

Sermon Outlines The Christian Life

*“God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work.”
(2 Corinthians 9:8)*

St. Paul was always desirous that Christians should realize fully their possessions and possibilities. The Gospel speaks of inheritance and refers to present as well as future realization of it. The Greek word “*ploutos*” shows fulness of God for us.

Paul also keeps prominent the idea of a vigorous Christian life. He does this on every possible occasion and in connection with the simple facts of every-day living. Wherever opportunity offers, he drives it home by way of counsel, or encouragement, or warning, or command. Here, he urges his readers to liberality in sowing, or giving - “God loveth a cheerful giver” - and, consequently, in reaping, or getting - “God is able to make all grace abound.” Thus the illustration leads up to the universal principle of the text, which has within it three great facts for every Christian.

I. *The Object of the Christian Life* - “that ye . . . may abound in every good work.”

1. *Practical Living*

- a. Experience of Christianity in life - “by their fruits ye shall know them.”
- b. Necessity - springing from “a true and lively faith.”
- c. Good works - comparative, and so spiritual form for encouragement in each case.

2. *Consistent Living*

- a. “Every” - not some, but all.
- b. Two words: Constant (time), consistent (truth).
- c. Our works neither constant nor consistent - are apt to be twisted - intervals between blessings - dangerous times.
- d. Physical life maintained by processes which never cease: lungs breathing, heart beating, etc. - but these are automatic and not dependent on the will, whereas the moral life needs will power.
- e. Is it possible to “will” good works? Scripture says yes, for the Christian; there is no excuse for inconsistency, and there is always the conscience, ready to admit a fault.

Therefore, “every” good work: labor sometimes, play sometimes, sleep sometimes, eat sometimes - but “work” at all times. “Always” is one of Paul’s favourite words.

3. *Unmistakable Life*

- a. Not meagre, bare, poor - but should impress as something special. Should have abundance. Christianity was a new force in the world then and ought still to be seen as such.

II. *The Need of the Christian Life*

1. *Present Resources* - “having . . . sufficiency”

Cf. bankrupt - without means
self-contained - above means

2. *Sufficient Resources* - “all sufficiency”

Never lacking - in home life, business life, church life.

3. *Permanent Resources* - “always having all sufficiency”

Always every energy - never taken unawares

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III. *The Secret of the Christian Life*

1. Supply of grace - not our own but God's own life in the soul.
2. Variety of grace - "all" - Cf. Prayer Book Collect for 17th Sunday after Trinity - "given to all good works."
3. Measure of grace - two "abounds" - God's grace abounds to us; then we abound to every good work.
4. Adaption of grace - "toward you" - "to every good work" - just what is required.
5. Source of grace - God is able - grace depends on His character.
 - a. Rely on God - assurance of faith
 - b. Abide in God - no waiting for new supply till old is exhausted - Cf. automobile needing refilling with continuous supply of power to electric train or trolley-car.
 - c. Receive from God - "in-letting" before "out-letting."

. . . . *W.H. Griffith Thomas, D.D.*