiming to secure the good of others. To a great extent these obligations constitute each man his brother's keeper, and therefore all the duties which flow from this brotherhood relationship are imposed on every man—*because* he is a man and a brother.

In one sense all men are brethren. In a far higher sense, all Christians are brethren—mutual dependants, as members of the same body; and, therefore, no one member can suffer *without every other* suffering with it,—*whether he will or no.*

This pleasing of another to his good is, then, a consulting of *each one his own* good, and thus the good of society and of the Church. "If one member suffer, all the members *must* suffer with it; and if one member be honoured, all the members" (as a necessary consequence) "will rejoice with it;" 1 Cor. xii. 26. But the divine mind says, "*the strong* are to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please themselves," in what would bear down and not support. The words are—"we that are strong *ought*" i.e. we *owe* it to them. We owe it to Christ, who has set us the example. We owe it to his church, "that there be no schism in the in the body;" and we must pay this deference of our will to their interests, if we would be *really*, what we are *nominally*, His disciples. "*For even Christ pleased*