

A Sermon
from
2 Corinths XII, 7. 8. 9.

And lest I should be ex-
alted above measure through
the abundance of the revelations,
there was given to me a thorn
in the flesh, the messenger of
Satan to buffet me, lest I should
be exalted above measure.

For this thing I besought the
Lord three times, that it might de-
part from me. And he said
unto me, My grace is sufficient
for thee; for my strength is made
perfect in weakness. Most gladly
therefore will I rather glory in
my infirmities, that the power
of Christ may rest upon me.

Among
Of all the attainments of the
Christian believer nothing is
more frequently ~~or more urgently~~
enjoined or more urgently de-
manded than humility. It is of
all Christian graces one of the
most essential. It sustains, adorns,
sanctifies, promotes & enhances all
other graces & virtues. As faith
without charity is nothing worth,
so the most shining gifts and the
greatest zeal are of little avail
without humility.

Even between man & man, humility
commends itself ^{to the good, will & was}
~~more than any~~
^{feature of others}
~~other characteristics~~ and tends
to raise us in the esteem & affection
of our brethren & fellowmen. It
increases our influence for good.
We ^{should} ~~might~~ for instance, be unwilling
to receive counsel & admonition, or
reproof from a proud & assuming,
or, overbearing person; but we might

receive the same in good part
from a man ~~possessed of a~~ ^{characterized by}
humble mindedness, ~~in a man~~.

Then as regards our relation
to God, how essential & necessary
is a humble frame of mind,
by which alone all our efforts
to do good, our acts of faith &
labors of love, are rendered ac-
ceptable before God; for humility
teaches us, not to take any merit
to ourselves, but to give God the glory
of all we have & do all we do.
Hence an Apostle exhorts us; Be
clothed with humility, or wrap
up in it as in a garment.

God has promised to dwell with
us in those who are of a humble
& contrite heart, and the poor
in spirit are especially pointed
out as heirs of the heavenly Kingdom.
Now humility is a ~~gift of grace~~
imparted to us by the regenerating
influence of God's Holy Spirit. It
is not natural to any man; by nature

we are all proud & self sufficient
too apt to exalt ourselves, and to
~~glory~~^{boast} even of favors or talents
or ~~any~~ special distinctions which
may be awarded to us, instead
of giving all the glory to God.
Nor is this ~~too~~ natural propensity
utterly banished from the minds of
Christian believers; even they have
to guard continually lest they should
~~be so overcome as to forget that~~
the merit of all they do or possess
& enjoy is due to God alone.
Hence the Lord from time to time
sees fit to abase us, to show us our
own insufficiency & to teach us
an impressive lesson of humility;
it may be by ~~various~~^{some} severe trials,
trials, by the assaults of Satan
by chastisements & afflictions, or
by the assaults of Satan to make
us more & more conscious of our
own infirmities & shortcomings in
the sight of God.

The exercises
~~to be exercised~~
a wholesome
discipline
our hearts,
by some
severe trial,
affecting
either body
or mind.

Of this God's dealing with man
with his most faithful servants
we have a striking proof in the
great & noble Paul according
to the import of our text.

None however great & eminent
in the Church, however holy and
good in their lives, are spared.
He is just to the text by some
trial or other. And all this is meant for
~~for their own good~~ in order ^{that} ~~our good~~
that all glory may be ascribed
unto God who is justly jealous
of his honor, and ^{who} while he
us all dependent on his saving
grace in Christ Jesus.

According to our text we
note

- I, The special reason why the
Apostle was tried & humbled
- II, ~~How by what means the trial~~
^{The ~~special~~ ^{particular} thing of trial to which he was subject.}
~~was brought about.~~
- III, The Divine answer to his prayer for deliverance
- IV, The blessed effect produced &
maintained by ~~it~~ his trial.

And may God's Holy Spirit by
his teaching enable us to learn
effectually the gracious purpose
of God in all our trials of
faith & patience unto this
enable us for present
meditation.

I Just before our text St Paul
informs us of some special &
extraordinary ^{vision, or divine} revelation with
which he had ^{been} favored. ~~He tells~~ ^{relates}
~~us of a most wonderful event~~
~~in his life & history, he having~~
~~been~~ caught up into the third
heaven, or into ^{the} most exalted place
of the heavenly habitation, ^{even into Paradise} when he
had a revelation & heard words such
as it did not become him to utter,
or was beyond the power of man to
utter. Whether he was in the body, or
out of the body, he would not decide,
but of the fact itself he felt sure.
Yet although this might be a ^{fair} subject
~~for him to glory in with all justice~~
a fair & legitimate subject for him to

He tells
us that
he once
was

to glory in, he
 he ~~by~~ upon the ~~low~~ speaks of it with some re-
~~the~~ ~~at~~ ~~most~~ modestly. Though it hap- ^{several}
 pens a man than fourteen years before ^{and with}
 he evidently now, for the first time, ^{great}
 divulges the secret, and does
 so now with no other ^{motion or} ~~aim~~ ^{aim} than
 to prove his ^{Swiss} ~~Swiss~~ ^{call} ~~Swiss~~ ^{call} ~~Swiss~~ ^{call}
 to prove his ~~Swiss~~ ^{call} ~~Swiss~~ ^{call} ~~Swiss~~ ^{call}
 been assailed by some false teachers.
~~now to show that~~ ~~What~~ ~~con~~ ~~some~~
 might think, or ^{say} ~~think~~ ^{say} ~~think~~ ^{say} ~~think~~
 was beyond recall in God's special ^{that he}
 favor and had been ^{highly} ~~highly~~ ^{highly} ~~highly
~~highly~~ ^{highly} ~~highly~~ ^{highly} ~~highly~~ ^{highly}
 honored by God. He clearly
 intimates, in our text & the context,
 that such an abundant, or,
 wonderful revelation, as he had
 been permitted to behold might tend to raise
~~him to make him glory of this~~ ^{him to raise}
~~distinctive favor & honor.~~ ^{him in his}
 And hence, God had thought ^{own & other}
 fit to humble him, lest he should ^{idea; exim-}
 be in danger to be exalted above ^{alia, so}
 measure. We have therefore in the ^{as to cause}
 example of the apostle a special ^{him to glory.}
 proof, how jealously and carefully~~

[illegible]

in order
to maintain
his sovereign
rule

For when we
began of the
wonderful news
our own hearts

1 Brethren,
that things
in themselves
lawful &
honest, dis-
tinguished which
we may justly
claim, special
favors from
exh'n, may,

^{W. Thos. M. May Jr}
~~Somehow it is~~ human favor & ap-
^{with others}
 please, ~~somehow~~ eminent services
^{they have rendered}
~~to their many~~ to their fellowmen
 in the cause of the Church or great
^{which has} ^{and} ^{attended this effort}
 success ~~on their efforts~~, so ~~many~~
 ex prove snare & stumbling block & human vainglorious.

or it may be the superior

talents by which ~~they may~~ ^{to make may} be distinguished
goodness, ~~all these scales we are~~ ^{on our security} ~~constantly on the watch & we are~~ ^{which}
~~possible caution may prove~~ ^{men} ~~more~~ ^{an apt}
~~once a moment, to render a man~~ ^{men}
self sufficient & proud, or forgetful
of the given & hidden of all good
things. But no sooner is this
danger apparent, no sooner takes
a man credit to himself & feels
self complacent, than something is likely to
happen to humble him. And
this the Lord permits & directs
men particularly ^{tempers} ~~with~~ those who
are chosen vessels in his hands.
his most faithful servants are
tried. They more than others.
They are often put to the most severe
discipline to sore trials, lest they
should exalt themselves. Now

II, What let us notice in the next place,
how Paul was tried, by what
means his humility was sustained
and promoted. He tells us; There
was given me a thorn in the flesh, the

messenger of Satan to buffet me?

Now what this Thorn in the flesh many
has puzzled & perplexed many an
inquirer; nor have any of the most
eminent divines who have commented
on it, or tried to explain it, fully
cleared up ~~the~~ the precise import, or
direct signification. The Thorn in the
flesh has been variously explained
by different writers. Some think it
meant some painful Malady, of
bodily sufferings, or a bodily in-
firmity rendering life ^{a burden} burdensome;
others suppose it was some mental
anguish ^{of soul} or desponding thoughts
afflicting from time to time the mind,
caused by Satan's insinuations &
assaults, or ~~some peculiar temptation~~
~~and temptations~~ ^{or} temptations. Various other things
have been suggested ^{to be the proper meaning} ~~to be the proper meaning~~
The Spittle ~~may have been subject~~
But no one can describe the precise
nature of this Thorn in the flesh. Nor
is it of any special ^{way to us} ~~importance to us~~
to know exactly what the Spittle meant

by it, so long as we apprehend its general
by this than in the flesh which ~~seems~~ ^{imposed}
~~to pierce & distress him in body & soul,~~ ^{& tempt} and ^{the} ^{refutation}
~~Let us mark how every~~ ^{for our}
When the apostle explains the purpose
of this than, he tells us it was the
messenger of Satan, or one of Satan's
evil angels, that ~~he~~ ^{and} buffet him.
Hence it is evident that more than
mere bodily sufferings were comprised
in this distressing trial. The ^{Scriptures}
frequently intimate that Satan
has much to do with human suffering.
He may be viewed as a scourge, or,
instrument to afflict us in body
or mind. Not only these ^{of} ^{the} ^{presence}
of evils, but others ^{of} ^{the} ^{presence}
bodily infirmities ~~are~~ ^{it is as}
set forth in the Gospel narrative, ~~that~~ ^{that they}
afflicted by Satan. The case of ^(were)
Paul with a than in the flesh caused
by Satan's messenger, forcibly reminds
us of Job whose extreme sufferings
& trials of patience are attributed
to Satan's ⁱⁿ ^{human} ^{calamity}, permitted
by the Almighty. His bodily suffering

The significant emblem of a throne
~~subject~~ is properly not directly a dwelling
described to render its application
more general & more comprehensive.

The throne may differ ^{with} different believers
~~men~~ Satan has numerous manifold
devices to afflict & harass & perplex
the saints efforts. But seem let
us forget that all things must
work together for good to them that
love God. Even Satan's temptations & assaults
are overruled & defeated by one greater
than he all the powers of darkness.

That Paul prayed for deliverance
from this servitude, shows that
it is lawful for us to contend
with faith to pray for help
from above, or to be delivered
from afflictions. But the Lord
knows best what is good for us
we must bow to his will &
grow pleasure.
He will be fail to give

an answer for our gratitude & trust,
it will be a gracious answer even
if he does not grant our request.

I was distinctly w with Paul.
He was not only interested in ~~his own~~
but comforted & cheered by the ^{Lord's} answer.
My grace is sufficient for thee,
so if the Lord meant to say, I will
not my omnipotent grace will at all
time sustain. For my strength
is made perfect in weakness. In
proportion as we feel recognize &
confess our weakness God's grace
to strengthen & uphold will in
crease. To be captain of self
is to be ready for to be filled with
grace from on high

And how blessed the result how
cheered & encouraged the spirit
now appears