

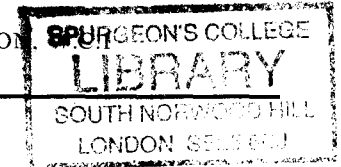
# THE THEOLOGICAL STUDENTS' FELLOWSHIP

## TERMINAL LETTER FOR STUDENTS AND MINISTERS

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### MAN OF GOD

TO BE a man of God was the pattern set by St. Paul for his dearly beloved son Timothy. In the first Epistle (1 Tim. vi. 11) it was to be the standard of his Christian conduct. In the second Epistle (2 Tim. iii. 17) he is reminded that it is to be the goal of Christian character through the study of Holy Scripture.

The term is found in the Old Testament as a testimony to the godly character of such men as Moses, Samuel, David, Elijah and Elisha.

A man of God describes a standard of life and conduct which the world expects of any man professing to be a Christian, specially a minister of God's Word. In the eyes of the world anything less is a denial of our Christian profession and invites criticism. In the Christian vocabulary it suggests sincerity of character, humility of heart, a Christ-like life, a close walk with God, a life lived in fellowship with Jesus Christ. In this article it is our intention to use the term in relation to the Christian Ministry; to examine the character and conduct of a minister of the gospel which marks him as a man of God.

#### *Conscious of being called of God*

St. Paul was 'separated unto the gospel' (Rom. i. 1). Jesus Christ reminded the disciples, 'Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you' (Jn. xv. 16). The first essential mark of a man of God, a man who has been called of God, is the commission, the inward conviction of the reality of God's call. The initiative lies in the counsel of the divine will, a call by grace for a purpose conceived in the mind of God before the foundation of the world, not on the ground of any special gifts or talents that we may possess. We are chosen in Christ, called by grace, 'that we should be holy and without blame before him in love' (Eph. i. 4).

#### *Concerned in knowing God*

A man of God will make it his ambition to 'walk worthy of the Lord', 'increasing in the knowledge of God' (Col. i. 10). With St. Paul his concern will be 'that I may know him' (Phil. iii. 10). His whole life will be disciplined by the desire to know the Lord who has called him to be His ambassador. There must have been a pathetic note in the Master's voice when He said to Philip 'Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip?' (Jn. xiv. 9). So often it is true that we are so busy doing the Lord's work that we have little or no time to know Him. For the man of God there can be no greater concern than a personal and intimate knowledge of God. Obviously, it is only those who know God who can speak with authority for Him. The man of God must take time to stand on holy ground as Moses did, to be found on the mountain top alone with God, often to retire to the secret place. 'There is a place by me' (Ex. xxxiii. 21).

It is in the secret place where our life is challenged by a vision of the holiness of God. 'Woe is me!' cried the prophet, 'because I am a man of unclean lips' (Is. vi. 5). That is where self is consumed as a whole burnt offering, our sins purged by the live coal from off the altar, and our hearts cleansed in the precious blood of Jesus Christ. Such is the price which must be paid by all who would know God. To be a man of God, to have this dominating passion, often means walking the lonely path of the life separated unto God. Yet it is the way to know the reality of His presence, the secrets of His mind, the intimacy of His fellowship, and to be made partakers of His

power which enables us to do exploits for Him. 'The people that do know their God shall be strong, and do exploits' (Dn. xi. 32).

#### *Constrained by the love of God*

'The love of Christ constraineth us' (2 Cor. v. 14). The man of God must have a heart which is flooded with the love of God. 'The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost' (Rom. v. 5). The criterion of discipleship is the supremacy of the love of Christ. 'Lovest thou me more than these?' (Jn. xxi. 15) was the challenging question to Simon Peter. We may be quite orthodox in our faith, gifted as a speaker, careful and strict in our observance of the rules of a Christian life, yet be 'as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal' because we lack the love of God (1 Cor. xiii. 1).

To be constrained by the love of God means that absolute singleness of purpose as expressed in the words of the hymn of Charlotte Elliott, 'Thy love unknown has broken every barrier down; now to be Thine, yea, Thine alone . . .' It means being moved with divine compassion for the souls of men. One of the main reasons why so much of our Christian service is fruitless is that the ministry of the Word is not charged with passionate love. A characteristic of the Lord Jesus Christ in His ministry was that 'he was moved with compassion' (Mt. ix. 36). So few of us know what it means to be 'moved' by love; we are moved when our dignity is hurt, but not with that divine compassion which touches the lost chord in a lost soul.

To be constrained by the love of God is an essential mark of a true man of God. The evidence of it is seen in a life radiant with love and abounding in the joy of the Lord. Above all, it is the very imprint of our Master's spirit which testifies to the world whose we are and whom we serve. 'They took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus' (Acts iv. 13).

#### *Consecrated to the will of God*

A man of God in the final analysis is a man wholly committed to God and wholly possessed by God. It is what St. Paul conceived when he describes himself as a 'bondslave of Jesus Christ'. A slave in the days of the Roman Empire knew that he belonged absolutely to another; his entire life including his will and his time was at the complete disposal of the one who was his master. Literally a slave possessed nothing that was his own. That is the standard by which the Christian must measure his consecration as a man of God. Since we have been bought with a price it is our reasonable service, it is the only logical response that we can make to the One who has called us to His service. 'Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: who . . . took upon him the form of a bondslave' (Phil. ii. 5, 7).

Possibly the greatest need today in the field of Christian service, particularly in the Christian ministry, is for men who will be wholly committed to the will of God, whatever the cost; men who have been ordained by the pierced hand, who have been commissioned, having faced the challenge and implications of the wound prints. 'He shewed unto them his hands and his side. . . . As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you' (Jn. xx. 20, 21). The wound prints were the measure of the cost to Him to be obedient to His Father's will. 'He humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross' (Phil. ii. 8). 'Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone' (Jn. xii. 24). That is still the fundamental principle that must operate in the life of any true man of God.

#### *Controlled by the Spirit of God*

Finally the man of God is one who is led by the Spirit. That is the key to a life which produces the 'fruit of the Spirit' (Gal. v. 22). He is a man who is 'filled with the Spirit' (Eph. v. 18). As a Christian he has received the Holy Spirit as a divine Person who dwells in the heart of every true believer, but it is possible to be a *possessor* of the Holy Spirit and yet not be *possessed* by the Holy Spirit. It is possible for you to have the indwelling Spirit, yet to be grieving Him and to be quenching His voice; in consequence your life is not bearing 'the fruit of the Spirit . . . goodness and righteousness and truth' (Eph. v. 9); you have no 'melody in your heart' (Eph. v. 19) and little experience of the life of victory. The Holy Spirit is the gift of the ascended Lord to enable the man of God to live a fruitful life. 'Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples'

(Jn. xv. 8). It is to empower the man of God to be 'more than conquerors through him that loved us' (Rom. viii. 37), and to 'shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness' (1 Pet. ii. 9).

The secret of such a life, the essential condition for being a man of God as portrayed in the Word of God, is the moment by moment submission to the sovereignty of the Holy Spirit. Though it is true that the man of God began to live the Christian life through the crisis of a new birth, and probably came into the blessing of life more abundant through a crisis of surrender to the Holy Spirit, the continuance of the new life, the growth of the new life, the fruit of the new life, is only possible as the Holy Spirit is given implicit obedience of heart and will. The man of God must be willing for his life to be controlled by the Holy Spirit; there is no other way if he would be 'a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work' (2 Tim. ii. 21).

New Malden.

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## 'IN CHRIST'

IN 1892 the appearance of Deissmann's exhaustive analysis of the Pauline formula 'In Christ' startled the theological world of his day, and it is no exaggeration to say that the ripples have not yet subsided. Successive interpreters of St. Paul have wrestled with the meaning of the phrase and its significance in the Pauline corpus. Some have contended sharply with one another, as Principal James Denney and Professor A. S. Peake, whether it should be understood mystically or morally. Others have found it to be the key to the deadlock reached by orthodox theologians in presenting the heart of Paul's theology in *experimental* terms rather than *legal*. All of us are indebted to such writers as H. A. A. Kennedy, C. Anderson Scott, J. S. Stewart, and A. M. Hunter for their full and lucid treatment of this theme.

The phrase itself is used 164 times by St. Paul, chiefly in the Epistles of the Imprisonment, possibly as a corrective against the idea that he was in the hands of Nero. Wherever he was, and whatever he was, he was still 'in Christ', prisoner though he was of the Emperor. Under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit Paul used this term to interpret his position as a Christian, and to do justice to the encounter with the risen Lord, which was foundational to all that followed. This simple, yet profound phrase, means so much more than *Christian*, although it may mean no more than that in Philemon 16. 'Both in the flesh, and in the Lord' may be only another way of saying both as a man and as a Christian.

### I.

The phrase is equivalent to a similar expression 'in the Spirit'. Indeed it might appear as though *the risen Christ is equated with the Holy Ghost* in the Pauline Epistles. Certainly the identification is actually made in 2 Cor. iii. 17: 'The Lord is that Spirit.' Yet the two personalities remain distinct in the New Testament, but hardly so in our experience. The apostles after Pentecost recognized the lineaments of the glorified Christ in the indwelling Presence of the Holy Spirit. Theology has tended to treat the doctrines of the Redeemer and the Sanctifier under different heads and to divide asunder what is united in the believer's experience. In much the same way as the early Christians could only say 'God' when they declared, by Christ 'we have access by one Spirit unto the Father' (Eph. ii. 18). Thus the relationship of Christ and the Spirit are inseparable in our union with God. Dr. Wheeler Robinson has suggested that only in the acceptance of Jesus as Lord and Saviour by the believer does the personality of the Spirit of God become real and understandable. 'If the Lord gave personality to the Spirit,' he affirms, 'the Spirit gave ubiquity to the Lord.' A Sunday School teacher who asked a little refugee 'Who is the Holy Ghost?' was astonished by the reply, 'The Twin Brother of Jesus.' Like Peter, flesh and blood had not revealed it unto him. To be 'in the Spirit' is the same experience as to be 'in Christ'.

John Calvin, commenting on 'the body is one and hath many members', says simply that *St. Paul calls Christ the Church*. For a long time Protestants have been so afraid of the ordinance usurping the place of its Lord that they