

Imitators of God

By Nick Bibile

We ought ourselves also so to walk even as he walked. A Bible ought has great weight with a conscientious man. Ought it to be so? Then it shall be so, God helping me. If we say we must do. If we talk, we must walk, or it will, be mere talk. If we make the profession of abiding in Christ, we must prove it by our practice of walking with Christ. If we say that we are in Christ and abide in him, we must take care that our life and character are conformed to Christ, or else we shall be making an empty boast. This is true of every man who says he is in Christ, for the text is put in the most general and absolute manner: be the man old or young, rich or poor, learned or simple, pastor or hearer, it is incumbent upon him to live like Christ if he professes to live in Christ.

"Be ye imitators of God, as dear children." It is the nature of children to imitate their parents. Be ye imitators; of Christ as good soldiers, who cannot have a better model for their soldierly life than their Captain and Lord. Ought we not to be very grateful to Christ that he deigns to be our example?

Grace looks towards holiness, that there should be a people called forth to whom Christ should be the elder brother, the firstborn among many brethren. You certainly have not had the purpose of God fulfilled in you, dear friend, unless you have been conformed to the image of his dear Son. "He hath chosen us in Christ Jesus before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love." This is the aim of election; this is the object of redemption; this is the fruit of calling; this is the concomitant of justification; this is the evidence of adoption; this is the earnest of glory; that we should be holy, even as Christ is holy, and in this respect should wear the lineaments of the Son of God. He hath given his own Son to die for us, that we may die to sin; he has given him to live that we may live like him. In every one of us the Father desires to see Christ, that so Christ may be glorified in every one of us. Do you not feel this to be an imperative necessity to be laid upon you? Would you have the Lord miss his purpose? You are chosen of God to this end, that you should be "a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people, zealous of good works," and what is this but that you should walk even as he walked? Observe.

Observe, again, another point of this necessity: it is necessary to the mystical Christ that we should walk as he walked, for we are joined unto the Lord Jesus in one body. Now, Christ cannot be made a monster that would be a blasphemous notion. And yet if any man had eyes, ears, hands, or other members that were not conformable to the head, he would be a strange being. The mouth of a lion, the eye of an ox, the feathers of a bird—these things would have no consistency with the head of a man. We read of the image in Nebuchadnezzar's dream, that it had a head of fine gold, but legs of iron, and feet part of iron and part of clay. Surely, Christ's spiritual body is not compounded of such discordant elements. No, no. He must be all of a piece. The mystical body must be the most beautiful and precious production of God; for the church is Christ's body, "the fulness of him that filleth all in all." And shall that mysterious fulness be something defiled, deformed, full of sin, subject to Satan? God forbid! "As he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy," and as your HEAD is holy, so be ye, as members of his body, holy too. Ought it not to be so? Does anybody

raise a question? Does not every member of Christ, by the very fact that he is joined to him by living union, feel at once that he must walk even as Christ walked?

"Whosoever doth not bear his cross and come after me, cannot be my disciple." "Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, and ye shall find rest unto your souls." You know, if any man love Christ, he must follow him:—"If ye love me, keep my commandments." When we took Christ's cross to be our salvation we took it also to be our heavenly burden. When we yielded ourselves up to Christ to be saved by him, we in spirit renounced every sin. We felt that we had come out from under the yoke of Satan, and that we made no reserve for the lusts of the flesh that we might obey them, but bowed our necks to the yoke of the Lord Jesus. We put ourselves into Christ's hands unreservedly, and we said, "Lord, sanctify me, and then use me. Take my body and all its members; take my mind and all its faculties; take my spirit and all the new powers which thou hast bestowed upon me with it; and let all these be thine. Reign in me; rule me absolutely, sovereignly, always and alone. I do not ask to be my own, for I am not my own, I am bought with a price."

For, once more, inasmuch as we are in Christ, we are now bound to live to Christ's glory, and this is a great means of glorifying Christ.

We preach here in the pulpit; but what can we do, unless you preach yonder at home? It is you preaching in your shops, in your kitchens, in your nurseries, in your parlours, in the streets, which will tell on the masses. This is the preaching—the best preaching in the world, for it is seen as well as heard. I heard one say he liked to see men preach with their feet; and this is it, "they ought also so to walk even as Christ walked." No testimony excels that which is borne in ordinary life. Christ ought to be glorified by us, and therefore we ought to be like him, for if we are not, we cannot glorify him, but must dishonor him.

Sin promised freedom, and brought us bondage; grace now binds us, and ensures us liberty.