

Christ Our Example.

MAY 10.

PHILIPPIANS ii: 5-16.

Golden Text, Phil. 2: 5.

THIS epistle was written at Rome to the Church at Philippi founded by Paul, Timothy, and Silas in the second missionary journey, Acts 16: 12-40. V. 5. *This mind*—Paul does not hold himself up as an example, but Christ. Nor does he say that we must do just as Christ did, which is impossible, but we should regard Him as our model and seek to be animated with His spirit. V. 6. *In the form of God*—*Heb. 1: 3.* Having the essential attributes of God. S. Cat. 6. *Thought it not robbery*—because it belonged to Him already as the second person in the Trinity, 1 Jno. 5: 7. V. 7. *Of no reputation*—literally, “emptied Himself” of the external manifestations of the Godhead—not of its essence. *Took upon Him*—implies that He voluntarily veiled His glory, John 10: 18. *The form of a servant*—contrasted with the form of God. V. 8. *In fashion*—in outward appearance and speech. *Humbled Himself*—assumed not only a lower nature, but a lowly position in that nature—a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, Matt. 8: 20. *Obedient*—The highest test of duty is to obey, even at the cost of life and by death most ignominious. V. 9. *Wherefore*—as the reward of his obedience, teaching us that if we would hereafter be exalted we, too, must humble ourselves now. *A name*—“The name.” Jesus means Saviour, Matt. 1: 21. V. 10. *Every knee*—Isa. 45: 22, 23, signifying His universal sovereignty, 1 Cor. 15: 25. *Every tongue*—every nation and language. *Lord*—equivalent to “Jehovah”—the eternal, self-existent God. It is to the glory of God to confess that Jesus is Lord, John 5: 23. Matt. 10: 40. V. 12. *Wherefore*—because we have such an illustration of honour and glory resulting from true humility. *In my absence*—Do not think that the work of grace cannot go on without Me. *Work out your salvation*—as though all depended on your own efforts. *With fear*—lest you fall short of its accomplishment. V. 13. *God worketh*—God and man are fellow-workers in this great transaction, 2 Cor. 6: 1. We cannot define the extent of free-will, but we must not ignore it. Men are not lost because they are sinners, but because they will not believe in God’s plan of salvation. The invitation is to all, Isa. 55: 1; Rev. 22: 17. V. 14. *Murmurings*—fault-finding and contentions about trifles destroy domestic happiness, discourage children, disorder society, dishonour God, and are opposed to the genius of Christianity, Rom. 12: 18. V. 15. *Blameless*—as far as it is possible for sinful human nature to be so. *Sons of God*—1 Jno. 3: 2, 3. *Crooked*—as opposed to an honest, straightforward consistent course of life. *Shine*—Matt. 5: 16. V. 16. *Holding forth*—Christians are required both to hold fast and to hold forth the truth—to attend to personal holiness and to interest others in the way of salvation. The best kind of teaching is that of example.

Christian Contentment.

MAY 17.

PHILIPPIANS iv: 4-13.

Golden Text, Phil. 4: 9.

THE Philippian Church was exposed to poverty and persecution, and Paul exhorts them in this letter to patient endurance and resignation to the will of God. V. 4. *Rejoice*—The Christian ought to be the happiest of men, for in the severest trials he has to encounter he can always find something to be thankful for. *Rejoice in the Lord*—(1) Rejoice in the Lord Jesus as your Saviour. (2) Let your joy be of that kind that proceeds from like-mindedness to Him—not a mere selfish pleasure, but the joy of having Him for your friend, intercessor, and guide. *Always*—in all circumstances, whether of prosperity or adversity. V. 5. *Moderation*—considerateness for others, not urging one’s own rights to the uttermost. Avoid running into extremes in anything. *Be known*—Let nothing inconsistent with moderation appear in your conduct towards others. *The Lord is at hand*—He will come again to judge the world, and render to every man according to his deeds, 2 Cor. 5: 10. Let us therefore be charitable in our judgment of our fellow-men, Matt. 7: 1. V. 6. *Careful for nothing*—not in the sense of being careless about every thing, but as in the R.V. “In nothing be anxious,” Matt. 6: 25. Carefulness, as the word now means, is a duty incumbent on all, but Paul is speaking of fretting and worrying which perplex and distract the mind and dishonour God. *Everything*—It is the Christian’s privilege to carry everything to God in prayer: He will answer in the way best for us, John 14: 13. If He does not remove trouble, He will give strength to bear it, Rom. 8, 37-39. V. 7. *The peace of God*—coming from God. *Your hearts*—The heart is the citadel or treasure-house, Matt. 12: 35; and must be guarded, Prov. 4: 23. It is also the source of evil, Jer. 17: 9, and must be cleansed and regulated, Ps. 51: 10. 1 John 1: 8, 9. *Through Christ*—He alone can bring true peace into the soul, Isa. 26: 12. V. 8 contains a summary of duties incumbent on all Christians, see also Gal. 5: 22, 23, and 2 Pet. 1: 6, 7. V. 9. Learn from this statement that example is more convincing than precept. V. 10. Paul finds good cause for rejoicing in the well-doing of others: so should we. He does not refer to his own privations to complain of them, but only to make grateful mention of former kindnesses received from those to whom he is now writing. *I have learned*—by the teaching of the Holy Spirit and the example of his Master, Heb. 5: 8. *Christian contentment* is not indifference to the future, but a conscious trust in God’s overruling providence, Rom. 8: 28. Vs. 12, 13. *I know*—I have learned by experience in the school of adversity as well as of prosperity that the only way of reaching true contentment is implicit faith in God. *Through Christ*—who enables me to do and endure all things by the aid of His Holy Spirit—without whom we can do nothing, John, 15: 5.