

THE MIND OF CHRIST.

August 24.]

[Philippians 2:1-13.]

GOLDEN TEXT:—*Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.*—Phil. 2:5.

HOME READINGS:—M. John 13:1-17. T. 1 Pet. 2:18-25. W. Phil. 1:1-20. Th. Phil. 1:21-30. F. Phil. 2:1-13. S. 2 Pet. 1:10-21. S. Heb. 2:1-18.

Philippi, named after Philip King of Macedon, was a city in Macedonia, in Greece: and it was the first city in Europe visited by Paul in his ministerial and Apostolic journeyings, Acts 16:9-12. When he wrote this Epistle, he was a prisoner at Rome, Phil. 1:13. After telling them that he felt it would be "gain" for him to die, that he would rather depart to be with Christ, but that he was willing to abide on earth yet longer if it would be for the good of others and the glory of Christ, he exhorted them to pursue a course of life consistent with their Christian profession, 1:27, and not to be terrified by their adversaries, Mat. 10:28; and the lesson now to be considered contains some farther faithful and loving exhortations, together with many considerations calculated to encourage and stimulate them to reduce those directions to practice. In v. 1, he recommends the cultivation of a spirit of brotherly love and unity: *be like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind.* Psalm 133, John 15:12 and 17:20, 21. This is enforced by several considerations. The more they had of a Spirit of love and unity the greater would be their consolation in Christ, Luke 2:25, John 14:18. 2 Cor. 1:4, 5. Eph. 2:8—their comfort of love, Rom. 5:5—their fellowship of the Spirit, 2 Cor. 13:14, Eph. 2:8—their comfort and help from a mutually forgiving Spirit and from the tender mercies of the Lord, Col. 3:12. Another inducement was this, that they would thereby increase the happiness of Paul himself—would "fulfil"—fill up—his joy, v. 3. Two things named of great importance if they would dwell together in love and unity: that *nothing be done through strife or vain glory*, Gal. 5:26—in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than themselves, Rom. 12:10—1 Pet. 5:5—1 Cor. 10:33, v. 5. *Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus.* Mat. 11:29, John 13:15 and 1 Pet. 2:21. No sooner did Paul, in writing this Epistle, begin to refer to the example of Christ than his whole soul became aglow with a grateful and adoring admiration of the wonderful condescension and saving mercy of the Son of God, v. 6. *Being in the form of God*, John 1:1, 2 Col. 1:15, Heb. 1:3. Psalm 9:6—*thought it not robbery to be equal with God.* Being "God manifest in the flesh" it was not robbing God of his glory to say "I and my Father are one," John 10:30—and to accept worship, John 20:28, 29, and Heb. 1:6. They who take to themselves the glory that belongs to the Lord are robbers of a very sinful character—they rob God 1 v. 7. Is. 42:1, Luke 22:27, v. 9, *wherefore*, &c., Ps. 110:1, Acts 2:33, Heb. 2:9, *a name above every name*, Gal. 1:20, 21, v. 10. Mat. 28:18. All must submit to Christ: willingly to be saved—or, if the salvation be neglected, must yield to His power—for "He must reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet," 1 Cor. 15:25, and Ps. 2:2, v. 11, *Lord to the glory of God the Father.* Jesus, King of Zion, Mat. 2:6, Mat. 8:18. The Father says, "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased, hear ye Him," Mat. 7:5. To come to Jesus who invites us is to obey the Father: to be a Christian is to serve God in the Gospel of his Son, Rom. 1:9, v. 12. *Work out your own salvation.* "Salvation belongeth unto the Lord," Ps. 3:8, Eph. 2:8 and 2 Tim. 1:9. Christians are in a state of salvation—they are pardoned, saved from condemnation, John 5:24; but salvation from sin is a process in the renewed soul, that of sanctification. Christians are to be "laborers together with God" for progress in the new life. They are to "watch and pray," to "fight the good fight of faith," to go on from strength to strength, from one degree of grace to another, Phil. 3:12-14.

PRACTICAL RELIGION.

August 31.]

[Colossians iii:16-25.]

GOLDEN TEXT:—*And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily as to the Lord, and not unto men.*—Col. 3:23.

HOME READINGS:—M. Col. 3:16-25. T. Eph. 5:19-33. W. Eph. 9:1-10. Th. Phil. 2:1-11. F. Col. 4:1-9. S. 1 Cor. 7:1-10. S. Deut. 10:12-22.

Colosse was a city in Asia Minor—large and wealthy—close to the river Syceus where it falls into the Meander. About 66 A.D., in the 10th year of Nero's reign, a violent earthquake shook the city, almost destroying the whole of it. It was afterwards rebuilt and called Chonao. Though some false views had crept into the Colossian Church, the members of it generally seem to have been a very kind and sympathizing people. When Paul was a prisoner at Rome, they sent their minister Epaphras to convey to him an expression of their love and sympathy, and doubtless to ask also his advice as to certain evils that had begun to trouble them, Col. 1:7, 8. Epaphras, on reaching Rome, not only conveyed the messages, but engaged zealously for the time being in Christian work, and he also became imprisoned. Philemon, v. 23. When Paul wrote this Epistle, Epaphras was still a prisoner at Rome, Col. 4:12, and this Epistle was sent by Tychicus 4:7, 8. Though Paul was in bonds he was not inactive, Col. 4:11. He was acting according to the advice he gave to the Galatians 6:10. See Acts 28:30, v. 16. *The word of Christ.* The doctrine of Christ—not only what he spoke, but what he enabled Apostles and others to write "as they were moved by the Holy Ghost"—"the Spirit of Christ which was in them," 1 P. 1:11, *dwell in you richly*—fully—in the different "chambers" of the soul—the understanding, the memory, the heart—influencing the conscience, the will, and every spring of moral action in the soul. *In all wisdom*—unto—in order to—a practical use thereof. For wisdom is the right use of knowledge. *Psalms*—the book of Psalms. *Hymns*—probably—those hymns of praise spread throughout the Scriptures—many of them being brief ascriptions, and calculated greatly to help Christian conversation and fellowship of Spirit. *Spiritual songs*—that may have been arranged by some of themselves or other Christians, founded on Scripture truth and statements, v. 17, Eph. 5:20: *In the name of the Lord Jesus*—not in a Spirit of self-righteousness, but trusting in Christ for pardon and for grace to be "conformable to his death," Titus 2:14. *Giving thanks to God and the Father*—i. e. even the Father—as the original is in some other places translated, v. 18, Eph. 5:22. *As it is fit in the Lord*—i. e. in all lawful things. If, for instance, the husbands were yet unconverted and idolaters, the wives were not so to be "subject" as to worship with their husbands contrary to conscience and their obligations to their Lord and Saviour, Mat. 19:29, Luke 18:29, v. 19, Eph. 5:25. Whilst the Apostle enjoined it on wives to be "subject" to their husbands, he forcibly suggests to husbands that they should exercise not a rigid authority but the authority of love—expressly saying *love your wives and be not bitter against them*, v. 19. *Inheritance*—1 Pet. 1:4, Col. 1:12, v. 25. *He that doeth wrong*—whether a servant or a master. *There is no respect of persons*—not personal beauty, Absalom 2, Sam. 14:25 and 18:33—not personal riches, Mat. 19:22—not personal rank, Dan. 5:30—not personal family connection, Rom. 9:7. God is no respecter of persons—but of characters." In every nation he that feareth God and worketh righteousness is accepted of him," Acts 10:34, 35.