

No.
328.

"IF YE THEN BE RISEN WITH CHRIST, SEEK THOSE THINGS WHICH ARE ABOVE, WHERE CHRIST SITTETH ON THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD." COL. 3. 1.

OUR ATTITUDE TOWARD
THE FAILURES OF OTHER PEOPLE.

An Address (revised) at

FOREST GATE, E. 7.

June 29, 1940

by

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OUR ATTITUDE TOWARD THE FAILURES OF OTHER PEOPLE.

Address by Mr. P. W. Heward
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One of the most dangerous things is to see other people's mistakes, and yet it would be dangerous not to see them, because it would mean there was no discernment. Do we feel, "Well, I should not do that; I am ashamed of him acting like that - disgraceful". Do we look upon a mistake in manner or action by any who bear the name of the Lord Jesus, and before we are aware of it, is there something of severance that comes into our minds "Well, I am different from that", and unconsciously Pharisaism comes in, - a little pride, a little self-confidence? Now that is the subject that has been on my mind somewhat. Shall we seek by the grace of God help from the Scriptures in connection with it? We know, do we not? how SOME people looked on the sins of others. In the Gospels we read "Two men went up into the temple to pray, the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican: God, I thank Thee I am not as other men are...or EVEN as this publican" is his climax thought. Before he goes on to say what he does, negatively he tells what he is not; positively of what he does, but not a word of confession of sin. We would all admit the force of the words which the Lord Jesus added "Every one that exalteth himself shall be abased". That is the special point brought before us in Luke's Gospel again and again. Luke 7 the Pharisee said "If this man were a prophet he would have known who and what manner of woman this is that toucheth him, for she is a SINNER", and the word, of course, has a special tone when Simon the Pharisee uses it. "This Man receiveth sinners and eateth with them". "Why eateth your Master with publicans and sinners?" This was always the complaint made about the Lord Jesus Christ by those who looked on other people's sins quite differently from the way in which the Lord Jesus looked on sins. That at once brings us to a very important thought. We are not now dealing with the sins of God's own children, but with the fact that when the Lord Jesus was among the educated people, their objection was that He did not have their way of looking on sin. And yet He hated sin far more than they did.

But He knew more about the nature of sin. We grade sins, and make some sins greater than others, excusing some, judging others, according to our temperament. The Lord judged sin, and that which He judged most severely was the sin of wrongly judging other people's sins, and not seeing one's own. "Why behideth thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?" It is the same principle. The one would say "Let me cast out the mote out of thine eye" - quite politely. The Lord says "Thou hypocrite". Now that is a deeply important matter, which shows us that one of the most difficult things is to look upon other people's sins, - especially for those who are acquainted with Scripture. Knowledge of truth is dangerous, as well as knowledge of error, unless it is sanctified. Knowledge of truth will only lead to self-esteem, unless the humility grows quicker than the knowledge, unless the heart receives more than the head receives. Now the fact that we desire this, is not sufficient. We must be in a condition to receive what we desire. This aspect is brought out in Luke 5, Luke 7, Luke 16, Luke 18, throughout that Gospel, as the right way of dealing with other people's sins. You get it, too, in Romans 2: "wherefore thou art inexcusable, O man...thou that judgest doest the same things". That is a most extraordinary statement. Perhaps you have found it so in your own experience. It is very true, even in little details. You blame somebody off-handedly for something-- you find in a few moments or a few hours, you have done something very similar. There will be the tendency to look on it the other way. In other words, in a matter of lateness, you will be inclined to say to him, "Why, you are ten minutes late"; when you are late you will say "It is only a few minutes, and I really could not help it". The peril is to have a different standard for ourselves and for others. An imperfect man is not fit to be a final judge. We need to have that true self-judgment, that true discernment of things that differ. Romans 14 "Let us therefore no longer judge one another, but judge this rather, that no man put a stumbling-block or an occasion to fall in his brother's way". The manner of doing things is all-important. We are not entrusted with the position of being/fellow helpers to the truth. This is a

very beautiful aspect, and if only we can realize it, it will be so blessed.

My real thought is to do with believers, and looking upon believers' failures, but I do want also to notice how the Lord Jesus Christ dealt with sin around Him. He looked upon the city, and wept over it. We read; every high priest taken from among men is ordained for men to offer gifts and sacrifices, who can have compassion on the ignorant and those who are out of the way. Otherwise he could be a high priest. No one was allowed to be a high priest unless he knew what compassion meant, That was the Divine principle. In other words the high priest had to deal with the aspect of drawing near to God, and had to deal with certain arrangements for others. He had to deal with the type of sin in leprosy, and so forth. It was so easy for him to get a certain official view of things. God does not want officials, He wants tender hearts. God does not want our brains and our heads to be the first thought. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine HEART" is the first aspect in Deuteronomy, and "with the HEART man believeth", and so forth.

A right relationship among children of God is of primary importance. One of the greatest difficulties at the present time (when there is to be re-
viving) - the enemy's special attempt will be to make discord among brethren. Children of God will soon come together, some with all manner of knowledge, and all manner of ignorance. Many talk about evacuation, people being sent away many miles, either for internment, or to escape difficulties, - people are talking of such rearrangements suddenly in terms of large numbers, and there may come persecution which will bring children of God of all nations together, into confinement, from all lands, all conditions, and all circumstances. We little know what may happen. And the great peril will always be among believers - FRICTION - discord, misunderstanding. The enemy will seek to sow that. The question is just how are we to look at one another's failures. We need to view our own failures as sins. We are brought at the outset to the difficult and full passage in Jude (verses 22,23.) It is not an easy passage to translate, but might be more simply: "And some convict, when they

dispute; and some save, snatching them out of the fire; and some have mercy upon with fear." I think there are these three things: Some convict when they dispute - don't let them go on disputing. Some save, snatching them out of the fire - they are in danger of being hindered by errors. On some have mercy with fear - be afraid lest you be affected, but have that tender mercy. Realize these different ways of dealing with different conditions. Here we have a very important aspect: there is a dealing with those who are disputing, convict them, seek to reprove; but there are some you have to snatch out of the fire - be earnest, don't let them be led astray; and on some have mercy with fear, be afraid lest YOU be damaged. We need to be very careful to act in a way that brings God glory. Let us recollect also in this connection, we do not always want to be on the look out for failures. We want to look out for the work of the Lord. I want to be more occupied with what the Lord has done for my brother than with his failures. If I am occupied with his failures I shall increase them. If I am occupied with what the Lord has done for my brother, I shall decrease his failures. It is easy to be occupied with failures. When there is illness, it is not always the best thing only to deal with the illness, there may be the need that the weak frame should be built up. What we want is to see whatever there is of Christ in a fellow believer and encourage it. There should be an increasing concern to emphasize that which is of the Lord and from the Lord. One is conscious in this connection of the beautiful meaning of Galatians 6:1. If anyone is overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual restore such an one in the spirit of meekness, considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. A spiritual person; and then a spiritual condition first, - in a spirit of meekness. A spiritual person can lack meekness. The Holy Spirit does not say a spiritual person will not make a mistake. The right kind of person in the right condition at that moment. You cannot put on a meekness in five minutes, but it equally shows that being spiritual generally is not enough. - there must be the right condition at that moment. "Consideringg thyself, lest thou also be tempted". The great

point here brought before us is "Restoring such an one" - an aspect of deep spiritual importance to us all. The great object is to restore. Do we sufficiently realize that in dealing with sin? In dealing with failures the great object is restoration. As to the body, if there is a physical failure, what is your object? Simply to know all about the disease? Or is your object, through any knowledge of it, to get a victory over it, that the life of the person, instead of the deadly power of the disease, may have the victory? You deal with the disease because there is a living person there who has power in that life to fight it, and it is through the living power of that person you hope to get victory over the disease. You are depending upon the fact of life being there, and that somehow that life may be brought into a condition to deal with the disease. There is life in fellow believers, and we want the life to operate in our own life and others. "Considering thyself". Every other brother's failure has a relationship to us. It may be he is copying something we did. It may be we have not been the help to him we might have been. It may be we have neglected showing Christian love. We have a bigger share in other people's failures than we think. It is deeply important to realize "Considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted", because it is just as likely for you and me to make a mistake as for someone else to make a mistake. We all need to realize our dependence on the Lord. The great thing is to RESTORE such an one. I do like that aspect. It is the same in Matthew 18 "if thy brother trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast GAINED THY BROTHER". Hebrews 12 "Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees; and make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed". "Restore", "gain", "heal", - that is the object. Why? "Destroy not him with thy meat FOR WHOM CHRIST DIED". "Through thy knowledge shall the weak brother perish FOR WHOM CHRIST DIED"? Grace is not to make us careless. As we are concerned about our own lives, so with other people's lives. From the standpoint of our action, we can kill a brother, if we are a hindrance to him spiritually. What the Lord will do

to prevent by His grace does not touch the point. Intent to murder is murder, and though the Lord may hinder an action reaching its goal, the tendency of our action is to destroy our brother for whom Christ died. It is not. "I like him, and therefore I want him to be restored". We do not have liking in Scripture, but loving. "I like" according to my own natural inclinations, but "love" is far deeper, it is according to the grace of God. It is so important we should realize "For whom Christ died". That gives a concern as to the right view of the failures of one another. If one member suffers, all the members suffer with it. You cannot separate the members of a body, and you cannot separate children of God.

It is so easy to feel pity for others, but the real meaning of "sympathy" is FEELING WITH. I can feel for a person very easily; but I do not know if I rightly use the word "I feel with you". Should we not often say "I feel for them, but I do not always feel WITH them". But the aspect of "remembering those that are in bonds as bound with them" has a certain bearing on our relationship to one another. I suppose we all know what it is to feel that certain things would cut us more closely if we felt any were very closely related to us in the flesh. The closer the relationship, the more keenly one would feel it. When Daniel felt his share in the disgrace of Israel's sin, the Lord blessed him. When Ezra felt his share in the disgrace of the sins of those who had come back from captivity, God blessed him. There is the burial of all scandal and discord as soon as that aspect is taken. For one to talk "of" another, to others, is ruled out. There is such a concern for that which pleases the Lord. We need to realize that we all have a share in one another's failures, and we have an intense longing for others to please the Lord because we belong to one another. As a parent looks with deep concern on a child when ill, oh that there might be that same affection, that same desire for healing, that God might be glorified in the blessing among His people. It does not

take much to be one of Job's friends - they knew a great deal, but if any book has been written to show the absence of fact, it is the book of Job. They were morally good men, and they knew much truth, but they altogether lacked that sensitiveness of God's will. Head knowledge of truth may make one all the more severe. Unsanctified knowledge is a peril. James 5:19 - "Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; let him know that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way, shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins" reminds us of the same aspect brought before us in 1 Peter 4:8 "Above all things have fervent love among yourselves, for love shall cover the multitude of sins". "Restore", "cover", "save", "win", "heal" - lovely words setting forth God's purpose, and God's desire that we, His people, might have that full view of "For Whom Christ Died", to affect our aspect as to everything, in the gracious ministry of the Holy Spirit.

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