

ADORNING THE DOCTRINE

"Not purloining, but shewing all good fidelity; that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things." Titus 2:10.

In most of Paul's letters he starts out with doctrine. Then he deals with duty. The first part has to do with experience and the last deals with living. Seeing that these things are true, we ought to live in such a manner as to prove them true. Christian living can only spring out of Christian experience. We must be something before we can do the things we are called upon to do. Our lives prove what we are. We must recognize the fact that we give expression to the things we have experienced. Too many people seem to be satisfied with an experience, and fall short of the life they ought to live. Some seem to feel about becoming a Christian like one man expressed himself about getting married. He said, "I think I will just get married and be done with it." Now every married person knows that when you get married you are not done with it. When you get married you have just begun. The same thing is true of becoming a Christian. The experience is just the beginning. Out of the initial experience of grace there ought to flow a stream of holy living that will adorn the doctrines we profess.

There are certain great truths that must be believed if we are to become what we ought to be. There is a tendency today to decry doctrine. Some say, "It doesn't make much difference what you believe, it is what you are that counts." That is not true. It does make a difference what you believe, for what you believe will determine what you will eventually become. "As a man thinketh in his heart so is he."

One thing which stands out in our text is the grandeur of Christian doctrine. Paul speaks of "the doctrine of God." We know that much is meant when men speak of the eloquence of Demosthenes, or of the philosophy of Plato, or of the poetry of Shakespeare; but "the doctrine of God" is another thing altogether. It stands apart, with a majesty all its own. The Psalmist said, "Among the gods there is none like unto Thee, O Lord; neither are there any works like unto Thy works." Just as the works of God are beyond the finest artistry of men, so the doctrines of God stand before all the philosophies and speculations and writings of men. The word "doctrine" here means "instruction." It means the great truths set forth in God's Word.

"Adorn" is a familiar and pleasing term. It means to beautify, to grace, to embellish and to ornament. In Luke 21 it is recorded that Christ's attention was called to the great Jewish temple, "how it was adorned with goodly stones and offerings." The glory and splendor of that great structure at Jerusalem was such as to impress and evoke comment from every passerby. It was so adorned as to attract and to hold the interest of pilgrims from all parts of the world.

"Adorn the doctrine." The audacity of this text is enough to make one gasp. Is it possible to beautify, to embellish or to ornament the truth of God? Yes, it is possible to "adorn the doctrine of God." You can bring out its suppressed magnificence. You can make it visible and intelligible by your character, your speech and your life. What a privilege! You can beautify the doctrine of God through a genuine Christian life. You can make the doctrine of God beautiful, as when you put a picture in a frame, or a jewel in a lovely setting, or well-fitting garments on your body. Just as a beautiful painting is more fascinating in a worthy frame, a book elegantly bound is of greater value than one in a cheap and tawdry binding, and a king of stately appearance becomes still more regal when royally robed, so the doctrine of God becomes far more beautiful and appealing when it is incarnated and exemplified in the life of a Christian. Children of God should live in such a manner that others would be impressed by the comeliness of their character and want to be like them. By properly adorning the doctrine of God we proclaim to those among whom we live and work that we have something which satisfies and inspires us. By His life of purity, friendliness, sincerity, sympathy, sacrifice and service Christ adorned the doctrine of God. It certainly behooves us to follow His example in

this respect. "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." Matthew 5:16.

I. Things Which Prevent Christians From Adorning The Doctrine.

1. Ignorance.

To multitudes Christianity is not attractive because so many professed Christians are ignorant of the essential facts which underlie the Christian faith, of the Book from which we are to get our beliefs, and of the supreme claims of Christ.

2. Insincerity.

This makes Christianity unattractive. Few Things do more damage to the cause of Christ than the insincerity of professed Christians. Insincerity saps the vital power of one's testimony, distorts his character, weakens his influence, and robs Christianity of its dignity and power.

3. Indifference.

Indifference toward Christian duties on the part of those who call themselves the followers of Christ is a terrible foe to attractive Christianity.

4. Inconsistency.

Somehow or other, when it sees Christian people failing to live up to the level of their profession, the world says, "You are hypocrites!" or, "Your Christianity is not worth much!" Many Christians damage themselves in the eyes of the world and impair the effectiveness of Christianity by their personal inconsistencies. The best illustrated Bible is the conduct of Christians who make the Scriptures the rule and guide of their faith and practice. When our lives are working models of Christianity, then it is possible for us, by our lives, to conciliate prejudices, to prepare people to listen favorably to the message of God's love, and to win others from their antagonism and make them say, "Well, after all, there is something to Christianity."

II. Ways By Which Christians Can Adorn The Doctrine.

1. By making Christianity a reality in their lives.

As the stars adorn astronomy and the roses of June adorn botany, so the conduct of Christians must flash out the hidden virtue and glory of the doctrine of God. The doctrine of God is in the Bible in suppressed magnificence and the children of God are to give it expression or embodiment.

2. By demonstrating to the world that Christianity produces the highest type of character.

3. By incorporating Christianity into our lives in such a way that the world can see that Christ satisfies us.

4. By making Christianity the thing of supreme importance in our lives.

Christ can supply all of our needs, whether they be physical, mental or spiritual.