

I'm going to deal with this section under three portions, and will read first a brief summary of each of the three portions.

First, I will read from portions of vv.7-8. "But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ, yea doubtless I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord."

Second, end of v. 8, "That I might win Christ. . . . not having my own righteousness which is of the law but that which is through the faith of Christ . . . that which is of God by faith that I might know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings being made conformable unto His death.

Third, reading a portion from v.11-14. "If by any means I might attain . . .not as though I had already attained. . . Brethren I count not myself to have apprehended but this one thing I do, . . .I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."

I would like to discuss this unified passage which I read for Paul's Epistle. Maybe somebody is surprised I did not start at the beginning of the chapter. But I believe most of you know that our ch. divisions were put in by an English archbishop in the 13th century, and that Paul wrote his epistle as one complete unit. The ch. divisions are often an interruption. Sometimes a very helpful interruption. Sometimes one that is a great hindrance. But it is always good to see what verses belong together. This is a definite unified section from v. 4-14, though of course related to that which precedes and to what follows.

In this section, the first of the thoughts that is presented is in these words "but what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ." We entitle this "Paul's attitude toward the good things of this world."

Paul is not at this point discussing his attitude toward the evil things of this world. We read something of that in our Scripture lesson this morning. For instance we read, "But now ye also put off all these, anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth. Lie not one to another." Everyone knows these are evil. There are certain attitudes, actions, emotions which well up in every human being and everyone knows they are evil. Everyone knows he deserves punishment for them. Everyone has a guilt complex on account of them. Even if he doesn't, if someone becomes so hardened that he doesn't realize them in himself, every person, no matter who, feels disgusted with other people when they manifest these qualities. He feels very definitely they are wrong, and wicked in the other person even if he does not see them in himself.

These are very important in life. They are in all of us and they are a great problem for us. But that is not what Paul is talking about in this first part of this section. He says, "But what things were gain to me, these I counted loss."