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—*to repose on Christ—to confide the soul really to His keeping.*

To believe this truth implies *the continual remembrance of it.* It implies that we hold the mind in the attitude of dependence and trust. Suppose I am leading a little child by the hand ; I give him my finger and lead him along upon the brink of a frightful precipice. I tell him, 'Without me you will fall. Now, if he believes this, he will hold fast to my hand. His mind will be in a constant attitude of depending, trusting, holding on to me. Now this illustrates what I mean by believing in our dependence upon Christ. The mind that believes in this will not attempt to do anything without Christ.

But take another illustration. Suppose here is a man who has but one leg. He never attempts to walk without a crutch. When he sits down, he lays his crutch by his side, or sets it up within reach. Whenever he attempts to walk, the very first movement of his mind is towards his crutch. Just so with the mind that believes in the doctrine of dependence upon Christ. It is just as natural for this mind *to throw itself upon Christ in the performance of every duty* as it is for the lame man to throw himself upon his crutch. Not to understand and believe this is real infidelity in respect to Christ. It is a real rejection of the gospel of Christ and of Christ Himself. No man properly understands and believes the Gospel in a saving sense, who does not understand and believe his universal dependence upon Christ.

Again, the rejection of this doctrine *renders the soul proud and presumptuous*. If a man depends upon his own powers unenlightened by the Spirit of Christ, he is depending upon the bruised reed of his own resolutions, and must inevitably find himself in perpetual condemnation.

Again, to reject or overlook this doctrine *leads the soul to neglect due watchfulness*. If a man is not sensible of his constant dependence upon the indwelling Spirit of Christ, he will not feel the necessity of watchfulness and prayer so as to retain the Spirit of Christ.

Again, the rejection of this doctrine *fosters self-righteousness*. If a man gets the idea that without the Divine support and enlightenment he performs acts that are acceptable to God, this is one of the worst forms of self-righteousness.

Again, the rejection of this doctrine *makes us the sport of temptation*. A man is certain to be overcome if he attempts to resist temptation in his own strength, just as certain as a man of one leg would be to fall if he should attempt to run without his crutch.

Again, the rejection of this doctrine *leads to ultimate discouragement*. When persons make attempts to stand in their own strength and find themselves continually overcome, they are soon led to doubt seriously whether there is any such thing as standing before the power of temptation. Finding themselves perfectly impotent in their own strength, and not believing in Christ as they ought, they fall, of course.

Again, the understanding and belief of this truth tends to results opposite to those just mentioned. To believe this truth *causes the mind to be careful not to grieve the Spirit of Christ*. It renders the soul humble, and empties it of all its proud, self-righteous dependence upon self. It naturally engages the soul to love Christ, to honour Him, and watch carefully against doing anything that might displease Him. It strips the mind of all dependence upon its own resolutions and unaided efforts ; it teaches the mind where to go in the hour of temptation, and throws it upon Christ, its all-sufficient support ; keeps the soul out of bondage, begets gratitude, fixes the attention and thoughts upon Christ, and engages the soul to live by faith on Him.

IV. NOTICE THE PRONENESS OF THE HUMAN MIND TO OVERLOOK AND DENY THIS TRUTH.

In some sense everyone knows it to be true, and yet few realize its truth in any such sense as to make a practical use of it. This is evident, partly from the fact that *they do not think of it*. They do not realize it as the lame man realizes that he cannot walk without his crutch. His dependence upon his crutch is with him an omnipresent reality. He always thinks of it whenever he attempts to walk. Now, if an individual really receives this truth, it will be to him an omnipresent reality. The fact of his dependence on Christ will be so deeply settled in his mind, that he will just as naturally and cer-

tainly turn to Christ for support as the lame man turns to his crutch.

But another evidence that few realize and believe this truth we have in the fact, *that so little gratitude is felt and manifested to Christ.* If our dependence were an omnipresent reality, we could not fail, having performed any duty, to feel our obligation to Christ for having wrought in us to will and do this thing. We should not take the credit to ourselves, but be grateful to Him.

Another evidence that this truth is not believed by many, is the fact that *they are so little afraid to sin against Christ.* It cannot be that they would be so reckless in sinning against Him if they believed themselves absolutely dependent on Him for all their own right actions. Suppose that you were entirely dependent upon someone to lead and uphold you every step you take; could you suffer yourself to wrong your guide and supporter?

Another evidence we have in the fact that *there is so little praying against temptation, so little looking to Him for grace to support and strengthen us at every step.* The Bible teaches that God works in us to will and to do of His good pleasure—that all our springs are in Him—that He is our life, and that there is no good in us only as it is wrought in us by the Spirit of Christ. Now, that there is not much hearty confidence in these truths, even in the Church, manifests itself in many ways. For example, there is but little prayer comparatively for restraining grace, for upholding grace, for the indwelling and energizing of the Holy Spirit. There

is but little of the spirit of thanksgiving for the constant aid and agency of the Spirit of God.

Again, if for a short time Christians are kept from a besetting sin, they *soon cease to thank Him for sustaining grace, and lose a sense of the fact that He is truly keeping them above it.* They think they have so overcome the temptation to that sin, that they are dead to it in and of themselves. Their taking up this notion often makes it necessary for Christ to withhold His restraining grace, in order to remind them that not they but He has kept them from falling. Thus he teaches them by bitter experience what they will not learn from His Word, that without Him they can do nothing,

Again, *when persons are kept for any length of time from any particular besetting sin, they soon cease to pray against it.* This shows that they overlook the fact that Christ is every day and all the time holding up their feet in the path of obedience, and that they would instantly fall but for Him. When they thus cease to pray and watch against sin, Christ lets them fall, to remind them of their dependence. But why should He remind them of it if they are not prone to forget it?

Again, *in proportion as they are kept above sin, they are prone to lose a sense of the fact that the grace of Christ upholds them.* If they are supported just enough to feel the keen force of temptation and the necessity of cleaving to Christ continually, they do not lose a sense of dependence; but if Christ only for a short time lifts them so high that temptation does not seem to touch them, they

immediately become forgetful of their dependence, wax self-confident, dishonour and grieve His Spirit, and fall into condemnation.

Again, *as we do not see, nor hear, nor directly feel the hand that supports us, we are constantly prone to forget that we are supported.* The influence which Christ exerts is not a physical but a moral one. It is the power of truth and persuasion, the power of Divine light which sustains the mind. Now as we do not directly see the agency of Christ employed in sustaining us, we are very apt to overlook the fact that His invisible agency is our constant support.

Again, *thoroughly to learn the lesson of our dependence upon Christ so that it shall be an ever-present reality to us, is a most difficult thing.* There is nothing more contrary to the natural pride and independence of human nature. There is no doctrine of the Bible which we are more prone to disbelieve and practically reject than this. It may be admitted as a theory, without being ever believed.

Again, it is one of the most difficult things, *always to remember practically that we cannot take one step in the path of obedience without depending on Christ, any more than a lame man can take a step without his crutches.*

Again, *Christ has more trouble with us on this point perhaps than any other.* It is easy for Him to support us, if He can persuade us to depend upon Him. He can easily guide us, if we will keep hold of His hand. He can easily carry our

burdens if we will suffer Him to do so. He can work in and for us all that we need with infinite ease, if we will but trust in Him and surrender up our mind to His influence. In short, the greatest practical difficulty lies in the right understanding and belief of the doctrine of our dependence upon Christ. I say a right understanding and belief, because to believe this in one sense and in a particular form, is antinomianism : to understand and believe it in another sense, is sheer legality. Legality rests in Christ as an atoning sacrifice, but not as an indwelling, upholding, all-sustaining, and controlling Spirit. It receives an outward but not an inward Christ—a Christ in heaven, but not a Christ in the heart ; a Mediator between God and man, an Advocate on high, but not a present sanctification in the soul. It is receiving Him in the latter sense which constitutes the right belief of our dependence upon Christ. Indeed, He must be received both as an atoning sacrifice—a risen, reigning, glorified Redeemer—a Mediator and Advocate with the Father ; and also as an indwelling, sanctifying, constantly operating, upholding, guiding, renovating Spirit. He must be received by the mind's own faith, to dwell in the inward sanctuary of our own being, there to exert a constant sustaining and sanctifying influence, to work in us both to will and to do of His good pleasure.

Unbelief as it respects this doctrine, in the form in which I now state it, is the occasion of all our failures and of all our sins. It is a want of ap-

prehending this doctrine, and of thoroughly embracing it, that leaves so many souls in bondage to live on in the state described in the seventh chapter of Romans, without ever finding their way to the experience of the eighth chapter.

REMARKS.

As I have already intimated, *many hold this doctrine in theory, who never realize or practically believe it.* To this class of persons, this doctrine is a fatal stumbling-block. Holding as a theory the doctrine of their dependence on Christ, and yet not actually depending on Him, inevitably leaves them in sin; for their theory prevents their making any effort to help themselves, and their unbelief prevents their casting themselves on Christ, so that they settle down into antinomianism, in the form so generally witnessed among professors of religion. They make their dependence their excuse for not obeying God; whereas, did they really believe this doctrine of dependence, and actually cast themselves on Him, they would do their duty. Now this class of persons are labouring under a great delusion. They suppose they truly believe the doctrine of their dependence upon Christ, whereas they only hold it as a soul-crippling, God-dishonouring theory, and therefore it is to them a most fatal stumbling-block.

Again, *the real belief of it as a gospel fact will secure a real, as opposed to a theoretical, dependence upon Christ.* If a man believes his dependence upon Christ because the Bible asserts it; if he be-

believes it as a truth of the Gospel and a revealed fact, he will of course believe farther than this—that in Christ, and with the help of Christ, he can do all things required of him. The Apostle Paul says, that of himself he was not sufficient to think anything as of himself; but adds in another place, ‘I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.’ Now it is very manifest, that if the doctrine of dependence is embraced as a truth of revelation, the other fact will also be embraced as alike revealed, viz., that we can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth us. The belief of this will of course secure obedience to Christ.

Again, it is of very little use to speculate about the philosophy of Divine influence in the soul, or the manner in which Christ upholds and sustains us. The fact is the thing to be believed, and although I have myself speculated much, and often very much to my own injury, upon the mode of Divine influence, still I am convinced that to lay hold of the fact, without concerning ourselves to understand the mode of Divine operation, is the great thing to be attained to.

Again, we need to settle it as a fact of as much stability as the fact of our own existence, that we shall and can do nothing if the Divine support is withdrawn; and yet that it is always so proffered to us that we are perfectly responsible for every duty enjoined in the Scriptures.

Again, it is of the last importance that we understand what it is to depend constantly on Christ. Now we can acknowledge our dependence without

depending. I can hold in theory and in fact that I am dependent, without being willing to be dependent ; without the act of depending, without casting myself upon Christ and settling down upon Him. Now depending is a holding on to Christ. It is an ever active state of the mind. It is a cleaving to Him. The child upon the precipice who holds on to my hand must hold his mind in a state of dependence, or he cannot hold on to my hand. Did his mind turn from me, the muscles of his arm would instantly relax, and he would let go of my hand. Now a depending and holding on to Christ is as really an active state of the will as if we used our hand to hold on to Him. This needs to be understood, and a want of properly understanding this is the reason why persons do not abide in Christ. To abide in Christ is for the mind to cleave to Him, to depend on Him not as an outward and distant Saviour or atoning sacrifice, but as a present, indwelling support, a help at hand, a God as near to me as I am to myself. This is the true idea of depending on Christ. Without this dependence we can do nothing ; with it, we can do all things. Brethren, think of this !

THE END.

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