Philippians - Commentaries by Frederick George Patterson

Words of Truth: Volume 5, That I May Know Him (3:1-10)

To know Thee—Oh my Saviour,

My longing soul's desire

Is daily of Thy beauty

More knowledge to acquire.

To see Thee, as the "risen One,"

Sitting at God's right hand,

My death in Thee, my life in Thee,

With power to understand.

To know Thee, in Thy sorrows,

And grieve for all Thy woe,

To shrink not from partaking

Thy sufferings here below.

But bless Thee that Thou countest me

Worthy to bear the cross,

Sent in the love of Him for whom

I count all else but dross.

To know Thee, in Thy dying,

To give my dead soul breath,

And ever to be praying

"Conform mete Thy death."

Thus would I know Thee, blessed Lord,

In all Thy wondrous worth,

And seek to follow in Thy steps

Till called away from earth.

Words of Truth: Volume N1, Contentment (4:11)

"I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content," is experience of the deepest order. I am sure Paul could not have said this at any other time of his life than when in his prison in Rome he was taught the wondrously blessed lesson that Christ could do without him—great vessel and all that he was. When we contemplate the pathway of this man, as summed up in the few verses which the folly of the Corinthians forced from him, in 2 Cor. 11:23-32, we see in some measure what the vessel has to pass through before it could write such a Scripture as Phil. 4. How often is such a Scripture as this taken up and read, as if it could be understood without the vessel being prepared to learn it by the lessons which preceded its utterance.

I have been deeply struck by the remark of an old Roman Catholic woman to another. When it was repeated, it at once connected itself in my mind with some of the experience of this chapter. But, like it, it could not be uttered by a mere tyro in the path of a Christian, or indeed by any who had not been taught it through those sort of trials that lead the heart to know God. Her remark amounted to this— "My experience of Him is, that He either gives me what I want, or makes what I have do!"

Speaking of Paul in this Epistle, I may also name another striking feature, as to his being cut off from that twofold ministry (of “the Gospel to every creature under heaven,” and “of the assembly to complete the Word of God”), and of which he was the chosen vessel-separated from his mother’s womb, and called by grace to it. He found that both these lines of God’s testimony were going on better without him! —him, the very vessel to whom they were entrusted. “The things that happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel,” marks the one. While, if the Church was obedient when the Apostle was there, and while she had such a great gift as he, now she was much more so, when hearts were true. “Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God which worketh in you, to will and to do according to his good pleasure.”

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