

"What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's." I Corinthians 6:19-20.

The dignity and importance of the human body was never really revealed until Christ came. Those who are familiar with the different heathen philosophies and pagan religions know that a great many of the philosophers and teachers said, "It does not make any difference to what use you put the body. It is merely physical, and when you die it is gone. Even though your soul may persist after death, the body will never rise again, and it is impossible to defile the soul by anything you may do with the body." That was the very essence of the philosophy that was taught in Corinth, where Paul had been used of God for the calling out of the company of those who had been saved. Paul knew that there was a very grave danger that they might bring over to the new Christian organization some of the old pagan conceptions, and in that way fail to appreciate the purity that should be exemplified in the life of the believer in Christ.

It seems that there were some in the membership of the church at Corinth who regarded Christianity as giving them a kind of liberty to do whatever they wished. Some of them, who had left Judaism with its various restraints, and others, who had deserted paganism with all of its restrictions, were too ready to push far beyond their limits the doctrines of religious liberty as proclaimed by Paul. That accounted for the fact that Paul here let it be known that the believer in Christ has a marvelous liberty, but not to do wrong. He must distinguish between license and liberty. An instructed believer will never say, "I am in Christ, and it does not make much difference what I do." Any person who talks like that makes it clear that he has never apprehended the reality of what "in Christ" means.

Paul set forth a noble doctrine of Christian liberty when he said, "All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient." Some of the Corinthian leaders and teachers said, "All things are lawful." In other words, they were teaching people not to exercise any restraints at all, but just to express themselves in any way they might desire. In contrast with that teaching, Paul taught that a Christian did not have the liberty to be immoral and impure. He also taught that a child of God did not have the right to exercise liberty to the point where his conduct was injurious to others.

## I. A Transaction.

"For ye are bought with a price." Christ redeemed us from the wrath of God, the vassalage of Satan, the curse of the law, and the power of sin. Christ did not buy us on the installment plan, with someone holding the mortgage, but He bought us and paid for us. The purchase price was the death of Christ on the cross. Christ gave Himself, His happiness, His body, His blood, His life, and His all for us.

The fact that Christ bought men shows that He values them highly. He never bought anything else beside men. The fact that He bought them proves that He wanted men. A person does not buy something that he does not want. The greatness of the price that He paid for us defies all words and transcends all thought. It was R. L. Stevenson who said, "The cost of a thing is the amount of what I will call life which is required to be exchanged for it, immediately or in the long run." The price of our redemption was stated clearly in I Peter 1:18-19: "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, for your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot."

## II. A Truth.

"Ye are not your own." Why are we not our own? We did not create ourselves. We have not sustained ourselves. We have not redeemed ourselves. We have not and cannot save

ourselves. There are those who want to be their own masters. There are others who think that they are their own masters. Many others act as if they were their own masters, by following their own desires and going their own ways, but they are not. You are not your own provider or guide.

"Ye are not your own. For ye are bought with a price." So, if you are a Christian, you do not belong to yourself, but you belong to Christ. Even the possessions which you have been calling your own do not belong to you. The Lord has entrusted them to you, and wants you to use them, and is going to hold you responsible for what you do with them, and call upon you to give an account to Him. The recognition of these facts should keep us from many a false step, from many an error, from many a sin, and from many a sad failure.

Here is how this works. If you are the right sort of a person, and a friend loans you a book to read, you do not mark it, because it is not yours and you should return it in as good condition as when you received it. Likewise, God gives you a body, which is a marvelous organism. Through sin you can make a deep mark on it. But the Lord says, "Do not mark it, for it is not your own, and you must give it back to Me."

You are not your own to injure, neither your body nor your soul. You are not your own to waste, neither in speculation nor in idleness. Since you are not your own, you are not to exercise caprice, or to be governed by your own prejudices, depraved affections, wayward wills, or evil appetites. You are not your own to serve self, for self is dethroned and Christ is enthroned.

Those of us who are Christians belong to God by right of purchase. Christ has ransomed us with His own precious blood. What an amazing truth this is! We now belong to Him. No longer can we do what we like, unless it is in conformity with the will of the Lord; no longer do we possess any rights apart from Him; no longer can we say that we can do what we like with our possessions, for everything belongs to Him, "whose we are and whom we serve." What a glorious privilege it is to belong to God! What an honor it is to be His possession! He Who made the world and upholds all things by the word of His power is our Lord and our Master. Here is something to move our hearts and stir our emotions. Everything else pales into insignificance in comparison with this.

As a rule, three things are involved or implied in the word "ownership." It implies the right to exclusive possession; the right to exclusive enjoyment or use; and the right to do as one likens with that which is his. But a moment's reflection is sufficient to convince us that we are not our own in any of these senses.

### III. A Task.

"Therefore glorify God in your body." Inasmuch as Christ bought you, and you are not your own, you must not live like the pagans who believed they could indulge in all manner of uncleanness without injuring their souls. You must not desecrate your manhood or your womanhood. You must not defile your body, for it belongs to Him Who has redeemed and saved you.

In recent years the question has often been raised: Do you find life worth living? The answer is, No, nobody finds life worth living; he has to make life worth living. And the secret of the "making" is found adequately, joyously, and achievingly in Christ our Lord. He did not find life worth while; He had to make it so. What He found in our world was misunderstanding, jealousy, hatred, betrayal, sorrow, and a cross. Did He surrender to them? Not at all. He seized them and turned them to profit. When life treated Him to its utmost villainy, and nailed Him to a cross, He took hold of that cross and fashioned it into a ladder of love and light up which He climbed to His throne of lordship in the hearts of millions.

Christ purchased us with His own blood in order that He might lift us out of the degradation of sin and give us eternal life. He purchased us in order that He might bring us into the family of God. The Bible says, "God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons" (Galatians 4:4-5). God wanted us in His family, so He sent forth His Son to redeem us. What an evidence of His infinite love! What amazing grace! What condescension!

If you are a child of God, you are obligated to glorify the Lord in your body. He created it. He made it for Himself. He has sustained it. He has done everything for you. He has redeemed you from sin. Gratitude demands that you glorify Him in your body. Your eyes can and should look to and for the Master. Your ears should listen to and heed the Master. Your lips should speak encouraging, strengthening and helpful words. Your hands should be engaged in working for Christ, but you do not have any right to use them in serving Satan. Your feet should go on errands for Him every day. The Lord Jesus wants to express Himself through your body, and He has every right to your body for this purpose. He gave His body on the cross for you, and today He wants your body to be used in glorifying Him. He wants to express Himself in and through your life, but if your body is not yielded to Him He cannot do it. Glorify Him to whom you belong. Here is the real meaning of life. Here is the high mission of life.

"Thou hast no tongue, O Christ, at once of old,  
To tell the story of Thy love divine.  
The story is the same, as sweet, as true,  
But there's no tongue to tell it out but mine.

Thou hast no hands, O Christ, as once of old,  
To feed the multitude with bread divine;  
Thou hast the Living Bread, enough for all,  
But there's no hand to give it out but mine.

Thou hast no feet, O Christ, as once, to go  
Where Thy lost sheep in sorrow pine.  
Thy love is still the same, as deep, as true,  
But now Thou hast no feet to go but mine.

And shall I use these ransomed powers of mine  
For things that only minister to me?  
Lord, take my tongue, my hands, my heart, my all,  
And let me live, and love, and give for Thee."

May God help us all to make that surrender to Him. We have not been placed or left here through chance or accident. Wendell Phillips, one of the great reformers of this country, said that at the age of twelve years he heard Lyman Beecher speak, and the great man looked down at him and pointed his finger at him and said, "Son, you belong to Christ! Live for Him!" And Wendell Phillips said that from that hour he was dedicated to give his all to Christ.

Phillips lived a stormy life. He was boycotted in his business no matter which way he turned. He was hooted and hissed when he appeared on the streets of Boston. Rotten eggs pelted him and all kinds of insults were heaped upon him. He would go home at night to his invalid wife, and when she would see him come in and behold his weariness and his readiness almost to faint and to quit, she would say, "Wendell, you belong to Christ. Do not shilly-shally. Go back to your work and let them do to you as they please. You are working for humanity. You are working for Christ. Go bravely on."

Oh, that is the word for all of us who are God's children! Do not shilly-shally. You belong to Christ. Incarnate His spirit; represent Him; and live like He wants you to live and to serve. Let Him express Himself through you. "Glorify God in your body."