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“LOOKING UNTO JESUS”

At one time, people used to think in terms of lasting values, but in the fast changing world of today, it would be difficult to say just what is a lasting value. Wherever we look, everything is in a state of flux and change.

In such conditions, each Christian can be grateful to our Heavenly Father for His wonderful love and unmerited favour. A scripture verse which we all might apply to ourselves, to our own previous condition and to our own development, is Eph. 2:12. There the apostle says “At that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world.”

How thankful each of us can be to our Heavenly Father, how we can praise Him in the presence of His people with all sincerity, confessing that while we in no way deserved His favour toward us yet we greatly treasure it and praise the Lord for His wonderful love and mercy in that “now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God.” Eph. 2:19.

How true are the apostle's words in Eph. 5:14 “wherefore He saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.” For many years, as His people, we have enjoyed the Lord's marvellous light, His leading and His care, and His wonderful provisions for us. Even His great sacrifice on Calvary is the precious provision of our Heavenly Father, for there is no other way of salvation. No wonder the apostle could say: “I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ and Him crucified.” 1 Cor. 2:2.

All the Lord's people are seeking to walk in the light of our Lord; we are looking to Him in all circumstances of our lives, happy or unhappy. In times of gladness, we thank Him, even though we realise that earthly joy is of a transient nature — it is here today and gone tomorrow. In times of sadness, we look to Him for consolation, for His over-ruling and his strength to overcome such experiences. Indeed, whatever we do,

we look to our Lord Jesus.

For every Christian, the purpose of the knowledge and acknowledgment of the Lord is to look to Him and to grow in His likeness. “Speaking the truth in love (we) may grow up into Him in all things, who is the Head, even Christ” Eph. 4:15. Our looking unto Christ in all situations of life does not depend on our own wisdom our education or ability, for as Jesus said to His disciples while He was with them during His earthly ministry: “The disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his lord. It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master, and the servant as his lord. If they have called the master of the house of Beelzebub, how much more them of his household.” Mat. 10:24,25.

Every disciple of Christ has gone through practical experiences of privation, difficulties and persecutions; this has been so from the beginning even till now. But we realise that the Divine wisdom and the Divine mercy are revealed to babes, not to the wise of this world, nor to the powerful who can manage and change many things. Our Lord said: “I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight. All things are delivered unto me of my Father; and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal him.” Mat. 11:25-27.

Then come our Lord's words of invitation: “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of

In This Issue

Looking unto Jesus	1
Prophet Amos	4
God will have all men to be saved	8
Fruits of the Spirit-Temperance	12

me; for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." Mat. 11:28-30. How often we think of these words of our Lord and apply them to ourselves in the many problems and difficulties of this life, realising how much we need the attitude of meekness of our Lord, to come and take His yoke upon ourselves, to be meek and lowly of heart ourselves, and so to find His rest to our souls. We know that Christians throughout the Gospel Age have experienced persecution and troubles, to greater or less extent, but that this is part of normal Christian development.

When we consider our Lord, did He live His life and was His earthly ministry peaceful and restful, with everything plain sailing? No, He continued to endure the contradiction of sinners against Himself and had to carry on His work in the face of persecution and difficulty. But our Lord revealed that wonderful truth of Divine love when He declared: "God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." John 3:16. His preceding words tell how this was to be accomplished: "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up; that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have eternal life." John 3:14,15.

We are all familiar with the experiences of Israel during the forty years of wanderings in the wilderness after they left Egypt. Very often theirs was quite a difficult situation and we read in Num. 21:5-9: "the people spake against God, and against Moses, Wherefore have ye brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no bread, neither is there any water; and our soul loatheth this light bread (the manna). And the Lord sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people; and much people of Israel died. Therefore the people came to Moses and said. We have sinned, for we have spoken against the Lord, and against thee; pray unto the Lord, that He take away the serpents from us. And Moses prayed for the people. And the Lord said unto Moses, Make thee a fiery serpent, and set it upon a pole, and it shall come to pass, that everyone that is bitten, when he looketh upon it, shall live. And Moses made a serpent of brass, and put it upon a pole, and it came to pass, that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived."

What an amazing story! It was as if a look at that serpent of brass (or copper) in itself contained some kind of anti-venin, to counter the venom of those serpents; these it seems were Egyptian cobras, very deadly snakes. It was just a look at that serpent on the pole, which was sufficient for the person to recover and feel no ill effects. In itself, this was a miracle, but

again consider how it happened. A man or a woman was suddenly bitten by a snake; unless they believed Moses' words, they would just lie down and die. But on the other hand, whoever believed Moses and the instructions of the Lord, lifted their heads in faith and looked to that snake on the pole — these did not suffer any ill effects and recovered.

And so our Lord compared Himself to that brazen serpent, saying: "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up." With the brazen serpent, it was a Divine ordinance. God ruled it that way. And so it is with our Lord — if we have faith enough, we look to the Lord. We look to Him for forgiveness of our sins, for that covering robe of His righteousness. By virtue of His blood shed on Calvary for us, He is our wisdom, He is our justification, for we know that it is only through acceptance of our Lord as our personal Saviour that we have a right to life. So we look to Jesus in all the affairs of our lives, for encouragement, for strength, for everything. For us, He has become our "all in all."

It is the Divine ordinance that only through faith in Christ as our Saviour can we have life. Similarly, those Jewish people of old, those Israelites, had to lift up their heads and look toward that pole where the serpent of brass was glistening in the sun and that alone saved their lives. Speaking of God's provision for us, the apostle John writes: "In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent His only-begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins." 1 John 4:9,10.

At thirty years of age, our Lord at His baptism became the Messiah in His full authority and began His ministry, culminating at his death at Calvary, which we especially remember at memorial season. His message reached out first to those that heard and believed in Him.

That was the time when Divine mercy and Divine forgiveness were turned to the people. Before that, there was no way out, the Jews were under the Law of Moses but were in bondage to the law, because none could keep it perfectly; even if 99 per cent of it were kept, failure in one point resulted in the law condemning that one to death.

So the apostle John writes: "The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." John 1:17. That is the grace extended to and accepted by us, when we first looked towards our Lord. He is our Saviour, in due time we accepted Him and we became reconciled to God, who is now able to overlook all our imperfections because He looks to us through the merit

of the sacrifice of Jesus. Nothing of this is of ourselves, though we are trying to do our best, are trying to look to our Lord and grow into His likeness, and surely enough are being transformed by the Spirit of God dwelling within us. But still we are imperfect and it is only through the merit of Christ's sacrifice on Calvary that we are acceptable to God and have right to life.

The same apostle puts the situation simply and positively "He that hath the Son hath life, and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life." 1 John 5:12. In other words, the person who does not accept Jesus is still under condemnation. The apostle Paul writing to the Corinthian brethren points to the Divine grace revealed to us as part of His plan of salvation. "All things are of God, who hath reconciled us to Himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation." 2 Cor. 5:18. This ministry is first for the believers of this gospel age; we are reconciled to God by faith in our Lord and in His great sacrifice.

The ministry of reconciliation has only a small beginning however in this gospel age; during the millennium when the kingdom of God is established, uncounted billions of people will come back from the grave and will be restored. To them too will that gospel be preached — that ministry of reconciliation will reach them too and they will have the possibility of being saved and living forever. But it will still need to be by faith, for that is what God desires. For as the apostle writes under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit: "without faith it is impossible to please Him; for he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him." Heb. 11:6.

In the same chapter, the apostle goes on to describe, as it were, a gallery of the great victors of faith, beginning with the first martyr, Abel, then going on to Enoch, Noah, and so on. Finally he says that time would fail him to tell of everyone who pleased God, not through keeping of the Mosaic law but by faith. Then to conclude the chapter he writes: "these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise, God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect." Heb. 11:32,39,40.

Then as if to show supreme faith and the pinnacle of faithfulness and loyalty, he exhorts us to be "looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider Him who endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds. Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin." Heb. 12:2,3.

What an encouragement we have — to look to our Lord, to look to Him for everything. We look to Him for wisdom, for our salvation, for redemption and for the great reward He promised when he said: "I go to prepare a place for you and... I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." John 14:2,3. Where the Master is, there will be His servants!

So let us look unto Jesus, our confidence and trust in Him will bring great reward in our own lives here and now and in the work of restoration of all mankind in the age to come. Especially in these insecure times, when there is no such thing as a lasting value or a secure tenure, our Lord is the best and indeed only security. He is our Leader, He is our elder Brother and we can depend on Him for all things.

(S Szwaluk 28 Dec 1991)
"There is life in a look at the crucified One.
Look, look, look and live!"

Bro Simon Szwaluk 10/4/23 - 2/3/05

Follow Me

The morning was dawning on that fateful day
Stunned silence, no words could they find to say
For was rolled aside, the heavy gray stone
An empty tomb they were now being shown

The first rays of sun that fell on the cave
Revealed not the One to the world come to save
They entered the place where the Savior was laid
Two days before, a great debt He had paid

Amidst blood stained linens, their sorrow was great
His body was gone, and they knew not His fate
Sadness and mourning now turned into fright
For standing among them two men clothed in white

They bowed down in fear then one of them said
Why do you look for the living among the dead?
Into the hands of sinful men the Son of Man was given
He was crucified, dead, but now He is risen!

Joy replaced fear as they ran from that place
Knowing that soon they would see His face
The good news was spread by His followers then
The birth of the church was soon to begin

From the depths of that tomb so dark and so cold
Came the good news of life for which we are told
Christ Jesus did come here to show us the way
"Follow me" is what He tells us today.

- Steven Walls -

“THE PROPHET AMOS”

The prophecy of Amos was written during the time of King Jereboam II and King Hosea, the two kings reigning at the time of a few of the prophets. They provide a geographic glimpse of how the nations were at the time and what was happening then. Generally speaking, prophecies are the litmus of the judgments of the Lord Almighty God. He uses prophets as His messengers, as the carriers of His message, basically for the nation of Israel. Taking a cross section of all the prophecies from Isaiah right up to Malachi, there is a set pattern in what all the prophecies tell. We see that God's favour was bestowed upon the nation of Israel, upon the people. We see the way God brought them out of Egypt, how He groomed them as His children, and then how Jehovah God was displeased with the nation of Israel. In referring to Israel, we think of the whole nation including Judah and Israel.

So why was God displeased with them, and how did He chastise and correct His own people? A correction factor was involved. The people were corrected a bit; here and there. Some of them were good, but as a nation they varied up and down, and that is when we see the scorn of Jehovah God poured out on the nation of Israel, for we believe God was totally displeased with the fleshly Israelites at that particular time. What eventuated from all the evil inflicted on them is that a good thing came out of it, a final blessing, the favour of restoration. They were plucked out but then put back, but we see here in these prophecies that they were to be cut off in that particular day. In our studies a great deal of importance is given to chronology and we have to look at prophecies from that viewpoint, noting times and seasons, as Jesus Christ mentioned. Associated with 'times and seasons' are 'signs'.

Driving along the highway, we need both a map and signposts to help us find our destination. Likewise, we have to see the prophecies from the signs given to us. In the midst of Egypt, the Lord God tells us, He will provide a witness, and that is one of the signs. There are many such signs, and as we review the prophecy of Amos we will be blessed to have understanding of it. It is time very well spent to study the prophecies of the Minor Prophets. We often look at the well-known prophecies of Daniel and Jeremiah, but sometimes we forget the Minor Prophets.

Amos, the Prophet

In reviewing the book of Amos, we want to know much about the prophet and the context of his book. What is he trying to tell us in this day? According to one of the commentaries, James Smith's Dictionary, the book of Amos is unbound by time; there is no time limit. It had an application for Jews at that particular

time and an application for the present. There are many prophecies that are coming to a better light now as students try to learn more about them with the help of the Lord's spirit. Amos was one of the first prophets to write down the prophecies given to him. Prior to that, if you go into the books of First and Second Kings, there were a lot of prophets from Elijah to Elisha and some lesser prophets, but their prophecies were verbal. Amos, during his time, prophesied verbally but also wrote down his prophecies.

The meaning of Amos' name is obscure. Probably there is a meaning of 'bearing a load, part of a burden' and that seems to be associated with the name Amos. To those whom he prophesied, he seemed to be placing a burden upon the nation. People disliked Amos because of the burden he put on them. He was a bold prophet, and that is an example to us. How should we tell the Word of God to the people of this world? We have to be bold in expressing the true knowledge of God. If we are weak and deviate from the truth, we ourselves risk being corrupted. Amos' prophecy emphasizes the injustices between the rich and poor. It tells about the structure of the whole nation of Israel; its social, religious and political structure, how the kings abused their power. Amos was not from an advantaged background, he was not the son of a prophet, as he tells us in Chapter 7, nor was he of a royal background. God sends His messengers not to please the flesh but to please Himself. God is not a respecter of any person, so the message from Amos was not to please Israel but to send the messages of God directly, whether they were liked or not.

Amos was a shepherd from the kingdom of Judah and his home in Tekoa was about 25-30 miles from Jerusalem or 10 miles to the south of Bethlehem. He was from the Kingdom of Judah but the Lord sent him to Israel, the Northern Kingdom. So he went all the way there without questioning the Lord like Jonah did. He took up the burden of the Lord and went to the Northern Kingdom. The meaning of Tekoa is 'a trumpeting sound', so we can nominate Amos as a trumpeting shepherd who blew his trumpet with a certain message that we see in Chapter 3 onwards. In Chapter 7, verse 14, Amos boldly replies to the false prophet Amaziah, affirming ¹⁴I am no prophet, neither am I a prophet's son; but I was an herdman, and a gatherer of sycamore fruit: ¹⁵And the Lord took me as I followed the flock.' That means from then on, he primarily took care of the Lord's flock. His message was for the sheep, the flock of God; primarily the 10 tribe Kingdom of Israel, although many of his warnings are applied to Judah as well. He prophesied at Bethel, the centre of the worship of the golden calf.

That worship was instituted during the time of Jeroboam I, when there was a split. That was the centre of these evil practices. We see in Leviticus 26 how the scorn of Jehovah God came on them and how the Levites, who were part of these 10 tribes, left the 10-tribe Northern Kingdom and went to Judah, one of the historical occurrences during that particular time.

His Style of Writing

With that background, we look at what the writing is about, the nature of the writing. The book of Amos may be seen as a form of satire. Satire is a form of language, a literary work using sarcasm, irony or wit in ridiculing or denouncing abuses, follies, customs, etc. As James Smith explains in his dictionary, it is one of the beautiful literary works; poetic artistry is there in this book. As you look into the Scriptures, it is a beautiful explanation and, not exaggeration, but the way the poet puts the context into reference. The writer openly scorns the religious, social and political practices of Israel. The style of writing includes the following elements: Some of his verses are the old way of saying something, some are narrated, including some predictive elements and of course prophecy, vision, dialogue and a dramatic monologue expressing the conversation of Jehovah God with the prophet himself, (Chapter 6). It is lyrical poetry on the pronouncement of God and scorn of His people. The writer proves himself to be a master of ancient poetry, and we have to understand this was written about 2800 years ago so the Hebrew language he uses is clear and simple but at the same time he uses some of the purest and most classical Hebrew in the entire Old Testament. He uses metaphor, simile, epithet, titles, parallelism, rhetorical questions, sarcasm, conflict, and other methods in his book.

Contemporaries of Amos

Now we look at the contemporaries of this prophet, Amos. He was there during the time of King Jeroboam who ruled the Northern Kingdom of Israel and who greatly expanded his territory. He captured the greater part of Upper Syria and added to and greatly expanded the Northern Kingdom. Jeroboam reigned from 825-784BC. Second Kings 14:24-27 tells of him, but mostly about his evils. He was an able king, capturing many of the Provinces, but there was a lot of evil in him. He worshiped gods that the Almighty God never liked. Another contemporary was King Uzziah of Judah, who tried to burn incense before the Lord, and the Lord consequently made him a leper. He reigned between 810-758BC. These were the two kings who were reigning during the time of this prophet. The prophet Hosea was also a contemporary during the years 784-725BC together with Joel, probably during the last few years of Joel's prophecy in about 810BC, very close to Jonah's time. We also see in Chapter 7 that there was a false prophet, Amaziah, who told Amos to go back to do his work in Judah and not to

prophesy in Israel. But Amos, being a good prophet, continued to prophesy in the Northern Kingdom of Israel. With this background, we go into the book of Amos.

The content of the book of Amos

Chapters 1 & 2

The first two chapters basically tell of the judgment upon the nations around Israel and also the nation of Israel itself. The nations adjoining Israel were Assyria, Gaza (that is the Philistines), Tyrus (which is Phoenicia, present-day Lebanon) and to the southern part all the Trans-Jordan nations which are Edom, Ammon and Moab. These are the six nations upon which God sent His judgments. Why should God chastise these nations along with the Israelites? A suggestion would be because these nations were included in the greater Kingdom of Solomon and David. During the time of Solomon, Solomon included a practice of mixing these races with Jews, He also inculcated the heathen habits of these nations, so there was all the more reason for the Lord God to chasten these nations too. All these nations are mentioned in Jeremiah 25, with similar judgments. Of these, Edom was a more emphasized nation in Jehovah's judgment. Edom is another name for Esau who was a special enemy of Jacob, and God changed the name of Jacob in those days when the blessings came upon Jacob.

In Chapter 2 verse 6 onwards, Jehovah God reproves the nation of Israel. Why? Because they sold the righteous for silver and the poor for a pair of shoes, they corrupted the Nazarites, and they also commanded the prophets not to prophesy. So these were the sins of Israel. Isaiah 8:9,10 tells: 'Associate yourselves O ye people' and ye shall be broken in pieces; and give ear, all ye of far countries: gird yourselves, and ye shall be broken in pieces; gird yourselves, and ye shall be broken in pieces.' So there is a destruction process upon all the nations. That was the context, the scorn, the rebuke of Jehovah God in Chapters 1 and 2.

Chapter 3

In this chapter Jehovah tells of a controversy about the nation of Israel itself. Beginning with verse 1, it says: 'Hear this word that the Lord hath spoken against you, O children of Israel, against the whole family which I brought up from the land of Egypt, saying, You only have I known of all the families of the earth: therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities.' It is quite logical. I can punish my own son; I have no authority to punish anybody else's son. The nation of Israel had that special bonding relationship with Jehovah God, so God chastised them as His own son. If you go to verse 6, it tells us about the trumpet: 'Shall a trumpet be blown in the city, and the people not be afraid?' So when we hear the trumpeting sound we must, as the children of God, think that there is a message coming

down to us. Down the ages we see there are seven trumpets blown, and I believe we are in the times of the seventh trumpet, which is still in progress. Verse 8 reads: 'The lion hath roared, who will not fear? The Lord God hath spoken, who can but prophesy?' The roaring of the lion is also mentioned in Chapter 1 in the mountains of Samaria and the mountains of Jerusalem. That was a controversy. Also in verse 3, there is another aspect: 'Can two walk together, except they be agreed?' Can you walk together if you don't agree? How can we join together? So Jehovah's argument is, how can He walk with the nation of Israel if there is disobedience from His own people.

Chapter 4

Here is a very idiomatic expression of the scorn by Jehovah upon His people. Verse 1 begins: 'Hear this word, ye kine of Bashan'. In some versions it says 'the cow of Bashan', as in Psalm 22:12: 'the bulls of Bashan are all around me'. They were all around Christ Jesus attacking the Anointed One when He was offering up His sacrifice. Bashan is the northern part of Israel, very near the Sea of Chineret. It is a very fertile land where a lot of livestock was processed and there were good cows and sheep, and it is also famous for oak trees. The oaks of Bashan are part of the Old Testament prophecies. Basically, the cows of Bashan were so physically fat that they discarded the words of God and wanted their own food, never willing or inclined to hear the Lord's words or the prophecies given by His holy prophets.

Verse 2 says: 'The Lord God hath sworn by his holiness, that, lo, the days shall come upon you, that he will take you away with hooks, and your posterity with fishhooks.' Usually when cows are slaughtered, hooks are put on their feet, and that is how they are hung for meat. So, the Assyrian king came and took them by the hoofs, and no one survived, everyone perished. And in verse 4: 'Come to Bethel, and transgress: at Gilgal multiply transgression; and bring your sacrifices every morning, and your tithes after three years.' Gilgal and Bethel were the religious institutions of Samaria, so people used to do this as a tradition but their hearts were very far from the Lord. The Lord says in Isaiah 29:13: 'this people draw near me with their mouth and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their heart far from me.' Going down to verse 6 it talks about the fire in the house of Joseph. In 1 Peter 4:17 it says: 'Judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?' So, judgment begins at the house of God.

Chapter 5

This chapter refers to Bethel and Gilgal. The Lord God tells them in verse 15: 'Hate the evil, and love the good, and establish judgment in the gate: it may be that

the Lord God of hosts will be gracious unto the remnant of Joseph.' And this grace was given to the remnant of Joseph in the Jewish harvest which was at the time of Christ. The most important aspect of Chapter 5 is from verse 16 onwards where it explains the Day of the Lord. In the Day of the Lord shall be ¹⁶wailing in all the streets; and they shall say in all the highways, Alas! Alas! And they shall call the husbandman to mourning, and such as are skilful of lamentation to wailing.... ¹⁸Woe unto you that desire the day of the Lord! to what end is it for you? The day of the Lord is darkness, and not light.' It is very clear in this prophecy that the Day of the Lord wherein the Lord begins to set up His kingdom, the kings of the earth do not want the Anointed King of Jehovah sitting upon the house of David. They don't want to respect Him, so they all want to rail against this king, hence the gross darkness.

In verse 19 we are told it is 'as if a man did flee from a lion, and a bear met him; or went into the house and leaned his hand on the wall, and a serpent bit him.' Commentaries on this verse are meager, so a suggestion is that it is about past times we know well. These are two emblems. The British lion is the symbol of the British Empire and the Russian bear. The British ruled with such a strong hand. They believed the sun would never set on the British Empire, which they ruled from Canada and all the richest nations even up to Japan. Of course, some good things were done by the British but they had some unwelcome practices, such as, divide and rule, displacement of people, apartheid, huge amounts of looted wealth were taken to Britain, and they named Singapore 'the City of the Lion'. So this is just a suggestion. Man escaped the evils of the British Empire, and then came Russian Communism. He went into the house, and we see all the countries are fully concerned with nationalism. India is filled with Hindu nationalism, China is filled with Chinese supremacy, and now is the time the serpent is to bite. That would be the time of trouble, and we see this happening around the world. The French, German and Russian confederacy want to join together and that is one of the prophecies.

But finally, what Jehovah God tells here is the total destruction of these evil systems, the breaking of the structures. We also have to realise that during the harvest work, it is not just breaking the structures but the binding of the tares. One such tare would be the binding of the European Union. These prophecies give an idea of how these things will happen. The things happening in Iraq and Indonesia today give a glimpse of the start of anarchy, when people are upset and the weak shall say, I am strong! In North Korea there is not enough food to eat but it abounds in the West. These are problems we are going to face.

Chapter 6

Here the prophet says: 'Woe to them that are at ease in Zion, and trust in the mountain of Samaria.' These are the people who trust in nominal Christendom wherein there is no truth. They are very relaxed and do not know the word of God that they should be prepared. Amos tells to his people in one of his previous verses, Prepare to meet thy God.

Chapter 7

In verses 7 and 8 God holds a plumb line. Jehovah God is not inclined to give favours to Israel and He tells them, My judgment shall surely come.

Chapter 8

This chapter speaks of the basket of summer fruit which shall be no more, it is finished. In verse 11 there is an interesting thought: 'Behold the days come, saith the Lord God, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord' and we see this prophecy being fulfilled during the 1260 years of gross darkness upon the face of the earth. The youngsters were yearning for the truth but never got it.



Olive Trees in the Garden of Gethsemane

Chapter 9

The final blessings come in this chapter, verse 11: 'In that day I will raise up the Tabernacle of David that is fallen, and close up the breaches thereof and I will raise up his ruins and I will build it as in the days of old.' So that is the final blessing upon the nation of Israel. This pertains to the fleshly Israel; it is going to be blessed but the blessing comes from Jerusalem that is above. The king of the heavenly Jerusalem, Christ Jesus, the Anointed One, He is going to come and bless the nation of Israel. As we are part of the heavenly nation, let us consider the earthly Jerusalem because they are our mistaken brethren. In due time they will be blessed and we will all be in the house of God. We will all enter into the peace of the Tabernacle and dwell in the restful pastures of the Lord God, wherein the Great Shepherd Himself will feed us with much better food.

What we are not able to understand today, we will understand in the days to come. The hope of Christ, the hope of glory, Christ in you.

“GETHSEMANE AND CALVARY”

In far-off Palestine there is
A place whose history,
In Time or in Eternity,
Shall ne'er be forgotten be--
The Garden of Gethsemane,
Where we in memory tread
The soil that Jesus' feet oft pressed;
And his tears hallowed;
For when his work on earth was done,
And he would soon depart,
And leave in this unfriendly world
Those dearest to his heart,
He sought with them the solitude
Of that familiar place,
And there "exceeding sorrowful,"
Bowed down with tear-stained face.
In spirit gladly he had done
His Father's righteous will;
But had the oft-times weary flesh,
Failed some jot to fulfill?
"By one man's disobedience,
Death passed upon all men."
Nor could the blood of many beasts
Cleanse them from inbred sin.
God had, through Moses' Law, decreed
A "Corresponding Price,"

Therefore the Offerer must bring
A perfect sacrifice
And fear of death--eternal Death--
Encompassed him that night,
Oh, would the Cross thus banish him
Forever from God's sight,
And leave the lost and dying world,
Which he had come to save,
With nevermore a ray of hope
Of life beyond the grave?
And in that dark and lonely hour,
Without one pitying eye,
Thrice from his troubled heart there came
The same despairing cry,
"O Father, if 'tis possible,
Remove this cup from me,
If not, except I drink of it,
Shall I, not bow to Thee?"
Not Calvary's bitter pain or shame,
The "cup" he prayed to shun;
But endless Death--yet even so,
"Thy will, not mine, be done."
And oh, how worthless our lives seem,
As we behold him there--
The Son of God, that speechless Lamb,
In agonizing prayer.

“GOD WILL HAVE ALL MEN TO BE SAVED”

God will have all men to be saved! Could there be anything more vital than salvation for us, the called-out church of the Gospel Age, and for all the human family in the coming Kingdom Age? Any other promises we might receive would have but little value without eternal life with which to enjoy them - they could give pleasure for but a brief moment. Compared to eternity, this lifetime is but a brief moment. This address is really a reminder of the old, old story which we love to think and speak about, (BSH 161), but it is always good to have clearly in mind the Scripture evidence from God's Word of the wideness and comprehensiveness of our Heavenly Father's wonderful plan of salvation.

The theme text is taken from 1 Timothy 2:4. To get the context, let us read verses 1-6 of that chapter - "I exhort, therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions and giving of thanks be made for all men; for kings and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus: who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.' We rejoice that in the fullness of time the opportunity will be given to all the descendants of father Adam to receive everlasting life.

During the Gospel Age it is those that our Heavenly Father is calling with a heavenly calling to be members of His special divine family, the Bride for His only-begotten Son, all those that are to receive a heavenly reward. During the coming Kingdom Age it will be all the multitudes of mankind. What a blessing it is that by the grace of God we have been enlightened to understand this precious truth! What a joy and comfort it is to know that all our friends and relations that die unsaved will be restored to life again in that future day and be given the opportunity to live forever in the earthly paradise, the kingdom that God has prepared for them from the foundation of the world. (Matt.25:34)

If we have the true love of God in our hearts we rejoice, not only because our friends have been given this opportunity but also we are even glad that our enemies are also to receive the same opportunity. Our heavenly Father is to open wide the doors of the great prison house of death and release all those imprisoned therein, both His friends and His enemies. His enemies will be figuratively slain by the sword coming out of the mouth of His Son, that is, by the truth, like the picture given us in Revelations 19:21. God will destroy His enemies by making them His friends. We see by the Scriptures that unfortunately there will be some who will be incorrigible and will not avail themselves of the gracious provisions God has made for them. Only these will

receive a literal slaying. We would hope that this class would be few in number.

Going back again to 1 Tim 2: 4 'God will have all men to be saved', what exactly is this verse saying? What is the meaning of "saved" here? Is it speaking of eternal salvation? No, we would understand this verse to be speaking of what we might call "initial salvation", saved from the Adamic death sentence and, additionally for those of mankind that have fallen asleep in death, saved from the grave. We ourselves have already been saved from the Adamic death sentence and in God's due time all men will be saved in this same way.

This is the first step towards eternal salvation. Different thoughts have been expressed on this verse. Some believe that it teaches universal salvation. We would all be only too pleased if this could be achieved within the framework of God's plan, but such an understanding would be contrary to the Scriptures and we must fully accept God's Word and not be influenced by our own thoughts, desires and emotions. God will not take over the mind of anyone and save them against their own will. God's Word must be the final arbiter in our understanding of His divine plan.

When we correctly understand this verse, it really teaches not universal salvation but universal opportunity for salvation. It is like with the nation of Israel of old, God said in Deuteronomy 30: "See, I have set before thee this day life and good, and death and evil.' This is just the way it will be in the coming Kingdom Age. God does not force eternal life on any one. It is a priceless and special gift. Those wishing to obtain it must desire it strongly enough that they are prepared to accept the great Creator's conditions. He is the life-give so He is entitled to make the rules and these rules have not changed. They are still the same as they were for our first parents - absolute obedience, leading with practice to doing and even delighting to do God's Will, just as it was with our blessed Saviour, as it is written in Psalm 40:8 "I delight to do thy will, 0 my God: yea, thy law is within my heart." He is the pattern to follow. This applies to ourselves now and to all mankind in the next Age. We can easily see how essential obedience is. We need only to look at the terrible conditions in our world today to see the results of disobedience. If all would obey our Creator's righteous laws the world's troubles would just vanish away. Right near the end of the Bible in the Book of Revelation we see that the same requirements still apply, Rev. 22:14 "Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they might have the right to the tree of life and may enter in through the gates into the city."

Only those who have learned this lesson well will have the right to the tree of life. Of course, they must also

develop a loving, righteous character. The first step for us and for the entire world is the acceptance of our Heavenly Father's gracious gift freely given for all mankind, namely the life of His only-begotten Son. During the Gospel Age this is a matter of faith. In the next Age it will be more a case of walking by sight. When the dead are coming back to life, none can then have doubts that there is a God and they will readily believe on the only name given for Salvation, as we read in Acts 4:12. A brother once told of a man he knew that could not accept that there could be a resurrection. He said, I will not believe unless I see someone come back from the dead. The brother commented: The first person he will see back from the dead will be himself!

We note that they are first saved. This is by the context of verse 4. It is only then that they come to a knowledge of the truth, whereas it is only after they receive this knowledge of the truth that they can make progress towards final and complete salvation. Until they come to a knowledge of the truth, they cannot even take the first step of accepting Jesus as their Saviour. So if final and eternal salvation was meant, the verse would have to read in the reverse, namely, God will have all men to come to a knowledge of the truth and be saved. The Greek word translated "knowledge" is a stronger word than our English translation. It means "accurate knowledge" as some of the more literal translations render it. Many today have a very inaccurate knowledge of the truth. By our heavenly Father's grace, we have been greatly blessed in that we have been given a clear understanding of the basic truth of His glorious plan for us and all the human family, ie "meat in due season".

A Ransom for All

The verses in our passage all link together with the one theme, that is, the hope for all mankind.. Verse 1 exhorts us to make supplication and prayer for all mankind. That is because God has an interest in all and will have all to be saved. Then verses 5 and 6 read: 'For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.' Here we have the same truth - Jesus gave Himself a ransom for all. As we know, the Greek for ransom means "a corresponding price", a corresponding price for father Adam. This is the only place in the Scriptures where this word occurs. We have the word "ransom" in other places where it is from a slightly different Greek word simply meaning "price". We note that this precious truth of the ransom is to be testified in due time. For some the Gospel Age is the due time, for others the next Age will be the due time.

Now let us turn to 1 Cor.15: "For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." Verse 22 commences with the word "for" linking it in with the previous verse, and shows what is meant by "all made alive", namely, all resurrected. Our Lord also confirms this Himself in John 5:28 & 29

where He says that the resurrection is for both the good and the bad. Like our theme verse in 1 Timothy 2:4, these verses again confirm the hope for all mankind, all of Adam's progeny, but there is a subtle difference between 1 Tim.2:4 and this passage. 1 Tim.2:4 is speaking primarily of "being saved" which, as we saw, means saved from the Adamic death sentence. This would include the work of the Gospel Age, the saving of the called-out church as well as the saving of the whole world of mankind during the next Age. This verse in Timothy is not really speaking of the resurrection but, of course, it is implied. Those that have died "unsaved" must of course receive a resurrection in order to be "saved" from the Adamic death sentence, whereas 1 Cor.15: 21 & 22 is speaking solely of the resurrection, those that are literally made alive. It does not include the work of the Gospel Age those that are made alive figuratively, such as the church has been. These, of course, are all included in those literally made alive in Christ. So then, these verses in 1 Corinthians only have their fulfillment when resurrections take place.

A Resurrection for All

Some of our Christian friends who do not understand the wideness in our Heavenly Father's mercy and love cannot accept that this verse teaches a resurrection for all. They say that it is only those that are in Christ at the present time that are to be made alive. It is true that where the term "in Christ" is used it normally applies to the called-out church, but the term is used in quite a different sense here. To get a clear understanding of the verse we need to carefully analyze the passage, taking in the full context. The "in" is translated correctly here but sometimes the same word is translated "through" or "by". Perhaps if we use these terms we will find it helpful. If we say that it was "through" or "by" Adam's transgression that death passed upon all men and that it is "through" or "by" Christ that the resurrection of all will take place, that is, through His ransom sacrifice, this helps to clarify the statement. The context of this passage shows that Paul is combating the erroneous understanding of some that there was to be no resurrection of the dead. It was probably the Sadducees that were preaching this false doctrine.

The following from 1 Cor.15: 12-26, reads in part: "For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming or presence, as it should be! Paul's argument here is very clear; he is simply saying that there is to be a resurrection of the dead, all the dead. He is not separating the different classes in the resurrection. We know that there is to be a first resurrection which comprises Christ's body members, a resurrection of the great multitude and the Ancient Worthies, but in Paul's argument here he is simply confirming that all who have ever lived are to be brought back to life. 1 Cor.15: 23 reads: 'But every man in his own order: Christ the

firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at His coming.' Presence is the correct rendering here, from the Greek word "parousia" meaning "presence". Rotherham and Young's Literal Translation both render it "in His presence". This makes it clearer. It is "in" or "during" the time of His presence, which includes His 1000 year reign, that all the resurrections take place, not just at the moment of His coming/arrival as the word at suggests. "Every man in his own order".

The word "order" here (Greek *tagma*) is very interesting; this is the only place where it is found in the Bible. The Expanded Biblical Comments say that the word means "in his own band or company". Vine's Greek Dictionary explains it as "signifying that which has been arranged in order especially a military term denoting a company. It is used metaphorically in 1 Cor.15: 23 of the various classes of those who have part in the first resurrection." We would agree with this statement except for the words "first resurrection". Rather we would say it applies to the various classes coming back in the resurrection

God's Word shows that there will be only one class in the first resurrection, namely, the firstfruits the priestly class as we see by Rev.20:6 'Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.' These are Christ's body members. No other classes are shown as coming back in this resurrection. It is generally thought that the next in order will be the great multitude, then the Ancient Worthies, followed by all the world of mankind. So this verse 23 is saying that each one brought back in the resurrection will be brought back in his own particular class. This would mean in different time sequences.

Further on in chapter 15 Paul is still on the subject of the resurrection. Let us read in part from 1 Cor.15:35-44: 'But some men will say, How are the dead raised? And with what body do they come? Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die: and that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be, but bare grain; it may chance of wheat or of some other grain.....There are celestial bodies and bodies terrestrial; but the glory of the celestial is one and the glory of the terrestrial is another. There is one glory of the sun and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars: for one star differeth from another star in glory. So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption.' Here Paul is bringing out again that there are to be different orders or classes in the resurrection, each having their own particular honour and glory, each glorious in their own way. Just as there is one glory of the sun and a different glory of the moon and a different glory again of the stars. He is saying, This is how it will be in the resurrection of the dead. He says that even individual stars differ in glory, showing that each individual will differ one from another, each shining in their own

particular place or setting where the great Creator has seen that they are best suited. Each will be happy and content in their own particular sphere.

Christ's in His Presence

What exactly does it mean 'they that are Christ's in His presence'? Who are these that are Christ's? This is generally understood to refer to those who become Christ's during the Millennial reign, but it does not really say that. It says 'those that are Christ's...' suggesting that they are already Christ's. It seems that this is referring to the "all in Adam" that are to be made alive in Christ, namely, all mankind, both the spiritual and fleshly classes. We must bear in mind that this verse is still speaking of the resurrection. It is not speaking only of those that have proved worthy of everlasting life, but it includes also those that are made alive and receive a resurrection to judgment. All mankind that died in Adam are already Christ's at the start of the Millennium. They will become Christ's later in a different sense when they accept Him as their king and Saviour, but they are already His at the start of the Millennium in that He purchased them all with His own blood.

Let us look at Acts 20:28 - 'Take heed therefore unto yourselves and to all the flock over which the Holy Spirit hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.' This is, of course, speaking of the church but the same principle applies to all mankind. He purchased them all. Now to Ephesians 1:14- "Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory." The comment is made in the Reprints on this verse that the whole earth is part of the purchased possession and will be filled with the glory of God.

Now let us look at Psalm 2: "Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion.⁷ "I will declare the decree: the Lord hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee.⁸ Ask of me and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.' Verse 7 is better rendered "This day have I brought thee forth". It applies to the resurrection of our Lord. This is confirmed in Acts 13:33. We note particularly Psalm 2:8 where the heavenly Fattier is speaking to His beloved only-begotten Son: "Ask of me and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance." The term "heathen" means all the non-Christian world of mankind. All the world and its inhabitants belong to the heavenly Father, but Jesus purchased them with His own precious blood, so His Father hands them over to Him. This is a purchase that lasts only until the end of the 1000-year reign and the little season. Then our Lord hands them back to the One who originally gave them to Him, namely, His heavenly Father.

They were given to Jesus in order that He might carry out the great restitution work and bring all the willing

and obedient up the highway of holiness to develop a righteous and loving character, worthy to receive everlasting life. He does this on behalf of the Lord God, who has appointed Him king for this very purpose, as we saw in Psalm 2:6 "Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion." Psalm 98 is a very interesting and beautiful passage: "0 sing unto the Lord a new song; for he hath done marvellous things: his right hand and his holy arm hath gotten him the victory. The Lord hath made known his salvation: his righteousness hath he openly shown in the sight of the heathen. He hath remembered his mercy and his truth toward the house of Israel: all the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God...for he cometh to judge the earth: with righteousness shall he judge the world, and the people with equity." We note especially "all the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God". How beautifully this links in with our theme text, which, as we saw, says that all men will come to an accurate knowledge of the truth. Comparatively few at the present time have seen the full scope of God's wonderful salvation for all the human family. This passage we have just been looking at shows the time when 1 Tim. 2:4 has its fulfillment.

Passed from Death unto Life

People sometimes ask, Are you saved? How should we answer this question? Should we say, I am being saved, or I hope eventually to be saved one day? No, our answer should be, Yes I am saved.' That is the Scriptural answer. God takes a very positive view. We are right now saved from the Adamic death sentence that fell upon Adam's progeny. We have life! Do we really have life? As we look around we see the signs of aging on many faces; we see grey hair and wrinkles developing, memories are not as keen as they used to be, and energy is waning. In these respects we see no difference between ourselves and the whole world of mankind, but God sees a great difference. What do the Scriptures say? Jesus gives us a very definite answer in John 5:24 "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life." Again, in 1 John 3:14 "We know that we have passed from death unto life because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death." Now let us look at Romans 8:1 "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh but after the spirit". We are not under the Adamic condemnation, we have life!

At the present time all mankind apart from the church are dead. They are still under the Adamic death sentence. They must wait until the next age to be released from this condemnation. The life that we have will never be taken away from us again unless we sin deliberately and wilfully. So long as we prove faithful unto death our life is secure for us. So then, just as we have been saved from the death sentence, so God will have all men to be saved in the same way and to be

given a full and complete opportunity to go on to eternal salvation. When speaking to others who have a hearing ear about God's wonderful provisions for all to be saved, it is good if we present as much scriptural evidence as possible. Many believe that only the "called out church" is to be saved, so it is helpful to present scriptures, which contrast the two salvations.

Let us just quote a few of these, firstly, John 5:28-29 already alluded to -"Marvel not at this: for the hour cometh in which all that are in the tombs shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of judgment.' Those that receive a resurrection to life are those that die already "saved", having life. Therefore they obtain a resurrection to life. Their testing and trials are over. With mankind in general these are still ahead of them. Paul in Acts 24:15 is saying the same thing as Jesus, only using different words. The verse reads: "And have hope toward God, which they themselves also allow, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust" Paul is saying that this is the hope that he has. It is not just a hope for the just but for both the just and the unjust. We have a very lovely passage in Romans 8:19-23: "For the earnest expectation of the creation waiteth for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to vanity, not of its own will, but by reason of him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only so, but ourselves also, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for (our) adoption (to wit), the redemption of our body." (ASV)

At the present time the whole creation is unknowingly waiting for the revealing of the sons of God, that is, God's chief Son, Jesus Christ, together with His other sons (Heb 2:10), the church in glory! Romans 8:21 would be the key verse here, showing that it is not only the children of God but the whole creation that will be delivered from the bondage of corruption. 1 John 2:2 reads – "And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world." Finally, 1 Timothy 4:10 "For therefore we both labour and suffer reproach because we trust in the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, specially of those that believe." At the present time God's special interest is in His called out ones, those that believe now, but He is not only the Saviour of these but of all mankind, as in the words of hymn 98 (BSH) - "Salvation full at highest cost He offers free to all".

Hallelujah, what a Saviour!

(JGT 4/04)

THE FRUITS OF THE SPIRIT-TEMPERANCE

Temperance is the last of the fruits of the Spirit listed by the Apostle Paul in Galatians 5:22-23.

While it is the last fruit listed it is by no means the least important. Strong's Concordance gives the meaning of "temperance" as (#1466) "from #1468, self control (especially continence)". The parent word (#1468 - *egkrateis*) is defined as "strong in a thing (masterful), i.e. self controlled". The 'middle voice' between #1466 and #1468 is #1467 which is defined as "to exercise self restraint".

The need for self control (restraint) is with us every moment of every day. In Galatians 5:17 the Apostle declares "*For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other ...*". In order to restrain or control the lusts of the flesh we need to "*bring into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ*" (2 Cor. 10:3-5)

The Apostle Peter also exhorts Christians to exercise self control (or restraint): "*Dearly beloved, I beseech you (appeal to you) ... abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul ...*" (1 Peter 2:11). Abstinence infers self restraint.

In 1 Corinthians 9:24 - 27 the need for temperance is likened to the discipline required of athletes: "*Know ye not that they which run in a race run all but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain. And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things ... I keep under my body and bring it into subjection...*". The comparison of the self control required by an athlete with that required by a Christian is very apt. An athlete must be temperate (exercise self control), in all things, not just in the physical movement of their bodies. Some aspects that require self control are nutrition, rest, life style, and mental attitude. Likewise a Christian who is diligently striving to be an overcomer must exercise self control in all aspects of their life, both material and spiritual. The scope is much broader than just Bible study.

One particular member of our bodies that requires constant restraint is our tongue: "*If any man among you seem to be religious, and brideth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain.* (James 1:26) The task of bridling our tongue requires continuous vigilance: "*If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body. Behold, we put bits in horses mouths, that they may obey us; and we turn about their whole body ... For every kind of beasts, and of birds, and of serpents, and of things in the sea, is*

tamed, and hath been tamed of mankind: But the tongue can no man tame; it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison". (James 3:2-8). Restraining or controlling our tongue requires continuous diligence.

The development of temperance (self control) cannot be achieved in isolation, but is dependent on the development of other fruits. The Apostle Peter gives the sequence: "*And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, and to virtue knowledge, and to knowledge temperance, and to temperance patience, and to patience godliness, and to godliness brotherly kindness and to brotherly kindness charity (love)*" (2 Peter 1:5-7) Faith, virtue and knowledge are prerequisites for the development of temperance, and temperance is necessary for the development of patience, godliness, brotherly kindness and love.

Self control requires faith; faith that there is a future reward for the obedient; a faith that is strong enough to enable us to withstand the feeling of deprivation that stems from denying ourselves "*the lust of the eyes, the lusts of the flesh and the pride of life*". (1 John 2:16)

However faith alone is not sufficient to enable us to exercise the self control (restraint) that is necessary to be an overcomer. Our faith must be strong enough to cause us to focus only on virtuous things (Phil. 4:8). Such a focus will result in us growing in knowledge - knowledge of God's plan and the nature of the Christian walk.

When our faith, our desire for virtuous things, and our knowledge are all strong enough to enable us to exercise the level of self-control that constitutes temperance, we will develop patience, our fleshly instincts being sufficiently restrained to enable us to endure adverse circumstances or experiences.

Temperance is one of the crowning glories of a Christian; it requires us to be consciously aware of, and to restrain (exercise self control over), the desires of the flesh every moment of our lives.

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