

ST. PAUL

Servant and Apostle of Jesus Christ

Lessons and Devotions from the Life of the Apostle Paul



*What we preach is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, and
ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake. For God, who said,
"Let light shine out of darkness," made his light shine in our hearts to
give us the light of the knowledge of God's glory
displayed in the face of Christ.*

————— 2 Corinthians 4:5-6 —————

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Other books in this series:

David: A Man After God's Own Heart
Jesus Christ: The Only Begotten Son
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**Scriptures in the heading of each excerpt are in the
New King James Version, unless otherwise noted.**

**Excerpts have been taken from the writings of
C. T. Russell, author of *Zion's Watchtower* and other works.
Reprint numbers or references are included after each entry.**



May these writings serve as a source of personal reflection and devotion, as a reminder, an encouragement and an inspiration to the reader. While the words were written over a century ago, they still hold true today more than ever as the establishment of Christ's Kingdom approaches very near.

St. Paul

Was there ever a nobler soldier of the Cross than St. Paul—the Redeemer alone excepted? Soldiers of fortune and patriots have indeed left their marks in the world and on the pages of history, but not one of them has left so indelible a mark as St. Paul. The motive power influencing others has generally been selfishness. But the motive power of the Christian is the reverse—love. Others hazarded and laid down their lives in self-interest, or in the interest of their kin or tongue. St. Paul, copying his Master, laid down his life for Jew and Gentile, bond and free, male and female, to assist in gathering the “elect” to be the Bride of Christ—that ultimately through the glorified King and his glorified Bride, all the families of the earth may receive the blessing which God waits to give to “all the families of the earth, through Abraham’s Seed.” —Gal. 3:29.

Doubtless the secret of his brilliancy lay in the fact that he so fully gave himself up to God—to do, not his own will, but the Father’s will—that the Lord could use him as an Apostle, as a mouthpiece, as a servant, to a greater extent than He ever used any other man, perhaps. In this we are not implying that St. Paul was greater than his Master. Our Lord had only three and one-half years of service, while St. Paul had a long ministry—a long period of service for God and for the Church. Besides, it was not possible for the Master to go into the details of the Divine Plan; for even His devoted followers, including the Apostles, were natural men, who did not receive the begetting of the Holy Spirit until Pentecost. Hence we read that Jesus’ teachings were chiefly in parables and dark sayings. —1 Cor. 2:14; Matt. 13:10-17.

St. Paul, the most learned of The Twelve, the one who took the place of Judas, had naturally the best opportunity for breadth of thought. True, as Saul of Tarsus, he had showed himself to be very narrow and bigoted in his warfare against Christ and His followers. But after his eyes of understanding had been opened, and after he had become a spirit-begotten New Creature, St. Paul manifested a wonderful insight into the things Divine. Explaining this insight, he declared that he had visions and revelations more than had all the other Apostles of the Lord together. —2 Cor. 12:1; 2 Cor. 12:7; 2 Cor. 12:11-12.

All this was in harmony with what the Lord had said respecting him: “He is a chosen vessel unto Me. . . . I will show him how great things he must suffer for My name’s sake.” (Acts 9:15-16.) Naturally, the Lord could use a well-talented man, a well-educated man, who had fully given up his own will, to better advantage than He could use an illiterate man; and of some of the remainder of the Apostles it is written that even the multitude perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant. (Acts 4:13.) Not so with St. Paul, however. He had education and a wonderful breadth of mind. All the spirit-begotten children of God, able to understand the deep things of the Bible, are surely amazed at the logic, the wisdom and the power of St. Paul’s writings! We know of nothing in the world that will compare with them.

Pushed to the front as the Lord’s mouthpiece to the Gentiles, St. Paul’s mind grasped more quickly than did the minds of the other Apostles, the things pertaining to the New Dispensation; and he perceived that the Gentiles were to be fellow-heirs with the Jews in the Kingdom privileges. (Eph. 3:1-12; Col. 1:25-27.) Naturally, some thought that St. Paul was going too far; and the argument was raised that he was not one of The Twelve, that he was not to be ranked as an Apostle, etc.

However willing St. Paul might have been to be nothing and to let others take their own estimate of him, nevertheless he felt a duty toward the Truth. This led him to tell us in no uncertain terms that he had full proof of his apostleship, and that he was not a whit behind the very chiefest of the Apostles in the understanding of the Divine Program—yea, that to him more than to all the others the Lord had revealed more of those things to come of which our Lord Jesus had spoken.—John 16:13; 2 Cor. 11:5; Gal. 2:2-10; etc.

To me, who am less than the least of all the saints, this grace was given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, and to make all see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the ages has been hidden in God who created all things through Jesus Christ.

---Ephesians 3:8-9

We stand in awe before such an example of moral heroism as we find in the Apostle Paul. As we follow him from city to city and mark his faithful labor and care, his patient endurance of persecution, his untiring devotion and zeal for the truth, his patience in instructing and bearing with the weak and ignorant, and all his sufferings for Christ's sake, and then hear him say, "None of these things move me," we feel that we are indeed contemplating a sublime character.

To say that Paul was a remarkable man, a wonderful man, a grand man, gives no adequate conception of his character. See how in every city, bonds and afflictions awaited him: mobs and stripes and imprisonment were his constant expectation. Then read his epistles and mark his fervency of spirit, his deep insight into the things of God, his care for the churches and his deep solicitude for their spiritual welfare, his earnest exhortations and his living example. Read till you are filled with the inspiration of his noble example and behold in him a miracle of divine grace.

No ordinary hopes and ambitions could inspire such a life. His eye of faith was fixed on the things as yet not seen. He was a man of superior advantages and blessings, as well as of peculiar and almost unprecedented trials. R. 4533, R. 5941, R. 1558

Although I was formerly a blasphemer, a persecutor, and an insolent man, I obtained mercy because I did it ignorantly in unbelief. And the grace of our Lord was exceedingly abundant, with faith and love, which are in Christ Jesus. . . (1 Tim. 1:13-14) of which I became a minister according to the gift of the grace of God given to me by the effective working of His power. To me, who am less than the least of all the saints, this grace was given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, and to make all see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the ages has been hidden in God who created all things through Jesus Christ. . . . (Eph. 3:7-9) Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. (Eph. 3:20-21)

Amen.

St. Luke

Luke, the physician, who wrote the Gospel of Luke, was the author of the Book of Acts. In the latter he takes up the narrative substantially where he left it in the Gospel—the ascension of Christ. He recapitulates, however, to the extent of giving us a narrative of the conversation immediately preceding our Lord’s ascension. The account is evidently addressed to a friend, of the then common name, Theophilus, who was supposed to have been a person of considerable dignity and influence, inasmuch as he is elsewhere styled “most excellent,” a title which implied a considerable social or political rank. Luke was not one of the apostles, and his records are not, therefore of apostolic authority. Such authority or plenary inspiration was not necessary, however, in the recording of plain, simple facts such as the Gospel of Luke and the Book of Acts present. It requires no inspiration to record a fact, though it does require some ability, and it is reasonable to assume that since the Lord used Luke’s abilities in connection with the work of recording the facts of that time he was guided of the holy spirit in the ascertainment of the facts, which his education and natural talents eminently qualified him to state succinctly. Luke was guided of the holy spirit, in the same sense that all of the Lord’s consecrated people are guided by his spirit, which is to a different degree from that plenary inspiration granted to the twelve apostles—Paul taking the place of Judas.

Luke, the writer of the Acts of the Apostles, in its introduction refers to his Gospel narrative of the life of Jesus—respecting “all that Jesus began both to do and to teach until the day in which he was taken up.” It was no doubt of divine intention that he should express this matter in this particular form, and refer to the personal work of Jesus as merely the beginning of his work. Only those who grasp this thought; viz., that the body of the Church, “the body of Christ,” in the flesh, is a continuation of the work of Jesus, the Head of that body, in the flesh—only such can grasp with clearness the divine plan. R. 2818

The former account I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach, until the day in which He was taken up, after He, through the Holy Spirit had given commandments to the apostles whom He had chosen.

Acts 1:1-2

The first verse refers back to the Gospel of Luke, as a treatise of the doings and teaching of Jesus from the time he began his ministry to its close; and some have assumed that the word “began” might reasonably be understood to imply that our Lord continued his ministry after his ascension, speaking and acting, through his apostles, and those believing on him through their word. This is true enough whether it was what Luke meant or not; for the Scriptures invariably teach that the Church of Christ in the flesh is his representative: as the Apostle Paul says, we “fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ, for his body’s sake, which is the Church.” (Col. 1:24.) And as we have to do with the suffering of the anointed one, so we have to do with the witnessing or ministry by which the members of the body are to be called out from the world, separated, instructed, and thus prepared for a share in the glorious Kingdom and the great work of judging the world, which it will inaugurate. It is in this sense that our Lord declared, “Ye shall be my witnesses, both in Jerusalem and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.” Primarily, the apostles were the witnesses who testified to us respecting our Lord’s words, his death, his resurrection and ascension, and His promises of a return to accept his faithful to a share in his kingdom, when he shall take unto himself his great power and reign. In a secondary sense all who receive the apostolic testimony and declare the same to others are likewise Christ’s representatives and witnesses.

“St. Luke, the Evangelist, physician and historian, is said by tradition to have been a painter, and perhaps in the picturesque qualities of his writing we may trace the origin of this pious opinion. There is a legend that he painted the portrait of the Virgin, and certainly the greater part of the little we know of our Lord’s mother is due to St. Luke, who preserved for us the Magnificat, and drew in words that poetic picture of the Nativity, adorned with the Nunc Dimittis and the Benedictus, which pictorial art has never ceased to reproduce. There is just now a widespread desire to discover the personalities of all great writers, and surely there is no one who has any feeling for Christianity but must regret our ignorance about the four Evangelists. St. Luke is the only one of whose character it is possible to form any definite idea. Even in his case we must rely mainly upon conjecture, for the modest chronicler of the Acts of the Apostles has purposely withdrawn himself from the gaze of his readers. He never tells us who he was, nor asks for our sympathy or our praise for the many hardships which he and St. Paul bore, and the many heroisms they displayed together. He never even betrays his presence except by the use of the pronoun “we.” All we know for certain is that the “beloved physician” never failed his friend, but was alone with him when he made “ready to be offered.” There is no direct evidence as to whether he was a Jew or a Greek, but many authorities, including Renan and Professor Ramsay, adhere to the latter conclusion. To the ordinary reader their view would appear the more plausible. St. Luke shows little sympathy with the Jews as a nation, and always paints them as hindering the work of the Church. On the other hand, he betrays some tolerance for the heathen religion around him, and a just and sympathetic comprehension of the attitude of the Roman Governors towards the new faith.

But whether he belonged to “the people” or “the nations,” the historian was an artist,—a man of great literary genius, whose heaven-instilled purpose, while it inspired his work, never for a moment obscured his artistic skill. The object of the book of the Acts is, as we read it, twofold. First, the author desires to draw a picture of the early Church while it was still but an offshoot of Judaism; and secondly, to describe the bursting of the Judaic bonds by the real hero of the book—St. Paul. Inspired by his wonderful—we are tempted to say his Greek—love of beauty and happiness, St. Luke begins with an exquisite picture of the early Christian community. An ideal social life prevailed among the brethren. “No man lacked anything,” for “they had but one heart and one mind.” No one “called anything his own, but they had all things in common,” and “breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart.” —*The London Spectator*, R. 3244

St. Luke, a poet, and more than a poet, tells us how the beacon light of Christianity flashed from Jerusalem to Antioch—from Antioch to Ephesus, and to Troas, and to Philippi—from Philippi to Athens and Corinth, until at last it was kindled in the very palace and pretorium of the Caesars at imperial Rome. The light of the world dawned from the little Judean village and brightened in the Galilean hills, and then it seemed to set upon Golgotha in the midst of a disastrous eclipse. The Book of Acts shows us how, rekindled from the embers in the brief space of thirty years, it has gleamed over Aegea and over Hadria, and has filled Asia and Greece and Italy, with such Light as has never shone before on land or sea. —Ferrar, R. 4304

As St. Luke, in his Gospel, has set forth the personality of Jesus as the **Magnet** to draw the hopes and establish the confidence of the “Israelites indeed,” so in the Acts he uses it to still point to our Lord as the central figure, the Magnet. Indeed, seen from the standpoint of

the Resurrected,

the Glorified One,

highly exalted,

***far above principalities
and powers,***



the magnetic qualities of the Messianic personality are greatly enhanced. While never forgetting his earthly life and sacrifices, our hearts and minds look to him now as

the one who ever liveth,

the Head of the Church,

the King of Glory,

waiting for the completion of his Bride, and in due time to take possession of earth's dominion, and to begin the great work of Restitution.

It is as important today as ever that we keep before our minds the thought of our Lord's personal relationship to every feature of his work. If it was his message to the early Church to remember his words, “Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the Age,” the thought of the Lord's personal presence now in the harvest should be still more impressive to us. If he kept a supervision or control of all the affairs of his people throughout the Age, does not the thought of his Second Coming and still more intimate association with every little detail of what is planned make us rejoice to be more careful, more zealous? Let us establish our hearts in the fact that the Lord is too wise to err and is as able as he is willing to make all things work together for good to us and to all the called ones, according to his purpose. Let this thought restrain us and counsel us to give closer attention to that which the Master has committed to our care, and that “To his own Master each servant stands or falls,” and it is for him to approve or disapprove. It is not, therefore, for us to grasp management or control or in any degree to force our views upon others, but rather to do our part as faithfully as possible, and to leave the results to the Lord, realizing his presence and his care, his wisdom and his love. R. 2924 and R. 4305

***For you have heard of my former conduct in Judaism,
how I persecuted the church of God beyond measure and
tried to destroy it.
Galatians 1:13***

SAUL OF TARSUS, THE PHARISEE

1



At the time of the ascension “about one hundred and twenty” were reckoned as being in full and deep fellowship in Christ; ten days later at Pentecost three thousand converts were added; shortly after five thousand more as recorded; later (Acts 5:14) “multitudes, both men and women, were added to the Lord;” still later, “the number of the disciples was multiplied in Jerusalem greatly, and a great multitude of priests were obedient to the faith.” (Acts 6:1-7.) This period of gathering the ripe wheat and establishing them in the doctrines of Christ was a very necessary prelude to the period of trial, persecution and suffering which shortly followed.

Tradition has it that Stephen’s ability as a speaker brought him into special prominence and that as a religious logician he met with the learned men of his time, amongst whom it is said Saul of Tarsus was one. Stephen’s discourse before the Sanhedrin (Acts 7:1-53) marks him as having been a man of great ability. It reads more like the language of the Apostle Paul than that of any other New Testament writer. And the Apostle Paul, then Saul of Tarsus, is supposed to have been one of his hearers, a member of the Sanhedrin. R. 2108

The infant Christian Church prospered at Jerusalem. Not only was the Lord’s blessing upon the apostles in their ministries, but upon others of the Church also, who, full of love and zeal for the Truth, told the good tidings as they had opportunity. They had the Gospel message in its purity, and it was a pleasure to tell it. They needed not inducements of social advancement, financial prosperity, honorable titles and good salaries. The message itself incited love and devotion, and enkindled a flame of sacred love in their hearts which tended to make each believer a burning and a shining light, as the Lord himself had enjoined. R. 4328

If anyone else thinks he may have confidence in the flesh, I more so: circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews. Concerning the law, a Pharisee.

– Philippians 3:4-5 –

Saul was one of those Israelites who lived amongst the Gentiles, but who occasionally went up to Jerusalem to certain of the feasts. His home was in the city of Tarsus, one of the notable cities of that date—said to have been excelled in scholarship and fine arts by the cities of Alexandria and Athens only. He not only had the advantages of a home in such a city, but his family was one of the influential ones, as is implied in the fact that he was not only a citizen of Tarsus but also a citizen of Rome. In addition to the education of his home city he had received a special course in theology or Jewish Law at Jerusalem, under Gamaliel, one of the greatest teachers of that time. His early training, therefore, and all of its conditions were favorable to producing in him a breadth and refinement of thought equaled by few; and these conditions combined with his honesty of heart and his zeal for God, though not at first according to knowledge, fitted him to become just what the Lord subsequently made of him; namely, “A chosen vessel unto me to bear my name before the Gentiles and kings and the Children of Israel.” —Acts 9:15. R. 2117

I am indeed a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, taught according to the strictness of our fathers’ law, and was zealous toward God as you all are today.

– Acts 22:3 –

The Apostle to the Gentiles had two names, Saul and Paul. His family stock was strongly Jewish and religious—Pharisees. This accounted for his not being sent to the University of Tarsus, but instead to Jerusalem to the School of Gamaliel. Nevertheless, quite probably his early association with learned Greeks helped to give him mental poise, which was afterward helpful to him when he addressed all classes.

Of Jewish parentage he was named after Israel’s first King, Saul; but, as his father was a Roman citizen, it was proper that he should receive a special name with such and Paul was chosen—possibly because in the Greek language the name Saul (Saulus) signified “waddling.” We find that after St. Paul’s ministry reached to foreign lands he adopted and used his Roman citizenship name exclusively. R. 4355

Tradition has it that his parents were quite wealthy, as their position of Roman citizenship implies. Paul’s education in Gamaliel’s School further implies this, as that was an advanced School or Seminary, attended by few except the sons of the rich. R. 4355

I persecuted this Way* to the death, binding and delivering into prisons both men and women, as also the high priest bears me witness, and all the council of the elders, from whom I also received letters to the brethren, and went to Damascus to bring in chains even those who were there to Jerusalem to be punished.

– Acts 22:4-5 –

St. Paul's experience may find more of a parallel in the Christian Church, amongst those consecrated to the Lord, but blinded by superstition. Such may violently persecute those of "this way," and may do so in all "good conscience," as did St. Paul. There is hope for all such, that in some manner the Lord will cause the eyes of their understanding to open. We have more hope of the conversion from error to Truth of those who, in their blindness, are bitter persecutors of "this way," than we have for those who are cold and indifferent or lukewarm. The Lord stands pledged to help those whose hearts are right toward him. True, many, like St. Paul, may weep bitter tears in future years over their misdeeds of ignorance, over their failure to give proper heed to the instructions of the Scriptures, but in the end the Lord will deliver them. R. 4355

I was formerly a blasphemer, a persecutor, and an insolent man, but I obtained mercy because I did it ignorantly in unbelief. And the grace of our Lord was exceedingly abundant, with faith and love which are in Christ Jesus.

1 Timothy 1:13-14

***We have access to the Holy place through the blood of Jesus, by the new and ever-living Way which He opened up for us through the rending of the veil--that is to say, of His earthly nature. (Weymouth)**

Hebrews 10:19-20

Stephen, full of faith and power, did great wonders and signs among the people.

– Acts 6:8 –

Stephen, it will be remembered, was chosen as one of the assistants of the apostles and was known as a deacon—minister or servant—the original intention being that the service should be chiefly with reference to the temporal interests of the Church. His choice would indicate that he was considered at the time a man of ability, and that faithfulness to the work entrusted to him led on to still greater privileges and opportunities for service. Accordingly we find him ministering spiritual things with imbue ment of the spirit and ability closely approaching that of the apostles. He was full of faith and power, says our common version, and no doubt truly, but the oldest manuscripts render this "full of grace and power." Both were true, because he could not have had the grace and the power without the faith. "This is the victory which overcometh the world, even your faith." In Stephen's case the faith working by love had produced zeal for the Lord and his cause; and the faith and zeal blended with the spirit of holiness gave Stephen extraordinary grace and power, as pointed out in verse 8. And the same combination will produce like grace and power in all of the Lord's people in proportion as these elements of character are found in each. R. 2108

All who sat in the council, looking steadfastly at him, saw his face as the face of an angel.

—Acts 6:15 —

It was Stephen's turn to be called before the Sanhedrin, that he might give the leaders of his people a gospel sermon, the basis of which was Jesus and the resurrection. The doctors of the law and members of the Sanhedrin (Saul of Tarsus is supposed to have been a member) did not wish to be parties directly to the charges, nor to seem to be interested in the destruction of a noble man. They therefore procured others to give testimony that would be of the kind desired—testimony upon which it would be possible for their distorted judgments and consciences to render a death verdict. Strangely enough, the second martyr, like the first, was convicted of blasphemy against God and against the Temple, and without any more foundation for the charges than in the case of his illustrious Master.

Doubtless, as Stephen heard the charges against him, and noticed the advancement of the case, he mentally remarked the correspondence between these charges against him and those upon which his Master was convicted. We may be sure that some such thoughts were passing through his mind when his face was so wonderfully lit up with the indwelling joy, that it is recorded that all sitting in the Sanhedrin "looking steadfastly on him saw his face, as it had been the face of an angel." But even an angelic face could not move such hearts, some of the same, doubtless, that had sat in condemnation of the Master himself.

May Stephen's beaming face be impressed upon our memories. If it is, and if every time we stand forth before men publicly or privately, as the representatives of our Lord, we could so realize his blessing and our privilege as his servants, that it would fill our hearts, and beam forth from our faces, in gladness, in thankfulness, for the privilege of serving, then indeed we would have the highest degree of blessing to ourselves, and doubtless also would bring the largest degree of blessing to all those whose hearts would be prepared for the truth, and also for those not yet ready for it, but who are under the Lord's discipline and guidance, in preparation for it, as was Saul of Tarsus. R. 2952

Do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul.

— Matthew 10:28 —

It is well that the Lord's people, especially when they come into trying positions on account of their fidelity to the truth, should remember these, the Master's words. Men may kill our bodies, or they may speak evil of them, or spitefully use them otherwise; but it is beyond their power to injure us as new creatures, or to ruin our prospects as respects the future life. That life which the Lord has promised to his faithful, —the resurrection life, —is beyond the power of man. It is the eternal, the invaluable life. If we gain it, no matter what the cost may be, as respects the present life, and mortal-body condition, we shall have made a great bargain, we shall have gained a great prize. All who really appreciate it see it to be a "pearl of great price," for which they, like the Master, are willing to lay down all, —to sell all that they have, that they may obtain it.

To be able to meet the trials and difficulties of life as they come to us, and to meet them in the proper spirit which the Lord directs—in the spirit of rejoicing in tribulation, and counting such experiences all joy, —it is necessary that all fear of man, which brings a snare, shall be removed. And it is our Lord's direction that we shall fear Jehovah, and not fear our mortal fellows. The righteous are bold as a lion, as well as gentle as a dove, and meek as a lamb. This peculiar combination should be found in every Christian, and we doubt if it will be found elsewhere. R. 2952

You stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears! You always resist the Holy Spirit. As your fathers did, so do you. Which of the prophets did your fathers not persecute? And they killed those who foretold the coming of the Just One, of whom you now have become the betrayers and murderers, who have received the law by the direction of angels and have not kept it.

– Acts 7:51-53 –

After paid witnesses had given their testimony before the Sanhedrin, charging blasphemy—the penalty for which was death by stoning—the Sanhedrin, with a show of fairness, permitted St. Stephen to reply in his own defense. This he did in a masterly way, by taking up the thread of Jewish history and reciting it, showing his implicit faith in God's dealings with Abraham and in the promises there made. In orderly manner he brought the thought of his hearers down to the time of Moses and the giving of the Law, and reminded them that Moses had said that in due time God would raise up a greater Prophet than he. (Deut.18:18-19.) This great Prophet, St. Stephen allowed them to infer, was Jesus; and since Moses had particularly referred to Jesus thus as greater, it could be no disloyalty to Moses now to accept that greater Prophet.

It is assumed that Saul of Tarsus was a member of that Sanhedrin. R. 5858

**This is that Moses who said to the children of Israel,
'THE LORD YOUR GOD WILL RAISE UP FOR YOU A PROPHET LIKE
ME FROM YOUR BRETHREN. HIM YOU SHALL HEAR.'**

Acts 7:37

Thus one feature of the charge against St. Stephen was overthrown. He was not disloyal to Moses, but contrariwise.

As for the Temple, St. Stephen reminded his hearers that God first established the Tabernacle in the wilderness; and that by and by, in its stead, God provided the Temple at Jerusalem. It was no disrespect to the Tabernacle for them to believe in the Temple that Solomon built. God had now provided that a still higher Temple should take the place of the building made with hands. The higher Temple was the spiritual one, to be composed of the people of God who, as living stones, would be builded together for a habitation of God through the Spirit. As it was not blasphemy to accept the Temple of Solomon instead of the Tabernacle of Moses, neither should it be considered blasphemous to accept this higher, spiritual Temple, of which Jesus is the Head, or Foundation, instead of the typical Temple, built of wood and stone.

So able, so logical, so convincing, were the words of St. Stephen that his hearers "were cut to the heart," not in a penitent sense, but with a realization that their cause was coming out second best. They no longer had any hope of justly charging St. Stephen with blasphemy. Their only hope now was that they could fasten upon something that he would say as being blasphemous, and on the spot rush him to his death. R. 5858

When they heard these things they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed at him with their teeth.

– Acts 7:54 –

We read that his hearers gnashed on him with their teeth. This signifies chagrin, disappointment, savage animosity. We read that they were “cut to the heart.” Stephen’s words were sharp and their force consisted not in any angry or bitter denunciation, but in plain, simple narration of the Truth. This should be the style of all preaching. It is not necessary for us to say angry or bitter things. The Truth itself is “sharper than any two-edged sword,” and needs no unkind language, no profanity, no epithets to drive it home. Where immoderate and unchristian language is considered necessary it is a sure sign that the argument is correspondingly weak, and it warns us to beware. The Truth itself is mighty, even if spoken by a little child. Hearing Stephen with impatience, aggravated by the fact that his argument was true, they were gnashing their teeth with chagrin, because they were unable to detect a flaw or excuse for his death. R. 4329

These men were in a wicked condition of heart, and the truths uttered by Stephen were to them stings, rebukes, arousing their hatred to a pitch of frenzy— “they gnashed on him with their teeth.” R. 2958

But he, being full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God, and said, “Look! I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God!”

– Acts 7:55-56 –

St. Stephen, full of his subject, preaching Christ and the blessings yet to come through Him upon Israel and the world, was radiant in face—like an angel of the Lord. Full of the holy spirit, Stephen was wholly unmoved by their manifestations of anger. He was testifying for God and for the truth, and instead of fear of man his heart was brought into the closer sympathy and union with the Lord. The Lord knew all about the termination of the trial and what the sentence would be, and no doubt gave Stephen a vision of heavenly glory—of the Father, and of Christ at the right hand of his majesty. This no doubt was for the strengthening of Stephen’s own faith for the martyrdom just at hand; and perhaps also intended to act as it did upon his unjust judges. His declaration of the vision which he saw capped the climax of their indignation, at his supposed opposition to God and to Moses and to themselves as representatives of the Law. They construed this to be additional blasphemy—that Jesus of Nazareth, whom they condemned as a blasphemer, and whose crucifixion they had procured, was acceptable to God; and not only so, but made next to the Father—at the right hand of God, or place of power and influence. Using this as a pretext, they terminated the trial and executed the sentence of stoning—stopping their ears as though they would thus say, what no doubt some of them actually felt, that such an exaltation of Jesus next to Jehovah, far above Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and the prophets was gross blasphemy which they could not justify themselves in hearing and felt bound to resent by stoning the blasphemer. R. 5858 and R. 2109

Then they cried out with a loud voice, stopped their ears, and ran at him with one accord, and they cast him out of the city and stoned him. And the witnesses laid down their clothes at the feet of a young man named Saul.

– Acts 7:57-58 –

Pushing the minister of Jesus outside of their gates—for no execution was allowed on the inside—the crowd threw their clothing at the feet of the young man Saul of Tarsus. Thus he became their authority for the stoning. Then they stoned Stephen to death, he crying at the time, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit”—my life—and also, “Lord, lay not this sin to their charge!” This was St. Stephen’s climax of victory—faithfulness unto death, and, withal, the loving spirit in which he received death through his enemies—the spirit of the Master, the same spirit which we should cultivate and manifest.

According to the Law, those who heard the blasphemy did the stoning; and they laid their outer garments at the feet of Saul, which would seem to indicate that he not only consented to the verdict that Stephen was a blasphemer worthy of death, but that he was one of the leaders in the prosecution, as well as an influential man in the Sanhedrin. R. 5858 and R. 2109



The stoning of Stephen as Saul looks on

And they stoned Stephen as he was calling on God and saying, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.” Then he knelt down and cried out with a loud voice, “Lord, do not charge them with this sin.” And when he had said this, he fell asleep.

Acts 7:59-60

Indeed, I myself thought I must do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. This I also did in Jerusalem, and many of the saints I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priests, and when they were put to death, I cast my vote against them. And I punished them often in every synagogue and compelled them to blaspheme. And being exceedingly enraged against them, I persecuted them even to foreign cities.

– Acts 26:9-11 –

When Saul of Tarsus persecuted St. Stephen and others of the early Church, he verily thought that he did God service, as he himself afterwards tells us. —Acts 26:9-11. All down through the Gospel Age, those who have been faithful to the Truth of God have been put “out of the synagogue.” The creeds of men have been barriers to keep out those who understood the Word of God. There was a time when many were excommunicated as heretics because of conscience. One of these was Michael Servetus, a brother Christian, whose horrible death at the stake was brought about by John Calvin. This course of conduct literally fulfilled the Scripture which says,

They will put you out of the synagogues. Yes, the time is coming that whoever kills you will think that he offers God service.

John 16:2

Those who had charge of the synagogues were not always bad people, but they were mistaken, as was Saul of Tarsus when he haled men and women to prison. (Acts 8:3.) The same conditions exist today. The darkness hateth the light. When any become enlightened in the Word of God, they are told, “If you stay with us, you must not present these matters.” Those who are loyal to God are in this way forced out of the synagogues.

Our day has a peculiarity, however, that other days have not had. The Divine Plan is so beautiful that by its light we see that others are in darkness. The voice of God, the voice of conscience, of enlightenment, calls the people of God out of Babylon, which is misrepresenting God’s character, Plan and Word. Instead of feeling like bringing vengeance upon our enemies, we should feel sympathy for them—not with them, but for them. We should realize that with them it is very much as it was with the Jews of our Lord’s day, who, had they known what they were doing, would have been very much ashamed of their course.

The persecutions of today are different from those of any other period of history. Many faithful followers of the Lord are reprov'd and slandered for their loyalty to the Word of God. Our Lord’s words, however, warrant us in expecting that those who are faithful to Him will be evil spoken of, even as He was. With His words before our minds, we should not be surprised at false charges and false insinuations made against His true followers in proportion to their prominence as His servants.
R. 5173

Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

Matthew 5:10-12

Now Saul was consenting to his death. At that time a great persecution arose against the church which was at Jerusalem, and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles. And devout men carried Stephen to his burial, and made great lamentation over him. Acts 8:1-2

As for Saul, he made havoc of the church, entering every house, and dragging off men and women, committing them to prison.

– Acts 8:3 –

[Here we read about] the zeal of one, Saul of Tarsus, in the persecution of the early Christians and his part in the persecution of Stephen, even unto death. He consented to his death and took charge of the cast-off outer garments of those who stoned him; and he made havoc of the Church: entering into every house and haling men and women, he committed them to prison. Yet Saul's was not a hopeless case, and Stephen's prayer for his persecutors did not go unanswered; for from their midst this one was shortly after raised up to be a most efficient and devoted servant of the truth.

The persecution spread to all the Church, causing all except the apostles to leave Jerusalem and remove to other parts. The apostles bravely determined to stand their ground there, doubtless in order to give courage to the scattered flock who might still look to them at Jerusalem as representatives, overseers and counselors of the Church. Had they gone it would have seemed as if the Church were broken up. But as the others went forth they went everywhere preaching the word, and so the persecution did not really hinder, but it actually helped to spread the truth more and more. They all recognized their commission from God to preach the truth as soon as they received it.

Saul of Tarsus was an energetic man, on whichever side of a question he stood. When an opponent of the Lord Jesus and his Church and gospel, he was its most active enemy, and we cannot doubt that his activity in the matter was backed, as he himself afterward declared, by a "good conscience," which believed that he "verily did God service" in opposing what he considered to be the sect of the Nazarene. God seems to be specially on the lookout for just such earnest characters, and they are far more certain to get the truth than are the cold, listless and indifferent kind who neither love nor hate either righteousness or sin. Peter and James and John were of this positive and strong character, and they with the Apostle Paul, consequently, were the ones most freely used by our Lord in conveying the blessings of the gospel to us and to the world. R. 2110

It was Paul's zeal for God and his cause that made him a persecutor, and not his love for persecution itself,—nor any brutal desires that gloried in the sufferings of others. His impulse was duty—toward God and toward his nation; for if the false doctrines spread it meant to him a spreading of opposition to both, and temporarily, at least, a frustration of the hopes of Israel—putting further off the glorious day of blessing for which all Israel had longed and hoped. Similarly we find today noble Christian people opposing the present truth in the very same spirit. It is not that they love or appreciate persecution, but that they believe they are doing God service,—that the promulgation of present truth means the shaking if not the overthrow of all the religious systems in which they trust—which they believe to be of divine origin, and through which they are hoping to bring about the Kingdom

of God condition through missionary efforts, and the conversion of the world. Present truth declares all these efforts to be misdirected and futile; it points out the fall of Babylon and everything pertaining to her; it declares the establishing of God's Kingdom, and the exaltation of the royal priesthood outside of sectarian lines; ignoring sect membership, it acknowledges only "Israelites indeed," personally attached to the Redeemer. The revolution of thought, the conversion necessary now, is almost as great, and almost as difficult as was that which came to Paul and other sectarians of his nation. Let us rejoice then, if by the Lord's grace our eyes are opening to the truth; and let us have more of compassion for others who are still in the condition in which Saul of Tarsus was when he persecuted those of "this way." R. 1433 and R. 2969

Therefore those who were scattered went everywhere preaching the word.

– Acts 8:4 –

The death of Stephen marked the beginning of an epoch of persecution, especially in Jerusalem, where for some years peace had prevailed and the message of the Gospel found considerable root in the hearts of "Israelites indeed." The Lord allowed these new beginners to attain a fair degree of development in grace and knowledge, and then permitted the persecution which scattered them everywhere throughout Judea and Samaria. The effect was that, so far from the Truth being injured, it was carried to larger numbers, for every true disciple is a light-bearer.

Saul was one of the chief persecutors, apparently. We read that he made havoc of the Church, entering every house, and, armed with the necessary legal authority, he effected the imprisonment of many, and thus led to the scattering of others. But in some unaccountable manner this

persecution seems to have passed by the apostles. The Lord probably wished to keep Jerusalem as the center for the Apostolic ambassadors of the Truth for a season. The lesson for us all is faith, courage, zeal, a loyal heart, a shining face, love and prayers for our enemies, and to see that we learn a lesson from the evil course of others, "See that no man render evil in return for evil," as the Apostle says. R. 4329

Now those who were scattered after the persecution that arose over Stephen traveled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to no one but the Jews only.

Acts 11:19

The work done in Judea during the thirty-seven years following our Lord's crucifixion and closing with the destruction of Jerusalem, A.D. 70, was a harvesting work to that nation. During that time we may be sure every grain of "wheat" was separated from the chaff and gathered into the garner—the higher or Gospel dispensation—into the spirit-begotten condition. That Harvest extended beyond Palestine, but even then it always applied "to the Jew first," until A.D. 70. R. 4337



The power of the Pharisees. Art by William Holman Hunt, c. 1854-60.

The Jewish priesthood was granted and exercised considerable power under the arrangements of the Roman government. It had come to exercise very much of the power subsequently used by the Popes of Rome. They had power to authorize arrests and imprisonments for the infractions of their religious rules and regulations. Saul, exercising the same respect to law and authority that subsequently marked all of his dealings and teachings as a Christian, did not attempt to take matters into his own hands in the persecution of the Christians, but went about it in the manner recognized as legal —under the sanction and authority of the highest religious tribunal. Let us remember that nearly all persecutions have been sanctioned by some human law, and regulate ourselves under the divine code. R. 2117



Then Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest and asked letters from him to the synagogues of Damascus, so that if he found any who were of the Way, whether men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem.

– Acts 9:1-2 –

Saul was breathing out threatenings against all of “this way,” and doing all that he could to stamp out Christianity. In as much as the persecution had caused the scattering of believers, Saul was pursuing them—going even outside the province of Judea in his zeal to crush out that which he believed to be dangerous heresy. Some may wonder how he could be at heart loyal to the Lord, and yet in mind be so bitter against the Lord’s faithful.

Let us suggest how the matter probably appeared to Saul’s mind: Doubtless he was full of the Jewish sentiment respecting Messiah, respecting his nation, Israel; he considered it a certain and unquestionable fact that the Pharisees represented God and all the glorious prophecies and traditions of the nation; and that as Jehovah had favored this nation for now these many centuries, his favor, undoubtedly, must still be with it; so that if he had any further revelations to make they would undoubtedly come through the scribes and pharisees who “sit in Moses’ seat” —as representatives of God and of the Law. He expected a

Messiah of dignity and wealth and social standing in the nation; —if born in the natural way at all to be of one of the best families. He expected him to establish the dignity of Israel upon a plane similar to, but higher than that of Solomon; —that he would be a great leader and commander to his people, who would successfully carry them through every difficulty and opposition like as did Moses, Joshua, David, —but still greater, still grander, still more successful.

It would appear that the circumstances connected with the stoning of Stephen only incited Saul to the greater energy in stamping out what he believed to be a very injurious doctrine—a heresy. Our own experience confirms the thought that an earnest, conscientious opponent is more to be respected than a cold, indifferent professed friend, and we are reminded of the Lord’s words, “I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew thee out of my mouth.” Let us have respect, therefore, for all who are warm-hearted and zealous; remembering that there is more hope of their being pleasing to God, and being accounted worthy to receive the truth, than for the lukewarm. R. 2117

It is surely difficult for us to imagine how absurd would be the claims of Jesus, to a mind filled with such expectations. Jesus had neither wealth nor social standing nor influence amongst his own people; he was despised and rejected by the religious chiefs and elders of the nation Moses represented; he could have no power or influence whatever with the Roman Emperor or others—in the way of establishing Israel as the chief nation of the world, whose laws should ultimately extend to every nation, carrying with them the foretold Messianic blessings. No, from Paul’s standpoint Jesus was a fraud, a deceiver, a false Messiah, his disciples were crack-brained dupes, and their doctrines were calculated to bring odium upon the religious rulers, who represented Moses in the nation, —calculated to stir up strife and division amongst the people and to mislead them and turn their minds entirely away from Moses and the Law and the hopes of Israel; and thus to hinder the good cause of God which had been gradually developing for centuries. R. 2969

The Lord said to him, “Go, for he is a chosen vessel of Mine to bear My name before Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel. For I will show him how many things he must suffer for My name’s sake.”

Acts 9:15-16

SAUL: CALLED AND CHOSEN

2

He is a chosen vessel of Mine to bear My name before Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel.

– Acts 9:15 –

The name of the Lord's choice for the twelfth apostle was, in the Hebrew language, Saul, and in the Greek, Paul. Under divine supervision, and with a view to his future work, without, however, interfering with his will, the Lord had carefully guided, in respect to the birthplace, opportunities, education, etc., of this one whom he foresaw to be his chosen vessel to bear his message to the Gentiles. He was well-born, well educated, inheriting the valuable right of a Roman citizen; was of a very religious cast of mind, a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee.

**Paul, a bondservant of Jesus Christ, was called to be an apostle, separated to the gospel of God.
Romans 1:1**

Paul, like others of his countrymen, was zealous for the Law, and for the promises made to Israel.

He was not a wicked man in any sense of the word, but, on the contrary, was moral, upright, religious, having a religious zeal which led him to persecute Christ and his followers as heretics against the Mosaic institutions. He himself tells us that he persecuted the Church "in all good conscience," and yet he freely admits that in his language respecting Christians he blasphemed the holy name, and was an injurer of the saints and a persecutor. In his religious zeal, he tells us, he was "exceeding mad against" the Christians, and "delivered into prisons both men and women." —Acts 22:4; 26:11; 1 Tim. 1:13; Phil. 3:5,6.

It was because Paul of Tarsus was not a bad man, but a good man, laboring under blindness and misapprehension, "an Israelite indeed," fighting the truth ignorantly, that our Lord favored him in [such a] miraculous manner. Indeed, we may suppose that the Lord in some manner favored all "Israelites indeed," as we note, for instance, that he favored Nathanael, who at first was skeptical respecting his Messiahship, but was granted convincing evidence because of his sincerity. Similarly we may suppose that some of those who were converted by the miraculous manifestations of the day of Pentecost and shortly afterward (numbering thousands), may have been amongst the very ones who, but a few days previously, had thought of and perhaps had spoken of Jesus as an impostor, and his disciples as shallow-minded dupes. The Lord had mercy upon Nathanael, and assisted him in one way, while he assisted others, at Pentecost, in another way, through manifestation of the spirit; and now in a still different manner he arrested the attention of Saul, convincing him speedily that he was doing the very opposite thing from what he intended to do.

The heart of Paul being in a right attitude, —of loyalty toward God, of zeal for God, he merely needed to be set right; and we see that immediately the same zeal and fervency of spirit which once persecuted the Church was enlisted on behalf of the Church; —that he gladly forsook all to follow Christ, as soon as he recognized his true character. These things being true, those who refer to the Apostle Paul's "conversion," and who compare it to the conversion of an ordinary evil-doer, show that they are laboring under a serious misapprehension of the facts. Had Saul of Tarsus been a wicked man we could not suppose that the Lord would have been interested in him in any such manner, nor that any such miraculous means would have been used to bring his attention to his wrong course of action. R. 2823

The account given [in Acts chapter 9] of the opening of the eyes of Saul's understanding is that of Luke, and was doubtless received directly from the Apostle Paul himself—with whom he traveled for a time. Two other accounts are given by the Apostle Paul himself. (See Acts 22:6-11; 26:12-20.)

The Three Accounts of Saul's Vision:

- 1) Acts 9:3-9
- 2) Acts 22:6-11
- 3) Acts 26:12-20

The three accounts are in practical agreement, and show only such variations as might reasonably be expected, considering the fact that they were delivered under different conditions; as it was sought to emphasize or elaborate different points. Had the three accounts been exactly alike, word for word, there would have been just ground for supposing a special preparation of the text with this harmony in view. Even the seeming discrepancy of the account, when rightly seen, are additional evidences of the truthfulness of all. The account itself being simple, we need give attention only to those points which apparently conflict. All three accounts say that Saul himself:

1 Heard the voice,

2 Saw the light and

3 Fell to the ground.

One of the accounts adds that all with him fell to the earth as well. The account in our lesson tells that the men of his company "stood speechless, hearing a voice but seeing no man." Another account says, "They beheld indeed the light, but they heard not the voice of him that spake to me." These accounts can be harmonized in this way: Saul himself was evidently the center of manifestation—"a great light shone round me." His companions doubtless saw something of this light in a general way, but they did not see the source of the light; they did not see the glorious body of our Lord Jesus—"seeing no man." Saul, however, saw the glorious body of our Lord Jesus, as he himself subsequently testified, "last of all he [Jesus] was seen of me also." Although none but Saul was smitten to the ground, the others who stood speechless and terror stricken no doubt soon knelt reverently about their leader. Respecting the voice—Saul and all that were with him heard a sound, "the voice," but only Saul could distinguish the words—which were meant for him alone. A similar case is recorded in John 12:28,29, where it is stated that our Lord Jesus heard a voice from heaven, saying, "I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again." But the people that stood by and heard the voice understood not the words, but said that "it thundered." Saul and all of his company in one sense of the word heard the sound or voice, but in another sense of the word he alone heard the voice. We use this same form of expression in our daily conversation today. If some one speaks to us in a low or indistinct voice, we say that we did not hear—we mean that although we heard the voice we did not understand or comprehend it. R. 2117

Acts 9:3-9

3 As he journeyed he came near Damascus, and suddenly a light shone around him from heaven.

4 Then he fell to the ground, and heard a voice saying to him, “Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?”

5 And he said, “Who are You, Lord?” Then the Lord said, “I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. It is hard for you to kick against the goads.”

6 So he, trembling and astonished, said, “Lord, what do You want me to do?” Then the Lord said to him, “Arise and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do.”

7 And the men who journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing a voice but seeing no one.

8 Then Saul arose from the ground, and when his eyes were opened he saw no one. But they led him by the hand and brought him into Damascus.

9 And he was three days without sight, and neither ate nor drank.



Saul sees the light of the Lord

As he journeyed he came near Damascus, and suddenly a light shone around him from heaven.

– Acts 9:3 –

The light which shone about Saul and those who went with him, was evidently a supernatural one, because the time of the manifestation was about noon (Acts 22:6) and the light was far brighter than that of the sun which at the same time, no doubt, was shining with great brightness, as is general in that country. The phenomenon was seen by the entire band, but its special features were known only to Saul; the others saw something of the light but they saw not the vision which Saul saw representing the Son of Man in his glorified condition. The others heard a sound but did not distinguish the words which Saul heard. All fell to the ground, but all apparently were able to rise again and to stand wondering, except Saul whose eyes were seriously injured so that he was blind. Similarly Stephen saw a vision while those who were near him saw nothing: similarly John saw the dove descending upon Jesus while the others about saw nothing: similarly Jesus heard certain words of the Father while the multitude said it thundered. It is even mentioned here that the voice spoke in the Hebrew tongue: whereas those who were with Saul probably spoke in the Syriac or the Greek language. R. 2969

**Now it happened, as I journeyed and came near Damascus at about noon,
suddenly a great light from heaven shone around me.**

Acts 22:6

Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.

– 1 John 3:2 –

One great difference between the effect of what Saul saw and what the entire glorious Church will see in the resurrection is that Saul's eyesight was injured by the sight; besides, he saw nothing very distinctly—merely a blinding light, which the voice explained to be the appearance or manifestation of Jesus. Far more precious will be the experiences of the Church. Before beholding Him who is declared to be "the express image of the Father's person," "whom no man hath seen nor can see, dwelling in light which no man can approach unto" —before this, we shall have been changed, glorified. This will enable us to see Him as He is, for the glory of the Church will be like to the glory of her Lord, and superior to the glory of the angels.

While heavenly glory does not consist exclusively of brightness, nevertheless the Scriptures everywhere seem to associate bright-shining with the heavenly ones, and would imply that the higher the station and rank the brighter will be the sheen, the glory. Thus the glory of the Heavenly Father is represented as being so great that few could endure it; and angels and seraphim are represented as veiling their faces before the Divine glory, which so greatly transcends their own.

It should not, therefore, surprise us that the Scriptures everywhere represent that our Lord Jesus and the Church, "made partakers of the divine nature" (2 Peter 1:4), will have a great honor and brightness, far above that of angels and all others except that of the Heavenly Father. R. 5055

Then he fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to him, “Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?” And he said, “Who are You, Lord?” Then the Lord said, “I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. It is hard for you to kick against the goads.” So he, trembling and astonished, said, “Lord, what do You want me to do?” *

– Acts 9:4-6 –

Although none but Saul was smitten to the ground, the others who stood speechless and terror stricken no doubt soon kneeled reverently about their leader. Respecting the voice—Saul and all that were with him heard a sound, “the voice,” but only Saul could distinguish the **words**—which were meant for him alone. A similar case is recorded in John 12:28,29, where it is stated that our Lord Jesus heard a voice from heaven, saying, “I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again.” But the people that stood by and heard the voice understood not the words, but said that “it thundered.” Saul and all of his company in one sense of the word heard the sound or voice, but in another sense of the word he alone heard the voice. We use this same form of expression in our daily conversation to day. If some one speaks to us in a low or indistinct voice, we say that we did not hear—we mean that although we heard the voice we did not understand or comprehend it.

And the men who journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing a voice but seeing no one.

Acts 9:7

Saul’s astonished answer was, “Who art thou Lord?” This was the entire difficulty, he did not know the Lord; and as our Master himself declared, this lack of knowledge of the Son implied a lack of correct knowledge of the Father. We have his further explanation that however others in the past might have known something **about** God, they could never really know him, in the sense of personal acquaintance and appreciation of his character and spirit, except through the Son—a part of whose object in coming was to reveal the Father. So we might say of all who have persecuted the body of Christ, even when they did it ignorantly, it was because they did not know Jesus—because they had not received of his spirit in sufficient measure. Let us beware that no such spirit of persecution finds any sympathy or lodgment in our hearts, or any expression in our words or deeds. This will not mean, however, that we shall never offer criticism either of persons or doctrines; nor that we shall never reprove or rebuke and that publicly (2 Tim. 4:2); but it surely does mean that our reproving and rebuking, of teachings and of teachers, shall be done from a Scriptural standpoint—giving reasons, giving them plainly but without bitterness, without harshness, without unkindness in any degree. R. 2117 and R. 2969

That the Lord Jesus guards His sheep is distinctly stated by Himself. When He reproved Saul of Tarsus for the death of St. Stephen and for troubling the Church, He declared, “Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me? [Saul] never saw Jesus personally in the flesh to persecute Him, but whatsoever was done to the least of His disciples was done to Jesus. This still is true, and will continue to be true until the Body of Christ, which is the Church Elect, shall have been completed and glorified. Meantime, he that harms one of the least of the Lord’s little ones, and he that gives a cup of cold water to one of the least of these, does it to the Lord of Glory Himself. R. 5180

* The statement, “And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?” quite probably well explains Paul’s condition of body and mind at the time; but these words are not found in the ancient Greek manuscripts: likewise the words, “It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks,” are omitted. R. 2969

Then the Lord said to him, “Arise and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do.”

– Acts 9:6 –

The Lord’s spirit, the spirit of truth and of righteousness, received as a result of faith in the Redeemer and consecration to him as a follower, a pupil, is the beginning of a new life, which starting in the will, should grow, develop, increase, until it permeates and fills all the avenues of life—its affections, its ambitions, its cravings.

Today, as in the Apostle’s day, those who have become the Lord’s people through faith and consecration need to be informed respecting the possibilities of their new life, else they may permit it to lie comparatively dormant—permit it to be covered up, and finally to be extinguished, smothered by the old nature—the will of the flesh, its affections, its ambitions, its cravings. While, therefore, it is important that conversion should take place—a turning of the will, the intention, from sin to holiness, from self to God,—it is very important that conversion be not esteemed to be the end, but merely the beginning of the Christian’s course.

Awake, you who sleep, arise from the dead, and Christ will give you light.
Ephesians 5:14

When the believing, converted, consecrated, begotten, sleeping, “new creature” has been awakened—when the eyes and ears of his understanding have been opened, to see the true conditions of the world, and to realize himself as a “new creature” in Christ,—his next duty is to **arise**. His arising from the dead signifies the activity of the new mind, the new will, in directing and controlling his mortal body. This implies effort; the putting forth of all the energy of the new creature. It requires no effort to sleep, or to lie after one gets awake; but to rise requires the exercise of every muscle. Arising is not an instantaneous act, but a process requiring one movement after another, until it is fully accomplished; so also is the arising of the “new creature” from the dead conditions of sin and trespass against the laws of righteousness and truth and purity; it requires his every effort, and is a work of time. Indeed all experienced Christians who have followed the Apostle’s injunction to arise from the dead, have found that it requires days, months, years, of energetic effort to rise up above, superior to the fallen tendencies of his own flesh,—common to the world of mankind. He finds that even after he has risen fully up, so that he does not willfully practice sin, nor countenance it in any sense or degree, he still must be on his guard lest he be entrapped by the weaknesses of his mortal body; or by the allurements of the world; or by the temptations of the adversary; and thus stumble again over some of the things of sin and death from which he had arisen by the Lord’s grace. R. 2966

Sin is figuratively represented by darkness; and, additionally, it generally prefers literal darkness for the accomplishment of its purposes. The Lord’s children are children of the light, and are to walk in the light of truth; they are to have their hearts enlightened and their minds so illuminated as to make them burning and shining lights in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, blinded and darkened by the Prince of Darkness. And all such while endeavoring to arise from the dead and to live separate from the world are recommended to walk in the light of truth; and so far as possible to live in the light actually,—to see that their homes are well lighted, —recognizing that even the natural light is a foe to the darkness of sin. R. 2967

Then Saul arose from the ground, and when his eyes were opened he saw no one. But they led him by the hand and brought him into Damascus.

– Acts 9:8 –

The feelings of Saul, as he heard from the Lord of glory a reproof of his misdirected zeal, can be better imagined than described. Nevertheless, we can but admire the promptness with which he at once laid down the arms of his opposition, and placed himself on the side of the one whose cause he had so recently persecuted. We can imagine him praying, Lord, teach me! In my blindness and ignorance I have been fighting against thee, the Only Begotten of the Father, the Messiah; while “I verily thought I did God service.” Having made such a great mistake I am thoroughly humbled, I can no longer trust to my own wisdom nor to the wisdom of those in whom I have heretofore confided; —the chief priests, the scribes and Pharisees. Now Lord, I come to thee: Show me how I can undo some of the great wrong I have done ignorantly: show me, and I will be glad to promptly follow and obey.

How deep a hold the matter took upon the mind of Saul may be judged from the fact that he neither ate nor drank for three days. He could not think lightly of his own blinded course. Deep contrition is always a good evidence of genuine repentance of wrong. No doubt his thoughts were busy, and, well educated in the Law and in the Prophets, and familiar with what he had learned concerning the Nazarene and his teachings, we may reasonably suppose that those three days of blindness and fasting were days of prayer and reflection, in which he diligently compared the testimony of the Law and the Prophets with what he knew of the Nazarene and his teachings. His natural sight had been destroyed, but his mental vision had been opened, and he now saw matters in a new and wonderful light. R. 2117

And he was three days without sight, and neither ate nor drank.

Acts 9:9



The zealous Pharisee, loyal and appointed to the putting down of heretics, who so prided himself upon his zeal for the Lord, in one moment was humbled to the dust, not only literally falling to the ground, but crest-fallen in his mind and self-esteem. The city of Damascus, which he had expected to enter with great dignity as the representative of the Jewish High Priest, the head of the Jewish religious system, he entered very differently. Opening his eyes after the voice had told him to go into the city, Saul found himself totally blind, so that he required to be led by the hand. So overwhelmed was he that for three days he did neither eat nor drink. He was doubtless acquainted at Damascus or possibly stopping at a hotel, but evidently on the most aristocratic street of the city, called “Straight,” because it was really straight, as were so few of the streets of old-time cities. It was a very noble thoroughfare for those times of narrow streets. Its width was one hundred feet and it had a colonnade of marble columns separating the roadway from the building. R. 4356

Now there was a certain disciple at Damascus named Ananias, and to him the Lord said in a vision, “Ananias.” And he said, “Here I am, Lord.”

– Acts 9:10 –

If one mentioned Ananias in the Scriptures was convicted of falsity toward the Lord, another of the same name was found faithful. He resided at Damascus. To him the Lord appeared in a vision directing him fully as to how he should find Saul and what he should do to him for the opening of his eyes. Ananias protested that there must be some mistake, because this man Saul had done much evil to the saints of Jerusalem. He knew also the purpose of his visit to Damascus.

The Lord did not send one of the Apostles from Jerusalem, nor was Ananias one of the elders or deacons, as far as we know; but he was a plain, humble, obedient disciple, “A broken and emptied vessel, for the Master’s use made meet.” Let all of the Lord’s dear people be similarly filled with the Lord’s spirit, and on the alert; emptied of self, feeling their own brokenness and littleness, let them be ready and anxious to do God’s service; that they may be used of him as opportunity shall occur. What a blessing must have come to Ananias in connection with his service! Ever afterward he could think how he had been a humble instrument in the Lord’s hands in carrying a blessing to one who subsequently became such a noble servant of the cross of Christ. Likewise some of the Lord’s faithful ones in recent times have taken the Lord’s message either by word or tract or pamphlet, and have opened the eyes of some who subsequently have become mighty for the truth and for the pulling down of the strongholds of error. What a rejoicing such have had in the privileges of their service! We know not which will prosper, this or that, therefore let us diligently use every opportunity as it may come to us; praying the while for much wisdom and grace and many opportunities for service. R. 4356 and R. 2970

Ananias is the first one accredited with the use of the word “Saints” in connection with Jesus’ followers. As we well understand, the word signifies “holy ones,” “sanctified ones.” Surely it is a fitting name for all who profess and endeavor to follow in the footsteps of their Master. R. 4356

So the Lord said to him, “Arise and go to the street called Straight, and inquire at the house of Judas for one called Saul of Tarsus, for behold, he is praying.”

– Acts 9:11 –

The Lord’s commendation of Saul to Ananias was, “Behold, he prayeth!” Ah! how much of a story is told in those three words! How sure we may be that those who similarly humbly address the Almighty are in no injurious mood! True, there are hypocritical prayers, just as our Lord illustrated in the parable of the Pharisees and the publican, but, taken as a whole, private prayer may be considered a sure index to an honest, contrite heart. In our estimation, only the praying ones, even of the Lord’s consecrated people, are at all likely to win the prize. If they do not love the Lord enough to render thanks for his mercies and to approach the throne of the heavenly grace and obtain mercy and strength to help in every time of need, then they are not likely to have sufficient strength to stand the trials and tests. We wish that we could feel sure that all of our readers are faithful and earnest in the practice of prayer. We are sure of many of them, but as we long for their progress, we urge them to embrace this great privilege heartily. R. 4356

12 “And in a vision he has seen a man named Ananias coming in and putting his hand on him, so that he might receive his sight.”

13 Then Ananias answered, “Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much harm he has done to Your saints in Jerusalem.

14 And here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who call on Your name.”

15 But the Lord said to him, “Go, for he is a chosen vessel of Mine to bear My name before Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel.

16 For I will show him how many things he must suffer for My name’s sake.”

– Acts 9:12-16 –

The name Ananias in a previous lesson was associated with ungodliness and falsehood, but here we find another Ananias of a totally different character—a true servant of the Lord. His hesitation does not seem to have been caused by opposition, nor faithlessness, but rather a reasonable caution. He had heard of Saul and possibly also knew Saul’s host to be an enemy of the cause of Christ, and therefore wanted to assure himself that he was not misunderstanding the Lord. The Lord very graciously made the matter clear to him, as he always does to his faithful ones, and Ananias promptly fulfilled his mission. Here again is an illustration of divine methods: The Lord sent upon this important errand one who apparently was a very humble member of the Church. He did not send Peter and John and James the apostles from Jerusalem with great pomp and show to receive the penitent enemy of the cross and to make a public triumph, but used an instrument ready and willing that was nearby. This should be a lesson to us that the Lord is both able and willing to use in his service the humble ones who are ready and waiting—

***Emptied, that he might fill them, as forth to his service they go;
Emptied, that so unhindered his life through them might flow.***

How strangely it sounds, “For I will show him how great things he must suffer for my name’s sake!” Is any other service than that of our Lord ever entered on these terms—promises of suffering? Surely not. Yet how honest for the Lord not to call his disciples under any misapprehension of the facts! We are called to suffer with him—to sacrifice ourselves, our earthly interests—to share his Cross and, by these experiences, to prove that we have been begotten of his Spirit, and that it has been shed abroad in our hearts and constituted us copies of God’s dear Son. Faithfulness to this cause insures the reward of joint-heirship with our Redeemer in his Kingdom; nor can those Kingdom honors be hoped for on any other terms. The Apostle understood this and seems to give the thought, also, that the more any of the Lord’s followers can share of the sufferings of Christ, in the flesh, proportionately will be his share in the glory which by and by shall be revealed to us—in the “members of his Body.” R. 2118 and R. 4356

The expression, “For my name’s sake,” is comprehensive. It includes everything connected with the Divine Plan, of which Jesus, the Messiah, is the center. It includes sufferings for the Truth’s sake, because the Truth is vitally connected with the “only Name.” It includes the brethren because they have named the name of Christ and they are under his name as members of his Body. It includes all the work of the Millennial Kingdom because he is the Head of it all, and his name, his honor, is associated with it all. Let us, therefore, be glad of any sufferings which come to us directly or indirectly, because of our faithfulness to the “precious name” and these various interests which are associated with it. R. 4356

It pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb and called me through His grace, to reveal His Son in me.

– Galatians 1:15-16 –

The Lord's foreknowledge is clearly displayed [in these verses]; he knew Saul—knew of his honesty and of his zeal; —he knew that this honesty and zeal as soon as they should be rightly directed would make just such an instrument for his service as he desired to use. The Apostle Paul recognized this himself, and even traces divine providence so far back as his birth, declaring that the Lord had chosen him from his mother's womb. He could see in the light of subsequent events how all of his affairs, from earliest childhood, had been tending in a favorable direction to prepare him for his work of ministry, as an apostle; —and even his experiences as a persecutor proved profitable, for they humbled his estimate of himself and undoubtedly gave him a larger degree of sympathy for those suffering from a similar blindness, increasing his helpfulness toward them. This does not signify, however, that God had predetermined that Paul should have a place in the Kingdom: that he determined for himself, —making his calling and election sure by faith and obedience. The Lord providentially guided his steps in childhood and youth, so that he learned certain lessons, and gained certain preparations which might be useful in due time; and in due time he opened the eyes of his understanding, knowing well what would be his own choice thereafter. Nevertheless, this same Apostle declares that even after having preached the gospel to others, he, himself, might have become a castaway; —having borne the Lord's name before the Gentiles and Israelites and kings, and having suffered great things for the Lord's name's sake, he might still fail to maintain, faithfully to the end, the character of an overcomer, and thus fail to become a joint-heir with his Lord. R. 2970

No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him.

– John 6:44 –

God does not draw mankind by any other means than that original power which He implanted and which has not been altogether lost through the fall of the race of Adam. All mankind have degenerated from the image of God; but the desire for worship, for righteousness, for harmony with God, is much stronger in some people than in others. In proportion as one desires righteousness, in that proportion that one is drawn toward God, feels after God, if haply he might find his Creator. He is feeling after God because he wishes to find Him.

This is the drawing, we believe, that comes to every one of us. Before we gave ourselves to God in consecration, we had a desire to come to Him, and that desire was something awakened in us. But it was there before it was awakened. Then something occurred that turned the thoughts toward God. Perhaps it was some great sorrow, some calamity, which drew the heart to God; and with it came the feeling that our grief should be taken to Him. Along with that desire, probably came the thought, "God will not hear me." This is a very proper conclusion, for there is no way of approach to God except through the Redeemer, who said, "I am the Way, the Truth and the Life." R. 5583

Not until we have the desire to go back to God are we ready to be directed by the great Advocate; for when we come to the Advocate, He very pointedly says, "I cannot receive you except upon one condition." That condition, He tells us, is that we take up our cross and follow Him. (Matthew 16:24.) R. 5583

And Ananias went his way and entered the house, and laying his hands on him he said, “Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you came, has sent me that you may receive your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit.”

– Acts 9:17 –

Assured by the Lord’s leadings that the way was open to him to serve the Truth, Ananias hesitated no longer. In full confidence of faith he addressed Saul in the most kindly terms, saying, “Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the holy Spirit.”

Then he said, ‘The God of our fathers has chosen you that you should know His will, and see the Just One, and hear the voice of His mouth. ‘For you will be His witness to all men of what you have seen and heard.

And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins,* calling on the name of the Lord.’

Acts 22:14-16

Promptly there fell from Saul’s eyes something resembling fish scales. Evidently the intense light had destroyed the surface of the eye, which now peeled off. His sight was restored, though to what degree of perfection is questionable. It seems evident that for the remainder of life he was afflicted with weak eyes, which hindered his writing his own epistles, except one which, he remarked, was written in large characters. We can fancy the disadvantage he would be under in some respects by reason of this affliction, that his bodily presence would be much less attractive than before, and that nothing but the Truth behind his words could longer influence his auditors.

Saul had been praying and fasting for three days and nights and now realized the Lord’s forgiving love, as manifested in the sending of Ananias, in harmony with his dream and with a recovery of a measure of his sight. With this evidence of Divine favor he would start afresh. First he would be baptized and thus symbolize his allegiance to the Crucified One. Then he would eat for the refreshment of his body that the strength might be used in the service of his new Master. R. 4356

Immediately there fell from his eyes something like scales, and he received his sight at once, and he arose and was baptized.

Acts 9:18

* The baptism of John, which was instituted for Jews, was a baptism unto repentance and remission of sins---not original sin, but sins against the Jewish covenant, and sins against Jesus, the Messiah who fulfilled that Covenant. This was John’s baptism, the one that was appropriate to the Jews; for every Jew who was in harmony with his God and with his covenant had his original sin covered under the arrangement of the Mosaic Law, in the sacrifices which took place year by year continually, until the great sacrifice came, the antitypical one, which superseded all others. Every true Israelite, therefore, who was in Moses under the Jewish Law Covenant, by virtue of Christ’s work in taking the place of Moses, and in substituting the New Covenant for the Law Covenant, was, so to speak, transferred from the Old to the New; from Moses into Christ; and the *typical* covering of original sin became *actual* in Christ. Therefore the Jews were everywhere called upon to repent and to be baptized for the *remission of their sins against their covenant*; that thus they might be in full accord with the Lord. This baptism for the remission of sins, John’s baptism, was for the Jews only, and not for the Gentiles, who were not under the Mosaic covenant nor in Moses (baptized into Moses---1 Cor. 10:2), and hence in the transfer of the Mosaic institution into the Christian we were not transferred into Christ. Baptism to the Gentiles means an admission into Christ---into the body or Church of Christ, as the Apostle explains. ---Rom. 6:3-5.

Lest I should be exalted above measure by the abundance of the revelations, a thorn in the flesh was given to me, a messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I be exalted above measure.

—2 Corinthians 12:7 –

Although the Lord, at the hands of Ananias, performed a miracle on the eyes of Saul, so that scales fell from them, and he was able to look upon Ananias, nevertheless, we have every reason to believe that his eyes were never restored to their former strength, and that it was for this reason that the Christian brethren would have gladly plucked out their own eyes for him (Gal. 4:15); for this reason, also, that, although a learned man, he wrote very few of his own epistles, and was largely dependent upon his companions, though himself invariably the chief speaker and writer. This was the “thorn in the flesh,” which the Lord was not pleased to remove entirely, and which the Apostle learned to rejoice in ultimately, when he came to know that through this God’s mercy and grace would abound toward him the more. —Gal. 6:11; 2 Cor. 12:7-9.

And so with us: we might be inclined to think that if we had greater talents and abilities, or we were relieved of certain weaknesses of the flesh, it would be better for us and for the Lord’s cause; yet we are to remember the Master’s words again, that we are to “seek first the Kingdom of heaven,” and that all things needful of an earthly kind will be added to us.

Concerning this thing I pleaded with the Lord three times that it might depart from me. And He said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.
2 Corinthians 12:8-9

Our desires and prayers are not to be for the earthly things after which the Gentiles seek, but are to be chiefly for the spiritual things. We are to remember that as respects our earthly interests they have all been committed to the Lord, and that he knoweth what things we have need of before we ask him, and that he has promised to do for us in every matter exceeding abundantly better things than we could ask or think, as viewed from the standpoint of our spiritual and eternal interests. We surely would not want temporal blessings which would in any degree hinder our attainment to the exceeding great and precious promises—the spiritual things which God hath in reservation for them that love him.

Let us note carefully the message God sent to Paul through Ananias. “The God of our fathers hath **chosen thee**, that thou shouldst know his will, and see that just one, and shouldst hear the voice of his mouth.” Ah! how few indeed realize the truth of the Master’s statement, “No man can come to me except the Father which sent me **draw him**.” How few realize that God, during this present time, is not attempting to gather the world into his arms, but merely, as the Scriptures abundantly declare, is taking out from amongst the people a peculiar people, a little flock, to constitute the Bride, the Lamb’s wife and joint-heir. If all who have heard the voice of Jesus speaking to them through his Word, and who, with the eye of faith, have seen him, and into whose hearts the light of the glory of God, above the brightness of all earthly light, has shined, could but realize how great a favor has come upon them, it would indeed be a great stimulus to their appreciation of the privileges thus put within their grasp. They would see that all this signifies that we are called to be coworkers together with God, to be fellow-sufferers with Jesus in this Gospel age of sacrifice for righteousness’ sake, and to be fellow-heirs with him in the coming age, in which the reign of righteousness shall prevail to the blessing of all the families of the earth, and the subjugation of Satan and sin. R. 2825

Immediately he preached the Christ in the synagogues, that He is the Son of God.

– Acts 9:20 –

After a few days to gain strength from his fasting and the nervous excitement incidental to his experiences, days of communion with those whom he had come to persecute, and whom now in his renewed condition of mind he recognized and fellowshipped as dear brethren, he promptly began to preach Christ as the Son of God—publicly using the opportunities afforded in the Jewish Synagogues. R. 2118

Then all who heard were amazed, and said, “Is this not he who destroyed those who called on this name in Jerusalem, and has come here for that purpose, so that he might bring them bound to the chief priests?”

Acts 9:21

Having taken his stand for Christ, he acknowledged him in the usual way, by baptism, and not by joining a sectarian system. He joined the body of Christ, and thus became a fellow-member with all who are joined to Christ, the one Head of the one body. Immediately he met with the Lord's people; he was no longer ashamed of them; he could not now do too much for them; any honor and dignity which were his by virtue of his birth, and wealth, and Roman citizenship, were none too good to be sacrificed for the Lord, and having learned that in persecuting the Lord's people he persecuted the Lord himself, so he now understood that in meeting with the Lord's people and honoring them, he was meeting with and honoring the Lord. Forthwith he preached Jesus. He preached him as the Son of God, the one in whom the prophecies of the past were being fulfilled, the Messiah who had redeemed, and who in God's due time would deliver Israel and the world from the bondage of Satan—sin and death. R. 2970

Hear the Apostle: “I certify unto you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.” “But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel than that we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.” (Gal. 1:8,11,12.) “For my gospel [message of good tidings] came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the holy spirit, and in much assurance.” “As we were permitted of God to be put in trust with the gospel, even so we speak; not as pleasing men, but God.” “We preached unto you the gospel of God”—exhorting “that ye would walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory;” and we thank God that “when ye received the word of God WHICH YE HEARD OF US, ye received it not as the word of men, but, as it is in truth, the word of God.” (1 Thes. 1:5; 2:4,9,12,13.)

I make known to you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man. For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came through the revelation of Jesus Christ.

– Galatians 1:11-12 –

By the loss of Judas a vacancy had occurred in the company of the apostles, which vacancy the apostles themselves endeavored to fill by their election of Matthias. (Acts 1:26.) This they had no authority to do, but, presuming such to be the Lord's will, they chose two and asked the Lord to indicate which of the two whom they had selected would be his choice; and when the lot fell upon Matthias—for it must of course fall on one of the two—the eleven accepted him as the Lord's choice for the place of Judas. But the sequel showed that the Lord merely ignored their presumption in the matter, and in his own time and way chose Saul of Tarsus, a man at heart devoted to the service of God and needing only to be enlightened by the truth when all his consecrated powers would be fully enlisted in the blessed work of bearing the name of Christ to the Gentiles as well as to the Jews. And this Saul, afterward called Paul, was the most noted, self-sacrificing and efficient of all the apostles.

When God revealed His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately confer with flesh and blood, nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me, but I went to Arabia, and returned again to Damascus.

Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and remained with him fifteen days. But I saw none of the other apostles except James, the Lord's brother.

Galatians 1:16-19

I Paul **am an Apostle**, not of men, neither by man's appointment, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father who raised him from the dead. To prove to you that I received my commission and authority direct from the Lord and not from them which were Apostles before me, let me tell you that I did not go up to Jerusalem until three years after my conversion; and then I went to see Peter, and abode with him fifteen days; but other of the Apostles saw I none save James, the Lord's brother. (vs. 17-19.) Then **fourteen years after**, I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, and took Titus with me also. And I went up **by revelation**—the Lord sent me—not to learn of them, but to communicate unto them **that** Gospel which I preach among the Gentiles (Gal. 2:1-2). R. 1444 and R. 551

Then, too, in the selection and special favor shown to Saul, we see the Lord's appreciation of loyal and zealous hearts. What a comfort is this to all the saints in the midst of a realizing sense of our own infirmities and short-comings, that if our hearts are loyal, the Lord can read it there. If we lack knowledge he will grant it in his own good time and way; and his wisdom will correct our mistakes, and his love and mercy and grace will abound toward us more and more as we continue to walk in his ways. The part which Ananias was privileged to take in the healing of Paul's eyes and in enlightening his mind with the truth was one which must have brought great joy and blessing to his own heart—not only because of being specially chosen of the Lord for this purpose, but also in seeing such a one as Saul of Tarsus so fully convinced of the truth and enlisted in its service. How wonderfully wise are the ways of the Lord; how blessed is his truth; how tender are his providences; how consoling is his mercy; and how rich are his abounding love and grace! R. 1444

**Then last of all He was seen by me also, as by one born out of due time.
– 1 Corinthians 15:8 –**

The Lord evidently designed that Saul should have the opportunity of being the twelfth Apostle, to take the place of Judas. In order to be an Apostle, it was necessary that he should be a witness to our Lord's resurrection. And so Saul of Tarsus was given a demonstration which made him an eye witness to the fact of the Lord's resurrection from the dead.

He was seen of the other apostles as the gardener, as a stranger, as the Crucified One, etc., etc., but when Paul, the last of the apostles, saw him it was not so, but as we shall see him by and by when we are changed to his likeness—he saw him as one of premature birth. The Church of

St. Paul saw our Lord not in fleshly form, but shining above the brightness of the noonday sun; he saw him as a spirit being, as all the Church hope to see him after they shall have experienced the resurrection change, when they shall be like him and see him as he is (not as he was) and share his glory. R. 4187

the First-Born are at the resurrection changed to be like their Lord and see him as he is. Any special revelation of the Lord might have been withheld from the Apostle Paul until the same time except that it was necessary that the apostles should be "witnesses," testifiers to the fact that Christ had not only died but had also risen from the dead; and in order that Paul as an Apostle might thus testify he was granted the vision of the glorified one.

There is something pathetic in this reference to his own glimpse of Jesus. It called up the period of his own bigoted persecution of the Church. It reminded him of his own responsibility in connection with the death of St. Stephen, and of the blind hatred which led him to persecute inoffensive fellow-creatures, simply because they believed that Jesus died and rose again, the very thing which he was now trying to testify to all having the hearing ear.

**For I am the least of the apostles, who am not worthy to be called an apostle,
because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am,
and His grace toward me was not in vain, but I labored more abundantly than
they all, yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.
1 Corinthians 15:9-10**

His memory went back to the madness which he had manifested in pursuing Christians even to Damascus, haling them to prison. Again he saw the great, blinding light from heaven, above the brightness of the noonday sun, his fall to the earth, and heard the voice speaking to him, saying, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?" (Acts 9:1-9; 26:12-19.) Again he remembered his astonishment at learning that those whom he had persecuted were not renegade and deceived Jews, but highly esteemed and acknowledged by this Great One, a glimpse of whom felled him to the earth. Ah, that was a wonderful sight! If Messiah was so great, so glorious, so powerful, he could believe in Him, he could reverence Him. R. 5408, R. 3905 R. 5034

**I was formerly a blasphemer, a persecutor, and an insolent man, but
I obtained mercy because I did it ignorantly in unbelief.
1 Timothy 1:13**

I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago---whether in the body I do not know, or whether out of the body I do not know, God knows---such a one was caught up to the third heaven.

– 2 Corinthians 12:2 –

We are to recognize that the Apostle Paul had special information from the Lord. He tells us so. He says he had visions and revelations more than all the other Apostles. And he declares that the Lord revealed to him things not proper to be uttered at that time. He must not explain these visions; their meaning was a secret intrusted to him. (2 Cor. 12:4.) The Apostle's mind being thus illuminated, he was able to write with great intelligence, clearness and power, so that we, with the increasing light upon the Holy Scriptures now due, might be able to see a depth to his writings, and get a grasp on the Truth, not otherwise possible. And we do. Nearly all of our knowledge of the deep things comes from St. Paul's Epistles, because he had this light and it permeated all that he wrote. So we today are able to explore and to understand many things which were secrets, known only to the Apostle Paul in his day.

I know such a man---whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows---how he was caught up into Paradise and heard inexpressible words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter.

2 Corinthians 12:3-4

Paradise, we recall, is elsewhere referred to by the Apostles as "the third heaven" —"a new heavens and a new earth."

(2 Cor. 12:2; 2 Pet. 3:13.) They are not referring to new worlds, nor to heavens ranged one above another, as many have supposed, but, as already shown, what is termed the first heavens and earth or order of things, passed away at the flood; and that the heavens and earth "which are now," the present order of things, are reserved of God to pass away with a great fire of trouble, revolution, etc., which shall utterly destroy them—the present spiritual powers and the present earthly or social arrangements. "Nevertheless, we according to his promise look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness." This will be the third heavens, and third earth, or the new heavens, and new earth, which will differ from the present condition of things in that it will be righteous, whereas the present is unrighteous, imperfect. R. 5339 and R. 2832

Paul is the clearest eye the Church has ever had. Though he was not permitted to make known what he so clearly saw, (2 Cor. 12:4) yet it is evident that the things seen, so deepened and widened his own knowledge of God's plan and love as related to the past, present, and "ages to come," that his writings have a rich depth, fullness, and golden coloring, possessed by no other New Testament writer. He seems to come to the very verge of those glorious revelations while explaining Rom. 11:25-33, concerning the plan of God relative to the casting off of fleshly Israel and their future restoration to his favor through the agency of the church---when the church is complete---when they shall obtain mercy through your mercy. How anxious he seems to tell *plainly* all about those future dealings---what was not due to be clearly known until *now*. "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God." R. 365

Saul increased all the more in strength, and confounded the Jews who dwelt in Damascus, proving that this Jesus is the Christ.

– Acts 9:22 –

We read that forthwith Saul preached Christ in the synagogue of Damascus. We admire his courage, his honesty! We do well to let the illustration quicken our own minds and hearts with appreciation that we may be fortified for similar and all emergencies—to use every opportunity to serve the Lord and to undo anything that we have previously done amiss. Presumably the Apostle felt his need of special preparation for the ministry of the Cross of Christ. At all events it is presumed that it was shortly after his conversion, shortly after his preaching at Damascus, that he turned aside into the desert of Arabia. It is possible that those three years were spent studying out the various features of the Divine Program. Doubtless there he received visions which filled him with enthusiasm for the work of his great message, the blessings of which have come down through all age and are still with us. R. 4357

I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.

– Philippians 4:13 –

As the self-conceited must learn humbly to trust God and not rely on themselves and thus secure balance, so the naturally self-depreciative must learn a lesson of confidence. Not **self**-confidence, not **self**-reliance is the most desirable, but rather confidence in God and reliance upon His promised “grace to help in every time of need.” This maintains the desirable humility and meekness, yet gives the courage and force suggested by the Apostle’s words: “I can do all things through Christ, which strengtheneth me.” (Phil. 4:13.) As St. Paul again declares, “Our sufficiency is of God!”

Thus inspired by faith in God and in His promises those “taught of God” become marvelously “strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might.” (Eph. 6:10.) The righteous is strong as a lion, saying, “I will not fear what man may do unto me.” (Psa. 118:6.) I will not heed what man may say of me or do to me. So long as I have the Almighty Creator for my Father and the Redeemer for my elder Brother I shall be content, relying on their “exceeding great and precious promises.”

Thus, whether by nature self-conceited or humble, God’s Word and providences in Christ tend to bring all followers of Christ to oneness of heart and mind. The one is humbled, the other exalted. Both learn not to trust in self or the arm of flesh, but in Him who is able to do for them exceedingly, abundantly, more than they could ask or think, according to the riches of His grace in Christ Jesus our Lord. R. 5113

My brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might!

Ephesians 6:10

Now after many days were past, the Jews plotted to kill him. But their plot became known to Saul. And they watched the gates day and night, to kill him. Then the disciples took him by night and let him down through the wall in a large basket.

– Acts 9:23-25 –



St. Paul Escapes Damascus

We may remember [Jesus] when evilly entreated and taken to the brow of the hill to be cast headlong: he did not use his superior power to do injury to his opponents, but passed through their midst, evidently either directly or indirectly exercising over them a restraining influence, because his time for death had not yet come. So, too, we may use any moral influence we may possess to escape from the power of our enemies, and be assured that we will have the divine care and protection until our lessons and experiences are completed—until our time shall come to pass beyond the veil. Similarly the Apostle, learning of the threats of the Jews against his life, did not make threats against them nor pray evil upon their heads; but he did use such steps as were at his command to thwart their evil designs, sending word to the governor and invoking the power of the civil authority; and on another occasion he defended himself by appealing to the people. —John 18:22,23; Acts 23:1-5,17.

In Damascus the governor, under Aretas the king, was guarding the city of the Damascenes with a garrison, desiring to arrest me, but I was let down in a basket through a window in the wall, and escaped from his hands.

2 Corinthians 11:32-33

The lesson for us is that we may use all lawful and legal means in our self-defense, and may even wisely run away from dangers and persecutors, as the Lord directed and the apostles exemplified. (2 Cor. 11:33; Matt. 10:23.) But we are not authorized to retaliate. R. 3738

Pursue peace with all people. Hebrews 12:14

Then the churches throughout all Judea, Galilee, and Samaria had peace and were edified. And walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, they were multiplied.

Acts 9:31

A certain centurion's servant, who was dear to him, was sick and ready to die. So when he heard about Jesus, he sent elders of the Jews to Him, pleading with Him to come and heal his servant.

– Luke 7:2-3 –

Evidently he was naturally a benevolent man, well disposed, and had a heart, which, had he been born an Israelite and entitled to the privileges of that elect nation, would have proved to be good soil in which the good seed of the Kingdom, planted by our Lord, would have brought forth good results and have constituted him one of the “brethren.” This is attested not only by his faith, but also by the fact that his servant was “dear unto him,” so loved that he went to much trouble to secure his healing. In his humility he felt unworthy of our Lord's favors, realizing, as did the Syrophenician woman, that the Gentiles were as “dogs” who could have only the crumbs from the children's table. Hence he got the elders of his city to request the Master to heal his servant; and they urged his request before our Lord, saying that he was a good man, “He loveth our nation and hath built us a synagogue.”

The beauty of the centurion's faith and humility was specially manifest in his afterthought and message of apology to the Lord for having asked him to come to his house to see his servant; for he felt that in so doing he had only put him on a par with other physicians, and besides was taking him away from other and more important work: hence his message, I am unworthy that you should come under my roof; but being myself a man clothed with authority, and accustomed to doing things by my servant's hands, I know that you can do the same on a higher plane with your servants and agents: therefore simply speak the word of command, and it shall be done.

This simple, noble faith and humility were very pleasing to the Lord, who declared, “I have not found so great faith,—no not in Israel,” where he had much more reason to expect it. His faith was rewarded by the healing of his servant, and our Lord, who had received his message through the Elders at Capernaum (verse 3), and who had already started toward the Centurion's house, discontinued his journey and instantly granted the healing of the servant.

Impressed by the faith and goodness of this Centurion, so unexpected among Roman soldiers, we were considering that it would be “just like the Lord” to send the gospel to such a noble Gentile soon after the Jewish favor would end, when the doors of divine love and mercy would be opened to Gentiles as well as Israelites. Then the Lord brought to our memory Cornelius, the first Gentile to whom the gospel message was sent. (Acts 10:1-8.) We remembered that he also was a Centurion, and of him also it is recorded that he was “a devout man, and one that feared God with all his house, which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God always.” It is not probable that among the Roman soldiers of Palestine there were two Centurions of such similarly exceptional character. The residence of the Centurion mentioned by Luke is not stated but that of Cornelius is mentioned: it was Caesarea. R. 1922

When Jesus heard these things, He marveled at him, and turned around and said to the crowd that followed Him, “I say to you, I have not found such great faith, not even in Israel!”

Luke 7:9

There was a certain man in Caesarea called Cornelius, a centurion of what was called the Italian Regiment, a devout man and one who feared God with all his household, who gave alms generously to the people, and prayed to God always.

– Acts 10:1-2 –

Our Lord's personal ministry was to the Jews only, and likewise His disciples labored only with the Jews for the fixed period of time—until the end of “the seventy weeks” of the promise of Divine favor to that nation. Those symbolic weeks ended three and a half years after Jesus' crucifixion. Then the door was thrown open to the Gentiles also, Cornelius being the first Convert. —Acts 10.

It was just like the Lord to keep in mind this exceptional character among the Gentiles, and when the due time came for the gospel to be preached to the Gentiles, to send it to him first. “Them that honor me, I will honor,” saith the Lord; and so it appears in this case that the Centurion was doubly honored, first in the granting of his request and in the friendship and commendation of the Lord; and subsequently in being the first Gentile to receive the holy spirit of adoption as a son and heir of God.

Cornelius had his vision first. He saw in a vision “openly,” not in a dream, an angel of God coming in unto him. He talked with the angel and received the assurance that his prayers and his alms of years had now been received of the Lord, because the “due time” had come—the end of Israel's covenanted favor. We may be sure that at the same time the alms and prayers of all other Gentiles ascended up as incense to the Lord. We may be sure that blessings were arranged also for all such, and the Gospel sent to them, though not in so marked a manner as to Cornelius,

The record shows that Cornelius was a just man, a reverential man, a benevolent man, a man every way prepared to be a follower of Jesus—a Christian, the only obstacle being that he was not a Jew. That obstacle was not Jewish prejudice, but an insurmountable one—God's unwillingness to deal with any others than his covenanted people of the seed of Abraham. So as soon as the Covenant arrangement with Israel terminated, and God's “due time” came for dealing with such Gentiles as were in proper condition of heart, he had no difficulty in finding messengers to convey the good tidings. R. 4344

because the Lord would make of his case a special lesson for the benefit of the apostles and of all of us who have lived since. In recounting this matter elsewhere Cornelius says that the angel told him to send for St. Peter and gave him his address and added, “When he is come, he shall tell thee words, which shall be to the saving of thyself and house.”

Cornelius was rejoiced, and showed his faith by immediately sending messengers to the Apostle. Meantime, while they were approaching Joppa, Peter at noon-time betook him to prayer, perhaps seeking special guidance as to what should be his next move in Christian work. He got the answer through a dream-vision and through the messengers of Cornelius. He went with the messengers, nothing fearing, and yet not for a moment presupposing what actually took place. He took with him six men, probably as witnesses, or as an escort, or because of the dignity of the person upon whom he was calling. He doubtless was surprised to find that Cornelius had invited into his house his kinsfolk and special neighbors, who with his own family made quite an assemblage. The simplicity of the centurion's faith was thus clearly attested. When St. Peter inquired why Cornelius had sent for him, he explained the visit of the angel and declared that now they were ready to hear the words, the

Wonderful Words of Life.

R. 5048, R. 1923, R. 4344

So I said, 'Who are You, Lord?' And He said, 'I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. But rise and stand on your feet, for I have appeared to you for this purpose, to make you a minister and a witness both of the things which you have seen and of the things which I will yet reveal to you. I will deliver you from the Jewish people, as well as from the Gentiles, to whom I now send you, to open their eyes, in order to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who are sanctified by faith in Me.'

Acts 26:15-18

APOSTLE PAUL: A LIGHT TO THE GENTILES



I, Paul, am prisoner of Christ Jesus for you Gentiles—if indeed you have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which was given to me for you, how that by revelation He made known to me the mystery.

– Ephesians 3:1-3 –

Evidently [the apostles] were to bear witness to all they knew, and to all they learned under the special guidance of the holy Spirit. Only thus would they be faithful stewards of that which was intrusted to them. “Let a man so account of us as. . . stewards of the mysteries of God,” said Paul. (1 Cor. 4:1.) And the same intent was expressed by the Lord when he said, “I will make you fishers of men,” and again, “Feed my sheep” and “lambs.” Again, Paul says that “the mystery [the deep truths of the gospel concerning the high calling of the Church—the Christ] **hidden in other ages**, is now revealed unto his holy [justified and consecrated, and so reckoned ‘holy’] apostles and prophets, by the Spirit,” and that the object of its being revealed to them was “**to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery** [upon what terms they may have the privilege of fellowship in this mystery—of joint-heirship with Christ], which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God.” (Eph. 3:3-11.) And, again, after speaking of how the Church was to be built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone (Eph. 2:20-22), he says, “For **this cause** [viz., **the building up of the Church**, the temple of God] I, Paul, [am] the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles.” —Eph. 3:1.

Thus we see that the apostles were not only to bear historic testimony of Christ, but they were also specially prepared and empowered, through the influences of the holy Spirit, both to discern and teach **the deep things of God**, which they did as wise and faithful stewards of the blessings intrusted to them for the good and edification and building up of the whole Church. “Freely ye have received, freely give,” said the Master; and they were careful to obey the injunction, and through them the same blessings have come down to us—even “to the uttermost part of the earth.”

Paul was pre-eminently the apostle to the Gentiles, and the others more particularly to the Jews. Hence Paul has by far the more to say to us through his numerous epistles; but in their day “the eleven” were more prominent in the Church than he—Peter, James and John, as Paul says, being regarded as pillars among them. (Gal. 2:9.) Paul was the pushing pioneer, and his work among the Gentiles of his day was by no means a light, nor an honorable task, in the estimation of men. It exposed him to all sorts of danger, persecution and humiliation. R. 1523

Pushed to the front as the Lord’s mouthpiece to the Gentiles, St. Paul’s mind grasped more quickly than did the minds of the other Apostles, the things pertaining to the New Dispensation; and he perceived that the Gentiles were to be fellow-heirs with the Jews in the Kingdom privileges. (Ephesians 3:1-12; Colossians 1:25-27.) Naturally, some thought that St. Paul was going too far; and the argument was raised that he was not one of The Twelve, that he was not to be ranked as an Apostle, etc.

However willing St. Paul might have been to be nothing and to let others take their own estimate of him, nevertheless he felt a duty toward the Truth. This led him to tell us in no uncertain terms that he had full proof of his apostleship, and that he was not a whit behind the very chiefest of the Apostles in the understanding of the Divine Program—yea, that to him more than to all the others the Lord had revealed more of those things to come of which our Lord Jesus had spoken. —John 16:13; 2 Corinthians 11:5; Galatians 2:2-10. R. 1523 and R. 5941

Now those who were scattered after the persecution that arose over Stephen traveled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to no one but the Jews only.

– Acts 11:19 –

It seems that the start of the work of the Lord at Antioch, the little spark of light and truth which started that important work, resulted from the persecution at the time of Stephen's death. Some of those forced out of Jerusalem by the persecution settled in Antioch, and, of course, they could not live and walk in the light of the gospel without letting the light shine out for others. This at first was done only toward those who were of the Jewish faith, for in a large commercial city such as Antioch there were sure to be large numbers of Jews. We know not how many of these were reached with the gospel; but it was confined to them, surely, until the end of Israel's seventy symbolical weeks—until A.D. 37. At the same time that the Lord was sending Philip to the Samaritans and to the Ethiopian eunuch, and opening the door to the Gentiles through the Apostle Peter, he was ready to open the door to the Gentiles everywhere; and under the leading of divine providence some of the Christian Hebrews got the proper thought at the proper time,—that a Gentile who would receive the Lord Jesus, and conform his life to his teachings, could be classed as a disciple equally as though he had been born a Jew. The work thus started amongst the Gentiles at Antioch spread considerably, the Gentiles seeming to take more notice of it than had the Jews to whom the gospel was first preached.

And the hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number believed and turned to the Lord. Then news of these things came to the ears of the church in Jerusalem, and they sent out Barnabas to go as far as Antioch.

Acts 11:21-22

ANTIOCH, at the time of our lesson, was the third city in the world in rank of commercial importance and population, the latter being estimated at 500,000. Its situation was about 300 miles north from Jerusalem, ---a long distance in those days of foot and camel and sailboat traveling. It is noted as being the first city outside of Palestine in which a Christian church assembly was formed; and indeed, we might say that as Jerusalem was the center of influence in Palestine, so Antioch became a center of influence as respected the gospel amongst the Gentiles. R. 2997

Barnabas at once overflowed toward the Antioch brethren, and in the same comforting and helpful manner as at Jerusalem he **exhorted** them all. The Greek word here is from the same root as his name, and signifies comfort, stimulation, assistance. R. 2998

When he came and had seen the grace of God, he was glad, and encouraged them all that with purpose of heart they should continue with the Lord.

Acts 11:23

BARNABAS

Barnabas was evidently a most wise selection to be a representative of the brethren at Jerusalem, a Pilgrim to the newly interested brethren at Antioch. The narrative indicates that he stopped to visit other groups of the Lord's people enroute, Antioch being the end of his prescribed journey. On his arrival several things resulted:

- He himself received a blessing. "He perceived the grace of God and was glad."
- He exhorted them all that with purpose of heart they should cleave unto the Lord.
- They had already separated themselves from heathenism and Judaism, and by faith and obedience and acceptance of the holy Spirit had been joined to Christ. The exhortation was that they should thus abide, separated from further affiliations and bound unto the Lord—with purpose of heart—not temporarily nor because of mental conviction of the logic of Christ's religion, but that their hearts should be fully given over to the Lord in the fullness of consecration.

When he came and had seen the grace of God, he was glad, and encouraged them all that with purpose of heart they should continue with the Lord. For he was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and of faith. And a great many people were added to the Lord.

Acts 11:23-24

Such consecration was the subject of Barnabas' preaching for quite a little while, and the result was "Much people were added unto the Lord." Now notice another beautiful tribute to Barnabas' character, and let us each see to what extent we can find these characteristics predominant in ourselves, and to what extent we can, by God's grace, have them still more abound. We read, "For he was a good man, and full of the holy Spirit and of faith." What more could be said to the credit of any child of God? This testimony is far richer than if we read, "For he was a learned man, or a brainy man, and full of self-confidence and a mighty collector of monies for the Church." His heart was full of the spirit of holiness and he was full of faith as respects God's power and God's Truth. R. 4358 and R. 4318

Barnabas was a Levite, and hence was trained with a view to the work of a teacher, instructor amongst his people. Tradition has it that he became acquainted with Saul of Tarsus in the Gamaliel school. However, the bonds of union between the two, which subsequently took them forth as messengers of the good tidings, was not the earthly tie, but the spiritual one.

The point we would impress is that it was not a restraining of the flesh, nor a perfecting of it, that was sought, but a much deeper work of grace than this; a purity of heart, of intention, a heart-adhesion to the Lord. We today cannot do better than follow this same course in our endeavors to do good unto others as we have opportunity. The brethren needed strengthening rather than tearing. They needed building up in the most holy faith and love. They needed encouraging in heart-adhesion to the Lord, and that criticisms of the flesh come in afterward gradually and very carefully and kindly. No wonder we read that as a result of his labors at Antioch much people was added unto the Lord! R. 2998

Then Barnabas departed for Tarsus to seek Saul.

– Acts 11:25 –

The last we heard of Saul of Tarsus (Acts 9:30) was that after the opening of the eyes of his understanding, after he became the disciple of the Lord Jesus, and had preached in Damascus, and then in Jerusalem, his life being endangered the brethren sent him down to Caesarea, and then probably by ship to his native city, Tarsus. We are not informed regarding the nature of his work in his home city, but can readily suppose that one of his character and disposition would not long remain idle. He was in Tarsus while Barnabas was at Antioch, and the latter now had in mind the talents, the force, the logic, of Brother Saul, whom he had met in Jerusalem, and he concluded that Tarsus being not very far from Antioch he would look him up, interest him in the service of the Antioch Church.

Barnabas perceived the largeness of the field of opportunity at Antioch and bethought him of Saul of Tarsus, whom he sought out and brought to the new field of labor. Evidently the Lord had allowed Saul to rest in quietness for a time to digest certain features of the Truth, to get himself properly gauged up. No doubt these lessons were needful for the development of humility and faith and obedience. Now, however, the time had come for Saul to be introduced into the Gospel work. Again God used instrumentality. Barnabas did not trust to writing a letter, but went to see him personally, to urge upon him activities in the Master's service and to point out to him the open door of a still greater work at Antioch, where Saul's learning and talents would be an additional fortification to the Truth and inspiration to the brethren. For a year he assembled with the Church at Antioch and taught much people publicly and privately. R. 2998 and R. 4358

Christians†

And when he had found him, he brought him to Antioch. So it was that for a whole year they assembled with the church and taught a great many people.

And the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch.

– Acts 11:26 –

Antioch was the first church of believers, so far as we know, outside of Palestine—the first church amongst the Gentiles. The gospel was thenceforth not for Jews exclusively, but for people of all nationalities who were in heart-readiness to receive it.

It is noteworthy that our Lord never gave any name to his people; he called them disciples, which signifies pupils, learners. The apostles have applied to the Church various terms, “church of the living God;” “church of God;” “church of Christ;” “the church;” but gradually the name “Christians,” identifying God's people with their Redeemer and leader, came to be the general name throughout the world.

There was a start toward sectarianism in the early Church, some saying, I am a Christian, but of the order of Paul; others, I am a Christian, but of the order of Apollos; others, I am a Christian, but of the order of Peter, etc. But the Apostle promptly rebuked this spirit, assuring them that the relationship in Christ was all that was necessary; that neither Peter nor Paul had redeemed them, and that neither, therefore, could occupy the place of a head to the Church. R. 3005 and R. 2998

JOHN MARK

John Mark, the writer of the Gospel by Mark, cousin of Barnabas, and son of one of the Marys at Jerusalem (Acts 12:12,25), is noted as being their minister, attendant servant, and this, together with the fact that he was not sent out by the Church as a missionary with the others, shows us clearly that while all brethren are to be very highly esteemed as brethren this does not signify that they have all one office or one work. It is the same lesson which the apostle inculcates in 1 Cor. 12, saying, "If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling? But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him." The eye serves the hand in some respects; the hand serves the eye in other respects; the foot serves both in still other respects, and both hand and eye serve the foot. The lesson here is that each of us should seek to find the position in which the Lord is pleased to have us and to use us, and finding this we are to exercise ourselves therein as best we are able;—continuing, if the will of God be such, to abide in that condition and service forever, and thankful for the privilege of serving the body of Christ in any capacity.

**And Barnabas and Saul returned from Jerusalem when
they had fulfilled their ministry, and they also took with them
John whose surname was Mark.**

Acts 12:25

Mark's faithful service continued for some time, but for some reason (Acts 13:13) not stated he left the work, and we may judge very nearly lost his privilege and opportunity in connection with it. No one knows how much he may have lost of spiritual blessing and privilege by his failure to continue with Paul. The disagreement, whatever it may have been, apparently extended to his uncle Barnabas, and eventually led to the separation of the latter from Paul. However, years afterward John-Mark apparently saw things in a different light, and again joined Paul's company. He seems to have ultimately become a true yoke-fellow, very highly appreciated by the great Apostle. (Col. 4:10; 2 Tim. 4:11.) Here is a suggestion to all of us that, no matter what may be the door of opportunity for engaging in the Lord's service, faithfulness to it is essential to progress; and there is a further lesson that if we find that we have erred and been unappreciative of our privilege the best thing to do is to repent there for and seek a renewal of the opportunities, and to attest our loyalty by fresh and increased earnestness. R. 3006 and R. 2141

**Now in the church that was at Antioch there were certain prophets and teachers:
Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen who
had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul.**

Acts 13:1

As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, “Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.”

– Acts 13:2 –

There were three public speakers at Antioch, besides Paul and Barnabas, and that as they served and practised self-denial, the holy Spirit indicated that Barnabas and Paul should have a special work to do in carrying the message of God’s grace to others.



The spirit of Christianity is an aggressive one. The Gospel sets before the true believer an object, a motive, which inspires to an enthusiasm of the highest degree. The message becomes a burning one which must flame forth as a true light to enlighten others. Otherwise it would become extinct, smothered. “Quench not the holy Spirit, whereby ye are sealed,” may surely be applied to a proper missionary spirit, as well as in other ways. Missionary endeavor in foreign lands certainly has been in harmony with the Divine intimation, that a knowledge of the grace of God might be scattered abroad so as to select God’s “elect” from every quarter.

Then, having fasted and prayed, and laid hands on them, they sent them away.

Acts 13:3

The proper course decided upon, the congregation fasted and prayed and laid their hands on Paul and Barnabas. [This] simply meant that—We, the congregation, by this laying on of hands of our representative Elders, are sending forth these two men, Paul and Barnabas, on a missionary tour; and that they go, not only as the representatives of the Lord, and as representatives of themselves, but also as representatives of the Church of the Lord at Antioch, and as such we hold ourselves responsible for their **maintenance**. We will supply them the needful assistance, and thus will be co-laborers with them, —sharers in their labors, sympathizers with them in their difficulties and trials, helpers of them in their necessities, and partakers with them also in whatever results shall come to the Lord’s praise through their efforts.

The nature of the praying offered in connection with the sending forth of the missionaries we can readily imagine; —they were, doubtless, prayers for the Lord’s blessing upon them, for their guidance, for their support and strengthening, and that their journey might be profitable and to the Lord’s praise. R. 4359 and R. 3006

When James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that had been given to me, they gave me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship, that we should go to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised.

Galatians 2:9

The Great Commission

Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you.

– Matthew 28:19-20 –

Following the assurance of his authority as the Messiah, our Lord, addressing especially the eleven apostles, but indirectly, with and through them, addressing all his followers, gave them and us the great commission under which we, his people, have since been operating. It might be termed the ordination of his apostles and all his followers as preachers, ambassadors, members of the royal priesthood, speaking and teaching in the name of the Master, the fully empowered Messiah. The commission divides itself into three parts:

- 1 *Make disciples of all nations;*
- 2 *baptizing them;*
- 3 *teaching them.* The word teach, in the Common Version (vs. 19) is not from the same Greek word rendered “teach” in vs. 20. The word in vs. 19 signifies *proselytizing* or making disciples of. The word “teach” in vs. 20 signifies *instruct*.

A wrong thought is derived from this text by many students of the Scriptures, when they consider it to mean, Go and convert all nations. This is not the thought, but rather, Go ye and gather converts from all nations, and baptize them and teach them, etc. This view is in accord with our Master’s declaration on other occasions, in which he testified that they would not be converted at his second coming, but quite the reverse: “When the Son of Man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?” This interpretation is in harmony with our Lord’s statement in Matt. 24:14, “This Gospel of the Kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all the nations; and then shall the end come.” Whoever gets the wrong thought respecting the commission is apt to take the wrong action in his endeavor to comply with it. Those who have concluded that the Lord intended the conversion of the world are led to various subterfuges, both in mind and in conduct, in order to attempt to carry out the commission they misunderstand. This is leading some at the present time to ignore the Scriptural definition of the terms of membership in Christ’s Kingdom—to lower the standard both of faith and of conduct, in order to admit a larger proportion of the human family and in order to, if possible, convince themselves and others that the world is growing better and being converted. Some have not only concluded that the preaching of the cross of Christ and faith in the redemption is unnecessary but have even gone further than this, and have claimed that even a historical knowledge of Christ is unnecessary, and that heathen religions are to be esteemed as part of the preaching of the Gospel, and that the heathen obedience to their religious customs is to be esteemed as obedience to the Gospel. Thus more or less false views of the commission are leading astray many who see no hope in any other way of ever attaining to that which our Lord commissioned nearly nineteen centuries ago, and which otherwise they would feel has thus far failed most miserably, and has no hope of ever being accomplished.

Primarily [the great commission] belonged to the eleven Apostles, but subsequently it included St. Paul, who took the place of Judas and who was “not one whit behind the very chiefest of the Apostles.” (2 Corinthians 11:5.) The Apostles, and they alone, are authorized as mouthpieces of the Lord Jesus Christ and His Church to the world. All that has been told us of Apostolic Bishops being successors of The Twelve is false, unscriptural. They had no successors; they are with us yet. The Master’s Message through them is given us in the New Testament, of which one of them wrote, “The Word of God is sufficient, that the man of God may be thoroughly furnished.” (2 Tim. 3:16,17.) To the Apostles was given the great work of inaugurating the Church. They were endued with the power at Pentecost. R. 5588

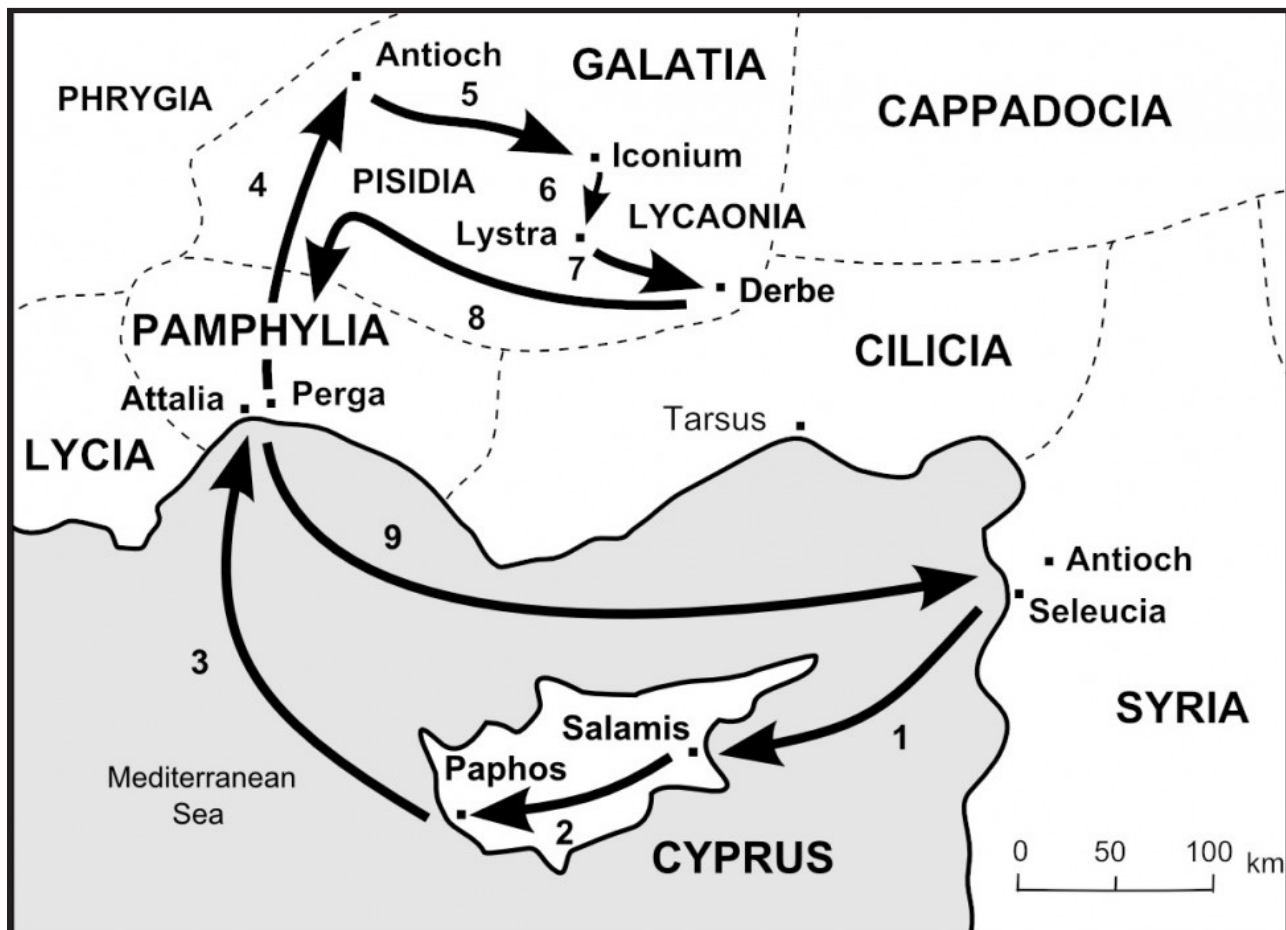
**Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.
Matthew 28:20**

That our Lord gave this commission, not merely to the apostles but to all who should believe on him through their word, is clearly shown by the words with which he closed the commission,—“Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the age.” The apostles did not live to the end of the age, and hence the Lord’s words signify that he will be with all of his followers who avail themselves of his commission, and who endeavor to present his message to those who have ears to hear out of all nations. He of course did not mean that he would be personally present with them, for he had already told them that personally he would go away, and that personally he would come again at the end of the age (John 14:2), and his words are not to be understood as contradictory. His meaning in the present instance evidently was that he would supervise their work, he would be the real head of the Church, he would oversee all of their affairs, he would be with them in the sense of supporting and guiding and counselling those who would walk in his way and proclaim his message—and in proportion as they were faithful to the charge. This assurance of the Lord’s presence was intended to give the apostles courage for the work he was committing to them. While he was with them in the flesh they merely followed his direction, and as soon as he was smitten they felt as sheep having no shepherd, and now he was going away, but he wished them to realize that his power would be with them and his supervising guidance of their affairs would be granted them, as surely as while he was with them in the flesh—though apparent only to the eye of faith. According to their faith it should be unto them a strength, a power.

And all the way down through the age the Lord’s people have similarly been required to walk by faith and not by sight, and the lesson no doubt has been valuable to them in spiritual upbuilding, much more so than had he remained in the flesh with us. And if the thought of the Lord’s spiritual supervision of his work was to be a source of encouragement and strength to those who would attempt to teach in his name all through the age, much more may we of the present time realize his actual presence in the harvest of this Gospel age, although we see him with no other than the eye of faith, yet, believing, we have joy unspeakable and strength and courage for the work. He is with us in the harvest work as he was with the apostles in the sowing of the seed. R. 2809 and R. 2810

FIRST MISSIONARY JOURNEY

Acts 13:4 -- Acts 14



St. Paul's First Missionary Journey from FreeBibleImages.org

So, being sent out by the Holy Spirit, they went down to Seleucia, and from there they sailed to Cyprus. And when they arrived in Salamis, they preached the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews. They also had John as their assistant.

Acts 13:4-5

A Noteable Sermon by a Noteable Man (Acts 13:16-41)

When they departed from Perga, they came to Antioch in Pisidia, and went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day and sat down. And after the reading of the Law and the Prophets, the rulers of the synagogue sent to them, saying, “Men and brethren, if you have any word of exhortation for the people, say on.”

Acts 13:14-15

16 Then Paul stood up, and motioning with his hand said, “Men of Israel, and you who fear God, listen:

17 The God of this people Israel chose our fathers, and exalted the people when they dwelt as strangers in the land of Egypt, and



St. Paul Preaching by Gustave Dore

with an uplifted arm He brought them out of it.

18 Now for a time of about forty years He put up with their ways in the wilderness.

19 And when He had destroyed seven nations in the land of Canaan, He distributed their land to them by allotment.

20 After that He gave them judges for about four hundred and fifty years, until Samuel the prophet.

21 And afterward they asked for a king. So God gave them Saul the son of Kish, a man of the tribe of Benjamin, for forty years.

22 And when He had removed him, He raised up for them David as king, to whom also He gave testimony and said, ‘I HAVE FOUND DAVID THE SON OF JESSE, A MAN AFTER MY OWN HEART, WHO WILL DO ALL MY WILL.’

23 From this man’s seed, according to the promise, God raised up for Israel a Savior --- Jesus ---

24 after John had first preached, before His coming, the baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel.

25 And as John was finishing his course, he said, 'Who do you think I am? I am not He. But behold, there comes One after me, the sandals of whose feet I am not worthy to loose.'

26 Men and brethren, sons of the family of Abraham, and those among you who fear God, to you the word of this salvation has been sent.

27 For those who dwell in Jerusalem, and their rulers, because they did not know Him, nor even the voices of the Prophets which are read every Sabbath, have fulfilled them in condemning Him.

28 And though they found no cause for death in Him, they asked Pilate that He should be put to death.

29 Now when they had fulfilled all that was written concerning Him, they took Him down from the tree and laid Him in a tomb.

30 But God raised Him from the dead.

31 He was seen for many days by those who came up with Him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are His witnesses to the people.

32 And we declare to you glad tidings---that promise which was made to the fathers.

33 God has fulfilled this for us their children, in that He has raised up Jesus. As it is also written in the second Psalm: 'YOU ARE MY SON, TODAY I HAVE BEGOTTEN YOU.'

34 And that He raised Him from the dead, no more to return to corruption, He has spoken thus: 'I WILL GIVE THE SURE MERCIES OF DAVID.'

35 Therefore He also says in another Psalm: 'YOU WILL NOT ALLOW YOUR HOLY ONE TO SEE CORRUPTION.'

36 For David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell asleep, was buried with his fathers, and saw corruption,

37 but He whom God raised up saw no corruption.

38 Therefore let it be known to you, brethren, that through this Man is preached to you the forgiveness of sins,

39 and by Him everyone who believes is justified from all things from which you could not be justified by the law of Moses.

40 Beware therefore, lest what has been spoken in the prophets come upon you:

41 'BEHOLD, YOU DESPISERS, MARVEL AND PERISH! FOR I WORK A WORK IN YOUR DAYS, A WORK WHICH YOU WILL BY NO MEANS BELIEVE, THOUGH ONE WERE TO DECLARE IT TO YOU.' "

– Acts 13:16-41 –

The first Sabbath day [at **Antioch of Pisidia***, Acts 13:13-14] found Paul and Barnabas in a Jewish synagogue, according to their custom; because the Jews who had been waiting for the fulfillment of the Messianic prophecies were the best prepared soil for the Gospel message; at least so far as their heads were concerned. Entering with the others they took seats and, after prayers, listened to the reading of a portion of the Law, a selection from the prophets by the Elder of the congregation, styled the “angel of the synagogue.” Then came the time for addresses by the rabbis or other learned persons. The officiating Rabbi recognized Paul and Barnabas as intelligent and cultured men and sent them word that they would be pleased to have them use the liberty of the synagogue, and give the people an address, if they felt so disposed. Then Paul stood up in his place, not going to the public stand. Saluting with his hand, St. Paul began his address, saying that he had something that should be heard by all Israelites and by others who revered God. He proceeded in a wonderful discourse, which in some particulars reminds us of Stephen’s address—which St. Paul [at the time] had doubtless heard and rejected. His argument was:

- 1 That God, having a great blessing to bestow upon mankind, had chosen the nation of Israel as a channel for the blessing; and that his care for that nation, ordering its affairs for centuries, was in line with this original purpose.
- 2 He showed that, by and by, in that nation of Israel God had further indicated the choice of a special family through which the blessing should come. Messiah was to be the offspring of David. And “the sure mercies of David,” to be accomplished in Messiah, would mean God’s sure mercies to Israel as a nation, because Messiah would come to them as their King.
- 3 Finally, after centuries of waiting, Messiah did come in this very line of descent of the house of Israel—of the family of David—Jesus of Nazareth. —V. 23.
- 4 The Messiahship of Jesus had already been recognized to a considerable extent. —Vs. 24-26.
- 5 The Jewish nation as a whole, however, represented by their rulers, heedless of the testimony of the prophets, and ignoring Jesus’ manifest purity, had accomplished his death through the Romans. —Vs. 27-29.
- 6 The Messiahship of Jesus was proven by his resurrection from the dead. This accorded with the prophecies of the Scriptures and was attested by numerous witnesses. (Vs. 30-37.) Note the absence of cant and rant in this discourse. Note the appeal to reason, the logic of the argument—fact upon fact, each in its proper place and order. However, the mere recitation of these facts might have accomplished little. The Apostle proceeded to draw from the facts a great lesson, most important to his hearers, namely, that
- 7 All were sinners, and that Jesus, the Messiah, through his death, had become the Saviour of sinners. Whatever his future work, he was already doing work for all those who would hear the message and give hearty response. R. 4364

* The Antioch here mentioned is not to be confused with the city of Antioch where Paul and Barnabas first preached. The Antioch here is in the region of Pisidia. See map on previous page.

Therefore let it be known to you, brethren, that through this Man is preached to you the forgiveness of sins.

– Acts 13:38 –

[Here] is the center and pith of the Apostle's discourse. He was not merely talking to tickle their ears respecting their being the seed of Abraham, nor was he talking for the purpose of showing his comprehensive grasp of Israel's history; nor was he merely telling them the story of our Lord's crucifixion. More than all this, it was an individual message to every heart before him in condition to receive it, —namely, "Through **this man** is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins." The Apostle does not refer to something that was done by our Lord as the archangel before "he was made flesh" (John 1:14), nor does he refer to any work to be done by him in his new, highly exalted condition, "set down with his Father in his throne" and partaker of his divine nature; but he here refers to the work done by "**the man**, Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for all" (1 Tim. 2:5,6) at Calvary. Thus the Apostle again emphasizes the fact that "as by **a man** came death, by **a man** also came the resurrection of the dead." (1 Cor. 15:21.) Yes, this is the center of the gospel proclamation that the failure of the first perfect man was fully offset by the sacrifice of "the man Christ Jesus," and that it was to this end that it was needful for our Lord to leave the glory which he had with the Father before the world was, to become poor (in the sense of taking our lower nature—but not its blemishes, for he was "holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners"); and yielding up this human nature a **ransom-price** or corresponding price for the life forfeited by father Adam for himself and his race. This is the basis upon which every offer of grace is presented by the Scriptures. And now, he who was the Father's agent in the redemptive work is to be the Father's agent also in the work of "blessing" all the redeemed with ample opportunities for return to divine favor—the first step of which is the forgiveness of sins.

Whoever realizes the divine perfection and himself a sinner, imperfect and under condemnation of Justice, and desires reconciliation with God—and the result thereof, eternal life—such, and such only, are prepared to receive the gospel of redemption and forgiveness and help. "By him all that believe [after the manner described] are justified from all things [reckoned right, just, pure and perfect, notwithstanding all their inherent blemishes and uncontrollable weaknesses]." From none of these things could the law of Moses justify any. The law of Moses condemned every failure, but was powerless to forgive, and had no means of making permanent atonement or covering for those who were under that covenant, because its mediator, Moses, did not and (being himself a member of the fallen race) could not fulfil that covenant and satisfy its demands in his own person, for himself and the people. Hence, Moses and his covenant had not power to grant mercy or justification, as can be done under the New Covenant by its mediator, Christ Jesus, who sealed it with his own precious blood, "a ransom for all."

Paul preached the only genuine gospel—the only one authorized—the everlasting gospel which ultimately must be preached to every creature. R. 2150

By Him everyone who believes is justified from all things from which you could not be justified by the law of Moses.

– Acts 13:39 –

Forgiveness of sin is still the essence of the Gospel, although mankind now, as then, are generally loth to accept it thus,—it disappoints them by condemning them, and showing up the fact that all are sinners; —that there is none righteous, no, not one; —that all need just such a redemption as God has provided in the sacrifice of Christ. It disappoints also in that it shows a necessity for repudiation of sin in the heart, and, so far as possible, resisting it in all the conduct of life. Few are prepared for this—few have an ear to hear this message. The majority are ready to say, Preach unto us smooth things! Praise us for our religious fervor! Point out to us how much superior we are, not only to the heathen world, but to the masses of those who are about us! Tell us that we are God’s people, and that he could not get along without us! Do not tell us that we are sinners, and under condemnation as others; and that all who would come unto God through Jesus Christ must come by the same strait and narrow gate of faith, and repudiation of sin, and heart-consecration! R. 3009

The discourse had its effect—a two-fold effect:

1 The honest hearted, realizing the truth regarding God’s perfection and their own imperfection, realized their need of just such a Savior as the Apostle had preached: these were specially drawn to the missionaries, who, recognizing their right attitude of heart, assured them that they were already in God’s grace or favor; and that now the message of salvation through Jesus was an additional unfolding and development of the same favor that had already been extended to the Jews; and that they should continue in the grace of God,—continue to let God lead and guide them in his way, —continue to be the recipients of his mercies and blessings, which now were multiplied to them through Christ Jesus, and the atonement work he had accomplished.

2 Others were much less prepared for the Apostle’s words, and rather inclined to be envious of the attention bestowed upon the missionaries and their teachings,—which meant corresponding disregard for the usual leaders of the meeting and for the doctrines previously set forth, which the new views were calculated to supersede entirely.

So we find it today also: the essence of the Gospel preaching of today, [as it was then], must be man’s sinful and condemned condition, and his need of redemption, reconciliation and recovery from sin and its wages, death. This is the Gospel, which is falling into disuse in the pulpits of churchianity, in response to the itching ears of the majority, the “tares,” and their call for the preaching of smooth things. R. 3009

“It was necessary that the word of God should be spoken to you first, but since you reject it, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, behold, we turn to the Gentiles.”

– Acts 13:46 –

The trial of the nation as a whole, represented by its leaders, ended at Calvary, or rather five days before Calvary, when our Lord rode on the ass and wept over the city of Jerusalem, saying, “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets and stonest them that are sent unto thee: how oft would I have gathered thy children, as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate!” As a nation, as a people, you have rejected the divine invitation to the great Feast, and as a nation you cannot taste of it. Nevertheless, according to divine intention and promise, through the prophets, God extended mercy to various individuals of that nation, after the nation as a whole had proven itself unworthy of the Kingdom privileges. The apostles were sent to gather, not the nation, but such individuals as were of humble mind, to share in the feast, and this calling of individuals, instead of the nation of Israel, was responded to exclusively by those who realized their own unworthiness,—the lame, the halt, the blind, who confessed that they were not perfect, but who desired perfection, and who rejoiced in the call to partake of the Kingdom privileges, and gladly forsook all else for it.

Since the bringing in to the Gospel favor of as many Jews as were ready for it, the message has been turned to the Gentiles, “to take out of them a people for God’s name,” to partake of the great Feast with the remnant of Israel. As the Apostle Paul said to some of the Jews in his preaching:

**Simon has declared how God at the first visited the Gentiles to
take out of them a people for His name.**

Acts 15:14

They showed themselves unworthy of this great blessing or gift, in that they were interested more in the things that perish than in the glorious promises of the everlasting future. The acceptance of the invitation to this Feast means a deep interest in it, beyond everything else, so that all other matters, whether houses or lands, father or mother, wife or children, shall be secondary to the interests of the Kingdom, and to our responsibilities to the terms and conditions of the invitation. Consequently, what was true respecting Israel has been true as respects the Gentiles, viz., that the call to the Kingdom has been generally rejected by those who had a considerable measure of this world’s blessings and advantages—those who are rich, either in honor of men or social position or talents or reputation or money, have found it difficult to leave these all to follow Jesus in the narrow way: and, consequently, the Scriptural assurance is, not only that those elected in the end of the Jewish age were chiefly the poor and lowly, but that the same has been true amongst the Gentiles, and is true today: “Not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble;” but chiefly the poor of this world, rich in faith. —1 Cor. 1:26; James 2:5. R. 2702

The Apostle shows that the call of the Gentiles to be sharers in the Kingdom is merely the continuation of the original call, and that we are called in to take the places of those who neglected so great salvation and privilege. He illustrates this by the olive tree, saying that the natural branches were broken off that we, who by nature were wild, might be grafted in and become partakers of the root and fatness of the olive. —Rom. 11:17.



Divine favor produced pride of heart instead of humility, and unfitted the majority of Israelites to inherit the chief blessing offered to that nation. Consequently the words of the Apostle (considered in Acts 13:16-41), logical and convincing, in that they were in harmony with the testimony of the Law and the prophets concerning the Messiah, were nevertheless coldly received, because they ran counter to certain Jewish prejudices:

- 1 Although Paul preached a Jewish Messiah it was the crucified One.

- 2 If his message were true, it reflected very discredibly upon the heads of their nation and church, of whom they had been accustomed to boast as the greatest and holiest teachers of the world.

- 3 If the Apostle's message were true, it vitiated if it did not utterly destroy their long cherished national hopes that Israel would shortly be the great nation of earth, in principal power, instead of Rome. The Messiah for whom they hoped was not the meek and lowly crucified One whom the Apostle preached, but a mighty, earthly conqueror of men and nations.

- 4 If the Apostle's preaching were correct, Israel was no longer in a place of preference above the other nations, and those who would accept Jesus of Nazareth as Messiah, whether Jews or Gentiles, would become the holy and divinely recognized Kingdom on a common level. The various promises which in their selfishness they misinterpreted, served to blind them to the pure, true light of the gospel as it now shone upon them. R. 2150

For so the Lord has commanded us: 'I HAVE SET YOU AS A LIGHT TO THE GENTILES, THAT YOU SHOULD BE FOR SALVATION TO THE ENDS OF THE EARTH.'

– Acts 13:47 –

Those of [the Jewish] number who had been proselyted from amongst the Gentiles had less cause for stumbling on these points, being less prejudiced by national pride and selfishness. These seem to have heard the message with true appreciation and inquired for further opportunities of meeting and hearing more of the good tidings, and the privilege of bringing with them Gentile friends who were feeling after God (verse 42). The result of the second meeting was a little nucleus of believers. By and by the news of the new Jewish gospel became noised abroad throughout the city, the result being a large concourse to the synagogue on the following Sabbath.

So when the Jews went out of the synagogue, the Gentiles begged that these words might be preached to them the next Sabbath.

Acts 13:42

Here was a new line of temptation to reject the gospel, which bore upon such Jews as were not in proper condition of heart to receive it; the concourse of the Gentiles made them “envious.” They said within themselves: We

have tried long and earnestly to make an impression upon these Gentiles, but they seem to have no ear for the Law of Moses, few of them attend our meetings: but now that

But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy, and contradicting and blaspheming, they opposed the things spoken by Paul.

Acts 13:45

these missionaries of a new gospel have come they seem both willing and anxious to hear them. The result will be that they will despise the Law of Moses, and claim that our church is breaking up, and that after waiting for Messiah for centuries our holiest people crucified him. Thus we shall become a reproach in the eyes of our neighbors, even if we reject this new gospel, and still more so if we receive it. Their selfishness and envy triumphed, and then they began to think of and use all the arguments they could find in opposition to the teachings of Paul—even “blaspheming” the Messiah whom he preached. Thus the greatest and grandest truths become the most crucial tests, stumbling the proud and selfish, and lifting up and blessing the humble and devout. There is a great lesson here for all. As our Lord said, “Take heed how ye hear.”

Then Paul and Barnabas told them very plainly that while it was necessary that the gospel should be preached first to Israel, as per divine promise, it was nevertheless now to be extended beyond them to all Gentiles. As usual he quoted them a text on this subject from the old Testament, saying, Thus the Lord through the prophet commanded us: “I have set thee [Christ] to be a light to the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth.” The rightly disposed among the Gentiles were glad of this message, but the Jews, who should have rejoiced at the broadening of the divine mercy and grace, only hardened their hearts the more against the message; because the light and favor which they had already received had not dissolved the selfishness of their natural hearts.

Concerning the Gentiles it is written, “As many as were ordained to eternal life believed”—better translated, “As many as were *disposed* for everlasting life believed;”—as many as were in the right attitude of heart, who desired reconciliation with God and eternal life along the lines preached by the apostle, believed. R. 2150

8 And in Lystra a certain man without strength in his feet was sitting, a cripple from his mother's womb, who had never walked.

9 This man heard Paul speaking. Paul, observing him intently and seeing that he had faith to be healed,

10 said with a loud voice, "Stand up straight on your feet!" And he leaped and walked.

11 Now when the people saw what Paul had done, they raised their voices, saying in the Lycaonian language, "The gods have come down to us in the likeness of men!"

12 And Barnabas they called Zeus, and Paul, Hermes, because he was the chief speaker.

– Acts 14:8-12 –

Leaving Antioch of Pisidia, Paul and Barnabas went to Iconium, about 100 miles distant. There also they preached the Word faithfully, and there also opposition was aroused and persecution threatened; "and when there was an assault made, both of the Gentiles and also of the Jews, with their rulers, to use them despitefully and to stone them, they were aware of it, and fled unto Lystra." They did not allow fear to hinder them from the preaching of the gospel with courage, boldness; neither did they fear threats; but when the persecution took a positive form they delayed no longer, but fled. Arriving at Lystra, the preaching of the gospel was begun afresh, as courageously as though there had been no previous opposition.

It is easy to discern how a comparatively ignorant and superstitious people might jump to the conclusion that the visit of Paul and Barnabas was a repetition of this visit of Jupiter and Mercury, handed down to them through tradition. They called Paul, Mercury, because in their tradition, Mercury was the orator, the speaker; and they called

Barnabas, Jupiter, and forthwith the priest of Jupiter prepared to offer a sacrifice of oxen before the statue of Jupiter, at the gate of their city, in honor of the supposed gods present with them as men, in the persons of Barnabas and Paul.

The city of Lystra figured as the scene of a mythological event, the tradition being that **Jupiter and Mercury**, two of the gods of mythology, having once come to their city in the form of men, had been everywhere refused lodgings until they came to the lowly hut of a poor man who entertained them to the extent of his ability. They rewarded him by turning his hut into a gorgeous temple, and punished the others of the city with a flood. These traditions were very old, but were perpetuated by a statue of Jupiter at the gate of the city, as its protecting god.

We may draw a lesson from the incident, helpful to all of the Lord's people who are to any extent his ambassadors, representatives, teachers of the truth. The truth itself, especially in the light of our day, is so wonderful, so brilliant, that it naturally reflects some of its brilliancy upon those who represent it, causing men to marvel, and to say, as of old, "Whence hath this man this wisdom?" In some instances it might lead to an undue deference, to an ascription of undue honor, and to a subserviency which it would not be proper for the Lord's ambassadors to receive, and which they should as promptly and as thoroughly repudiate and refuse as did Paul and Barnabas refuse the honors which the Lystrians were about to bestow upon them. . . .

But when the apostles Barnabas and Paul heard this, they tore their clothes and ran in among the multitude, crying out and saying, “Men, why are you doing these things? We also are men with the same nature as you, and preach to you that you should turn from these useless things to the living God, who made the heaven, the earth, the sea, and all things that are in them.”

Acts 14:14-15

The only wise course for the Lord’s servants is the one followed by these missionaries of our lesson—to repudiate the entire matter; to confess that they are men of like passions with others; to hold up the light of God’s Word, and behind it to hide and ignore themselves entirely. Not alone will this be profitable as respects the finding and development of the true children of God whom he is now gathering out of the world, but it will be profitable also for the Lord’s ambassadors; for in this way they will grow in the Lord’s grace and likeness; of which humility was a prominent trait.

The Apostle, in pointing out to the Lystrians that their ideas were vanities, well knew that this could not bring him the favor of his hearers; for it is not human nature to appreciate being told of our follies. In his endeavor to be candid, and to serve the truth, he risked their disappointment and displeasure; and he was undoubtedly keen enough to know this in advance, and what result to expect. Nevertheless, as God’s mouthpiece, he shunned not to declare the whole message, whatever its results might be as regarded himself and his work.

It requires comparatively little courage to be a soldier of the cross and faithful to the truth amongst those of like precious faith and obedience; but it requires great courage to resist improper honor of men when we know in advance that this resistance will not only deprive us of their honor and friendship, but make us ignoble in their sight, and turn them into enemies. True soldiers of the cross still have the same trial, and it still requires hardness—a hardening campaign of experience in the Lord’s service—to endure these things and come off joyful in the Lord. R. 3012

The sudden change of public sentiment, the result of the Apostle’s explanations and plain statements of the truth, led the Lystrians to look at the missionaries with very different eyes, now that they were, according to their own declarations, common men like themselves. It was while the populace was in this spirit that certain Jews from Antioch and Iconium came thither, explaining to them that the missionaries were impostors, working upon the credulity of the people, “turning the world upside down,” raising questions about theology, and disturbing the minds of the people. As a result, Paul was stoned, and dragged outside the city, and left for dead.

But God was not through with the Apostle Paul; he was not stoned because of God’s indifference, nor because of his lack of power to protect his servant. On the contrary, quite probably the Lord was teaching the Apostle some great lesson, valuable both to himself and to the Church, for whom he was a general minister,—and to whom even today he ministers in the matter of these experiences. Quite probably the Apostle, while being stoned, remembered afresh the death of Stephen, to which he had consented; and quite probably, too, the result was a fresh realization of his own unworthiness to be so prominent a representative of the Lord and of his truth,—a humbling of his heart before the Lord, profitable to him and to the Church also.

Their entire public preaching at Lystra was now at an end, and the next day the missionaries went to Derbe. R. 3011

And when they had preached the gospel to that city and made many disciples, they returned to Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch, strengthening the souls of the disciples, exhorting them to continue in the faith, and saying, “We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God.”

– Acts 14:21-22 –

When it became expedient to return to Lystra to confirm the household of faith, the courage to serve the Lord’s sheep was not lacking. The entire course of the apostles shows us that their mission work was very different in object, as well as in method, from that of missions today. They went to the principal cities, and to the most religious persons in each. They had no expectation of converting all, but merely of interesting a few—a “little flock.” They knew what the majority of missionaries today do not know, that the work of this age is the selection and perfecting, in patience, experience and character, of the “Bride of the Lamb,” the Church—to be joint-heirs with Christ during the Millennium in the work of breaking the power of Satan over the masses, and of opening the blind eyes and unstopping the deaf ears, and leading all who then will be led, to perfection and lasting life and joy.

The Apostle’s care for the souls of his converts is also noteworthy. He was not only anxious to make converts, but he was even more anxious to confirm them in the faith and hope of the gospel, to establish them in the doctrine of Christ, to warn them against error and to encourage them to steadfastness in the midst of persecutions which would surely follow. R. 1472

So when they had appointed elders in every church, and prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord in whom they had believed.

– Acts 14:23 –

The proper thought connected with ordination is that which the Bible gives when we read that the Apostle “ordained Elders in every Church.” (Acts 14:23.) Similarly, amongst the Lord’s people today, Elders are chosen, or appointed, or authorized, by the congregation by the stretching forth of their hands—by the congregational vote. Every Elder and every Deacon Scripturally chosen by the vote, “the stretching forth of the hand” (not by laying on of hands), is thus ordained, or appointed, or authorized, to serve in the capacity indicated.

In thus ordaining Elders and Deacons, the Lord’s people are instructed that they are to seek to know the mind of the Lord. Their voting for and electing one of the brethren to be a Deacon or an Elder implies that they believe that such a person possesses the Divinely indicated qualifications for the service. No one should be voted for who does not give evidence of having received the begetting of the Holy Spirit, which is the Divine authorization to preach or to teach, as set forth in Isaiah 61:1.

All of the Lord’s spirit-begotten people are ordained in this general way to speak in the Master’s name the wonderful Words of Life, according to their opportunities. But when a congregation of such ordained, spirit-begotten children

Now when they had come and gathered the church together, they reported all that God had done with them, and that He had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles.

Acts 14:27

of God chooses from its midst some to be Elders, others to be Deacons, it implies that they consider the ones chosen to be especially qualified, “apt to teach” —ensamples to the brethren in word, in conduct. —1 Tim. 3:2. R. 5940

The Jerusalem Council

And certain men came down from Judea and taught the brethren, “Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved.”

– Acts 15:1 –

These Judaizing teachers interfered with the work of Paul and Barnabas at Antioch, and a great controversy ensued. The question was a vital one, and one which involved the whole structure of Christianity; for the error struck right at the foundation doctrine—the efficacy of the precious blood of Christ for salvation to all them that believe, whether Jews or Gentiles. These false teachers were claiming that faith in Christ as the Redeemer was not sufficient for salvation, but that this was only an appendage to the Law, which still held dominion over the Jewish converts, and to which the Gentile converts must also submit. R. 1472

Therefore, when Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and dispute with them, they determined that Paul and Barnabas and certain others of them should go up to Jerusalem, to the apostles and elders, about this question.

– Acts 15:2 –

The Church at Antioch was greatly exercised on this question, and Paul and Barnabas were zealous in proclaiming the full value of the precious blood of Christ, as completely abrogating the former covenant of works, which had been proven powerless to save. But the Gentile converts were anxious to know what would be the consensus of opinion on this important subject among the other apostles in Jerusalem. Consequently they determined that Paul and Barnabas and certain others of them should go up to Jerusalem, a distance of about three hundred miles, and have a conference with the apostles and elders there about this question, which they did, probably at the expense of the Church at Antioch. This was the visit mentioned by the Apostle in Gal. 2:1,2, about fourteen years after his conversion. The course of the Church at Antioch in this matter, as well as its former course in sending them out as missionaries to other cities, whence they had returned to minister to it again (Acts 14:28), gives evidence of its zeal and faithfulness, not only to serve the Lord, but also to come to an exact knowledge of the truth.

The early Church, composed first of Jewish converts, was not in opposition to the salvation of the Gentiles, but having been so long under the Law, it is not at all surprising that even the apostles were slow to follow the leading of the Spirit in turning to the Gentiles, and that all were naturally inclined to trust in some measure to the old Law covenant of works, not realizing that in so doing they were nullifying the covenant of grace in Christ. Paul seems to have been the first to grasp the situation, and his clear declaration in his letter to the Galatians (Gal. 5:2-6) of the all-sufficiency of the atonement leaves no room for doubt as to his position on this subject. R. 1472

Now the apostles and elders came together to consider this matter.

– Acts 15:6 –

The Church at Antioch had become the center of Christianity amongst the Gentiles, and Jews born in Gentile lands. Its Gentile surroundings, no less than its membership, tended to cultivate in it a broad spirit of Christian liberty; —some of its membership, under the influence of brethren who had come from Jerusalem, feared that it had gone too far in the matter of Christian liberty, and held that Gentiles, upon accepting Christ through faith, should likewise accept Judaism and the Mosaic Law, and come as fully under the conditions of these, including circumcision, as though they had been born Jews. Certain brethren who had recently arrived from Jerusalem accentuated these fears, and as a result there was quite a dissension in the Antioch Church, amounting, as the Greek word shows, almost to a schism, a split. But the right spirit evidently prevailed; because, instead of splitting over a vexed question, each party respected the conscientious convictions of the other, and it was wisely determined to appeal the matter to the Church at Jerusalem for such words of counsel and advice as its leaders, the apostles and elders, should see fit to give. The Antioch brethren evidently had full confidence that God had appointed the apostles, and that their conclusion on the matter would ultimately be the correct one. At the same time, knowing that the brethren at Jerusalem were surrounded by the Judaizing influence, tending rather to narrowness of view as respected the Mosaic customs, they sent their two leading representatives, Paul and Barnabas, to present before the Jerusalem Council the views which seemed to the majority of the Church to be the correct ones, —that thus the entire subject might be fully, fairly, thoroughly investigated, and the mind of the Lord determined as accurately as possible.

The truth has nothing to lose by fairness, openness, and a reasonable moderation and the turning on of all light obtainable. And while the Church at Antioch evidently had great confidence in Paul and Barnabas, they properly also had great confidence and respect for the apostles at Jerusalem, and reasoned that since these men all gave evidence that they were truly the Lord's special servants and mouthpieces, it would be strange indeed if meeting together and hearing all that could be said on both sides of the question, they could not arrive at a unanimous decision respecting the Lord's will, that would assure the Church in general. We commend this noble principle which is as applicable now as it was then. Today, however, as we cannot refer questions to the living Apostles, we must refer them to the recorded teaching of our Lord and the apostles, —seeking assistance in this amongst the brethren who appear to have the best knowledge of God's Word and the greatest insight into the divine plan. R. 3018

While God could have quickly made the truth plain to all the Church in various ways, he chose to do it gradually and through agencies. Hence through a vision to Peter he first gave indication of his purpose to begin the blessing of the Gentiles with the gospel. But to Paul God made known the particulars of his plan, and through him comes the clearer understanding to the whole Church, including the other apostles. To him came visions and revelations more than to others. —2 Cor. 12:1-7. R. 1472

Now when Peter had come to Antioch, I withstood him to his face, because he was to be blamed. I saw that they were not straightforward about the truth of the gospel, and I said to Peter before them all, "If you, being a Jew, live in the manner of Gentiles and not as the Jews, why do you compel Gentiles to live as Jews?"

Galatians 2:11,14

Peter and James finally agreeing with Paul, influenced the entire council. R. 972

And when there had been much dispute, Peter rose up and said to them: “Men and brethren, you know that a good while ago God chose among us, that by my mouth the Gentiles should hear the word of the gospel and believe.”

– Acts 15:7 –

The fact that the question at issue was—the obligation of Gentile converts to the Law, is not to be understood as signifying that the Law of Moses was recognized as being of binding force upon Jewish coerts. All were bound to concede that the Law-Covenant had saved none—that Christ's fulfilment of it brought all under divine grace. It was more a question of usage—the Jews were used to circumcision which preceded the Law, used to abstaining from pork, not only merely because the Law forbade it, but because aside from the Law they considered it unclean. What the Jew did in the exercise of his liberty he thought the Gentile should be forced to do; —a very common error with many. It requires development to learn to use our consciences and liberty and to let others use theirs, even though they differ.

When a fair hearing had been granted to both sides of the question, Peter, one of the leading apostles, and doubtless the eldest, rehearsed his experiences with Cornelius; then Paul and Barnabas were heard, and James closed the discussion. All upheld the teachings and practices of Paul and Barnabas, and cited the leadings of the Lord's spirit, as well as the prophecies of the Old Testament in corroboration of this position which, doubtless, as above suggested, they had held tentatively for some time, though they only now thought it necessary to make a public statement regarding it. The conclusion was satisfactory to the apostles and elders and the whole Church; and an answer in harmony with this was sent to the friends at Antioch, Syria, and throughout Silicia—the regions which had been affected by the Judaizing teachers. R. 3019

Verses 7-21 give probably but a small portion of the discussion. It would seem that the question, What is the responsibility of converts amongst the Gentiles toward the law of Moses? had never come up for consideration previously, and the apostles, it would appear, were without very positive convictions until they began to discuss the subject. Peter, one of the oldest of the disciples, and a man of strong character, pointed out that God had made choice of him as the one who should be first to open the gospel door to the Gentiles; how Cornelius was the first of these converts, and how God poured out the holy spirit upon him and thus recognized him as a son and joint-heir with Christ, while as yet he was uncircumcised, thus proving that circumcision was not essential to divine reconciliation and sonship in the household of faith under the New Covenant. He doubtless also called attention to the fact that our Lord, who instructed them to teach all nations and to baptise those who believed, gave no instructions in reference to circumcision or any of the commands of the Mosaic law. He argued, therefore, that they had no right to put upon the Gentiles, as a yoke of bondage, the law of Moses, which God had not put upon them, but only upon the Jews, and which the Jews found it impossible to bear, and from which they (believing Jews) had to be liberated through the merit of Christ.

Then Paul and Barnabas told how God had greatly blessed their ministry amongst the Gentiles, performing many miracles, etc., and in every way attesting his blessing upon their work; and yet that work had nothing in it respecting obligation to Moses' law or God's command to Abraham and his seed—circumcision. R. 2158

And after they had become silent, James answered, saying, “Men and brethren, listen to me: Simon has declared how God at the first visited the Gentiles to take out of them a people for His name.”

– Acts 15:14 –

James, our Lord’s brother, was the president or chairman of the meeting, and after hearing the foregoing coincided with Peter, Paul and Barnabas, adding to the argument by citing from the prophets evidences:

1 that the Gentiles would be received into divine favor and

2 that the reception of the Gentiles was not to make of them Jews, but that, on the contrary, God had certain blessed provisions for the Jews to be fulfilled subsequently,—“**After this**, I will return and build again the tabernacle of David which is **fallen down**.” Since Israel is to be recognized in the future by the Lord as distinct from the Gentiles, it follows that the particular national mark which distinguishes Jews from Gentiles was not to be abolished, —was not to be made general amongst Gentiles, even after they believed and became God’s people.

The results of the conference were satisfactory to all present, and it was decided to send a statement of the results to the Antioch Church, both by writing and orally by Judas and Silas.

Probably only the substance of the letter is given in the brief recorded statement; but it is sufficient to show clearly that those who claim that the apostles were confused upon the subject so as almost to make a split in the Church, are greatly mistaken, for in so many words they positively declare that those who went out from them and troubled the Church at Antioch, almost unsettling their faith and peace with the statement, “Ye must be circumcised and keep the law,” were not



St. James at the Jerusalem Council (artist unknown)

representatives of the apostles, and had received no such commandment or teaching from them. It is refreshing and strengthening to our faith to note that the Lord’s promise, specially to bless and use the apostles and keep them from error in their teaching, was remarkably fulfilled, as in this case. Our Lord’s words to them were:

**Whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and
whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.**

Matthew 16:19

In other words, I will so particularly direct you that you will make no mistakes in respect to what you will command and in respect to what you will forbid. R. 2158

“Known to God from eternity are all His works. Therefore I judge that we should not trouble those from among the Gentiles who are turning to God, but that we write to them to abstain from things polluted by idols, from sexual immorality, from things strangled, and from blood.”

– Acts 15:18-20 –

The conclusions of the Conference are given us in few words, namely, that so far as God is concerned, he had recognized believers of Gentile birth by his holy Spirit in just the same way in which he had recognized believers of Hebrew birth, “and put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith.” (Acts 15:9.) What more could be asked? And these Gentiles had received all this favor of God without having come under the bondage of the Law Covenant. Why, they wisely asked, should we put a yoke upon them, when God has made no such requirement? They realized that the Law Covenant was indeed a yoke. More than this, that it was so heavy a yoke that neither they nor their fathers had been able to bear it. Christ had relieved them of the yoke of the Law Covenant. Why should they put it upon brethren to whom the Lord had never given it?

Going beyond this, even, they recognized that in some respects the Gentile, free from the Law, never having come under that yoke, held the superior position of the two; hence the statement, “We (Hebrews) believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they (Gentiles).”

We have in Verses 22-29 the decision of the Apostles on the question. They not only wrote it out, but sent it at the hand of two of their trusted brethren, Judas-Barnabas and Silas, with Paul and Barnabas, that they might have the matter in written and in oral testimony. The declaration was that the disquieting teachings had not been authorized by the Apostles at Jerusalem. Then they briefly summed up, not as Law, but as “necessary things,” the following:

- 1 Abstain from sacrifices to idols;**
- 2 And from blood;**
- 3 And from things strangled;**
- 4 And from harlotry.**

It was not intimated that abstinence from these things would make them Christians, for nothing but faith in Christ and consecration to him and endeavor to walk in his steps could constitute them Christians. By these recommended abstentions they declared, “It will be well with you”; you will find these recommendations profitable to you as followers of the Lord. As a matter of fact, the Apostle Paul has pointed out most forcefully that “Love is the fulfilling of the Law,” because love for God would control the life as respects holiness, and love for our neighbor as respects earthly justice. The things here recommended were necessary to a preservation of the fellowship of the “Body” composed of Jews and Gentiles of their different education and sentiments. Without discussing whether or not harm could come to the meats sold in the markets, by reason of pagan ceremonies in connection with their killing, the advice was that these be abstained from, because Jews certainly would consider the eating of such meats as participations in the heathen idolatry—even though from the broad standpoint of fact the idol, being nothing but wood or metal or stone, could neither profit nor injure the food. Nevertheless, it was advisable that the Gentile Christians abstain from the use of their liberty in this direction, out of deference to the weaker brethren, Jews and Gentiles, who could not so deeply philosophize and whose consciences might be injured. R. 4374

Then it pleased the apostles and elders, with the whole church, to send chosen men of their own company to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas, namely, Judas who was also named Barsabas, and Silas, leading men among the brethren.

They wrote this letter by them:

Acts 15:22-23



The apostles, the elders, and the brethren,
To the brethren who are of the Gentiles in
Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia:

Greetings.

Since we have heard that some who went out from us have troubled you with words, unsettling your souls, saying, "You must be circumcised and keep the law"--to whom we gave no such commandment--it seemed good to us, being assembled with one accord, to send chosen men to you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul, men who have risked their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

We have therefore sent Judas and Silas, who will also report the same things by word of mouth. For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things that you abstain:

- from things offered to idols,
- from blood,
- from things strangled, and
- from sexual immorality.

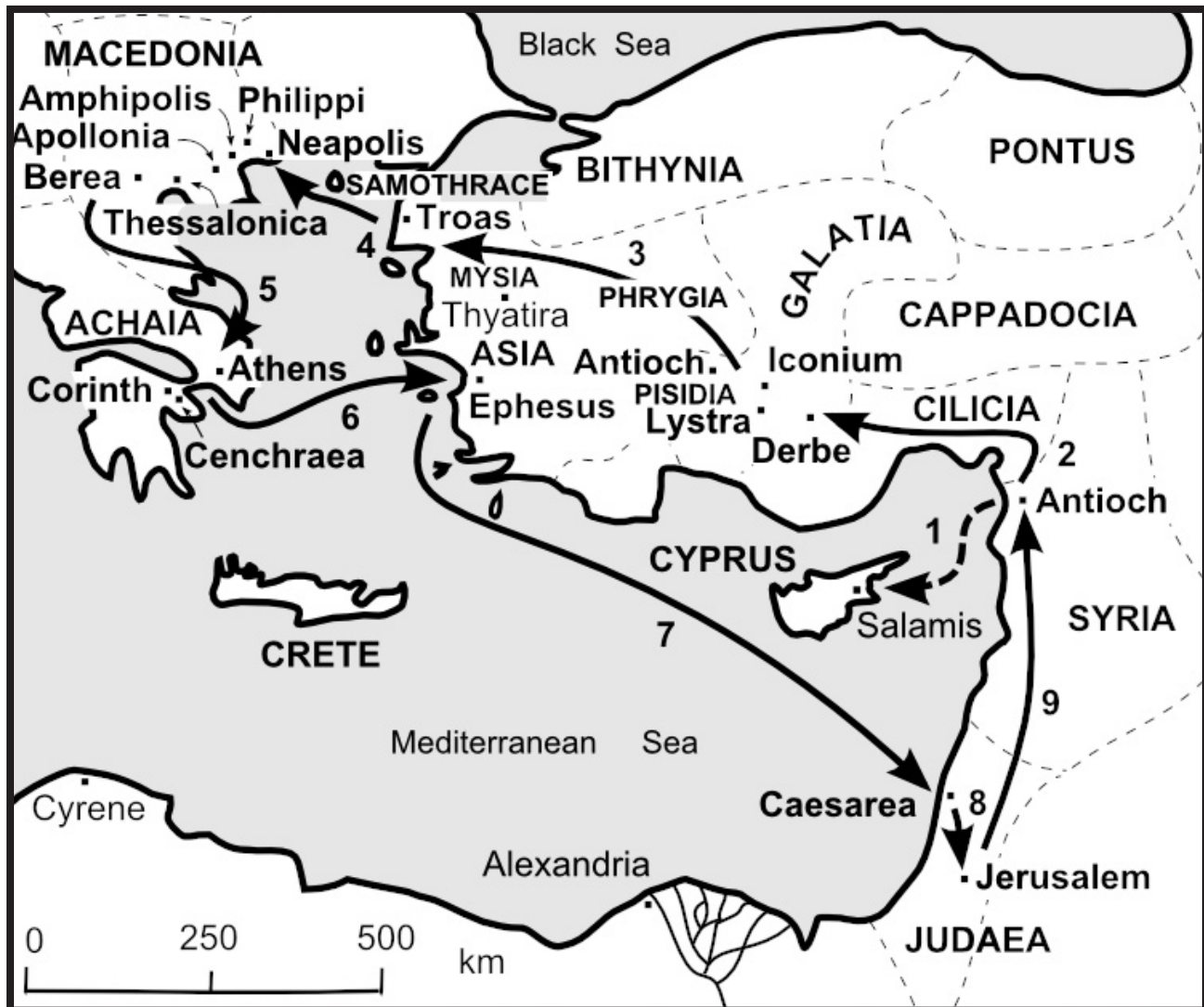
If you keep yourselves from these, you will do well.

Farewell.

Acts 15:23-29

SECOND MISSIONARY JOURNEY

Acts 15:39 -- Acts 18:22



St. Paul's Second Missionary Journey from FreeBibleImages.org

So the churches were strengthened in the faith, and
increased in number daily.

Acts 16:5

[Here we have] the introduction of the Gospel into Europe. After the conference at Jerusalem, Paul and Barnabas remained for a time at Antioch. But seeing that there were many laborers there and that a larger field was little worked, a second missionary journey was planned. Barnabas and his nephew John Mark went in one direction, while with St. Paul went Silas (Sylvanus). It is with this latter couple that we have to do in this [missionary journey]. Their course lay through Syria and Cilicia, Derbe and Lystra. In these places they confirmed the faith of such as had already been accepted of the Lord through the Apostle's first missionary tour, and the working of the Truth during the interim. It was at Lystra that Timothy was found, a young man of Jewish mother and well trained in the Scriptures by her and his grandmother—his father being a Greek. We note that amongst the things presented to the Churches was the decision of the Jerusalem conference that the Jewish Law should not be considered binding to the Gentiles, except in certain features noted in a former lesson. R. 4399

SILAS

Paul chose Silas and departed, being commended by the brethren to the grace of God. And he went through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the churches.

Acts 15:40-41

Silas, whose full name was Silvanus, [was] one of the brethren sent from Jerusalem after the conference to be [Paul's] companion and helper, and with whom he had become acquainted at the Jerusalem conference and who is reported to have been a Roman citizen, as was St. Paul. They started northward from Antioch, then turned westward to Derbe, then to Lystra, where the company was joined by young Timothy.

For his second missionary tour Paul chose Silas for a companion. The original plan was that he and Barnabas should go together again, but they disagreed respecting the suitability of Mark to be their companion. The result was a division of the work, Barnabas taking Mark, and revisiting the brethren in the Island of Cyprus, while Paul went overland to the churches of Galatia, probably visiting en route his home city of Tarsus. Apparently Silas, whose home was at Jerusalem, found it necessary to go there to close up his affairs, before starting on the tour, and joined Paul later in Asia Minor. This inference is based upon the fact that Luke, the historian, says "he" instead of "they," at the beginning of Paul's journey; then uses the word "they" after Paul had been joined by Silas and Timothy at Lystra, and finally uses the word "we" when he would include himself; —Luke probably joining the company at Troas. R. 2175, R. 4399, R. 3022

TIMOTHY

Then he came to Derbe and Lystra. And behold, a certain disciple was there, named Timothy, the son of a certain Jewish woman who believed, but his father was Greek. He was well spoken of by the brethren who were at Lystra and Iconium. Paul wanted to have him go on with him. And he took him and circumcised him* because of the Jews who were in that region, for they all knew that his father was Greek.

Acts 16:1-3

At **Lystra** he found that the grace of God and the knowledge of the Gospel had reached a considerable development in a young man, probably about twenty-one years of age, named Timothy, whose father had been a Greek and his mother a Jewess, —the latter at this time, according to the Greek text, apparently a widow. Timothy's mother was a Jewess, his father being a Greek he had never been circumcised. Paul, foreseeing that he would be a valuable assistant in the work, recommended that, according to the Jewish custom, Timothy be circumcised,* and thus become in the fullest sense a Jew according to the custom divinely enjoined upon that nation. R. 2175 and R. 3022

* Paul has been sharply criticised for his course in this matter by some who consider that his action here directly contradicted his testimony to the Galatians— “If ye be circumcised Christ shall profit you nothing.” (Gal. 5:2-6.) But these critics fail to notice an important feature; namely:

- 1 that circumcision was established before the Mosaic Law was given at Sinai;
- 2 that it was made a national mark, and that any Jew who was not circumcised, forfeited by that neglect his rights in the Abrahamic promise.
- 3 The Galatian Christians, who were told that they must not be circumcised, were not Jews, and had nothing to do with Israel's national sign; and for them to perform circumcision would indicate that they were seeking for divine favor by becoming Jews and coming under the Jewish laws and regulations, and that they were not trusting fully to Christ. (Gal. 2:14-16.)
- 4 A Jew, on the contrary, while trusting in Christ, could properly enough conform to the national usage of circumcision established before the Law.

The thought is, that being children of Abraham, according to the flesh, is not sufficient to make us new creatures in Christ Jesus; and therefore circumcision of the flesh will not accomplish this. As the new creature is received of God as a member of the body of Christ through a living faith, he must as a new creature have the circumcision of the heart, in order to be a Spiritual Israelite, whether he was previously a Jew or a Gentile. Circumcision of the heart signifies a **cutting off**—a separation from the flesh, its aims, hopes, desires, etc. We see, then, that there could be no objection to the circumcision of Timothy—it would neither help nor hinder him spiritually, —if done with the clear understanding that it was only a figure, and not the real circumcision which constituted Timothy a member of the body of Christ, the Church. Timothy's mother being a Jew, he was a Jew,—even though his father had been a Greek. And this fact becoming known to Jews in general with whom in traveling they would come in contact, inquiry might be made as to whether or not he had been circumcised. If the answer were No, the implication would be that he had never been a good Jew but a renegade. If the answer were Yes, it would remove this obstacle and grant him correspondingly greater influence with them—a closer access to their hearts. R. 2175 and R. 3022

And a vision appeared to Paul in the night. A man of Macedonia stood and pleaded with him, saying, “Come over to Macedonia and help us.”
– Acts 16:9 –

The journey through Galatia and Phrygia having been accomplished, the next question was respecting future labors, —other fields. As soon as the Lord’s guidance was recognized no time was lost, and matters in general seemed to cooperate for the journey of the missionaries into Macedonia.

Now after he had seen the vision, immediately we sought to go to Macedonia, concluding that the Lord had called us to preach the gospel to them.
Acts 16:10

They went direct to **Philippi**, the principal city in that vicinity. Apparently they found no Jewish synagogue there, but outside the place they found a spot on the river bank where services were customarily held. This place is supposed to have been a temporary shed, such as, it would appear, was not unusual where the numbers were insufficient to erect a synagogue. It is possible, too, that this city, being directly under the Roman government, prohibited synagogues within its walls.

They evidently made inquiries respecting people who already knew God, and revered and worshiped him; and however small their number and unimposing their meeting place, thither the Apostle and his companions went.

And on the Sabbath day we went out of the city to the riverside, where prayer was customarily made, and we sat down and spoke to the women who met there.
Acts 16:13

The text of the Apostle’s discourse is not given. We know, nevertheless, quite distinctly what his message was. He had only the one message; viz., that God’s promises made to Abraham were beginning to be fulfilled; that Messiah had come and had paid the ransom-price for the world, as its sin-offering, and that now forgiveness, reconciliation to God, and a privilege of joint-heirship in the Kingdom, was being offered, “to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile;” —and that whosoever accepted the call in honesty of heart, and was faithful to it, would have not only the joy and peace of the Lord’s spirit and blessing in the present time, but also a share in the glory to follow by and by. R. 3022



St. Paul preaching by the river in Philippi

LYDIA

Now a certain woman named Lydia heard us. She was a seller of purple from the city of Thyatira, who worshiped God. The Lord opened her heart to heed the things spoken by Paul.

Acts 16:14

In the audience was a woman from Thyatira, of the very district (Asia Minor) into which the Apostle was not permitted to enter and preach. She was in Philippi, probably temporarily, engaged in merchandising—a seller of purple—perhaps of purple dyes, or possibly of purple-dyed cloth. Dyeing and dyes had not reached present development, and the processes were generally secret, and profitable to those who understood them. It is presumed, therefore, that Lydia was well to do in this world's goods, as well as rich toward God in faith. Like the Apostle, she had sought out the place of prayer, and now the Lord had rewarded her and answered her prayers by sending her the truth for which she had been hungering and thirsting. She and some of her household believed, and were promptly baptized in confession of their faith;—possibly on this very Sabbath day in which she first heard.

The fact that Lydia's household believed implies that she was the mother of adult children. And these were so thoroughly under her influence that they worshiped with her the true God, neglecting the idolatries prevalent in Philippi. We may infer that she was a widow, since her husband is not mentioned. R. 4399

Where the heart is in a condition of readiness, obedience does not need to be delayed, nor does it require long to decide to be on the Lord's side, and to be obedient to the voice of the good message which he sends us. This attitude of Lydia's heart is noted in the lesson, in the words, "whose heart the Lord had opened." We are not to suppose a miracle wrought in her case, to open her heart to the truth; we are rather to suppose that it was in her case as it is in the case of all the Lord's people; that none are ready for the truth unless the Lord has prepared their hearts. And O, how much this preparation of heart means!—often trials, disappointments, difficulties, etc.—the processes by which the Lord breaks up and mellows and makes the soil of our hearts fit for the receiving of his truth and grace. No doubt Lydia, after receiving the truth, looked back at past experiences, severe ordeals, etc., and could praise God for the leadings of his providence by which her heart had been "broken" and humbled and made ready for the seed of truth—ready to appreciate, not only the good things which God hath in reservation for them that love him, but ready also to appreciate his promised watch-care in their affairs in the present time, guaranteed to work out blessings to those who abide in his love.

Having received the truth, and some of its joy, Lydia not only confessed the Lord, but sought means to serve him. She could not join the Apostle's company as an evangelist of the good tidings, but she could entertain and serve Paul and his associates, and did so. No doubt she received more than compensation for the expense and trouble, in spiritual riches and refreshment;—but nothing in the narrative implies that even this laudable selfishness actuated her. Apparently her sole desire was to serve the Lord, and she saw the opportunity for this in rendering service to his representatives. She esteemed it a privilege, and so expressed herself, saying, "If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house and abide." R. 3023

And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures.

– Luke 24:45 –

Of those upon whom the seed of the kingdom falls, a large proportion are found to be “stony ground.” This condition of man was foreseen and provided for. “A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh” (Ezek. 36:26). Moses rehearsed all the words of the law unto the people; the Prophet like unto Moses not only rehearses the law, but opens the minds and the hearts of the people to receive it. The disciples were made aware of this soon after he rose from the dead. “Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures” (Luke 24:45); and this operation has been going on ever since, as all true believers can testify, of whom Lydia— “whose heart the Lord opened” (Acts 16:14)— may be taken as a sample.

**Moses carried the law to the people in his hands;
Christ carries the law to the people in his heart. R. 1322**

And when she and her household were baptized, she begged us, saying, “If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come to my house and stay.” So she persuaded us.

– Acts 16:15 –

[Because we assume Lydia was a widow] it was her right, without conference with anybody, to invite the Apostle and his companions to share the hospitality of her home. She seems properly to have realized that, instead of honoring them, she was honoring herself and her home by having such guests—the ministers of God, the brethren of Christ—under her roof. Note her language when inviting, “She besought us, saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide there. And she constrained us.” The latter statement implies that the Apostle was not too ready to force himself upon anybody, that he did not urge, saying, Surely myself and companions who have preached to you should be served by you in temporalities—though that was the Truth. Rather the Apostle made no reference to temporalities. Indeed, after the suggestion of Lydia had been made it was apparently not too quickly accepted, but with the indication that the disciples of Jesus had no desire to intrude upon others. This is implied in the statement that they were “constrained,” gradually drawn or led to accept invitation. How beautiful it is to see God’s children wisely exercised in such matters! How much more is their influence upon one another for good!

This lesson may be considered as specially teaching Divine supervision of the true Gospel and its ministers. Yet how diversified God’s dealings and how necessary that his children in ministering the Truth should have fullest confidence in his wisdom, love and power! Note the sharp contrast that, after specially guiding the apostles to this place and then to a very small meeting and apparently one family of converts, the Lord next allows what seems to be a great catastrophe to befall his faithful servants. R. 4399

16 Now it happened, as we went to prayer, that a certain slave girl possessed with a spirit of divination met us, who brought her masters much profit by fortune-telling.

17 This girl followed Paul and us, and cried out, saying, “These men are the servants of the Most High God, who proclaim to us the way of salvation.”

18 And this she did for many days. But Paul, greatly annoyed, turned and said to the spirit, “I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her.” And he came out that very hour.

19 But when her masters saw that their hope of profit was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the marketplace to the authorities.

– Acts 16:16-19 –

While the missionaries were day by day passing from Lydia’s home to the place of worship, outside of the city gate, they were met repeatedly by a young woman known in **Philippi** as a Pythoness, or Sibyl—a fortune-teller. She was a slave girl possessed by an evil spirit—one of the fallen angels—the spirit working through her, divining, or giving intelligence of lost articles, telling fortunes, foretelling future events, etc. She was evidently well known to all the people; and the exercise of her profession brought large income to a joint-stock company that owned her—apparently a syndicate of influential men.

For several days, as the missionaries went to and from the home of Lydia, attending to the Lord’s work, this slave girl followed them, shouting, “These be the servants of the Most High God, which show unto us the way of salvation!” Of course, the girl did not know St. Paul and his companions; but the evil spirits did. To what extent they had forecast the results we may not know definitely, but quite possibly what occurred was what they had premeditated; namely, that the Apostle would cast out the evil spirit, and that this would bring upon the missionaries and their converts a violent attack from the owners of the girl and their friends, and all whom they could arouse to a frenzy of excitement, of wrath and of rioting.

It is also possible that the evil spirit may simply have told the truth without considering the possibility that the Apostle might command it to come out of the woman—perhaps supposing that he would be rather pleased with a testimony from any quarter. But we read that St. Paul was grieved as day after day this testimony was given—not that he was grieved that a testimony was made regarding the Truth, but that it should come from such a source; for he knew that the evil spirit would have no respect for the Truth. Any of the fallen angels who would have respect for God and for the principles of righteousness would not seek to obsess humanity when they knew that such obsession would be to their injury and contrary to the Divine will.

Some teachers will probably suggest that this woman had hysteria, or that she was somewhat demented. But either thought is out of accord with the facts in the case as Scripturally set forth, and is quite contrary to the words of the Apostle. St. Paul said not a word to the young woman, assuming that she was not accountable. He addressed the evil spirit as such, and in the name of Jesus commanded it to come out of the woman—just as our Lord and the Apostles under His instruction had frequently cast out these evil spirits. —Mark 5:1-17; Matthew 10:1; Luke 10:17. R. 5908

Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake.

– Matthew 5:11 –

Evidently the owners of the Pythoness had influence; for they succeeded quickly in arousing a mob determined to have revenge upon St. Paul and Silas. The two missionaries were carried before the rulers at the market place. There the syndicate ignored the truth of the matter and raised spurious charges, claiming that the prisoners were teaching a religion contrary to the laws of Rome, and thus likely to raise sedition. This was contrary to the truth; for the Lord's servants went, according to law, outside of the city gates for their worship.

However, under the circumstances, the false charge was sufficient to bring down upon the Lord's representatives the severest penalties which their judges could inflict. The magistrates, who held office especially for the preventing of rioting and for preserving order, were greatly excited and rent

their garments as an indication of their distress and dissatisfaction that such a disturbance should be brought to their city. The thought was that the men against whom the populace would thus rise up must be guilty of something and thus deserving of punishment. They knew not that the evil spirits had to do with the arousing of the riot. As St. Paul elsewhere expressed it,

And they brought them to the magistrates, and said, "These men, being Jews, exceedingly trouble our city, and they teach customs which are not lawful for us, being Romans, to receive or observe."

Acts 16:20-21

For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.

Ephesians 6:12

To satisfy the mob and to restore peace quickly, the magistrates ordered the missionaries to be beaten, presumably with rods, and then committed them to prison. Alas, what a reward for missionary effort! What a recompense for sacrificing their lives for the Lord and the Truth—that these noble men should be evil-spoken of, evil-thought of and evilly treated!

And when they had laid many stripes on them, they threw them into prison, commanding the jailer to keep them securely. Having received such a charge, he put them into the inner prison and fastened their feet in the stocks.

Acts 16:23-24

Let us remember that the God who changes not is our God, and that He has supervision of the interests of the Church today as then. Let us remember that He requires of us today, as of those missionaries of old, that we be willing to represent Him, willing to endure hardness and thus to make full proof of our ministry—of our service for Christ and His Message. Would it require faith on the part of the missionaries to accept such experiences as providential and not to think of these as evidences of the Lord's disfavor or neglect? So must we learn similar lessons of faith in the School of Christ, and be glad to follow in the footsteps of Jesus and the Apostles. We must learn to rejoice in tribulations as in prosperity. R. 5098

At midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them.

– Acts 16:25 –

The prison was constructed with outer cells, more or less accessible to the light and to air, and with an inner or central dungeon for the most vicious criminals. It was into this inner prison that St. Paul and Silas were thrust, and their feet made fast in the stocks. It was under these unfavorable circumstances, with their backs raw and bleeding from the scourging, that these faithful brethren were so filled with the spirit of rejoicing that they gave vent to their feelings in hymns of thankfulness for the privilege of suffering in connection with the Lord's work and of enduring tribulations for righteousness' sake.

We can readily see that nothing less than a strong, living faith in God enabled these two missionaries to feel that their adversities endured for the sake of the Gospel meant to them the Divine approval, if rightly received. They realized that their trying experiences were but "light afflictions" which, under Divine providence, would work out for them a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. Only this enabled these mistreated men to triumph in their hour of distress and to praise God for the privilege of suffering as members of the Body of Christ, filling up a share of the sufferings of Christ in order that by and by they might also share His glory as members of His Body—members of the great antitypical Moses, the Mediator of the New Covenant. —Col. 1:24; Acts 3:22.

**I now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up in my flesh what is
lacking in the afflictions of Christ, for the sake of His body,
which is the church.
Colossians 1:24**

These things were written for our instruction, that we, beholding the faithfulness of others, might be encouraged. Our covenant is the same as theirs, and theirs was the same as our Lord's; for the sufferings of Christ are one, however varied in character, and the glories to follow will be one, although the sharers will differ as star differeth from star in glory. The greater the sufferings endured faithfully, uncomplainingly, rejoicingly, the greater will be the reward in the Kingdom of our Father and of our Lord and Savior. R. 5908

Here we have before us two men who had forsaken all for the privilege of being God's ambassadors, representatives of Christ, suffering to bear the message of divine grace to the sin-blinded and unthankful; —yet under most distressing circumstances, with their backs lacerated from the beating, with their feet in the stocks, and their whole bodies therefore pained and uncomfortable, with seemingly no cause for thankfulness that the worldly could discern, they were filled with love and gratitude to God, and their hearts overflowed in songs of praise. Surely they were actuated by super-human hopes and joys! R. 2182

26 Suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken, and immediately all the doors were opened and everyone's chains were loosed.

27 And the keeper of the prison, awaking from sleep and seeing the prison doors open, supposing the prisoners had fled, drew his sword and was about to kill himself.

28 But Paul called with a loud voice, saying, "Do yourself no harm, for we are all here."

29 Then he called for a light, ran in, and fell down trembling before Paul and Silas.

30 And he brought them out and said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"

31 So they said, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household."

32 Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house.

33 And he took them the same hour of the night and washed their stripes. And immediately he and all his family were baptized.

34 Now when he had brought them into his house, he set food before them, and he rejoiced, having believed in God with all his household.

– Acts 16:26-34 –

The Lord's response to the faith, prayers and praise of his servants, by an earthquake, is of course out of the ordinary course of his providences; but the case was an extraordinary one. These were extraordinary servants, the work given them to do in establishing the Church was an extraordinary work. And evidently something extraordinary was needed in the case of the jailor, who, though an honest and well disposed man, was not expecting any blessing of religious instruction from the prisoner under his care: yet, as soon as he grasped the situation he became as teachable as a child at the feet of his prisoners, inquiring the way to eternal life. It is worthy of note that the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ has little effect upon any who receive it otherwise than in meekness: those who oppose themselves and fight the truth at every step are not of the kind, nor in the condition to be blessed by it: hence the Lord's instruction to preach the gospel to the **meek**.

The gist of the apostle's instructions is summed up in our text,—

Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ----

the significance of which is very comprehensive. It implies not only mental assent to the fact that Christ died for **our sins** and arose for **our justification**, but also a reception of these truths into the heart and into the life of the believers; so that thenceforth he may realize that he is not his own, but bought with a price, even the precious blood of Christ; that he belongs to him and should willingly submit in every matter to his guidance and direction. R. 2182

**For you were bought at a price, therefore glorify God in your
body and in your spirit, which are God's.**

1 Corinthians 6:20

35 And when it was day, the magistrates sent the officers, saying, “Let those men go.”

36 So the keeper of the prison reported these words to Paul, saying, “The magistrates have sent to let you go. Now therefore depart, and go in peace.”

37 But Paul said to them, “They have beaten us openly, uncondemned Romans, and have thrown us into prison. And now do they put us out secretly? No indeed! Let them come themselves and get us out.”

– Acts 16:35-37 –

The magistrates evidently realized that they had no just cause against the missionaries. The beating and imprisoning of them was merely to satisfy the public clamor, just as when Pilate similarly commanded Jesus to be beaten, not as a satisfaction for justice, but to appease the anger of the multitude. But St. Paul had not been a lawyer for nothing. The night before he had probably attempted to tell the rulers that he and Silas were Roman citizens and had the right to demand a fair trial before having any kind of punishment, but probably the clamor of the people was so great that their protests were unheard. Now, however, the missionaries sent word to the magistrates that they were Roman citizens and had been unjustly dealt with and would have to be treated in such a manner as would show that they had done no wrong. This would avoid leaving a reproach upon the faith at Philippi. The public should not say to them, “Your teachers were tried and expelled from this city and forbidden to return.” On the other hand, notice the spirit of compromise. The missionaries did not insist on going forth to preach in public and demand that they be given legal protection in the exercise of their liberties. On the contrary, they concluded they had accomplished all in their power and that God’s providence was now directing them elsewhere. They acted upon Jesus’ counsel,

When they persecute you in this city, flee to another.

Matthew 10:23

Thus a peaceful compromise was effected by which the magistrates were relieved from further difficulty and the missionaries were honorably led forth as men who had done nothing amiss, but who had concluded that in the interests of peace they would quit the city, although their rights as Roman citizens would have permitted them to remain. Some of the Lord’s people make the mistake of not insisting sufficiently on their rights and others err in the opposite way of insisting too much for their earthly rights. Here in St. Paul’s condition we find illustrated the proper course—“the spirit of a sound mind.” He insisted on such of his rights as were reasonable and necessary for the cause, and he freely relinquished other rights in the interests of peace; in harmony with the Scriptures, “Seek peace and pursue it;” and again, in harmony with his own exhortation, “So far as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.”

Before separating they returned to the home of Lydia and “met the brethren” and comforted them. What they said for the comfort of the brethren is not difficult to imagine. They surely recounted to them the joy they had experienced in suffering for Christ’s sake and how the Lord overruled their trials and difficulties, sufferings and imprisonment for good, in that thereby the jailer and his family were added to the number of brethren— “the Lord’s jewels.” R. 4407

So they went out of the prison and entered the house of Lydia, and when they had seen the brethren, they encouraged them and departed.

Acts 16:40

Then Paul, as his custom was, went in to them, and for three Sabbaths reasoned with them from the Scriptures, explaining and demonstrating that the Christ had to suffer and rise again from the dead, and saying, “This Jesus whom I preach to you is the Christ.”

– Acts 17:2-3 –

When released from the prison at Philippi, Paul, Silas and Timothy went about a hundred miles direct to **Thessalonica**, the largest commercial city of that district—Macedonia. Nothing daunted by their experience at Philippi, apparently not even waiting for their backs to thoroughly heal from the wounds there received, Paul at once began a vigorous presentation of the Gospel. As was his custom, he went first to the Jews. The propriety of this course is evident: the Jews were familiar with the prophecies of the Messiah, and although making their home amongst the Gentiles, nevertheless, as the Apostle declares, they were continually hoping for the fulfilment of the grand promises made to Abraham, confirmed unto Isaac and unto Jacob, and that by divine oath, or affirmation. —Acts 26:7.

Not only were the Jews, acquainted with the prophecies and looking for their fulfillment in a Messiah, better prepared than other peoples for the message of the Gospel, but, additionally, it was part of the divine will that the first offer of the Gospel should go to the Jew, the natural seed of Abraham, who was, by divine intention, to have the first opportunity of becoming a part of the spiritual seed. Furthermore, the Jewish synagogues were ostensibly conducted on a liberal plane, anyone of reasonable ability being free there to show what he could of the teaching of the Scriptures. Thus the Apostle met with the Jews on three Sabbath days; and, according to his own narrative, he labored with his hands for temporal necessities between times. (1 Thes. 2:9.) It was during this stay of probably three to six months that he twice received financial aid from the brethren at Philippi.

The method of the Apostle's teaching is expressed in the statement that he “reasoned with them out of the Scriptures,” opening and showing forth “that it behooved Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead.” The Greek word used signifies that the teaching was in the nature of a dialogue. He appealed to the Scriptures, offered explanations of their meaning, pointed out how this meaning found its fulfilment in the experience of our Lord, and heard and replied to queries and objections. The word “opening” carries with it the thought that these Scriptures had been closed previously, and this is in harmony with the statement of Luke, when mentioning the Lord's discourse with the two disciples on the way to Emmaus, it is declared that he “**opened** unto them the Scriptures,” saying, “Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer.” —Luke 24:26,46; 1 Pet. 1:11. R. 3130

The result of his labors was the nucleus of a flourishing church, to which two of his epistles were addressed. The Apostle's attitude toward these brethren may reasonably be taken as the criterion of his general attitude toward all of the Lord's dear flock. He dealt not with them as a lord or master amongst slaves or subordinates; but, using his own words, he was gentle toward them, as a nursing mother to her children. (1 Thes. 2:7.) He admonished, comforted, instructed them, “as a father doth his children.” (1 Thes. 2:11.) He lived an unblamable, unselfish life in their midst, giving them the Gospel, and with it his very life. —1 Thes. 2:5-8,10. R. 3130

Some of them were persuaded, and a great multitude of the devout Greeks, and not a few of the leading women, joined Paul and Silas. But the Jews who were not persuaded, becoming envious, took some of the evil men from the marketplace, and gathering a mob, set all the city in an uproar and attacked the house of Jason, and sought to bring them out to the people.

– Acts 17:4-5 –

Having no truthful argument, no logic wherewith they could overcome the arguments of the missionaries, the unbelieving Jews resorted to Satan's usual tactics of misrepresentation, slander, arousing prejudice, hatred, malice, etc. They incited an uproar in the city—a mob, which made an assault upon the house of Jason, with whom the missionaries were lodging. Not finding the missionaries, the mob, under leadership, took Jason and other believers before the magistrates, saying,

“These who have turned the world upside down have come here too. Jason has harbored them, and these are all acting contrary to the decrees of Caesar, saying there is another king---Jesus.”

Acts 17:6-7

This was almost the exact charge made against our Redeemer when he was brought to Pilate's judgment bar. And there was a measure of Truth in it, for the Caesars not only claimed to be civil rulers of the world, but also claimed the title *Pontifex Maximus*, or chief religious ruler. While the Kingdom that Jesus and the apostles preached is a heavenly one, a spiritual one, the message includes the thought that in due time this heavenly rule or authority would be extended to the affairs of earth and Messiah's Kingdom be world-wide—under the whole heavens. We can readily see how such a proclamation might be construed as treasonable from the world's standpoint, but surely the Jews had no excuse for using their influence along these lines, for they well knew that all the hopes and promises in which their nation rejoiced led up to just such a Kingdom hope. Nevertheless, their pride and hatred blinded them to the injustice of their course, when they incited the heathen multitude. R. 4408

JASON

Personal name often used by Jews as a substitute for Hebrew Joshua or Joseph and also used by Gentiles. In Acts 17:5, Paul's host in Thessalonica. He was brought up on charges before the city officials when the angry Jewish mob were unable to find Paul (Acts 17:6-7). The Jason mentioned in Romans 16:21 may have been the same person. He is identified as a Jew who joined Paul and others in greeting the Romans.

—Holman Bible Dictionary

**Timothy, my fellow worker, and Lucius, Jason, and
Sosipater, my countrymen, greet you.**

Romans 16:21

Do not think that I came to bring peace on earth. I did not come to bring peace but a sword.

– Matthew 10:34 –

The Jews realized that there was a conflict on between Judaism and Christianity, and that wherever the two came in contact there could be naught else than a clash and conflict, and one or the other be turned upside down. Similarly, some of those who at present are blinded to Present Truth rail at us, using almost the same language. And the truthfulness of the assertions cannot be controverted. The Gospel of Christ did create differences in the Jewish system then, as the Gospel Truth is doing now in Christendom. And this is what Jesus foretold when he said, “Think not that I have come to send peace upon the earth. I have come to send a sword. A man’s foes shall be they of his own household.” Our experiences, like the experiences of the apostles, corroborate the Truth of our Lord’s statement. An irrepressible conflict is on. However, had the Jews only properly understood the matter they need not have given themselves such concern, but might have known that comparatively few would accept the message of the Gospel—the few going out from them would scarcely be missed.

And so it is today. Our dear friends in the various denominations are fearful that Present Truth will capture their people by the wholesale. But they are mistaken. It will take only the select, the “elect,” and leave the remainder. The wheat are comparatively few in proportion to the tares. And only the wheat is being gathered. The tares must be left in the bundles—in sectarian bodies. And it is better so. They must not in any manner get in amongst the wheat ready for the garner—the separation amongst the wheat and the tares should not, and could not, take place in the past, but must and will take place now in the harvest of this Age. R. 4408

Then the brethren immediately sent Paul and Silas away by night to Berea. When they arrived, they went into the synagogue of the Jews. These were more fair-minded than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness, and searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so.

– Acts 17:10-11 –

The next stopping place was **Berea**, and there, as usual, the missionaries went first to the synagogue. They were agreeably surprised to find the Jews at that place so honest-hearted. Many of them, therefore, believed—Jews and Greeks, men and women. Here is a suggestion to us—to all. We should have a judgment and conviction respecting the Divine Word, but it should not be so unreasonable a one as would hinder us from receiving a further knowledge from the same source. We are to try the spirits, the teachings, the doctrines.

This does not signify, however, that we “are to be blown about by every wind of doctrine.” We should know in whom we have believed and having once been convinced we should not be easily turned aside from a properly grounded faith. If we are satisfied that we have been building upon the Rock Foundation furnished us in the Divine Revelation we should expect that any further light coming to us would not be contradictory to that which we have received and found Scriptural and harmonious with the Divine character.

Let us then not only search the Scriptures daily and obtain intellectual appreciation of the Divine character, but let us meditate upon these eternal verities in our hearts. Let us familiarize ourselves with these points of Divine Government. Let us come more and more into sympathy with them—come into fullest harmony with our Creator and his requirements! R. 4408

Sermon on Mars Hill

They took him and brought him to the Areopagus, saying, “May we know what this new doctrine is of which you speak? You are bringing some strange things to our ears. Therefore we want to know what these things mean.” For all the Athenians and the foreigners who were there spent their time in nothing else but either to tell or to hear some new thing.

– Acts 17:19-21 –

The Apostle, as the chief spokesman, “drew the fire” of his enemies to such an extent that their hatred seems to have been confined to him alone—not affecting Silas, his companion, nor Timothy, at this time his assistant or servant. The latter two were left behind, to strengthen and encourage the believers, whose faith already had been established.

Under these circumstances the Apostle arrived at **Athens**, once the world’s capital in every sense of the word; but still its capital in respect to science and art and theology and schools of general instruction—its commercial and political influence having gone to Rome with the imperial control. To Athens came the youth of wealthy

families of the world, and many others possessed of a special craving for wisdom,—to avail themselves of the teachers, studies and lectures—practically the only means of instruction at that time.

Certain Epicurean and Stoic philosophers encountered him. And some said, “What does this babbler want to say?” Others said, “He seems to be a proclaimer of foreign gods,” because he preached to them Jesus and the resurrection.

Acts 17:18

Now while Paul waited for them at Athens, his spirit was provoked within him when he saw that the city was given over to idols.

Acts 17:16

Without a miracle no other one of the apostles would have been competent to secure a hearing before the Athenian Council of the Areopagites—composed of the teachers of the various schools of learning, and generally speaking, of the reputedly wisest men of the world. That the Apostle Paul, without letters of introduction, without political or other influence, serving as such, should succeed in a few days in obtaining an invitation to address this august body of men, indicates clearly that he was a man of remarkable talent, as well as learning. These natural qualities in him were reinforced by the spirit of a sound mind, the spirit of the Lord, the spirit of the divine revelation, the true Gospel. The Apostle lost no time in beginning his special work: true, he first made a general inspection of the chief features of the city’s attractions, noting its numerous public statues to the gods, whose number Pliny gives as over three thousand in the time of Nero. It was while making this inspection of the city and considering how best he could launch the gospel message there, that his attention was drawn to one altar erected

“To the Unknown God.” R. 3138

To set forth any strange gods in **Athens** was a crime, it being held that they already had them in plenty, and that to admit that any one could present a new god of which the Athenian teachers knew nothing, would be an insult to their learning and evidently a fraud. This, together with the Apostle's talents, secured for him a hearing before the Areopagites, or Council of the Learned. It was this Council which had the power to sentence to death anyone who should attempt to set forth strange gods in Athens; and hence the Apostle's hearing before them was probably, more or less, in the nature of a trial for life, because he had been preaching Jesus—an unheard-of god amongst the Athenians up to this time—and the resurrection. R. 3138



Mars Hill (with a view of the Acropolis)

We can picture before our minds the Apostle addressing the Council of Mars' Hill, composed of "the noblest blood of Athens, the first politicians, the first orators, the first philosophers; accordingly the most august, not only of Athens, but of Greece, and, indeed, of the whole world, under whose supervision 'came the transactions of the popular assembly, religion, laws, morals and discipline.'" Now the Apostle had use for the text he had found. He must prove to these men that he was not the setter forth of a *new* theology, but an *old one*. R. 3139

St. Paul's Sermon on Mars Hill

Acts 17:22-31

22 Then Paul stood in the midst of the Areopagus and said,
“Men of Athens, I perceive that in all things you are very religious,

23 for as I was passing through and considering the objects of your worship, I even found an altar with this inscription: TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Therefore, the One whom you worship without knowing, Him I proclaim to you:

24 God, who made the world and everything in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands.

25 Nor is He worshiped with men's hands, as though He needed anything, since He gives to all life, breath, and all things.

26 And He has made from one blood every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, and has determined their preappointed times and the boundaries of their dwellings,

27 so that they should seek the Lord, in the hope that they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us,

28 for in Him we live and move and have our being, as also some of your own poets have said, ‘For we are also His offspring.’

29 Therefore, since we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Divine Nature is like gold or silver or stone, something shaped by art and man's devising.

30 Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent,

31 because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead.”



Thus did he set before them the greatness of the true God, in contrast with their numerous gods whom they feared or hated, revered or placated, and whose vices and frequent impotency they admitted. The Apostle thus brought his teachings within the rules and regulations, as being not a new teaching, but a fuller declaration of a God already recognized by his hearers. And indeed, so high, so noble, so great a thought of God, must have impressed his hearers favorably.

A God who was not merely the God of one nation or of one city or of one precinct, but who had created all races and nations, and had had to do with the rise and fall of nations, was certainly a very different God from anything that had ever been heretofore suggested to the minds of these philosophers; for although the Jews had preached the same God, undoubtedly their presentation of him as the God of the Hebrews must have favored the impression that each nation had its own god or gods, demanding its worship, reverence, sacrifices, etc.

Describing the true God further, the Apostle assured his hearers that none could live or move or have existence, even, aside from the power and good intent of this great God. His words are equally truthful, whether we restrict them to the imperfect existence of the present time and the dying condition of the world, with but a spark of life, or whether we apply them in the fuller sense to the Lord's provision for the future by restitution processes and arrangements. Still wishing to offset the thought that his message was a new one, the Apostle declares that certain Grecian poets had practically expressed this thought in saying, "We are also his offspring." Carrying the mind, then, to the logical conclusion, he urges that if we are the offspring of God our thoughts respecting divinity should not lead us to make or to worship images of any kind, all of which are professedly of man's device.

The Apostle did not go into a full explanation as to why this great God who had created all nations had neglected to send word to the Athenians until now. [He] did not attempt to show how God in the past had merely been giving the world lessons in respect to the wages of sin, neither did he mention how Abraham's seed had been selected as the line through which divine blessings were to be

The word "because" commencing vs. 31 has a special significance which should not be overlooked. God calls upon all men to repent and reform, because he has appointed for them a day of judgment. It is to be a trial day or judgment day to see, to test, to prove which of the world of mankind desire fellowship with the Lord, desire to be obedient to him, desire to walk in his ways. The Millennial Age is this trial day, and the Lord assures us that a full opportunity shall be granted to each and every member of the race to hear, to know, to comprehend his goodness, his love, his redemption of the world through Christ. R. 3139

carried eventually to all the families of the earth, and that God had been dealing with the natural seed of Abraham for the preceding eighteen centuries, making types of them and through them illustrating the progress of the divine plan as it shall ultimately be carried out. He did not explain, either, how that Christ offered himself to this nation of Israel, and (in harmony with the divine foreknowledge) had been rejected, and that now God was seeking a spiritual seed of Abraham—spiritual Israelites—to take the place of the broken-off branches of the fleshly house. —Rom. 11.

He contented himself with the bare statement of the truth, that in times past God had "winked at" or overlooked or disregarded and paid no attention to the idolatries of the world, but that now the time was come for a change of dispensation; —that now God was sending his message to them, and to all who had ears to hear, commanding repentance from sin and turning from idolatries to true worship and righteousness. Quite possibly, though the account does not state it, the Apostle explained that the foundation or basis of this call to repentance was the fact that Christ had been a propitiation (satisfaction) for the sins of the whole world—clearing men thus from the original condemnation of death and alienation from God, and permitting the return to his favor of whomsoever would. R.3139

I, the LORD, have called You in righteousness, and will hold Your hand. I will keep You and give You as a covenant to the people, as a light to the Gentiles, to open blind eyes, to bring out prisoners from the prison, those who sit in darkness from the prison house. I am the LORD, that is My name, and My glory I will not give to another.

– Isaiah 42:6-8 –

The blessing of the world means the breaking open of the prison-house and the setting at liberty of the captives, who for six thousand years have been going into the prison-house of death. For this reason our Lord is called the Life-giver, because his great work will be to give back life to the world of mankind, who lost life in Adam. And since the restoration of life to mankind will mean the removal of pains and sicknesses and troubles, which are a part of the dying process, our Redeemer is styled the Great Physician.

The prophecy which mentions the breaking open of the prison-house of death, and the setting at liberty of its captives (Isa. 42:7), was applied, and unquestionably correctly, by our Lord to himself; but he did not break open the prison-house of death, and set all the captives free by resurrection immediately upon his own resurrection. He tells us when this work will be done, saying (John 5:25-29), “The hour cometh in the which all that are in the graves shall hear the voice of the Son of Man, and come forth”; “and they that hear [obey his voice then, Acts 3:22] shall live.”

Our Lord thus passed over the interim of the Gospel Age, and pointed to the grand consummation of his work in the incoming Age, because such was the Father's prearranged Plan. The Father sent the Son, and the Son willingly undertook the work of redemption, at a time sufficiently in advance of the “Times of Restitution,” or resurrection, and the general blessing of the world during the Reign of Messiah, to leave the interim of this Gospel Age for another work, namely, for selecting from the world a “little flock,” a “royal priesthood,” a “peculiar people,” a “holy nation,” to be joint-heirs with Christ Jesus their Lord in the honors of the Mediatorial Kingdom. These shall be associated with the Redeemer in the grand and glorious work of destroying the Prince of Darkness and breaking open the prison-house of death, and setting at liberty the captives of sin and ignorance and superstition; and in fulfilling generally all the provisions of the gracious promises of God made to Father Abraham, that in his Seed (Christ, and his elect Body, the Church), “all the families of the earth shall be blessed.” —Gal. 3:8,16,29. R. 4793

And when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked, while others said, “We will hear you again on this matter.” So Paul departed from among them.

– Acts 17:32-33 –

The Apostle was proceeding logically to show that the resurrection of Christ from the dead was God's assurance to all that he would ultimately carry out this great plan of blessing the world, by granting to each member of it an individual trial or judgment for life, under the favorable conditions of the Millennium; and that the resurrection of Christ was not only God's attestation to men that his sacrifice has been satisfactory, but was also necessary, that our Lord Jesus as the risen and glorified Son of God might exercise in due time “all power in heaven and in earth,” and thus bring about the great Thousand-Year Judgment Day, or “times of restitution of all things which God hath spoken by the mouth of all the holy prophets since the world began.” (Acts 3:21.) But with this his hearers, who must have been amazed with the logic of his argument, and must have wondered how their various disciples would be influenced by the new teacher, and to what extent they would lose caste, as being less logical or less lofty in their sentiments, found occasion for an expression of dissatisfaction, and of thus logically casting aside the entire argument—dismissing it as unworthy of further consideration.

Their objection rested on the resurrection, which the Apostle made so prominent, so indispensable to the carrying out of the entire plan of God; indispensable, first, as to the Redeemer, that he must rise from the dead, ere he could be the agent of Jehovah in prosecuting the work of blessing the world; necessary to the world of mankind, that they might come forth from the tomb and be granted a knowledge and opportunity of restitution or resurrection to all that had been lost by Adam's disobedience. When the resurrection was mentioned the occasion for expressions of derision was furnished, as though they would say: We knew that there could be no thorough-going philosophy superior to our own; we were on the look-out for the weak point in the argument of this speaker who sets himself up to be a teacher, and now we have found it; —the resurrection! Nonsense! Whoever saw or heard of a resurrection from the dead? R. 3140

However, some men joined him and believed, among them Dionysius the Areopagite, a woman named Damaris, and others with them.

– Acts 17:34 –

One member of the Council of Mars' Hill (the Areopagite Society) had been deeply interested in the truth he had heard; also a woman of some distinction, and others with them; —for although the Society alone occupied the place of prominence in such discussions, the people in general were privileged to surround the court. The Apostle's experience here, as elsewhere, like our own, demonstrates the fact that at the present time not many have ears to hear the Word of the Lord; not many are seriously “feeling after him if haply they might find him.” The majority are blinded by the god of this world, Satan, through various traditions, heathen and Christian, so that they cannot discern the lengths and breadths and heights and depths of the true gospel. At the present time it is not given to all to see and to understand (Matt. 13:11; Mark 4:11), but we thank God that the time is coming when all the blind eyes shall be opened, and all the deaf ears shall be unstopped; and then the preaching of “Jesus and the resurrection” will mean a great blessing, and all shall come to the knowledge of the truth, from the least to the greatest, as the Lord, through the Prophet, has declared. —Jer. 31:33,34. R. 3140

Paul at Corinth

St. Paul made but a brief stay at Athens, the Lord's providence guiding him to Corinth. Silas had remained for a time at Berea, and Timothy at Thessalonica, and later he returned to Philippi. Meantime St. Paul was apparently considerably cast down. His epistle to the Corinthians, written later on, clearly implies his discouragement and possible sickness. He wrote, "I was with you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling" (1 Cor. 2:3.) His rough experiences at Philippi, his small success at Athens, the slenderness of his purse, and his need of fellowship, contributed to make him rather downcast, and he informs us that the Lord encouraged him with a vision. Soon after his arrival at Corinth he found Aquilla and Priscilla his wife. R. 4416

AQUILA and PRISCILLA

And he found a certain Jew named Aquila, born in Pontus, who had recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla (because Claudius had commanded all the Jews to depart from Rome), and he came to them.

So, because he was of the same trade, he stayed with them and worked, for by occupation they were tentmakers.

Acts 18:2-3

The Emperor Claudius Caesar was reigning at this time, and the historian says that he "drove the Jews from Rome, because they were incessantly raising tumults at the instigation of a certain Chrestus." This was about the year A.D. 52, about twenty years after Pentecost, and it is surmised by some that the historian wrote Chrestus instead of Christus, a less common name, and that his reference was to dissensions among the Jews respecting the principles of Christianity, which by this time had doubtless reached Rome. That Christianity was already established in Rome before Paul's going there seems to be implied by his expression, "I am ready to preach the gospel to you who are at Rome also." (Rom. 1:8-15.) The supposition is that Aquila, a Jew, with his wife, Priscilla, a Gentile, who were amongst those driven from Rome, had received the message of the gospel, and that the Apostle going to Corinth found Aquila readily by reason of their being of the same craft or trade—tent-makers.

Under the leadings of divine providence [the Apostle] became acquainted with Aquilla and Priscilla, poor Jews, outcasts for their religion, who were earning their living by the same trade. Their troubles had no doubt mellowed their hearts and made them ready for the gospel of Christ, and the Lord brought it first to their humble dwelling, and they became devoted servants of the Lord's cause.

[Priscilla] and her husband also accompanied Paul on one of his journeys from Corinth to Ephesus, where they met Apollos and were both diligent in instructing him more perfectly in the truth. (Acts 18:18-26.) R. 3143, R. 2191, R. 1549



Paul making tents with Aquila and Priscilla

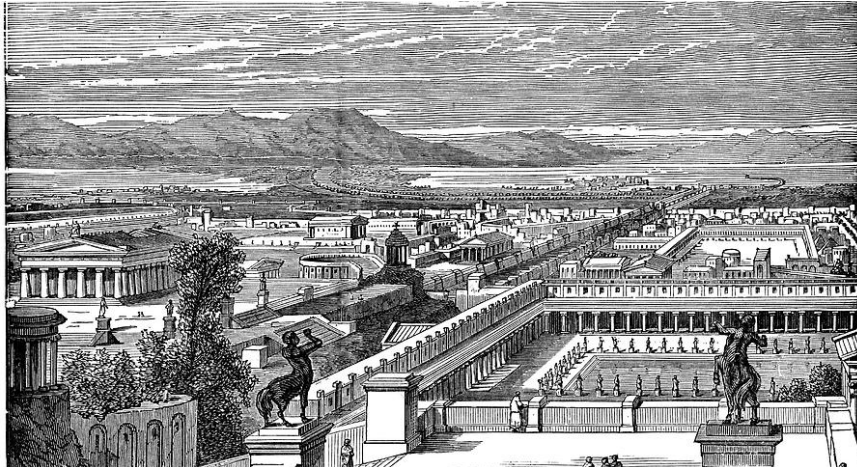
**Because he
was of the same
trade, he stayed
with them and
worked, for
by occupation they
were tentmakers.
– Acts 18:3 –**

It was customary at that time that the sons of all the upper class of people should learn a trade, however well educated otherwise. St. Paul's trade as a tent-maker stood him now in good place, enabling him to provide for his necessities, while preaching the gospel of Christ. From his own explanation of the matter we learn that even after a considerable number of believers had been gathered at Corinth as a Church, the Apostle maintained himself by his trade—not because it would have been a sin for him to have received money and support from the believers there, but because he hoped that the gospel would commend itself more to many if its chief expounder were seen to be laboring not for the meat that perisheth, nor for wealth, but preaching the gospel without charge—laying down his life for the brethren. There is a lesson in this for all of the Lord's people who have talent as ministers of the Word. Our object, like that of the Apostle, should be seen to be that “we seek not **yours**, but **you**.” —2 Cor. 12:14. R. 3143

It is surmised that Paul's conversion to Christianity isolated him completely from his home and family and deprived him of an income previously enjoyed, all of which he gladly forsook for Christ's sake. The fact that he had a trade at tent-making is not out of harmony with this, for it is the custom of the rich to give their sons trades. The fact that St. Paul was poor and needed to use his trade seems to imply that his financial allowances were discontinued. His later condition, on the contrary, seems to imply that he afterward inherited a patrimony, which enabled him to live in his own hired house, with numerous conveniences, enjoyed at that time only by the wealthy, and surely not by prisoners in general. R. 4355

Corinth

was about forty miles from Athens and a prominent city in Greece, though very different from Athens. It was a commercial city, noted for its manufactures, architecture, paintings, Corinthian brass, or bronze, etc. It was much less moral than Athens, much less refined, much less given to the study of religious themes, but, nevertheless, a better field for the gospel.



Ancient Corinth

Where religious forms and ceremonies become popular they are apt to have correspondingly the less weight and force. Where sin, immorality and irreligion are popular, those minds which have a religious trend are apt to be freer, more open for the truth, because unsatisfied by formalism, and because they more keenly recognize righteousness by its sharp contrast with the sin abounding. Similarly today, the truth is likely to receive a cooler reception amongst those whose religious sensibilities are to some extent satisfied by forms and ceremonies: truth usually makes better progress today in places where to some extent irreligion seems to have the upper hand (as in Corinth), and where, therefore, virtue is at a higher premium. The heart most ready for the truth is the one which is not satiated and stupefied with religious formalism; but which realizes to some extent the exceeding sinfulness of sin and longs for the righteousness which is of God. Hungering and thirsting after righteousness is induced by such conditions. Like the Apostle, we are to discern the most fruitful fields, and spend our energies upon them, leaving the other fields for a more convenient season, whether it shall come during the present age or during the Millennium. The Apostle apparently stayed but a few days at Athens, but abode a year and a half at Corinth—the irreligious city, where he found many honest-hearted people, to whom the Lord directed the gospel through him. R. 3143

Corinth as a city was almost the opposite of Athens. Corinth was as completely given over to commerce and sinful pleasures as Athens was given over to religious philosophy and idol worship. We have seen what poor success attended the gospel amongst the superstition-blinded philosophers of the religious metropolis; and we feel curious to know whether its effect will be more or less amongst the non-religious of Corinth. The Lord's testimony settles the matter. In a vision he encouraged the Apostle not to be afraid but to speak boldly, assuring him that he would be with him and protect him; adding, —

**I have much people in this city.
Acts 18:10**

So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth. Because you say, ‘I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing’---and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked.

– Revelation 3:16-17 –

Corinth was nicknamed the Vanity Fair of the World, because it was a center of frivolity, pleasure-seeking, etc. It is credited with having been one of the most licentious and profligate cities of its day. It may at first seem very strange to us that this vilest of the great cities should yield larger spiritual results than any other, so that the Lord would specially specify that he had “much people”

there and would providentially detain his ambassador there a year and a half, while in other places he had been permitted to remain only a few days or a few weeks. The philosophy of the matter seems to be this:



The Sack of Corinth by Thomas Allom 1872

Outward morality frequently leads to a pharisaical spirit of self-righteousness, which is most pernicious and a deadly foe to true righteousness. On the other hand, where sin stands out glaringly it has a repulsive effect upon the pure in heart, upon all who love righteousness, and this repulsion from the evil seems to prepare such hearts the better for a genuine consecration to the Lord and for his message. This theory holds good, at least in the missionary work at Corinth, as in contrast with that of places much more respectable in reputation.

The lesson for us in this connection is that we should be on guard in our

own hearts against this self-righteous spirit of outward observance, which lacks true holiness, true sanctification. Is it not along this line that the Lord found fault with one of the seven Churches, saying, “Because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew thee out of my mouth? Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.” (Rev. 3:16,17.) This is our Lord’s charge against the present state of the Church, so rich in earthly advantages, so rich in spiritual privileges, so self-satisfied. Let us be on guard lest in any manner or to any degree such a lukewarmness should come over us and we come under Divine disfavor. R. 4417

When Silas and Timothy had come from Macedonia, Paul was compelled by the Spirit, and testified to the Jews that Jesus is the Christ. But when they opposed him and blasphemed, he shook his garments and said to them, “Your blood be upon your own heads. I am clean. From now on I will go to the Gentiles.”

– Acts 18:5-6 –

Finally Silas and Timothy arrived, bringing with them not only good fellowship and encouraging news from Berea, Thessalonica and Philippi, but also, as the Apostle tells us, a gift—quite probably from Lydia, the seller of purple dyes, supposed to have been comfortably circumstanced. The effect of these encouragements is intimated. Paul was pressed in spirit—he felt a fresh vigor urging him to still more vigorously present his message and bring matters to a focus and crisis at the synagogue. After testifying with great boldness and finding his message repelled by the majority of the synagogue, St. Paul forced the crisis himself by shaking his garment as though he would not even take from them the dust, saying to those who had opposed and blasphemed, “Your blood be upon your own heads. I am clean. From henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles.” There are times when positiveness is absolutely necessary, even though it cause a division amongst those who profess to serve the same God. There are times when much more good can be obtained thus than by a continuance under disadvantageous conditions.

The same is true today. Oil and water will not mix, and time spent in trying to blend them is altogether wasted. When positive bitterness and hatred are manifested, as in the case under consideration, it is better to withdraw. But neither the Apostle nor we would recognize as proper or at all allowable that the Lord’s people should quarrel and take offense one with the other over trifles unworthy of consideration. The shaking off of the dust was not only what our Lord suggested but a custom of the time, a warning as it were, that the Apostle felt that he had discharged his entire duty and left the responsibility upon their own shoulders.

**Whoever will not receive you nor
hear your words, when you depart
from that house or city, shake off the
dust from your feet.**

Matthew 10:14

The effect was good in two ways. It helped Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue, to take a decided stand, whereas otherwise he might have been stunted in his spiritual development. Crispus decided for the Lord Jesus and took his stand with the Apostle and a few others. Secondly, the fact that the Jews had repudiated the Apostle and his message would draw the attention of the Gentiles more particularly to his Gospel. And some of these already believed. The new meetings were held in the home of Justus, a reverent man who resided near the synagogue. Thus Paul’s message in the synagogue would continually remind the Jews as they attended this synagogue worship and would be a continual invitation to them to come in and hear more respecting the fulfilment of the prophecies in Jesus. The result was that a considerable number of the Corinthians accepted God’s grace and were baptised, thus symbolizing their consecration. Let us, too, learn that opposition is not necessarily an injurious thing to the Lord’s cause. It is safe to say that a most dangerous condition is the stagnant one. R. 4416

**And he departed from there and entered the house of a certain man
named Justus, one who worshiped God, whose house was next door to the
synagogue. Then Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue, believed on the
Lord with all his household. And many of the Corinthians,
hearing, believed and were baptized.**

Acts 18:7-8

Now the Lord spoke to Paul in the night by a vision, “Do not be afraid, but speak, and do not keep silent, for I am with you, and no one will attack you to hurt you, for I have many people in this city.”

– Acts 18:9-10 –

Evidently the Lord saw that his servant Paul needed some special encouragement at this time and hence another vision was granted. What an insight this gives us to the Divine supervision of the Gospel message and its servants! How these words remind us of the promise that the Lord will not suffer us to be tempted above that we are able, but will, with every temptation, provide also a way of escape! That vision and its message, we may be sure, was not for the Apostle merely, but for us also and for all of the Lord’s people from that time until now. The same God is rich unto all that call upon him and able to shield and to deliver all of his servants and will allow them only such experiences as his infinite wisdom sees will be advantageous to his cause, and work out for his servants a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.

The Lord’s statement that he had much people in Corinth teaches us a lesson also. It shows that the Lord knows the hearts of all—and has a care, not only for his saints, but also for those who have not yet heard of and received his grace, but whose hearts are in a favorable attitude of honesty, sincerity. A further lesson comes to us in this connection. We are to remember that the Lord is his own superintendent of missions and is able and willing to guide his consecrated servants, not only as to direction and place of service, but also as respects the time they shall remain to accomplish his will and the character of the experiences it will be necessary for them to have in order best to accomplish his purposes. The more our faith can grasp this situation, the more we can rely upon the Lord and use his wisdom instead of our own; the more successful will we be as his servants; and the more happy and contented; because realizing that all things are working together for good to us and for all who are his, submitted to his guiding care. R. 4416

The Lord’s promise that no man should set on the Apostle to hurt was fulfilled; for, although a disturbance was created and he was taken before the magistracy, no violence was done him, and the case was dismissed by the Roman governor. As with the Apostle, so with us; in the Lord’s wisdom varying experiences may be to our advantage. Sometimes it may be advantageous to us and the cause that we should seem to be defeated and forced to flight. We may rely, however, that the Lord understands the situation fully, and will not permit his work to be disconcerted and interrupted to its real disadvantage. Long ago some one said, “I am immortal until my work is finished;” and we may rely upon it that this is practically true of all engaged in the Lord’s service—that “Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints.” He will use and protect and guide them in their affairs, in ways that will be to his pleasured, and eventually to their highest welfare,—to the intent that all of his good purposes shall be accomplished. R. 3144

It was during this stay in Corinth that the Apostle received a loving contribution for his support from the converts at Philippi, which gave evidence that Luke, who remained with them, was performing a faithful ministry and stirring up their hearts with zeal for the Lord and his service. It was during this period, also, that he received through Silas and Timothy a good message from the Churches at Thessalonica and Berea; and it was during this stay in Corinth also that the two letters were written to the Church at Thessalonica. Nevertheless, it is respecting this very period of his stay in Corinth that the Apostle subsequently wrote to the Corinthians (1:4; 2:3); in which he mentions his weakness (bodily sickness) and “fear and trembling;” probably the result partly of his weak physical condition and of the remembrance of the trying experiences already passed through.

Subsequently he writes apparently referring back to experiences at Corinth, —

To the present hour we both hunger and thirst, and we are poorly clothed, and beaten, and homeless. And we labor, working with our own hands. Being reviled, we bless. Being persecuted, we endure. Being defamed, we entreat. We have been made as the filth of the world, the offscouring of all things until now.
1 Corinthians 4:11-13

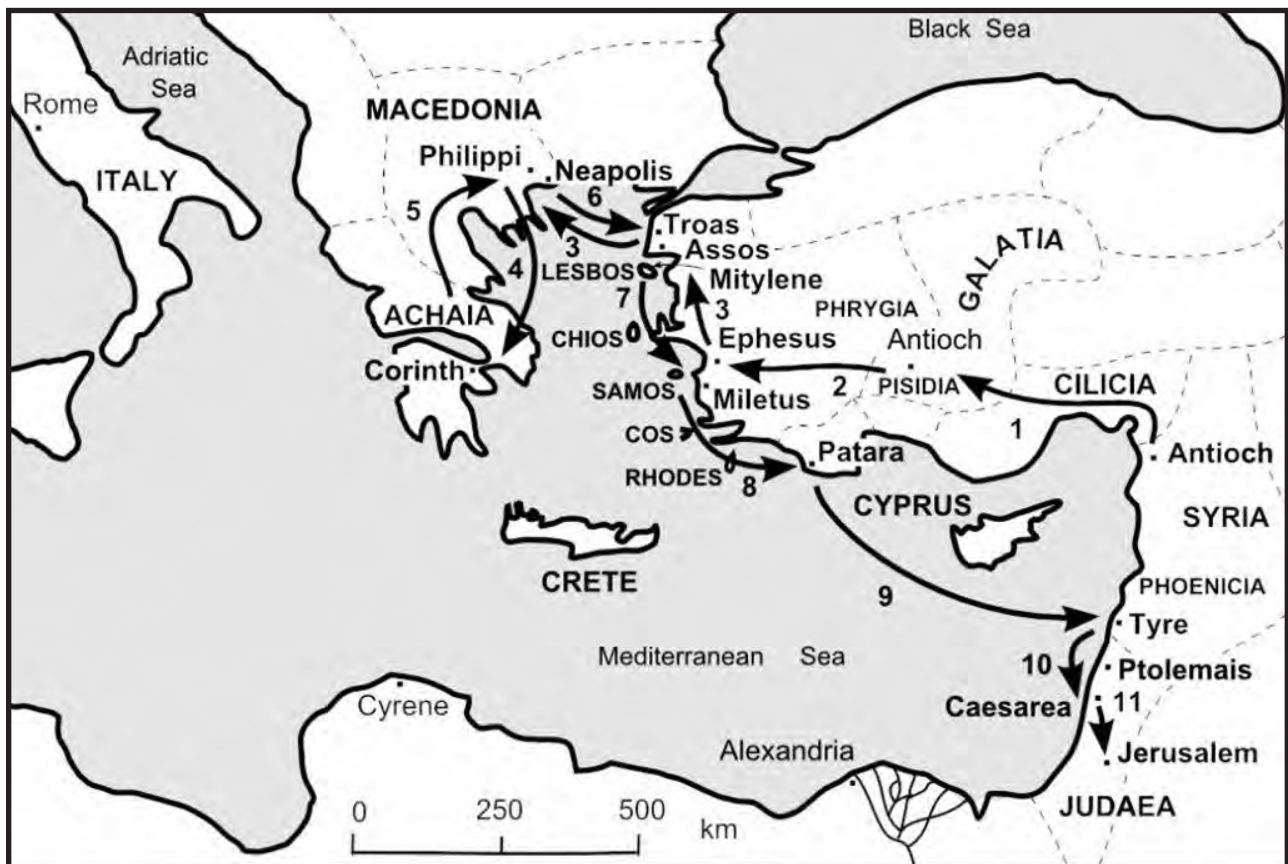
Every servant of the truth today can find rich lessons in the experiences and faithfulness and perseverance of the great Apostle. In infinite wisdom the Lord permitted this his chiefest servant amongst men, next to the Lord Jesus, to preach the truth under unfavorable circumstances and with many drawbacks. Paul learned that the servant is not above his Master; and so must every other faithful follower learn the same lesson of faithfulness and endurance—overcoming self and difficulties in the name and strength of the Lord and his Word: upheld by loving zeal and by the exceeding great and precious promises of the Father’s Word. In due time we shall reap the reward, if we **faint not** by the way. R. 2192

“I must by all means keep this coming feast in Jerusalem,* but I will return again to you, God willing.” And he sailed from Ephesus. And, when he had landed at Caesarea, and gone up and greeted the church, he went down to Antioch.
Acts 18:21-22

* He left Corinth probably six months after writing his letter to the Thessalonians, journeying to Jerusalem, determined, if providence permitted, to attend the next feast of Passover in the Holy City—not the Jewish feast, of course, but the substitute; as St. Paul explains, “Christ our Passover is slain; therefore let us keep the feast.” (1 Cor. 5:7.) R. 4420

THIRD MISSIONARY JOURNEY

Acts 18:23 -- Acts 21:17



St. Paul's Third Missionary Journey from FreeBibleImages.org

And when he had landed at Caesarea, and gone up and greeted the church, he went down to Antioch. After he had spent some time there, he departed and went over the region of Galatia and Phrygia in order, strengthening all the disciples.
Acts 18:22-23

Paul at Ephesus

After leaving Corinth the Apostle completed his second missionary tour, and returned to Antioch, stopping en route at Jerusalem, where he greeted the Church and, no doubt, gave them an account of the Lord's blessing upon his recent ministries in Europe. Aquila and Priscilla went with the Apostle as far as Ephesus, and the vessel on which he traveled remaining over the Sabbath at the port, he improved the opportunity to speak for Christ in the synagogue of Ephesus. His discourse was no doubt in the nature of a preparation for a future work which he hoped to do there. He doubtless spoke only along the lines of first principles—respecting the glorious prophecies of Messiah, and the fulfillment which should now be expected. His discourse was well received, and he was urged to remain longer, and gave his promise of a later return.

We are not informed how long the Apostle remained at Antioch, but “after he had spent some time there he departed and went over all the region of Galatia and Phrygia in order, establishing all the disciples.” While the Apostle was energetic in the establishment of new companies of the Lord's people, he was not slack in looking out for the spiritual welfare and growth of those which he had already established, as is evidenced by this statement—this being his third visit to these churches.

When the Apostle returned to Ephesus he found that in his absence a Christian brother named Apollos had come and had preached eloquently in the synagogue, using very close, logical and convincing arguments, and securing twelve converts to Christianity. R. 3152

Ephesus was in many respects the scene of the Apostle Paul's most successful work. He spent about three years there altogether, accompanied by Timothy, Erastus, Titus and, possibly, others. The influence of his work, either directly or indirectly, extended to other cities round about. It is supposed that it was during this stay at Ephesus that congregations were started in the nearby places, mentioned in Revelation as “the seven churches of Asia” (Minor). Our last lesson showed the Apostle beginning his work at Ephesus in the synagogue. He continued to present the truth until opposition to it became quite marked, and certain of the Jewish adherents began to speak evil of the teachings and of the believers. Then the Apostle and those who believed, unwilling to continue a condition of strife, discontinued their attendance at the synagogue, and began a separate meeting, apparently in a rented public hall, called “The School of Tyrannus,” because, according to the custom of that time, it was used by him for this purpose in the forenoons. R. 3157

And he went into the synagogue and spoke boldly for three months, reasoning and persuading concerning the things of the kingdom of God.

But when some were hardened and did not believe, but spoke evil of the Way before the multitude, he departed from them and withdrew the disciples, reasoning daily in the school of Tyrannus. And this continued for two years, so that all who dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks.

Acts 19:8-10

APOLLOS

Now a certain Jew named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man and mighty in the Scriptures, came to Ephesus. This man had been instructed in the way of the Lord, and being fervent in spirit, he spoke and taught accurately the things of the Lord, though he knew only the baptism of John.

Acts 18:24-25

A Christian brother named Apollos had come and had preached eloquently in the synagogue [at Ephesus], using very close, logical and convincing arguments, and securing twelve converts to Christianity. He was a Jew, born at Alexandria, one of the chief cities of that time, specially noted for its schools of learning, and extensive libraries. The common version says that Apollos was “eloquent”; the revised version, that he was “learned”, and the Greek word seems to be with equal propriety translatable either way: in all probability he was both learned and eloquent. However, he was not as thoroughly advanced in the knowledge of the Lord and of the truth as were Aquila and Priscilla who had for a time companied with the Apostle; and as soon as they heard Apollos in the synagogue they recognized him as a Christian brother, and took him to their own home, where they had good opportunity for communicating to him “the way of the Lord more perfectly.”

Apollos had explained the gospel merely to the extent of repentance from sin and faith in Christ as the Redeemer. He had no knowledge of the fuller meaning of baptism as explained by the Apostle (Rom. 6:3-5) —a baptism of consecration, to suffer with Christ—to be dead with him, to participate in his resurrection to the new nature and to be ultimate sharers with him in the heavenly Kingdom. R. 3152

So he began to speak boldly in the synagogue. When Aquila and Priscilla heard him, they took him aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately.

– Acts 18:26 –

We have here a beautiful illustration of how the Lord is pleased to use his consecrated people. He had use for the talents and education of Apollos; he had use also for the less talented Aquila and Priscilla who, though not qualified to speak in public in the synagogue, were, nevertheless, used of the Lord to bless his more eloquent disciple, and thus to be sharers with him in the fruits of his more public ministry. The same is true today, as the Apostle explains. (1 Cor. 12:12-26.) No member of the body of Christ can say that he has no need for another member, and no member may say that there is nothing whatever that he can do in the service of the body. Under the guidance of our glorious Head each member who is filled with his spirit, and desirous of serving him, may do so. When the time for rewards will come, who knows how much of the usefulness of Paul and Apollos may be accredited to some of the humble ones such as Aquila and Priscilla, who in various ways ministered to

And when he desired to cross to Achaia, the brethren wrote, exhorting the disciples to receive him, and when he arrived, he greatly helped those who had believed through grace.

Acts 18:27

and encouraged and supported their abler brethren in the Lord’s work. The Apostle mentions very tenderly some of this class who colabored with him, supporting his work by their influence and by their means. (Phil. 4:3.) R. 3152

1 And it happened, while Apollos was at Corinth, that Paul, having passed through the upper regions, came to Ephesus. And finding some disciples

2 he said to them, “Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?” So they said to him, “We have not so much as heard whether there is a Holy Spirit.”

3 And he said to them, “Into what then were you baptized?” So they said, “Into John’s baptism.”

4 Then Paul said, “John indeed baptized with a baptism of repentance, saying to the people that they should believe on Him who would come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus.”

5 When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.

6 And when Paul had laid hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke with tongues and prophesied.

7 Now the men were about twelve in all.

– Acts 19:1-7 –

Apollos himself knew only the baptism of John—the baptism unto repentance (the same now taught by the Disciples or Christian denomination—Acts 18:25; 19:4), and they had been so baptized. Aquila and Priscilla heard him speak, and, perceiving his imperfect knowledge, took him home and instructed him more perfectly, so that when he went away from Ephesus to Achaia, he went better equipped for the work. The coming of the Apostle was just in time to encourage the infant Church and to correct the mistakes of the zealous and beloved Apollos. His inquiry and their reply, with reference to receiving the holy spirit, showed their entire ignorance of the privileges of believers—of entire consecration and adoption as sons of God into the divine family, implied in the ordinance of baptism into Christ. This subject of the high calling of believers, of the gospel age, Paul opened up to them, probably in quite extended discourse, of which verse 4 must be understood as a mere synopsis. This clearer understanding was at once acted upon, and they were again baptized—not this time with the significance of John’s baptism (unto repentance), but of Christ’s baptism (of entire consecration and full submission to the will of God).

Then followed the evidence of their acceptance with God, granted to all the early Christians through the laying on of the Apostles’ hands (never otherwise communicated, except at the beginning): the power of the holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke with tongues and prophesied. (Verse 6) These gifts were

[Paul] required them to be baptized again, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. This brought them into full relationship with God, as were the remainder of the disciples. The Lord probably permitted this mistake in order that the Apostles might more clearly understand, and that thus the truth of the matter might come down to us. These things give us a clear conception of how particular God is in all His dealings. There is a definite way in which we may come into covenant relationship with the Lord, and He insists on the recognition of the conditions which must be observed to this end. R. 5964

necessary to the Church then in its incipient stage, both for their own full assurance of faith, and also for the world’s recognition of them as specially owned of God; but they were not intended to be continued beyond the days of the Apostles. —1 Cor. 13:8. R. 1558

The Temple of Artemis, one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World



Ephesus was one of the most important cities of that time, its population being chiefly Greeks. It was called “one of the eyes of Asia.” It had a colosseum or place for public gatherings, capable of accommodating fifty thousand people, and one of its chief attractions was an immense and grand temple erected to the honor of the goddess Diana, and it was the centre of her cult, whose influence and numbers extended throughout all Asia-Minor. The temple was built of the purest marble. We readily see that the character of the idolatry with which the Apostle had to contend was very widely different from that of the South Sea Islanders. Its majestic temples were not out of harmony with its priesthood and general features, all of which were evidently on an impressive scale, quite in harmony with its devotees,—intelligent and cultured people, as the Ephesians were. R. 2206



Amphitheater (Coliseum) in the ancient city of Ephesus

Now God worked unusual miracles by the hands of Paul, so that even handkerchiefs or aprons were brought from his body to the sick, and the diseases left them and the evil spirits went out of them.

– Acts 19:11-12 –

Ephesus was a great city for magic, incantations, divinations, etc. The worship of Diana and the delusions connected therewith, “black art,” etc., were (like all the heathen religious practices) devices of Satan and the fallen angels, whereby the people were made to believe in the power of Diana for good and evil, for health and sickness, for safety or accident. A vessel going to sea in order to have a prosperous journey it was thought must have on board a miniature “shrine of Diana.” The individual who wished for luck repeated certain words or prayers to Diana and wore upon his breast a charm or amulet marked with her likeness or with a prayer to Diana (much after the manner that Roman Catholics wear upon their bosoms what are termed “scalpel,” blessed with prayers to the Virgin Mary, with holy water, masses, etc.). As we have already seen, the powers of darkness (Satan and the fallen angels) have liberty and ability to perform wonders of certain kinds under certain circumstances, just as Jannes and Jambres had power from the same source as recorded in Exodus 7:11. In consequence we are not surprised that the Lord greatly blessed the Apostle Paul in Ephesus with powers of the holy spirit which enabled him to more than meet the powers of darkness.

As St. Paul, amongst other miracles, cast out evil spirits in the name of the Lord, some of his opponents claimed that he did so merely by hypnotic influence, and that others could do the same if they would. Carrying out the thought they attempted to exorcise an evil spirit, with disastrous results. They commanded the spirit to come out of the man in the name of Jesus, whom Paul preached. But “the evil spirit answered and said, Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are ye? And the man in whom the evil spirit was leaped upon them, and overcame them, and prevailed against them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded.” As these opponents were prominent men the matter became generally known both to Jews and Greeks at Ephesus and the result was a spirit of reverence, and the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified. R. 2206 and R. 4421

And many who had believed came confessing and telling their deeds.

– Acts 19:18 –

They exposed the fact that many of their deeds were by occult or hidden power and injurious. They brought their books and burned them openly. They did not sell them to others and thus permit the evil influence to spread, but did their share towards its destruction. So should it be still. Those who turn to the Lord from darkness and sin should publicly confess the transformation of their hearts and lives and should destroy everything calculated to exercise an evil influence, either upon themselves or upon others. It is the thorough-going convert—converted from center to circumference—who has taken a radical stand for righteousness, as he previously took it for sin, that the Lord permits to honor him; and sometimes at the sacrifice of earthly interests. R. 4421

Many of those who had practiced magic brought their books together and burned them in the sight of all. And they counted up the value of them, and it totaled fifty thousand pieces of silver.

Acts 19:19

So the word of the Lord grew mightily and prevailed.

Acts 19:20

About that time there arose a great commotion about the Way.

– Acts 19:23 –

The Lord saw best to permit the adversary to raise up a persecution about this time, and, of course, Paul would in a large measure be the centre of it. This persecution was on strictly business lines. The manufacturers and workmen engaged in the producing of the images, amulets, charms, etc., of Diana, were gotten together by one of their craft, Demetrius, who pointed out to them that the progress of Christianity meant the destruction of their various trades and that now was the time to put a stop to it and to reenkindle amongst the people a fervor of sentiment for Diana. The scheme worked well, and soon a furor was created: the less intelligent masses being easily aroused by the cry, "Great is Diana." R. 2207

For a certain man named Demetrius, a silversmith, who made silver shrines of Diana, brought no small profit to the craftsmen. He called them together with the workers of similar occupation, and said: "Men, you know that we have our prosperity by this trade. Moreover you see and hear that not only at Ephesus, but throughout almost all Asia, this Paul has persuaded and turned away many people, saying that they are not gods which are made with hands."

Acts 19:24-26

It has been surmised that this riot occurred in May, the month of Diana's Festival, when usually there was the largest demand for the charms, amulets, etc., and that on this occasion business being less brisk than usual, the depression was laid to the charge of Christianity, whose influence was by this time considerable, and certainly every item of it in opposition to Diana. Ephesus was not only the shrine of Diana, but it was a great mercantile centre for Asia, as Corinth was for Greece, and the May Festival of Diana was accompanied by not only sacrifices in her temple and processions in her honor and prayers for her protection, but with these were associated wonderful displays in their theater or Colosseum,—gladiatorial combats, athletic feats, hippodrome races, etc. These drew people from far and near, and for a time, commercially, the city was a fair, and a large amount of business was done with the strangers. R. 2207

"So not only is this trade of ours in danger of falling into disrepute, but also the temple of the great goddess Diana may be despised and her magnificence destroyed, whom all Asia and the world worship." Now when they heard this, they were full of wrath and cried out, saying, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians!" So the whole city was filled with confusion, and rushed into the theater with one accord, having seized Gaius and Aristarchus, Macedonians, Paul's travel companions.

Acts 19:27-29

For we do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, of our trouble which came to us in Asia: that we were burdened beyond measure, above strength, so that we despaired even of life. Yes, we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves but in God who raises the dead, who delivered us from so great a death, and does deliver us, in whom we trust that He will still deliver us.

– 2 Corinthians 1:8-10 –

Paul being the prominent leader in the promulgation of Christianity was of course the central figure against whom the rioters [in Ephesus] moved. It is supposed that he still made his home with Aquila and Priscilla and that the mob made directly for their lodgings: apparently, however they missed getting Paul, and as the next best thing took Gaius and Aristarchus, two of his co-laborers. It is probable that it was at this time that Aquila and Priscilla, as Paul's faithful friends, risked their lives in his protection, as intimated by the Apostle's statement in his epistle to the Romans (16:4) where he says of them that they "laid down their necks" for his life. When the mob got Gaius and Aristarchus they took them to the Colosseum (theater), the general place of rendezvous for large gatherings. Here Paul, full of courage, purposed to attempt to speak to the mob in defense of the Christian cause, but the Ephesian converts would not permit him, knowing better than he the vicious and unreasoning spirit of the superstitious lower classes of Ephesus.

When the mob got to the theater it was much confused, and of different opinions respecting the object of the gathering. Many of them evidently supposed that it was a tumult against the Jews, —a very likely mistake, since the Apostle and some of his co-laborers were Jews, and since the common people would probably only distinguish Christians as being a Jewish **sect**. Realizing this the Jews put forward Alexander. (Probably Alexander the copper-smith, mentioned by the Apostle in 2 Tim. 4:14, possibly a convert to Christianity who subsequently apostatized. —1 Tim. 1:20.) Alexander was put forward by the Jews evidently for the purpose of explaining to the mob that the Christians were **renegade** Jews, and that the Jews proper would thoroughly approve of and support their persecution as disturbers of the general peace; that the Jews in general were a commercial people, interested, therefore, in the festivities of Diana, and the associated business prosperity. However, the Lord did not permit so insidious an attack, Alexander not being permitted to speak.

The account here given is very brief, but is supplemented by the Apostle's own statement of the matter. (2 Cor. 1:8-10.) It was probably the intention of the ringleaders of the mob to have a "spectacle" in the Colosseum, —to have the Apostle cast into the arena to be devoured by the wild beasts in the presence of the multitude. The Apostle refers seemingly to this persecution saying,

If, in the manner of men, I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, (1 Cor. 15:32)

which would imply that if he did not have a combat of the kind intended for him, it came so near being such a conflict that it amounted to practically the same thing so far as his trials were concerned; —or it is barely possible that he referred to the Ephesian mob itself, as "beasts" seeking his life.

Two important lessons to be drawn from this narrative are (1) that thorough conversion to the Lord means a thorough abandonment of evil, whatever the cost, the self-denial, financial or social. (2) That the love of money is the root of all evil and a frequent cause of opposition to the Lord's Word and plan. These principles, at work eighteen centuries ago, are still the same, and exercise similar influences today. And this is the very object of the truth during this Gospel age, —to be a test of our love for truth, for righteousness, for God. R. 2207

For we are to God the fragrance of Christ among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing. To the one we are the aroma of death leading to death, and to the other the aroma of life leading to life. And who is sufficient for these things?

– 2 Corinthians 2:15-16 –

St. Paul testified that the Truth is a “savor of life unto life and of death unto death.” Either it has a tender, a softening, a lubricating effect upon the mind and the life and the character, making it more loving and Christ-like, or, reversely, it has a hardening effect, an embittering effect, turning the opponent away from the Lord and his message. It does not surprise us that this was the effect at Ephesus; yea, and everywhere today, as well as then, wherever the Truth is spoken clearly, thoroughly, intelligently.

Today, Catholics can preach in Protestant Churches; so can Jews. Unitarians and Trinitarians, believers in Election and Free Grace, believers in something and believers in nothing, can all mingle in so-called Christian harmony and fellowship and without a thought of persecuting one another. Why? Because, while they differ one from the other, they have a sufficiency of error in harmony with each other to constitute a basis of agreement. The evidence of this is that as soon as the Truth, the whole Truth and nothing but the Truth is proclaimed in their midst it is denounced by every one of them, opposed, slurred, falsified, vilified, lied about; and all associated with it come more or less under a social ban, a spirit of persecution. They do not like the savor of the Truth. To them it has an odor of death, of self-sacrifice, which is contrary to all of their hopes, aims and desires. Some of the opponents of the Truth today are hardening their own hearts by their attitude, just as did Pharaoh thirty-five hundred years ago, and just as did the chief priests, scribes and Pharisees eighteen centuries ago.

Alas, that there are even today so many of the same disposition as Demetrius and his fellow craftsmen! The principal opponents of present truth are professed ministers of the gospel; and so far as we are able to discern, their opposition is inspired by the same selfish spirit which incited Demetrius and his associates—their craft is in danger—their salaries are endangered—respect for them and their teachings on the part of the people is endangered. It will not at all surprise us if ultimately their opposition to the truth shall lead to something analogous to this riot at Ephesus. Then we shall expect that they, like Demetrius, will not set forth the real secret of their opposition, but base it on the broader grounds of hostility of the truth to the great system of errors, misnamed “Orthodoxy,” chiefly built by Antichrist, and known in the Scriptures as “Babylon.”

Faith assures us that all of the steps of the Apostle were Divinely, wisely ordered. Perhaps he needed the rougher experiences at the beginning of his ministry to polish him, to prepare him for his further service, the writing of his epistles, etc. Doubtless we shall understand his experiences better, and our own experiences better, when, by and by, beyond the veil, we shall see as we are seen and know as we are known. Until then the Lord requires that we exercise faith and confidence in him, nothing doubting. R. 4421 and R. 3160

And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma.

Ephesians 5:2

Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

– 2 Corinthians 12:10 –

Noble and loyal and true and strong in character as the Apostle Paul was, he yet realized that he was a member of the fallen race, and, in common with all humanity, subject to frailties. God had called him to a most important and glorious work—that of bearing the gospel to the Gentiles; and, for the benefit of the whole Church, to him were granted special and wonderful revelations, even above all the other honored and beloved apostles. He was caught away in mental vision to the third heaven—the new dispensation, the Millennial reign of Christ, and shown things (doubtless the plan and purpose of God, as now made manifest to us, largely through his writings, in the light of this harvest period, but) not lawful to be uttered then, because not then due to the Church. (2 Cor. 12:4.) Upon him devolved the care of all the Churches of the Gentiles, and great were the responsibilities of his office. Though the position was a most laborious and trying one, requiring great fortitude, zeal, energy and self-denial to fill it, it was also one of great honor.

And Paul appreciated the honor of such intimate fellowship of service with the Lord, and manifested his appreciation by untiring zeal and enthusiasm. But even in this the Lord recognized a personal danger to his beloved and faithful Apostle—a danger of pride and self-exaltation, which, if it should develop, would soon unfit him for further service and rob him of his future reward. So the thorn in the flesh was permitted to come. It came, not from the hand of the Lord, though by his permission; but, as the Apostle affirms

a messenger of Satan to buffet me.

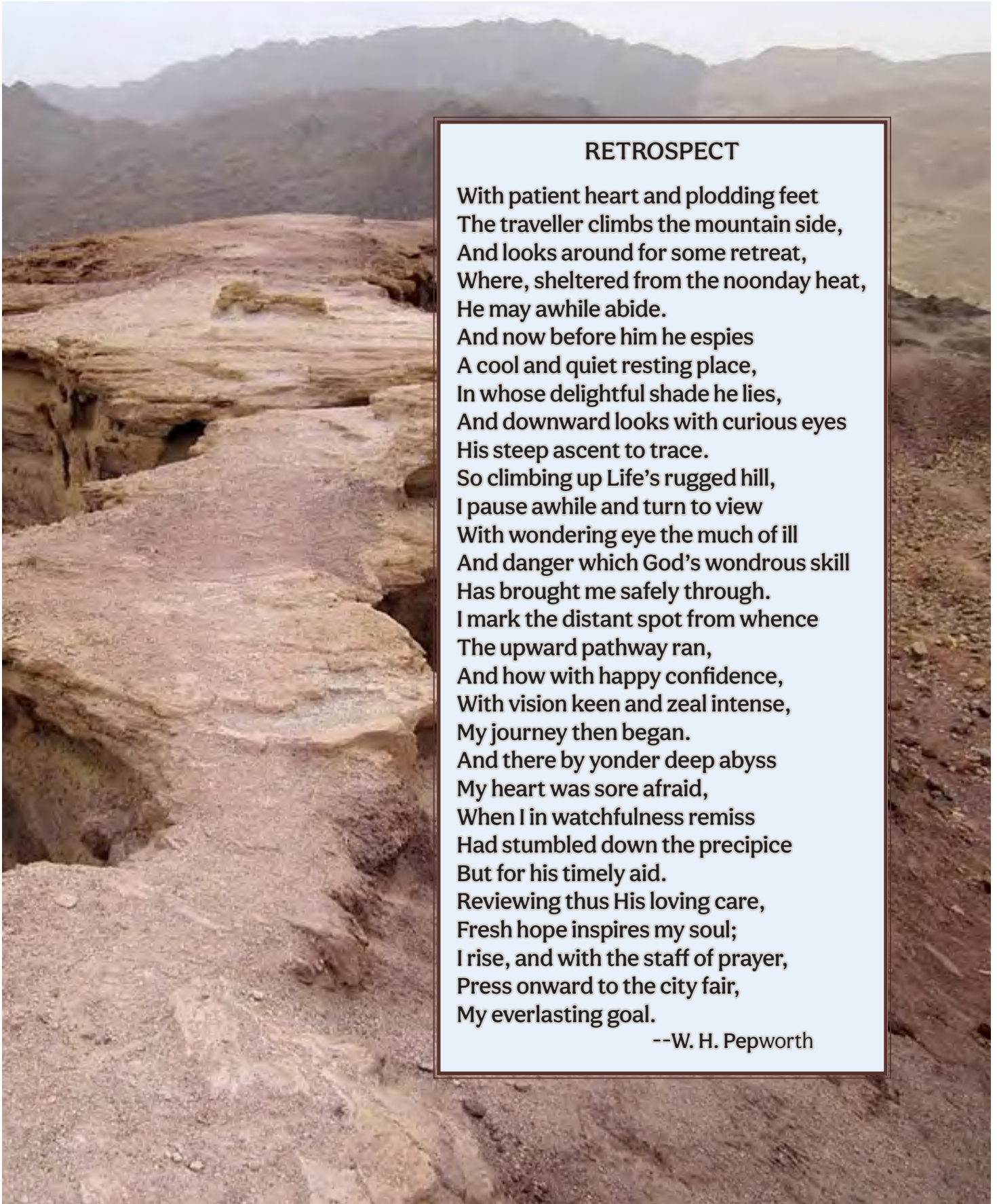
2 Corinthians 12:7

The implication of weakness the Apostle humbly accepted. He did not resent it and begin to boast of his strength and to reproach the Lord for not exerting his power for its removal; but, on the contrary, with grace and gladness he accepted the Lord's judgment of his heart, and his estimate of his strength, and appreciated the love that thus cared for him personally, while through him he was ministering to the whole Church. Yes, praise the Lord! he chooses his own instruments, and whets and grinds and polishes them for the more effectual service, and wields them with force and power in the service of his people; but in all the painful and laborious service he has special care also for the willing and faithful instrument. He will not suffer it to be tried beyond that which it is able to endure; nor will he suffer it to be exalted without some counterbalancing thorn in the flesh to preserve its equilibrium. R. 1744

The answer to the Apostle's prayer, although not in accordance with his request, was a blessed consolation—

**“My grace is sufficient for you, for
My strength is made perfect in weakness.”**

2 Corinthians 12:9



RETROSPECT

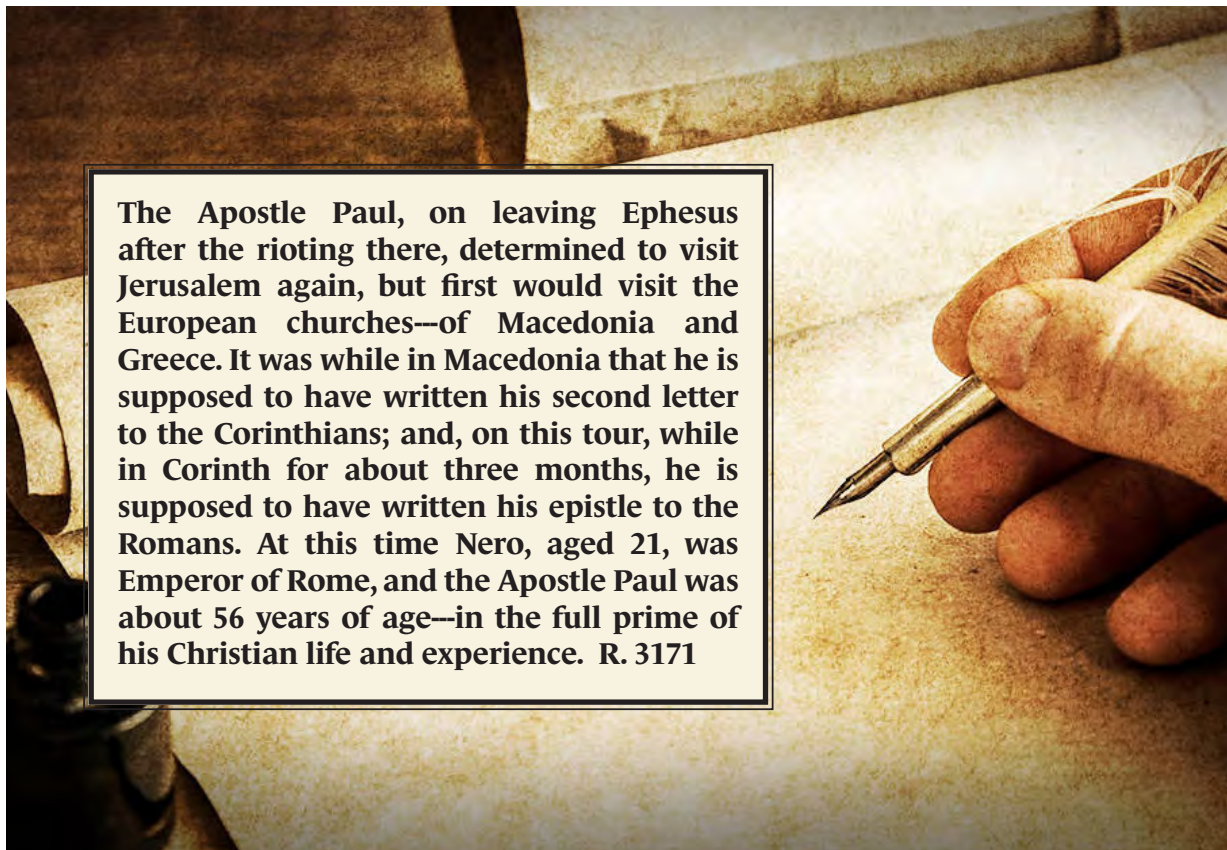
With patient heart and plodding feet
The traveller climbs the mountain side,
And looks around for some retreat,
Where, sheltered from the noonday heat,
He may awhile abide.
And now before him he espies
A cool and quiet resting place,
In whose delightful shade he lies,
And downward looks with curious eyes
His steep ascent to trace.
So climbing up Life's rugged hill,
I pause awhile and turn to view
With wondering eye the much of ill
And danger which God's wondrous skill
Has brought me safely through.
I mark the distant spot from whence
The upward pathway ran,
And how with happy confidence,
With vision keen and zeal intense,
My journey then began.
And there by yonder deep abyss
My heart was sore afraid,
When I in watchfulness remiss
Had stumbled down the precipice
But for his timely aid.
Reviewing thus His loving care,
Fresh hope inspires my soul;
I rise, and with the staff of prayer,
Press onward to the city fair,
My everlasting goal.

--W. H. Pepworth

Paul at Miletus

After the uproar had ceased, Paul called the disciples to himself, embraced them, and departed to go to Macedonia.

Acts 20:1



The Apostle Paul, on leaving Ephesus after the rioting there, determined to visit Jerusalem again, but first would visit the European churches—of Macedonia and Greece. It was while in Macedonia that he is supposed to have written his second letter to the Corinthians; and, on this tour, while in Corinth for about three months, he is supposed to have written his epistle to the Romans. At this time Nero, aged 21, was Emperor of Rome, and the Apostle Paul was about 56 years of age—in the full prime of his Christian life and experience. R. 3171

Paul had decided to sail past Ephesus, so that he would not have to spend time in Asia, for he was hurrying to be at Jerusalem, if possible, on the Day of Pentecost.

Acts 20:16

When St. Paul fled from Ephesus, after the rioting, he made a tour of the European Churches which he had founded. Passing through Macedonia to the city of Corinth he came by vessel again to Miletus, about fifty miles south of Ephesus. He was accompanied by representatives of several of the churches of Asia Minor. He was en route for Jerusalem, for whose poor at his suggestion collections had been made in the four provinces in which he had been preaching. Seven delegates accompanied him, representatives of the Church at Thessalonica, Berea, Derbe and Ephesus. These visits are supposed to have consumed several months of time, and now, at Miletus, he would have his final opportunity of bidding goodbye to the Elders of the Ephesus Church. The vessel on which the party were to go to the Jerusalem port was detained indefinitely at Miletus, so word was sent to the Elders at Ephesus and they came to Miletus.

[We especially call to] attention the Apostle's address to these Elders. We are not to understand this as a boastful statement, but rather as a plain rehearsal of matters which his hearers would fully concede and of which he boasted nothing. The rehearsal was given, not for his own sake, not as indicating personal vanity and self-praise, but with a view to quickening the recollection of his hearers and making the lesson of the hour more impressive upon them. He reminded them that for the space of three years they had known him intimately, the manner of his life, his devotion to the Lord, to the service of the Truth and to the service of the brethren. He reminded them of his humility of mind; that he had not been with them as a boaster; that his conduct had not been haughty and overbearing; that he had not sought to "lord it" over the Church, but on the contrary, he had endured amongst them many trials and difficulties with the Jews, with "false brethren."

They knew of his work, his endurance and of his holding back nothing from them that would be helpful to them; that he had taught them both publicly and privately as circumstances opened to him opportunities. He had testified both to Jews and to Greeks that there is only the one Gospel of Christ, to be accepted through faith and turning away from sin. By calling attention to these elements of his own character he was laying the foundation for his subsequent exhortation to them that they should copy his zeal, his fidelity. He had been a faithful overseer or bishop, watching over their interests. He had been a faithful pastor, guiding their welfare and seeing to their nourishment in spiritual things. Knowing the truthfulness of these presentations and having the whole situation in mind, they would be the better prepared to receive from such an one his parting exhortation—the great lesson which he had to give them.

[We find] the Apostle en route to Jerusalem, on a trading vessel which was detained at the port of Miletus. The number of days the vessel would be detained, changing cargo, etc., was uncertain; hence, the Apostle, instead of going to Ephesus, sent word to the elders of the Church there that they might come to him at Miletus—that thus he might have as long as possible with them, without missing his vessel when it would be ready to start. The elders came, and our lesson records the Apostle's address to them. They may have stayed several days in his company, and probably he said much more, but the final words evidently, in the mind of Luke, who chronicled them, were an epitome of the entire address, which is generally esteemed as both eloquent and touching. It is an address from a general overseer to local overseers, and to be appreciated must be viewed from this standpoint. R. 4458 and R. 3171

From Miletus he sent to Ephesus and called for the elders of the church. And when they had come to him, he said to them:

“You know, from the first day that I came to Asia, in what manner I always lived among you, serving the Lord with all humility, with many tears and trials which happened to me by the plotting of the Jews, how I kept back nothing that was helpful, but proclaimed it to you, and taught you publicly and from house to house, testifying to Jews, and also to Greeks, repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. And see, now I go bound in the spirit to Jerusalem, not knowing the things that will happen to me there, except that the Holy Spirit testifies in every city, saying that chains and tribulations await me. But none of these things move me, nor do I count my life dear to myself, so that I may finish my race with joy, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God. And indeed, now I know that you all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, will see my face no more. Therefore I testify to you this day that I am innocent of the blood of all men. For I have not shunned to declare to you the whole counsel of God. Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood. For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves. Therefore watch, and remember that for three years I did not cease to warn everyone night and day with tears. So now, brethren, I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified. I have coveted no one's silver or gold or apparel. Yes, you yourselves know that these hands have provided for my necessities, and for those who were with me. I have shown you in every way, by laboring like this, that you must support the weak. And remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He said,

It is more blessed to give than to receive.

– Acts 20:17-35 –

”



Paul at Miletus

The Apostle evidently knew by inspiration of some kind that he would never see these dear brethren again—that his mission in this field was at a close, and as a true under-shepherd he was looking out for the interests of the flock. He knew, probably from the prophecy of Daniel, that a great falling away was to come; —that the Adversary was to be permitted to develop a great antichrist system, —as he subsequently wrote to the Church at Thessalonica; and he wished the local overseers to realize the responsibility of their position,

and to be vigilant. “Grievous wolves shall enter in amongst you, not sparing the flock;” —ambitious for power, influence, etc., they would not hesitate to barter the interests of the flock for their own advancement. Another source of danger would be from within— “of your own selves” some would rise up—be puffed up with ambition, to have followers, adherents, and would lead them into false doctrines, to the injury of themselves and those misled by them.

The knowledge of these things was to keep them on guard continually, not only as against wolves from without, but against the rising of ambitious ones amongst their own number—not necessarily watching each other merely, but rather each specially watching and guarding his own heart against the insidious attacks of the Adversary along the lines indicated, —too great self-esteem or desire to be great. The Apostle, we may be sure, was glad to be able to point to his own course in their midst, as an example of proper humility of spirit, and of zeal for the interests of the flock. “Remember that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn [admonish] everyone day and night with tears.” The secret of the Apostle’s zeal lay, evidently, in his appreciation of the fact that he was God’s ambassador, and that the work of the Lord in which he was privileged to be a coworker, is a most important one—relating first to the salvation and perfecting of the saints, the elect, and ultimately through them to the blessing of all the families of the earth. Had the Apostle, during those three years, been neglecting the spiritual interests of the flock, he could not have made such an address as this to the elders.

Turning from the darker picture of coming trials and difficulties, the Apostle commended the brethren to the Lord, who loved his Church so as to purchase it, who watches over its interests, so that the Adversary cannot harm those who faithfully follow the Captain of their salvation, —assuring them that this grace of God might be expected to come to them through his Word. R. 3172

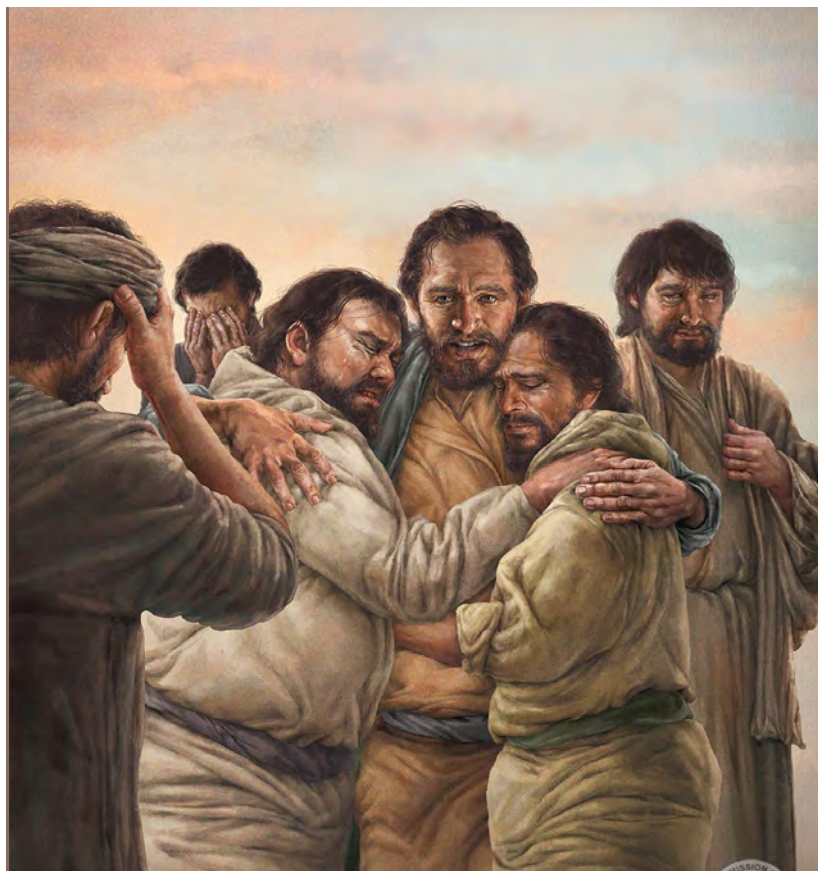
These words of our Lord (“It is more blessed to give than to receive”) are not recorded in any of the Gospels. Dr. Philip Schaff tells us that “outside the inspired memories of the Gospels we possess the record of some twenty sayings of Jesus which have floated down to us.” This quotation by the Apostle Paul is one of these, of whose authenticity we can have no doubt; and surely it is in full accord with our dear Redeemer’s conduct. R. 3173

And when he had said these things, he knelt down and prayed with them all. Then they all wept freely, and fell on Paul's neck and kissed him, sorrowing most of all for the words which he spoke, that they would see his face no more. And they accompanied him to the ship.

– Acts 20:36-38 –

At the close of the conference, when we may suppose the sailing of the vessel was announced, the Apostle knelt with the brethren from Ephesus, in prayer, the tenor of which may well be imagined. Then the parting took place, and doubtless the dear brethren began to realize more fully than they had ever done before what great blessings God had bestowed upon them through the Apostle's ministries, and the thought that they should never see him again filled them with sadness, and they wept as they accompanied him to the ship.

Doubtless the Apostle consoled them with the reflection that the time of partings would soon be over and the blessed eternity of union and fellowship soon begin, when they would meet not only one another, but above all meet the Redeemer himself and all the faithful in Christ Jesus. So our Lord also expressed himself on this matter, "a little while." The eighteen centuries intervening would have seemed a long while had any lived from then till now,—but since their "sleep" would be an unconscious interval, it was well that God kindly veiled their eyes and merely comforted them from his own larger standpoint of "soon," "quickly," "a little while." But now that the Kingdom is nigh, even at the door, our hearts no longer cry, How long, O Lord? but, Hallelujah! the day star is risen —the morning is here! R. 3173



The brethren from Ephesus weep as Paul departs

I remember you in my prayers night and day, greatly desiring to see you, being mindful of your tears, that I may be filled with joy, when I call to remembrance the genuine faith that is in you.
2 Timothy 1:3-5

Paul at Tyre and Caesarea

When we had sighted Cyprus, we passed it on the left, sailed to Syria, and landed at Tyre, for there the ship was to unload her cargo.

– Acts 21:3 –

Paul's experience in the city of Tyre serves to show us the bond of sympathy and Christian love which prevailed in the early Church. Apparently Paul and his companions were unaware that there were believers at Tyre, but, no doubt providentially, they found some; and so close was the bond of Christian sympathy that the finding of them insured the finding of fast and loving friends. We may imagine the blessed experiences of the little group of believers during the seven days of the Apostle's stay with them. We are not told what was done, but from the character of the Apostle we may judge with considerable accuracy, for "a good fountain sends forth sweet waters" only. He surely did not waste time in telling them of his many travels and the various scenes in foreign lands. We may be sure also that, having the spirit of love shed abroad in his heart he did not indulge in "gossip" in respect to the Lord's people in the various places he had visited: he had come under "the royal law" of Love, which neither thinketh nor speaketh ill of his neighbor; and we may be sure he would be doubly careful of what he would say to or about the Lord's "brethren." Paul had a grander mission than this, and a mind too noble to permit him to be either a "busybody in other men's matters" or a gossip. He had more important business: As he elsewhere expressed himself, "This one thing I do,"—the Father's business. Forgetting the things which were behind, and pressing forward to those things which were before, he ran with patience the race set before him in the gospel, for the prize of the high calling; looking unto Jesus as both the Author and Finisher of his faith.

We may therefore know assuredly that those seven days were profitably employed by the Apostle in talking over with the Church at Tyre the gracious plan of God, his precepts and his promises to those who love and obey him. The impression made indicates that the Apostle had become a lifelong friend of the Tyre believers, so much so that they were all loth to part, and husbands, wives and children accompanied Paul and his associates clear outside the city limits, and they parted with prayer. Where such holiness of heart, singleness of purpose and devotion to the Lord are found, there cannot be found in the same individual a contrary spirit; and all who are in close company with such a Christian will be profitted and helped and kept thereby. R. 2222

And finding disciples, we stayed there seven days. They told Paul through the Spirit not to go up to Jerusalem. When we had come to the end of those days, we departed and went on our way, and they all accompanied us, with wives and children, till we were out of the city. And we knelt down on the shore and prayed.

Acts 21:4-5

As we read the account of how the disciples at Tyre, with their wives and children, accompanied the Apostle and his companions to the ship, and all knelt in prayer on the shore, we say to ourselves that the spirit of discipleship was evidently the same everywhere in the early Church—just as warm and just as expressive among these probably less cultured ones at Tyre, as it was with the elders of the Church of Ephesus at Miletus. And we are glad to say that the household of faith today has many of the same characteristics of intense love for the brethren, even though they have not previously seen each other. R. 3182

Leaving Tyre their vessel soon came to Ptolemais. There were a few friends at Ptolemais, and the day was spent in their company, and probably the partings again were full of expressions of sympathy; and then Caesarea, the Roman capital of Palestine, was reached.

PHILIP

On the next day we who were Paul's companions departed and came to Caesarea, and entered the house of Philip the evangelist, who was one of the seven, and stayed with him. Now this man had four virgin daughters who prophesied.

Acts 21:8-9

Philip the evangelist, one of the seven deacons originally appointed at Jerusalem, and who did a good work, it will be remembered, with the Ethiopian eunuch and at Samaria, was at this time apparently making Caesarea his home. We have no definite statement respecting the number of believers at the place, but evidently most of these groups of the Lord's people were few in number. Five of the Church, at least, were of Philip's own family, for he had four daughters, who are spoken of as unmarried sisters which did prophesy. It is difficult for us to determine whether or not they prophesied of future events, because this word "prophesy" is also used to designate public speaking without reference to foreseeing. Apparently the Apostle's company tarried more days at Caesarea than they had intended, for finding that they would not be in time for the Passover the Apostle and his company were not in special haste to reach Jerusalem before the Pentecost season. R. 3183

And as we stayed many days, a certain prophet named Agabus came down from Judea. When he had come to us, he took Paul's belt, bound his own hands and feet, and said, "Thus says the Holy Spirit, 'So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man who owns this belt, and deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles.'"

– Acts 21:10-11 –

Believing implicitly that Agabus (as he declared) spoke as a mouthpiece of the holy spirit, the friends began to importune the Apostle to discontinue his journey to Jerusalem; even his companions joining in the request. But Paul was fully convinced that it was the Lord's will that he should go to Jerusalem and could not be hindered from so doing. As he had told the Elders of Ephesus that the holy spirit witnessed to him that bonds and imprisonments awaited him at Jerusalem, so now he was not surprised when through Agabus came another intimation to the same effect. His noble answer to the fears and entreaties of the brethren was in the sublimely courageous and yet beautifully sympathetic language. O how important it is that we should all learn the lesson, not to be moved from faithfulness to the Lord and his commands; neither by the tears and entreaties of friends nor by the frowns and threats of our foes.

The Apostle was firm. He had not started on this journey without the full conviction and assurance that it was in the Lord's providence that he should take it; and he was not to be daunted by any of the circumstances that might arise. He well knew that all the powers of darkness would assail him in vain, except as the Lord should permit, and he well knew also that the Lord would permit nothing to occur that would be to his real disadvantage. He would, therefore, go on conscientiously and courageously, and finish the work that the Father had given him to do. R. 2222 and R. 3183

Now when we heard these things, both we and those from that place pleaded with him not to go up to Jerusalem. Then Paul answered, “What do you mean by weeping and breaking my heart? For I am ready not only to be bound, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus.”

– Acts 21:12-13 –

The Apostle tells us previously, that the spirit witnessed in various places that bonds and imprisonment awaited him; but, nevertheless, he understood it to be the divine will that he should go to Jerusalem, and that, hence, he would not hesitate, knowing that the Lord was able to work out

See, now I go bound in the spirit to Jerusalem, not knowing the things that will happen to me there, except that the Holy Spirit testifies in every city, saying that chains and tribulations await me.

Acts 20:22-23

his own good purposes, if he were obedient. We are not to understand this testimony of these local prophets to be a contradiction of the Apostle’s understanding of the same holy spirit’s leading;

the one teaching him that he should go to Jerusalem, the other teaching that he should not go to Jerusalem. We are rather to understand that these prophets merely had from God a revelation to the effect that Paul would suffer violence in the city of the great King, and that on the strength of this information they themselves advised the Apostle not to go. But Paul, without disrespect, or in any degree impugning the truthfulness of their message, drew a different lesson from it—understood the Lord’s message differently. He saw that this meant a trial of his faith, his zeal, his perseverance, and that for him to yield to these suggestions, through fear, would have been an evidence of his lack of confidence in God, since the Lord had himself revealed to him that he should go up to Jerusalem.

It may be wondered why the Apostle would feel so urgently desirous of going to Jerusalem, knowing in advance what to expect.

Paul purposed in the Spirit, when he had passed through Macedonia and Achaia, to go to Jerusalem, saying, “After I have been there, I must also see Rome.”

Acts 19:21

We reply that he evidently realized that the work amongst the Gentiles was growing considerably, and that there was a feeling that there was a more or less clearly defined separation of interest and sympathy as between believing Gentiles and believing Jews, and that part of the Apostle’s object in this visit was to counteract this tendency and to help cement the Church as one. He was taking with him contributions from the various churches amongst the Gentiles to the poor of the larger congregation at Jerusalem, a thank-offering to the Lord for the good things which had been sent to them through their Jewish brethren. These offerings would attest the love and fellowship of the Gentile believers, and help to convince the brethren at Jerusalem that those abroad had one and the same spirit as those with whom they were better acquainted in Palestine. Then again, in Paul’s company were several Gentile representatives, as it were, of the grace of God amongst the Gentiles—noble brethren, whose meekness, patience, gentleness, long-suffering; brotherly kindness and various fruits of the spirit fully attested the work of grace amongst the Gentiles to be the same as amongst the Jews. Furthermore, the Apostle realized that some had, intentionally or unintentionally, misrepresented his position—claiming that he was an opponent of the Law and of the Jews. He was an opponent of neither; he loved the Jews as his brethren, and he loved the Law of Moses, realizing that it was just, perfect and good, and so great and wonderful a law that no fallen human being could possibly live up to all of its requisites, and that, therefore, whoever would be justified could not be justified by the Law, through obedience to it, but must be justified according to God’s arrangement—justified by faith. R. 3182

Paul at Jerusalem

When the Apostle Paul and his companions arrived at Jerusalem they were cordially received by the brethren—they had further manifestations of the same loving brotherhood specially noted in [previous gatherings]. The Church was called together that the Apostle might make a general and public report, and might turn over to the proper authorities the funds donated for their poor by the churches amongst the Gentiles. Apparently several of the Apostles still resided at Jerusalem, “James, our Lord’s brother,” being in some particular sense the leader or chief spokesman. Tradition tells us that the different apostles ultimately scattered in different directions, preaching the Gospel—Andrew to Cythia, Jude to Assyria, Thomas to Persia and India, Peter to Babylon and Rome. We infer, however, that they had remained at Jerusalem up to this time, since Paul seems to have been the leader in the work amongst the Gentiles; quite probably his report of the Lord’s blessing upon his efforts, in conjunction with the subsequent persecutions at Jerusalem, led the other apostles to go into the foreign fields of service. It was now but twelve years before the destruction of Jerusalem, and less than half that time before the beginning of the factionalism and anarchy which led up to that destruction. R. 3188



The date on which the Apostle Paul, after his interview with the elders of the Church at Ephesus at Miletus, resumed his journey toward Jerusalem, is calculated by those who have made a special study of the subject, to have been Monday, April 24, A.D. 58. He wished to reach Jerusalem about the time of the Passover, but apparently was somewhat delayed enroute, and it is supposed he did not reach there until May 17*— Pentecost day, that year. R. 2222

*There seems to be some debate regarding the date of Paul’s arrival to Jerusalem. In a later article, Br. Russell says that he arrived on Friday, May 27, A.D. 57. In both cases the dates agree that it is on or very near the Day of Pentecost.

**And when we had come to Jerusalem, the
brethren received us gladly.
Acts 21:17**

On the following day Paul went in with us to James, and all the elders were present. When he had greeted them, he told in detail those things which God had done among the Gentiles through his ministry. And when they heard it, they glorified the Lord.

– Acts 21:18-19 –

St. Paul, accompanied by Luke and Trophimus of Ephesus, Aristarchus of Thessalonica, Sopater of Berea, Secundus of Thessalonica, Gaius of Derbe, Timotheus of Lystra and Tychicus of Ephesus, arrived at Jerusalem Friday, May 27, A.D. 57*. He was returning from his third missionary tour amongst the Gentiles. He had been absent seven years. As we have seen, the Lord had permitted forewarnings to reach him that he might expect trouble—bonds and imprisonment—in the Holy City. However, this noble ambassador for Christ, undeterred, had now arrived. He and his associates, it will be remembered, brought with them money collections from the Churches in Asia Minor for the Church at Jerusalem, which, apparently, was in a measure of financial distress.

Their reception on their first day was apparently of a private and personal character, but on the next day, which was probably the Day of Pentecost (Acts 20:16), the Apostles and leading brethren came together to receive St. Paul and his company in a more formal manner. St. James, brother (or cousin) to our Lord, was apparently the recognized leader in the Jerusalem Church. No mention is made of the other Apostles. Probably some of them were absent, engaged in the work at other points. St. Paul recounted his missionary tour amongst the Gentiles and the Lord's blessing upon his ministries of the Truth, notwithstanding the tribulations permitted. We may presume also that at the same time the collections were turned over.

The brief record indicates that the brethren at Jerusalem were considerably perturbed by St. Paul's presence with them. Not merely did they fear for his personal safety, but also lest his coming might stir up persecution against them all. His activity and persistency made him well known to the Jews in the influential part of the world in which he had been laboring. The Jewish custom that the zealously religious come frequently to Jerusalem to celebrate religious festivals kept the Jerusalem Jews in touch with the religious interests of the whole world. St. James and his associates realized that in all probability Jews from Ephesus, Athens, Thessalonica, Berea, etc., might be present celebrating the Pentecostal feast. They knew that St. Paul's activities had already been reported, and that some, even of the Christian believers, were troubled at his reported teaching—that the Law was dead and that no one needed to pay any further attention to it. They urged St. Paul to contradict these partial misconceptions by going into the Temple and associating with some brethren who had taken the Nazarite Vow. They did not suggest that St. Paul take this Vow, but that he be present with these brethren, as a recognition of the propriety of what they did, and that he bear their expenses, which included not only the shaving of their heads and burning of the hair, but also the cost of sacrificing for them four animals each.

The scheme to have St. Paul appear as partially endorsing the Law seemed successful for several days, but when the seven days were nearly expired he was recognized by Jews who had come from Asia. They had seen the Apostle with the Greek, Trophimus, and jumped to the conclusion that the latter was one of the four men whose heads were shaved. This would have been a grievous offence from the Jewish standpoint. Only Jews were allowed within the sacred precincts of the Temple, outside of which was a Woman's Court and also a Court of the Gentiles. A stone fence separated these two apartments and constituted what the Apostle elsewhere alluded to as the "middle wall of partition." (Eph. 2:14.) R. 4484

***I want you to know, brethren, that the things which
happened to me have actually turned out for the
furtherance of the gospel, so that it has become evident
to the whole palace guard, and to all the rest, that my
chains are in Christ, and most of the brethren in the Lord,
having become confident by my chains, are much more
bold to speak the word without fear.***

Philippians 1:12-14

PAUL BOUND IN CHAINS

4

The apostles and brethren at Jerusalem were fully in sympathy with the Apostle Paul, though evidently their minds did not grasp so clearly as did his the complete breaking down of “the middle wall of partition” which previously had separated Jews from Gentiles, nor did they appreciate so fully as he that the Law was merely a pedagogue, a servant, to lead to Christ—to his school.

Practically the Jerusalem friends said to the Apostle: We are in full accord with you and the noble work

The law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith.

Galatians 3:24

which you have been prosecuting, and we perceive the Lord’s blessing upon it, and recognize the true Christian spirit in these brethren who have come with you, as representatives of the work of the Gospel amongst the Gentiles. However, you know how great is the opposition here; how bitter is the hatred of the Jews, and that they have heard of you. Jews who have come from Ephesus and Corinth and other places, evidently misunderstood some things that you taught there, or at least misrepresented your teachings. They have heard that you are an enemy of the Law, while we know that you believe that “the Law is just and holy and good,” and full of shadows of better things to come. But now, as an offset to their pernicious presentations, and as an object lesson to some of our own brethren who are not just strong along this line, and for the benefit also of some whom we are endeavoring to interest in the Gospel of Christ, we have something to propose to you, and to these brethren: it is that you go into the Temple, as a worshiper, and associate yourselves with some of the rites and ceremonies there in progress, that thus all may know that you are not disrespectful toward Moses or the Law or the Temple,—that their misapprehension and evil-speaking may be counteracted. Amongst us are three brethren who have made certain vows to the Lord, called the vows of the Nazarites, and we suggest that you show your sympathy with them and with the arrangements, acting as sponsor for them—paying for the sacrifices which, according to the Law, they must offer, etc. Thus you will be seen with them, and in performance of certain ceremonies, for about a week, in the court of the Temple known as the Court of the Women, and we hope that much good will result therefrom, and much misapprehension be abated.

The sacrifices which pointed to Christ, and which he fulfilled, were no longer proper, but these sacrifices which the Nazarites offered in connection with their vows did not typify Christ’s sacrifice, but rather the consecrations and devotions of the people, the antitypes of which will prevail during the Millennium. It was no sin, therefore, on the Apostle’s part to join in this procedure, and yet we incline to doubt the wisdom of the course pursued. We incline to believe that it was rather a temporizing acknowledgment of the dignity of the Temple and its services; whereas by this time the real Temple and the real service had been inaugurated;—for the Church itself is the antitypical Temple in which God has been present by his holy spirit since Pentecost. Although it is not distinctly so stated, we incline to believe that the Apostle Paul and all of his associates in this matter took a different view of it subsequently, as being a compromise which, without being sinful, was not advantageous, and reflected no special credit upon any connected with it. Perhaps such a lesson was needed by the apostles and the Church at Jerusalem, that they might learn to be the more courageous in their presentations of the truth—that they might be less fearful of the Jews, more bold in their presentations of Christ and the New Covenant arrangements in his blood—the better sacrifices, better vows. R. 3188

Then Paul took the men, and the next day, having been purified with them, entered the temple.

Acts 21:26

Alas! that grand, noble, bold Brother Paul should let slip so favorable an opportunity for testifying as he afterward did to the Galatians (5:2-6) that whosoever justified (purified) himself by the Law and circumcision, Christ would profit him nothing. Similar besetments surround us all today: how often many teaching brethren are tempted now, as were James and the Elders at Jerusalem, to keep back part of the truth in the endeavor to swell numbers and influence; how many are tempted as Paul was, to consent to unwholesome advice for the sake of peace, and because of love and respect for brethren. Instead, each should have been anxious only to please the “Head of the body,” and to declare the whole counsel of God. R. 972

Now when the seven days were almost ended, the Jews from Asia, seeing him in the temple, stirred up the whole crowd and laid hands on him, crying out, “Men of Israel, help! This is the man who teaches all men everywhere against the people, the law, and this place, and furthermore he also brought Greeks into the temple and has defiled this holy place.” (For they had previously seen Trophimus the Ephesian with him in the city, whom they supposed that Paul had brought into the temple.)

– Acts 21:27-29 –

It was while the Apostle and these brethren, who were really Jews by nature, but who saw beyond the types and symbols, and appreciated the antitypes, were engaged in the performance of the typical, or symbolical rites, that the Jews recognized Paul and one of his companions, and became furiously incensed, either believing or claiming to believe that the Apostle was attempting to do the very reverse of what he and the Jerusalem Church intended—that he was attempting to discredit the Law and dishonor the Temple by violating, and getting others to violate, its holy precincts. It was on this score that St. Paul’s life was in danger from the mob which speedily gathered at the cry of the Asiatic Jew that the Temple was being profaned.

And all the city was disturbed. And the people ran together, seized Paul, and dragged him out of the temple, and immediately the doors were shut.

Acts 21:30

As the excited shouts arose in the air a mob was quickly gathered; and as in Ephesus “the mob ran together, the greater part not knowing wherefore,” so here again the mob merely knew that some of its leaders were frantically indignant at the Apostle Paul, and believed that he should be killed. He was dragged out of the Temple, and immediately the great doors of the Beautiful Gate of the Temple were closed—that no rioting or bloodshed might occur within the sacred enclosure.

Now as they were seeking to kill him, news came to the commander of the garrison that all Jerusalem was in an uproar. He immediately took soldiers and centurions, and ran down to them. And when they saw the commander and the soldiers, they stopped beating Paul.

Acts 21:31-32

While the mob was beating the Apostle, seeking to kill him, a chief Captain or Colonel of the Roman soldiers in the Castle Antonio close by the Temple became aware of the tumult and hurried to the scene with a troop of soldiers. The beating ceased. The people, who had not learned to respect the majesty of the Roman Law, had become amenable to its military forces. R. 4485 and R. 3188

Then the commander came near and took him, and commanded him to be bound with two chains, and he asked who he was and what he had done.

– Acts 21:33 –

The chief captain, Claudius Lysias (Acts 23:26), caused the arrest of Paul and commanded that he be chained to two of the Roman soldiers—much after the manner in which now a culprit is sometimes handcuffed to an officer. Each Roman soldier carried, as a part of his outfit, an iron chain and a leather thong, for use in just such an emergency. While this handcuffing, which fulfilled the prophecy of Agabus, was in progress, Lysias made inquiry respecting the Apostle and the crime which had occasioned the commotion and indignation of these religious people. As a Gentile, he would naturally suppose that such a commotion amongst religious worshipers must have been incited by some atrociously evil conduct, some villainy or sacrilege, or that a disguised robber or assassin had been discovered. The multitude shouted out its various conjectures, and, it being impossible to judge the case at the time on such evidence, he commanded that Paul be brought into the prison.

Then as Paul was about to be led into the barracks, he said to the commander, “May I speak to you?” He replied, “Can you speak Greek? Are you not the Egyptian who some time ago stirred up a rebellion and led the four thousand assassins out into the wilderness?” But Paul said, “I am a Jew from Tarsus, in Cilicia, a citizen of no mean city, and I implore you, permit me to speak to the people.”

Acts 21:37-39

Lysias, the foreign officer, had probably a very imperfect knowledge of the language spoken by the Jews, which was either Hebrew or Syriac, his own language being the Greek. Knowing this, the Apostle spoke to him in the Greek language, and with such fluency as to cause the commander great surprise. From the account, he evidently had confounded the Apostle with an Egyptian leader of an insurrection of some time previous. Paul's request was that he be permitted to speak to the people, who were in such commotion and crying out, “Away with him!” He evidently thought that he might correct some false impressions and pacify the multitude. R. 3188 and R. 1559



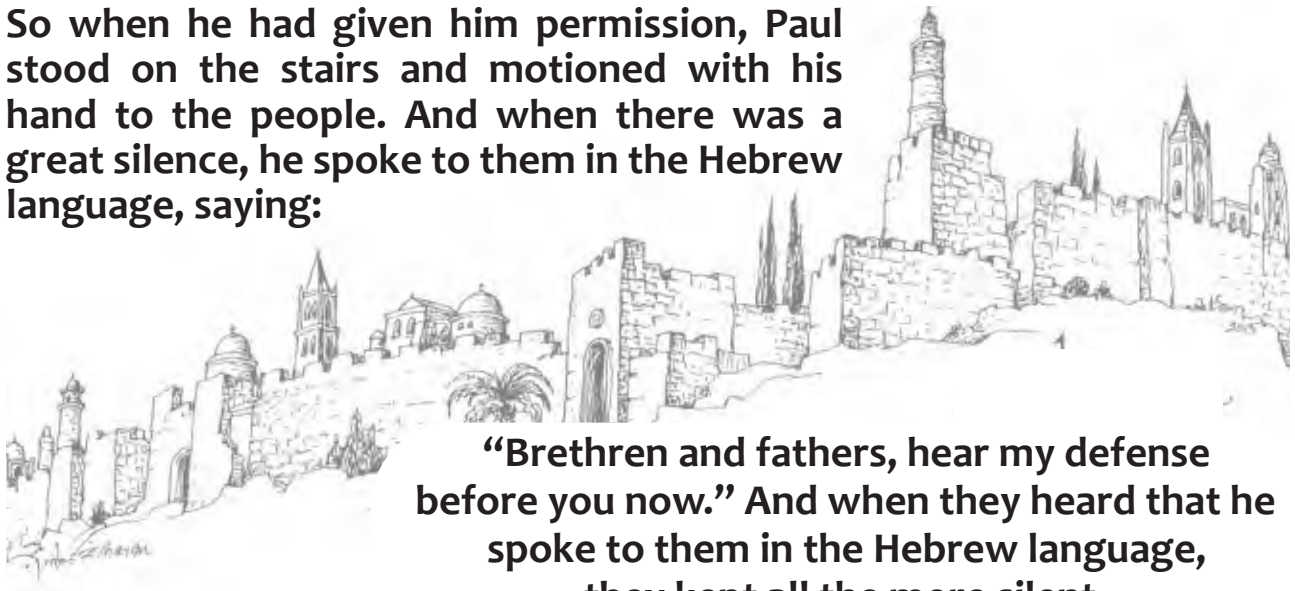
Paul arrested in Jerusalem

Lysias

Claudius Lysias—Roman tribune or army captain who helped Paul escape the Jews and appear before Felix. Acts 23:26 —*Holman Bible Dictionary*

Here is another illustration of the dauntless courage and holy enthusiasm of this noble soldier of the cross, a noteworthy instance of which is seen in his request to the chief captain to suffer him to speak to the people, —as soon as they had left off beating him. And the noble address which followed (chap. 22) was a model of skill, logic and eloquence; and a fair reflection of the worthy character of the Lord's chosen Apostle. May its inspiration fire our hearts to the furtherance of the Lord's work.

So when he had given him permission, Paul stood on the stairs and motioned with his hand to the people. And when there was a great silence, he spoke to them in the Hebrew language, saying:



“Brethren and fathers, hear my defense before you now.” And when they heard that he spoke to them in the Hebrew language, they kept all the more silent.

– Acts 21:40--22:2 –

In a few well-chosen words he told the people the story of his own experience: he had, like themselves, been an opposer of Jesus, a persecutor of all the followers of the Lord; how he had been miraculously interrupted in this work, and led to consider the claims of Jesus from the standpoint of the Word of God—the Law and the Prophets; how he had become fully convinced that Jesus is indeed “the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world,” the deliverer who should come out of Zion, and through whom a blessing should come to all that would receive his message. He then proceeded to tell them what should have brought joy to their hearts; viz., that the Lord sent him to be a messenger to the Gentiles, to tell them of the good tidings, that they also might participate, as well as the Jews. But their hearts being evil and selfish, this mention of divine favor and mercy going to others incensed them; they

heard the Apostle in peace and with profound attention up to this point, and then all their prejudices seemed to be aroused with the thought that this man claimed and taught that Gentiles could have favor with God equal to that bestowed upon the Jews. They cried out against him in much the same language that they had used against the Lord, “Away with such a fellow from the earth, for it is not fit that he should live;” and while they thus cried out and threw dust in the air, and gesticulated with their arms, and threw their garments about, they made a wild, weird picture. The Roman commander, not understanding the Hebrew language, had not been able to follow the Apostle’s discourse, and considering it evident that after he had had so quiet and orderly a hearing for a time, and now there was such a wild burst of indignation at what he said, it implied something very deep and treacherous and evil in the man, else his words would not thus arouse the passions and malice of religious people. He, therefore, ordered the Apostle to be scourged to make him tell a true story of his differences with the Jews. R. 3189

And they listened to him until this word, and then they raised their voices and said, “Away with such a fellow from the earth, for he is not fit to live!” Then, as they cried out and tore off their clothes and threw dust into the air, the commander ordered him to be brought into the barracks, and said that he should be examined under scourging, so that he might know why they shouted so against him.

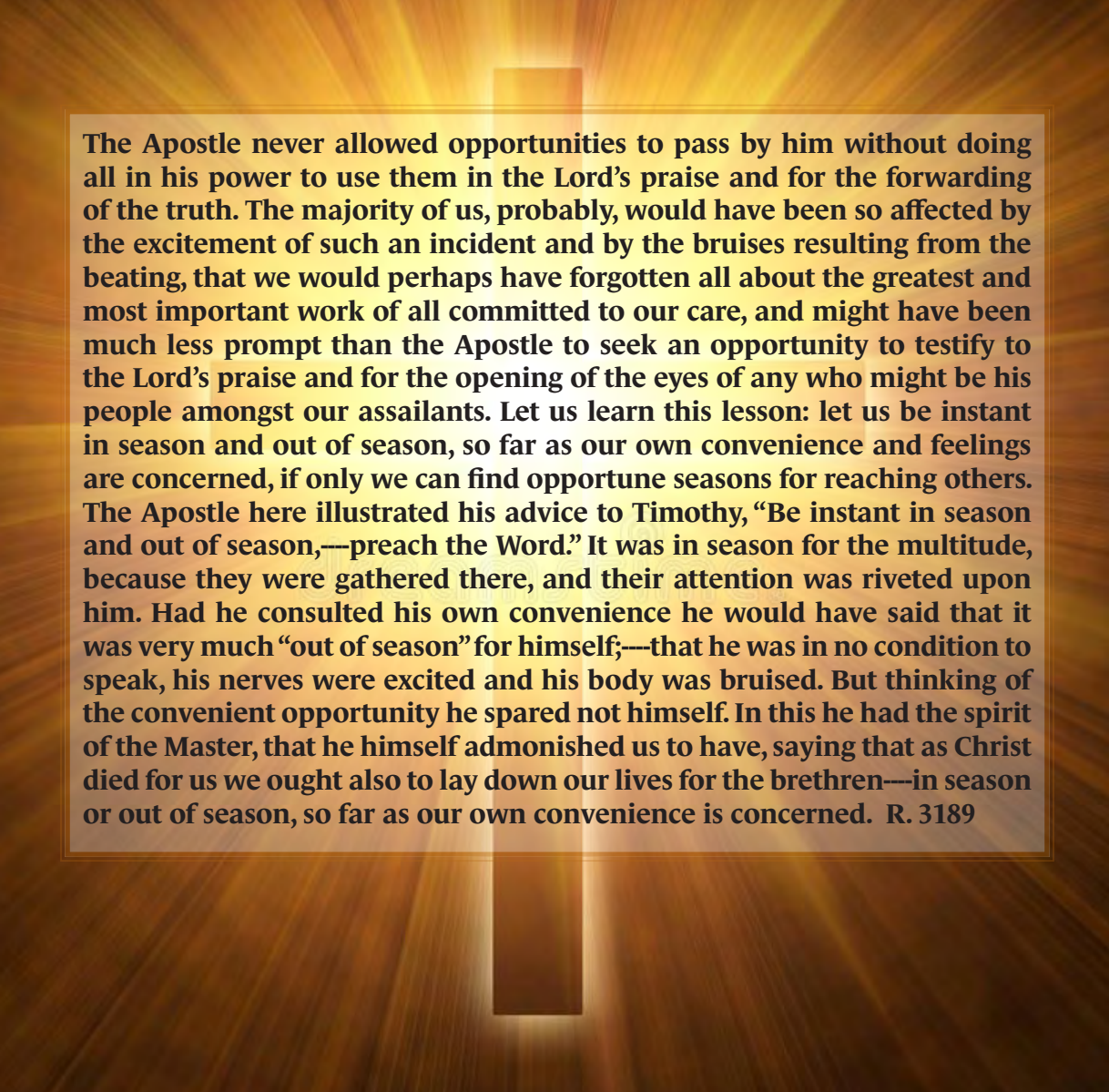
Acts 22:22-24

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For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

– 2 Corinthians 4:6 –

Had the Apostle been either a cold or a lukewarm Christian and servant of the Lord, or one of the “fearful and unbelieving” kind, he might have attended the [synagogues] and for years kept his “light under a bushel;” and in such an event it probably would shortly have become extinguished, according to the divine rule; and he would have lost his place as a servant of the gospel and some one else who had a sufficiency of faith, love and zeal would have been permitted to do the work. But the Apostle never kept his light under a bushel, but lifted it high that all might see the glorious light of the goodness of God as it shines in the face of Jesus Christ our Lord, which had shone into his heart. He continually showed forth “the praises of him who had called him out of darkness into his marvelous light.” R. 2192



The Apostle never allowed opportunities to pass by him without doing all in his power to use them in the Lord's praise and for the forwarding of the truth. The majority of us, probably, would have been so affected by the excitement of such an incident and by the bruises resulting from the beating, that we would perhaps have forgotten all about the greatest and most important work of all committed to our care, and might have been much less prompt than the Apostle to seek an opportunity to testify to the Lord's praise and for the opening of the eyes of any who might be his people amongst our assailants. Let us learn this lesson: let us be instant in season and out of season, so far as our own convenience and feelings are concerned, if only we can find opportune seasons for reaching others. The Apostle here illustrated his advice to Timothy, “Be instant in season and out of season,—preach the Word.” It was in season for the multitude, because they were gathered there, and their attention was riveted upon him. Had he consulted his own convenience he would have said that it was very much “out of season” for himself;—that he was in no condition to speak, his nerves were excited and his body was bruised. But thinking of the convenient opportunity he spared not himself. In this he had the spirit of the Master, that he himself admonished us to have, saying that as Christ died for us we ought also to lay down our lives for the brethren—in season or out of season, so far as our own convenience is concerned. R. 3189

This is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.

– John 3:19 –

[Today] a stranger or worldly person, hearing some sectarian Christian animadvert against some one who has been preaching the true gospel of the Lord Jesus, would be inclined to suppose that the message must contain something very vicious, very terrible indeed, else it would not so arouse those who have outwardly so much “form of godliness.” And if, as in the case of the Roman officer, an audience be granted, and the truth be presented in their hearing, they cannot understand it; — that is to say, “the world by wisdom knows not God,” knows little of his plan, understands little of the language of his Word—it is a different language from that to which they are accustomed. And when, after a presentation of the truth, they find bitter opposition and invective against it on the part of religious teachers—modern scribes and Pharisees and doctors of divinity—we must not be surprised if they are the more inclined to side with those who represent popular theology—so-called “orthodoxy,” and assume that the true gospel, because believed and taught by so few and opposed by so many of influence, must necessarily be something very evil.

Nevertheless, it is for us to take the Apostle for our guide, and to be faithful in the use of every opportunity to let the light shine forth, even though it arouse the bitter opposition and persecution and prejudice of darkness. The darkness hateth the light, because it is reprov'd thereby, is our Lord's explanation. Nothing seemed so much to incite the scribes and Pharisees of eighteen centuries ago as the reasonableness of the true gospel. The common people heard it gladly, unless intimidated by their religious rulers, and led to doubt those who had been teaching them to the contrary. Hence, the rulers were incensed against the gospellers: “They were grieved because they [the apostles] taught the people.” They held, on the contrary, that only the scribes and Pharisees, the doctors and leaders, should be taught, and that the people should simply follow them blindly, and without requiring a reason and a “Thus saith the Lord” for their faith. R. 4485

While not condemning the Jews harshly for their selfish, bitter feeling of opposition to the Gentiles, let us notice how much injury this bitterness and selfishness worked to the Jews themselves. Had it not been for this wrong spirit doubtless many others of that time might have been quite ready to hear the Gospel. The lesson to us, therefore, should be to put away meanness, selfishness, enmities, bitterness, out of our hearts, out of our minds, out of our conduct and words; and instead to put on the spirit of our Lord Jesus Christ—a spirit of meekness, gentleness, patience, long-suffering, brotherly kindness, love. R. 4485

For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed. But he who does the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God.

John 3:20-21

**23 Then, as they cried out and tore off their clothes and threw dust into the air,
24 the commander ordered him to be brought into the barracks, and said that he should be examined under scourging, so that he might know why they shouted so against him.**

25 And as they bound him with thongs, Paul said to the centurion who stood by, “Is it lawful for you to scourge a man who is a Roman, and uncondemned?”

26 When the centurion heard that, he went and told the commander, saying, “Take care what you do, for this man is a Roman.”

27 Then the commander came and said to him, “Tell me, are you a Roman?” He said, “Yes.”

28 The commander answered, “With a large sum I obtained this citizenship.” And Paul said, “But I was born a citizen.” Acts 22:23-28

Then immediately those who were about to examine him withdrew from him, and the commander was also afraid after he found out that he was a Roman, and because he had bound him.

– Acts 22:29 –

As followers of Jesus, we, like Him, resign our rights rather than try to get them. So we are different from others. We have a knowledge of God's Plan for the forgiveness of sin. We are suffering as members of the Body of Christ, filling up that which was left behind of the sufferings of our Head, and we are to rejoice in the privilege of doing this. But if we were to render evil for evil and to exact justice from everybody, we would be losing our privilege of sacrificing for righteousness' sake. Jesus knew that it was the Father's will that He should be a Sin-Offering, that He should suffer “the Just for the unjust.” And He invites us to walk with Him in this way, to be sharers of His sufferings, and thus be sharers in His glory in the Kingdom. It behooves each of the Lord's followers therefore to see that he does not render evil for evil.

This does not mean that it would not be proper under some circumstances to appeal for justice to the law, in whatever country we might be living; but it means that when the law has decided the matter against us we should submit. We see that in our Lord's case, when He was unjustly sentenced, He inquired respecting the justice of the matter. He put the matter to the Court. This was not resistance. In the case of St. Paul, we remember that in [one] instance, the Apostle was about to be beaten unjustly; and as they were binding him he said to a centurion standing by, “Is it lawful for you to scourge a man who is a Roman, and uncondemned?” This immediately brought the Apostle release from his distressing circumstances. On another occasion, when he was beaten very sorely, we have no knowledge that he endeavored to prevent the injustice. He merely accepted it as of the Lord's permission. We are not to resist evil, in the sense of trying to retaliate and get revenge for injuries done us. Rather let the evil be repeated. This was the Master's course; and it is a part of our covenant with the Lord to share in the persecution and sufferings of our Head, to endure opposition and injustice for the Truth's sake, for Christ's sake. R. 5897

However unjustly and however much we realize that trials and difficulties could not come to us without the Lord's permission, nevertheless we are at liberty to use any legitimate means for our own assistance and deliverance—even as St. Paul took advantage of his Roman citizenship. God had provided him in advance with that measure of protection and it would have been culpable negligence on his part not to have used it and to have expected the Lord to deliver him in some miraculous manner. R. 4485

The Apostle was not ashamed of his sufferings; for he realized that they were endured for Christ's sake. Any individual should feel deeply pained at a public arrest and imprisonment as a felon, as a violator of the law. But when these things are experienced because of faithfulness to the Lord, because of following in His footsteps, such may well rejoice in the ignominy, rejoice in the things which otherwise would be shameful and detestable.

If therefore, in the Lord's providence, arrest or imprisonment or scourging should come to any who read this article, and they can directly or indirectly trace their tribulation to faithfulness to the Lord and to His Truth, let them not be ashamed. Let them glorify God on this behalf, rejoicing that they are accounted worthy to suffer for the name of Christ, and remembering that even thus also was it with our Lord Jesus Himself. He was placed under arrest; He was bound; He was scourged; He was publicly insulted; He was even crucified as a blasphemer against God. —1 Peter 4:16.

REST IN GOD'S WILL

How sweet to feel God's will is best,
And in this precious thought to rest;
To know, whatever may betide,
'Tis best, for He is by our side!

Oh, how it helps us bear the pain,
Oh, how it makes us strong again!
The cold and gloom of darkest night
It fills with warmth and heavenly light!

To those who take His will as best
He grants His perfect peace and rest,
And ever gives them day by day
His grace sufficient on the way.

Then why should hearts grow weak or faint?
Why should we ever make complaint?
Let us press on with upturned face,
And follow where we cannot trace!

— G. W. SEIBERT

How often we find in the pages of history that violence and unreason have been manifested in the name of religion and for the defense of various sects! How utterly foreign to all such conduct is what St. Paul designates "the spirit of a sound mind" —the spirit of reason, justice—not to mention the spirit of generosity, loving-kindness and tender mercy! Let every instance of religious bigotry and fanatical violence speak to our hearts a lesson in the opposite direction, and fix in us resolutions that by the grace of God we will never be thus foolish, thus wicked, but contrariwise will become the more gentle, the more kind, the more Christ-like, as the days go by. R. 5942

**According to my earnest expectation and hope that in nothing
I shall be ashamed, but with all boldness, as always, so now also
Christ will be magnified in my body, whether by life or by death.
Philippians 1:20**

Paul Before the Sanhedrin

The next day, because he wanted to know for certain why he was accused by the Jews, he released him from his bonds, and commanded the chief priests and all their council to appear, and brought Paul down and set him before them.

– Acts 22:30 –

The day after the riot and St. Paul's rescue by the soldiers the Roman Commandant, Lysias, perplexed, called together the Jewish Sanhedrin, that they might pass upon Paul's case; for by this time he had recognized that the point of dispute was a religious one, and that his only duty was to preserve peace. Thus Paul was afforded another opportunity to witness the Gospel to the Jews—to their most learned body, to their most influential Court of Seventy. Perhaps the Apostle began to realize by this time that his trying experiences were furnishing him with superior opportunities as a herald of the Gospel. Looking back with the eye of faith we can realize that this is always so; that the Lord is, as from the first, supervising his own work. But only in proportion as we know what the Lord's work is, can we have and use the eye of faith. We must see that the Divine program is not to attempt the conversion of the world at the present time, but to leave that for the future, to be accomplished by Christ's Millennial Kingdom. We must see that his work during the present age is merely that of selecting or electing the Church, to be his Bride-Consort in his Kingdom—his associate in the great work which will then be accomplished for the world in general. R. 4485



Paul before the Chief Priests

Then Paul, looking earnestly at the council, said, “Men and brethren, I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day.” And the high priest Ananias commanded those who stood by him to strike him on the mouth.

– Acts 23:1-2 –

As St. Paul realized the opportunity granted him of addressing the leaders of his nation, he sought to make wise use of it. Hence the earnestness of his countenance. “Looking steadfastly” at his audience, he began by reminding them of his faithfulness as a Jew. He had been ever a model citizen, never lawless. He addressed the council as “Brethren,” thus putting himself on an equality with them, both in respect to religious zeal and general learning. Indeed, it is quite generally supposed that at the time of the stoning of Stephen, Paul, then Saul of Tarsus, was a member of the Sanhedrin.

The address which St. Paul had planned to deliver was interrupted by the High Priest’s saying, “Smite him on the mouth!” This was a special mark of indignity and a protest against the words uttered. Our Lord declares, “The darkness hateth the light.” It is not unfair to assume that the High Priest felt his own course in life specially condemned by St. Paul’s words. Josephus charges Ananias with having been a hypocritical grafter of the baser sort, but so crafty that the public in general esteemed him. Suddenly checked in his speech the Apostle shouted,

**“God will strike you, you whitewashed wall! For
you sit to judge me according to the law, and do you command me to
be struck contrary to the law?”**

Acts 23:3

The prophecy came true. Within two years Ananias was deposed, within six years he met a horrible death, his own son being associated with his assassins, who drew him from his hiding place in a sewer and slew him.

The term “**whited wall**” was applied to ordinary graves which were covered with a stone slab bearing the inscription. These were whitewashed frequently, so as to be easily discernible, lest any traveler should tread upon them, and, according to Jewish ritual, be defiled. The pure, glistening white of the stone was beautiful, but beneath was corruption. The strength of the symbol as representing hypocrisy is manifest. Some who heard the Apostle replied,

Do you revile God’s high priest?

Acts 23:4

**Then Paul said, “I did not know,
brethren, that he was the high priest,
for it is written, ‘You shall not speak
evil of a ruler of your people.’ ”**

Acts. 23:5

It will be remembered that the Apostle never fully recovered his eyesight after being struck blind on the way to Damascus. Imperfect vision as a “thorn in the flesh” the Lord refused to relieve him of, but assured him that in compensation he should have the more of Divine grace, which answer to his

prayer the Apostle gladly accepted. It is possible, therefore, that he did not discern the High Priest, or that he did not know that the indignity was suggested by him. It is claimed by some that Ananias had usurped his office and hence the Apostle’s words may have meant that he did not recognize that the true High Priest was present. The latter view is implied by the fact that St. Paul did not apologize for his words, but merely showed that he fully recognized the Divine Law that rulers should not be slandered. R. 4486

But when Paul perceived that one part were Sadducees and the other Pharisees, he cried out in the council, “Men and brethren, I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee. Concerning the hope and resurrection of the dead I am being judged!”

– Acts 23:6 –

The Apostle well knew that the Sanhedrin was about equally divided between the ultra-orthodox, holiness-professing Pharisees and the agnostic and higher-critical Sadducees, who numbered amongst them many of the most prominent Jews, including priests. The effect of his shout was instantaneous. The Pharisees took his part as one who believed in some respects as they did, although they could not endorse all of his teachings. As between the infidel Sadducees and an out-of-the-way Pharisee they promptly espoused the cause of the latter. A tumult ensued, some seeking to take his life and others to protect it. Again Caesar’s soldiers needed to intervene between warring factions of the people of God. How sad a scene! How pitiable that those who possess much advantage every way as Jews under Divine instruction should so sadly neglect the lessons of the Divine Law in respect to justice and each other’s rights, not to mention the instruction, “Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself!” How pitiable it is that the same is sometimes true amongst Christians possessed of still higher appreciation of the Divine standards and under covenant vows to lay down their lives for the brethren, and indeed exhorted that they cannot win the prize they seek unless they reach the point of loving their enemies!

Now when there arose a great dissension, the commander, fearing lest Paul might be pulled to pieces by them, commanded the soldiers to go down and take him by force from among them, and bring him into the barracks.

Acts 23:10

Back at the castle in safety the Apostle was doubtless wondering in what manner the Lord had been glorified by his latest experience. Often it is thus with ourselves. But where we cannot trace the Lord’s providences and see the outcome we have all the better opportunity for experiencing the faith which can firmly trust him, come what may. R. 4486

Lessons for us are God’s providential care, and how this operates towards his faithful ones, such as the Apostle and all who have “made a covenant with him by sacrifice.” The incident shows how God prefers to use natural means rather than supernatural agencies, and how all should be on the alert to serve the Lord’s cause at any moment and every moment. God’s purposes will be accomplished, but happy is the man or woman or boy or girl accounted worthy of the privilege of any service to the Lord or to the least of his disciples. Let us, then, be continually on the lookout, in an inquiring attitude of mind, desirous of knowing the mind of the Lord in every matter. As for the Apostle, he doubtless learned a lesson which we all may profitably consider; namely, that while having full confidence in the Divine will, it is ours to reasonably and properly protect our own lives and interests, as well as those of others. R. 4486

The following night the Lord stood by him and said, “Be of good cheer, Paul, for as you have testified for Me in Jerusalem, so you must also bear witness at Rome.”

– Acts 23:11 –

How much the Apostle must have felt strengthened by this vision, and assurance of divine care, we can well imagine. Nevertheless, the Lord was as truly with him and as fully caring for his interests as on other occasions, when no vision attested the fact: and he is with us, his followers of today, in like manner; and doubtless the visions granted to the Apostle were destined of the Lord to be an encouragement for “all who should believe on him through their word.” The Apostle’s visions serve us as they served him—assuring us also that the Lord is with his people, and is able to care for and protect and guide and bless our efforts today, as eighteen centuries ago. But to have the Lord thus with him and to feel good cheer in the Lord’s presence implied the fullest sincerity and zeal on the part of the Apostle to do and to be all that would please the Master; and similarly we can enjoy his presence and appropriate to ourselves the message, “Be of good cheer,” only in proportion as our hearts can realize that, however imperfect our labors for the truth and for the brethren, they are done “as unto the Lord” and to the best of our ability.

Although the Lord promised Paul that, as he had been faithful in testifying of him at Jerusalem, he must also preach the Gospel at Rome, nevertheless this latter prediction was long deferred of realization. It was over two years before he reached Rome, and then as a prisoner. We also need certain lessons of faith. We not only need to believe that the Lord is with us, and has the care of our affairs, but have need of patience and perseverance in faith and hope and love; and



The Apostle Paul in prison

ofttimes with us, as with the Apostle, the Lord defers for a long time to complete our deliverance from adverse conditions—defers for a long time the opening of the desired door of opportunity in his service. We are to remember his wisdom as well as his love and power, and to rest contentedly therein after doing all within our power. In Paul’s case it may be that conditions at Rome would be more favorable to his ministry later than they were at this time. It may be also that the Lord had a work for him to do in the interim as a prisoner at Caesarea,—amongst the Romans. And so in our affairs: we are to look for the opportunities of service as they come, and leave to our Lord the supervision of our life as a whole. R. 3190

The Lord stood with me and strengthened me, so that the message might be preached fully through me, and that all the Gentiles might hear.

2 Timothy 4:17

When it was day, some of the Jews banded together and bound themselves under an oath, saying that they would neither eat nor drink till they had killed Paul. Now there were more than forty who had formed this conspiracy. They came to the chief priests and elders, and said, “We have bound ourselves under a great oath that we will eat nothing until we have killed Paul.

– Acts 23:12-14 –

The Jews must have realized that their case against the Apostle would appear very poorly in the eyes of the Roman commander, seeing that they were doing the rioting on both occasions, that the Apostle was the more sedate and willing to reason his cause, and that some of those supposed to be his accusers had turned to his defense. Meantime the sympathy of the Pharisees for Paul doubtless cooled off. At all events, during that night more than forty of the deluded religious enthusiasts bound themselves to God with a curse that they would kill Paul. Such an anathema was in effect, “May the divine curse be upon us if we do not effect the death of this man, whom we believe to be an enemy of God and of our religion, and whom we believe it to be our duty to destroy.”

They laid a plot, as follows: They would have the high priest send word to the Roman commander that the Sanhedrin desired a fresh examination of the prisoner on some other charges, the intention being that while the soldiers would be bringing him these forty men would assault and risk their lives to assassinate Paul. The matter was evidently not kept as secretly as they supposed, for one of Paul's relatives learned the particulars. Indeed, we know that it is impossible to keep anything from God, and that the most secret engagements are, therefore, powerless to do injury to the Lord's people. Nevertheless, when the information reached the Apostle he did not say to himself, God knows all about this matter and will take care of me, and, therefore, I have nothing to do in respect to it. On the contrary, he arranged matters so far as he could to defeat the plot—just as though the entire responsibility for his preservation rested upon himself. There is a lesson in this which many of God's dear people need to learn, viz., that each of the Lord's followers is a colaborer with the Lord in every good work. It is our duty to do all that we know how to do in proper self-defense and in protection of one another from the wiles of the Adversary and in the defense of the cause we serve; but, having done all in our power, having exercised all the wisdom and prudence we can command, we are to rest our hearts in the knowledge that the Lord will take care of all that is beyond our power to control, so that all things shall work together for good to them that love God. R. 3190

**So when Paul's sister's son heard of their ambush, he went and entered the barracks and told Paul. Then Paul called one of the centurions to him and said, “Take this young man to the commander, for he has something to tell him.” So he took him and brought him to the commander and said, “Paul the prisoner called me to him and asked me to bring this young man to you. He has something to say to you.” Then the commander took him by the hand, went aside, and asked privately, “What is it that you have to tell me?” And he said, “The Jews have agreed to ask that you bring Paul down to the council tomorrow, as though they were going to inquire more fully about him. “But do not yield to them, for more than forty of them lie in wait for him, men who have bound themselves by an oath that they will neither eat nor drink till they have killed him, and now they are ready, waiting for the promise from you.” So the commander let the young man depart, and commanded him,
“Tell no one that you have revealed these things to me.”**

Acts 23:16-22

And he called for two centurions, saying, “Prepare two hundred soldiers, seventy horsemen, and two hundred spearmen to go to Caesarea at the third hour of the night, and provide mounts to set Paul on, and bring him safely to Felix the governor.”

– Acts 23:23 –

Perceiving that he was in conflict with at least one-half of the influential of Jewry, the commandant concluded that the wisest course for him to pursue would be to put his prisoner under the protection of Felix, the Roman Governor, at Caesarea. Accordingly, at 9 o'clock that very night, two hundred infantry, two hundred spearmen and seventy horsemen took the Apostle to new quarters, where as an ambassador in bonds he would have fresh opportunity for representing his great Master.

God prefers to use natural means rather than supernatural agencies; and that all of His children should be on the alert to serve His Cause at any and every moment. God's purposes will be accomplished. But happy is he who is accounted worthy of the privilege of any service to the Lord or to the least of His brethren. Let us, then, be continually on the lookout, in an inquiring attitude of mind, desirous of knowing the mind of the Lord in every matter. As for the Apostle, doubtless he learned a lesson which we might all profitably consider; namely, that while having full confidence in the Divine will, it is ours to protect reasonably and properly our lives and interests as well as those of others. R. 5953

He wrote a letter in the following manner:

Claudius Lysias,

To the most excellent governor Felix:

Greetings.

This man was seized by the Jews and was about to be killed by them. Coming with the troops I rescued him, having learned that he was a Roman. And when

I wanted to know the reason they accused him, I brought him before their council. I found out that he was accused concerning questions of their law, but had nothing charged against him deserving of death or chains. And when it was told me that the Jews lay in wait for the man, I sent him immediately to you, and also commanded his accusers to state before you the charges against him.

Farewell.

Acts 23:25-30

Paul Sent to Felix

When they came to Caesarea and had delivered the letter to the governor, they also presented Paul to him. And when the governor had read it, he asked what province he was from. And when he understood that he was from Cilicia, he said, “I will hear you when your accusers also have come.” And he commanded him to be kept in Herod’s Praetorium.

Acts 23:33-35

Felix

The procurator of Judea at the time Paul the apostle visited Jerusalem for the last time and was arrested there. Antonius Felix became procurator of Judea in A.D. 52, succeeding Cumanus. He remained in office until A.D. 60, when the emperor Nero recalled him. He is depicted in Acts as a man who listened with interest to Paul’s defense but failed to make any decision with regard to the case or with regard to the personal implications of Paul’s message. Rather he hoped Paul would pay him a bribe (Acts 24:26). Contemporary historians Tacitus and Josephus paint Felix as a brutal, incompetent politician who was finally replaced. —*Holman Bible Dictionary*

Felix was notoriously avaricious, cruel and licentious, and who was one of the most corrupt and oppressive governors ever despatched from Rome to Judea. —*Josephus*



Site of Herod's Palace and Praetorium in Caesarea

Felix, the Roman governor, received St. Paul a prisoner. His enemies, the high priest and other Jewish rulers, hastened from Jerusalem to Caesarea, thirsting for his blood. They brought with them a Roman lawyer, Tertullus. His knowledge of Roman usage and his skill as a pleader would, they hoped, enable them to prove that St. Paul was a dangerous character—a sort of anarchist. Felix was the judge. There were no jurors. Tertullus made his charges and confirmed them by witnesses from Jerusalem.

Shrewdly the Roman attorney complimented the governor along the lines of his hitherto efficiency in preserving the peace and putting down every form of insurrection and maintaining quiet and order. This very completely paved the way for the lawyer's request that the governor should continue this praiseworthy course and rid the land of an obnoxious trouble-maker—the Apostle. Witnesses were produced who testified respecting the first tumult in the temple and also respecting the one of the following day in which the Sanhedrin became divided into two parts, and a general uproar ensued. The Apostle was credited with being a ringleader of a sect called Nazarenes, and it was claimed that he made trouble the whole world over amongst both Jews and Greeks.

This was his case. He charged that the prisoner was guilty of sacrilege—that he had defiled the temple, and the inference was deducible that he had caused rioting within the holy sanctuary. The witnesses were produced to prove that these charges were true.

The governor motioned to the Apostle that he was at liberty to answer the charges. St. Paul opened his defense by remarking that he was gratified that his judge had been on the bench for some time and was well acquainted with Jewish customs; that he would understand, therefore, what a novice could not, why the Apostle had come to Jerusalem to worship after the manner of the Jews, to celebrate one of their religious festivals. He came not to raise an insurrection, but to worship, and no witness had testified, nor was it true, that he was found in the temple even disputing or gathering a crowd; neither did he do these things in the synagogues, nor anywhere; neither could his enemies prove the things of which they accused him. This, his answer, was logical and complete. Still the governor could not understand why there should be such a commotion under the circumstances; hence it was necessary for the Apostle to explain that the Jews had an antipathy against him, because of his different belief and not because of any wrongdoing.

**But this I confess to you, that according to the Way which they
call a sect, so I worship the God of my fathers, believing all things which
are written in the Law and in the Prophets.**

Acts 24:14

St. Paul avowed that he had experienced no change in his Jewish belief—that he still believed the teachings of the Law and the writings of the prophets; and that he still held to the fundamental Jewish doctrine of the necessity of a resurrection of the dead, and that thereby God's blessing should ultimately come to Israel and through Israel to all the families of the earth. And, continued the Apostle,

**I have hope in God, which they themselves also accept, that
there will be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and the unjust.
This being so, I myself always strive to have a conscience without
offense toward God and men.**

Acts 24:15-16

This was a grand testimony. R. 4499

You will be brought before governors and kings for My sake, as a testimony to them and to the Gentiles. But when they deliver you up, do not worry about how or what you should speak, for it will be given to you in that hour what you should speak.

– Matthew 10:18-19 –

Our Lord foretold that some of his disciples would stand before kings and princes, but that they should not be dismayed, for he would stand by them to give them aid. How literally this was fulfilled in St. Paul's case! How evidently the Lord stood by him and gave him the suitable words! He proceeded to explain that he brought alms to his nation, the offerings of Gentiles, who had heard his message of the grace of God. Certain Jews from Asia found him purified in the temple, but without cry or tumult. Those Jews should have been brought as witnesses, or those who were making the charges against him should have been specific—should have said what he did tumultuously in the temple, or what wrongdoing they found in him on the day following the mob, when before the Sanhedrin.

Or else let those who are here themselves say if they found any wrongdoing in me while I stood before the council, unless it is for this one statement which I cried out, standing among them, 'Concerning the resurrection of the dead I am being judged by you this day.'

Acts 24:20-21

Surely the governor could not think that in this there was anything akin to rioting or anarchy. The prisoner had been quite in the right, while those accusing him had been in the wrong. R. 4499

The Apostle's testimony shows us that in all of his preaching he laid special stress upon the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead—the just and the unjust. Alas, that in our day this doctrine has been measurably lost sight of. Few Christians ever think of the resurrection. Few have ever heard a sermon on that subject. Why is this? We reply that it is because a great error has come in amongst Christian people in respect to the condition of the dead. We prefer to go back to the words of Jesus and the Apostles and to note that, according to their teachings, the dead are really dead and that their only hope is, as the Apostle expresses it, a resurrection hope, "the hope of the resurrection of the dead, both of the just and of the unjust." It is not the resurrection of the body that the Bible teaches, but a resurrection of the soul, and that "God will give it a body" at the time of the awakening. (I Cor. 15:38.) We could wish that all Christian people would arouse themselves to a fresh study of the Scriptures: that the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead should be given its proper place. R. 4499

So he commanded the centurion to keep Paul and to let him have liberty, and told him not to forbid any of his friends to provide for or visit him.

– Acts 24:23 –

Can we wonder that Felix, perverse though he was, himself felt disinclined to yield so noble a prisoner to death, even to accommodate and please the flattering attorney and the influential high priest, whose favor he would undoubtedly prefer to hold? The record leads us additionally to infer that Felix considered that in Paul he had a good opportunity for receiving a bribe for the performance of justice; for in his narrative the Apostle proceeded to show that so far from seeking to do injury to his fellow-creatures, he had brought with him from foreign cities large sums of money. Felix thus perceived that the prisoner, who had liberal education and talent and Roman citizenship, had friends not only in Jerusalem, but abroad. He doubtless concluded that they would be quite willing to make him a handsome present to effect the Apostle's release. R. 3195

**He also hoped that money would be given him by Paul, that he might release him.
Therefore he sent for him more often and conversed with him.**

Acts 24:26

Now as he reasoned about righteousness, self-control, and the judgment to come, Felix was afraid and answered, "Go away for now. When I have a convenient time I will call for you."

– Acts 24:25 –

Apparently Felix was considerably interested in his prisoner, and mentioned him to his wife, a Jewess: he was called before them, that they might know further respecting this new teaching. The Apostle proceeded to show that righteousness was the reasonable requirement of the divine Law, and that the acceptance of God's favor in Christ led to self-restraint and opposition to natural tendencies, and that there is a judgment day to come, in the which all deflections from righteousness will be rewarded with stripes proportionate to knowledge. The governor trembled; his own wicked life and licentious course stood out before his mental gaze, and he realized that, according to the standards presented, he would have many stripes to bear in the future. His wife, Drusilla, was really the wife of King Azizus; but her conscience, evidently more seared than his, seems not to have been in the least agitated. Felix suggested that at a more convenient season he would hear further of the gospel; but we doubt if ever he called for any further explanations—he already had enough, more than he was willing to obey. His course is one too frequently imitated since. Many who tremble as they think of their sins, hope that a more convenient time for breaking off may come to them; but a convenient season for abandoning sin—when sin indulged in our members will make no objection to being ousted—will never come. He who would become a follower of the Lord Jesus, must courageously accept of Christ, the power divine for the breaking of the shackles of his slavery to sin—must first love the liberty wherewith Christ alone can make us free. Those who have not this craving will remain slaves of sin until the glorious Millennial morning shall break, until after the completion of the election Church of "overcomers"—until the dawning of the Millennial morning, when the overcomers, with Christ at their head, shall break all the shackles of sin and set all prisoners free. R. 3195

I will fear no evil, for you are with me.

– Psalm 23:4 –

Paul improved his opportunity when brought before Felix, the governor—who was notoriously avaricious, cruel and licentious, and who, Josephus says, was one of the most corrupt and oppressive governors ever despatched from Rome to Judea—to reason of righteousness, self-control and judgment to come. And his reasoning was such as commended itself to the hardened sinner before him.

The courage of the Apostle in holding up the truth before one who so largely had to do with the decision of his own case is remarkable and commendable. It is in full agreement with the declaration of this verse. Those who are on the Lord's side, and who, therefore, have the Lord on their side, in all of life's affairs, need fear no evil. This absence of fear, however, should not in us, any more than in the Apostle, lead to bravado or discourteous manner or language. The divine rule is, as expressed by the Apostle, that we should speak the truth in love. —Eph. 4:15.

A good lesson may be learned from the Apostle's method of presenting the truth to Felix. He did not attack the governor's character, nor berate him for his sins. He did better than this. Ignoring the individual entirely, he lifted the mirror of the perfect law of love and liberty and righteousness before the governor, and let him see for himself how far short he came of the perfect standard which alone God can approve. Would that all of God's children could learn thus to reprove sin—by letting the light of truth and the corroboration of the same in their own conduct shine out—their words, and no less their conduct, being epistles of the grace of God and his gracious arrangements, both for rewarding those who seek him and for chastening and correcting those who require it!

Felix was not a Christian in any sense and therefore Paul had nothing to say of the Christian's higher hopes and privileges, nor did he even present the foundation truth of the gospel—Redemption through the crucified Christ. For none of these things was Felix yet prepared. Paul realized this, and concluded to give only such truths as he was prepared to understand and appreciate. Paul took the most sensible and proper course with Felix. He took his standpoint of observation, and showed how even from his standpoint righteousness and temperance was the wisest course for any man to pursue. He took what truth Felix already admitted and showed the reasonable deductions which should be drawn therefrom by every thinking man. R. 932

**But after two years Porcius Festus succeeded Felix, and Felix,
wanting to do the Jews a favor, left Paul bound.**

Acts 24:27

The Roman governor, Felix, of Judea, was succeeded by Festus, and, willing to curry favor with the Jews, he left Paul a prisoner, although confessedly he had found him not guilty of any infraction of the Roman law and was persuaded that his enemies were frantically jealous of him. The two years of St. Paul's imprisonment doubtless afforded excellent opportunities for his mature study of the Divine Plan set forth in the Scriptures. R. 1564, R. 3195, R. 4500

Festus Succeeds Felix

Festus, the new governor, went at once to Jerusalem, the center of his province, there to become acquainted with the chief men of the people, amongst whom he must preside as governor and judge. St. Paul's enemies were on the alert to accomplish against him through the new governor what they failed to do with Felix. However, after setting forth the arguments of Tertullus to prejudice his mind, they feared to have a trial before him, because of the weakness of their cause.

**Now when Festus had come to the
province, after three days he went up from
Caesarea to Jerusalem.
Acts 25:1**

Hence they proposed to Festus that after all the dispute with St. Paul was more along religious than civil lines, and that therefore the desirable thing would be that he should be delivered to the Sanhedrin at Jerusalem for trial, according to the Jewish law, and drop the charges against him before the Roman Court. Meantime the plans had been matured whereby in the name of God and religion and the "good of the cause" the Apostle was to be assassinated on the journey. Alas that such criminal injustice cannot be charged against the Jews of that age alone, but that in every age and in almost every religious system the mental unbalance is such that in the heat of the moment atrocious crimes have been advocated and perpetrated in the name of God and holiness! What lessons we may learn from these excerpts of history! R. 4500

Festus

The successor of Felix as procurator of Judea (Acts 24:27). He assumed this office at Nero's appointment in A.D. 60. He held it until his death in A.D. 62. Paul the apostle appealed to Porcius Festus for the opportunity of being tried before Caesar, and Festus granted that request. —*Holman Bible Dictionary*

Festus inherited the problems of his predecessor in regard to the Roman practice of creating civic privileges for Jews. During his administration, Jewish hostility to Rome was greatly inflamed by the civic privileges issue. Feelings were aroused which played an important part in the closely following Jewish War of AD 66. —*Wikipedia*

Festus, the successor of Felix as Roman governor, was of a totally different character from his predecessor. The Apostle styles him "noble Festus," and history confirms the appellation. The Jewish rulers, taking advantage of the fact that a new governor would naturally desire to make a favorable impression in respect to prompt dealing with prisoners charged with sedition, rioting, disloyalty, etc., quickly brought Paul's case to the attention of Festus. R. 3196

And when he had remained among them more than ten days, he went down to Caesarea. And the next day, sitting on the judgment seat, he commanded Paul to be brought.

– Acts 25:6 –

As soon as Festus was installed in office, he was besieged by leading Jews, to send Paul to Jerusalem for trial, their intention being to murder him on the way. (Acts 25:1-3.) But Festus preferred to have the man tried before him, and told them they might come down to Caesarea and prefer their charges against him. This they did, but their false accusations were all refuted by Paul, who was permitted to answer for himself.

When he had come, the Jews who had come down from Jerusalem stood about and laid many serious complaints against Paul, which they could not prove.

Acts 25:7

Then Festus, anxious to conciliate the Jews, answered Paul, and proposed that, since the accusations pertained principally to the Jewish religion, he go up to Jerusalem to be tried. But Paul was on his guard, and having in his hand, as a Roman citizen, the power of averting the danger of the governor's compliance with the desire of the Jews, viz., the right of appeal to Caesar, he refused to be tried at Jerusalem.

Paul said, "I stand at Caesar's judgment seat, where I ought to be judged. To the Jews I have done no wrong, as you very well know. For if I am an offender, or have committed anything deserving of death, I do not object to dying, but if there is nothing in these things of which these men accuse me, no one can deliver me to them.

I appeal to Caesar."

Acts 25:10-11

The case was therefore postponed for a hearing at Caesar's judgment-seat, and Paul was to be sent to Rome under military protection. R. 1568

**Then Festus, when he had conferred with the council, answered,
"You have appealed to Caesar? To Caesar you shall go!"**

Acts 25:12



Paul Before Herod Agrippa



Agrippa II

After some days King Agrippa and Bernice came to
Caesarea to greet Festus.

Acts 25:13

Before the prisoner had been dispatched to Rome, Herod Agrippa, king of the country east of the upper Jordan, came to pay his respects to the new governor of Judea, and on hearing from him of the peculiar case of the Christian prisoner, against whom the Jews were so incensed, but against whom Festus was unable to formulate any charge to present before the court of Caesar, Agrippa consented to have Paul brought before him, that they might determine what charges to make against him. —Acts 25:25-27. R. 1569

HEROD, was a family name. There were several kings over Israel by this name:

1 Herod the Great, who flourished about the time of our Lord's birth, and who murdered the babes of Bethlehem.

2 Herod Archelaus, son and successor to Herod the Great—deposed A.D. 6.

3 Herod Antipas, another son of Herod the Great, the murderer of John the Baptist, who subsequently, with his men of war, set at naught and mocked Jesus, just prior to his crucifixion—deposed A.D. 40.

4 Herod Agrippa I., grandson of Herod the Great, mentioned in the present lesson as the murderer of the Apostle James. He was nephew of Herod Antipas.

5 Herod Agrippa II., the last of the Herods, before whom the Apostle Paul defended himself. —Acts 26:28. He was not a Jew, but an Edomite, a descendant of Esau. He appears to have been desirous of the good will of the people, even at the cost of principle. He took pains to observe the minutia of Jewish ceremonials. He hung up in the temple the gold chain which the Emperor Caligula had given him. It is related that at a "Feast of Tabernacles" he caused the entire Book of Deuteronomy to be read in the hearing of the people, and that he "burst into theatrical tears" when the reader came to the words, "Thou mayest not set a stranger over thee, who is not thy brother." Thereupon the populace obsequiously cried, "Don't weep, Agrippa, you are our brother."

He was also responsible for the beheading of the Apostle James and the imprisonment of the Apostle Peter. R. 3002 and R. 4346

Then Agrippa said to Festus, “I also would like to hear the man myself.” “Tomorrow,” he said, “you shall hear him.” So the next day, when Agrippa and Bernice had come with great pomp, and had entered the auditorium with the commanders and the prominent men of the city, at Festus’ command Paul was brought in. And Festus said: “King Agrippa and all the men who are here present with us, you see this man about whom the whole assembly of the Jews petitioned me, both at Jerusalem and here, crying out that he was not fit to live any longer. But when I found that he had committed nothing deserving of death, and that he himself had appealed to Augustus, I decided to send him. I have nothing certain to write to my lord concerning him. Therefore I have brought him out before you, and especially before you, King Agrippa, so that after the examination has taken place I may have something to write. For it seems to me unreasonable to send a prisoner and not to specify the charges against him.” Then Agrippa said to Paul, “You are permitted to speak for yourself.” So Paul stretched out his hand and answered for himself:

Acts 25:22-26:1



The Apostle Paul Explains the Tenets of Faith to King Agrippa by Surikov Vasily, 1875

I think myself happy, King Agrippa, because today I shall answer for myself before you concerning all the things of which I am accused by the Jews, especially because you are expert in all customs and questions which have to do with the Jews.

Therefore I beg you to hear me patiently.

Acts 26:2-3

- 12 They will lay their hands on you and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues and prisons.
 13 You will be brought before kings and rulers for My name's sake. But it will turn out for you as an occasion for testimony.
 14 Therefore settle it in your hearts not to meditate beforehand on what you will answer,
 15 for I will give you a mouth and wisdom which all your adversaries will not be able to contradict or resist.
 16 You will be betrayed even by parents and brothers, relatives and friends, and they will put some of you to death.
 17 And you will be hated by all for My name's sake.
 18 But not a hair of your head shall be lost.
 19 By your patience possess your souls.

– Luke 21:12-19 –

Accordingly, at a set time, Paul was permitted to speak for himself before the assembled royalty. (Acts 26:1-29.) With the respect and decorum due to the civil powers, Paul began his address; but he seemed to forget that his life trembled in the balance, while he used the opportunity to preach Christ. The address was full of logic, eloquence and pathos. He recounted the circumstances of his conversion, declared his zeal for the cause of Christ, showed this to be the cause of the opposition from the Jews, and attributed his protection thus far, and his liberty to preach the gospel in Caesarea for the past two years, to divine interposition and providence. So mightily did he show forth the truth and with such vehement eloquence, that with a loud voice Festus cried out,

“Paul, you are beside yourself! Much learning is driving you mad!”

Acts 26:24

The Apostle's reply was a clinching exhortation which almost persuaded even Agrippa to become a Christian; but how hardly the rich enter into the kingdom! During the two years in Caesarea Paul had witnessed to both small and great, but as usual with more effect among the small—the poor and middle classes. His preaching was from the text book of the prophets, and was shown to be in harmony with all their teaching, so that those who truly believed the prophets must of necessity accept the fulfillment of their predictions in Christ.

**“King Agrippa, do you believe the prophets?
 I know that you do believe.”**

Acts 26:25

The force of this truth is seen in Agrippa's reply to his searching question—

Then Agrippa said unto Paul, *You almost persuade me to become a Christian*—for to believe the prophets is to believe in Christianity. St. Paul's reply favors the former interpretation:

**“I would to God that not only
 you, but also all who hear me today, might become
 both almost and altogether such as
 I am, except for these chains.”**

Acts 26:29

A nobler sentiment, a broader spirit of charity, in a prison, falsely accused and unjustly restrained, cannot be imagined. Only those who have been with Jesus and learned of him could thus exemplify the sympathy and

moderation which he taught. Oh, that all of Christ's disciples might learn also to be meek and lowly of heart and find rest to their souls, for who can doubt that St. Paul, the prisoner, with his glorious hopes, was happier every way than any of those who heard him? R. 1569 and R. 4501

For the king, before whom I also speak freely, knows these things, for I am convinced that none of these things escapes his attention, since this thing was not done in a corner. “King Agrippa, do you believe the prophets? I know that you do believe.” Then Agrippa said to Paul, “You almost persuaded me to become a Christian.”

– Acts 26:26-28 –

The Apostle appealed to Agrippa in a most earnest and dignified tone. The intimation is that the Apostle had in this discourse set forth the fulfillment of the prophecies so fully, so explicitly, that anyone believing them to be inspired could not doubt that Jesus was the Messiah. This led to the notable words of Agrippa, “Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian.”

The New Testament revisers evidently considered this language ironical, but it does not so seem to us. The Apostle’s rejoinder seems to contradict that thought, “I would that thou wert not only almost but altogether such as I am—except these bonds.” It is presumed upon reasonable grounds that, although Agrippa did not become a Christian, this knowledge of the principles underlying Christianity remained with him and influenced him during the remainder of his life. History tells us that in the subsequent persecutions that arose in connection with the trouble coming upon the Jewish nation Agrippa received and kindly entreated the Christians who fled to him for protection.

How many there are in Christian lands who have heard the gospel message more or less distinctly, and have been “almost persuaded” to lay hold of the grace of God, but neglect opportunities of action and have lost the appreciation of the privilege. These, like Agrippa, will have comparatively small conception of the wonderful things they came so near to grasping and yet missed. When they shall come forth from the grave and enjoy the great privileges of the Millennial Kingdom it will amaze them to know what great opportunities they had to become members of the little flock, the Lord’s associates on the throne. R. 3198

As we read this account, the burning eloquence of this Christian orator seems almost to fall on our ears, and we seem to see the light of a countenance radiant with heavenly enthusiasm as the Apostle exclaims, “I would to God, that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were both almost, and altogether such as I am, except these bonds.” (v. 29)

When he had said these things, the king stood up, as well as the governor and Bernice and those who sat with them, and when they had gone aside, they talked among themselves, saying, “This man is doing nothing deserving of death or chains.” Then Agrippa said to Festus, “This man might have been set free if he had not appealed to Caesar.”

– Acts 26:30-32 –

It is a mistake, made by some well-meaning members of the Lord’s family, to suppose that the Master’s teaching of nonresistance means that they should put forth no efforts on their own behalf. It is our privilege to avail ourselves of every right granted to us by the laws of the country in which we live. It is proper for us to appeal to higher or better courts if we can, to obtain that justice which might not be obtainable in lower courts. But having exhausted all such legal resources and remedies, the Lord’s people are to be submissive to the results—not anarchists, not grumblers, not resisters of the decisions of the law. R. 3196



Truth is stranger than fiction, and it is no wonder that some today, like Festus of old, find it hard to believe in the goodness and wonderful provision that our heavenly Father has made for his creatures. Today, if some of our worldly friends note our enthusiasm for the Lord, his brethren and his truth, it all seems very different from any religious sentiments or feelings, hopes or ambitions they have entertained, and they are inclined to say of us also that our heads are a little turned. They think it not strange if men become enthusiastic about politics or money-making, because such enthusiasm is common to men; everybody is more or less excited and interested in money-getting and in politics. But when it comes to religion, they say to themselves, no one knows anything about this matter; it is all pure speculation, and these people must be crazy when they think of their religion as being tangible, worthy of self-denial and the enduring of persecutions. We admit that no romance of earth ever equaled this one of the divine arrangement for man's salvation:—the fall; the calamity of death and disease, mental, physical and moral; the sending of God's own son; his offering of himself as the sin-offering on our behalf; his resurrection and ascension to glory, honor and power; the gathering of a little flock to be his Bride and joint-heir in the Kingdom; and, by and by, the establishment of a Kingdom for the blessing and enlightenment of all the families of the earth. No novel, no plot of human concoction, could ever equal this one. It is the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes. We cannot wonder if those who see from the outside—who do not see the strength and beauty and consistency and harmony from the inside standpoint—consider that we who see matters from the right standpoint are too much enthused. They cannot appreciate the fact that we accept gladly the privilege of self-sacrifice, in order thereby to attest our love and devotion to the Lord and to be accounted worthy a share with him as members of his Church, his Bride.

The time will come, and it is not far distant now, when many who are now highly esteemed amongst men for their wisdom, will be seen to have been foolish, and many who are now esteemed fools for Christ's sake and for the gospel's sake, will be seen to have been truly wise in choosing the heavenly things and in being willing to surrender the earthly things for the attainment of the heavenly.

The Apostle's answer to Festus was not flattery, but Christian courtesy. Festus was a noble man, and it is not improper to speak the truth in reasonable language, and to give a merited compliment. "I am not mad, most noble Festus, but speak forth words of truth and soberness." So, when we answer the world, let us remember the difference of standpoint, and that our privilege of seeing the deep things of God is the result of our having been accepted of him through consecration and obedience, receiving the spirit of the Anointed, whereby we can know the things freely given unto us of God. R. 3197

For there stood by me this night an angel of the God to whom I belong and whom I serve, saying, 'Do not be afraid, Paul. You must be brought before Caesar, and indeed God has granted you all those who sail with you.'

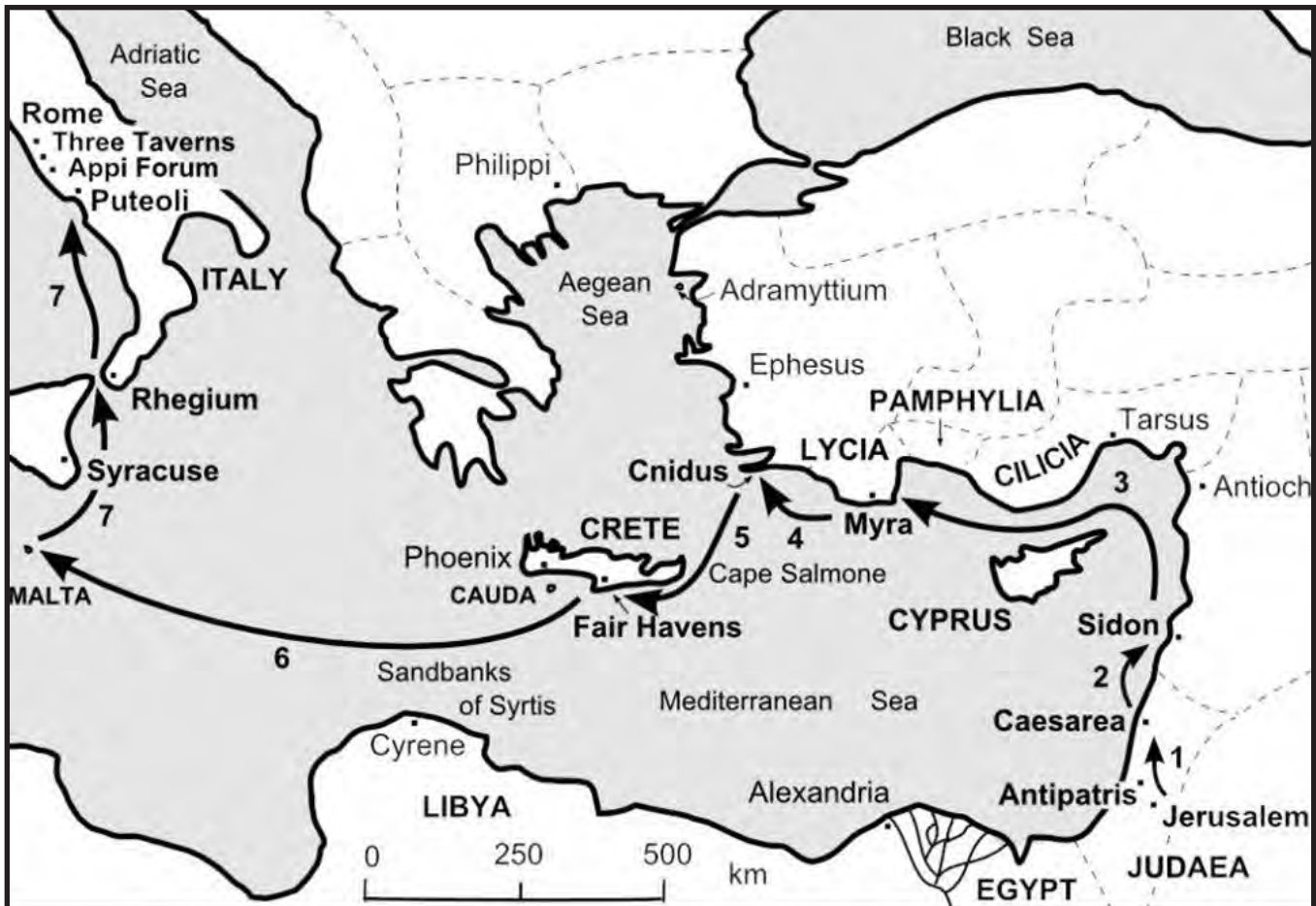
Acts 27:23-24

VOYAGE TO ROME

5

A Perilous Journey

Acts 27:1--Acts 28:16



St. Paul's Voyage to Rome from FreeBibleImages.org

And when it was decided that we should sail to Italy, they delivered Paul and some other prisoners to one named Julius, a centurion of the Augustan Regiment. So, entering a ship of Adramyttium, we put to sea, meaning to sail along the coasts of Asia.

Acts 27:1-2

“The voyage of life” frequently resembles the [voyage of St. Paul to Rome]. It may start out with summer suns and every prospect favorable, but, ere long, the trials and difficulties of life sweep down as a storm—financial or social or moral tests come upon the individual to drive him from his intended course. His purposes thwarted, his heart overwhelmed with dismay and almost in despair he finds himself the more ready to hear the message from on high, speaking peace and telling him of a fair haven at last. Nevertheless it can be reached only through the wrecking of the earthen vessel, and Divine providence alone can effect the ultimate salvation. Happy are those who shall ultimately be saved even “through great tribulation,” as the companions of God’s “peculiar people,” represented by St. Paul. (Rev. 7:14.) But still more happy, more blessed will be the 144,000 who now have in the stormy times the fellowship of God and through sore tribulation shall enter the Millennial Kingdom as Joint-Heirs of the Lord. It will be through their instrumentality under God that their companions in the storm of life may ultimately be saved. —Rom. 11:31. R. 4506

Festus, governor of Judea, sent St. Paul and other prisoners to Rome, the former with no derogatory charges against him.

The conclusion of the examination [by Agrippa] was that no true charges could be made against the Apostle; and had he not appealed to Caesar he might have been immediately released. But nevertheless it was well that he had appealed to Caesar; for had he been released, he would again have been at the mercy of the Jews. During the two years of his detention in Caesarea he had enjoyed the greatest liberty to preach the gospel, all the while under the protection of the government as an imperial prisoner. And now he was to be conveyed under the same protection to Rome, to enjoy similar privileges for the truth. Thus all things worked for good in the furtherance of the gospel.

There was no direct intercourse between Rome and the little port of Caesarea; hence for a distance of six hundred miles the journey was made by a small trading vessel. This journey lasted from about the middle of August to September 1st—good

And when we had sailed over the sea which is off Cilicia and Pamphylia, we came to Myra, a city of Lycia. There the centurion found an Alexandrian ship sailing to Italy, and he put us on board.

Acts 27:5-6

speed for a sailing vessel in those days, but the weather was fine. At Myra, St. Paul and two of the brethren who accompanied him (Luke and Aristarchus) and the guard and the other prisoners were transferred to an Egyptian vessel laden with a cargo of wheat, enroute for Rome and bearing a considerable number of passengers besides the crew—in all two hundred and seventy-six persons. The pleasant weather continued for several days and then it became stormy. The vessel abandoned her intended route to get into the lee of the Island of Crete and tarried at the port of Fair Havens for better weather. Thus they were delayed until about October 1st, the Jewish New Year’s Day and a fast day and the time for equinoctial storms. R. 1569 and R. 4505

And in all we were two hundred and seventy-six persons on the ship.
Acts 27:37

Now when much time had been spent, and sailing was now dangerous because the Fast was already over, Paul advised them, saying, “Men, I perceive that this voyage will end with disaster and much loss, not only of the cargo and ship, but also our lives.”

– Acts 27:9-10 –

The Lord had distinctly informed Paul in a vision that he should go to Rome as his ambassador. [Acts 23:11] He was now on the way, and on several occasions matters looked serious; it seemed as though he would never see the capital of the world; never have the privilege of presenting the truth to the brethren residing there, to whom he had already sent the Epistle to the Romans; never have the opportunity of laboring in their midst, as he had hoped and promised to do.

When in port at Crete a conference was held respecting the wisdom of wintering there or of going on, and the Apostle gave his opinion that it would be unsafe to go on. This may have been the result of some inspiration, but quite possibly was merely the result of his own judgment of the weather, etc. He had already had large experience in seeing disasters, as we are informed in one of his epistles written previous to this time: “Thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep.” (2 Cor. 11:25.) Besides, his trade as a sail-maker would naturally bring him in contact with sailors, and interest him in all matters pertaining to the craft. Those in command, however, decided to proceed on the journey. R. 3204

Nevertheless the centurion was more persuaded by the helmsman and the owner of the ship than by the things spoken by Paul.

Acts 27:11

When the south wind blew softly, supposing that they had obtained their desire, putting out to sea, they sailed close by Crete.

– Acts 27:13 –

St. Paul drew attention to the dangers of continuing the journey and advised that they winter there, but those in authority concluded that they would go to Phenice, a larger port. But before they had gone far a northeast wind (typhonic) struck the vessel suddenly and they were obliged to go with the wind to the southward and

came under the shelter of the little Island Cauda. Here they undergirded the ship by placing chains and ropes under her keel, because the

But not long after, a tempestuous head wind arose, called Euroclydon. So when the ship was caught, and could not head into the wind, we let her drive.

Acts 27:14-15

weight of the cargo of wheat and the severity of the storm had strained her. They lowered the gearing of the sails and continued to drive before the wind, guarding against sand banks. The ship labored heavily in the storm; part of her cargo was thrown overboard; later on she was further lightened by casting overboard her heavier furniture, tackle, etc. The storm continued for several days. Neither sun nor stars were visible, and the captain could not tell his whereabouts, for the compass had not yet been invented. Hence all aboard were gradually abandoning hope. They had ceased to eat and were almost in despair. R. 4505

Now when neither sun nor stars appeared for many days, and no small tempest beat on us, all hope that we would be saved was finally given up.

Acts 27:20

21 But after long abstinence from food, then Paul stood in the midst of them and said, “Men, you should have listened to me, and not have sailed from Crete and incurred this disaster and loss.

22 And now I urge you to take heart, for there will be no loss of life among you, but only of the ship.

23 For there stood by me this night an angel of the God to whom I belong and whom I serve,

24 saying, ‘Do not be afraid, Paul. You must be brought before Caesar, and indeed God has granted you all those who sail with you.’

25 Therefore take heart, men, for I believe God that it will be just as it was told me.

26 However, we must run aground on a certain island.”

– Acts 27:21-26 –

During those fourteen days the Apostle had abundant opportunity to fear and doubt and question the Lord’s providences, and apparently it was not until the night of the thirteenth day of the storm that the Lord sent an angel to the Apostle, with the consoling message that he should not fear—“Fear not, Paul; thou must be brought before Caesar; and lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee.” (Vs. 24.) We may safely assume that the Apostle, during these testing days, remained heartily loyal in faith toward God, and that this message at the close was in the nature of an encouragement and an expression of approval.

We may draw a good lesson from this incident, not only in respect to our own affairs in life,—that the Lord may lead in mysterious ways regarding our temporal matters and our service for him and his cause;—but we may additionally apply the lesson in a general way to all spiritual testings and trials. The Lord gives us, for instance, assurances of his love and care, and of the ultimate outcome of the narrow way to all who faithfully follow in the steps of Jesus; but meantime he may permit trials and difficulties of various kinds to come as storms upon us, threatening our very destruction, threatening the overwhelming of our spiritual life, darkening the sky of our hopes with the thunderclouds of our enemies’ threats and Satan’s roarings. Our duty is to let the eye of faith be undimmed by these various terrible conditions,—to let our hearts be firmly fixed upon him who has promised, and who is able also to perform.

Promptly after receiving the assurances of the safety of all on board, the Apostle made the matter known to the ship’s company, and manifested his own faith in the message by cheerfulness and breaking of his fast, and advising all the others to do likewise. His spirit was contagious; they were all cheered, and doubtless they were all impressed not only

The expression, “God hath given thee all them that sail with thee,” is very meaningful. There was only one man on that ship who was in personal relationship to God. The thought from the words is that the divine care going with the saints may prove a great blessing to their companions, even though, as in this case, they be worldly and unregenerate. This thought is particularly applicable in the earthly families of God’s people. Very frequently (indeed, we may suppose generally) those of their families who have not come into full relationship with the Lord are to some extent included under the protecting care. R. 3204

by the fact to which the Apostle called their attention—namely, that this disaster had come upon them by their failing to follow his advice—but also by the evidence of God’s special favor toward him in connection with the knowledge of their ultimate rescue. R. 3204

Jesus, Savior, Pilot Me

Jesus, Savior, pilot me
over life's tempestuous sea;
unknown waves before me roll,
hiding rock and treacherous shoal.
Chart and compass come from thee;
Jesus, Savior, pilot me.

Though the sea be smooth and bright,
sparkling with the stars of night,
And my ship's path be ablaze
with the light of halcyon days,
still I know my need of thee;
Jesus, Savior, pilot me.

When the darkling heavens frown,
and the wrathful winds come down,
and the fierce waves, tossed on high,
lash themselves against the sky,
Jesus, Savior, pilot me,
over life's tempestuous sea.

As a mother stills her child,
thou canst hush the ocean wild;
boisterous waves obey thy will,
when thou sayest to them, "Be still!"
Wondrous sovereign of the sea,
Jesus, Savior, pilot me.

When at last I near the shore,
and the fearful breakers roar
'twixt me and the peaceful rest,
then, while leaning on thy breast,
may I hear thee say to me,
"Fear not, I will pilot thee."

--Lyrics by Edward Hopper, 1871

--Music by John Edgar Gould

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.

– 2 Corinthians 1:3-4 –

The Lord showed Paul that he should yet preach the Gospel at Rome and that, for his sake, Divine Providence would care for every life on board the ship. A heart at peace with God and instructed through his Word is prepared for what may come, of joy or sorrow. The Apostle exhorted his dejected companions to be of good cheer. He reminded them of his vision and assured them of his absolute faith therein. He urged them to take food that they might be strengthened for the strenuous exertions of the coming day. His cheerfulness and example were contagious. As the light of the Lord was his peace and joy, so he in turn was the light of that ship and its comfort. R. 4506

[There is a] marked contrast between the comforting faith of the children of God and the disquiet and unrest of those who lack that faith. Yet the steady faith of the Christian in the midst of trials is an inspiration, as well as a testimony, to those of the world about them. All the frightened and weary passengers and crew took courage from Paul's words and example, and were strengthened. "Ye are the light of the world," said the Master, "let your light shine." The poor world has its heavy load of sorrow. Give them all they will take of your comfort and cheer. R. 1569

And as day was about to dawn, Paul implored them all to take food, saying, "Today is the fourteenth day you have waited and continued without food, and eaten nothing. Therefore I urge you to take nourishment, for this is for your survival, since not a hair will fall from the head of any of you." And when he had said these things, he took bread and gave thanks to God in the presence of them all, and when he had broken it he began to eat.

Then they were all encouraged, and also took food themselves.

Acts 27:33-36

27 Now when the fourteenth night had come, as we were driven up and down in the Adriatic Sea, about midnight the sailors sensed that they were drawing near some land.

28 And they took soundings and found it to be twenty fathoms. And when they had gone a little farther, they took soundings again and found it to be fifteen fathoms.

29 Then, fearing lest we should run aground on the rocks, they dropped four anchors from the stern, and prayed for day to come.

30 And as the sailors were seeking to escape from the ship, when they had let down the skiff into the sea, under pretense of putting out anchors from the prow,

31 Paul said to the centurion and the soldiers, “Unless these men stay in the ship, you cannot be saved.”

32 Then the soldiers cut away the ropes of the skiff and let it fall off.

– Acts 27:27-32 –

Paul understood the promise of God revealed in the vision (verse 24) to be of necessity subject to certain conditions—viz., that the deliverance would not be forced upon them, nor would it be granted to them without their cooperation. The promise presupposed both the desire and the effort of all to obtain deliverance, which desire and effort would, by divine interposition, be rewarded with success. But when the effort of the crew, which had assumed the responsibility of bringing the vessel into port, was directed to a mean and selfish purpose which ignored their responsibility and sought only to save themselves and leave the rest to their fate, Paul understood that God would be a party to no such selfish course, and he therefore told the soldiers that, notwithstanding the revelation of the vision, they would perish unless these pursued the proper course of sticking to the ship and making use of the means for averting the impending disaster. This teaching of the Apostle is quite contrary to the ideas of some Christians today who excuse themselves from active cooperation with God, idly expecting him to work miracles on their behalf. But such is not God's purpose; and the apostles taught quite to the contrary.

The soldiers took immediate measures to frustrate the selfish scheme of the shipmen by cutting the ropes and letting the life-boat drift away, that so the crew would be obliged to use their efforts for the salvation of all; and in the use of their utmost means and efforts God saved all. Doubtless the impression made upon the minds of all was a deep one. R. 1569

We all should understand that we have something to do in realizing the gracious promises of God to us. In connection with the affairs of this present life he has promised that our bread and water shall be sure, but this does not imply that we shall neglect reasonable opportunities for securing these. He has promised us also a share in the Kingdom by and by; but it is for us to make our calling and our election sure. God is thoroughly capable and thoroughly willing to perform all of his part in connection with every matter, but it is to our advantage that he calls upon us to show our faith by our works—by our cooperation with him in all reasonable ways. He does not expect us to perform miracles; but he does expect us to do what we are able to do both in respect to present things and eternal matters. R. 3205

When it was day, they did not recognize the land, but they observed a bay with a beach, onto which they planned to run the ship if possible.

– Acts 27:39 –

With the morning light they discerned the shore and a little bay which now is known as St. Paul's Bay in the Island of Malta, then called Melita. The pilot cut loose from his anchors, hoisted sail and sought to beach the boat; but, before reaching shore, grounded on a mud bank; the forepart holding fast, the rear began to go to pieces with the force of the waves, as it was a meeting place for two sea currents. The life boat had been cut adrift in the night, because the seamen had attempted to desert the ship. St. Paul advised this course, realizing the need of the seamen to bring the boat to land. His confidence in God's promise did not lead him to be slack as respects the proper use of earthly means. There is a lesson here for God's people. While praying and trusting, let us not slack our hands.

Seeing that only by swimming or floating on wreckage could the shore be reached, the soldiers proposed to kill the prisoners because under Roman law they were answerable for their security with their own lives. But the centurion had learned to esteem the Apostle, and for his sake spared all the prisoners, doubtless remembering the vision which had inspired them all with the hope and courage which brought them thus far towards safety. It turned out as St. Paul had foretold [Acts 27:24], that every human life was spared and the ship alone was lost with her cargo. R. 4506

Julius

A centurion of the Augustan cohort (Acts 27:1) assigned the responsibility of escorting Paul to Rome. Though Paul was his prisoner, Julius treated the apostle with kindness. He allowed Paul to go ashore at Sidon to visit with friends. (Acts 27:3) Later, he saved the apostle's life by restraining the soldiers who wanted to kill Paul to keep him from escaping. (Acts 27:43) —*Holman Bible Dictionary*

The centurion alone seems to have profited by the experiences. He alone seems to have read the Apostle's living epistle to any advantage, and upon him it did make an impression, for while he would not have objected so much to the killing of the other prisoners, who probably were seditious characters and worthy of death, he saw no way to make an exception of Paul, and for Paul's sake, therefore, all the prisoners' lives were spared. R. 3205

Acts 27:39-44

39 When it was day, they did not recognize the land, but they observed a bay with a beach, onto which they planned to run the ship if possible.

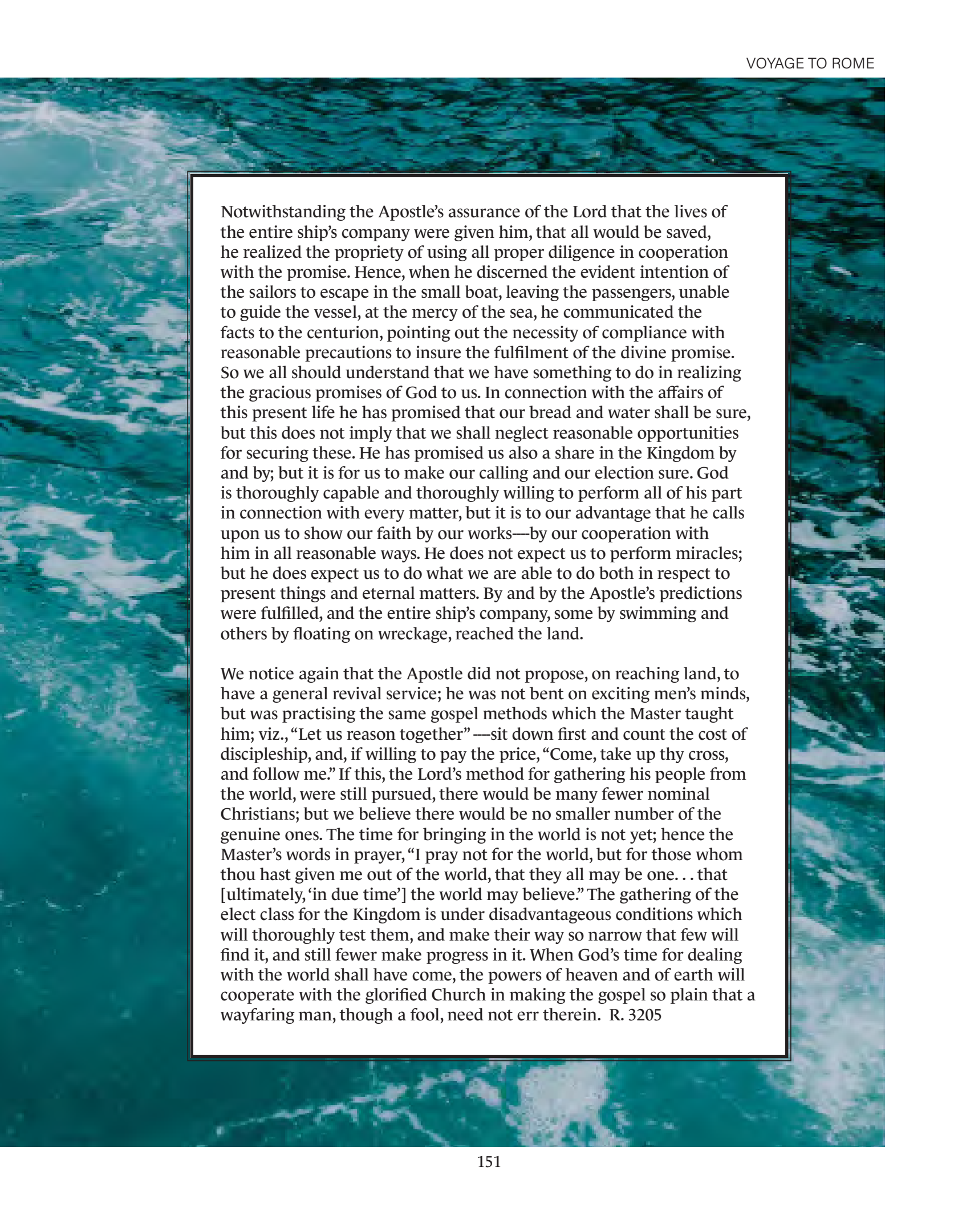
40 And they let go the anchors and left them in the sea, meanwhile loosing the rudder ropes, and they hoisted the mainsail to the wind and made for shore.

41 But striking a place where two seas met, they ran the ship aground, and the prow stuck fast and remained immovable, but the stern was being broken up by the violence of the waves.

42 And the soldiers' plan was to kill the prisoners, lest any of them should swim away and escape.

43 But the centurion, wanting to save Paul, kept them from their purpose, and commanded that those who could swim should jump overboard first and get to land,

44 and the rest, some on boards and some on parts of the ship. And so it was that they all escaped safely to land.



Notwithstanding the Apostle's assurance of the Lord that the lives of the entire ship's company were given him, that all would be saved, he realized the propriety of using all proper diligence in cooperation with the promise. Hence, when he discerned the evident intention of the sailors to escape in the small boat, leaving the passengers, unable to guide the vessel, at the mercy of the sea, he communicated the facts to the centurion, pointing out the necessity of compliance with reasonable precautions to insure the fulfilment of the divine promise. So we all should understand that we have something to do in realizing the gracious promises of God to us. In connection with the affairs of this present life he has promised that our bread and water shall be sure, but this does not imply that we shall neglect reasonable opportunities for securing these. He has promised us also a share in the Kingdom by and by; but it is for us to make our calling and our election sure. God is thoroughly capable and thoroughly willing to perform all of his part in connection with every matter, but it is to our advantage that he calls upon us to show our faith by our works—by our cooperation with him in all reasonable ways. He does not expect us to perform miracles; but he does expect us to do what we are able to do both in respect to present things and eternal matters. By and by the Apostle's predictions were fulfilled, and the entire ship's company, some by swimming and others by floating on wreckage, reached the land.

We notice again that the Apostle did not propose, on reaching land, to have a general revival service; he was not bent on exciting men's minds, but was practising the same gospel methods which the Master taught him; viz., "Let us reason together"—sit down first and count the cost of discipleship, and, if willing to pay the price, "Come, take up thy cross, and follow me." If this, the Lord's method for gathering his people from the world, were still pursued, there would be many fewer nominal Christians; but we believe there would be no smaller number of the genuine ones. The time for bringing in the world is not yet; hence the Master's words in prayer, "I pray not for the world, but for those whom thou hast given me out of the world, that they all may be one. . . that [ultimately, 'in due time'] the world may believe." The gathering of the elect class for the Kingdom is under disadvantageous conditions which will thoroughly test them, and make their way so narrow that few will find it, and still fewer make progress in it. When God's time for dealing with the world shall have come, the powers of heaven and of earth will cooperate with the glorified Church in making the gospel so plain that a wayfaring man, though a fool, need not err therein. R. 3205

Paul at Malta

On the shore we get a new picture of the Apostle. He stood not on any dignity or assumed superiority to be served, but promptly assisted in serving the interests of the entire company. A fresh opportunity here offered for the honoring of the Gospel message, for St. Paul found that the father of the governor was sick and he miraculously healed him and other sick people of the island. Thus was the knowledge of Christ and his minister to a considerable extent shed abroad, although so far as we have any information the Apostle did not attempt to preach the Gospel message, either to his companions on shipboard, or to the people of the island.

So far as the record shows, the Apostle and his companions did no mission work amongst the [natives] of the island on which they were wrecked, nor amongst the soldiers and sailors, their companions during that winter. They left no Church there; ---we may safely presume that they found no hearing ears. The lesson to us from this should be that we are not to expect the conversion of the world nor anything akin to it. We are to expect that the Lord will find with the truth a sufficient number to complete the elect Church, and then, with the power and the authority of the Kingdom, establish righteousness and cause the knowledge of himself to fill the earth and bless the whole world through the Church. ---Gal. 3:29. R. 4507 and R. 3205



St. Paul's Island (Malta). A statue of the Apostle Paul can be seen there.

Malta is in the middle of the Mediterranean Sea directly south of Italy and north of Libya. The island is 27 kilometres (17 mi) long and 14.5 kilometres (9 mi) wide, with a total area of 246 square kilometres (95 sq mi). --*Wikipedia*

1 Now when they had escaped, they then found out that the island was called Malta.

2 And the natives showed us unusual kindness, for they kindled a fire and made us all welcome, because of the rain that was falling and because of the cold.

3 But when Paul had gathered a bundle of sticks and laid them on the fire, a viper came out because of the heat, and fastened on his hand.

4 So when the natives saw the creature hanging from his hand, they said to one another, “No doubt this man is a murderer, whom, though he has escaped the sea, yet justice does not allow to live.”

5 But he shook off the creature into the fire and suffered no harm.

6 However, they were expecting that he would swell up or suddenly fall down dead. But after they had looked for a long time and saw no harm come to him, they changed their minds and said that he was a god.

– Acts 28:1-6 –

Again and again [the Apostle Paul] received special, individual encouragement from the Lord. In Corinth the Lord spoke to him by a vision, saying, “Be not afraid, but speak and hold not thy peace; for I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee; for I have much people in this city.” (Acts 18:9,10.) Again, in the midst of fierce persecution “the Lord stood by him, and said, Be of good cheer, Paul; for as thou hast testified of me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome.” (Acts 23:11.) And again, when in imminent danger of shipwreck, the angel of the Lord stood by him, saying, Fear not, Paul, thou must be brought before Caesar: and lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee.” (Acts 27:23,24.) And the Lord constantly witnessed with him to the truth of the gospel, by miracles and signs which mightily convinced the people. —Acts 19:11,12; 20:9-12; 28:3-6,8,9.

In view of these things, do we not truly say that Paul was a miracle of grace? He himself said, “I can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth me” (Phil. 4:13); and that it was the power **of Christ** that rested on him. (2 Cor. 12:9,10.) The grace given was indeed sufficient for the heavy labors and incessant toil of this beloved witness of the Lord unto us Gentiles. And as we look upon his shining course we see Christ in him; and reason says, If one who thus saw the Lord and heard his gracious voice, and who lived in such close and constant fellowship with him, was so inspired with hope and joy, and so nerved to cheerful endurance of hardship, pain and loss of every earthly treasure, the reward itself must indeed be glorious.

Beloved, let us mark the noble examples of the Lord and of Paul, and let us run with patience the race set before us, looking unto Jesus, as did Paul, for all needed strength and consolation.
R. 1558

**I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.
Philippians 4:13**

In that region there was an estate of the leading citizen of the island, whose name was Publius, who received us and entertained us courteously for three days. And it happened that the father of Publius lay sick of a fever and dysentery. Paul went in to him and prayed, and he laid his hands on him and healed him. So when this was done, the rest of those on the island who had diseases also came and were healed.

– Acts 28:7-9 –

Our Lord had the power to turn the stones to bread; and later he did turn water into wine, and, to feed the multitudes, he twice made food out of nothing—increasing two fishes and three small loaves into an abundance for thousands. But these miracles were an unselfish use of his power. He never used that power selfishly: to have done so would have been an avoidance of his covenant of sacrifice; and such a suggestion was this temptation.

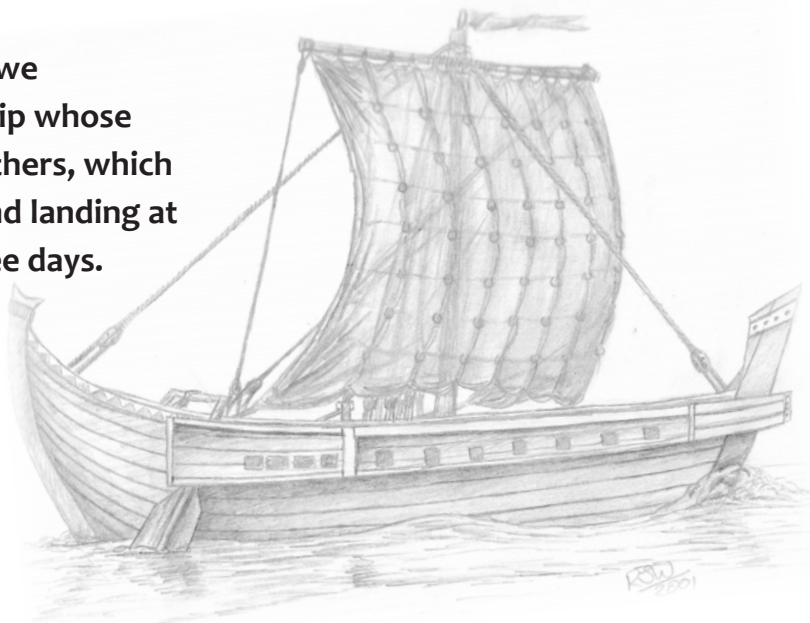
The same principle attaches to our prayers and efforts for the sick: they should be unselfish. We, the consecrated, are not authorized to call upon divine power for the healing of our own infirmities. Our Lord healed the multitudes, but when weary himself simply sat down and rested. On the same principle, the Apostle Paul healed the multitudes, but did not cure himself. He sent napkins and handkerchiefs to the diseased, but when the consecrated were sick he sent none to them. Compare Acts 19:12; 28:7-9; 2 Tim. 4:20; 1 Tim. 5:23 on this subject. R. 1689

They also honored us in many ways, and when we departed, they provided such things as were necessary.

Acts 28:10

After three months we sailed in an Alexandrian ship whose figurehead was the Twin Brothers, which had wintered at the island. And landing at Syracuse, we stayed three days.

Acts 28:11-12



Early in the spring A.D. 60 Centurion Julius and his soldiers of the Augustan Band started from Malta with St. Paul and the other prisoners for Rome in another ship, Luke and Aristarchus accompanying. R. 4507

From there we circled round and reached Rhegium. And after one day the south wind blew, and the next day we came to Puteoli, where we found brethren, and were invited to stay with them seven days. And so we went toward Rome.

– Acts 28:13-14 –

The sea journey was effected without special incident, the landing being made in the Bay of Naples at Puteoli, the seaport of Rome, which is one hundred and fifty miles inland. Here they tarried seven days, the Centurion awaiting orders from Rome respecting the disposal of his prisoners. The delay afforded St. Paul an opportunity to meet with a little band of Christians residing at Puteoli. Doubtless he took the opportunity also to send word to the Christians residing at Rome, whom he repeatedly declared that he longed to meet and whom the Lord promised that he should meet. The journey to Rome, one hundred and eighty miles, was made on foot. En route the Apostle was frequently cheered by evidences of the Christian love of the brethren. Some of these met him at Appii Forum, forty-three miles distant from Rome, and another delegation met him at Three Taverns, thirty miles from the great city.

And from there, when the brethren heard about us, they came to meet us as far as Appii Forum and Three Inns. When Paul saw them, he thanked God and took courage.

Acts 28:15

Many great generals had come this same way with their troops to the imperial city, to receive honors and applause, but few preachers ever had so great honors as were accorded to St. Paul. The journey to and from was for one delegation sixty miles and for the other eighty miles, and the record shows us that the Apostle was by these made acquainted with the true spirit of brotherhood amongst the Christians at Rome. The brethren doubtless came on the journey for their own refreshment and joy, not realizing, perhaps, that the Apostle needed this evidence of their love. Commenting along these lines a gifted writer says, "We often forget that great men are often very lonely and, while we hesitate to say kind words to them, yet words of recognition for what they have done are refreshing to those who receive more criticism than praise. A few days ago an editor showed me a letter he had just received from one who had held nearly the highest position in the gift of the American people, thanking him for his kindly words in a late editorial. My friend said that at first he was astonished that so great a man should care for anything he could say; but on further thought he understood the value of generous appreciation even to the greatest." R. 4507

To all who are in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. For I long to see you, that I may impart to you some spiritual gift, so that you may be established---that is, that I may be encouraged together with you by the mutual faith both of you and me.

Romans 1:7,11-12

Paul Arrived at Rome

Now when we came to Rome, the centurion delivered the prisoners to the captain of the guard, but Paul was permitted to dwell by himself with the soldier who guarded him.

– Acts 28:16 –

Doubtless the favorable impression made by the Apostle Paul upon the centurion who brought him prisoner to Rome—the evidence which the latter had on the journey, in the storm, in the shipwreck, and subsequently during the stay at Malta—combined with the favorable letter sent by Festus to Caesar explaining that the charges against the Apostle were evidently the results of religious



Rendering of Rome at the 1st century

hatred, etc., secured for him very different treatment from that usually accorded to prisoners sent to Rome. He was treated as a prisoner to the extent that he was continually chained to a guard, a Roman soldier, responsible for his appearance whenever demanded. These guards were changed every few hours, so that, on the whole, probably a considerable number of the garrison had personal contact with the Apostle, knew his manner of living most intimately, and many of them must have heard his teaching and preaching to the numbers of Jews and Christians who visited him. It is surmised,—not without grounds, we think,—that some of these soldiers, who were subsequently sent to Great Britain, carried the gospel thither. Certain it was that the Apostle's life was a living epistle which cannot have been without its effect, either for the blessing or the hardening of those with whom he came in contact—to some a savor of life unto life; to others a savor of death unto death—according as they received or rejected the knowledge and light. The same should be true of all the Lord's followers to the extent of their abilities and opportunities; each should let his light so shine as to glorify the Father. Business acquaintances, social friends, neighbors, relatives,—all should know exactly where we stand on all questions of righteousness, as well as what is the foundation for our faith and hopes. R. 3208

The soldier on guard was changed every few hours, so that probably Paul came in close contact with at least six every day, and thus gradually he probably had contact with the entire imperial guard. Thus many were brought in contact with Christian teachings and example. It is claimed that it was through these soldiers that the Gospel message was carried to France, Germany and Great Britain. R. 4507

And it came to pass after three days that Paul called the leaders of the Jews together.

– Acts 28:17 –

The Lord's servant was not slow in using his God-granted privileges. He knew not when they might be taken away. First of all, of course, he met the Christian brethren; but, as early as the third day after his arrival, he sent for the Jewish leaders and officers of the synagogues, for at this time there were seven synagogues at Rome. He desired to give them information at first-hand respecting why he was there and a prisoner. Secondly, he wished to preach to them the Gospel. He explained that although a prisoner at the instance of the Jews at Palestine, he was not disloyal to his nation or its customs. He had been pronounced innocent at the Roman Court, but had been compelled to appeal to Caesar for his safety; but that even then he was making no accusation against his countrymen. He proposed that gladly he would explain to them the good news, that the long-expected Messiah, in whom the Jewish expectations of his nation rested, had come.

**So when they had come together, he said to them:
 “Men and brethren, though I have done nothing
 against our people or the customs of our fathers, yet
 I was delivered as a prisoner from Jerusalem into the
 hands of the Romans, who, when they had examined
 me, wanted to let me go, because there was no cause
 for putting me to death. But when the Jews spoke
 against it, I was compelled to appeal to Caesar,
 not that I had anything of which to accuse my
 nation. For this reason therefore I have called for
 you, to see you and speak with you, because for
 the hope of Israel I am bound with this chain.”**

Acts 28:17-20

The response was that they had received no letters or other communication injurious to the Apostle, and expressed a desire to hear for themselves what St. Paul had to say, because they had heard of this sect and knew that it was spoken against as evil. If he could say anything favorable to it they would hear it. R. 4507

Our attention [here is given] particularly to the Apostle's energy in seeking to be about the Master's business, ---seeking to make known the good tidings to those who as yet had not heard it. Three days after his arrival in Rome he sent forth an invitation requesting the leading Jews there to visit him. We can learn a good lesson from this in harmony with the Apostle's words, “Not slothful in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord.” Our chief business, like his, should be the Lord's service. R. 3208

So when they had appointed him a day, many came to him at his lodging, to whom he explained and solemnly testified of the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus from both the Law of Moses and the Prophets, from morning till evening.

– Acts 28:23 –

It is very noticeable that, though Paul was careful to present the subject in a manner least calculated to stir up Jewish prejudices, his caution did not keep back the truth. He gave it to them in due time and order, but with all its native force, and let it do its separating work, as it always does. His reasoning was close, Scriptural and cumulative in its power. He reached conclusions, and placed the issue fairly before his hearers.

And some were persuaded by the things which were spoken, and some disbelieved.

Acts 28:24

When some of them refused the message, St. Paul sought to further influence them, or at least

to influence the believing ones, by quoting from the Prophet Isaiah, showing that God foreknew and foretold that the majority of Jews would reject the message when it should come to them.

So when they did not agree among themselves, they departed after Paul had said one word: “The Holy Spirit spoke rightly through Isaiah the prophet to our fathers, saying, GO TO THE PEOPLE AND SAY: ‘HEARING YOU WILL HEAR, AND SHALL NOT UNDERSTAND. AND SEEING YOU WILL SEE, AND NOT PERCEIVE. FOR THE HEARTS OF THIS PEOPLE HAVE GROWN DULL. THEIR EARS ARE HARD OF HEARING, AND THEIR EYES THEY HAVE CLOSED, LEST THEY SHOULD SEE WITH THEIR EYES AND HEAR WITH THEIR EARS, LEST THEY SHOULD UNDERSTAND WITH THEIR HEARTS AND TURN, SO THAT I SHOULD HEAL THEM.’ ”

Acts 28:25-27

The rebuke of the Prophet was much more weighty to them than any words of his own would have been; for the Jews had not learned to recognize the inspiration of the apostles. From this suggestion we may all learn the wisdom of using the words of inspiration in preference to our own.

As is always the case, the truth proved a separator, and we are not surprised to find that among those who were interested enough, and curious enough, to desire to hear the Apostle, some believed and some disbelieved. The truth in the harvest time of this age has a similar effect: it is a sickle which both gathers the wheat to the garner and separates the tares. Paul was not responsible for the effect of the truth upon his hearers. He earnestly desired to do them good, and used his very best

endeavors to present the truth wisely, but the responsibility lay then with the hearers, not with Paul, nor with the Lord. It is the Lord's intention that the truth shall attract only the one class—the pure in heart, the Israelites indeed—and that it should separate and antagonize those who are not in the right condition of heart, but are moved even in their religious devotions by selfishness. So we find matters today; not all are ready for the present truth. The Lord is using just such testings now as then to separate the wheat from the tares, the gold from the dross. R. 1570, 4507, R. 3209



Then Paul dwelt two whole years in his own rented house, and received all who came to him, preaching the kingdom of God and teaching the things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ with all confidence, no one forbidding him.

– Acts 28:30-31 –

The good work thus promptly and thoroughly begun, we doubt not, was continued by the Apostle with fervency during the remainder of the two years he was a prisoner. He was not privileged to go out and make public discourses in Rome, for at that time the Emperor was not only the head of everything social and political, but also the ecclesiastical head of the world, and any new religion would be under special restraint in Rome, the seat of the imperial government. Hence, in all probability Paul's condition as a prisoner—at liberty to receive all who would come to him—was the best not only for him, but for the cause he represented. We are reminded here that some are kept prisoners at home by family duties, or illness, or other bonds of obligation or necessity, and that where such conditions prevail the Lord's people should both pray and expect that the Lord would bring to them such as might be benefitted by their ministries of the truth. Let us each be zealous to use our opportunities, whether our advantages be great or small, and let us rely upon it that the Lord knows our condition and is able to change it according to his good pleasure and wisdom.

Under the existing conditions, no one was able to forbid the Apostle, or to restrain him, from speaking with the utmost confidence and boldness the truths pertaining to the Lord Jesus and the Kingdom of God which he would establish at his second advent—the present Gospel age being for the selection and polishing and testing of those who will be joint-heirs with him in that Kingdom. Let us be faithful and let us see to it that our ministries, both public and private, be along these lines—that we do not permit any other gospel to take the place of this one which the Lord has committed to us. R. 3209

It was while a prisoner in his own house that the Apostle found favorable opportunity for writing several of his epistles—to the Philippians, to the Galatians, to the Ephesians, to the Colossians. Doubtless the two years spent in prison in Caesarea were valuable to the Apostle himself, as giving him more abundant opportunity for further study of the divine plan than he could have enjoyed while engaged continually in the mission work. Now this added experience and grasp of the gospel found their expression in the epistles referred to, and were communicated to the Church at Rome. We should remember, too, that Rome was the very center of influence at that time, that from its influences radiated in every direction. Thus we see the Lord's guidance in the Apostle's affairs, and applying the lesson to ourselves it impresses upon us his assurance that "all things shall work together for good to those who love God, to the called ones according to his purpose." Consoled with this promise we can endure trials and disappointments, even though at the time we cannot see how such experiences will ever work good. Thus we learn that "Faith can firmly trust him, come what may." R. 3208

All the saints greet you, but especially those who are of Caesar's household.

– Philippians 4:22 –

We would briefly call attention to the Lord's design that the whole (living) Church, however widely scattered over the world, should be knit together as one. It was so in the Apostle's days, and it should be so still. It is a pleasant observation that, even with their limited means of communication, whenever there was opportunity the churches in one place were prompt to send Christian greetings and benedictions to those in other places (Acts 15:23; 1 Cor. 16:19; 2 Cor. 13:13; Phil. 4:21-23; Col. 4:14,15; 1 Pet. 5:13; Titus 3:15; 3 John 14); and all were subject to the same regulations instituted by the apostles, having the "one Lord, one faith, and one baptism." Their earnest endeavor was to keep "the unity of the faith in the bonds of peace," and to avoid any schism in the body of Christ. (Eph. 4:3-13; 1 Cor. 12:25.) It is noticeable, too, what a beautiful unity of spirit and of faith, and what steady cooperation, there was among the apostles and elders of the early Church. They were all zealously endeavoring to preach "the same things," the "sound doctrine," of the truth of which they were fully persuaded. One was not endeavoring to eclipse another by getting up some brand new patented theories of his own. Apollos was not endeavoring to discount the teachings of Paul; nor were the elders of the various little companies endeavoring to lead the sheep under their care into by-paths of speculation and vain philosophies. No, it was not so, though from time to time false teachers came among them with the evil spirit of vain glory attempting these things, to draw away disciples after them; but the true ones, on the contrary, were faithful to one another, as they were also to the Lord. Paul planted, and Apollos watered, and God gave the increase. R. 1895

For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.

– 2 Timothy 4:6-8 –

Here the narrative of the Apostle's work ends. Tradition tells us that the Apostle was liberated at the end of the two years; that he again visited the churches of Asia Minor and, subsequently, made a visit to Spain, preaching the gospel; and that later on he came to Rome again a prisoner without favor, and that he suffered martyrdom after spending a considerable time imprisoned in the Mamertine prison, a dread dungeon in Rome. Tradition says that his Roman citizenship saved him from crucifixion, and that he was, instead, decapitated.

A dreadful conflagration burst forth in the City of Rome a few months after Paul was set at liberty, which laid waste a large area of the city during the six days it continued. Nero, the Emperor, "enjoyed the dreadful sight from a turret of his palace, singing and dancing the mime of the 'burning of Troy' during the progress of the national catastrophe." It was rumored that Nero himself caused the fire, and to avert suspicion he had it charged to innocent Christians, of whom, it would appear, there was a considerable number by that time. Christians, being unpopular with their heathen as well as their Jewish neighbors, were made the scapegoats, and they suffered dreadfully.

It was about two years after this conflagration and persecution that the Apostle was arrested,

imprisoned, and, very shortly after, beheaded; and it was while waiting in his prison that he wrote his second epistle to Timothy, who was, apparently, at the time with the Church at Ephesus—where tradition says he remained until his own martyrdom, which probably occurred about thirty years later, in A.D. 96.

In his letter to Timothy, Paul urges him with Mark to visit him at Rome, but he was beheaded before they reached there. The grandeur of the sentiments expressed, the confidence and hope, can be appreciated only when we remember the circumstances bearing upon the Apostle at the time they were written. Realizing that he had come to the end of his own course, he sought to impress as much as possible of his own spirit and zeal upon Timothy—that he might be the more faithful and efficient servant of God. The exhortation is specially applicable to all who seek in any manner to minister to others—and this really includes all of the Lord’s people, each one of whom should be a living epistle showing forth and speaking forth the Lord’s message as his ambassador. Dr. Peloubet summarizes this great man’s character in the following glowing terms, which we fully endorse:

“ **He was deeply religious, whole-souled, ardent, energetic, persevering, broad-minded, affectionate, loving. He was great in more ways, probably, than any other man of human history. He was a great traveler, a great author, a great orator, a great organizer, a great missionary, a great philosopher. All of this genius was yielded in absolute consecration to Jesus Christ. He is the Moses of the New Testament. The two stand supreme amongst men.** ”

As we note the noble character of this dear brother in the Lord, we all desire to emulate it and thus to be copies of the Lord Jesus. R. 3209, R. 3210, R. 4355

And as we glance through the Apostle’s history we concur with his judgment, and see that he was not boasting; but was a faithful follower in the footsteps of Jesus; that he did make a good fight for right, for principle, for truth, for the Lord against sin and selfishness; that notwithstanding its narrowness and ruggedness, he did run faithfully over the course from the time that he started in it; that he did keep the faith to the close, at the cost of self-denial, of self-sacrifice, hardships and persecutions. And here we must remember that keeping the faith is not merely keeping it in us, but is in the sense of faithfully declaring it; for whoever does not declare the good tidings to others will soon lose the faith himself. Let us press along the line toward the same mark for the same prize of joint-heirship with the Lord; and if when we come to the close of life we can say, as did the Apostle, that we have fought well all along the course and kept the faith, the Lord will not say to us that we did not do as much as the Apostle Paul or as much as the Lord Jesus, but having done what we could, having been faithful in the few things and in the small talents entrusted to us, we will hear the welcome words,

**Well done, good and faithful servant.
Enter into the joy of your Lord.
Matthew 25:21**

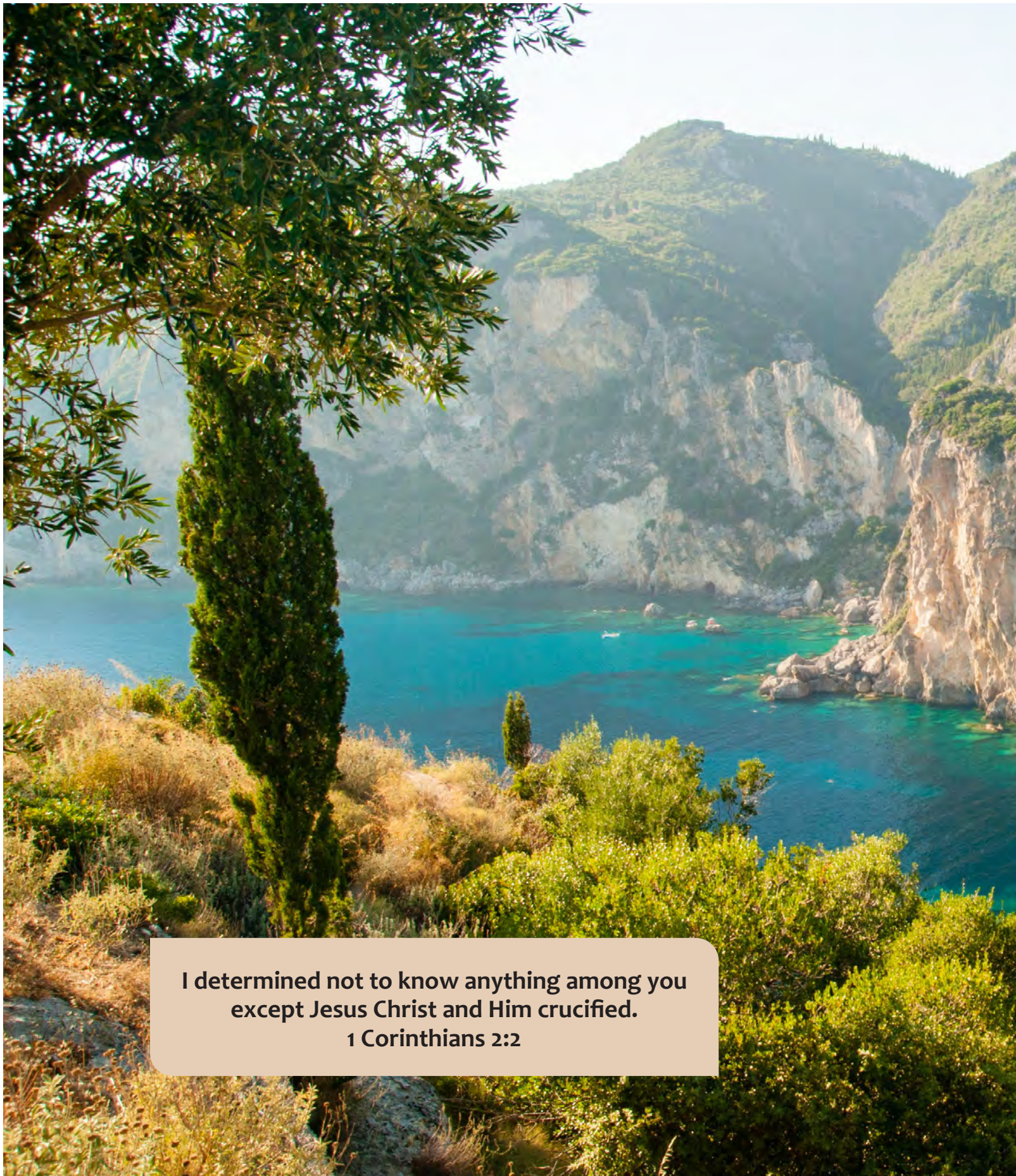


The book entitled, *The Acts of the Apostles*, might be more properly captioned, The beginning and early history of the Christian Church: it is a volume well worthy of study and meditation. As we pursue the divinely guided course and mark the inspiration, zeal and faithfulness of the apostles in accomplishing their mission, as set forth in the The Acts of the Apostles, we come with deeper interest and with the profoundest reverence to the study of their inspired Epistles. R. 1581

May the Lord of peace Himself give you peace always in every way. The Lord be with you all. The salutation of Paul with my own hand, which is a sign in every epistle, so I write. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.
2 Thessalonians 3:16-18

ST. PAUL: AUTHOR OF THE EPISTLES

6



**I determined not to know anything among you
except Jesus Christ and Him crucified.
1 Corinthians 2:2**



Dear Reader,

The letters addressed to the churches and elders that the Apostle Paul wrote are densely packed with Divine truth and wisdom. The amount of writing by Pastor Russell addressing these truths in Paul's Epistles is immense. Unquestionably, there is great benefit in making a thorough study of each Epistle with a verse-by-verse approach with context aiding understanding. We regret that only samplings of the Epistles and the Pastor's writing could be shared, but the entries have been thoughtfully chosen with the hope that they represent the teachings and doctrines of the Gospel, as well as convey the heart sentiments of this blessed Apostle. We are astounded by the service and zeal of St. Paul and hope that what follows here provides a general overview and tenet of each letter he wrote. May the entries inspire the reader to greater devotion and provide encouragement to press on in The Way.

—The Editor

I have not shunned to declare to you the whole counsel of God. – Acts 20:27 –

We notice that a large proportion of the apostolic epistles, particularly Paul's, consists of such logical arguments, based upon the inspired writings of the Old Testament and the teachings of the Lord. And those who have partaken of the same spirit, by following the lines of argument they thus present, are led by them to the same truthful conclusions; so that our faith does not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God. (1 Cor. 2:1,4,5.) But in this sort of teaching, as well as in the historic testimony, we see no evidence of word for word dictation, and that the apostles were mere mechanical amanuenses; but, rather, they clearly show that they were filled with a knowledge of the truth and with the spirit of the truth—with a holy enthusiasm to declare the good tidings, which burns and glows upon every page, and which kindles in the hearts of all of God's people the same sacred flame.

**My speech and my preaching were not with persuasive words of human wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, that your faith should not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.
1 Corinthians 2:4-5**

On the part of Paul there was no compromise of the truth, no mixing of it with human philosophies to make it more palatable to either Jews or Gentiles, or to avoid thus any measure of the otherwise inevitable persecution. The Christian teacher who can truly bear such testimony under such circumstances is indeed a soldier of the cross.

That the result of the Apostle Paul's renowned missionary journeys was only small congregations, as a rule, seems evident from the records; —because he set forth the gospel so clearly, so uncompromisingly; —showing the narrowness of the way, as well as the glories of the reward; —not shunning to declare the whole counsel of God. Yes, it was afterward—after the apostles fell asleep—that the mixed and misrepresenting preaching drew and drove multitudes into an apostate system; — “tares” to choke the “wheat.”

And even though the apostles, through faithful preaching of the truth, kept out the “tares” in their day, we find that the congregations which they established were not by any means all saints. St. Paul's epistles generally indicate this; for he sometimes addresses them to “the saints *and faithful brethren*” and to those “*called to be saints.*” In these epistles, too, he intimates that many are called compared to the number who will make their calling and election sure. He urges them to take heed lest any should seem to come short of the requirements; but to so run as to obtain the prize. R. 2942

Respecting the writings of the Apostle Paul, not only the Jews, but all others, in proportion as they come into close accord with both the letter and the spirit of the divine Word, will find in them the keys of the mystery of God—supplied to the Church by the Lord that they may be “all taught of God”—“that the man of God may be thoroughly furnished unto every good work;”—revealings of “the whole counsel of God;” capable of elaboration under the spirit's guidance, but quite “sufficient” for such elaboration. —John 6:45; 2 Tim. 3:17; Acts 20:27. The Lord does not raise up **rulers** from among our brethren in the body of Christ; but he does raise up faithful **leaders**, to whom earnest heed should be given, and whose faith and example should be imitated. R.1525, R.1558, R. 2419, R. 1559

**Not that we have dominion over your faith, but are fellow workers for your joy, for by faith you stand.
2 Corinthians 1:24**

For our gospel did not come to you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Spirit and in much assurance, as you know what kind of men we were among you for your sake.

– 1 Thessalonians 1:5 –

Let us hear what the Apostle has to say relative to the divine authority for his teachings. He declares that “God hath set” first or chief in the Church the Apostles, as rulers and teachers of all. (And that the early Church so recognized the apostles is very evident.) He declares that he is one of the apostles, the last; points to the evidences of his apostleship, how the Lord used him, not only in imparting to others through him a knowledge of the truth, but also in communicating the gifts of the spirit, which at that time outwardly witnessed the acceptance of all true believers, but also witnessed who were apostles, since only apostles could impart those gifts. 1 Cor. 12:28; 2 Cor. 1:1; 1 Cor. 9:1,2; 15:8-10; 2 Tim. 1:6. Every time, therefore, that Paul announced himself an apostle, he declared (to those who appreciate the meaning of that office) that he was one of those twelve specially commissioned of God and recognized of the Church as God’s representatives, through whom he would promulgate and establish in the world the truths concerning the New Covenant which had just been sealed with the precious blood (sacrificial death) of Christ. Every time he referred to his apostleship he announced himself one of those specially commissioned “by the holy spirit sent down from heaven” to preach and to establish the Gospel. See 1 Pet. 1:12.

His writings are toned not only with meekness, but also with that authority which should mark one who knows what he teaches to be the truth, unlike the uncertain “scribes.” Not only so, but he affirms, ‘I have not shunned to declare unto you [not my own opinions, but] all the counsel of God.’ Acts 20:27 Hear the Apostle:

“But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel than that we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.” (Gal. 1:8)

“For my gospel of good tidings came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the holy spirit, and in much assurance.”

“As we were permitted of God to be put in trust with the gospel, even so we speak; not as pleasing men, but God.” “We preached unto you the gospel of God” —exhorting “that ye would walk worthy of God who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory;” and we thank God that “when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but, as it is in truth, the word of God.” (1 Thess. 1:5; 2:4,9,12,13) “God. . . hath chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the spirit and belief of the truth: whereunto he called you by our gospel.” 2 Thess. 2:13,14 HG312

I certify unto you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.

Galatians 1:11-12

The Apostolic Epistles were written to the various local congregations or churches, and were directed to be publicly read, and to be exchanged among the churches; and the same authority was claimed for them by their writers as that which was accorded to the O.T. Scriptures. (1 Thes. 5:27; Col. 4:16; 2 Pet. 3:2,15,16; Heb. 1:1,2 and 2:1-4.) These letters and the five historical books were carefully preserved by the different congregations, and were appealed to as authority in matters of doctrine. The letters of the apostles, claiming, as they did, divine authority equal to that of the O.T. Scriptures, were treasured and guarded with special care by the various congregations of the early church. R. 1146



Letter to the Romans

Written while Paul was in Corinth staying at
the home of Gaius, A.D. 55-57

[Here is] one of the most notable of all the Pauline epistles, the epistle to the Romans. Apparently this noble production, like the other epistles, was the result of merely accidental circumstances: Paul, while in Corinth, saw an opportunity to send his greetings and counsel to the Church at Rome by the hand of Phoebe, who was about to sail thither; and, in consideration of their condition and circumstances, he wrote this letter. The Church at Rome was composed of both Jews and Gentiles, and naturally there were among them some unsettled questions incidental to the transition from Judaism to Christianity, which the Apostle in this epistle endeavors to adjust. The full settlement of these questions, however, was to be found only in a clear explanation of the principles of the gospel, which the Apostle, therefore, so ably set forth in this writing.

Its preservation to us is due, humanly speaking, to the high esteem in which it was held by them and others of the early Christians. Recognized by them as a logical presentation of the gospel of Christ, penned by a divinely inspired Apostle, they carefully cherished it, as did the other churches the various apostolic epistles written to them; and later these important letters began to circulate among the churches that all might receive their valued instructions. But when we consider further, how these writings have been preserved from generation to generation, sometimes in the hands of those who devotedly appreciated them, but for a long time—all through “the dark ages”—in the possession of Antichrist, hidden away under the sack-cloth of dead languages, and again brought forth to bear their testimony even to us at the end of the age, we recognize in this gift to us also the beneficent hand of divine providence. Some in these days point derisively to the human agencies through which God’s truth has been handed down to us, forgetting that back of these has been the Lord’s almighty hand making use of these agents as his honored instruments. We are not at all surprised when, with the Apostle, we are enabled to see the deep philosophy of the divine plan, as sketched in this epistle, that he is not ashamed of the gospel of Christ; for with him we see that it is indeed the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth. —[Rom. 1:16]

This epistle was sent from Corinth. It was dictated by Paul and written by Tertius, at the house of one of the Corinthian Christians—Gaius. (Rom. 16:22-23; 1 Cor. 1:14.) Up to the date of its writing Paul had never been in Rome. It is not known how the Church at Rome started, though there were Christians there who had been in the way for many years. It was probably one of the results of the outpouring of the holy spirit on the day of Pentecost; for on that occasion there were present “strangers from Rome.” (Acts 2:10.) These probably returned to Rome with the blessings of the gospel, and began to live Christian lives and to preach the truth to others; and a company of believers, even in the midst of that corrupt city, was the result. It seems difficult to understand how, in the midst of such conditions as the city of Rome presented, a people could be found to give an ear to the Word of the Lord, and to submit themselves to his training and discipline. It was the capital city of a great and powerful empire, presenting all the contrasts of wealth and poverty and all the hideous deformities of sin. Yet God could work even there, and his Word was quick and powerful.

While the Apostle Paul was a wonderful logician, and in his writings has set forth the elements of Christian faith along doctrinal lines more than any other apostle, yet we notice that he is in pursuit of a certain object: he is not beating the air, not discussing theological points for the sake of making an argument or showing his own ability. His arguments along doctrinal lines lead the reader in every instance onward and upward, as a stairway, to a grand upper room of perfected Christian character: and nowhere is this more manifest than in his epistle to the Romans. Beginning with the distinctions

between the Jew, informed respecting God, and to some extent respecting his will and his plan, and contrasting these with the general ignorance prevailing amongst all classes of Gentiles, “without God and having no hope in the world,” he carries the mind forward, pointing out how the degradation had come, and how the knowledge of God had reached Israel first, not because Israelites were better, but because of the divine favor, “grace,” “election.”

He points out nevertheless that “the Law made nothing perfect,” but was merely a pedagogue (a servant whose business it was to take children to school); thus the Law was to bring Israel to Christ, the great Teacher, that they might learn of him.

He points out further that, while Israel was seeking divine favor, they failed to get the chief blessing because they were not thoroughly candid with themselves, and hence mistook the mission of Moses’ Law. They hypocritically claimed that they kept that Law inviolate and were entitled to its blessings, —eternal life, etc.,—whereas they should have admitted that the Law was so grand and so perfect, and themselves so fallen from perfection, that they were unable to keep it; and they should have looked to the Lord for help. In this attitude of mind they would have been ready to receive eternal life as a gift, through Jesus Christ our Lord; and would have given up seeking it by the perfection of their own works. So the Apostle points out that Israel failed because they sought the blessing not by faith but by works. Thus “Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded.” (Rom. 11:7.) He then points out that this fall of Israel into blindness and the calling of a peculiar people from among the Gentiles to complete the “elect” company was foreknown of God and declared by him through the prophets. (Rom. 9:1-33 and 10.) But he shows that Israel is not cast off forever, and that when the elect class is complete all Israel shall be saved from the blindness into which they stumbled in the rejection of Christ; and that their recovery then will be the signal for blessings upon the whole world. —Rom. 11:15; Rom. 11:25; Rom. 11:32.



It is after eleven chapters of argumentative, logical, beautiful, instructive, blessed reasoning that the Apostle reaches the crown of his argument, saying (12:1), “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God [presented in the previous eleven chapters] that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.” He is addressing the “elect” body of Christ, of which a part was being gathered from among the Jews and the remainder being made up from those called from among the Gentiles. R. 1582 and R. 2212

**So, as much as is in me, I am ready to preach the gospel to you
who are in Rome also. For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the
power of God to salvation for everyone who believes. For in it the righteousness of
God is revealed from faith to faith. As it is written,**

“THE JUST SHALL LIVE BY FAITH.”

Romans 1:15-17



**1 Paul, a bondservant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated to the gospel of God,
2 which He promised before through His prophets in the Holy Scriptures,
3 concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, who was born of the seed of David according to the flesh,
4 and declared to be the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.
5 Through Him we have received grace and apostleship for obedience to the faith among all nations for His name,
6 among whom you also are the called of Jesus Christ.
7 To all who are in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.**

– Romans 1:1-7 –

The Apostle is addressing believers at Rome, “beloved of God, called saints” (1:7). Some of these were probably converts from amongst the Gentiles, while undoubtedly a considerable proportion were converts from Judaism. This is implied by the fact that the Apostle in this Epistle so particularly explains the Law, not as to Gentiles having no knowledge of the Law, but as to Jews having full knowledge of it. The Epistle is a very comprehensive statement of the entire plan of God.

The Apostle begins in the first chapter by showing that God was not responsible for the prevalent degradation, ignorance, sin, etc., throughout the world, and concludes with the crushing of Satan under the feet of the saints during the Millennial reign of the Christ. He explains that at one time God gave to mankind in general certain knowledge and blessings, but that “when they knew God they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Confessing themselves to be wise they became fools.” He explains that thus gradually men came down to idolatry and bestiality, dishonoring and degrading themselves, and “perverting the truth of God into a lie;” “for which cause God gave them up to vile affections and to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not proper;” and they became filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness, envy, murder, dispute, deceit, malignity, etc., etc. Thus he accounts for the various degrees of degradation, ignorance and superstition prevalent throughout the world. —Chap. 1:21,22,25,26,28,29. R. 2719

**For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen,
being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and
Godhead, so that they are without excuse, because, although they knew God,
they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in
their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened.**

Romans 1:20-21

**17 Indeed you are called a Jew, and rest on the law, and make your boast in God,
 18 and know His will, and approve the things that are excellent, being instructed out of the law,
 19 and are confident that you yourself are a guide to the blind, a light to those who are in darkness,
 20 an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes, having the form of knowledge and truth in the law.**

– Romans 2:17-20 –

Paul shows that while Israel had received God's Law, under a special covenant, and with special favors at his hands, they had not been saved by the Law, any more than the Gentiles had been saved without the Law; and that therefore both Jews and Gentiles needed just such a Savior as God had provided. Answering the supposed argument of the Jews, he declares, "Not the hearers of the Law are just before God, but the doers of the Law," and he argues that the Jew who rested in the Law, and made his boast of being of God's favored people, and who by reason of these favors knew the will of God more particularly than the Gentiles, would not, by reason of this knowledge and advantage, be justified under the Law, but could only be acquitted by a perfect keeping of that Law; and that since the Jews did not keep the Law perfectly they could not claim the reward promised by the Law, namely, eternal life. Hence, so far as eternal life was concerned, they had no more claim upon it than had the Gentiles, who had less knowledge as well as less outward piety. He asks:

**What then? Are we better than they? Not at all. For we have previously charged both Jews and Greeks that they are all under sin. As it is written:
 "THERE IS NONE RIGHTEOUS, NO, NOT ONE."**

Romans 3:8-10

The Apostle's argument is that none being righteous, none could be acquitted or approved before God, whether they had the Law or did not have it. Thus he proved that the Jews as well as the Gentiles, up to the time of Christ, were all under sin, all under condemnation, and that none of them had any claim upon eternal life, according to divine arrangements thus far made. For

Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin.

Romans 3:19-20

—Rom. Chap. 2:13,17; 3:9,10,19,20. R. 2719



For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh, but he is a Jew who is one inwardly, and circumcision is that of the heart, in the Spirit, not in the letter, whose praise is not from men but from God.

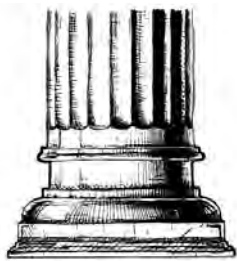
– Romans 2:28-29 –

Our Savior did not say the Law should not pass away, but that it should not pass away until it was fulfilled. But he tells us first that he came to fulfill it, so if it was fulfilled in him it has passed away. There is a vast difference between a thing being destroyed and passing away as a result of fulfillment. The law of circumcision was never destroyed, but it passed away and was abolished when that to which it pointed, circumcision of the heart, was set forth, and it is this higher circumcision we must observe. (Rom. 2:28, 29) Likewise Christ did not destroy the Law, or set it at naught, but his perfect life fulfilled its every requirement, as we imperfect creatures could not, and thus he became the great inheritor of all the promises of the Law, with the right to distribute what he inherited under the Law to all who would become his.

Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill. For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled.

Matthew 5:17-18

The thought is, that being children of Abraham, according to the flesh, is not sufficient to make us new creatures in Christ Jesus; and therefore circumcision of the flesh will not accomplish this. As the new creature is received of God as a member of the body of Christ through a living faith, he must as a new creature have the circumcision of the heart, in order to be a Spiritual Israelite, whether he was previously a Jew or a Gentile. Circumcision of the heart signifies a cutting off—a separation from the flesh, its aims, hopes, desires, etc. HG582 and R. 3022



In Him you were also circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ.

Colossians 2:11

**21 The righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed, being
 witnessed by the Law and the Prophets,
 22 even the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, to all
 and on all who believe. For there is no difference,
 23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,
 24 being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is
 in Christ Jesus,
 25 whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith,
 to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God
 had passed over the sins that were previously committed,
 26 to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He
 might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.**

– Romans 3:21-26 –

The Apostle is here showing the immense importance and value of the death of Christ, to both Jews and Gentiles, both of whom are alike under the dominion of sin and condemned to death: the Jews in that they were unable to keep the Law of Moses, the Gentiles in that they were unable to live up to the law of their own conscience; so that every mouth is stopped from self-justification, and all the world stands guilty before God. The Jews had vainly hoped to justify themselves before God by keeping his Law; but this the Apostle shows they did not, and could not, do; for the Law uttered only condemnation to all that were under it, its only office to them being to convince them of sin, and to show them how far short they had come.

But though salvation could never come by the Law, Paul shows that God had a way provided, apart from the Law, whereby men could be saved—not merely Jews, but all men who would come unto him in his appointed way—by faith in Christ Jesus, “whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation [place of satisfaction], through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God.” The one condition of this salvation is a grateful acceptance of it, by faith, as the free unmerited gift of God through Jesus Christ, which also implies an acknowledgment that we all have sinned and come short of the glory of God, that we are under just condemnation to death, and that we need a redeemer. (Verses 20,22-25.) Thus this Bible plan of salvation requires on our part :

- 1** the acknowledgment of the Bible account of the fall of man, and of his just condemnation to death;
- 2** our dependence upon the grace of God to rescue us from that condemnation, and
- 3** faith in his appointed means of doing it, with a grateful, humble acceptance of the favor. R. 1582

It is of faith that it might be according to grace, so that the promise might be sure to all the seed, not only to those who are of the law, but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all.

– Romans 4:16 –

Paul has elsewhere shown that there is but the one Seed of Abraham (Christ) in the chief or special sense, in the highest sense. And he tells us that it is our privilege and “calling” to be members of the Body of Christ. “If ye be Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s Seed, and heirs according to the promise.” We who are not Abraham’s seed according to the flesh, are thus counted as Abraham’s Seed because of our faith and because we become members of the Spiritual Seed. We are not to suppose that this is trifling with language and that the Lord would say “Abraham’s Seed” and then accept as Abraham’s seed those who are not his seed, who are not of his posterity at all. That would be to make his language delusive and ensnaring and deceptive. It must be, therefore, that our Lord Jesus is the “Seed of Abraham,” not only according to the flesh, but that he is also the Seed of Abraham according to the Spirit, on a higher plane than his fleshly relationship to Abraham; and it is on this higher plane that we are members of our Lord’s Body. We are members of him as New Creatures; we are members of the Christ Spiritual, and not of the Man Christ Jesus.

As the Apostle intimates in this text, it is the Divine purpose to have two seeds of Abraham; one of them the Spiritual Seed, to which we have just referred, and the other the natural seed of Abraham. The one of these, he says, is developed according to the spirit, according to grace, favor. We do not come into this relationship through the Law, but we come into it through participation with Christ. It is the favor of being permitted to present our bodies living sacrifices, acceptable to our Redeemer, of having this sacrifice accepted by God and of having a share in the reward. This is the favor or grace which now comes to us as the Spiritual Seed, in which we have participation to the extent of our faithfulness to the Lord. R. 4606

The Apostle shows [in Romans Chapter 4] that Abraham was not justified by the Law of Works, the Law Covenant, but by faith; and hence the claim advanced by some that the Mosaic Law was necessary, with faith for justification, was an erroneous one; because Abraham was called the friend of God, and had his faith counted to him for righteousness, not only long before the Law was given at Mount Sinai, but even before the outward sign of circumcision was given to himself—the latter being given, not as a requirement to his justification, but as a seal or mark of justification and harmony with God, to which he had already attained. —Chap. 4:1-15.

As Abraham was justified by faith, and received into favor with God because of his exercise of faith, so, says the Apostle, it is with us. “Being justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” And how and why through our Lord? Because, says the Apostle, “He was delivered for our offences [bearing the condemnation which those offences implied and involved—the very offences or weaknesses of the flesh which hindered Jews from keeping the perfect law given at Sinai, and being justified under it by works of obedience to it].” —Chap. 4:25; 5:1. R. 2720

Having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

– Romans 5:1-2 –

Thus far this epistle has established:

- 1 the necessity of justification to salvation from sin and death;**
- 2 that the terms of this salvation are alike for both Jews and Gentiles;**
- 3 that faith in the precious blood of Christ as the payment of our ransom, implying a humble, grateful reliance upon the same for salvation, is the one divinely appointed condition of justification and salvation; and**
- 4 in Abraham's case, he has illustrated the nature and promptings of such a true and saving faith. In this lesson the Apostle refers to the blessed influence of faith upon the character, and to its bearings upon the future prospects of those exercising it.**

Verse 1 shows that the immediate effect of faith is a blessed realization of peace with God; not through personal worthiness of his favor, but through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have received the atonement, his righteousness being imputed to us by faith. In thus accepting him whom God has appointed for our salvation, as our redeemer and Lord, we thereby acknowledge our own imperfections and sins and the necessity of redemption by the payment of a ransom, a substitute, an equivalent price, for that which was lost through sin.

Verse 2 has reference to a second privileged step of faith, an access by faith into a still higher grace, or position of favor, wherein also we stand by faith and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. Elsewhere we have been shown that this higher grace is the privilege of being “transformed” to a higher nature, of being made “partakers of the divine nature,” “heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ, if so be that we suffer with him,” and of being made like him and seeing him “as he is” — “the express image of the Father's person.” (Rom. 12:2; 2 Pet. 1:4; Rom. 8:17; 1 John 3:2; Heb. 1:3.) This is the “high calling” (Phil. 3:14) of those who, being justified by faith, have enough faith to go still further and accept and appreciate this great privilege of our high calling and enough of the spirit of Christ to follow in his footsteps of self-sacrifice faithfully, even unto death.

And, adds the Apostle, the Law Covenant was introduced, not for the doing away of sin, but that sin might be more distinctly seen to be sin, and in its true colors; not, however, with a view to the injury of the Jews, with whom that Law Covenant was made, for if sin abounded amongst them the more by reason of their greater knowledge through the Law, then God's grace abounded proportionately the more; for as sin hath reigned unto death, even so there is to be a reign of grace unto eternal life under righteous provisions through Jesus Christ our Lord. —Rom. 5:12,17-21. R. 1585 and R. 2720

Then, dearly beloved, appreciate more fully than ever before your privilege as a Son of God and understand the Apostle's words, “Being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom also we have access (by faith) in to THIS GRACE [special favor] wherein we stand,—rejoicing in hope of the glory of God” [as sons, as joint-heirs with our Redeemer in his great work of reconciling the world, whom he has already redeemed.] And from this standpoint of hope and grand anticipation, knowing that we must be tested and tried, “we glory in tribulations also,” knowing that it is by such means, with his promises, that the Father would develop in us patience, experience, and hope, as well as the love of God shed abroad in our hearts by the holy spirit of the truth imparted to us from the truth. —See Rom. 5:1-5. R. 1007

We also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance. And perseverance, character, and character, hope.

– Romans 5:3-4 –

We cannot claim that it is a divine law that glory and honor must be preceded by sufferings and humiliations. Our heavenly Father and the holy angels, highly honored, have never been humiliated. Nevertheless, we are assured that so far as God's dealings with the Church of this present Gospel age are concerned, they are along these lines. The suffering is not compulsory but granted us as a privilege, and the exaltation is held out as a reward, marking the degree of divine approval.

If indeed we suffer with Him, we may also be glorified together.

Romans 8:17

With this thought before us how it helps us to appreciate the sentiments of the Apostle, "Gladly, therefore, will I glory in tribulation." We glory not in the tribulations themselves, for sometimes they seem to the flesh to be grievous; but our hearts can glory in tribulations, since we know that under the divine arrangement governing our call as the Church of Christ these tribulations are working in us those elements of character pleasing and acceptable in the Father's sight, which eventually he will reward with a share in the exaltation of our Redeemer, our Bridegroom.

**Remember the word that I said to you,
'A servant is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted
Me, they will also persecute you.**

John 15:20

A mistake is made by the world in respect to the Lord's followers. Those who have sorrows and trials and persecutions and poverty they esteem to be under divine disfavor. Thus it was prophesied of our Lord, but is true of his Church, his body as a whole— "We did esteem him stricken, smitten of God and afflicted," and we were ashamed of him. The world cannot discern, as we do, that God's favor toward the elect is manifested in letting them have those experiences necessary to their preparation for Kingdom honors.

**Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?
Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or
nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written: "FOR YOUR SAKE WE
ARE KILLED ALL THE DAY LONG. WE ARE ACCOUNTED AS SHEEP
FOR THE SLAUGHTER." Yet in all these things we are more than
conquerors through Him who loved us.**

Romans 8:35-37

Thus we learn as people of God to **glory**. We may glory in all the things which He has done **for** us and **in** us. The things that naturally would be least likely to be gloried in are tribulations, persecutions. But we may glory also in these. We may rejoice in them—not that we enjoy the tribulations, the persecutions, but we realize that these are working for us characters pleasing to God. R. 3589, R. 3370, R. 5779

Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.

– Romans 5:5 –

As we grow in grace and knowledge—as the love that is of God, that is inspired by his Spirit, grows in our hearts and fills us, being “shed abroad in our hearts” (Rom. 5:5)—we are led to still wider love—beyond the household of faith, for whom we delight to lay down our lives. We learn to love all mankind, yea, even those who misunderstand us and are therefore our enemies—we learn to love all these as brethren. Not as brethren in Christ—that is a very special, very dear relationship—but we learn to love them as brethren of the one family of Adam, redeemed by Jesus and hence by purchase the family of the second Adam.

As we grow in grace and knowledge we are able more clearly day by day, year by year, to appreciate the fact that the whole world was born under sin and are children of wrath, blinded by ignorance and superstition, mentally and physically unbalanced through the fall, and really in a terrible state, as the Apostle declares, a “groaning creation.” In proportion as we are able to take God’s standpoint in looking at the poor, fallen world, we are able to sympathize with them, even as the Scriptures declare that God looked down and beheld the groans of the prisoners—prisoners of sin, in captivity to death, going down to the tomb. (Psa. 102:19-20.) We realize that they were born in sin, shapen in iniquity, that in sin their mothers conceived them—that in addition to this their associations with evil have all tended to drag them downward, and that, furthermore, Satan the great adversary, a wily foe to our race, is continually exerting his powers to blind the minds of their understanding and to misrepresent the divine character and plan.

With all this before our minds, what sympathy it gives us for our brothers according to the flesh, sinners, strangers, aliens, foreigners, yet redeemed, and in God’s gracious plan en route for the glorious blessings of the Millennial age. We say to ourselves, If God so loved these, if Christ died for them as well as for us, why should not we be very merciful, very compassionate, very sympathetic with them, and do all in our power to assist them out of darkness into God’s marvelous light, out of the ways of sin into the ways of righteousness, out of bondage to Satan into the liberty wherewith God has made us free—the liberty of the sons of God, which he has promised shall be available to all peoples, kindreds, nations and tongues in the sweet by and by. R. 3933

God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

– Romans 5:8 –

THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST

is the Message of Divine compassion toward sinners. The Bible, of all the religious books we know of, alone tells of a God touched with the feeling of human infirmities and with sympathy toward sinners. “God commendeth His love toward us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for the ungodly.” —Rom. 5:8.

Note the expressions of the Scriptures indicating Divine compassion: “God looked down from His Holy Habitation to behold and to hear the groaning of the prisoners” —the suffering of humanity under the death penalty, and the incidental aches and pains of our fallen condition. He did more than look, He did more than pity; His right Arm of divine power in due time began to bring deliverance for the captives of sin and death. Already He has sent His Son and thus provided a Ransom price for the sins of the whole world. Already His Son has been glorified, and merely awaits the time for the establishment of His Kingdom.

There are those who see in the Son of God taking upon himself our nature, and becoming the propitiation for our sins, no proof of the love of God. They say, That is proof of the Son’s love, but where is the proof of the Father’s? The answer is, In the Father’s gift. A real father would much rather die himself than give a beloved child up to death. There is far more love displayed in God giving his only begotten and well-beloved Son up to death than there would have been in God dying himself, had that been possible. The proof of the love of God is not only the most conclusive on record, but it is also the most conclusive conceivable.

**For God so loved the world that He gave His
only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him
should not perish but have everlasting life.**

John 3:16

The principle taught in the divine Word, that true love weeps with those that weep and rejoices with those that rejoice, is one which is also exemplified in the divine character. The immortal Jehovah could not himself die for us, his divine nature being proof against death. And, even if he could have died, there would have been no higher power to raise him out of death, and all creation would have been left forever without a governor, and only disaster and ruin could have ensued. But God could and did sacrifice at great cost to his loving, fatherly nature, the dearest treasure of his heart, and thus he manifested (1 John 4:9) the great love wherewith he loved his deceived and fallen creatures. If this sacrifice cost him nothing; if it were impossible for his mind to realize any painful emotion, even under such a circumstance; then the gift of his Son would be no manifestation of love; for that which costs nothing manifests nothing.

So superior is this God of the Bible and of Christianity to all the misconceptions of heathendom and Christendom that, when the glorious Day of Messiah’s Kingdom shall have been fully ushered in, the glory of our God will be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together. —Isa. 40:5. R. 5032, R. 1328, R. 1833

What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it? Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death?

– Romans 6:1-3 –

If God's grace will be caused to abound in proportion to the sentence, so that he who has many and deep sins can be as fully and completely forgiven and released as he who has fewer and smaller sins, shall we then argue that we may as well delve deeply into sin, assured that God's grace will be that much the more abundantly provided for us? No, says the Apostle; those who have come into the position to **see** and comprehend this much of divine mercy and favor must first have made a consecration of themselves to God, otherwise their eyes of understanding would not be opened widely enough to grasp the subject with clearness and definiteness; and if one had made a consecration of himself, and immersed his will into the will of God in Christ, and thus reckoned himself dead to the world and to sin, how could such persons live lives of sin or take pleasure therein? So surely as they have received the holy spirit, the new mind, that surely that new mind would be out of harmony with sin, craving, hungering and thirsting after righteousness, truth, etc. R. 2720

Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

Romans 6:4

Reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

– Romans 6:11 –

We are therefore to reckon ourselves dead to sin, but alive to God through Christ; and we are not to let sin reign in us, because we, as new creatures, are begotten of a different spirit, that is at warfare with sin, as sin is at warfare against righteousness. Instead, therefore, of continuing to be servants of sin, and yielding our bodies to that service, we are to recognize ourselves as “**new** creatures in Christ,” servants of God, his ambassadors and representatives; and are to seek to use our members, our bodies and their talents, in the new service of righteousness, —remembering our past experience in sin, that its wages are degradation and ultimate death, and that this privilege which we have now entered upon as new creatures, redeemed by the precious blood, is God's covenant through Jesus Christ our Lord, and means to us eternal life, if we maintain it. —Rom. Chap. 6.

Do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God.

Romans 6:13

For what I am doing, I do not understand. For what I will to do, that I do not practice, but what I hate, that I do. The good that I will to do, I do not do, but the evil I will not to do, that I practice.

– Romans 7:15,19 –

[In chapter 7 of Romans, the Apostle] has in mind, and is specially addressing the Christian brethren at Rome who were formerly Jews, as he says, “I write unto you who know the Law.” I can truly say that while living under this Law Covenant I approved it with my mind, with my heart, and I endeavored to serve it accordingly, but when I came to perform its requirements I found another law, a law of sin working in my members, which hindered me from rendering the obedience I desired to render to that Law Covenant.

Not that it hindered me entirely, for I certainly succeeded in some degree in conforming life and conduct to its requirements; but since I could not render perfect obedience to its every requirement I necessarily failed, because in that Law Covenant no provision was made for my weaknesses and imperfections which I had inherited, and which were my share of the fall of our race. Thus I found myself in a terrible predicament: my heart crying out for God and for righteousness, and earnestly desiring to fulfill the requirements of my covenant and to gain life everlasting, but I found myself wholly unable to fully obey its requirements; I found them entirely beyond my reach. Not that they were beyond the reach of my mind, for with my mind I grasped them and enjoyed them and appreciated them; nor that they would have been beyond the reach of obedience of my body, had my body been perfect; but,

O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?

Romans 7:24

I find that my body is a dead body, that sin has gained such a power over it and so chained it down to things that are evil, in fact and in intention, that I cannot do the things that I would,—that when I would do good and keep the perfect law, sin is present with me, and hinders,—being an integral part of my body; so that the good that I would do, the perfect life that I would live, I am unable to perform, and the evil things that I would not do, which my mind, my will, rejects, and which I strive against, those things to some extent I find myself unable to resist; and here was my helpless condition as bound to the Law Covenant. I realized that I never could gain, through its assistance and offers, the glorious perfections that I desired, and the eternal life which could accompany only these perfections. What shall I do? How can I escape this condition of things? I thank God that a way of escape has been provided!

I thank God---through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, with the mind I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin.

Romans 7:25

I thank God that in his due time he has sent Jesus, as a great Redeemer, and that through his death the world of mankind has been redeemed from the original sentence, and additionally that all we who were Jews and under the Law Covenant are set at liberty from that covenant—that the death of Jesus on our behalf means the death of our Covenant, which, though in some respects an advantage, was very unfavorable to us because of our inherited weaknesses. I thank God that now I am at liberty to become united to Christ, at liberty to consider my union with Moses and the Law Covenant as at an end, at liberty to take on me the vows and covenants required of all called to be the Bride of Christ. Thanks be unto God for this deliverance from the bondage of the Law of Works into the liberty of the Law of Faith in Christ Jesus! R. 2720

Those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit.

– Romans 8:5 –

The Apostle's definition of how we are to know the two classes apart is (verse 5) that the unregenerate will mind the things of the flesh, while the regenerate will mind the things of the spirit. There is a great gulf fixed between these two classes, and there should be no need that any one should long be in doubt on the subject of whether he is or is not a member of the Church, the body of Christ. If he is in Christ he has the new ambitions, the new hopes, the new aims, and however short he may at times come of realizing these aims and ambitions, his heart being right, it will always revert to the divine standard. His affections are for the things that are just and pure and good, however he may find the law of sin and death assailing him, through the weaknesses of his mortal body. He is not to be content with merely this condition of mental preference for the right and having his heart solicitous for righteousness, experiencing grief if he finds himself overcome by temptation; but, as the Apostle elsewhere enjoins, he is to be so deeply in earnest about the matter that he will not only do his best to right every wrong, but will continue seeking for grace at the heavenly throne, that he may be more and more able to overcome, that he may grow stronger and stronger in spirit, and that the power of his flesh may be correspondingly weakened. R. 3202

To be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.

– Romans 8:6 –

Ability to understand the Scriptures, to talk fluently upon them and to expound them clearly is a qualification which we think should follow in the wake of spiritual-mindedness; but some might be able to expound Scripture very well, and to express truths in very good form who are not necessarily very spiritually-minded.

To be spiritually-minded is to have a mind in harmony with the Spirit of God, and fully surrendered to the Divine will—fully consecrated to the Lord. It would not be enough merely to have a preference for good, saying, "I prefer not to do any gross sin; I prefer to live a life that will be honest and decent." This attitude would not be spiritual-mindedness. Adam was not spiritually-minded, but in his perfection he had a mind to do right. He had the mind of God in the sense that he had a balanced mind, not one having a preference for sin, or one that was weak. He was sound-minded and could appreciate things from the standpoint of righteousness and justice. But even in his perfection Adam had not a spiritual mind, in the highest, or Scriptural sense of the word.

[Here] the Apostle Paul uses the expression "spiritually-minded" in describing a certain class who have become followers of Christ, who have made a full consecration of their lives to the Lord and who, in harmony with this consecration, have been begotten of the Holy Spirit. These are spiritually-minded. These are granted a spiritual insight into Divine things. R. 4968

For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.

Romans 8:14

For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it in hope, because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now.

– Romans 8:19-22 –

Sin, the great monarch ruling the world, has enslaved the entire human family. None can escape this bondage, except in one way. Under this bondage of Sin they get disease, sorrow, disappointment, death. Death is the great climax of the wages of this great Monarch. And so we read, “The wages of Sin is death.” “The whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together.” (Romans 6:23; 8:22.) They are all travailing in this slavery. The whole world is in alienation from God, banished from His favor and from everlasting life.

Father Adam went into slavery of his own volition. His children—all mankind—were born slaves, born in sin and slavery, under the penalty of death. Christ appeared that He might redeem the one who sinned—that He might give a Ransom-price, a corresponding price—His own life for the life of Father Adam. All these slaves may then be set free; may attain absolute freedom, if they will. All whom the Son shall set free will be free indeed.

The whole creation is not waiting intelligently, for “the god of this world has blinded their minds;” but they are ignorantly and blindly waiting, groaning and hoping for the “Golden age” and life elixirs of which the world’s poets have long sung; all of which hopes are far inferior to the wonderful Millennial blessings which God has promised shall be ushered in, when the elect number of the “royal priesthood,” the “sons of God,” now making their calling and election sure by conformity to the predestinated conditions of joint-heirship, shall have been “changed” and manifested in glory.
—Rom. 8:29,17,18.

“And not only they [the world] but ourselves also [the elect Church—the seed of Abraham, through whom “they” are to be delivered, after “we” have been “glorified” as the sons

**And not only they, but ourselves also, which have
the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan
within ourselves, waiting for the adoption,
to wit, the redemption of our body.
Romans 8:23 (KJV)**

of God, we,] which have the firstfruits of the spirit, even we groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption [the full recognition of our sonship], to wit, the redemption [deliverance] of our body” —the body of Christ, the Church, in the first resurrection. R. 5355 and R. 2049

We are the sons of God. As the Apostle says, “Now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be [how glorious]; but we know that when Christ shall be revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.” (1 John 3:2.) We see then that the world’s hope is in the glorified Church, whose glorious Head is the Redeemer Himself. When this Church shall be exalted in Millennial glory the world’s time of blessing will begin. Then all the groaning creation shall be liberated and have the opportunity of coming out of the corruption of death, mental, moral and physical, and into liberty and perfection of life as the sons of God, all of which privileges have been secured for them through the merit of the precious blood. SM619



GROANING CREATION

Across the sea I heard the groan
Of nations in the intervals
Of wind and wave. Their blood and bones
Cried out in torture, crushed by thrones,
And sucked by priestly cannibals.
I dreamed of freedom slowly gained
By martyr meekness, patience, faith,
And lo! an athlete grimly stained,
With corded muscles battle-strained
Shouting it from the fields of death.
I turn me, awe-struck, from the sight
Among the clamoring thousands mute.
I only know that God is right,
And that the children of the light
Shall tread the darkness under foot.
I know the pent fire heaves its crust,
That sultry skies the bolt will form
To smite them clear; that Nature must
The balance of her powers adjust,
Though with the earthquake and the storm.
God reigns, and let the earth rejoice!
I bow before His sterner plan.
Dumb are the organs of my choice;
He speaks in battle's stormy voice,
His praise is in the wrath of man.
Yet, surely as He lives, the day
Of peace He promised shall be ours,
To fold the flags of war, and lay
Its sword and spear to rust away,
And sow its ghastly fields with flowers.

---J. G. WHITTIER, R. 696

We know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.

– Romans 8:28 –

[Romans 8:28-30] make plain to us that God has a special purpose in the special Gospel High Calling of this present Age. Other Scriptures show that this Calling of this present Age is to joint-heirship with Jesus in the Messianic Kingdom which is shortly to grant restitution blessings to all the families of the earth. To get a suitable class to be the teachers, blessers, rulers and judges of the world in the future has been the object of this Gospel Call. Jesus, the Head of the Church, was the first to respond and has been glorified and honored, and through all eternity will be honored. His followers, called during this Gospel Age, will have a similar blessing at the hands of God—glorification on the spirit plane, if faithful.

The Lord's assurance to his truly consecrated spirit begotten children is, that all things shall work together for good to them. (Rom. 8:28) God assures them that having entered into a new relationship with him, all of their affairs are henceforth his affairs and concern. Consequently, they may realize, fully, that however the world may be subject to accidents, incidental to present imperfect conditions under the curse, God's "little ones" are his peculiar care. Not a hair of their heads may suffer injury without his knowledge and consent. (Matt. 10:30; Luke 12:7) How wonderful! And yet how reasonable when we recall the assurance that, "Like as a father [earthly] pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that reverence him." Psalms 103:13

Are not five sparrows sold for two copper coins? And not one of them is forgotten before God. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Do not fear therefore. You are of more value than many sparrows.

Luke 12:6-7

The lesson of trust is one of those difficult lessons for us to learn and apply—to realize that all of life's experiences are under Divine supervision and that nothing can happen to us but what is for our highest good. This is not now true of the world, but merely of God's family. By and by God will make all things work out blessings for the world. R. 5837, HG295, R. 5403

It is one of the evidences of reaching the graduating condition of heart, when we are able to take the oppositions of the great Adversary and of the world and of our own flesh *patiently*, uncomplainingly, uncomplainingly, "joyfully"—as a part of the disciplinary experience meted out to us by our all-wise and all-loving Lord. R. 2412

For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.

– Romans 8:29 –

The Apostle says that God foreknew us also by Jesus. (Rom. 8:28-30; Eph. 1:4,9-12.) Not that he foreknew you and me as **individuals**, necessarily, but that He foreknew a Church, a class; He had fore-intended the gathering of such a class, or Church, from the beginning. It is just as much a part of the Divine Plan that the Church, the Body of Christ, should be called to walk in His steps, to be dead with Him, to present their bodies living sacrifices, as it was a part of the Divine Plan from the beginning that Jesus should do these things.

The very object of the begetting of the New Creature, the very object of giving it the opportunity of the present life, is to develop character and to crystallize that character. This seems to be the thought of the Apostle when he says, “Whom He [God] did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son” —not partly conformed, but fully conformed to the image of His Son. Our mental state, our will, must be fully fashioned after the mind of Jesus Christ. And His will was full obedience to the Father’s will, to the extent of self-sacrifice, even unto death. R. 4855 and R. 4975

Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called. Whom He called, these He also justified, and whom He justified, these He also glorified.

– Romans 8:30 –

Then the Apostle points out the procedure by which God has selected this predestinated or foreknown class to be copies of His Son. They were called in the sense that the Lord brought to their attention the glorious opportunity, and we may safely say that such a call was extended only to the honest-hearted who were feeling after God, desirous of knowing Him and serving Him. These called ones needed first to be justified before they could accept the call, and this justification must come through repentance and through acceptance of Jesus as the Redeemer. It was those who accepted Jesus and were justified by Him through faith, whom God also glorified (honored) by begetting them with the Holy Spirit, bringing them into His family as children, joint-heirs with Jesus, to the privilege of suffering for the Truth and being glorified in connection with the Kingdom. R. 5837

None come to God in this Gospel Age except those who make a sacrifice. Others may *turn* toward God; they may *look* toward God; they may be converted from a wicked life to a better one. But none except the class who are adopted into God’s family are begotten of the Holy Spirit. The invitation of this Age is NOT an invitation to do the *best one can*; we are all called in the one hope of our calling. (Eph. 4:4.) It is good not to do wrong. But more than a righteous life is required of those who would be *sons of God*. R. 4134

I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

– Romans 8:38-39 –

The very chiefest of all treasures is the personal love and friendship of God and of Christ. Jesus becomes to us “the fairest among ten thousand, the One altogether lovely.” He is an unfailing Refuge in every time of need, our daily Joy and Solace and Comfort.

When we have gained this Treasure, we have gained the One that never changes, One whose love never grows cold, One from whom nothing can separate us—“neither death,” which to His loved ones will now mean our blessed “change”; “nor life,” which means further opportunities for suffering with Him that we may also share His glory, and which permits further works of loving service for Him whom we love; “nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers,” for these cannot harm us who are sheltered in Christ; “nor things present, nor things to come”; for “all things shall work together for our good,” and in every trial He will direct the issue that we may be able to bear it; “nor height” of temporary exaltation; “nor depth” of trouble or sorrow, for our Refuge and Strength is ever near; “nor any other thing” in creation, for He has promised to “keep the feet of His saints,” and that nothing shall touch them as New Creatures in Christ, and that His presence shall go with them wherever they may be. —Romans 8:35-39; 1 Samuel 2:9; Luke 10:19; Exodus 33:14.

Having this confidence, we can with unspeakable joy and gratitude lay hold of the exceeding great and precious promises which are ours through Christ, and without presumption press along the line toward the prize of our High Calling, humbly trusting that He who has begun the good work in us will complete it unto the day of our glorification with our Bridegroom in the Heavenly Kingdom, when we shall be presented before the Father “without spot or wrinkle or any such thing,” gloriously complete and perfect, in the most absolute sense, fitted and prepared for the wonderful work which we shall share with our blessed Lord and King. R. 5862

Does not the potter have power over the clay, from the same lump to make one vessel for honor and another for dishonor?

– Romans 9:21 –

We must consider this text in the light of the whole argument of which it is a portion. Paul is showing that though God's promises were handed to Israel, and though they understood that they were for them only, God had a perfect right to make such selection as he saw fit, for the high-calling to joint-heirship with Christ. He was not bound to take that nation. He had never said that all of that nation should fill this position. He had, on the contrary, shown through the prophets that only a remnant would be worthy of this honor, and that all of nominal Israel were not the real Israel referred to in his promise.

Paul is justifying God's course and showing that since it is a **favor** that he is about to grant, and not a justice (a privilege of sharing with Messiah in the great work of dispensing still other favors and blessings), he had a perfect right to do what he chose with his favors. God had a perfect right, had he so chosen, to have selected only a part of Israel to honorable service in his great cause and a part to a less honorable share, or to no share at all, even if they had been all exactly alike, and all equally adapted to his work and equally pliable to the moulding influences he exerts through his truth, his providences, etc. He had already shown his right in this direction in the choice of Isaac to be of the line in which the blessing should come, and the rejection of Ishmael's line or family. Likewise he chose Jacob as the line instead of Esau, though both were sons of the same parents and he might have chosen either line. Nor can it be claimed that God's choice of Jacob above Esau, as the line or family through which he intended to favor and bless the world, was a choice dependent in any degree upon character; for God's selection of Jacob's line was declared before his birth. And not only has God thus chosen to use certain persons in his service to honor his name, but he can select and has at times selected others for other places, for the illustration of his power. For instance Pharaoh: in him God raised to power in Egypt a man who more than others was a hard and determined man, that the bringing of Israel out from a cruel bondage should not only furnish a just punishment upon Egypt, but also manifest God's power of deliverance against all opposition. In addition God made in the deliverance of Israel under Moses and the overthrow of Pharaoh a type of the ultimate deliverance of all his people under Christ from the bondage of Sin and the power of the devil, whom Pharaoh typified.

But though God had the **right** to make as absolute selections as those mentioned, when selecting those whom he will use as the "promised seed" through whom he will bless all nations, yet he has not done so. The selected ones are not entitled to the honor by reason of ability to do the work to be done, hence are selected according to favor (grace); yet there is a reason why they are selected, namely, their faith and obedience to the light and ability enjoyed.

Here, then, we have the proper view of this passage, and we see the fallacy of using it to prove that God now makes all people sinners, vessels of wrath, and by and by will make all vessels of honor possessed of everlasting life. The Apostle's argument has nothing whatever to do with salvation, but has to do entirely with the high-calling. The fact that Esau and Ishmael were used to typify those who fail to attain the high-calling (Heb. 12:15-17) has nothing whatever to do with their chances of attaining **life** during the Millennium. And the fact that Pharaoh and his hosts were used to typify the overthrow of Satan and his hosts by no means proves that they will be of those destroyed in the Second Death. God merely used them as typical vessels of wrath. They were already under sentence of death through Adam, and their day of judgment or trial for everlasting life will come under Christ's Millennial reign. They only represented the real vessels of wrath (those who sin willfully after coming to a knowledge of God's gracious plan in Christ), just as Moses, Isaac and others were used as the typical vessels of mercy representative of those through whom God will manifest his mercy during the Millennium. The application of this text, then, as a proof that God caused any man to sin, is wholly wrong. R. 1225

30 What shall we say then? That Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness of faith.

31 But Israel, pursuing the law of righteousness, has not attained to the law of righteousness.

32 Why? Because they did not seek it by faith, but as it were, by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumbling stone.

33 As it is written: “BEHOLD, I LAY IN ZION A STUMBLING STONE AND ROCK OF OFFENSE, AND WHOEVER BELIEVES ON HIM WILL NOT BE PUT TO SHAME.”

– Romans 9:30-33 –

What must we conclude, then, concerning God's dealings with Israel and the Gentiles? We conclude that though Israel has been seeking to be right and justified before God, for over 1600 years, and the heathen nations were indifferent to and ignorant of needed justification, yet now that it is offered, Israel will reject, and the heathen will accept, the gospel of justification and reconciliation. Why? Because Israel, as a nation, vainly expect it by works, while the heathen will accept it by faith in Christ's finished work. Israel, feeling so confident that she can approve herself to God by works of obedience, stumbles at the simplicity of the gospel and will not believe that Jesus was the propitiation (satisfaction) for the sins of the whole world. Therefore, instead of accepting of redemption through Christ, they have stumbled over and rejected the only way to God. This was foreshown by the prophet Isaiah (8:14). R. 1970

He will be as a sanctuary, but a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense to both the houses of Israel, as a trap and a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

Isaiah 8:14

The Apostle's meaning is clear when his discourse is considered as a whole, and when it is remembered that he is addressing Israelites—those who had been under the bondage of the Law Covenant. The ninth, tenth and eleventh chapters should be taken together and studied as one subject. Then it will be seen that the Apostle, reasoning from the Old Testament Scriptures, is showing that the gospel is to be preached to all the world, and not to Israel only, as some had imagined. To support this argument he repeatedly quotes from the prophets. R. 1969

If you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.

– Romans 10:9 –

If you would lay hold of this great salvation, you must publicly and openly confess that Jesus is Lord—your Master; that by his death he purchased you, and thus became your owner; for “To this end Christ both died and rose and revived, that he might be LORD [owner, master] both of the dead and living.” (Rom. 14:9.) And you must not only own and believe that he is your purchaser, your Redeemer and Lord, but also that he is a living Lord, that God raised him from death and highly exalted him to a higher nature than that which he gave as our Ransom. To believe and thus confess is acceptable with God, and to such believers it will be plain that Christ settled all the condemnation of the Law against them, and such may have joy and peace in thus believing. After all, it is with the heart that men believe. No matter how much their minds may be convinced of the truth, if their hearts be stubborn they will not believe. Brethren, get your hearts right, and then you will be able both to believe on and to confess Jesus as your Lord.

For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

Romans 10:10

It is the privilege of the spiritual Israelite now, beforehand, by the exercise of faith to realize in himself acceptance with God, justification by faith; to realize further that the merit of Christ covering all his imperfections, which are not of the heart, continues him in this justified relationship with God, notwithstanding the imperfections of his flesh and of his works—for we “are not under the Law but under grace.” To those who can now exercise the faith, all the blessings that will come to the world in the Millennial age are possible—and more. To such these greater blessings are not hidden, but may be seen with the eye of faith. To such they are not far off—pertaining to another age—but are possibilities of the present time, through the operation of faith. Such, having the ear of faith, are not saying, We cannot know the mind of the Lord, for he is afar off in heaven; who shall bring us a clear, definite statement of his will? These already have this declaration of the divine will in the person of Christ, in his teachings, personally and through the apostles. Neither will such say, Christ indeed has come, has died, has gone into the sleep of death; who shall now bring him forth that he may instruct us? For with the same eye and ear of faith they both hear and see that he is no longer dead, but is risen, glorified, empowered of the Father, and that he ever lives to be the blessing and High-priest for all those who approach the Father through him. R. 1970 and R. 3071

What then is this message which can thus be heard with the ear and recognized by the eye of faith? The prophet as well as the Apostle declares that it is possible for us to have this salvation, an ever-present power within us, in our hearts and in our mouths. The Apostle declares that this which Moses prophesied is the Gospel which he preached, which we have received; viz., the confession of the Lord with our mouths and faith in him in our hearts.

You shall lay up these words of mine in your heart and in your soul, and bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall teach them to your children, speaking of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up. And you shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

Deuteronomy 11:18-20

Romans Chapter 11

The picture that God gives through the Apostle Paul in the 11th chapter of Romans represents Israel as the trunk and the branches of the olive tree, and the root of the tree as the Promise which God made to Abraham, which was to bless the world. God had not explained His Plan to them, but had merely said: “Do you wish to enter into a Covenant with Me—to be My peculiar people?” “Yes,” was the answer. “When will you be ready?” “We are ready now,” they replied. And so this Covenant was made, which constituted them the nation, or tree, growing out of the root of Promise. The Promise was primarily spiritual, though this fact was long kept hidden.

God never purposes to do anything except through the Spiritual Seed, but Natural Israel did not know this. They declared that they would be all that God wished them to be, if only they might have the Promise made to Abraham their Father. What it was they did not know, although they thought they knew. They were anxious to have the best at any rate. And they still had this thought and this hope in Jesus’ day; as St. Paul said: “Unto which Promise our twelve tribes, instantly serving God day and night, hope to come.” (Acts 26:7.) And again the Apostle says:

Israel has not obtained what it seeks, but the elect have obtained it, and the rest were blinded.

Romans 11:7

That is, those of the Jews who came into Christ became of the Elect. —Rom. 11:7.

What was the condition on which the Jews might inherit that blessing? It was that they would lay down their lives sacrificially. And they would be tested as to their sincerity in claiming that they would obey God in order that they might win that Promise. But the Message came to them, and they were called upon to answer the question, Will you accept Jesus of Nazareth as your Messiah, and take up your cross and follow Him? Then the test was upon them. They were brought face to face with the proposition which would prove how much they meant in their professions of loyalty to God as His special people. But the great majority failed in the testing. “They all with one consent began to make excuse.” (Luke 14:18.) When the point was reached of making a positive decision as to whether they would accept God’s conditions and His way of accomplishing His Plan, but few were ready. They listened and then went, one to his farm, another to his merchandise. The cost was too much!

Those who were found in that condition of mind were none of them living up to their profession. But God did not make that Promise for nothing. When the Israelites were proven unworthy of becoming heirs of the Abrahamic Covenant, they were broken off and Gentiles were grafted in to take their places and become partakers of “the root and fatness of the olive tree.” (Rom. 11:17.) Only those Jews who were desirous of doing God’s will in the fullest sense of the word were allowed to remain as branches of the olive tree. Only those who accepted Christ were made heirs of the Promise, as members of the Spiritual Seed. After all the “Israelites indeed” of the natural seed were gathered in, the Message went to the Gentiles, that the full number of the Elect might be found. But the Lord tells us through the Apostle Paul, in Rom. 11:1-36, that God’s ancient people may yet be grafted into the olive tree from which they were broken off, “if they abide not still in unbelief.” “And so all Israel shall be saved,” after “the fullness of the Gentiles be come in.” O the riches of the love and goodness of God! R. 5837

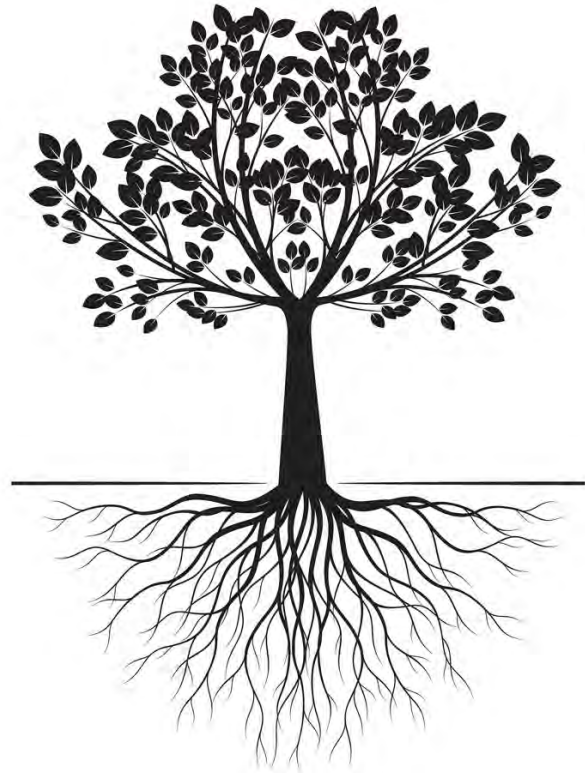
**Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!
How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out!**

Romans 11:33

For if the firstfruit is holy, the lump is also holy. And if the root is holy, so are the branches.

– Romans 11:16 –

Here the Apostle is showing that as the First-fruit of this great “olive tree” growing out of the root of the Abrahamic Covenant is holy, so is the entire fruitage. As this First-fruit class is holy, the Apostle declares, “the lump is also holy.” The word **lump** here would better be translated **mass**, for he is speaking of people. The root is holy—the Covenant of Jehovah, confirmed by His oath to Abraham. So all who become joined to this root, and receive their life and their privileges and blessings from it, will also be holy.



Abraham typically represented Jehovah God; **Isaac** represented the Son, our Lord Jesus; and **Rebecca**, the wife of Isaac, represented the Bride of Christ, the members of His Body. All these together—Father, Son and Bride—will bring forth a holy, earthly Israel. This will eventually include all mankind who shall come under the terms of the New Covenant. So Israel restored, and the entire world—all of the race of Adam who will return to harmony with God—will constitute the “holy lump,” or mass—the after-fruit. R. 5533

And if some of the branches were broken off, and you, being a wild olive tree, were grafted in among them, and with them became a partaker of the root and fatness of the olive tree, do not boast against the branches. But if you do boast, remember that you do not support the root, but the root supports you.

– Romans 11:17-18 –

The covenant promise of God out of which the kingdom classes are being developed is the root, and fleshly Israel as branches were first developed. But, because of unbelief and pride, most of these were broken off, and wild, heathen branches were grafted in instead, with them to partake of the life of the root, yea, the very fatness of the promise; yet they should not be puffed up against the broken-off branches, but humbly and thankfully remember that they are occupying the place originally belonging to the natural descendants. Walk humbly, for if because of pride and unbelief they failed and were cast off, God would be as likely to cut off the wild branches under similar circumstances. R. 1971

**You will say then, “Branches were broken off that I might be grafted in.”
Well said. Because of unbelief they were broken off, and you stand by faith.
Do not be haughty, but fear. For if God did not spare the
natural branches, He may not spare you either.**

Romans 11:19-21

This is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts, and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. No more shall every man teach his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, ‘Know the LORD,’ for they all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, says the LORD. For I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more.

– Jeremiah 31:33-34 –

In his valedictory, Moses proceeded to rehearse to Israel the Law of the Lord in full, reciting the blessings that would come from obedience to this Law, and the curses which would surely follow a disobedient course. He even proceeded to prophesy, and he points out that Israel would experience both the blessings and the curses, and that as a result they would ultimately be scattered throughout the earth, but that God, in infinite mercy, would remember them and finally bring them back to himself, and circumcise their hearts, a type of which circumcision they already had in the flesh. —Compare Rom. 11:25-30.

Behold, I set before you today a blessing and a curse: the blessing, if you obey the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you today, and the curse, if you do not obey the commandments of the LORD your God.

Deuteronomy 11:26-27

If any of you are driven out to the farthest parts under heaven, from there the LORD your God will gather you, and from there He will bring you. Then the LORD your God will bring you to the land which your fathers possessed, and you shall possess it. He will prosper you and multiply you more than your fathers. And the LORD your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your descendants, to love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, that you may live.

Deuteronomy 30:4-6

Even the most faithful under the Law were obliged continually to say, “O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from this death-condemnation” in which I am, under this Law? —Behold the Law of God is just and good and right, and I approve the same with my heart, but am unable to comply with its conditions because of weakness, —death working in my mortal body! The time of Israel’s return to divine favor at the close of the Gospel age is the period mentioned by the Lord through the Prophet Jeremiah saying, “I will remember their sin no more.” —Jer. 31:33,34.

Under that blessed arrangement of the New Covenant, established in the hands of the greater Mediator, the Christ, the great Prophet, the desires and intentions of the heart, accompanied with the best endeavors of the flesh, will be accepted, even though the latter be imperfect for a time, and require the blessed influences of the “times of restitution” to bring them to perfection. Moses’ prophecy looks down to this time, grasps the new situation, sees Israel turned to the Lord with new hearts, enabled to keep his Law perfectly; it will not be too difficult for them, but new and plain and possible. R. 3071

For I do not desire, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own opinion, that blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in.

– Romans 11:25 –

The Apostle tells us that as soon as this Gospel age is completed, the Lord's favor will turn again to natural Israel, and that as a result blindness shall be turned away from them—Israel shall be saved from their blindness. (Rom. 11:25,26.) He goes on to explain that this will not be for anything of merit on their part, but because of the Lord's mercy, compassion, forgiveness through Christ. The prophet takes up the matter at the same point and declares that Israel shall look upon him whom they have pierced and shall all mourn because of him, and that the Lord will pour upon them the spirit of prayer and of supplication in connection with that mourning. Thus the blessing shall come again to those who rejected the Lord and crucified him, and with eyes opened still wider under the favorable conditions of the Millennial age, under the wise administration of the Lord himself as the great King over all the earth in that day, and with the influences of Satan bound and restrained that he may deceive the nations no more by "putting light for darkness and darkness for light," the people of Chorazin, Bethsaida and Capernaum shall have a further blessing, though a somewhat different kind from that which they rejected. They rejected the privilege of becoming disciples and joint-heirs in the Kingdom. That will never be offered to them again, because when next divine favor is exercised toward them it will be with the privileges of restitution to human nature—to that which was lost in Adam and redeemed by the death of the one whom they crucified. R. 3348

And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written: "THE DELIVERER WILL COME OUT OF ZION, AND HE WILL TURN AWAY UNGODLINESS FROM JACOB, FOR THIS IS MY COVENANT WITH THEM, WHEN I TAKE AWAY THEIR SINS."

Romans 11:26-27

Looking at the deep workings of God's Plan thus, in the light of what He tells us is future, as well as of what is past, how wonderful it is! Oh, the rich depths of God's wisdom and knowledge! How useless for us to try to discover His dealings except as He is pleased to reveal His plans to us. His doings are all mysteries to us except as we are enlightened by His Spirit. Who knew this gracious Plan, so much beyond human conception? Who helped the Lord to arrange such a Plan, think you? This is not human wisdom. God only could be its Author. A Jew would never have planned to graft in Gentiles to share the **chief** blessings of the Promise. A Gentile never would have arranged the original stock and branches Jewish and himself a favored **graft**. No, the Plan is clearly of God, and well illustrates both His goodness and His just severity. Of Him is all the Plan; through His power it is all brought to pass, and to Him be the glory forever. R. 5533

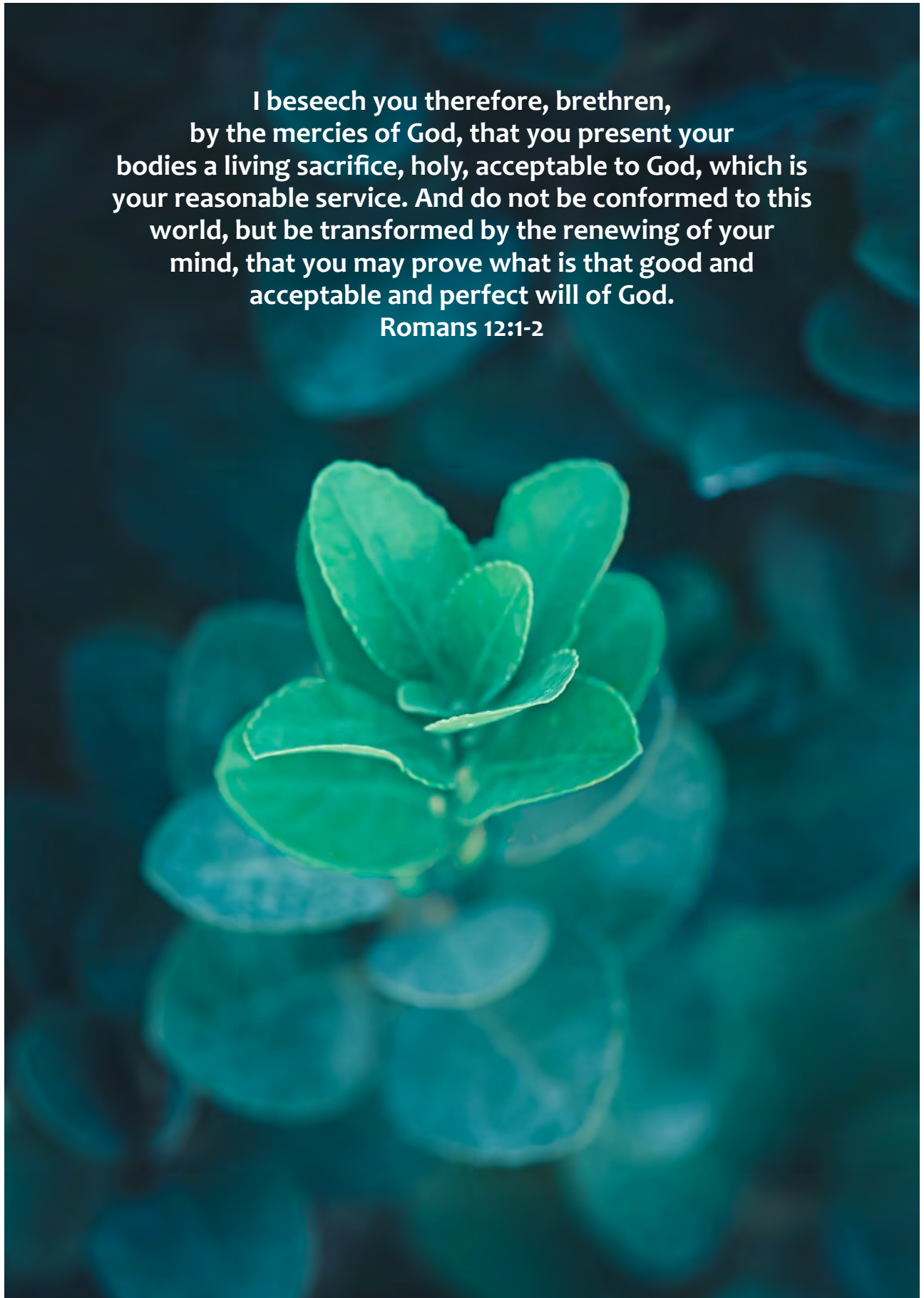
For who has known the mind of the LORD? Or who has become His counselor? Or who has first given to Him and it shall be repaid to him? For of Him and through Him and to Him are all things, to whom be glory forever. Amen.

Romans 11:34-36



**I beseech you therefore, brethren,
by the mercies of God, that you present your
bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is
your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this
world, but be transformed by the renewing of your
mind, that you may prove what is that good and
acceptable and perfect will of God.**

Romans 12:1-2



This exhortation of St. Paul's is based upon the preceding statements of the eleventh chapter of this same Epistle, as is shown by the connecting word **therefore—because** of those things recited in that chapter. The **eleventh chapter** tells of the mercies of God toward both Natural Israel and Spiritual Israel—not so much to the world. But the **tenth chapter** takes up in elaborate form the mercies of God toward all His creatures. In this Epistle the Apostle is addressing those who had been Gentiles. In view of these mercies of God (His Plan of Salvation and the call of some of the Gentiles to take the places in the Body of Christ, lost by Natural Israel) St. Paul exhorts his hearers to present their bodies living sacrifices, holy and acceptable.

He evidently is using these words as an exhortation, not to the world, but to **believers**. The introduction to the Epistle indicates that it was written to those already consecrated. But evidently some connected with the Church at Rome had not yet made a consecration. Some who were believers, who had come to a knowledge of the Lord and had counted the cost of self-sacrifice, but who had not given themselves fully to the Lord, might yet become brethren in the Truth in the full sense. The Apostle's words would apply equally to both classes—those who had presented their bodies living sacrifices, and those contemplating doing so. It would have been fully as proper to say, Brethren, you who have already given yourselves to the Lord, I beseech you that you fulfill your Vow of Consecration; for your bodies are holy and acceptable to God.

The Heavenly Father never forces anybody; but He tells them that He is willing to accept sacrifices, and that now is the acceptable time to present them. He sets forth the fact that self-denial and sacrifice are the only terms upon which one can come into fellowship with Him. But nowhere does He urge or command any one to make a consecration. To do so would be to change the matter from *sacrifice* to *obligation*; and the very thought of *sacrifice* is in opposition to *requirement*.

This exhortation, viewed from the standpoint of one who has not completed his consecration, might be understood to mean, if you take this step of consecration, remember that then the merit of Christ will be imputed to you, and that through the arrangement which He has made in Christ God is willing to accept you. This vitalization of your justification which the Lord has granted you has constituted you holy. And because the Lord counts you holy, and yourselves wholly acceptable to Him, you should continue to do good works—complete the good work which you have begun. The sacrifice being esteemed of God holy and acceptable, the results will be grand and glorious.

It is, therefore, a reasonable service. The Apostle tells us the conditions. All who would have this great blessing must offer themselves living sacrifices, holy and acceptable to God. It is ours to present our bodies. It is not the New Creature who does the presenting; there is no New Creature at the time the body is presented. Our natural mind discerned from the Message of the Lord that there is a more excellent way—of harmony with the Lord—and we desired to come thus into harmony with Him. And that new, or changed, will presents our earthly interests and all that we have in sacrifice. We are altogether human when we offer ourselves to the Lord. We are then begotten to a new mind, a new hope, and thus are New Creatures.

We presented our bodies, and they were made **living** sacrifices: they were then received by God and were slain with Christ and we arose to walk in newness of life. By the body is meant also all the earthly interests, both present, past and future—every interest that we ever had or might ever have. Such a one gives up all the hope or right he might otherwise have had in a future Restitution. The covenant is a complete one. The sacrifice of such became holy and acceptable to God as soon as the merit of Jesus was imputed; and our offering continues to be acceptable to the end. To render all that we have in the service of the Lord is not only a most reasonable thing, but an offering far too small. It is far less than we would gladly render to Him who has manifested toward us such wondrous compassion and grace! R. 5422

Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

– Romans 12:2 –

It is not that we put any quality of our mind to be ruler, but that we put the will of the Lord there and accept Him to be Ruler in our wills, in our minds. Now, having reached this position in which Christ is the great Head, we should seek not only to cleanse the expressions of our tongues, and our actions, but to cleanse our minds also and bring them into subjection. It is our reasonable service that we cleanse not only our bodies and our words, but the very inmost thoughts of our minds. Anything that could be injurious either to ourselves or to another—envy, strife, hatred, bitterness—is to be put down and submitted to the new regulations, the new will which has taken control.

The very object of the begetting of the New Creature, the very object of giving it the opportunity of the present life, is to develop character and to crystallize that character. This seems to be the thought of the Apostle when he says, “Whom He [God] did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son” —not partly conformed, but fully conformed to the image of His Son. Our mental state, our will, must be fully fashioned after the mind of Jesus Christ. And His will was full obedience to the Father’s will, to the extent of self-sacrifice, even unto death. Gradually we come to love the Lord’s way. We grow in grace and in knowledge and in the love of God, so that eventually we come to hate the things we once loved and to love the things we once despised. Thus as the Apostle describes it, we are transformed by the renewing of our minds. R. 4975 and R. 5726

For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith.

– Romans 12:3 –

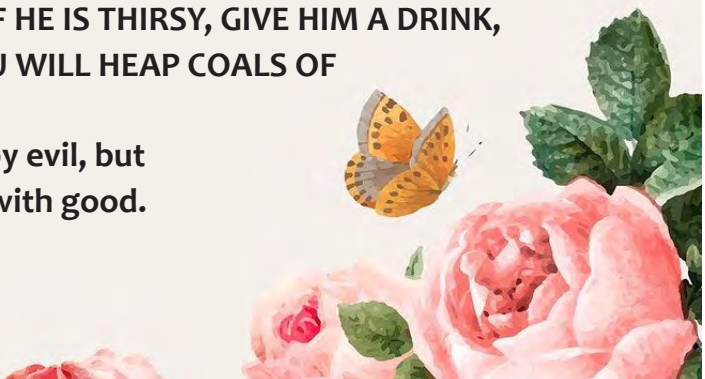
Through the grace given unto him Paul foresaw that one of the greatest temptations among Christians would be ambition to be great and highly esteemed, if not by the world, at least among those in the faith, and to do some great thing that would attract attention, rather than the common things that constitute the bulk of actual service. And therefore he counsels every man to take a sober estimate of his talents, neither overrating nor underrating them, so that he may make the best use of them as a wise and faithful steward.

The word here rendered “faith” is from the Greek *pistis*, otherwise translated **fidelity, assurance**. We have much to do with our own faith and assurance and exercise a certain amount of it before we are begotten of the spirit at all, else we could not be justified by faith, for justification precedes our presenting of ourselves living sacrifices and our acceptance and begetting of the holy spirit. This much of faith is our own evidently, but after we have received of the Lord’s spirit our faith may grow exceedingly, so that we will be able to walk by faith and not by sight—to accept the things that are not seen, and to sacrifice for them things that are seen and temporal. It may be said with propriety that the attitude which permits us to receive God’s message of grace unto justification is all of God, in the sense that all of our blessings are from above, and the faith which will enable the consecrated ones to come off victors is not merely the natural faith with which they started, and with which they laid hold upon the Lord and justification, but a higher attainment of faith, the result of being taught of God through his Word and by his providence. R. 1586 and R. 2811



Romans 12:9-21

Let love be without hypocrisy.
Abhor what is evil.
Cling to what is good.
Be kindly affectionate to one another
with brotherly love.
In honor, give preference to one another.
Be diligent.
Be fervent in spirit, serving the Lord.
Rejoice in hope.
Be patient in tribulation.
Continue steadfastly in prayer.
Distribute to the needs of the saints.
Be given to hospitality.
Bless those who persecute you---bless and
do not curse.
Rejoice with those who rejoice, and
weep with those who weep.
Be of the same mind toward one another.
Do not set your mind on high things, but
associate with the humble.
Do not be wise in your own opinion.
Repay no one evil for evil.
Have regard for good things in the sight of all men.
If it is possible, as much as depends on you,
live peaceably with all men.
Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place
to wrath, for it is written, "VENGEANCE IS MINE, I WILL
REPAY," says the Lord. Therefore "IF YOUR ENEMY IS
HUNGRY, FEED HIM. IF HE IS THIRSTY, GIVE HIM A DRINK,
FOR IN SO DOING YOU WILL HEAP COALS OF
FIRE ON HIS HEAD."
Do not be overcome by evil, but
overcome evil with good.



Owe no one anything except to love one another, for he who loves another has fulfilled the law.

– Romans 13:8 –

Love delights to bless, and against its pure and benevolent instincts there is no law. It recognizes the rights and liberties and proper relationship to God and fellow men of every individual, and in no sense interferes with those inalienable privileges of any of God's intelligent creatures; but rather delights in the largest development and most rapid progress of every individual. It is noble, generous, free, frank, unselfish, kind, tender-hearted, pitiful, helpful and true.

This noble benevolence, Paul says, we owe to every man.—“Owe no man any thing but to love one another.” This debt we owe, not only to our brethren in Christ, but also to our brethren of the human family. Originally God created man in his own image, and though that image has been sadly defaced in all, he has planned to restore it, and himself so loved the world, even while they were yet sinners, that he redeemed them at great cost. And if God so loved the world, then we also should love them with the same benevolence, kindness and tender compassion; and if we love God and have our hearts filled with his spirit we will delight to do so. R. 1789

Let us walk honestly, as in the day, not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying. (KJV)

–Romans 13:13 –

We are inclined to lay special stress upon the word **honestly**, for we believe that the Apostle used it advisedly and in a special sense. As we look about us we find that dishonesty is very prevalent, not only in the world, where we expect a certain amount of duplicity, misrepresentation, deception and hypocrisy, but even among professing Christians.

Every true child of God should see to it that he is honest, not only in money matters, but in his treatment of his neighbors and his brethren in the Church, and above all, in his confessions respecting his faith. The test is being made along this line, and those who love the favor of men rather than the favor of God will be given opportunity to prove that they are unfit for the Kingdom, whatever else they may be fit for. The Apostle tells us (2 Thes. 2:11) when speaking of this evil day, that God will send strong delusions that a certain class may believe a lie, because they were not honest, but acted deceptively, hypocritically. The lesson to us is that, however others may walk, we must see to it that we “walk honestly as in the day” (Rom. 13:13), as though we were living in the broad daylight, so that if the world understood all about any transaction of ours they would realize that we are honest—even as the Lord understands all about it. Any other course is dangerous and is not “walking as in the day.” —John 11:9. R. 5097

Let not him who eats despise him who does not eat, and let not him who does not eat judge him who eats, for God has received him. Who are you to judge another's servant? To his own master he stands or falls. Indeed, he will be made to stand, for God is able to make him stand.

– Romans 14:3-4 –

Some may endeavor to condemn them and may indeed succeed in finding fault with them for having imperfect judgments, and being sometimes imperfect in their conduct or words; but what will it matter that such should condemn those whom the Lord approves? The Lord informs us that he knows our imperfections better than any could know them; but that of his own grace he has provided a covering for our unintentional blemishes through the merit of the sacrifice of his Son. Who then shall succeed in condemning these whom God approves, whom God justifies, whom God declares to be right and acceptable to him through Jesus Christ? Others may claim that they are actually as nearly perfect as some of the faithful “elect,” but the difference is that whereas God must reject all to any degree blemished, these have the covering of his Grace in Christ and are accepted according to their intentions and endeavors; and, therefore, they shall be able to stand, for he is able to make them stand in their testing or judgment. R. 3052

One person esteems one day above another; another esteems every day alike. Let each be fully convinced in his own mind.

– Romans 14:5 –

Let each carry out fully the conviction of his own mind—whatever he believes to be the will of God for himself. When St. Paul urges that each “be fully persuaded in his own mind,” he does not mean that each should make up his mind what is the will of God for all His children, and then stick to his opinion, whether right or wrong, and be unwilling to listen to or consider the thought of any others of the brethren on the subject. On the contrary, he urges growth into the full liberty of Christ, counseling patience and consideration on the part of the stronger for the weaker. He approves the stronger, and plainly states that the brother who thinks himself under bondage regarding the eating of meat, the observance of Sabbath, etc., is the **weak** brother.

The Apostle approves the stronger, and plainly states that the brother who thinks himself under a **bondage** regarding meat, or Sabbath days, fast days, etc., is the **weak** brother. But he urges that if such a weak brother observes such a bondage, not as an attempt to “**keep the Law**” and to justify himself before God, ignoring Christ’s redemption sacrifice, but because he thinks that our Redeemer wishes him to be bound by such ordinances, then the stronger ones should not rail at, or make light of, his conscientious weakness, but rather receive him fully as a brother, trusting that discipline and experience and growth in grace and knowledge will gradually bring him to the liberty which others reach more quickly. R. 1734 and R. 5556

If the stronger brethren by sarcasm and influence were to force the weaker ones to use a liberty they did not realize, it would be forcing them into sin; for any violation of conscience is sin. (Rom. 14:23.) Therefore the weaker brethren should be left to the liberty of their consciences. R. 1734

So then each of us shall give account of himself to God. Therefore let us not judge one another anymore, but rather resolve this, not to put a stumbling block or a cause to fall in our brother's way.

– Romans 14:12-13 –

By these words the Apostle seeks to impress the thought that the weaker brethren are not to judge and censure the others, neither the stronger brethren to judge and censure the weaker. All are to remember that God is the Judge, and that each one needs to criticise himself rather than to criticise his brother—to make sure that he himself has a conscience void of offence toward God and man. Each one so doing may feel sure eventually of the divine approval. The same thought is given in a preceding verse (v. 10), which reads,

For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ.

Romans 14:10

Each one of the Church is on trial, and our Lord Jesus as the Father's representative criticises and examines the various members of his Body, not with a view to cutting them off, but, on the contrary, for their aid and encouragement, assistance and instruction and preparation for the Kingdom. Therefore, we are not to gauge ourselves entirely by what our fellow-men might think, but to have special respect to the Lord and his judgment of us. Hence the Apostle argues, Let us not, therefore, judge [condemn] one another any more, but let our judgment rather turn to ourselves, to see that nothing in our conduct toward our brethren shall be in any sense of the word contrary to our Master's new law of love. Watching that law carefully, and applying it to ourselves, we will be hindered from any course of conduct which would tend to stumble a brother; and such a love for the brethren as would lead us to the renouncement of our own liberties where necessary would certainly be pleasing in the sight of the Lord and the heavenly Father, and assure us a place and a higher honor than would otherwise be ours.

We who constitute the Church which is the Body of Christ are not judges one of another; all judgment is vested in the Head, the Redeemer of all. Each one now accepted as a member of the Church must ultimately stand the inspection of the Head of the Church; for our present membership in His Body is a probationary one. Loyalty, faithfulness to the Head of the Church now, will bring to us eventually membership in His glorious Body, the Church beyond the veil—His joint-heirs in the Kingdom—His Bride.

Instead of judging, condemning, fellow-members of the consecrated Body, we should be full of sympathy for them. We should realize that we do not know thoroughly their trials, their difficulties, their environments, their heredities. This should make us very sympathetic towards all the brethren. Our keen sense of justice, our love of righteousness, our hatred of iniquity, should find its principal exercise in self-criticism, and in watchfulness not to do anything that would stumble a brother—not to do anything that would discourage a brother or cause him to fall away from the faith and the works which the Lord requires. R. 4084 and R. 5324

Let us pursue the things which make for peace and the things by which one may edify another. Do not destroy the work of God for the sake of food. All things indeed are pure, but it is evil for the man who eats with offense.

– Romans 14:19-20 –

Though realizing his liberties in Christ, his freedom from all bondage, as of holy days, new moons, sabbaths, meats, etc. (Col. 2:16; Rom. 14:5), the Apostle was not anxious to use his liberty except as between the Lord and himself, and such of the brethren as could appreciate the matter. Those who were weak and bounden by laws and ceremonies and human traditions received from the elders, found in the Apostle one who did not seek to triumph over them by boasting of his liberty and their bondage. On the contrary, if they were in bondage to the Law he waived for the time his own liberties that he might thereby through sympathy and patience help them to the same liberty which he enjoyed at heart. And so we find him advising and urging others. He said:

You find yourselves free from the law and those restraints which are upon your brethren, the Jews, you now say they are no longer bondages to you. You are thus greatly relieved: nevertheless, use not your liberties for an occasion of the flesh. You may know that an idol is nothing, and that meat offered to an idol (the custom amongst Gentiles) is not thereby injured, and you may feel perfectly free to eat that meat; but if a brother is with you who does not yet realize this freedom and see matters from this loftier standpoint, do not put a barrier between your heart and his by using your liberties, but rather for his sake avoid the use of that liberty that you may have the greater influence with him and bring him to appreciate the still greater liberties which are ours through Christ.

The blessings of the Kingdom of God are not merely these liberties to eat what we please without condemnation, and to be without restraint from fast days, new moons and sabbaths! No, no; the liberties which we have as the incipient Kingdom of God are far better than these, though they include these. The more important things are the freedom from sin, the communion and fellowship with the Lord, and the prospect of a glorious inheritance in the future. Righteousness, peace, joy in the holy spirit, these are the fruits of our new relationship to Christ which are to be specially enjoyed, and in comparison to which our liberty to eat and not to eat what we please and to observe such holy days as we may please are insignificant. —Rom. 14:17-20. R. 2118

As children of God each one of us should use care that others are not injured by our liberty in Christ; for this would be condemned by the Law of Love. The Apostle clearly emphasizes this thought in this Epistle to the Church at Rome. He points out that all the Lord's children are not alike "strong in the faith." Some, weak in the faith, can see that Jesus is our Redeemer, but cannot realize as yet the liberty which we as sons have in Christ. One realizes that he is at liberty to eat whatever agrees with him; while another, who is weak, eats vegetables only, lest he violate some law under which he thinks himself. Some Christians condemn their brethren who eat meat, seeming to forget that our Lord ate flesh. We should learn to grant each other full liberty of conscience; the stronger should not despise the weaker, nor should the weaker judge others by himself. It should be sufficient for each of us to know that God accepts the others as well as ourselves, and manifests His acceptance by blessing them in His service. It is the same with reference to observance of days. One esteems one day above another, as the Apostle says; while another esteems every day alike. Let each carry out fully the conviction of his own mind—whatever he believes to be the will of God for himself. R. 5555

It is good neither to eat meat nor drink wine nor do anything by which your brother stumbles or is offended or is made weak.

– Romans 14:21 –

Anybody realizing his own liberty, as the Apostle did, might eat freely, according to his convenience, without any reproof from his conscience or in the sight of God. But the brother still in the dark respecting his liberty should have consideration—should not be urged to violate his conscience. Rather, the brother of enlightened mind should yield to the other, and abstain from using his liberty, lest he should tempt his brother to violate his conscience.

The brother who is strong, mentally, morally and physically, should gladly abstain from anything that would stumble his brother, or anybody else upon whom he exercised an influence. “Destroy not him with thy meat, for whom Christ died.” (Rom. 14:15.) If Christ loved the world so much as to leave His Heavenly riches and glory to die for sinners, should not we, in proportion as we have His Spirit, be glad to lay down our lives for the brethren, as the Apostle elsewhere exhorts us? And if so, should we not be much more ready to abstain from the use of comparatively trifling liberties for the sake of our weaker brother, for whom Christ died? This is a strong argument. Who can deny it?

Restrain yourself of your liberties, preserve others from the temptation too strong for them, and increase your own influence by faithfully abstaining from everything that might appear to be an evil in the sight of others, however right it might be in your own sight, and however correct your own judgment of the Divine Law on the subject might be. R. 5324

We then who are strong ought to bear with the scruples of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Let each of us please his neighbor for his good, leading to edification. For even Christ did not please Himself, but as it is written, “THE REPROACHES OF THOSE WHO REPROACHED YOU FELL ON ME.”

– Romans 15:1-3 –

With this light upon the Apostle’s words, our thought is that the primary meaning of the word **neighbors** as used by St. Paul is, those closest to us. That is to say, in the Church of Christ, our brethren are our neighbors; they are the ones nearest, closest to our hearts. All the children of God are our brethren; they are particularly our neighbors because they are on our own plane. We should especially seek to please these to their edification. This does not mean that we should necessarily please them according to the flesh; for this would, in many cases be quite the reverse of their edification. If we please the brethren rightly, we shall rather “stir up their pure minds,” their spiritual minds, to love and faith and zeal, to good works. This implies that the word please is used here in a limited sense.

It is not possible for us to **please** all people. The direction of our energies should be for their good as we have opportunity. Even though they be not saints, we should “provoke” them—rouse them—“to **love** and **good** works” as far as possible, and not to **anger** or **malice** or **sin** or anything unworthy. We may not always be successful in pleasing people to their edification. There may be times when even the

brethren will feel aggrieved rather than pleased at our efforts to serve them. We think, however, that if we **seek** to please them to edification, striving to exercise the spirit of a sound mind, our course will have the Lord's approval and blessing, whether it has the approval of others—even the brethren—or not.

So let every one of us endeavor to “please his neighbor for his good to edification.” This matter of neighborhood, the condition of nearness, extends, next to the Church, to our own families. Of course, as relates to earthly obligations and temporal needs our family would have the **first** claim, and would be our neighbors, very near, according to the flesh. We should seek to please them for **their** edification—should seek to do them good, as here suggested. R. 5556

For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.

– Romans 15:4 –

The Old Testament Scriptures were all carefully and religiously preserved by the Jews down to the inauguration of the Christian dispensation, and then their testimony was carefully interwoven by Christ and his inspired apostles with the further developments of divine truth due in the new dispensation of the Gospel age. And they are freely quoted and referred to by them as of divine authority, while the New Testament writings are presented as supplemental to them and of equal authority and divine inspiration; and all bear the one harmonious testimony.

The Scriptures point out to us that our comfort comes through fellowship with the heavenly Father and with our Lord Jesus: we are comforted, not by believing that they are ignorant of our weaknesses and shortcomings, nor that they have a low standard of righteousness and a sinful basis of fellowship, but quite to the contrary of all this, they comfort us with the assurance that although our every imperfection is known to the Lord he is yet very sympathetic, very merciful; and that having provided, in the great sacrifice at Calvary, a full propitiation (satisfaction) for all sins, the Lord is very pleased to apply, on behalf of each of his adopted children, in full measure, the riches of grace necessary to the covering and offsetting of every unintentional, unapproved error and failure. What comfort is here! What consolation! What privileges of fellowship with the Father and with the Son!

And this comfort, the Scriptures assure us, comes to us through the holy spirit—it is the channel, and, hence indeed, called the Comforter. (John 14:26.) Those who have the holy spirit may have the comfort; those who do not have the holy spirit may not have this comfort, this consolation. It is only as we receive of the spirit of the Lord, the mind of the Lord, his disposition, that we are able to understand and appreciate the lengths and breadths, the heights and depths of his love and compassion and provision for us, and to be comforted thereby.

Nevertheless, this comfort of the holy spirit (the channel of divine favor), reaches us through the Scriptures, for the Scriptures are the medium, or sub-channel through which the knowledge of God's grace and the comfort of all knowledge reach us; in the Apostle's language, “Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and **comfort of the Scriptures** might have hope.” —Rom. 15:4. R. 1584 and R. 2664

Now I urge you, brethren, note those who cause divisions and offenses, contrary to the doctrine which you learned, and avoid them.

– Romans 16:17 –

He exhorts that those teachers who favor divisions in the flock of Christ be “watched,” and turned away from; because they are not following the Lord’s will, but their own. And he adds,

For those who are such do not serve our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly, and by smooth words and flattering speech deceive the hearts of the simple.

Romans 16:18

It will be remembered that in the close of our Lord’s ministry there seemed to be a turn of the tide in favor of that Harvest message, so far as public opinion was concerned; this led the religious rulers and teachers of the people to the more bitter opposition, which eventuated in our Lord’s crucifixion. May it not be that with the close of this Age, Present Truth may obtain a degree of public recognition which will serve to draw against it and its servants the ire and the fire of some who occupy prominent places and great influence in religious matters! We do not know, but we should not be surprised if such would be the result.

Remember the Master’s words—It is needful that offenses and divisions come, but woe to that man by whom the offense cometh. (Matt. 18:7; Rom. 16:17; 1 Cor. 11:19.) Let us not by our acts or words or looks drive such from us, except in so far as faithfulness in speaking the truth boldly and in love will do it. Let the truth make the separation. Speak the truth in love, and stand firmly by it. It is the power of God, not only in the first separating and gathering, but it will be the power also in the second separating and casting out. “For the word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing of soul and spirit and of the joints and marrow, and is a discernor [manifestor] of the thoughts and intents of the heart.” —Heb. 4:12. R. 4376 and R. 1279

Note also [Paul’s] faithful warning against false teachers [in Acts 20:28-30], who would surely develop in their midst; against wolves in sheep’s clothing, who would not spare the flock while selfishly seeking their own temporal advantage. The Apostle did not counsel the handling of these wolves very gently, as some teachers of today advise. He did not say, you must call them all brethren, and tell them they are probably as near the truth as you are, and that you have a broad charity for all sorts of vain philosophies, etc., etc. No, Paul was not the man for such compromises. —Rom. 16:17,18; 2 Thes. 3:6,14; 2 Cor. 6:14-18; 2 Tim. 2:15-19. We are not to render bitter words for bitter words, slander for slander, nor reviling for reviling. It is not for us to smite them, either physically or with the tongue—nor even in our thoughts, but rather to pity them and to pray for them. Avoiding them does not mean excommunicating them, nor any other unkindness. It merely means what it says— “Avoid them.” Our avoidance of him for a time may be the very best lesson we could give him of our detestation of his attitude, his condition. R. 1559 and R. 4327

And the God of peace will crush Satan under your feet shortly. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen.

– Romans 16:20 –

Many are the Scriptures which seem to tell us of the final destruction of Satan; as, for instance, Romans 16:20, which declares that God will ultimately bruise Satan under the feet of the Church, thus associating the Church, the Body of Christ, with the Lord, the Head. This corresponds with the Divine statement in Eden that ultimately the Seed of the woman would crush the Serpent's head—ultimately destroy the Serpent and all that he stands for: namely, sin and rebellion against God.

Thus, eventually the wages of sin and death must be meted out to any willful, persistent rebel against the Divine Law, whether he be an outward rebel or one secretly disloyal. The lesson is one for all of God's people and for the whole world. If we know the Spirit of the Lord in respect to sin, happy are we if we conform our lives thereto.

Let us mark well the course that will ultimately lead to Satan's destruction. Let us mark well also the course of Jesus, which led to the highest glory. Which example shall we follow? Shall we in humility walk in the footsteps of our Redeemer, and become His joint-heirs, or shall we take the other course of pride, and thus become disciples of the Adversary, and reach his doom?

Not very long, now, we may hope, will it be until the elect seed of Abraham, the elect seed of the woman, shall be complete, and the work of treading down evil and ultimately destroying it, and eventually destroying Satan himself, with all who intelligently and willfully are coworkers with him in his rebellion against divine love and justice, will be accomplished. OV305 and R. 2842

The law entered that the offense might abound. But where sin abounded, grace abounded much more.

Romans 5:20



DOXOLOGY

Now to Him who is able to establish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery kept secret since the world began but now made manifest, and by the prophetic Scriptures made known to all nations, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, for obedience to the faith—to God, alone wise, be glory through Jesus Christ forever. Amen.

Romans 16:25-27

First Letter to the Corinthians

Written from Ephesus, c. A.D. 53-54

St. Paul made but a brief stay at Athens, the Lord's providence guiding him to Corinth. Athens did not prove to be a very successful field for the Apostle Paul's labors. He quickly perceived that, although its citizens were chiefly engaged in hearing new things and in philosophizing on every subject, including religion, nevertheless, the tendency of science and philosophy, falsely so-called, so occupied their attention and so satisfied their minds that they were not as ready for the truth as some others less highly educated and less philosophical. The Apostle's experience in this respect coincides with that of all who, in sincerity, preach the gospel of Christ stripped of all human invention and philosophy. His experience illustrates his declaration that God does not choose many great or wise or learned, according to the course or standard of this world, but chiefly the poor of this world, socially, philosophically and financially, to be heirs of the Kingdom; because this class is more inclined to receive the faith and to become rich therein.

Leaving Athens, the Apostle journeyed about forty miles to Corinth, a prominent city of Greece, though very different from Athens. It was a commercial city, noted for its manufactures, architecture, paintings, Corinthian brass, or bronze, etc. It was much less moral than Athens, much less refined, much less given to the study of religious themes, but, nevertheless, a better field for the gospel. Like the Apostle, we are to discern the most fruitful fields, and spend our energies upon them, leaving the other fields for a more convenient season, whether it shall come during the present age or during the Millennium. The Apostle apparently stayed but a few days at Athens, but abode a year and a half at Corinth—the irreligious city, where he found many honest-hearted people, to whom the Lord directed the gospel through him.

Corinth was nicknamed the Vanity Fair of the World, because it was a center of frivolity, pleasure-seeking, etc. It is credited with having been one of the most licentious and profligate cities of its day. It may at first seem very strange to us that this vilest of the great cities should yield larger spiritual results than any other, so that the Lord would specially specify that he had “much people” there and would providentially detain his ambassador there a year and a half, while in other places he had been permitted to remain only a few days or a few weeks. The philosophy of the matter seems to be this: Outward morality frequently leads to a pharisaical spirit of self-righteousness, which is most pernicious and a deadly foe to true righteousness. On the other hand, where sin stands out glaringly it has a repulsive effect upon the pure in heart, upon all who love righteousness, and this repulsion from the evil seems to prepare such hearts the better for a genuine consecration to the Lord and for his message. This theory holds good, at least in the missionary work at Corinth, as in contrast with that of places much more respectable in reputation.

The lesson for us in this connection is that we should be on guard in our own hearts against this self-righteous spirit of outward observance, which lacks true holiness, true sanctification. Is it not along this line that the Lord found fault with one of the seven Churches, saying, “Because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew thee out of my mouth? Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.” (Rev. 3:16-17.) This is our Lord's charge against the present state of the Church, so rich in earthly advantages, so rich in spiritual privileges, so self-satisfied. Let us be on guard lest in any manner or to any degree such a lukewarmness should come over us and we come under Divine disfavor.

Silas had remained for a time at Berea, and Timothy at Thessalonica, and later he returned to Philippi. Meantime St. Paul was apparently considerably cast down. His epistle to the Corinthians,

written later on, clearly implies his discouragement and possible sickness. He wrote, "I was with you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling." (1 Cor. 2:3.) His rough experiences at Philippi, his small success at Athens, the slenderness of his purse, and his need of fellowship, contributed to make him rather downcast, and he informs us that the Lord encouraged him with a vision. Soon after his arrival at Corinth he found Aquilla and Priscilla his wife. They were tent-makers, and this being Paul's trade (as every Jewish youth was required to learn a trade) he abode and labored with them. Of this period of his affliction he wrote to the Thessalonians, "Therefore, brethren, we were comforted over you, in all our affliction and distress, by your faith." (1 Thes. 3:7.) And later he wrote of his experience to the Corinthians, saying, "Even unto this present hour we both hunger, and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwelling place; and labor, working with our own hands: being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it; being defamed, we entreat: we are made as the filth of the world, and are the offscouring of all things unto this day." —1 Cor. 4:11-13.

Finally Silas and Timothy arrived, bringing with them not only good fellowship and encouraging news from Berea, Thessalonica and Philippi, but also, as the Apostle tells us, a gift—quite probably from Lydia, the seller of purple dyes, supposed to have been comfortably circumstanced. The effect of these encouragements is intimated. Paul was pressed in spirit—he felt a fresh vigor urging him to still more vigorously present his message and bring matters to a focus and crisis at the synagogue. After testifying with great boldness and finding his message repelled by the majority of the synagogue, St. Paul forced the crisis himself by shaking his garment as though he would not even take from them the dust, saying to those who had opposed and blasphemed, "Your blood be upon your own heads. I am clean. From henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles." There are times when positiveness is absolutely necessary, even though it cause a division amongst those who profess to serve the same God. There are times when much more good can be obtained thus than by a continuance under disadvantageous conditions. R. 3143, R. 4417, R. 4416

And he departed from there and entered the house of a certain man named Justus, one who worshiped God, whose house was next door to the synagogue. Then Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his household. And many of the Corinthians, hearing, believed and were baptized.

Acts 18:7-8

One of the chief men of the synagogue, and various of the people at Corinth were favorably impressed by the gospel message, and the Church of Corinth thus took its start in the house of Justus. The believers testified their acceptance by baptism—the true baptism of consecration, we may be sure, first, but also the outward symbolic water baptism, which would be a testimony to others. R. 3144

To the church of God which is at Corinth, to those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all who in every place call on the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. I thank my God always concerning you for the grace of God which was given to you by Christ Jesus, that you were enriched in everything by Him in all utterance and all knowledge.

1 Corinthians 1:2-5



I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.

– 1 Corinthians 1:10 –

[St. Paul] reproved the Corinthian Church because of a tendency toward sectarianism among them. (1 Cor. 1:10-13; 3:3-6.) They were dividing into Paulites, Apollosites and Peterites, while a few rightly clung to the name Christian. Each of these teachers had his peculiarities of manner in teaching, which caused some to esteem one, and others another, most highly. But they all had the one gospel—the one Lord, the one faith and the one baptism. The spirit of favoritism, which led to factions and divisions, and to the exaltation of sectarian or party names, or to the name of an individual teacher, to be the standard around which to rally, the Apostle declared was an evidence of carnality—proof of a worldly spirit.

For it has been declared to me concerning you, my brethren, by those of Chloe's household, that there are contentions among you. Now I say this, that each of you says, "I am of Paul," or "I am of Apollos," or "I am of Cephas," or "I am of Christ." Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul?

1 Corinthians 1:11-13

While the taking of different names was wrong, it was an evidence of a deeper wrong—of a selfish, party spirit. It was an evidence that those Corinthians who took the party names had never appreciated the oneness of the body of Christ; that they did not really appreciate that Christ is the only head, leader and standard; and that his is the only name by which his followers should recognize themselves and each other.

That which causes dissension amongst the Lord's people is either a lack of loyalty or a lack of knowledge. If it is a lack of loyalty, they will gradually drift away. The Lord does not choose to force any of His family. He is choosing such as worship Him in spirit and in truth, such as are in every respect loyal. He has set aside for the purpose of selecting this class the entire Gospel Age. And this company will be a Little Flock. They will, evidently, be a very select class. They are required to walk by faith, not by sight.

Not many have the loyalty to God and to righteousness to walk that way and to count the world as loss and dross—as nothing, with all its projects. As the disloyal ones leave the ranks, more and more the loyal ones will find themselves drawn together, and more and more of oneness will be found among those who are faithful. This would necessarily be true in every time and in every country. All who are thoroughly loyal would desire to do the Father's will, desire to lay down their lives in the Father's service. And this desire would make them one. R. 1570 and R. 5358

***We preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks foolishness, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.
1 Corinthians 1:23-24***

For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called. But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty. And the base things of the world and the things which are despised, God has chosen, and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are, that no flesh should glory in His presence.

– 1 Corinthians 1:26-29 –

Do we not see that as a rule the men and women of largest natural ability, and greatest natural wisdom, fail to obtain the riches of divine grace in knowledge and in experience, which some of the less favored naturally do attain? Surely, the reason of this generally is that the greater our mental poverty, the greater our humility, and consequently the greater our trust in the Lord's wisdom, and reliance upon his instruction, and obedience thereto.

Not always is this true, of course; for we find that some of the most haughty and self-conceited of our race are really the most poverty stricken as respects real ability: and occasionally we find some possessed of rare abilities, who are extremely humble minded and very reliant upon God; but neither of these cases is the rule: they are exceptions to the rule.

Gather together a company of God's devoted, consecrated people in any place and scan them critically, and you will be convinced that not many wise, or great, or mighty are being chosen; but chiefly the poor of this world, rich in faith to be heirs of the Kingdom. The worldly-wise today are not to be found among the open scoffers and infidels, for worldly wisdom dictates to them a different course; they are to be found rather in the most respectable and aristocratic congregations of professed Christians. Many of them are too honorable to be open hypocrites, and therefore rarely take part in meetings or say anything respecting their inmost convictions, —their inmost thoughts or doubts respecting the creed of their own church and the creeds of all other churches; nevertheless they feel that it is wise to support Christianity, because of its moral influence on their families, their employes and their neighbors; besides even the doctrines which they at heart repudiate have, they believe, a restraining influence upon the "lower classes:" hence their wisdom, worldly-wisdom, guides them into the support of Christianity, but forbids them to go to any extreme, such as annunciation of faith in Christ or full consecration to his service. R. 2262

**Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men,
and the weakness of God is stronger than men.
1 Corinthians 1:25**

But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God—and righteousness and sanctification and redemption.

– 1 Corinthians 1:30 –

For the humble, God has provided true wisdom in Christ. His words no less than his example show us that we are sinners and that “no man cometh unto the Father” except by him. He tells us of the Father’s pity, and of the redemption provided through his own blood, and of our privilege to accept of divine grace unto full forgiveness and reconciliation, and of our need of the heavenly wisdom for every step of the journey, if we would walk the narrow way, which leads to the glory of the Kingdom and life everlasting. And all who accept this “call” accept the great Mediator’s instruction and guidance, as the very essence of divine wisdom. With varying degrees of promptness and after varying degrees of wandering from this good Shepherd, and being sought and found by him, the faithful eventually reach the position where they put no confidence in themselves and their own wisdom, but all confidence in the wisdom of him whom God hath appointed to be our wisdom—“who of God is made unto us wisdom.” When this degree of progress has been attained, a measure of rest and contentment takes possession of the true sheep, which permits them to look up to God with confidence in every matter and at every time—especially in seasons of distress and grief and trial. They learn not to trust to their own wisdom any longer; but to trust implicitly to the wisdom and goodness of the great Shepherd. R. 2263

Wisdom We first receive, through learning of His sacrificial work on our behalf, necessary wisdom, instruction and guidance, by which we may through His merit come to the Father. And He is our Wisdom all along the way.

Righteousness In addition to His being our Wisdom, Jesus becomes our Righteousness. He covers our sins. He imputes to us His own righteousness, the merit of His own sacrifice. And this imputation brings us to a condition of complete righteousness—not **actual**, but reckoned, which God is pleased to recognize in the way He has arranged.

Sanctification The step of consecration on the part of those who become Jesus’ disciples is in the Scriptures called **sanctification**. But it is not the same sanctification which comes to us through Him. God says, “Sanctify yourselves, and I will sanctify you”—that is, Set yourselves apart, and then I will set you apart; I will put you into this place where you desire to come. So, to all of us who come to the Father through Him, Jesus not only becomes our Justification, but through Him we also have Sanctification—the complete setting apart.

Redemption Those who make satisfactory progress will have in the resurrection full deliverance from sin, from all imperfections of the flesh, and from the flesh itself—full deliverance through the power of the First Resurrection. Christ thus becomes our Deliverance. We shall then attain the full completeness of sons of God on the Divine plane.

In all these things Christ is the Center; through Him alone can we obtain these blessings. While the Father gives them, they are given through His Son, who is the Father’s Representative. Jesus received the Spirit of the Father and has shed it forth upon us. R. 5507

For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified.

– 1 Corinthians 2:2 –

The thought of our text seems to be that whatever the Apostle knew respecting other matters prominent in his day—customs of the Age, scientific questions, etc. —he would ignore. He would be a **specialist**. He would confine his thoughts, words and teachings along this **one line**; for he thought it was **worthy**. He had been at Corinth as an ambassador of Christ. He was not there to air his knowledge, but to tell the **message of the Kingdom**. He would make preaching the Gospel his one business, to accomplish which he felt that all of his knowledge and energy were too little.

The Apostle did not determine to ignore all of his knowledge without having a good reason, or purpose therefore. It was because he wished to concentrate all of his attention and influence upon one great subject. That subject was Jesus Christ, Jesus the Anointed; Jesus the Messiah was the main thought of all his preaching. He realized that the great Messiah was a part of the Divine Program which had been promised—the “Seed” which was to bless all the families of the earth; that Jesus was that great Messiah, and that all men should recognize Him, should flock to His standard. But St. Paul would preach, not only that Jesus was the Messiah, but that He was the **crucified** Messiah, for he would not be ashamed of the Divine teaching.

For us who see the importance of the Gospel, we know that this Gospel of the Kingdom, of which the Apostle was not ashamed, teaches that the elect Church is to be the Bride of Christ; that Messiah is to bless the whole world; that Jesus is the Messiah; that He was crucified, dead, buried, raised from the dead by His Father; that His crucifixion was a part of the great Divine Plan, and that without this very arrangement no salvation could be effected, either for the Church, or for the world in the future. Therefore, as the Apostle did, we are preaching Jesus, the Crucified One, who died for our sins, who rose again for our justification, and who, coming in glory with His Church, is the great Messiah, to bless the world through natural Israel.

The same truth that influenced St. Paul should influence us. If, therefore, any of the brethren feel disposed to go out after the manner of Babylon and preach something else, here is the **reproof** — “Not...**anything** save Jesus Christ and Him crucified.” This is the **only subject**. St. Paul would be as though he knew nothing else. This subject would be the **one** thing to which he would give his time and attention. Let it be so with us! R. 5044

For as it is written: “EYE HAS NOT SEEN, NOR EAR HEARD, NOR HAVE ENTERED INTO THE HEART OF MAN THE THINGS WHICH GOD HAS PREPARED FOR THOSE WHO LOVE HIM.” But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God.

– 1 Corinthians 2:9-10 –

We walk by faith, not by sight, whom not having seen we love, whose heavenly home not having been described to us we realize to be grander than all earthly things, because our heavenly Lord has assured us that “eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor entered into the heart of man the things which God hath in reservation for them that love him.” These things he tells us God hath revealed unto us by his Spirit. (1 Cor. 2:9.) Not that he has given us pictures of them either by visions or mental

pictures or word pictures, but he has revealed them to us in the sense that he has revealed himself to us; and as we come to a knowledge of the Lord and to an appreciation of his great wisdom and love and justice and power—as we come to realize that he is the grand exemplification and illustration of all that is good and great and loving and wise and beautiful and true, so we know that his heavenly home and all the arrangements which God has prepared for his special elect ones must be in some very special sense far above the very glorious things which he has prepared for those of the world in general, who during the Millennial age will accept his favors and his blessed provisions.

[Jesus] promised that in due time the holy spirit would be granted as a guide and instructor to his true disciples: “He will guide you into all truth” and “show you things to come.” (John 16:13.) Some of the mysteries of God were due to be understood at once, and some more gradually down through the age, but the great unfolding of the divine mystery we are expressly told was reserved until the close of the Gospel age, when “the mystery of God should be finished,” which he hath kept secret from the foundation of the world. —Rev. 10:7.

Even so much of the divine plan as was due to be revealed by the spirit and to be understood step by step during this Gospel age, was intended only for a special class, and not for the world in general. The Apostle Paul emphasized this when he declared, “The natural man receiveth not the things of the spirit of God, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.” “But God hath revealed them unto us by his spirit; for the spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep [hidden, obscure] things of God.” —1 Cor. 2:14,10. R. 3892 and R. 2208

For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

– 1 Corinthians 3:11 –

When this foundation of the spiritual temple was laid, all who came to a realization of the importance of the great work thereby accomplished rejoiced and praised the Lord. And this rejoicing in the strength and security of the foundation of our hopes never ceases. Praise the Lord! wells up from every heart that realizes the redemption accomplished by the precious blood of Christ, shed for many for the remission of sins. Upon this sure foundation the temple structure has been gradually and steadily progressing. The living stones are taken out of the quarry (the world), and, by the experiences and discipline of the present life, they are shaped and chiseled and polished and thus fitted for their places in the temple.

If Christ be the chief corner stone, the top stone and also the foundation, as he surely is (1 Cor. 3:11), the manifest suggestion is that the foundation of this building of God is laid in the heavens, not on earth, and that all the other living stones built upon this foundation are drawn and cemented to it by heavenly and not earthly attractions. Yes, “ye are God’s building” — “ye,” both individually and collectively, consecrated sons of God who have become the habitation of God through the spirit, ye are the temple of God. Howbeit, though now it is but a tabernacle in the flesh, and though in this tabernacle we often groan, being burdened, we know that when this tabernacle is destroyed we have a building of God, “a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.”—2 Cor. 5:1,2.

R. 1484, R. 1982

We know that if our earthly house, this tent, is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed with our habitation which is from heaven.

2 Corinthians 5:1-2

Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?

– 1 Corinthians 3:16 –

While the saints are thus individually the temples of God, they also collectively constitute the great temple in which Peter likens each individual to a living stone, and Christ to the chief or foundation corner stone, “To whom coming, as unto a living stone, . . . ye also, as living stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.” (1 Pet. 2:5.) Paul also refers to this same thought, saying, “Ye are. . . of the house of God, and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets [the foundation of hope in which they trusted, and which they pointed out to us], Jesus Christ, [he] being a foundation corner stone of it; in whom all the building fitly framed together, groweth unto an holy temple for the Lord: in whom ye also are builded together for a habitation of God through the spirit.” —Eph. 2:20-22. The living stones are being quarried out of the world, and being shaped and polished for places in the glorious Temple of which Christ is the Head. That Temple will be spiritual, unseen of men, each member like unto the glorified Jesus, far above angels.



In that Temple God by His Holy Spirit will dwell in fullest measure. Through it all mankind, during the Millennium, will be privileged to draw near to God and to receive Divine favors and uplift out of sin and death, back to the original image and likeness of God lost in Eden, redeemed for all at Calvary, and to be offered to all during Messiah's Kingdom Reign of a thousand years. Then in the largest sense of the word it will be God's Holy Place. Nothing defiling shall be brought into it. All merchandising and money-sharking will be far from it. It will be the House of Prayer, the Channel of Prayer, the way of approach of mankind to draw near to God for forgiveness of sins and for the reception of all the blessings and mercies which God has provided in Christ for whosoever will.

It was because the Temple at Jerusalem was a type of that glorious Temple of perfection that all business of every kind done in it was profanation—was spoiling the beautiful perfection of the type—was misrepresenting the future, the reality—God's intention in giving it.

As in the future the Church will be the Temple of God, perfect on the Heavenly plane, so each individual member of the Church of Christ, who has been begotten of the Holy Spirit as a New Creature, has to that extent God dwelling in his mortal body. The world in general are not temples of the Holy Spirit, however good or moral or kind or generous.

No one becomes a temple of the Holy Spirit until begotten of the Holy Spirit. That spirit-begetting constitutes him a New Creature, a son of God, even though only the will, the mind, is begotten again—even though the body is still an imperfect body of flesh. The new mind, dwelling in the old body and using it, constitutes that old body thenceforth a temple of God, and gives to that body a holiness or sanctity which it did not have before. R. 2367 and R. 5504

**For the temple of God is holy, which temple you are.
1 Corinthians 3:17**

Let a man so consider us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover it is required in stewards that one be found faithful.

– 1 Corinthians 4:1-2 –

These servants represent a stewardship—a term common in olden time. The servant did with his master's goods as though they were his own. At the same time, while given this privilege, he was required to give an account to his employer. The master did not give him these goods and say, Use them as you like, and I will call for them when I want them. On the contrary, his stewardship was to be a faithful one, and would be examined later with this end in view—to see if he had been faithful. A faithful steward would be on the lookout for everything that represented the master's interests—would be as careful of these as he would be of his own. He would use his every power for increasing the talent—represented by the money in his care. R. 5385

Judge nothing before the time, until the Lord comes, who will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness and reveal the counsels of the hearts.

– 1 Corinthians 4:5 –

God has no sympathy with **sin**; but He has so much sympathy for sinners that He has provided His well-beloved Son to redeem and uplift the sinner. He has set apart a thousand years for this work of human uplift. We note injustice; we ought to note it. But it is not our province to flay, to inflict punishment. We are to “judge nothing before the time.” We see acts committed that shock our moral sense. We are to say to ourselves, I believe that act to be criminal; but it is not for me to settle with that wrong-doer. God knows to what extent the individual is responsible; I do not. It is my duty as far as possible to view him from the standpoint of sympathy. It is my duty to assist him if it is in my power, if I have a proper opportunity—to help him out of his wrong views into right views. But even in this I am to be “wise as a serpent, and harmless as a dove.” The conduct is wrong, but I cannot know how wrong the individual may be.

But then let your spiritual senses be exercised in observing and marking the heretofore hidden things which the Truth, in its effects, is bringing to light. See how it is bringing to light the hitherto covered deformities of the various creeds. Everything is being dragged to the light, whether men are willing or not; for every hidden thing must be revealed. And not only the hidden things of creeds and systems of error and iniquity, but also the hidden things of individual character; “for there is **nothing** covered that shall not be revealed, neither hid that shall not be known. Therefore, whatsoever ye have spoken in darkness shall be heard in the light; and that which ye have spoken in the ear in closets shall be proclaimed upon the housetops.” —Luke 12:2-3.

So Love looks out and sees that the whole world is in much difficulty through the fall. And Love says, Be gentle toward all; be meek; be forbearing. We are ever to remember that we are in a world of sin, pain, sickness, death. From this viewpoint, Love will not be easily provoked, but will think kindly and sympathetically of others. Thus, beloved, shall we grow up into Christ, our glorious Head, in all things, until, made perfect and complete through His grace, we shall be presented to the Father “without spot or wrinkle or any such thing.” —Eph. 5:27. R. 5604 and R. 4798

For 1 Cor. 4:11-13, see page 90

Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump? Therefore purge out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, since you truly are unleavened. For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us.

– 1 Corinthians 5:6-7 –

Our Lord particularly called attention to the difference between an outward and formal expression of forgiveness with smooth words, and the true forgiveness which is from the heart. The former, or outward forgiveness is only lip-deep, and means that a rankling of an evil, unforgiving spirit is within, and that it will be only a matter of time until the pent-up force of malice and hatred will break forth in words of slander. God reads the heart, and, whatever the lip-professions may be, He will not consider these unless the heart and the life correspond with them. It is vain, therefore, that anyone should say, “I love my brother,” and at the same time seek, either by word or act, to do him injury. All the evil-speaking, malice, hatred, envy, strife, proceed from evil in the heart; hence the necessity, on the part of all who desire to be of the Lord’s Body, that they “purge out the old leaven of malice” that they may be members indeed of the unleavened loaf—the Body of Christ.

Such a heart-searching and cleansing, we remember, was shown in the Passover type given to the Jews. Before they gathered to eat their Passover-lamb they searched everywhere throughout their habitations for anything containing leaven or putrefaction, bones, crusts, everything. These all were burned—destroyed. So must we fulfill the antitype and “put away the old leaven” of anger, malice, hatred, strife. —1 Cor. 5:7-8.

But remember that this kind of leaven of sin cannot be thoroughly put away unless it be burned; and only love can burn it out—heavenly love, the love of God. If we have that love shed abroad in our hearts it will consume everything of the opposite character—jealousy, hatred, evil speaking, etc. Put off all these, urges the Apostle, and put on Christ and be filled with his Spirit. R. 4978 and R. 4153

Do you not know that the saints will judge the world?

– 1 Corinthians 6:2 –

We **do** know it. Our experiences now are fitting us to judge the world later, that we may do it successfully, courageously, lifting up all mankind who **will** to the glorious standard of perfection. All the evildoers shall be cut off. Then every knee will bow and every tongue will confess, to the glory of the Father and of the Son.

The Apostle says of the Jews that they are blinded; that a vail is over their hearts, that they cannot see, and he points us to the fact that in God’s due time this vail of ignorance shall be removed from Israel, and that they shall be saved from their blindness, and “shall obtain mercy through your mercy” —shall obtain mercy at the hands of elect spiritual Israel, the Body of Christ, now being selected, which will then be in power, as the kings and priests to bless and judge the world in righteousness. R. 5413 and R. 2375

For as you were once disobedient to God, yet have now obtained mercy through their disobedience, even so these also have now been disobedient, that through the mercy shown you they also may obtain mercy.

Romans 11:30-31

You were bought at a price. Therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.

– 1 Corinthians 6:20 –

We who have been purchased in advance by our Lord Jesus realize that we do not belong to ourselves. We are bought with a price and we are not our own. What does this mean to us? It is like this: Suppose that we had been drowning, or had been about to be burned to death, and suppose some one had rushed up and rescued us at the imminent risk of his own life. We would feel that we could not do enough for the one who has saved us. So the Apostle here seems to be expressing the same thought. The One who bought us not only risked His own life, but sacrificed it on our behalf, that we might be rescued from eternal death. How much more, then, should we gratefully appreciate His work of love for us! He left the glory which He had with the Father that by the grace of God He might taste death for every man; and the merit of His death has now been made available for us who have become His disciples. How our hearts should go out to Him in thankfulness! We say to ourselves, "What can I do to show my appreciation for what my Savior has done for me?"

When we look out over the everlasting future and think of the blessings of eternity, we realize that the way for us to attain these great blessings was opened to us through Jesus' death. So we gladly bring our little offering and give ourselves wholly to Him who died for us. We recognize that we are very small and imperfect; and that He is so great, so mighty—wonderful in perfection and glory. We cannot do what we would because of our weakness and blemishes, but we can show Him our loyalty. And we pray: "Lord, grant to us the opportunity to prove to Thee how much we love Thee, how glad we are to be given a small part in the carrying forward of God's great Plan." CR491

Jesus has not yet appeared before the Mercy Seat in Heaven for the world. The Bible declares of the world's present condition, "The whole world lieth in the Evil One." (1 John 5:19, R.V.) If they had been purchased, they would not be lying in the Wicked One. In our Lord's last prayer with His disciples before His crucifixion he said, "I pray not for the world, but for them which Thou hast given Me." (John 17:9.) The very next day after He offered this prayer He died for all the world—"He tasted death for every man." (Hebrews 2:9.) But He knew that the merit of His death would first affect those whom the Father would give Him out of the world. Hence He prayed in harmony with the Father's arrangement. CR491

You were bought at a price. Do not become slaves of men.
1 Corinthians 7:23

Now concerning things offered to idols: We know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge puffs up, but love edifies. And if anyone thinks that he knows anything, he knows nothing yet as he ought to know.

– 1 Corinthians 8:1-2 –

Some of the Corinthian Church had evidently made considerable progress in knowledge, and heartily appreciated the fact that since an idol is nothing, meat offered to the idol cannot in any sense of the word be injured. Nevertheless, in the conference of the apostles at Jerusalem it had been specially recommended to the Church at Antioch and to all Christian converts from the Gentiles “that they should abstain from meats offered to idols.” Some of the brethren at Corinth perceived that there could be no sin in the eating of such meat where their consciences were not violated, and concluded that the admonitions of the Apostles were not a law to the Church, but a recommendation, and had proceeded to use their liberties—to eat meat offered to idols, thinking, perhaps, thus to show not only their Christian liberty, but also that they entirely disregarded an idol.

It will help us to sympathize with them to remember that they were in daily contact with heathen neighbors who would repeatedly invite them to feasts, entertainments, weddings, etc., at which they were sure to be served with food that had been offered to idols, and which was supposed to be the better there for. To abstain, under such circumstances, would mean more or less of an insult to their friends, and the practical ostracism of themselves. Some of the brethren took the view that they could partake of such refreshments without the least injury to their consciences, and at the same time show their heathen neighbors that they were not narrow and bigoted, but broad-minded;—or perhaps explain the matter by saying, “Your god is nothing anyway, and could not injure the meat.”

The Apostle proceeds to build his argument, and to show that although it is true, as claimed, that the idol could do no injury to the food, nevertheless with Christians love must have the last word on the matter. Love, after securing knowledge and liberty, will look about to see what effect the use of liberty might have upon others; and would perceive that by reason of differing conditions of mental strength, perception, reasoning faculties, etc., all could not have exactly the same standpoint of knowledge and appreciation of principles. Love, therefore, would forbid the use of knowledge and liberty if it perceived that their exercise might work injury to another.

The question is not, Would it be a sin to eat the meat offered to idols? but, Would it be sin against the spirit of love, the law of the New Creation, to do anything which could reasonably prove a cause of stumbling to our brother;—not only to the brethren in Christ, the Church, but even to a fellow-creature according to the flesh?—for Christ died for the sins of the whole world. It is a very serious crime against the law of love and against the Lord’s injunction, to cause one of his brethren to stumble (Rom. 14:13; Rom. 14:21; Matt. 18:6), but it would also be a crime in his sight for us to stumble others,—to hinder them from becoming brethren, and of the household of faith. Hence, it is clear that although knowledge might remove all prohibition of our consciences and all restraints of our liberty, yet love must first come in and approve the liberty before we can exercise it. Love places a firm command upon us, saying,—Thou shalt love the Lord with all thine heart, and thy neighbor as thyself. Love, therefore, and not knowledge, not liberty, must finally decide every question. R. 3144

Beware lest somehow this liberty of yours become a stumbling block to those who are weak. When you thus sin against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, you sin against Christ.

1 Corinthians 8:9,12

Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain it.

– 1 Corinthians 9:24 –

Consecrated Christians have entered the lists, to run the great race for the prize of our high calling in Christ Jesus—the prize of joint-heirship with him in the kingdom of glory, to be established at his second coming. We start on our race course not aimlessly, not hopelessly, not simply for the sake of denying ourselves, not to do penance for sins, nor simply for the sake of developing character; but the Lord has graciously arranged the matter so that we will have a grand and noble incentive to self-denial. The prize at the end of the race is his “Well done, good and faithful servant;” and to the faithful little flock “the crown of life” and the glory of the Kingdom. Therefore we are not running uncertainly, doubtfully, not knowing what the prize will be, for we are instructed by the Lord’s own words. It is not only necessary that our whole being should be consecrated to the Lord at the beginning of the race, but it continues necessary all along the way, that it shall be continually subject to the new mind, the mind of Christ, which is to dwell in us richly and abound. R. 2118

And everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things.

Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown.

Therefore I run thus: not with uncertainty. Thus I fight: not as one who beats the air.

1 Corinthians 9:25-26

But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway. (KJV)

– 1 Corinthians 9:27 –

The Apostle tells one reason why he kept his body under—lest, having instructed others how they should do, he himself should make a failure and become a castaway. Likewise with every true Christian this is a matter of supreme importance, and should be particularly noted by every one who is a teacher in the Church.

In choosing a Bride for His Son, the Father is making a selection from those who accept the Gospel Message and desire to draw near to Him. The first test is as to whether or not they will make a full consecration to God. The second test is as to whether, after they have made their consecration, they will conquer the flesh and bring it into subjection. The third test is as to whether they will strive always to keep the flesh in subjection, even unto the end of the way.

The Lord is watching our course continually. His eye is ever upon us to see to what extent we are zealous in crucifying our flesh. Those who are in dead earnest in this matter are the ones whom He is seeking. He seeks a godly seed—those who have the disposition of the Master; and the Master’s disposition has ever been in direct antagonism to everything sinful. “Thou hast loved righteousness and hated iniquity; therefore God, even Thy God, hath anointed Thee with the oil of gladness above Thy fellows,” was spoken by the Father of our Lord Jesus. Moreover, the Master gladly laid down His life in sacrifice to do the Father’s will and to save the world.

And so the Father has, during the Gospel Age, been seeking for the Bride of His Son those who preeminently love righteousness, who hate iniquity, and are glad to be living sacrifices, to be used

up in God's service. In proportion as we manifest the spirit which actuated our Lord—a love for that which is right, a promptness to fight against all sin in ourselves, and a spirit of loving sacrifice—we shall be copies of God's dear Son. If we fail to have a proper zeal and energy in this respect, we shall be unfit to be granted the reward promised—“the prize of the High Calling”—and shall be rejected, be cast away.

Let us keep ever before our minds the thought that we have “put off the old man with his deeds”; and that we have “put on the new man,” and are now on trial for life or death eternal; that we are being tested, are being given the opportunity to prove the sincerity and depth of our consecration to the Lord. Surely this will spur us on and energize us to faithfulness. Let us remember that the keeping under of our body appertains to food and drink, to the clothing we wear, to the way we spend our consecrated time, to our every thought, word and deed.

These battles of the new mind against the flesh are a “good fight” —good in the sense that they are fightings against the intrenched weaknesses and besetments of the fallen nature, against temptations from within and without, that appeal to us as human beings. They are a “fight of faith” because the entire course of the New Creature is one of faith; for “we walk by faith, not by sight.” We could never succeed in this fight unaided. Hence we must keep very close to the Lord. We must “watch and pray,” putting on and keeping securely fastened to us the whole armor of God. The time is short in which to complete this work in ourselves. Then let us be diligent! R. 5686

Whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.

– 1 Corinthians 10:31 –

Have you given God the glory in all the affairs of your life, in whatever measure of success you have attained in His service? or have you often taken the glory to yourself? This is a good question for each one of the Lord's children to ask himself. We know that we have deserved no glory whatever in connection with what we possess or what we have accomplished. If any have attempted to take glory to themselves, they have taken the glory from the Lord. We must be so loyal that in presenting the Truth to others we will say, “This is not my Plan. I am glad to tell you anything that I know about it, but it is not man-made. It is all God's Plan.”

Even in the smallest affairs of life we are to look for the Lord's will. The humblest kind of service is acceptable to the Lord if prompted by love. We recall the case of our Lord Jesus. When opportunity was afforded Him to talk with a poor Samaritan woman at Jacob's well, He did not say, “I came to preach the Gospel; and since this woman is only a Samaritan, I will not bother with her.” When the disciples returned, they could not understand why the Master should be speaking with this woman instead of to a crowd. But Jesus, having the opportunity to preach, even if it were only to a Samaritan woman, improved His opportunity. He knew that through her the Truth might go to others; that what she would learn she would tell to her neighbors, and that when the due time would come the Samaritans might hear and be all the more ready to benefit by the opportunity.

It is for us to be about our Father's business, and to improve the opportunity—whether it is to speak the Truth or merely to give a kind word, etc. “The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; for He hath anointed me to preach Good Tidings to the meek.” God is seeking those who are kind and sympathetic, desirous of helping others. It is our privilege to give a cheerful word at all times. R. 5594 and R. 5740

Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ.

– 1 Corinthians 11:1 –

As his faithful and successful course was a worthy and safe example to the Church, so likewise should each disciple of Christ in turn consider that his example will have its influence upon others. Every Christian should strive to be a pattern worthy of imitation—a pattern of earnest, faithful endeavor to copy Christ in his daily life, and of active zeal in his service. Patterns of perfection, of the ultimate moral glory and beauty of holiness, we cannot expect to be in the present life. Such a pattern we have only in Christ our Lord. In no such sense did Paul ever say, Follow me, or Follow us; but he did say, “Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ.” —1 Cor. 11:1.

We are glad that the Apostle was able to call attention to his own course as an exemplification of his teaching. And this should be the rule with all of us, not merely to give precepts but to follow them with example. Christ is the pattern of us all, though we may learn to appreciate the grandeur of his example better by our closer contact with some who are walking in his steps and with whose experiences we may be able the more closely to sympathize. R. 1886 and R. 4007

If we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened by the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world.

– 1 Corinthians 11:31-32 –

In these words, the Apostle seems to be saying that if we as Christians should properly criticize ourselves, examine ourselves, correct ourselves, the Lord would not find it necessary to take us in hand and give us judgments, or criticism. But if we fail to do this judging, or criticizing, of ourselves, then it will be necessary for the Lord to do it; for He has taken us into His family, He has made us sons, and we are in the School of His Son, our great Elder Brother, to be trained and instructed. This is our Judgment Day.

**When we neglect to judge ourselves, He has to do it for us.
Then we are being chastened with a view to our correction.**

The object of this chastening on the part of the Lord is not to vent His displeasure upon us by causing us pain; but it is as the Apostle states, “that we may not be condemned with the world.” We judge ourselves when we criticize our own conduct, our own words—our own thoughts, even—and try them by the principles laid down in the Word of God—justice, kindness, mercy, love. As our Master admonishes us, if we find that we have done wrong, we should leave our gift before the altar—we should first go and make apologies to the one whom we have injured or wounded by any word or act of unkindness or rudeness. Then we may come and offer our gift.

This daily taking stock of ourselves, the discernment of our gains and losses as New Creatures in Christ, and of how and where these came to us in our constant warfare with all our spiritual foes within and without, will surely prove profitable to each child of God who takes such account of himself in the fear of the Lord, desiring only to be pleasing to his Father in Heaven, to become all that God would have him to be—a saint indeed. R. 5890 and R. 5519

Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I do not want you to be ignorant.

– 1 Corinthians 12:1 –

It was very necessary to [the brethren at Pentecost] and to us that they should have some manifestation of God's favor; that there should be some way in which God would show that Jesus had accomplished the Father's work, and that His sacrifice had been acceptable to the Father on our behalf. God manifested this acceptance by the bestowment of certain gifts. Those gifts were widely distributed in the early Church, and were miraculous. Some who had received the gift of the Spirit spoke one language and some another, of which they had previously no knowledge; some had the gift of interpreting the foreign languages which the others spoke; some received the gift of healing; and some had power to work other miracles.

These gifts served a three-fold purpose:

- 1** They proved God's favor, and that it had come through Christ, and therefore proved that He had ascended, and that His entire work of redemption had been satisfactory to the Father.
- 2** They were proofs to the public that God was with these people. This would lead lovers of God to investigate the Message they bore.
- 3** They were an assurance to the disciples themselves that they were following in the right way, and that God was blessing them and leading them.

All these experiences, indispensable for the establishment of the early Church, came at a time when such manifestation was most necessary. The early Church could not walk by faith as we do. They needed the assistance of sight, to the extent that was there granted; for they had no Bibles. They had no instruction from God except such as came through these channels.

When they came together, one would speak in an unknown tongue. Another would arise in another part of the audience, and with a power not his own give an interpretation of the foreign language used by the speaker with "tongues." This drew the brethren together every day, especially on the first day of the week. They wanted to have fellowship and instruction; and in this way they obtained it, God guiding in respect to the messages delivered in unknown tongues and to the interpretations.

Thus God taught them in almost the only way they could have received instruction at that time, but very differently from the way in which He now instructs His people, or has ever instructed them since the Apostles' day. Such instruction is no longer necessary, and is therefore no longer given. Instead, we have something much better. We have the Gospels, recording our Lord's words, parables, dark sayings, etc.; we have the Epistles of the New Testament, comments of the inspired Apostles on the Old Testament writings; and we have the prophecies of the Old Testament, to which St. Peter declares, "We do well to take heed, as unto a light which shineth in a dark place, until the Day dawn." —2 Peter 1:19.

St. Paul points out that all these variations in the manifestations of the Spirit meant, not different spirits, but the one Spirit, working in the entire Church, with the one purpose of building them all up as various members in the one Body of Christ. R. 5224

There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are differences of ministries, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of activities, but it is the same God who works all in all.
1 Corinthians 12:4-6

For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ.

– 1 Corinthians 12:12 –

The oneness of the Church with each other and with their Lord, the Head, St. Paul repeatedly sets forth, and [especially in this verse and chapter]. He shows that the different gifts enabled the different members of the Body to cooperate for their mutual welfare, edification and upbuilding, in preparation for the glories of service in the coming Kingdom. He says that as the human body is one, but has many members, all under the control of the head, so also is the Body of Christ. The Church is one Body, but composed of many members, all under the control of the Head, Jesus, operating through the Spirit of Truth, by the Word of Truth and by Divine providences.

The object of the organization of the Church is not the conversion of the world, but it is the upbuilding of herself and preparation for a future service. That future service is to be the blessing of the world. But before that service for the world can be properly begun, the Church herself must be developed, proven, approved of God, and glorified by a share in the First Resurrection. R. 5224

For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body---whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free---and have all been made to drink into one Spirit.

– 1 Corinthians 12:13 –

The specially called out of God's people during this Gospel Age, whether they be called out from amongst the Jews or from amongst the Gentiles, are of one Body, because the Body is one, and not a divided Body. The Psalmist compares this unity of the brethren, the Church, with the precious ointment poured upon the head of the king and of the high priest on their induction into office. The significance of the illustration evidently is that the anointing oil typified the Holy Spirit, and that as it ran down the high priest's beard, and even to the skirts of his garment, it anointed the entire body of the priest. That priest typifies Melchizedek, the Royal Priest—Jesus the Head, and the Church His Body. Throughout this Gospel Age the anointing of the Holy Spirit, which came to the Church, the Body of Christ, at Pentecost, has continued, and gives an unction, or anointing, to all of His true members. And by this anointing these members may be recognized as one with Christ, "For by one Spirit ye were all anointed into one Body."—I Corinthians 12:13.

R. 5212

Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! It is like the precious oil upon the head, running down on the beard, the beard of Aaron, running down on the edge of his garments.

Psalm 133:1-2

Throughout this Gospel age the world knoweth us not: it sees not our anointing of the holy Spirit. It merely knows that the claim is made for the Church that, as the body of Christ, its members are recipients of the same holy Spirit that came upon Jesus the Head—that we are all baptized by the one Spirit into one body. (I Cor. 12:13.) All that the world can see is the fact of this baptism. The effect upon the Lord was his devotion to his Father's work, the ministry of the Truth, even at the cost of the sacrifice of his life. And so with the Church also; it has a ministry of the Truth even unto death—laying down our lives for the brethren. The world recognizes a difference between this spirit and the worldly spirit, and yet knows not, appreciates not. R. 3712

St. Paul, further on in the chapter, tells how the various members of the Body should cooperate with each other, offsetting each other's imperfections, compensating for each other's shortcomings and weaknesses, and seeking only the welfare of the Body as a whole. There should be no schisms, no division, no sectarianism in the Body of Christ, the Church, and all the members should have the same love one for another. Sectarian love and sectarian pride should be unknown. Likewise, if any of the members suffer, all should feel a sympathy. He points out that God set the different members in this Body: first, the Apostles; and secondarily, prophets, or orators; and thirdly, teachers; after that, miracles, gifts, helps, diversities of tongues. All have not the same office given them of the Lord, but each should seek faithfully to use the talents which he possesses; and while using these gifts they should seek the best they are capable of exercising.

1 Corinthians 12:20-31

- 20 But now indeed there are many members, yet one body.**
21 And the eye cannot say to the hand, "I have no need of you."
Nor again the head to the feet, "I have no need of you."
22 No, much rather, those members of the body which
seem to be weaker are necessary.
23 And those members of the body which we think to be less
honorable, on these we bestow greater honor, and
our unpresentable parts have greater modesty.
24 But our presentable parts have no need. But God composed the
body, having given greater honor to that part which lacks it,
25 that there should be no schism in the body, but that the
members should have the same care for one another.
26 And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it. Or
if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it.
27 Now you are the body of Christ, and members individually.
28 And God has appointed these in the church: first apostles,
second prophets, third teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of
healings, helps, administrations, varieties of tongues.
29 Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers?
Are all workers of miracles?
30 Do all have gifts of healings? Do all speak with tongues?
Do all interpret?
31 But earnestly desire the best gifts.

Then the Apostle adds, "Yet shew I unto you a more excellent way,"
still better than any of these gifts. . . . R. 5225



1 Corinthians 13:1-8

1 Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal.

2 And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing.

3 And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profits me nothing.

4 Love suffers long and is kind.

Love does not envy.

Love does not parade itself.

Love is not puffed up.

5 Love does not behave rudely.

Love does not seek its own.

Love is not provoked.

Love thinks no evil.

6 Love does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth.

7 Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

8 Love never fails.

Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith so that I could remove mountains but have not love, I am nothing.

– 1 Corinthians 13:1-2 –

The Apostle points out distinctly that knowledge and oratory are not the most vital tests, but that Love permeating the heart and extending out through all the course of life, and actuating and operating our mortal bodies, is the real test—the real proof of our divine relationship. He points out that those who had received gifts of God before they had come into a proper relationship to God might become sounding brass and tinkling cymbals, and thus become “nothing,” if they lose the love, if they lose the spirit of Christ; for “if any man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of his.”

It is well for the Lord’s people to take particular note and to remember that valuable though they be, neither **oratory** nor **knowledge** are to be considered amongst the “brethren” as sure proofs of their being in the right way, nor that their influence might not be injurious instead of helpful. The **leading** characteristic to be looked for in everyone accepted as a servant of the Church, to minister in holy things, should be first of all the spirit of love. R. 2446

When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child, but when I became a man, I put away childish things.

– 1 Corinthians 13:11 –

The Apostle [here] compares the gifts of the Spirit with the fruitage of the Spirit and shows that the former, in contrast with the latter, were as the toys of childhood in comparison with the valuables of manhood. So the gifts of tongues, interpretation of tongues, etc., were given to the Church in its infancy and served useful purposes then, but might well be put away as the Church emerged from infancy to the strength and development accruing from a greater knowledge of God’s great Plan. The milk of the Word and the strong meat of the Word were intended by God to develop the members of the Body of Christ, until they all come to the stature of manhood in Christ. The more advanced the Christian, the more surely would he know that the gifts of the Spirit were merely like a childish plaything to be supplemented by the fruits of the Spirit, much more valuable to the Church in its developed condition. St. Paul points us further to the fact that we are living not merely for the present, but specially for the future; and that whatever we can develop here which will last us into the eternal future, must certainly be the most important matter for us to acquire. He would have us see that most important thing to the Christian—love. R. 4444

Now abide faith, hope, love, these three. But the greatest of these is love.

– 1 Corinthians 13:13 –

In this epistle St. Paul has been gradually leading the minds of his readers up to a higher appreciation of the blessings they enjoyed. In the chapter preceding our lesson he calls attention to these various facts and the oneness of the Church, and the Divine intent that each member should love and cooperate with the other. He pointed out to them that they were putting rather too high a value upon the “gift of tongues.” That, while this “gift” had its proper place in the Church as a blessing, a still higher lesson lay in the ability to present Truth in a well-understood tongue or language. He declared himself able to speak with more tongues than any of them, and yet pointed out that he preferred to speak in the tongue which would be understood by his hearers. Finally. . . St. Paul sets forth that not knowledge, not wisdom, not talents, not “gifts” of any kind are the things most to be sought for, but Love—because God is Love, and because all who would be pleasing to God must develop this character, this disposition, and because, according to the Divine Law, none will ever have full Divine approval or eternal life on any other plane of being, without the full establishment in the heart, in the character, of this Divine quality—love. Therefore “Love is the fulfilling of the Law.”

Love is a quality which seems beyond the power of man to describe. The best that we can do is to describe its conduct. Those who possess this quality are able to appreciate it, but are not able to explain it; for it is of God—God-likeness in the heart, in the tongue, in the hands, in the thoughts, permeating all the human attributes and seeking to control them. There are different kinds of love, however; and the Apostle is not speaking of general affection, but of that particular kind of love which belongs to God and to the New Creation, begotten of Him.

St. Paul points us further to the fact that we are living not merely for the present, but especially for the future; and that whatever will last us into the eternal future must certainly be the most important matter for us to acquire. The Apostle would have the Church see that faith, hope and love—three fruits of the Holy Spirit—are far superior to all the gifts of the Spirit; for these fruits will abide throughout the Age. Until the Millennial Morning we shall need faith, hope and love. We cannot get along without them. We cannot make any progress in the Master’s footsteps without these qualities. But if we seek to contrast these imperfect qualities amongst themselves, he points out that the chiefest of these is love.

Love is the Divine quality without which we should still be unsatisfactory to God, even if we possessed all the other qualities which go to make up Christian character. Love is the quality which will persist to all eternity. If we would abide in Divine favor, we shall need always to have Love. As for faith and hope, excellent qualities though they be, the time will come when they shall be swallowed up by sight, by the actualities of the glorious condition of fellowship with the Lord. But love will never fail. Amongst all the graces of the Spirit it stands supreme and eternal. R. 4444 and R. 5926

A college professor, commenting upon this word Love, said, "As you have seen a man of science take a beam of light and pass it through a crystal prism, as you have seen it come out on the other side of the prism broken up into its component colors—red, and blue, and violet, and orange, and all the colors of the rainbow—so St. Paul passes this thing, Love, through the magnificent prism of his inspired intellect, and it comes out on the other side broken up into its elements. And in these few words we have what one might call the spectrum of Love, the analysis of Love. Will you observe what its elements are? Will you notice that they have common names, that they are features which we hear about every day, that they are things that can be practised by every man in every place in life; and how by a multitude of ordinary virtues, the supreme thing, the *summum bonum*, is made up?"

*Love bears
all things*

*Love endures
all things*

**Nine Ingredients of
The Spectrum of Love:**

Patience — *Love suffereth long.*

Kindness — *and is kind.*

Generosity — *Love envieth not.*

Humility — *Love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up.*

Courtesy — *doth not behave itself unseemly.*

Unselfishness — *seeketh not her own.*

Good temper — *is not easily provoked.*

Guilelessness — *thinketh no evil.*

Sincerity — *Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the Truth.*

To the above we add three other ingredients:

Fortitude — Love "beareth all things,...endureth all things."

Trustfulness — Love "believeth all things."

Hopefulness — Love "hopeth all things."

*Love believes
all things*

*Love hopes
all things*

We cannot agree with the professor that these graces can be practised by every man, in every place, nor that they are ordinary virtues. We must contend that these fruits as a whole cannot belong to the "natural man." He may indeed put on some of the gentleness, some of the humility, some of the courtesy, some of the patience, some of the kindness, as men may attach grapes to thorn bushes or figs to thistles; but with the natural man these graces are wholly put on, and not the outgrowth of the inward grace, the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Love. They are not an evidence of relationship to God. Where the individual has not been begotten again by the Word of Truth and by the Holy Spirit, his imitation of certain outward manifestations of love will not constitute him a son of God nor bring to him the rewards and blessings of sonship, to which there is only the one Door—Christ Jesus. R. 5668

Next to our Lord's marvelous Sermon on the Mount stands [St. Paul's] great homily on Love, recorded in the 13th chapter of 1st Corinthians. Both discourses teach the same lesson, but approach it from different standpoints. All the instructions of the Divine Word and the Divine providences in our lives are designed by the Lord to develop our characters and to influence our conduct in harmony with the requirements of Love. The Master said, "A new commandment I give unto you [the Church], that ye love one another." Since "Love is the fulfilling of the Law," and is "the bond of perfectness" in the child of God, no wonder we are assured from the Scriptures that "God is Love," and that "he that loveth not, knoweth not God!" Our Lord again declared that "this is life eternal—that they might know Thee, the only true God"—the God who is Love.

This noble quality of Christian character cannot be acquired instantly. It is a *growth*; and its development is the chief business, the chief concern, of every spirit-begotten child of God who would know God, who would win the great reward of life on the highest plane of existence and who would see our Father and our Savior face to face and dwell in their presence forevermore:

Love is **patient**—it is longsuffering with the weaknesses and imperfections of those who give any evidence of good intentions. Moreover, it is patient even with those who are out of the way, and who oppose themselves to righteousness and Truth, realizing that the whole world are more or less under the influence of the great Adversary

Love is **kind** in its methods. It not only seeks to do good, but seeks to do it in the kindest possible manner. In proportion as love is attained the effort of the heart will be to have every word and act, as well as the thought which prompts them, full of kindness. Love is tender, affectionate. It has a real and deep interest in others, especially the brethren in Christ.

Love is **generous**, and has no place for envy, which, on the contrary, springs from a perverted nature—from selfishness. Love rejoices with them that rejoice; it rejoices in the prosperity of every good word and work, and in the advancement in Christian grace and service of all who are actuated by the Spirit of God.

Love is **humble**—it "vaunteth not itself." It does not sound a trumpet before it. Its good deeds are not done to be seen of men, not done to be praised of the brethren, but would be done just the same if no one should see or know but the Lord alone. It is boastful neither of its knowledge nor of its graces, but in humility acknowledges that every good and perfect gift comes from the Father, and returns praise to Him for every mercy received. Love seeks rather to keep self in the background.

Love is **courteous**—"doth not behave itself unseemly." How beautiful is this trait in the child of God! How much pain is caused by the lack of courtesy, of that thoughtful consideration for others which springs from real love in the heart—love that is trained! Pride and selfishness are at the root of most of the unseemly conduct and boorishness so common to those who think themselves somebody, either intellectually or financially. Perfect love, on the contrary, manifests courtesy along with humility. Politeness, courtesy, may be defined as love in the little things.

The secret of real courtesy is love. A gentleman or lady is one who does things gently, thoughtfully, kindly, lovingly. A true Christian, then, should be a gentleman or a lady in the most real and perfect sense. To ignore the little courtesies of life as unnecessary is a serious mistake in a child of God. A kind greeting, a pleasant smile, little acts of thoughtfulness for others—who has not realized their potency or felt pain from the lack of these?

Love is **unselfish**—"seeketh not her own," exclusively or pre-eminently. It never seeks to take advantage of others or to promote its own selfish interests. It goes out to others, and seeks to promote their comfort and happiness. It does not desire to grasp the best of everything for self, nor to have the chiefest seats or the most attention or the highest honors, but rather prefers others in honor, and is willing in cheerfulness to take the lower place.

Love is **good-tempered**—"not easily provoked." Among the evils abounding today is that of ill-temper, fretfulness, bad humor, touchiness, quickness to take offense. To whatever extent this disposition is fostered or willingly harbored, and not fought against, it is an evidence of a deficiency and a lack of development in the Spirit of God, of deficiency in likeness to Christ, our Pattern. Very few of the evidences of a wrong spirit receive as much leniency and as many excuses for its continuance as does this fault. However much natural weakness or nervousness may tend in this direction, every true member of the Body of Christ must surely vigorously oppose this disposition to be irritable, fault-finding and morose.

Love is **guileless**—"thinks no evil."

Love is **honest**—"Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the Truth."

Love is **strong**—it "beareth all things." It is both willing and able to endure, for the Cause of God, reproaches, reproofs, insults, losses, misrepresentations, privations, and even death. "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even your faith"—the very center and life of which faith is the holy spirit of love to the Lord, to them that are His, and of sympathetic love for the world. Perfect love can bear up under the most trying circumstances and conditions which the Lord shall permit to come upon His children, and by God's grace come off "more than conqueror through Him that loved us and gave Himself for us."

Love is **trustful**—it "believeth all things." It is not suspicious, but on the contrary is disposed to have confidence in others, so far as possible, and to give them credit for sincerity. It acts on the principle that it is better if necessary to be deceived a hundred times than to go through life soured by a distrustful, suspicious mind—far better than to accuse or suspect even one person unjustly. This is the merciful disposition applied to thoughts; and of this disposition the Master said, "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy." The unmerciful mind and heart, ready on every slight provocation or imaginary one to think evil of others, is father to unmerciful words and conduct toward others.

Love is **hopeful**, buoyant—it "hopeth all things." It is not easily discouraged. Hope is the secret of Love's perseverance. Having learned of God, and having become a partaker of His holiness, it trusts in Him and hopes undismayed for the fulfilment of His gracious Covenant, however dark the immediate surroundings. This hopeful element of love forms one of the striking features in the perseverance of the saints, enabling them to "endure hardness as good soldiers of Jesus Christ." Its hopeful quality hinders Love from being easily offended or easily stopped in the work of the Lord. Where others would become discouraged and put to flight, the spirit of love gives endurance; for its anchor of hope is fastened securely "within the Veil." It holds firmly to the Rock of Ages, and hence cannot drift into despair.

Not only is Love the greatest of all the graces, but really, as we have seen, it is the sum of all the fruits of the Spirit. It is **everlasting**—"Love never faileth." It is for those who develop this quality to its glorious perfection that eternal life has been provided. And those who possess the sacrificial love which our dear Master possessed, who so love as to gladly lay down their lives for the brethren, will gain the fullest and grandest life of all—Divine life. —2 Pet. 1:4. R. 5668



HEROES OF ALL TIME BUILT THEREOF

*It takes great love to stir a human heart
To live beyond the others, and apart;
A love that is not shallow—is not small;
Is not for one or two, but for them all.
Love that can wound love, for its highest need;
Love that can leave love, though the heart may bleed;
Love that can lose love, family and friend,
Yet steadfastly live, loving to the end.
A love that asks no answer, that can live,
Moved by one burning, deathless force—to give!
Love, strength and courage;
courage, strength and love—
The heroes of all time are built thereof.*

—C.P.S. Gilman

Brethren, I declare to you the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received and in which you stand, by which also you are saved, if you hold fast that word which I preached to you—unless you believed in vain. For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures.

– 1 Corinthians 15:1-4 –

From these words we perceive how important faith is to present salvation. Whoever cannot believe, whatever the lesson, cannot be saved in this present time. Whoever has not heard the Gospel, as in the case of the heathen, is not saved in ignorance, and whoever has heard the Gospel and does not keep it in memory and thus loses its power will miss the present salvation; or, if it should be kept in memory, still it might be useless because of failure to allow the Gospel message to act properly upon the heart and life. These things being true we perceive how important it is for us to have a pure Gospel, to know the truth, for nothing but the truth can make us free.

[Here] the Apostle summarizes our Christian faith. This much of knowledge is necessary to anyone who would be properly termed a believer, a Christian. Hence the heathen, whatever their condition in their ignorance of these facts, could not be believers, could not be Christians. This is the faith which justifies, and those who have it not are not justified. It recognizes “our sins” and “Christ’s death” as our ransom-price, and Christ’s resurrection, as evincing the satisfying of divine justice, and that the Redeemer lives to carry out the glorious features of our salvation.

Not that merely believing will bring the life, for “devils also believe and tremble,” but that believing brings them into that relationship with God where it is possible for them to become followers of Jesus, pupils in the school of Christ to learn of him; to be assisted in walking in his footsteps, to learn of their high calling of God in Christ Jesus, and by assistance granted, to make their calling and election sure to life eternal as members of his Little Flock, his Bride class. All this is possible in his name, in his merit, but none of it is possible on any other terms or conditions,

**for there is none other name given under heaven and
amongst men whereby we must be saved.**

Acts 4:12

Let us see to it with diligence, that having been favored so highly as we are, it shall not be said of us that we received the grace of God in vain! Receiving it let us use it, let us improve the opportunity, let us make our calling and election sure! R. 4187

For 1 Cor. 15:8, see page 30

For 1 Cor. 15:9-10, see page 30

If Christ is not risen, then our preaching is empty and your faith is also empty.

– 1 Corinthians 15:14 –

The glorious doctrine of the resurrection is a doctrine which finds no place in any religious system except Christianity, nor in any religious standards of authority save the Bible. While the doctrine of redemption is the central doctrine of the Christian system, the doctrine of the resurrection is the end of our faith, our glorious hope through Christ. Eliminate this doctrine from the Bible, and the Apostle tells us our faith is vain. —1 Cor. 15:14.

If we may thus see clearly an inestimable value in our Redeemer's sacrifice of himself, a glance will show us that his resurrection was of equal importance. Had the Father not raised him from the dead, it would have implied some unfaithfulness, some failure on our Lord's part. And if he had not arisen, how could he have made application of his human rights on our behalf? No wonder St. Paul forcefully declares, "If Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain....Ye are yet in your sins. And they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished....But now is Christ risen from the dead and become the first-fruits of them that slept." —1 Cor. 15:14-20.

So, then, upon the death of Jesus and his resurrection hang the resurrection hope of the Church and of the world. We must differentiate these as the Scriptures do. The Church is to have share in the "first" or "chief resurrection," called also "Christ's Resurrection," "his resurrection." (Phil. 3:10.) The resurrection of Christ and his Church is to the spirit nature of glory and perfection. On that glorious plane the Heavenly Bridegroom will soon claim his espoused Church as his Bride and joint-heir in his Kingdom.

But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. For since by man came death, by Man also came the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive. But each one in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, afterward those who are Christ's at His coming.

1 Corinthians 15:20-23

Then the world's resurrection will be due to begin—not a resurrection "change" to spirit nature, etc., nor an instantaneous work at all. Theirs will be a resurrection to human nature, human perfection, but of gradual development—first the awakening, "every man in his own order," and subsequently the gradual raising of them up out of sin and death conditions to perfection of life—as many as will obey the great King of the Millennial Kingdom. And such as will refuse obedience will be cut off—destroyed in the Second Death.

It is greatly to be regretted that very many Christian people, including many of the clergy, have failed to discern the great importance of the resurrection, in connection with the teachings of God's Word. This serious omission has aided greatly in the confusion which has led many to a rejection of the Word of God under the teachings of Higher Criticism and Evolution. Let us honor the Heavenly Father and the Redeemer by heeding the testimony of the Bible respecting the importance of the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead. R. 1774 and R. 4588

There is one glory of the sun, another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars, for one star differs from another star in glory. So also is the resurrection of the dead. The body is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption. It is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power. It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body.

– 1 Corinthians 15:41-44 –

The Apostle [here] introduces a description of the first or chief resurrection, in which the Church is especially interested, and shows that as there are various grades of earthly beings (fish, fowl, cattle and man), of which man is the lord or chief, so also in the spirit realm there are various degrees or grades of beings—

the angelic being one, and the divine nature chief of all. So he reasons that as we can conceive of harmony and perfection, with variety, in the earth, perfect horses, dogs, cattle and men, so we

All flesh is not the same flesh, but there is one kind of flesh of men, another flesh of animals, another of fish, and another of birds. There are also celestial bodies and terrestrial bodies, but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another.

1 Corinthians 15:39-40

can likewise conceive of similar variety in perfection amongst spirit beings. We may judge something of what human perfection will be by imagining all the wonderful powers of mankind exercised to the full by each. But although we know less about the spirit realm, we do know that spirits, powers and glories differ from human powers and glories. The glories, yet diversities, of the spirit world being well illustrated by those of the sun, moon and stars.

St. Paul declares that as star differs from star in glory, so it will be with those who attain unto the First Resurrection—all will come forth glorious, but some will blaze with a more resplendent brilliancy, because of their great zeal, and therefore their great likeness to their Redeemer and Lord. Jesus likewise mentions the distinctions amongst those who will sit with Him in His Throne. He assured James and John that, if they were willing to drink of His cup and be baptized into His death, they should surely sit with Him in His Throne; but as to whether or not they would have the chief places of honor and distinction was not for Him to say. Those places will be given according to the Father's determination; that is to say, according to principles of justice, of merit. R. 1511 and R. 5039



Thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ! Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.

– 1 Corinthians 15:57-58 –

Although we have not our spiritual bodies, incorruptible and powerful; although we still have the treasure of the new mind in the earthen vessel; although we see nothing of the Kingdom's establishment;—nevertheless, God giveth us victory through Christ, by faith; so that even now we can “rejoice with joy unspeakable,” and can so confidently look forward into the future as to claim a share in the victory over sin and death and the grave, through him who loved us and bought us.

Because we see these things so clearly with the eye of faith, we should be “steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that our labor is not in vain in the Lord”;—realizing that it is God who is working out this great plan of salvation, through our Lord Jesus Christ, and supporting all those who are seeking to walk in his steps, and to come off conquerors through him. Death and the grave may still seem to be gaining victories over us. But faith sees the matter from the other side, from the standpoint of accomplished victory in the future; and even now it exults and rejoices in the privilege of collaborating with the Redeemer, and realizes that time and energy and life so spent are spent “not in vain,” because we confidently hope for, expect and wait for the glorious First Resurrection “change” and the glorious privileges of association with our Master in his Kingdom and work. R. 3176

Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong. (KJV)
– 1 Corinthians 16:13 –

St. Paul's words in our text teach the same great lesson of the necessity for character-development on the part of all who hope to be heirs of God and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ their Lord. They must watch as well as pray, they must “stand fast in the faith” against the various oppositions of the world, the flesh and the Adversary. They must acquit themselves like men, “strong in the Lord and in the power of His might.” They must be strongly developed, by trials, difficulties and obstacles overcome in the name of the Lord and with His assistance. R. 4912



Second Letter to the Corinthians

Written from Macedonia c. A.D. 56-57

This same Church at Corinth was criticized sharply because of its carelessness as respects proper standards of morality. The Apostle assures us, however, that his words of reproof did much good, working in the Church a repentance toward God, and proved to be of lasting benefit to them. Thus in God's providence, He overruled for their good a mistake made by these followers of the Master, by using a faithful and courageous Apostle, who gave the proper rebuke in a proper, loving manner.

**If I made you sorry with my letter, I do not regret it, though I did regret it.
For I perceive that the same epistle made you sorry, though only for a while.
Now I rejoice, not that you were made sorry, but that your sorrow led to repentance.
For you were made sorry in a godly manner, that you might suffer loss from us in
nothing. For godly sorrow produces repentance leading to
salvation, not to be regretted.
2 Corinthians 7:8-10**

St. Paul labored hard with the Church at Corinth; and to have them fail to make proper progress in the Truth because they thought of him as an incompetent teacher seemed to him to be a pity. Hence [in 2 Corinthians chapter 11, he does] what he styles "foolish boasting." He did not approve of boasting; and yet for the sake of his hearers, he would inform them along certain lines. And how glad we are that the Holy Spirit so directed the Apostle, that we also may know him better and may fully appreciate his loving loyalty to the King of kings and the fact that he was the chosen vessel of the Lord for the communication of the Truth even to the Household of today!

The Apostle did not boast about himself—about his talents, about his oratory, about how the people were spellbound, about how many people recognized his ability, etc. No; he rather would boast of the things which others would think to be for his shame. He would tell them what God's providence had permitted him to suffer for the Truth's sake—scourging, whipping with rods, imprisonment, perils of the deep, perils from false brethren, perils from the heathen. To him these things were the marks of Divine love and favor, and bore witness also that he was a lover of the Lord and His righteousness, and that he had been willing to suffer for the Lord's sake, for the Truth's sake.

Thus seen this lesson is a very valuable portion of the Word of the Lord. It gives us information which we find in no other quarter. It sets before us crisply a picture of a soldier of the Cross and what he endured. It says to us, "Be thou faithful unto death"—follow in the footsteps of Jesus and this noble follower of His—boast not in yourself, but in the Lord and in your privileges of service in connection with His Truth. R. 3143, R. 4417, R. 4416, R. 5967, R. 5941

**He said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect
in weakness." Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that
the power of Christ may rest upon me.
2 Corinthians 12:9**



Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.

– 2 Corinthians 1:3-4 –

The Scriptures point out to us that our comfort comes through fellowship with the heavenly Father and with our Lord Jesus: we are comforted, not by believing that they are ignorant of our weaknesses and shortcomings, nor that they have a low standard of righteousness and a sinful basis of fellowship, but quite to the contrary of all this, they comfort us with the assurance that although our every imperfection is known to the Lord he is yet very sympathetic, very merciful; and that having provided, in the great sacrifice at Calvary, a full propitiation (satisfaction) for all sins, the Lord is very pleased to apply, on behalf of each of his adopted children, in full measure, the riches of grace necessary to the covering and offsetting of every unintentional, unapproved error and failure. What comfort is here! What consolation! What privileges of fellowship with the Father and with the Son!

And this comfort, the Scriptures assure us, comes to us through the holy spirit—it is the channel, and, hence indeed, called the Comforter. (John 14:26.) Those who have the holy spirit may have the comfort; those who do not have the holy spirit may not have this comfort, this consolation. It is only as we receive of the spirit of the Lord, the mind of the Lord, his disposition, that we are able to understand and appreciate the lengths and breadths, the heights and depths of his love and compassion and provision for us, and to be comforted thereby. R. 2664

For 2 Cor. 1:3-4, see also page 147

For 2 Cor. 1:8-10, see page 98

Now He who establishes us with you in Christ and has anointed us is God, who also has sealed us and given us the Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee.

– 2 Corinthians 1:21-22 –

He who **sets** us, **establishes** us, and has anointed us of the Holy Spirit, and thus made us members of this holy company, is **God**, the Heavenly Father. It is not the province of even our Redeemer to set us and anoint us. As the Apostle says, “God hath set every member in the Body as it hath pleased Him.” All things are **of** the Father, and all things are **by** the Son; hence this anointing that we receive comes from the Father. Nevertheless, the Channel is the Lord Jesus. This Holy Spirit which the Father has given to Jesus, He has shed forth upon us. The Father **authorizes** it; the Son **sheds it forth**.

This seal of covenant relationship, of sonship and heirship, is not an outward sign upon our foreheads; nor is it a mark or manifestation of God’s favor in earthly affairs, in worldly prosperity; nor is it now, nor was it ever, the “gifts” of healing, or of speaking with tongues, etc., for many who possessed those miraculous “gifts” lacked the seal and witness of the Spirit. Acts 8:13-23; 1 Cor. 13:1-3

The seal or pledge of the holy Spirit is in the heart of the sealed, and hence it is that no man knoweth it save he that receiveth it (Rev 2:17), except as others may see the fruits of it in his daily life. “He who establisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God; who hath also sealed us and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts.” 2 Cor. 1:21-22

This earnest or seal of sonship is the Spirit of love which is at-one with the Father and all his holy arrangements, crying out, Abba, Father; I delight to do thy will, O my God. He who has this seal or mark of sonship is he who not only seeks to do the will of the Father, but doing it finds it “not grievous,” but delightful. —1 John 5:3 R. 5498 and E247

Now thanks be to God who always leads us in triumph in Christ, and through us diffuses the fragrance of His knowledge in every place. For we are to God the fragrance of Christ among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing.

– 2 Corinthians 2:14-15 –

One advantage which the Christian toiler has over every other worker, is the full assurance that his labor shall not be in vain. And in proportion as he has faith in the promise of God, his service will be a joyful one, notwithstanding many things otherwise calculated to discourage. How truly may the consecrated child of God enter into the spirit of the Apostle's thanksgiving. Thanks be to God who always leads us forth to triumph, and who diffuses by us the fragrance of the knowledge of him in every place.



Like Paul it is our privilege to go with Christ outside the camp bearing his reproach. In the harvest field the Lord has appointed to every one of the anointed body a place, and showed that not even the humblest is excluded, and that the one, or two, or many talents may all be employed. Other saints have labored faithfully in the past, sowing the precious seed which we are now privileged to help in harvesting, and ere long the faithful sower and the faithful reaper shall rejoice together. —John 4:36.

But some may question, In what sense are we always led forth to triumph? We answer, In the same sense that Paul was so led. His message was not always received and appreciated, but

To the one we are the aroma of death leading to death, and to the other the aroma of life leading to life. And who is sufficient for these things?

2 Corinthians 2:16

whether received or rejected of men, he triumphed in the fact that his labor and sacrifices were a sweet savor to God in any case, whether they resulted favorably or unfavorably to those who heard. Paul's service was rendered heartily, as unto the Lord; and while his love for others made him intensely anxious that they should receive the full benefit of his service, he was not disheartened or tempted to give up the work, when the desired results failed to follow. It was his privilege to rejoice even then in his Master's approval, for he worked with an eye single to his glory.

The Apostle, speaking of the ministries of the Church one for another, says that ours is a sacrifice of sweet odor unto God, but again he adds that the Gospel referred to is of life unto life to some and of death unto death to others. That is to say, good deeds, kind words and efforts will be appreciated by those who are in the right attitude of heart to appreciate them, while on the contrary the same good deeds will arouse offence and constitute a bad odor to those who are in a wrong condition of heart. How often have we seen it so, that with our best endeavors to serve the feet of Christ some have been comforted and refreshed, others have been angered. R. 877 and R. 3537



For 2 Cor. 2:15-16, see also page 99

**You are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read by all men.
– 2 Corinthians 3:2 –**

The lives of God's people should in every case be "living epistles, known and read of all men"—especially by their own families. Those lives should testify not only to the completeness of the consecration to the Lord, but also to the peace and joy and comfort resulting. "Let the peace of God rule in your hearts; and be ye thankful." (Col. 3:15.) Your being a living epistle, without a single word of exhortation, will be powerful in its lessons to all those directly under your influence.

Not only by their words and logical presentations did the apostles witness, but their lives were witnesses. The lives of the early Church were the special witness to the Lord. Without the consistency of their lives and their consecration to the Lord and to the Truth, it is evident, the message would have had no such import as it bore. So it is with us today. It is well that we preach the Word. It is still more important that we live in it. But it is the ideal thing to both preach and live the Truth. "Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in heaven." R. 5571 and R. 4391



**Clearly you are an epistle of Christ, ministered by us, written not with ink but by the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of flesh, that is, of the heart.
– 2 Corinthians 3:3 –**

All are familiar with the fact that we have in our Bibles epistles, or letters, by various ones of the Apostles—St. Paul, St. Peter, St. John, St. James, St. Jude. But not many, perhaps, have heard of the Epistle of Christ. St. Paul tells us that it was written in his day. He describes the writing of it, how it was done, and declares that he was one of the instruments used by the Lord in connection with the writing of the Epistle. Here are his words: "Ye are manifestly declared to be the Epistle of Christ, ministered [written] by us; written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in the fleshy tables of the heart." —2 Cor. 3:3.

How beautiful and poetical is the thought here expressed! It is a compliment to both the Apostle as the Lord's faithful servant, and also to the Lord's people at Corinth. It is in line with the Apostle's statement elsewhere, "We are God's workmanship." (Eph. 2:10.) Wherever there is a true Christian—not merely spirit-begotten, but spirit-developed in the character-likeness of the Savior in meekness, gentleness, patience, long-suffering, brotherly-kindness and love—we have the evidence of the power of God at work in him to will and to do His good-pleasure, not arbitrarily, but in cooperation with the will of the individual. And wherever there is a Church, an Ecclesia, a class of Bible students who show these evidences of the Lord's Holy Spirit working in them and developing them, we have the Epistle of Christ, declaring and showing forth the praises of Him who called them out of darkness into His marvelous light.

And what is the Message—what is the Epistle—that is written in our hearts by the Holy Spirit through various agencies? Is it the knowledge of chronology? Is it the unraveling of types and shadows? Is it the cracking of hard theological nuts in respect to differently understood passages of Scripture? Is it the knowledge of the history of the Jews, the history of the world, the history of the Church? Is it the understanding and appreciation of the different Covenants, past, present, and to come?

No, it is none of these.

All of these subjects have more or less of value, and are more or less used of the Lord in connection with this writing that is to be done in the hearts of His people. But writing the Epistle of Christ is different—[it is] the writing, the tracing of the character-likeness of the Master in the hearts of His people—His meekness, His gentleness, His patience, His long-suffering, His brotherly-kindness, His love, His joy, His peace.

We might have all knowledge respecting chronology and history, might be able to quote every text in the Bible, and to cite it, too; and yet not have the Epistle of Christ written in our hearts. It is the Epistle of which the Apostle Peter says, “For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren [idle, inactive] nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ”; for knowledge will have its place. And thus with these characteristics of the Master deeply engraved upon our hearts, we shall be granted an abundant entrance “into the everlasting Kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.”—2 Pet.1:8; 2 Pet. 1:11. R. 5967

The three great lessons which will be required of those who will be heirs of the Kingdom are:

1 A proper, thorough **appreciation** of JUSTICE, and a **manifestation** of that appreciation of justice by an endeavor to comply with the requirements of the Golden Rule—to love our neighbor as ourselves.

2 A further lesson is that of LOVE, sympathy, compassion, mercy. However **exacting** we may be respecting **ourselves**, our own thoughts, words and deeds, we are not to exact from others, but be willing to take from them whatever they are pleased to give—as did our Savior. This will mean

3 suffering with Christ, having **fellowship** in His **sufferings**. It will mean the learning of valuable lessons to fit and qualify us for the work of being kings, priests and judges with our Lord in His coming Kingdom.

St. Paul emphasized the importance of having the Christ-character engraved on our hearts when he wrote that God’s predestination is that all who will be of the Church in glory must be copies of His dear Son—must have the Epistle of Christ written in their **hearts**. (Romans 8:28-30.) R. 5968

We all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.

– 2 Corinthians 3:18 –

A full transformation into a likeness of character to our heavenly Father should be the constant effort of every true child of God. It is not enough that we gain a knowledge of his plan and a pleasurable realization of his mercy and grace toward our unworthy race, and that we joyfully tell the good news to others; and it is not enough that we exert ourselves with uncommon zeal to bless others with those good tidings of great joy for all people; for we may do all of these things and more, and yet, if we do not let our Heavenly Father's goodness and grace have its due effect upon our own hearts, our knowledge, and even our good works, will profit us but little.

This transforming of our characters is not instantaneous but gradual—we grow more and more like Christ, we are changed from glory to glory in our minds, our wills, our hearts, our characters—this change will not be complete until our resurrection, when we shall be like him and see him as he is, and share his glory to the full.

We notice particularly that the statement is made of all the Church—we all are being changed from glory to glory. And the inference is consequently a strong one, that those who are not being so changed are not of the class addressed. This is a solemn thought, and one that claims the most careful consideration of all the consecrated. The question with us is not, Have we made a full consecration of ourselves to the Lord? but, having made such consecration, are we, in accordance with that consecration, fully submitting ourselves to the transforming influences of the Spirit of God to be changed daily more and more fully to the glorious likeness of our God?

Without any intervening veil of prejudice or fear or superstition, but with simplicity of heart and mind, so we behold the glory (the glorious character) of the Lord—not with actual vision, but as in a glass, as reflected in the mirror of his Word and as exemplified also in his living Word, Jesus Christ. And to aid us in this study we are promised the blessed influences of the Spirit of the Lord, who will guide us into all truth and show us things to come.

The Apostle adds (2 Cor. 4:7) that the fact that we thus hold this treasure of a transformed mind in these defective earthen vessels proves the excellency of the power of God, and not of us. And so, by constant yielding to the influences of

**We have this treasure in earthen vessels,
that the excellence of the power
may be of God and not of us.
2 Corinthians 4:7**

the Spirit of God, we may show forth the praises of him who hath called us out of darkness into his marvelous light. (1 Pet. 2:9.) Oh, let our efforts and prayers continually be that these poor earthen vessels may more and more show forth the praises of our God! R. 3040 and R. 3655

Jesus is a manifestation or pattern to us of the spirit or disposition which we should have toward God's law. We should love it as he loved it (Psa. 119:97); we should study and endeavor to conform to it as he did; and we should glory in it and by word and example teach it to others as he did. When Moses came down from the mountain the skin of his face shone so that Israel could not behold him without a veil between. Such was the glory of that first covenant, which proved to be only a ministration of death. But the Apostle gives us to understand that that glory was only a typical representation of the greater glory of the new covenant—the glory that excelleth. That glory we may now behold by faith; but let us not, like Israel, put a veil before it, so that we cannot see it. R. 1404

For God, who said, “Let light shine out of darkness,” made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of God’s glory displayed in the face of Christ. (NIV)

– 2 Corinthians 4:6 –

How I long for a trumpet-voice, clear and sweet, to sound out above the din of Babel confusion the message of the truth, the message of the love of God, the message of the word of God—the true message, not the false one, which has drawn us away from our God, the true sound for which the souls of men are so longing; that will tell them of the Father’s love and of His gracious provision, and that this provision is not merely for the Elect, but, as the scriptures declare, for all mankind! Oh, for the power to snatch away from before the eyes of the bewildered world the vail of ignorance, superstition, priestcraft, blasphemous error by which the great Adversary has for centuries beclouded our vision of the Lord! As the Apostle says, the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them that believe not lest the glorious light of God’s goodness as it shines in the face of Jesus Christ our Lord should shine into their hearts. (2 Cor. 4:6)

But even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them.

2 Corinthians 4:3-4

How we long for the ability to remove this blinding influence and to let the glorious sunlight of divine love shine into the hearts of the world of mankind! How we long for the opportunity, the ability of showing to mankind that the word of God, instead of being a message of eternal torture for the race, is a message of love and benevolence! How we long to show them what the real message of God is and where in their ignorance under the Adversary’s deceptions they have in the past added to the word of God the hobgoblins and wretched delusions which now alarm them and drive them from the throne of grace! In this afternoon’s discourse, we endeavored to show that the real penalty for sin is not eternal torment, but a death penalty. We showed also how that death penalty had been paid by our dear Redeemer, who died, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us back to God. We showed that while a few of us now, despite the Adversary’s misrepresentation, get the eyes of our understanding open to see the light of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, nevertheless the time is near at hand when the great Adversary shall be bound and when the glorified Jesus and His glorified Elect Church shall assume the government of the world and banish its darkness and sin and flood the world with the glorious light of the true message of the knowledge of God and that then every eye shall see and every ear shall hear and our God shall be gloriously vindicated from all the blasphemies which we and others unwittingly, at the Adversary’s instigation, have committed against His holy name. NS523

For 2 Cor. 4:6, see also page 118

Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day.

– 2 Corinthians 4:16 –

Ah, that was the secret of the matter—the renewing of the inward man, the New Creature! The tribulations of the outward man would have been terrible experiences indeed [for the Apostle Paul] had there been no inward man to take a different view of matters and to learn valuable lessons and experiences from the outward man's tribulations. The inward man had God's assurance that if God were for him the opposition of all others would be as nothing. He had the assurance that God would overrule all of his experiences for his highest welfare. He had the assurance of the Lord, too, that the glories of the future would be proportionate to the trials faithfully endured.

Ah, here we have the secret of the Apostle's great zeal for God, for the Church, for the Truth! He endured as seeing Him who is invisible to natural eyes. (Heb. 11:27.) St. Paul lived a double life, in the sense that to man he was Saul of Tarsus, but in reality he was Paul, the servant of God, the New Creature in Christ Jesus. The world knew him not; but he knew himself, knew his God; and he was energized by the power Divine and by the Message of God's Word, which spoke to him peace and relationship to God through Christ, and also informed him of the glory, honor and immortality awaiting all the faithful ones at the end of the way. And this secret of the Apostle's own experience is an open one to all of God's family of spirit-begotten children who faithfully are continuing to walk in the footsteps of Jesus. R. 5951

For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.

– 2 Corinthians 4:17 –

The Gospel Message which Jesus and the Apostles taught was expressed in our Lord's prayer: "Thy Kingdom come; Thy will be done on earth, even as it is done in Heaven." (Matt. 6:10.) The Apostles exhorted the people to prepare for the Kingdom of God's dear Son and to accept the invitation to become members of the Bride class. The parables of Jesus, His sermons, and the teachings of the Apostles abound with the thought that Messiah's Kingdom will be the great panacea for all the ills of the world; and that the Church, if found faithful, will share her Master's glory, honor and immortality. It was because St. Paul had this glorious hope before him, he declares, that he was willing to endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ and to count all his afflictions and sufferings for Christ, his sacrifice, but light afflictions. Because of these hopes, because of this deep-seated faith, he counted all earthly prospects as valueless in comparison, and willingly sacrificed his fame, his family position and his Roman citizenship, and endured stripes, imprisonments, buffetings and derision. —Phil. 3:7-11; 2 Cor. 4:17; 11:23-28.

We are to remember, dear brethren that nothing can by any means harm us, aside from our Father's will. We are promised that not one hair of our heads shall be hurt—figuratively. And we have the guarantee from the Lord that "all things shall work together for good to those that love God," who put their trust in Him. Whatever would not be a blessing to us will not be permitted. Our trials and tribulations, rightly received, are to work out for us "a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." —2 Cor. 4:17-18. R. 5850 and R. 5546

- 1 We know that if our earthly house, this tent, is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.**
- 2 For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed with our habitation which is from heaven,**
- 3 if indeed, having been clothed, we shall not be found naked.**
- 4 For we who are in this tent groan, being burdened, not because we want to be unclothed, but further clothed, that mortality may be swallowed up by life.**
- 5 Now He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who also has given us the Spirit as a guarantee.**
- 6 So we are always confident, knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord.**

– 2 Corinthians 5:1-6 –

The Apostle Paul (2 Cor. 5:1-10) addressing specially the consecrated Church of the Gospel age, uses language here which may be properly understood to refer to the present mortal bodies of the saints, as their houses of pilgrimage—their temporary houses, while on the way to their permanent homes, the spiritual bodies which God hath promised to them that love him, and which the same apostle described to the same readers in a previous epistle. —1 Cor. 15:38,42-45.

Our groaning is not with a desire to be unclothed; we do not wish to be without a body, for that at very best all down through the Gospel age would mean to be “asleep in Jesus,” waiting for the resurrection morning that then we might be “clothed upon with our house from heaven,” our new, perfect and permanent body, our “home.” What we prefer is not to have the little spark of present life extinguished, but to have it swallowed up, absorbed into the perfect conditions of the perfect life to which we are begotten, with its perfect body.

This perfect condition which we are to obtain in the resurrection will be the grand consummation of our salvation which God has promised; and the new mind, the new will begotten by the Word of truth, is reckoned as the beginning of that new creature, which will be perfected in the divine nature when the first resurrection shall have completed it. The holy spirit granted us in the present time is a hand payment so to speak, an “earnest” or assurance of the grand and gracious results for which we are hoping and striving, groaning and praying.

“Therefore we are always confident knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body [so long as we feel entirely contented with present conditions—ourselves and our surroundings], we are absent from the Lord.” If we were living near to him, “walking with God, we would not feel perfectly satisfied with present attainments, conditions, etc.; but would feel like pilgrims and strangers, seeking a better rest, a better home, “which God hath in reservation for them that love him.” But this, as the Apostle explains, is true only of those who walk by faith and not by sight.

“But we are confident [full of faith toward God, we rejoice to walk by faith], and are well pleased rather to be from home [homeless, pilgrims and strangers on the earth] and to be at home with the Lord” in the spirit of our fellowship.

For this cause we are striving, that whether it be by and by when we reach our home, or whether it be in the present time when we are actually away from home, pilgrims and strangers, we strive that we may be acceptable with the Lord; that we may have his favor and blessing and realize his fellowship and presence and know that we shall ultimately be accepted by him. R. 2231

We walk by faith, not by sight. – 2 Corinthians 5:7 –

What do these words mean? They mean that St. Paul had spiritual eyesight. He indeed saw earthly attractions, but they lost their drawing power upon him because of his spiritual sight—his perception of the things unseen. With the eye of faith he saw the Heavenly Father, the glorified Lord Jesus, the Heavenly hosts, the coming Kingdom of glory, honor and immortality. By faith he saw the great Millennial Kingdom spreading out before him, and heard the Divine invitation to become an heir in that Kingdom, to be joined in heirship with the Master and Redeemer. He had accepted this invitation. He had enlisted under the banner of the Master; and he realized that everything else in the world was of practically no value in comparison with these eternal things which God had promised. His confidence was in the Word of God.

So it is with the Lord's people today. We may see the advantages of politics, social standing, wealth, business, etc., etc. But all these earthly aims and ambitions are of comparatively little value to us because we have seen, with the new eyesight of the New Creature, the Heavenly things.

In this way of faith there is much of present privilege, as well as future prospect. It is the way in which we may enjoy the fellowship and the abiding presence of our Lord Jesus and our Heavenly Father, in which we may have intimate personal communion with them, and in which we may also have the witness of the holy spirit to our adoption and continued acceptance as sons of God, and the comfort of the Scriptures, the communion of saints, and the blessed inspiration, assistance and encouragement of all the means of grace. These present privileges, together with the glorious hopes they inspire and keep alive within us, are the meat which we have to eat which the world knows not of, enabling us to live a new life apart from the world—apart from its spirit and its fellowship. This is what it is to walk by faith. It signifies a course of life quite contrary to the usual order of the world, which is to walk by sight and after the desires of the flesh.

“The secret of the Lord is with them that reverence Him; and He will show them His Covenant.” These increase in faith as they go on in the path of obedience. Faith and

obedience are like our two feet. We put one forward, and then the other, and then the first one forward; and so we develop in faith by continuing in the spirit of obedience, following on wherever the Lord points the way. “We walk by faith and not by sight.” But we have good, tangible evidences all along our Heavenward journey. Outside of all other evidences, the true Christian has in his own personal experiences abundant proof of our Father's love and care. The Master said, “Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and not one of them shall fall upon the ground without your Father.... But ye are of more value than many sparrows.” (Matt. 10:29.) As he progresses in the narrow way the child of God comes to learn the fullness of meaning in these words of our Lord.

Every exercise of faith is based upon something real and tangible to faith. There is a mental tangibility for faith and also a physical, or outward, tangibility. True wisdom searches out the two grounds for faith. R. 1798

So the Christian who walks closely with the Master finds the truth of the Apostle's words that “faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence [proof, conviction] of things not seen.” (Heb. 11:1.) Faith is not only a groundwork, or basis, for our hopes (itself also having a groundwork in proven facts), but it is a real substance—a mental substance, so to speak, which stimulates and clarifies the mind. Faith is not a substance that we can hold in our hand or walk on with our feet. But it becomes a strength to our minds as we progress in the knowledge of God and of the things which God has to give to those who love Him above all else and who seek to render Him loving, devoted service. Faith becomes as real and tangible to us as any material substance—even more so; for the things upon which our faith lays hold are eternal. R. 5951, R. 1798, R. 5717

For the love of Christ compels* us, because we judge thus: that if One died for all, then all died, and He died for all, that those who live should live no longer for themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again.

– 2 Corinthians 5:14-15 –

St. Paul explains to us that it is the love of Christ that has exercised the constraining, or drawing, power upon our hearts. The love of Christ is merely the love of the Father, but as men we would not be able to understand the Father's love. We are enabled to understand that love as it was manifested by our Redeemer; and thus through Him we look upward to the Father, and are able to appreciate something of the love that is beyond all human understanding. As St. Paul points out, Christ's love was manifested in that He died for all. When we say "for all," it means that the whole race was dead, that none had a right to everlasting life, and that none could commend themselves to God so as to be worthy of everlasting life.

The Apostle explains that all who realize this matter fully, clearly, should indicate the fact by consecrating their lives to the Lord, to live unto Him, to know His will, to lay down their lives in the service of Him who died for them and who rose again. These have a special love for the Lord and they, properly, have a special love for each other. They are seeking to live, not after the flesh, but after the Spirit—in harmony with the begetting of the Holy Spirit, which they have received.

**Therefore, from now on, we regard no one according to the flesh.
Even though we have known Christ according to the flesh, yet now
we know Him thus no longer.
2 Corinthians 5:16**

Hence they more and more are thinking of Christ, not as the Man Jesus, but as the glorified Lord. So also they are learning to think of each other, not according to the flesh, but according to the heart; for "if any man be in Christ, he is a New Creature." To such, earthly things—earthly hopes, aims and prospects—have gone, and all things have become new. They have new hopes, new ambitions, new relationships. If faithful, they will receive the glorious things which God has in reservation for those who love Him. R. 5597

***The word *constrain* (or *compel* above) has the double thought of drawing together, holding together. The Apostle had been recounting his own activities in the Lord's service, and had stated that with some his course seemed to indicate an unbalanced mind. He explained that this was not so; that he had a sounder mind than ever before. He felt himself bound to Christ, constrained by love of Christ to love Him and all who were His with a pure heart. R. 4836**

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. Old things have passed away. Behold, all things have become new.

– 2 Corinthians 5:17 –

We must differentiate between the nominal Christian and the true one. The name Christian has become synonymous with civilization in general usage, but not so in Biblical usage; and our standpoint must be that of the Scriptures. The true Christian, then, according to the Bible, is one who has recognized himself as a sinner by nature, “a child of wrath even as others,” and who desires to flee from his sins and imperfections and to attain unto righteousness and eternal life. He has seen in Divine providence that our Lord Jesus is the Way, the Truth and the Life, by whom alone he may return to Divine fellowship and love and to the gift of God, eternal life. The true Christian is one who has accepted Christ as his Redeemer, and who, while striving for righteousness and in opposition to sin within and without, is not deceived into thinking that he can do perfectly; but realizing the imperfections of his very best endeavors, he relies upon the merit of the great Redemption-sacrifice of Christ to make up for his unwilling blemishes. Because of his faith in the precious blood he is reckoned a member of the “Household of Faith,” and is styled one of the “brethren.”

But a Christian, in the still higher sense that the Scriptures set forth, is one who goes beyond such faith, such righteous endeavors, and hearkens to the words of the Apostle, “I beseech you,

therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies living sacrifices, holy and acceptable unto God, and your reasonable service.” (Rom. 12:1.) This sacrifice that the Apostle speaks of is a matter that few even of the Household of Faith understand experimentally. It means much more than to strive against sin. It means a voluntary surrender of the will, and hence of all that we possess, to the service of God and His Message of Grace. It means such a complete revolution that those who take this step are called in the Scriptures “New Creatures in Christ Jesus,” “members in particular of the Body of Christ.”

Such are the “begotten again” ones, styled by the Apostles a “Royal Priesthood,” a “holy nation,” a “peculiar people.” These enter into covenant relationship with God, by which they surrender all their rights and privileges as men that they may have the higher riches and greater privileges

as spirit beings. These greater privileges will be fully entered upon at their resurrection change, but are reckonedly entered into from the time of their covenant. Of such the Apostle says, “Old things have passed away, all things have become new.” (2 Cor. 5:17.) The worldly aims and ambitions which once they held as their ideals have been exchanged for new ideals, Heavenly hopes, Heavenly ambitions. SM273



Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation, that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation. Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God.

– 2 Corinthians 5:18-20 –

Having finished his ransom-sacrifice, our Lord Jesus Christ ascended on high and **applied it**, not for the world, but for those who should believe on him and become his followers by consecration. The Apostle was one of these, as he explained to others, and incidentally to us of the same class today. The results of our Lord's appropriation of his merit on our behalf, was our consequent harmony with God and share in the reconciliation, not done by our Lord, but in a measure committed to us, his "members." He says, as above quoted, "God hath reconciled us to himself through Jesus and hath given to us the ministry [service] of reconciliation"; not the service of our own reconciliation, which is already passed, but the service of making known to the world the great fact that through the merit of Christ's death, whosoever wills may return to harmony with God, be reconciled to him. Our message is that this reconciliation is eventually to reach the whole world, but that, at the present time, it is intended only for "him that hath an ear to hear."

As ambassadors for God, as "members" of The Christ, it is our ministry or service in the world to carry the message to all who can hear it—to persuade men, to encourage them by word and example, to be reconciled to God—to accept his terms and conditions and to submit themselves fully to his will. This ministry or service in the present time affects merely the gathering of "the household of faith," including the "elect," but this is not the end of the service. Those faithful in the present work of the ministry of reconciliation will be counted worthy by the Lord of a share in the glorious work of the future. The reconciliation of that time will differ from the message of the present time. Now we persuade, we urge, we entreat, we lay down our lives for the brethren. We seek by word and example to encourage, to entice them to the Lord—to have fellowship in his sufferings and in our ministry.

The ministry of the future will be entirely different—it will be glorious. This ministry of reconciliation committed to the Church, now and hereafter, is sometimes referred to as the ministry of the New Covenant—the service of bringing Israel in covenant relationship with God **anew**. These royal priests serve the New Covenant by way of making ready, under the guidance of their Head, the sacrificing of their restitution rights as underpriests. The duties and privileges of this "royal priesthood" are now a sacrificing service; by and by a reigning, restoring and teaching service. "As he was, so are we in this world." —1 John 4:17.

Our Lord became the sin-offering for us, the household of faith, and that this is in order that

For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

2 Corinthians 5:21

we might be made the righteousness of God in him. In other words, we his "members" may be the channels through whom his merit would be applied for the propitiation of the world's sins, under the terms of the New Testament, or bequest, in his blood. This is in harmony with the Apostle's statement that God's mercy through Christ will be extended to Israel through the Church. As it is written, "They shall obtain mercy through your mercy." It is God's mercy through Christ which will pass through the Church to natural Israel to whomsoever wills of all the families of the earth. Thank God for the privilege of this ministry of reconciliation committed unto us! —Rom. 11:27. R. 4542

**4 But in all things we commend ourselves as ministers of God: in much patience, in tribulations, in needs, in distresses,
5 in stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labors, in sleeplessness, in fastings,
6 by purity, by knowledge, by longsuffering, by kindness, by the Holy Spirit, by sincere love,
7 by the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armor of righteousness on the right hand and on the left,
8 by honor and dishonor, by evil report and good report. As deceivers, and yet true.
9 As unknown, and yet well known. As dying, and behold we live. As chastened, and yet not killed.
10 As sorrowful, yet always rejoicing. As poor, yet making many rich. As having nothing, and yet possessing all things.**

– 2 Corinthians 6:4-10 –

The Apostle mentions some of these [cross-bearing experiences], and declares that the endurance of them are marks of his faithfulness as a servant of the Lord. How much our Master knew of being counted a deceiver, while yet he was the true one, of being called Beelzebub, while really the Prince of light! What a cross it must have been to endure such slanderous misrepresentations, and contradictions of sinners against himself; and how faithfully he bore the cross. And shall not all of his followers expect to similarly share this cross with him, and be misunderstood, misrepresented, misjudged, by those who are more or less blinded by the Adversary! Such dishonor, such evil reports, are amongst the things which our Lord specifically declared would be a part of our cross-bearing when he said, “Blessed are ye when men shall revile and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you falsely for my sake. Rejoice and be exceeding glad (in all such cross-bearings), for great is your reward in heaven.”

In a word, our Lord calls upon his disciples to follow him, in direct opposition to the world-current. He declares that the disciple must not expect to be above his Lord in being spared such experiences, but promises great rewards at the end of the journey—life eternal, with exceeding glory.

Our Lord Jesus Christ is the grandest Example of self-denial in the interests of others. He was rich in the possession of the spiritual nature with all its glory and honor. Yet for our sakes He became poor, taking the human nature in order that He might redeem mankind. To this end He surrendered life itself at Calvary, that through His sacrifice we might become rich—possessed of Divine favor and the riches of Divine grace in Christ—even joint-heirship with Him who now is our exalted Lord at the right hand of Divine Majesty. But to attain this joint-heirship with Him, we must study to be like Him, to have His Spirit and to share with others whatever He may give us of either temporal or spiritual favors. R. 2616 and R. 5927

**For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though
He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that you through
His poverty might become rich.
2 Corinthians 8:9**

Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness?

– 2 Corinthians 6:14 –

This command, not to be unequally yoked with unbelievers, is very generally quoted with reference to the subject of marriage. And it is properly so applied, being a general principle applicable in a variety of cases. But the Apostle is not here referring to the marriage bond, but to the bonds of friendship and communion, which should be sacred among the saints, and which should not exist between believers and unbelievers. Through this and the preceeding chapter he has been discoursing about the doctrine of Christ. He has been preaching the gospel of redemption and resurrection, and of the privilege of being new creatures in Christ, and showing that, having by faith received the blessed gospel, we are ambassadors for Christ and co-workers together with him in making it known to others; and that as such we should be faithful to our commission, and under no circumstances allow the truth to be mixed with error. The idea is not that the saints should be unkind or unneighborly to the unbelieving: on the contrary, they are to be kind to all men, to the thankful and to the unthankful, to the believing and to the unbelieving (Luke 6:35; Gal. 6:10); but it is that they should not be friends in the sense of having communion and fellowship.

To be “yoked” together with another signifies more than a mere passing friendliness or neighborly kindness. It signifies an intimacy, a companionship, a fellowship of spirit. If two are bound together with the same yoke, they must of necessity walk together; and if they cannot agree to walk together, they must sever the yoke, whether it be a literal wooden yoke, or a yoke of friendship.

The Apostle's questions are therefore significant: “What fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness?” None whatever: the man who is righteous cannot approve or agree with the unrighteous; they cannot walk together, either under the one yoke or the other, and they naturally drift apart, because there is nothing to hold them together. “And what communion hath light with darkness?” Can the natural light and darkness abide together? No more can the light of truth in one heart and the darkness of error in another draw them together in fellowship and sympathy. They are repellant and not attractive forces. They cannot assimilate. The light may come where darkness reigns and chase it away, and then there can be communion in light; but when the darkness opposes the light, and instead of giving place to it, seeks to overwhelm it, there can be no communion except the light suffer an eclipse and go out in darkness. R. 1588

What agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: “I WILL DWELL IN THEM AND WALK AMONG THEM. I WILL BE THEIR GOD, AND THEY SHALL BE MY PEOPLE.” Therefore “COME OUT FROM AMONG THEM AND BE SEPARATE, SAYS THE LORD. DO NOT TOUCH WHAT IS UNCLEAN, AND I WILL RECEIVE YOU.”

– 2 Corinthians 6:16-17 –

To be separate does not mean to be friends and companions, or to be in fellowship on any grounds. It means that we are to make a clean-cut division between ourselves and all the unclean, the impure in heart, as manifested by their disloyalty to the truth, and thereby to God, its great Author; and that this separation is to be so marked that the disfellowshipped one will be sure to know it, and that none can mistake our obedience and loyalty to the Lord and his truth. There is to be no trifling or half-way obedience in this matter; for we are not only to be separate in spirit from the enemies of the Lord, but we are not **to touch** the unclean. As the Apostle elsewhere says, we are to “avoid them” —to have no part or lot with them.

It is only on these conditions that we have the Lord’s promise—“And I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you; and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.” We are thus brought face to face with the alternative of making a definite choice between the Lord and his truth on the one hand, and the enemies of the Lord, whether open or covert, on the other. The command is, “Choose ye this day whom ye will serve.” There is no neutral ground; and no half-way compliance can realize the blessed promise— “And I will receive you.”

To thus come out from among the unclean, and to be separate from all the deceitful, as well as from the open, workers of iniquity, may often leave us quite alone in the world; but the truly loyal heart will **prefer** to be alone with God, rather than to have the friendship of those who are untrue to him. Even if the Scriptures had nothing to say on the subject, such would be **natural** to a devoted heart.

I WILL BE A FATHER TO YOU, AND YOU SHALL BE MY SONS AND DAUGHTERS, SAYS THE LORD ALMIGHTY.

2 Corinthians 6:18

What a promise! What a suggestion!—that we, by nature defiled and imperfect, should not only have the notice of our sovereign Creator, but should be invited to become His children and be given the assurance of His parental affection for us—that “like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that reverence Him.” How wonderful it seems! And then, as the Apostle elsewhere declares, this is not the end of the matter, but merely the beginning, for he says, “If children, then heirs, heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ, if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together.” —Rom. 8:17. Yes, it is this thought of what is implied in the term children of God, sons of God. R. 1588 and R. 5742

Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

– 2 Corinthians 7:1 –

Whoever, after having experienced the Lord's blessing in the forgiveness of sins, has no desire to war a warfare against them, and to bring into subjection to his new mind the powers and talents of his mortal body, has not the true spirit of sonship. He would thereby be giving evidence that he does not truly love righteousness, and that he does not truly hate iniquity.

In what sense, then, do we cleanse ourselves? We answer that having been reckonedly cleansed by the Lord, and brought under the influence of His Holy Spirit and the enlightening understanding of His Word, we are now invited to show our zeal for righteousness and to cooperate with Him in the work. While all the condemnation is reckoned as having passed from us, we still have the opportunity of showing the Lord what our spirit, our intention, would be, by striving against sin in our minds and in our flesh. The incentive to this cleansing is of the Lord, but the cleansing itself is something for us to do—"Let us cleanse ourselves." It is not sufficient that we avoid outward wrongdoing. Our minds must be cleansed. We must learn to hate sin, to repel its first advances. We must learn that our minds and our bodies are the temples of the Lord and that everything contrary to Him and His Law of Righteousness and Love must be barred.



Our text declares that such a purification of flesh and spirit, body and mind, constitutes a perfecting of holiness. The thought here is that holiness cannot be attained in a moment, but that it must be gradually effected, perfected. Holiness is not a charm which we may put in our pockets; it is not a garment which may be worn occasionally. Holiness resembles more the tempering of a piece of metal; it enters into the entire fiber, changing its general characteristics; it is transforming in its influence. True, there is a holiness reckoned to the Lord's people in the Robe of Christ's righteousness, which is granted to us when first we turn from sin, accept the Redeemer, and consecrate ourselves to God. But this is not sufficient. We must work into our characters that which we have willed—or, as the Apostle expresses it, we must allow the Lord to work in us the holy will, and the holy conduct which must necessarily accompany the holy will, as opportunity and conditions will permit. R. 5737

4 Great is my boldness of speech toward you, great is my boasting on your behalf. I am filled with comfort. I am exceedingly joyful in all our tribulation.

5 For indeed, when we came to Macedonia, our bodies had no rest, but we were troubled on every side. Outside were conflicts, inside were fears.

6 Nevertheless God, who comforts the downcast, comforted us by the coming of Titus,

7 and not only by his coming, but also by the consolation with which he was comforted in you, when he told us of your earnest desire, your mourning, your zeal for me, so that I rejoiced even more.

– 2 Corinthians 7:4-7 –

In his second letter to the Corinthians (1:3-7), ten times in these verses does the Apostle use this word “comfort.” He evidently had a keen appreciation of how much the Church needed such consolation, and how much the God of all comfort wished to have his faithful ones comforted, and how even the strongest in the Church, the apostles, needed comfort. What better evidence could we ask than that the spirit of comfort and of consolation, which the heavenly Father manifested, which the Lord Jesus manifested, which the apostles manifested and which all the faithful in Christ Jesus are called upon to exercise, is indeed the very Spirit of the Truth, the holy Spirit! Consequently, those who are making greatest progress in this direction, as comforters in Zion, are growing most in grace; and so we may be sure will be best able to grow also in knowledge, and to be helpful to the Church in every sense of the word, and to be used of the Lord as mouthpieces in the ministry of his Truth.

A little further along in the same epistle (7:4-13), the Apostle uses this word, “comfort,” seven times, saying, “I am filled with **comfort**; I am exceedingly joyful in all our tribulation. For when we came into Macedonia our flesh had no rest, but we were troubled on every side; without were fightings, within were fears. Nevertheless, God that **comforteth** those that are cast down, **comforted** us by the coming of Titus; and not by his coming only, but by the consolation [**comfort**] wherewith he was **comforted** of you, when he told us your earnest desire, your mourning, your fervent mind toward me; so that I rejoice the more. . . .Therefore, we were **comforted** in your **comfort**.” Here we see illustrated, in the Apostle’s language, the mutual helpfulness of the Church in this matter of comfort. Titus had a part in it, Paul had a part in it, the Church at Corinth had a part in it—every member possessing the holy Spirit and exercised by it had a share; and the Apostle declares that all this comfort was of God. And he expresses it as though this were God’s general disposition, in every such circumstance of his people, when he speaks of him as “the God of all comfort,” and “the God that comforteth them that are cast down.” We may safely understand, therefore, that wherever we find one of the Lord’s followers, however great his weakness, however much cast down, we have in his case presented to us an opportunity of serving the Lord, of being channels of his mercy, and carrying to the downcast one something of comfort and consolation and helpfulness. R. 3435

But this I say: He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity, for God loves a cheerful giver.

– 2 Corinthians 9:6-7 –

Let us note the change which the full appreciation of the gospel wrought upon the believers at Corinth. At first they were so negligent of their privilege that seemingly they never thought of volunteering financial assistance to the Apostle while he was serving them by the labor of his own hands, and receiving some assistance from believers in other places. But, after the grace of God entered more fully into their hearts and they began to appreciate the value of the truth which they had received,—that it had brought them priceless blessings of hope and joy and faith and character—they had a zeal, a “forwardness” to do something financially in the Lord’s service. And now that the Apostle was absent from them, and after his course had proved to them that he sought not their money but themselves, to do them good; he felt free to draw their attention to the great blessing that would come from liberality in the Lord’s cause in proportion to their ability and love.

Our Lord showed us how he measures our gifts; that he esteems them not according to the amount given, but chiefly according to the spirit which prompts the gift, when he drew attention to the poor widow who cast in two mites into the Lord’s treasury. Our Lord declared that from the standpoint of his estimation the poor widow had cast in a larger sum than any of the wealthy who had given merely out of their abundance, and not to such an extent that they felt it. How many of the Lord’s people would be more “fat” spiritually today, if they would give attention to the exercise of this talent, this opportunity for service, we cannot say; the Lord only knows. But this lesson makes it incumbent upon us to point out a privilege in this direction which is within the reach of the very poorest.

Gifts in any other spirit than a cheerful one might just as well not be given: they will bring no blessing. The Lord does not appreciate such giving: it has no “sweet odor” in his estimation. The gift, to be appreciated of the Lord, must be a thank-offering, prompted by a realization of a debt of everlasting gratitude, to him from whom cometh every good and every perfect gift. R. 2211

God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all things, may have an abundance for every good work. Now may He who supplies seed to the sower, and bread for food, supply and multiply the seed you have sown and increase the fruits of your righteousness, while you are enriched in everything for all liberality, which causes thanksgiving through us to God.

– 2 Corinthians 9:8,10-11 –

When in the last verse the Apostle speaks of “being enriched in everything,” we are not to understand him to mean that the Lord’s people will all be enriched financially. The Apostle himself was an example of how the Lord’s people do not become wealthy. He is speaking rather of the enrichment of the heart, as he says in another place, speaking of himself and co-laborers in the gospel work: We are “as poor, but making many rich;” —rich in hope, rich in faith, rich in love and all the various concomitant graces which these imply. R. 2212

For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds.

– 2 Corinthians 10:3-4 –

Many soldiers in the Lord's army are surprised to learn that the Captain's name is the Prince of Peace, and that all the enlisted ones are expected to battle for peace. The matter seems at first to be contradictory. Battling is warfare, peace is the result; we are called to be soldiers and called to be peacemakers. Many of the soldiers, without waiting to learn the rules and commands of the Captain, without waiting to study the proper use of the sword of the Spirit, spring courageously into the fight and begin to wound their neighbors, their friends, and sometimes their fellow soldiers in the Lord's army. This is a great mistake: this is an attempt to use the spiritual weapons in a carnal manner and is contrary to the example and word of our Captain. All such would do best to put up their swords again—to refrain from using the word of God in a belligerent manner, in a smiting way against those with whom they have to do. We must learn who is our foe, and not recklessly and blindly smite down any and everything opposing us.

Our real opponents are the fallen angels, the demons; and our poor fallen fellow creatures who oppose us and who oppose righteousness do so because they are under the power of Satan, more or less blinded by his sophistries and deceptions, —as it is written, “The god of this world hath blinded the minds of them that believe not” —has deceived the whole world. —(2 Cor. 4:4; Rev. 20:2,3.) Our sentiment against all opposers of righteousness amongst men should therefore be that of benevolence and compassion, realizing that they are under the Adversary's power, though they know it not. And if we suffer at their hands as soldiers of the cross, our sentiments should be, “Father, forgive them; they know not what they do.”

The Apostle is pointing out that these strongholds which we are to pull down are in ourselves. Sin is entrenched in our minds, in our imaginations. Pride, selfishness and various other kinds of sin, are entrenched in us through the long centuries of the downward tendencies of our race. These things have dug deep trenches in our system; they are firmly fastened there. But, urges St. Paul, “Let not sin have dominion over your mortal body.” Destroy the stronghold. Bring your entire being into subjection to the will of God.

These enemies in our own flesh cause us the greatest difficulties. To these Satan appeals; these he seeks to encourage in the warfare against the new spirit of our minds; through these the spirit of

the world gains closest approach to us, and seeks to capture us and lead us back as captives to Sin. So to speak, the “New Creature in Christ” is beset, surrounded on every hand with enemies seeking its disaster and re-enslavement. We must battle for ourselves, for our own liberty, for victory over our own weaknesses; we must battle against the spirit of the world, against delusions and snares of the Adversary by which he would make evil things appear good, and right to appear undesirable. No wonder that the child of God is urged to be continually watchful; that he is urged to “put on the whole armor of God”; that he is cautioned in respect to his various wily foes and especially against those of his own flesh; that he is urged to faithfulness and loyalty of heart!

**Casting down arguments and every
high thing that exalts itself against the
knowledge of God, bringing every thought into
captivity to the obedience of Christ.**

2 Corinthians 10:5

Heart-loyalty to the Lord means continual effort to bring all the conduct of our lives, yea, the very thoughts and intents of our hearts, into subjection to the Divine will. (2 Cor. 10:4,5.) This is our first duty, our continual duty, and will be the end of our duty; for “This is the will of God, even your sanctification.” R. 3274, R. 5889, R. 5127

For I am jealous for you with godly jealousy. For I have betrothed you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.

– 2 Corinthians 11:2 –

Throughout the Scriptures a woman is a symbol of the Church—a pure woman of a pure Church, a corrupt woman of a false Church. We find our Lord comparing the true Church in the end of this age to a company of virgins—part wise and part foolish—and likening himself to the bridegroom who, at the end of the age, had come to receive his espoused Church to himself in glory. John the Baptist pictured the matter after the same manner, saying, “He that hath Bride is the Bridegroom;” the Apostle Paul amplifies the figure, declaring, “I have espoused you (the consecrated Church) as a chaste virgin unto one husband, which is Christ.” John 3:29; 2 Cor. 11:2) Here, as well as in the Lord’s parable of the virgins, the Jewish marriage is set forth as the example or pattern of the union between Christ and the Church—a very different figure from our marriage custom of the present time.

With the Jews in olden time, when a betrothal took place, legal and binding documents were signed by or for the contracting parties, but no actual marriage or union took place for about a year. During that year, while waiting for the coming of the bridegroom to receive her unto himself, to take her to his own house, it was required of the espoused that she should be as faithful, as loyal, as true to her espousal as is now expected of any true wife who has been actually and fully married to her husband. We see the harmony between the Jewish marriage custom and the Lord’s dealings with the Church. No one is espoused to the Lord except he has entered into a formal and definite contract with him, the contract on the Lord’s part being the exceeding great and precious promises of the Scriptures, assuring the espoused that if found faithful she shall be joint-heir with her Lord, the Bridegroom, in his Millennial Kingdom and all its glories. The contract on the part of the Church is our covenant of consecration, loyalty, faithfulness unto our Redeemer, to whom we are espoused, even unto death. The interim following our personal acceptance of the Lord’s gracious promises by a full consecration of our all to him and his service until we actually die corresponds in a measure to the betrothal period of the Jewish maiden; but the still clearer and more exact fulfillment of the figure is found in the history of the Church as a whole. The Lord’s virgin Church was espoused to him at Pentecost, and has been awaiting the coming of the Bridegroom and the resurrection change to glory, honor and immortality—the marriage, the union—for nearly nineteen centuries.



We cannot understand that St. Paul was actuated by a mean jealousy, but that he was jealous **for**, or in the interest of, the **Corinthians**; he was jealous also for the things that were right and that they should be in accord with them. His jealousy, therefore, was an earnest, anxious solicitude and vigilant watchfulness, a godly jealousy for the best interests of the Lord’s precious Truth. This, of course, is a jealousy such as we all should feel in the Church. If we see a condition such as that to which the Apostle refers, a departure from the simplicity and purity which is in Christ, we should feel, “This is all wrong,” and should do all in our power and in reason to correct this difficulty. So, if we see anything in one member of the Church that would be likely to cast a reflection upon the Lord’s cause, we should feel it proper to put forth efforts to correct that one, lest harm be done.

HG409 and R. 4789

For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ. And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also transform themselves into ministers of righteousness, whose end will be according to their works.

– 2 Corinthians 11:13-15 –

The Apostle was thus obliged to contend with foes outside and inside the Church and only the Divine power seemingly could have sustained him in so unequal a contest. He had spent more than a year at Corinth, planting the seeds of Truth and establishing believers there, while encouraging other little groups of the Lord's people in various quarters by messages and epistles. The work flourished and the Adversary was permitted of the Lord to stir up opposition both external and internal. Internally false brethren had made various charges against St. Paul. They opposed some of his teachings. They denied that he was an Apostle any more than themselves. They urged that he erred in teaching that circumcision was unnecessary to the Gentiles; that his teachings were not fixed and consistent (2 Cor. 1:17); that he was given to self-commendation (2 Cor. 3:1; 5:12; 10:8); and that he assumed unauthorized authority. —2 Cor. 10:14.

They charged that he was unpatriotic and had fallen away from the faith (2 Cor. 11:22); that he was not Christ's servant at all (2 Cor. 10:7; 11:23); that he had falsely assumed to be one of the ambassadors of Christ (2 Cor. 11:5; 12:11); that he could show no proofs of his claimed apostleship; that unlike the twelve he had never known Christ personally; that his witness was second-hand and not direct like that of the others.

It does not surprise us to learn that these false teachers confused the Church at Corinth and that splits, factions, sects, parties, resulted—some saying, I am of Paul; others, I am of Apollos; others, I am for Peter, etc. They reproached St. Paul for having worked at his trade and received gifts from Macedonia (2 Cor. 11:2-10), claiming that he should have urged his needs upon the Corinthians. They insinuated that the collections taken for the poor at Jerusalem were probably in part, at least, for himself. (2 Cor. 12:16.) They even asked if it were certain that he was a Hebrew at all—of pure blood—if he were not a Gentile in whole or in part. (2 Cor. 11:22.) These wicked arrows, even bitter words, must have wounded deeply, painfully, one so sensitive as the Apostle, especially as they came from erstwhile friends, for whom he had been willing to suffer the loss of all things. R. 4517

The Church at Corinth and all of God's people since have cause for thankfulness that the account [in 2 Corinthians chapters 10-13] was given. It was the Apostle's *defense*, not merely of himself, but specially a defense of the doctrines of Christ, which he, as the Lord's mouthpiece, had been used to declare. In God's order he was the leader in the presentation of Christian doctrine then, as he has been since. R. 4517

For 2 Cor. 11:32-33, see page 33

For 2 Cor. 12:2, see page 31

For 2 Cor. 12:3-4, see page 31

For 2 Cor. 12:7, see page 27

For 2 Cor. 12:8-9, see page 27

**We may divide the Apostle's defense in his
second epistle to the Corinthians into three divisions:**

- 1** The sufferings which he endured in connection with preaching the Truth demonstrated his love for it, his love for the Lord, and his love for such of mankind as might have the hearing ear.

- 2** The proof of his apostleship in the visions granted to him, the communion with God and his deep insight into spiritual truths and the fact that the Lord had specially commissioned him to declare his name at Jerusalem and to the Gentiles. This, indeed, in conjunction with his having seen the Lord "as one born before the time," constituted the chief evidence of his apostleship, in conjunction with the service which he was permitted to render to the Lord's cause under that commission.

- 3** Finally his further proof—he was still a minister of the Lord and of his message to such as had the hearing ear. R. 4518

Under the first count St. Paul enumerates his faithfulness, saying, Are they Israelites? So am I. Are they the Seed of Abraham? So am I. Are they servants of Christ? I serve more; for I have ministered or served more than they, in larger fields; in labors more abundant; in stripes above measure—received at the hands of Gentiles, the Jewish measure being forty blows. In prisons he was more frequent; exposed to death more often; flogged to the limit (thirty-nine blows) by the Jews; five times beaten with rods; stoned; shipwrecked; a day and a night in the deep on wreckage; in journeyings often; in perils many from floods, from robbers; from the heathen; from his fellow-countrymen; in the city; and in the wilds; on the sea and amongst false brethren. The weariness and painfulness of his service; his watching, hungering and thirsting, fastings, cold and deprivations he had experienced more than any of the other Apostles. Furthermore, in God's providence the care of all the Churches had been his pleasurable and weighty responsibility. All these demonstrated his supreme love for God, his neighbor, and his brethren, to a degree unequalled.

Under the second count he had seen the Lord as a spirit-being in the brightness above the sun at noonday, and in advance of the remainder of the Church. What the other apostles saw of our Lord during the forty days of his appearance as a man after his resurrection would not compare in importance to the witness of our Lord's resurrection which St. Paul had seen. Besides this he had a most astounding vision or revelation in which he was "caught away to the third heaven" and saw things he was not authorized to explain. And now, "in due time," St. Paul's writings constitute the key to the Divine Plan of the Ages.

The third test, namely, his sanctity, is everywhere manifest in his writings. He preached not for filthy lucre, nor for worldly applause, nor for the honor of men—not even for honor from the Church. [In 2 Cor. 12:15 and 12:14] He declared,

***I will very gladly spend and be spent for your souls, though the
more abundantly I love you, the less I am loved.***

And again he says what his life affirmed,

I seek not yours, but you.

Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

– 2 Corinthians 12:10 –

However willing St. Paul might have been to be nothing and to let others take their own estimate of him, nevertheless he felt a duty toward the Truth. This led him to tell us in no uncertain terms that he had full proof of his apostleship, and that he was not a whit behind the very chiefest of the Apostles in the understanding of the Divine Program—yea, that to him more than to all the others the Lord had revealed more of those things to come of which our Lord Jesus had spoken. —John 16:13; 2 Corinthians 11:5; Galatians 2:2-10.

But the Apostle did not boast about himself—about his talents, about his oratory, about how the people were spellbound, about how many people recognized his ability, etc. No; he rather would boast of the things which others would think to be for his shame. He would tell them what God's providence had permitted him to suffer for the Truth's sake—scourging, whipping with rods, imprisonment, perils of the deep, perils from false brethren, perils from the heathen. To him these things were the marks of Divine love and favor, and bore witness also that he was a lover of the Lord and His righteousness, and that he had been willing to suffer for the Lord's sake, for the Truth's sake.

Are they Hebrews? So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I. Are they the seed of Abraham? So am I. Are they ministers of Christ?—I speak as a fool—I am more: in labors more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequently, in deaths often. From the Jews five times I received forty stripes minus one. Three times I was beaten with rods. Once I was stoned. Three times I was shipwrecked, a night and a day I have been in the deep. In journeys often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils of my own countrymen, in perils of the Gentiles, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren, in weariness and toil, in sleeplessness often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness—besides the other things, what comes upon me daily: my deep concern for all the churches.

2 Corinthians 11:22-28

The secret of the Apostle's endurance of so great privations—scourgings, imprisonments, buffetings of various kinds—is presented to us in the words of our Lord:

My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness.

2 Corinthians 12:9

And is this not the secret of every successful Christian life? Was it not even so of our Master—that the Father's Spirit in Him, His reliance upon the Father, and His looking for the light of the Father's countenance, were indeed the power of God working in our Savior to will and to do the Father's good pleasure? The same is true with every follower of the Lord since His day. The Master truly said to His followers, "Without Me ye can do nothing." (John 15:5.) It is the Divine Power which operates through our Lord Jesus, through the Word of Truth, through the followers of Jesus; and this Power can operate in the weakest members of the Body of Christ as well as in the strongest. The Lord's grace is sufficient for all and for every time of need. R. 5942

For 2 Cor. 12:9, see also page 100

For 2 Cor. 12:10, see also page 100

Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?---unless indeed you are disqualified.

– 2 Corinthians 13:5 –

Paul says, “Know ye not. . . that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?” and then he exhorts that we examine ourselves whether we be in the faith, or whether we have rejected the faith and thus become reprobates—no longer acceptable to God. (2 Cor. 13:5.) Every **true** child of God has respect to the commandments of God: he searches the Scriptures that he may know them, and is not left in ignorance of them; and, learning them, he endeavors to keep them, and the abiding presence of the Father and the Son is with all such so long as they continue to hold and to keep (obey) his commandments—to hold the Truth in righteousness.

Our Lord always links the progress and development of our spiritual life with our receiving and obeying the Truth, and every child of God should beware of that teaching which claims to be in advance of the Word, and that Christ or the holy Spirit speaks to such advanced Christians independently of the Word. The snare is a most dangerous one. It cultivates spiritual pride and boastfulness, and renders powerless the warnings and exhortations of the sacred Scriptures because the deluded ones think they have a higher teacher dwelling in them. And Satan, taking advantage of the delusion, leads them captive at his will.

Let us endeavor to have more and more of the mind, the Spirit of God—to have his Word abide in us richly (John 15:7; Col. 3:16)—to have and to keep his commandments, that the abiding presence of the Father and the Son may be with us; and that, realizing that the Christ-character and life are definitely formed in us, the hope of glory may be ours; for our Lord said, “Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.” (Matt. 7:21.) How careful then should we be in seeking both to know and to do the will of God. R. 3251

Finally, brethren, farewell.

Become complete.

Be of good comfort.

Be of one mind.

Live in peace.

**And the God of love and
peace will be with you.**

2 Corinthians 13:11



Letter to the Galatians

Possibilities: 1) Written from Macedonia at the same time letter to the Romans was written, c. A.D. 56-57;
2) Written on his way to the Jerusalem Council/before the Council occurred, c. A.D. 49

Paul and his company, passing through the Island of Cyprus to the city of Paphos, at its southern end, did not tarry there. Its climate is miasmatic, and this is presumed to have been the reason for a hasty departure for the high lands of Asia Minor—Galatia, etc. The Apostle is presumed to have referred to his own semi-invalid condition at this time when later, in writing the Epistle to the Galatians, he said, “Through infirmity of the flesh I preached the gospel to you at first.” (Gal. 4:13-14.) Galatia was the name of a district or state in which were located a number of cities and churches mentioned in the account of Paul’s missionary tours—Iconium, Lystra, Derbe, and Antioch on the borders of Galatia, in the state of Pisidia.

The Apostle was writing to Christians at Galatia, some who had been heathens. They had originally received the correct idea, that “Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures,” and that through his blood we have redemption [from the curse of sin] even the forgiveness of sins. (Gal. 3:1 and 1:4.) But their early trust in Christ’s redemptive work had been disturbed by some Christianized Jews, who, while calling themselves Christians, were denying the very foundation fact of Christianity, viz.: that Jesus’ death cancelled the sins of all who accepted of him as their Redeemer and Saviour.

They did not deny Jesus, else the Galatians would have been unmoved by their teachings. But **calling** themselves Christians, and confessing that Jesus was a notable and worthy **EXAMPLE**, they denied the **ransom**—they denied that there was “redemption **through his blood**, even the forgiveness of sins.” (Col. 1:14.) They claimed that Jesus’ example was good, yet if any would be saved, they must accomplish their salvation by good works, and observance of the law—circumcision, etc. That these were the facts, is evident from the Apostle’s language throughout this epistle.

In writing this epistle the Apostle is endeavoring to defend the Church in Galatia against certain Judaizing teachers who were seeking not only to undermine his teaching and personal influence, but thereby to bring believers under bondage to the Jewish law;—giving the inference that faith in Christ was only efficacious for salvation when supplemented by the keeping of the law. R. 1657

I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a different gospel, which is not another, but there are some who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ.

Galatians 1:6-7

The Apostle (Chapter 1) expresses his surprise that these Galatian Christians should so soon become entangled in this error, when the gospel of the Kingdom had been so clearly set before them. Then (Chap. 1:10-24; 2:1-10) he reproduces the evidence of his apostleship, and in a masterly way sets forth the strong foundation of the hope of the gospel, the entire freedom of both Jews and Gentiles from the bondage of the Law Covenant, and the glorious liberty and peculiar privileges of the sons of God. These Gentile Christians had never been under the Jewish law. They were “aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise.” But, through the preaching of the Apostle, they were brought nigh to God “by the blood of Christ” (Eph. 2:12,13); i.e., through faith in his blood they had been freely justified.

St. Paul's Epistle to the Galatians shows us how many of them, Gentiles by birth, had been misled into believing that whatever blessings they might enjoy through Christ and the original Abrahamic Covenant, they must also become amenable to the Law Covenant. Note that the Apostle's letter to the Galatians is almost exclusively devoted to this subject, and remember that the Galatians were not Hebrews, or, at least, the majority of them were not. In that epistle he found it necessary to show that he had equal authority with the other apostles as a teacher—that the Galatians might know that he was as well qualified as the others, and as fully authorized to instruct them respecting their obligations; that his word was authoritative; that the Gentiles were not under the Law Covenant, but under the Grace Covenant—the original Abrahamic Covenant. He recounts that he did not get his instruction or his knowledge of the Gospel from the Apostles at Jerusalem, but that, so far as it was concerned, he had under the Lord's Providence been their instructor, rather than they his instructor. —Gal. 2:1-14.

But when I saw that they were not straightforward about the truth of the gospel, I said to Peter before them all, "If you, being a Jew, live in the manner of Gentiles and not as the Jews, why do you compel Gentiles to live as Jews? We who are Jews by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles, knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law, for by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified."

Galatians 2:14-16

The Apostle proceeds to show that the Law Covenant did a good service for the Jews in that it prepared them and brought them to Christ, the great Teacher; that by hearing his message, his invitation, they might exercise obedient faith, sacrificing faith, and, being baptized into Christ, might put on Christ—become members of his Body. All such, Jew and Gentile, bond or free, male or female, would be members of the one Body, of which Christ Jesus is the Head. This chapter winds up with that forceful statement, "If ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's Seed and heirs according to the promise"—the Covenant made to Abraham. [Gal. 3:29]

All this argument was to show the Galatians that, so far from needing to get under the Law Covenant, they had no need of it whatever, and those who were under it needed to get out from under it, in order to be able by faith to accept Christ as their Redeemer and Justifier, and by faith to consecrate their lives unto death, that they might be acceptable to God as members of the Body of Christ.

R. 3009, R. 1657, R. 687, R. 4510

As we have said before, so now I say again, if anyone preaches any other gospel to you than what you have received, let him be accursed.

Galatians 1:9

For Gal. 1:11-12, see pages 29 and 167

For Gal. 1:15-16, see page 25

For Gal. 1:16-19, see page 29

For Gal. 2:9, see page 43

For Gal. 2:11,14, see page 59

I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me, and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.

– Galatians 2:20 –

Brother Paul was not literally crucified but ended his course by being beheaded. Yet figuratively he tells us long before his literal death, “I am crucified with Christ.” That is to say: I am delivered up to death—my will and self-control, my talents and powers, my rights and lawful ambitions as a man, are all pinioned and stopped by my consecration, so that having no will or plan or way of my own, I may be fully able to let the holy spirit or mind (will) of the Master dwell in me and rule my every act to his service—not so dead that I will not occasionally feel a twinging of the flesh, and have a suggestion as to another way and as to what would or would not be necessary, but I keep my body and its wishes under (1 Cor. 9:27), subject to the will of God, saying as did the Master under similar circumstances, “Not my will but thine (Father) be done.” As with our Lord, so with the Apostle Paul crucifying did not mean the crucifying of a sinful will, or sinful desires, plans, etc.; for he says “I am crucified **with Christ**,” and elsewhere he calls it being “dead **with Christ**” and having “fellowship in **his sufferings**.” So then if Christ’s crucifixion was not the crucifixion of a sinful will, and desires, neither was Paul’s; and neither are yours and mine as followers of the spotless Lamb of God, crucified with him.

As our Lord set aside and crucified his own will, and accepted of the Father’s will **instead**, so we set aside or crucify our wills or desires, no matter how good and wise they appear to us, to accept of the guidance and direction of our Lord Jesus who, now glorified, delights still to carry out the Father’s plan, and the grandeur perfection of which he can now **fully** appreciate. R. 960

He who supplies the Spirit to you and works miracles among you, does He do it by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? Just as Abraham “BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS ACCOUNTED TO HIM FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS.”

– Galatians 3:5-6 –

Father of the Faithful is one of Abraham’s titles in the Bible. He is one of the greatest characters in history. The most enlightened peoples of the earth look back to him as the Divinely-appointed channel through whom all their religious hopes and prospects have been received—Jews, Christians and Mohammedans. God’s promises made to Abraham constitute the foundation of faith for all these peoples, although many of them are not aware of the fact.

Abraham was full of faith. This feature of his character specially endeared him to the Almighty, who, because of it, styled him His friend. But it was not for his skill as a general, nor for his generosity in dealing with the spoils, nor for his generosity on other occasions, that God loved Abraham. The special quality that God esteemed in him is repeatedly mentioned in the Bible as having been Abraham’s faith. “Abraham believed God.” R. 5170

The name Abraham signifies Father of a multitude. It was given to him after he had responded to God’s call and showed his faith and obedience. Originally, his name was Abram, which signifies *exalted faith*. The name Abraham occurs in the New Testament seventy-four times. Jesus referred to him nineteen times. The promises of God made to Abraham constitute the foundation for all the theology of the New Testament, as expressed by the Lord Jesus, by St. Paul, by St. Stephen, St. Peter and others. R. 5169

And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel to Abraham beforehand, saying, “In you all the nations shall be blessed.”

– Galatians 3:8 –

St. Paul speaks of the Gospel's having been preached beforehand to Abraham, saying, “In thy Seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed.” Here was a vague statement of the Divine purpose, relating to the blessing itself as an acorn would be related to an oak tree. Similarly, seed-thoughts respecting coming blessings had previously been given, though with much less definiteness. Directly after the fall God had declared that the Seed of the woman should yet bruise the Serpent's head. In other words, he foretold that evil should not always triumph. Again, through the Prophet Enoch a seed-thought had been given in his prophecy, “Behold, the Lord cometh with his holy myriads, to execute judgment.” But to Abraham the message was so much more explicit as to make it worthy to be termed a part of the Gospel, a part of the good tidings now more fully made known unto us who are in Christ Jesus.

Two thousand years and more passed before any intimation was ever given to our race of divine mercy. The first intimation, vague at the time, (still vague except to those guided by the Holy Spirit), was made to Abraham in the brief statement that at an unnamed date in the future God would have mercy upon mankind and would use Abraham's seed in blessing all the families of the earth. The Apostle Paul (Gal. 3:8) calls this the first statement of the Gospel—the first announcement of the good tidings—saying, God preached the Gospel in advance to Abraham. R. 4451 and NS406

For Gal. 3:8, see also page 404

Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, “CURSED IS EVERYONE WHO HANGS ON A TREE”).

– Galatians 3:13 –

A weaker man than St. Paul might have followed the policy of covering up the fact of the **crucifixion** of Christ. He might have said that the Jews did not appreciate what Christ was doing, that Christ was the Son of God, the mighty Logos; and then he might have glossed over the death of Christ on the cross. Thus the Gentiles might have regarded our Lord as a great Teacher and never have learned of the manner of His death until some Jew should tell them that their great Teacher had been a malefactor so wicked that He was not fit to live. Should they then have asked St. Paul whether this was true, he could have explained that it was a fact, but that the great mass of the Jewish people had not consented to this act of their rulers and therefore were not a party to it.

This glossing over of truth is what is done today in all of the great pulpits of Christendom. If our Lord's death is mentioned at all, it is done in an apologetic manner. But St. Paul preached that Christ's death was **necessary** to redeem the human race, and that under the terms of the Law Covenant, He must die on the **cross** in order to redeem **Israel** from the curse of the Law. —Gal. 3:13.

Thus the Apostle did not shun to declare the whole counsel of God in the strongest form. (Acts 20:27.) Crucifixion was the only way in which our Lord's death would be of full value and accomplish the purpose intended. Had He not died, the “Just for the unjust,” He could not have been the Redeemer of the whole world. This Message was so great, so different from anything else in the world, that the Apostle concluded that he had no time for the discussion of any other topic. R. 5126

**Now to Abraham and his Seed were the promises made. He does not say, “And to seeds,” as of many, but as of one, “AND TO YOUR SEED,” who is Christ. And this I say, that the law, which was four hundred and thirty years later, cannot annul the covenant that was confirmed before by God in Christ, that it should make the promise of no effect. For if the inheritance is of the law, it is no longer of promise, but God gave it to Abraham by promise.
Galatians 3:16-18**

Therefore the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor.

– Galatians 3:24-25 –

Oh foolish Galatians! who has deluded you? As many as are trusting to obedience to the Law are under its condemnation or curse. Christ hath redeemed us [Jews] from the curse of the Law that the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles through Christ Jesus, and that we [Jews] might receive the spirit through faith. And surely God’s covenant with Abraham made four hundred and thirty years before the Law was given, cannot be annulled by that Law. —Gal. 3:1,10,13,17.

Next, Paul answers a supposed inquiry as to what was the object of the Law, and why it was given if not necessary to the attainment of the Abrahamic promises. He says the Law was added because of sin, to manifest sin in its true light—that sin might be seen to be a great and deep-seated malady

**What purpose then does the law serve? It was added because of transgressions, till the Seed should come to whom the promise was made, and it was appointed through angels by the hand of a mediator.
Galatians 3:19**

—to act as a school teacher pointing Israel to Christ as a good and only Physician who could cure their malady. But this Law schoolmaster was not intended to hold dominion over us [Jews] always, but only until the remedy should come, and to prepare some at least to receive the great Physician.

As children are under nursery laws and subject to teachers until an appointed time, so were we [Jews] under the Law, and treated as servants rather than as sons. We were kept under the Law which is

to govern the World in the next age, though we were the heirs through whom, according to the promise, the others were to be blessed. But in the fullness of time God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the Law, to redeem them that were under the Law that we [Jews] being liberated, might receive the adoption of sons. And so also, because ye [who were not under the Law, but were Gentiles or heathens] are [also now] sons [therefore] God hath sent forth the spirit of his son into your hearts. We were sons under tutelage and ye were of the servant class, but now you and we who are accepted of God in Christ, are fully received into sonship and heirship, and neither of us are subject to the Law. —Gal. 3:19-4:7. R.973

**For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.
Galatians 3:26-28**

If you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed and heirs according to the promise.

– Galatians 3:29 –

Only to Israel had God sent His Law and given His prophecies. To them He had said, "You only have I known [recognized] of all the families of the earth." (Amos 3:2.) When Jesus came, He said, If you had received the witness of John, you would have been ready to be My disciples. Many of the Jews had merely a form of godliness. They thought God would save them by the Law whether or no. But Jesus told them that they should not boast that they had Abraham for their Father, for God was able even of the stones about them to raise up children to Abraham. He assured them that God would find a worthy Seed of Abraham.

**Do not think to say to yourselves,
'We have Abraham as our father.' For I say to
you that God is able to raise up children
to Abraham from these stones.**

Matthew 3:9

The work of Jesus during His ministry was the starting of this new Seed. Jesus Himself was the Head of this Seed. The special work of the entire Gospel Age has been the calling and preparing of this Spiritual Seed of Abraham. The promise was first to the Jews, but since they did not prove worthy as a nation, God, after taking out the faithful "remnant" from that people, turned to the Gentiles, to take out from them a sufficient number to complete the foreordained 144,000 to comprise this Seed, the Church of Christ, the members of His Body. The Apostle tells us that when this Bride class is united with Him they shall be parts of the Seed of Abraham. This statement relates to the promise made to Abraham, that through him and his Seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed. Thus we see the work that Christ is accomplishing now.

The invitation to become the Bride of Christ is a very special invitation and those who would be His must walk in the "narrow way." If they will sit in His Throne, they must suffer with Him. If they suffer with Him they shall also share His glory. So "the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that shall follow," were not only to be accomplished in our Lord Jesus, personally, but He was an example for **all the Church** who are justified through faith in His blood. They have a share with Him in His sufferings, and will share in His glory. —Rev. 20:6.

Our Lord Jesus was in person the promised Seed of the woman, but, as we have already seen, the divine plan included also the Church, "members of his body." The sufferings of Christ, Head and body, are mentioned in the promise of Eden, as the bruising of the heel by the serpent. This has been in progress throughout the Gospel age; Jesus was crucified by the forces of evil, yielding himself up a sin offering; and the members of his Body are suffering with him, "filling up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ." Col. 1:24.

Soon the time will come when this great Seed, the Christ, shall be fully glorified, all the members sharing in the glory of the Head: and then, as the Apostle declares, "The God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly." (Rom. 16:20.) And it is this great Deliverer, whose Head and Lord has redeemed the world with his own precious blood, that the Father has appointed to be the Judge of the redeemed race, when it shall be on trial during the Millennial age, while Satan is bound. The work of the Son will not be complete until all evil has been thoroughly subjugated, which will be at the close of the Millennial age. He will reclaim, by a knowledge of the truth, and chastisements and corrections in righteousness, so many as are willing, and the residue shall be destroyed from among the people. (Act 3:23.) And when he shall thus have put down all opposing authority, rule and power, the Apostle assures us, he will deliver up the Kingdom to God even the Father. Thus the Father worked previously to man's fall, and has committed the work of reconciliation of man to the Son, and also the judgment of the race, and will receive it back again under divine jurisdiction, when, through the Son as his agent, he shall have made all things new. —1 Cor. 15:24; Rev. 21:5.

R. 5910, R. 4963, R. 2434

Therefore you are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.

– Galatians 4:7 –

As children are under nursery laws and subject to teachers until an appointed time, so were we (Israelites) under the Law, and treated as servants rather than as sons. We were kept under restraints, though we were the heirs through whom, according to the promise, others were to be blessed. But in the fullness of time God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the Law, to redeem them that were under the Law that **we** (Israelites), being liberated, might receive the adoption of sons.

You that desire to be under the Law Covenant, Do you not understand what it is? It is a **bondage**, as allegorically shown in Abraham's two sons. Abraham, here, is a figure of God; and Sarah, the real wife, is a figure of the real covenant of blessing, out of which the Christ should come as heir of all, to bless the world. For a long time Sarah was barren; so, too, for a long time the original Covenant of God (made with Abraham: In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed) brought forth no fruit—until Christ Jesus. Hagar, the servant of Sarah, in the meantime was treated as Sarah's representative, and her son as the representative of Sarah's son. Hagar represented the Law Covenant, and fleshly Israel was represented by her child, Ishmael. For the time they **represented** the true Covenant and the true seed of blessing, though they were always really servants—child, as well as mother. When the true son of the real wife, the heir, was born, it was manifest that the son of the bondwoman was not the heir of promise. And to show typically that the Law Covenant was not to have any rule over the spiritual sons of God, Hagar was not allowed to become the governess of Isaac, but in his interest was dismissed entirely. —Gal. 4:21-31; Gen. 21:10.

The Apostle's argument, based on this allegory, is, that we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the seed to whom the promise was made; we are not children of the bondwoman, the Law Covenant, but children of the original, Abrahamic Covenant, born free from the slavery and conditions of the Law Covenant. And not only so born, but the Law is **entirely put away** from us, and has nothing whatever to do with us. "Stand fast, therefore, in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage." —Gal. 5:1

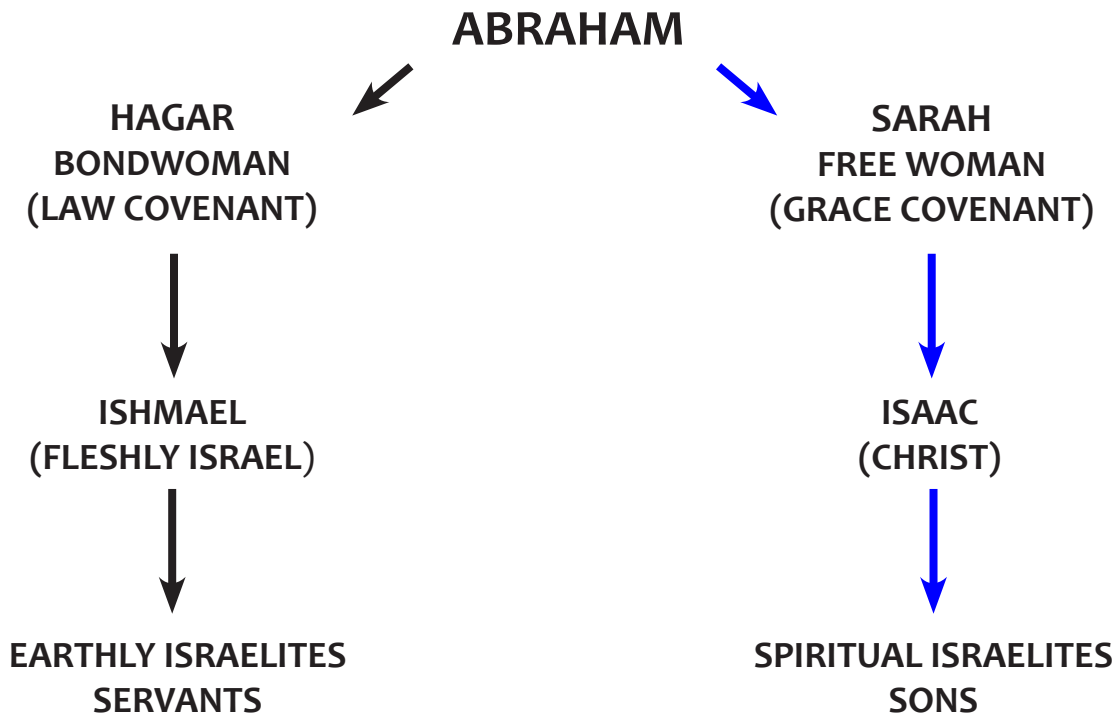
To thus accept the favor of God through Christ—the evidences of sonship and the present and prophetic inheritance of sons—is to enter into the blessed rest of faith. This rest of faith is something which the world can neither give nor take away. It brings with it peace and happiness and joy in the midst of all the shifting circumstances of the present life. To those who have entered into this rest of faith penances are seen to be of no avail, and prayers are occasions of sweet communion with God; feasting from the Lord's bountiful table take the place of fastings, active zeal in the Master's service supplants the gloomy and useless life of the solitary and self-tortured recluse; and the glorious sunlight of truth chases away the shadows of human superstitions. R. 1728 and R. 1657

It is written that Abraham had two sons: the one by a bondwoman, the other by a freewoman. But he who was of the bondwoman was born according to the flesh, and he of the freewoman through promise, which things are symbolic. For these are the two covenants: the one from Mount Sinai which gives birth to bondage, which is Hagar----for this Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia, and corresponds to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children----but the Jerusalem above is free, which is the mother of us all.

Galatians 4:22-26

Now, we brethren, as Isaac was, are children of promise. But as he who was born according to the flesh then persecuted him who was born according to the Spirit, even so it is now. Nevertheless what does the Scripture say? **CAST OUT THE BONDWOMAN AND HER SON, FOR THE SON OF THE BONDWOMAN SHALL NOT BE HEIR WITH THE SON OF THE FREE WOMAN.** So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman but of the free.

Galatians 4:28-31



The Abrahamic Covenant promised the development of the Seed of Abraham, through whom the New Covenant will bless all the people, and this Seed is not yet complete. True, our Lord Jesus is the Seed, yet God foresaw and has foretold the larger seed, spiritual, which will include the Body, the Church with the Head. (Gal. 3:16,29) And the Apostle points out that an earthly seed of Abraham will also share the work of blessing the world, yet spiritual Israel is the true Seed: as it is written, "The son of the bond woman shall not be heir with the son of the free woman." Gal. 4:22-31 T33

My little children, for whom I labor in birth again until Christ is formed in you.

– Galatians 4:19 –

Here the Apostle is likening his care and labor and endurance for those who had been begotten by the Truth to the new nature, to the physical endurance of a mother in nourishing and sustaining the germ of human life until the new human creature is formed and able to appropriate for itself the life-sustaining elements of nature, independent of her life. So the Apostle sought to nourish and sustain those germs of spiritual being with his own spiritual life until, apart from his personal work and influence, they would be able to appropriate for themselves the God-given elements of spiritual life contained in the Word of Truth; —until the Christ-character should be definitely formed in them.

In no other reasonable sense could the Apostle bear those Galatian Christians; and in no other reasonable sense could Christ be formed in them, or in us. The thought is that every true child of God must have a definite individual Christian character which is not dependent for its existence upon the spiritual life of any other Christian. He must from the Word of Truth, proclaimed and exemplified by other Christians, draw those principles of life, etc., which give him an established character, a spiritual individuality of his own. So positive and definite should be the spiritual individuality of every one, that, should even the beloved brother or sister whose spiritual life first nourished ours and brought us forward to completeness of character fall away (which the Apostle shows is not impossible —Heb. 6:4-6; Gal. 1:8), we would still live, being able to appropriate for ourselves the spirit of Truth.

Alas, how often we see among those who bear the name of Christ, and who have truly received the spirit of adoption as sons of God, that Christ is not yet formed in them! that they have not yet reached that degree of development which manifests a distinct spiritual individuality! They depend largely upon the spiritual life of others, and if their spiritual life declines these dependent ones suffer a similar decline; if they go into error, these follow, as did many of those Galatian Christians to whom Paul wrote. How is it, beloved, in your several cases? Apply the question to yourselves—Is Christ formed in you so fully that none of these things move you? that, however they may grieve you at heart, they cannot affect your spiritual life?

This is what it is to have “Christ in you, the hope of glory.” R. 3250

Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free, and do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage.

– Galatians 5:1 –

To **stand**, is to adhere to fixed principles; or in other words, to be **steadfast**, immovable, always abounding in the **work** of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord. (1 Cor. 15:58.) We are frequently exhorted to stand; to be steadfast; to **continue**, etc. Watch ye, **stand fast** in the faith, quit you like men, be **strong**. (1 Cor. 16:13.) **Stand fast** in one spirit, with one mind striving for the faith of the gospel. (Phil. 1:27.) But no one can stand in his **own** strength; so we are admonished to stand fast in the Lord. (Phil. 4:1.)

Stand fast therefore, in the **liberty**, wherewith Christ hath made you free.

But what is the liberty, or **freedom**, which we have in Christ?

This does not mean liberty or freedom to do wrong. But since Christians are not limited to the land of Palestine, it leaves us free to follow the **spirit** of the Law rather than its **letter**. This is true of the entire Ten Commandments. The Heavenly Father does not address his spirit-begotten children with commandments not to kill, not to steal, etc., because such commandments to them would be unnecessary. Begotten of the holy Spirit, they love God and reverence him alone, and would not think of homaging images, nor of profaning the Holy Name, nor of doing injury to a neighbor or a brother. On the contrary, their love for God would lead them to honor his Name, to serve his Cause. And their love for their neighbor as for themselves would prompt them to render him service—"doing good unto all men as we have opportunity, especially to the household of faith." (Gal. 6:10.) This love, the Apostle assures us, is the fulfillment of the Law, so far as we are concerned—the fulfilling of the spirit of the Law—for "ye are not under the Law (Covenant), but under [the] Grace (Covenant)." —Rom. 6:14; Gal. 3:29.

We are, in love, to serve one another and not through formality. Any service done or attempted to be done in love, with the desire to do good to one of the Lord's people, we may be sure has the divine approval and blessing. Let us lose no opportunities of this kind; let us remember the Master's example; let us, like our Master, not merely assume humility or pretend it, but actually have that humility which will permit us to do kindness and services to all with whom we come in contact, and proportionately enjoy this privilege as we find the needy ones to be members of the Lord's body—the Church.
R. 90, R. 4599, R. 3543

For you, brethren, have been called to liberty, only do not use liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.

Galatians 5:13

The Apostle would have us see that while we are granted liberties in Christ, nevertheless the essence of Christian teaching is to deny ourselves the use of those very liberties. As slaves of sin we were set free in order that we might become the voluntary bond-servants of righteousness—serving with self-sacrifice "even unto death." The Jews, as a house of servants under Moses, were bound as servants by rigorous laws, the meaning and object of which were not even explained to them. But the house of sons, of which Christ is the Head, is left free from any law, except the one—to love God with every power of being and our neighbor as ourself. But this very liberty, which is granted to us on the one hand, is the greater trial on the other hand. It leaves with us each the responsibility of proving our love to God and to his cause and to his people, and our sympathy for the world, by the extent to which we are willing to abandon our liberties for these—as their servants. R. 2118

But if you bite and devour one another, beware lest you be consumed by one another!

– Galatians 5:15 –

Amongst the Lord's people, even in the apostles' day, there was a tendency at times to fight each other rather than to fight the devil and the spirit of the world and the weaknesses within. The organs of combativeness and destructiveness, which would serve a Christian soldier in good stead if directed against his own weaknesses and blemishes, are sadly out of place when, ignoring his own weaknesses, he merely becomes contentious with the brethren—often over nothing, or over questions whose importance he exaggerates, because of his contentious spirit. Such should remember the Scriptural statement that greater is he that ruleth his own spirit than he that taketh a city. (Prov. 16:32.) The Apostle refers to that misdirection of Christian energy which bites and devours one another, and tends to the destruction of all that is spiritual amongst the Lord's people. Not that the Apostle favored slackness as respects the important principles of the divine revelation, for he himself urged that we contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints. (Jude 3.) But this earnest contending is not to be done in a biting and devouring manner—it is to be with patience and long suffering, brotherly kindness, love. R. 3858

We need patience.

We need to remember that it is not in order for us to nurse grudges or hard feelings of any kind, especially against those who like ourselves are striving to walk in the narrow way and to attain joint-heirship with our Lord in the Kingdom. Rather we should be willing to sacrifice something of our own rights and liberties and privileges in the interest of others. This does not signify that we should sit quietly and hear the truth misrepresented when we have the right and the opportunity to defend it. We should contend earnestly for the truth against the error, but we should not contend against the brethren. If there be any who deny the foundations of our Christian faith, the ransom, the Lord through the apostles has left us no room to doubt how firmly we should take a stand in respect to any kind of fellowship with them. (1 Cor. 5:11.) But there are a thousand and one occasions of friction amongst the brethren where no principle of truth is at stake; and these we are to be willing and glad to waive in the interest of harmony and peace and fellowship. This, however, need not mean that we should not present our understanding of the truth on proper occasions, but we need not insist upon them nor force them upon others if they cannot see them as we do. R. 3752

I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh, and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish.

– Galatians 5:16-17–

The Lord's people have enlisted as New Creatures, Spirit begotten, to walk [to live] not after the flesh but after the Spirit, and must continually recognize this fact, and keep watch that they are walking in line with the spirit of truth, and must know that in so doing they will not be fulfilling the desires of their fallen flesh.

The Apostle states this as a positive rule, without exception, that the flesh, the natural inclinations, tendencies, lusts or desires, are contrary to the Spirit, and likewise the Spirit desires are contrary to the flesh. These two desires being opposed one to the other we cannot gratify both, and whichever is gratified it will be so at the expense of the other. If we ever want to attain to the true liberty wherewith Christ makes free we should know that it can only be by a persistent warfare of the new mind against every sinful tendency and inclination of the old nature. It is not the new will warring against the old, for the old will we have reckoned dead. It is the new will warring against the flesh, which the old will used to control, and which flesh still has its evil tendencies.

The new will, therefore, needs all the sustaining strength and assistance which it can secure. Many of these are provided for it as food, nourishment, strength, through the Word of God, whose exceeding great and precious promises are given in order that the new will may be strong in the Lord and in the power of his might through faith, and conquer in all of its battles with the flesh.

The Apostle's declaration, "Ye cannot do the things which ye would," is in full accord with all our experiences. We can sometimes do as we would in some things, we can gain the victory over the flesh; but there are certain weaknesses, failings, blemishes in our flesh which are so powerful that the new mind never gets as complete a mastery over them as it desires. Nevertheless in all the battles being waged the new mind grows stronger and stronger while the flesh grows weaker and weaker. The Scriptural proposition, however, is that we must expect to have more or less of these battles until our dying moments. Thank God that will be the end of the strife, for in the resurrection we are promised new bodies, perfect, complete, in which the new mind will be able to exercise itself without conflict. That is the rest which remains for the people of God, and associated with it will be various other blessings, honors, dignities and responsibilities which the Lord has promised. R. 3858

But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.

– Galatians 5:18 –

That is to say, You who have accepted Christ, and who are now walking according to the new mind to the best of your ability, are following the lead of the Spirit, and you have nothing to do with the Law, and it cannot condemn you as imperfect because of your fleshly weaknesses, for you are protected under the robe of Christ's righteousness, and the divine arrangement is that so long as you are following the Spirit, following the new mind, seeking to walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit, that long you are justified, approved of the Lord, and the imperfections of your flesh that are contrary to your best endeavors are not charged to your account, but to the Lord Jesus' account. Those unwilling imperfections were all laid upon him who bore our sins in his own body on the tree, as his perfections have been applied to us through faith to cover those unwilling blemishes. R. 3858



**The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering,
kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.**

Against such there is no law.

– Galatians 5:22-23 –



The begetting of the Holy Spirit in the early Church was indicated by certain miraculous gifts, but this was for a special purpose in connection with the establishment of the Church. As Paul pointed out, those gifts were intended to pass away. (1 Cor. 13:8.) They were given by the “laying on of the hands of the Apostles.” (Acts 8:18.) Hence after the death of the Apostles these gifts were not bestowed upon any. And when those who had received the gifts died, the gifts themselves ceased—thus passed away. But instead of the gifts came the fruits of the Spirit as evidences or proofs of acceptance by the Lord and induction as members or branches of the Vine. The fruit buds are small at first. They need and have the Husbandman’s care. He prunes us—he cuts away the earthly things to which we are prone to cling. He leaves us without much earthly support except that which is connected directly with the Root, the Vine. Thus cut off from earthly ambition in harmony with our consecration unto death the Spirit of the Lord comes into us more and more, producing fruits of the Spirit, even as the juices of the vine go to the branches and its clusters. Such prunings are an evidence of our membership in the Vine and our fellowship in the sufferings of Christ; for the Heavenly Husbandman thus treats all true branches of the True Vine. We should begin to see fruits and graces. Our energy should be manifested in a variety of ways towards the Lord, towards His brethren and toward all mankind, in proportion as we have contact with them.

From the list which the Apostle Paul gives of the fruits of the Holy Spirit, we see that at the head he places love, then come joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, self-restraint. The Apostle Peter gives the list of fruits of the Spirit as cumulative—as a process of addition, leading up to the sum of all the graces. He begins with faith, the foundation. Then are to be diligently added, fortitude, knowledge, self-restraint, patience, brotherly love, then the broad love which includes all the world, even our enemies.

**Love as a general expression covers all these elements
of character which are really parts of love.**

We are to remember, however, that love is not something which is instantly developed. It grows. Therefore those who have some love today, something of this Holy Spirit, may have more of it tomorrow, still more of it in a year; for it is a matter of development. The love which the Bible commends to us as New Creatures is the love which had its start in our spirit-begetting. Whoever has been begotten of the Spirit of God has some of this pure, unselfish love of which St. Paul speaks. In proportion as one grows as a New Creature, he grows in love—so that he may gradually be filled, his capacity for love increasing in proportion to his growth. At the beginning of our Christian experience, we merely have a beginning of love, as it were. This is to spread and fill our whole system. This love of God will make us more loving, kind, gentle, toward our friends, toward everybody, even toward animals.

Fruits of the Spirit

- 1 Joy** — Love exultant
- 2 Peace** — Love in repose
- 3 Long-suffering** — Love enduring
- 4 Gentleness** — Love in society
- 5 Goodness** — Love in action
- 6 Faith** — Love on the battlefield of life
- 7 Meekness** — Love in resignation
- 8 Temperance (moderation)** — Love in training

If the Apostle led us into a tangled wildwood of human selfishness, thorns and thistles, as a specimen of the fruitage of the fallen flesh, he next leads us in the opposite direction, and shows us the fruits and flowers of sweet odor which belong to the Garden of the Lord. He tells us that these delightful fruits of the Spirit should more and more be cultivated, and should be developed to perfection in our hearts, and, as far as possible, should overrun and cover and choke out the imperfections of our flesh. The fruits of this garden are all the fruits of the Spirit of God—all such as he originally planted in man and which have become vitiated through sin—all such as he now has implanted afresh and would develop in the hearts of his sanctified ones.

The Apostle explains that those who have become Christ's followers have crucified the flesh with the passions and desires thereof. They have voluntarily agreed that they will live contrary to the emotions and desires of the fallen flesh. He urges, If we live by the Spirit, by the Spirit let us also walk! It is the Spirit of God which has quickened us and which ultimately is to perfect us. But it can perfect us only if we are led by it and walk in its ways. R. 4872, R. 5757, F186, R. 4688



Those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.
Galatians 5:24-25



Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ. – Galatians 6:2 –

The law of Christ we have seen to be the law of love: and Love says, "Bear ye one another's burdens." There are times in the experience of almost every one when the surges of trouble roll high, and the timid, shrinking soul is almost overwhelmed by them. And then how soothing is the sympathy and counsel of a fellow-member of the body of Christ! Worldly-minded friends may sympathize, but their counsel is almost sure to be wrong. Hence the necessity of fellowship in the body of Christ, and of disfellowship with the world.

It is not always necessary to tell one's sorrows and perplexities to another, and to have their sympathy and aid: in most cases they are better untold, except to the Lord. But Love's quick discernment is always watchful and ready with the word in season, the cordial friendliness and the helpful hand if need be, to help bear the burden.

There are various kinds of burdens to be borne: there are burdens of bereavement, of financial embarrassment, of business and family cares, of physical and mental suffering, of sudden disasters and great perplexities and anxieties; and there are burdens also of conscious sins. In all these, if we are diligently seeking to fulfill the law of Christ, we may be able to cheer and strengthen fellow-members of the body of Christ with sympathy and counsel, and such aid as may be most needful and timely.

But the Apostle calls particular attention to this last kind of burdens—burdens of sins—and counsels the exercise of this disposition specially in cases of acknowledged sin. We are all to remember our own liability to sin, and therefore to be patient and considerate with others when they are overtaken in a fault. Such patient, forbearing love is one of the most beautiful adornments of the Christian character. R. 3647

Do not be deceived, God is not mocked. For whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life.

– Galatians 6:7-8 –

The Apostle here brings to our attention the fact that there is danger of some of the Lord's people being deceived. Some might think that they could live according to their earthly desires, fleshly desires, and then attend meeting, or observe other religious forms, and it would make them all right with God. Others might deceive themselves into thinking that they might live according to the flesh, and then by going to the Lord in prayer they might have the matter all forgiven and corrected, and still be as far along spiritually as those who live daily a life of faithfulness to God. Another error which has deceived many is the teaching that, after living according to the inclinations of the flesh in sinful ways, they can go to the priest and obtain absolution, and that this will make them all right again. Now these are deceptions.

God has established a general principle which applies both to the Church and to the world. This general principle operates along the lines of sowing and reaping. In the natural world men are sure to reap in kind as they have sown. They would not expect to sow tare seed and reap a crop of wheat. The law of cause and effect is no less inexorable in the spiritual realm. And so the Apostle says that "God is not mocked" —do not think that you can do an evil thing and get good results. Whoever "sows to the wind shall reap the whirlwind"; whoever sows to the flesh will reap accordingly; whoever sows to the Spirit will reap in kind. R. 5665

Comparatively few realize to what extent we have the forming of our own characters—to what extent our minds, our affections, are gardens, in which we may plant either the thorns and thistles of sin, or plant the merely moral and practical qualities corresponding to the useful vegetables, or plant those seeds which will produce the fragrant and beautiful flowers which more particularly would represent the heavenly and spiritual graces. That which a man soweth he shall also reap in kind, whether he sow to the flesh or to the spirit. Whoever, therefore, seeks for the heavenly things, joint-heirship in the Kingdom etc., must plant or set out in his mind, in his affections, those qualities and grace which the Lord marks out as essential to the development of characters such as will be "meet for the inheritance of the saints in light."

—Col. 1:12. R. 2479





And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart.

– Galatians 6:9 –

God is seeking to develop and to fix character in His people; and in due time, after they shall have suffered awhile, fought and battled for a time against the weaknesses of the flesh, they will reap the reward. The work of grace will then go grandly forward, through them, for the blessing of the world.

And, says the Apostle, let us not merely avoid harshness toward those who have been overtaken in a fault, let us not merely guard ourselves that we shall sow to the spirit and not to the flesh, and let us not merely avoid weariness in this good way; but let us additionally, “as we find opportunity, do good unto all men, especially to those who are of the Household of Faith.” In so doing, we shall be copying our Heavenly Father’s character. He is the Fountain of Blessing. From Him come the blessings of the present life—the sunshine and the rain—upon both the just and the unjust, upon the evil and the good.

As the Heavenly Father is continually giving blessings, rather than seeking favors, so we as His advanced and developed children are to seek to have the same character-likeness, the same disposition, the same mind; namely, a disposition to do good to everybody. R. 5562

Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith.

Galatians 6:10



Letter to the Ephesians

Written from Rome A.D. 60-61

The Epistle to the Ephesians is one of the grandest books of the Bible. Deeply spiritual it appeals thoroughly only to the consecrated. Its central thought is the New Creation; that the justified by a consecration of their justified humanity, when accepted of the Lord, are begotten of the holy Spirit to be New Creatures in Christ. For such, old things have passed away—earthly hopes, earthly aims and ambitions; their earthly rights have been surrendered, and instead of them, heavenly prospects have been received by faith and are waited for, with the expectation that they will be received in the First Resurrection.

- **The first part of the book of Ephesians relates to the theory, the philosophy of the change from human to spiritual, from humanity to membership in the New Creation.**
- **The last chapters of the book point out to us the effect of this change, not only upon the sentiments of the New Creature, the new will, but also the effect of the change upon the mortal body, which the new mind is supposed thereafter to hold in check, to govern, to control with more and more decision and ability as it grows stronger in the Lord and in the power of his might. The New Creature is to keep the old creature, the body, under; to keep it dead, buried.**

For two years and three months St. Paul had actively engaged in the service of the Truth at Ephesus, the Gateway or Eye of Asia Minor. Ephesus was one of the greatest cities of that time. This may be judged from the fact that just at the entrance of the harbor stood one of the “seven wonders of the world,” an immense statue of “Diana of the Ephesians”—the deity of Ephesus and indeed of Asia Minor. To her shrine thousands of people came, as opportunity offered, believing that they received a special blessing from her, which affected favorably the prosperity of their homes. Her blessing was supposed to greatly increase the flocks and herds and the birth of children. Unlike the other (virgin) Diana, this one was represented to be the mother of all things living, fecundity being her special blessing. Of course, the fame of this great idol attracted general attention, and those who could not go to Ephesus to worship at the shrine of this image were pleased to purchase from merchants certain charms or amulets, which consisted of small copies of her shrine wrought in silver. The business of making these shrines grew as the people of that region learned to desire her blessing and to offer her worship. In the Apostle’s day the business of making these shrines of various sizes out of silver was immense, employing hundreds, perhaps thousands.

A man named Demetrius was the representative or head of a silversmith’s guild or union. [Acts 19:23-27] He, becoming incensed against the propaganda of the Apostle and the early Church at Ephesus, aroused his fellow-craftsmen by a stirring speech, in which he pointed out the great prosperity of their city through this idol, and how they themselves had prospered by the making of her shrine. Then he painted a black picture of how the prosperity would shortly die, as a result of the preaching of this man Paul. He called attention to the fact that it was not merely at

Ephesus that this new religion, opposed to the worship of Diana, was spreading, but that it prevailed throughout all Asia Minor amongst people who might be expected to place orders with them for shrines. With a wonderful cunning, he combined with this thought of the duty of supporting their city religion that of the duty also of looking out for their pocketbooks. Who can think of stronger grounds of argument with people in general? That he was successful in arousing the prejudices and creating a riot causes us no wonder. The whole city was in an uproar in the very tenderest spots, religion and worldly prosperity.

The scheme worked well, and soon a furor was created: the less intelligent masses being easily aroused by the cry, "Great is Diana." It has been surmised that this riot occurred in May, the month of Diana's Festival, when usually there was the largest demand for the charms, amulets, etc., and that on this occasion business being less brisk than usual, the depression was laid to the charge of Christianity, whose influence was by this time considerable, and certainly every item of it in opposition to Diana. Ephesus was not only the shrine of Diana, but it was a great mercantile centre for Asia, as Corinth was for Greece, and the May Festival of Diana was accompanied by not only sacrifices in her temple and processions in her honor and prayers for her protection, but with these were associated wonderful displays in their theater or Colosseum,—gladiatorial combats, athletic feats, hippodrome races, etc. These drew people from far and near, and for a time, commercially, the city was a fair, and a large amount of business was done with the strangers. It was doubtless in order to have an opportunity of presenting the gospel to these multitudes from round about, that the Apostle delayed taking his journey into Macedonia until after the Feast of Diana.

Paul being the prominent leader in the promulgation of Christianity was of course the central figure against whom the rioters moved. It is supposed that he still made his home with Aquila and Priscilla and that the mob made directly for their lodgings: apparently, however they missed getting Paul, and as the next best thing took Gaius and Aristarchus, two of his co-laborers. It is probable that it was at this time that Aquila and Priscilla, as Paul's faithful friends, risked their lives in his protection, as intimated by the Apostle's statement in his epistle to the (Romans 16:4) where he says of them that they "laid down their necks" for his life. It was probably the intention of the ringleaders of the mob to have a "spectacle" in the Colosseum,—to have the Apostle cast into the arena to be devoured by the wild beasts in the presence of the multitude. The Apostle refers seemingly to this persecution saying, "If I have fought with beasts at Ephesus" (1 Cor. 15:32) which would imply that if he did not have a combat of the kind intended for him, it came so near being such a conflict that it amounted to practically the same thing so far as his trials were concerned;—or it is barely possible that he referred to the Ephesian mob itself, as "beasts" seeking his life. The account here given is very brief, but is supplemented by the Apostle's own statement of the matter. (2 Cor. 1:8-10.) "Concerning our affliction which befell us in Asia, that we were weighed down exceedingly beyond our power, insomuch that we despaired even of life: Yea, we ourselves have had the answer of death within ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raised the dead: who delivered us out of so great a death, and will deliver."

These principles, at work eighteen centuries ago, are still the same, and exercise similar influences today. And this is the very object of the truth during this Gospel age,—to be a test of our love for truth, for righteousness, for God. Sufficient evil is still permitted to test the Lord's people, to prove who are "overcomers." Those who are fully the Lord's are ready to lay down everything in his service—the service of righteousness. Just as the converts in Ephesus were willing to burn their once highly esteemed and commercially valuable books on magic,

so today those who become the Lord's are ready to change their business if they find it inconsistent with righteousness and truth; and to lay down even life itself in the service of him who has called us out of darkness into his marvelous light

It was from his Roman prison that the Apostle Paul wrote the Epistle to the Ephesians, one of the most beautiful of all his letters to the churches; full of deep spiritual instruction. Its keynote is "in Christ," this expression, or its equivalents, occurring at least twenty times in this Epistle. As the first chapter points out that the Church is *chosen in Christ Jesus*, so [the second chapter] shows that we have life in Christ alone; and, subsequently, the Epistle shows that all of God's blessings and favors toward his people are solely upon consideration that they are *in Christ Jesus*—members of the body of Christ, members of the New Creation. None can get clear-cut, distinct appreciation of the Apostle's meaning except those who clearly differentiate between the Church and the world, and discern their different hopes, built upon different promises; and perceive that in God's plan only the Church is being dealt with at the present time—that the world's hope is future, and very different from that of the Church, now being called as the body of Christ, "members in particular."

**Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, to the
saints who are in Ephesus, and faithful in Christ Jesus:
Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord
Jesus Christ. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord
Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing
in the heavenly places in Christ, just as He chose us in Him
before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy
and without blame before Him in love, having predestined
us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according
to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of
His grace, by which He made us accepted in the Beloved.
Ephesians 1:1-6**

The Scriptures show us that this plan or purpose of God was foreknown, forearranged, by him before the foundation of the world. They show us also that in the divine purpose our Lord Jesus was the Head, the First, the principal One, the Lord of this little flock, and that God's dealings with him and the method by which he was prepared for his present high position were an illustration of the method by which his Church is to be prepared for joint-heirship with him in his Kingdom. —Eph. 1:3,4, 4:15; Col. 1:18; 1 Pet. 1:20.

Let us bear in mind that we have no standing or acceptance or purity of our own, that we are reckoned pure and acceptable to the Father through the merit of our Redeemer, that by his stripes we are healed, that through him we are accepted "in the Beloved" and not of ourselves, and let us realize the necessity for the fiery trials which shall try us, that every element of the spirit of leaven, of corruption, of sin may be destroyed so far as our heart intentions are concerned, and that we may be more and more conformed to the likeness of God's dear Son. (Eph. 1:6; 1 Pet. 4:12; Rom. 8:29) R. 4188, R. 4432, R. 3165, R. 2206, R. 2479, NS330



In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace, which He made to abound toward us in all wisdom and prudence.

– Ephesians 1:7-8 –

We should notice that there is a foretaste of these heavenly blessings granted to the faithful in this present life; these heavenly riches granted us now the Apostle speaks of as “riches of grace” (Eph. 1:7; Eph. 1:18), and these grace-riches include faith, hope, and joy in the holy spirit and an ability to see and appreciate with the eye of faith things actually not seen as yet. The Apostle declares that these treasures of wisdom and grace—knowledge of divine good things in reservation, and the fellowship with God which permits us to anticipate and enjoy those blessings in a measure now, are all **hidden in Christ**, “in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.” (Col. 2:3.) We must come into Christ, as members of his body, the true Church, by sacrifice, —before we can have the opportunity of even searching for these hidden treasures, or of finding any of them. R. 2762

Having made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself, that in the dispensation of the fullness of the times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth—in Him.

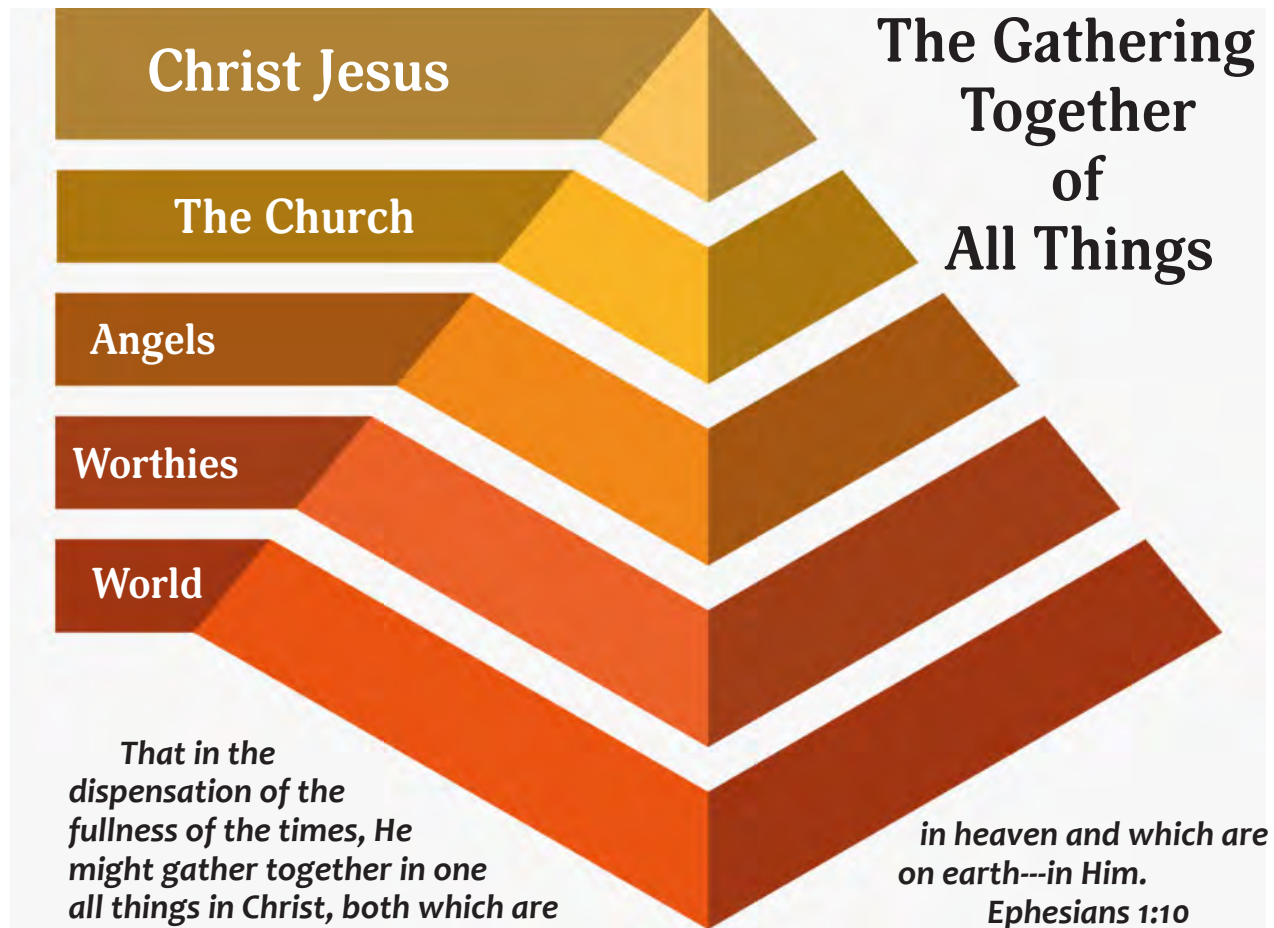
– Ephesians 1:9-10 –

This mystery of **God’s will**, though still hidden from the world, was to be fully appreciated by his saints during this evil day and was to be the ground for their faith and patience and endurance. They were to wait for the Lord from heaven and to expect deliverance from evil both for themselves and the world through him who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from the evil of this present period, according to the will of God our Father. —Gal. 1:4.

Not only were the saints to have this knowledge of the coming triumph of God and righteousness, but they were to confess to the Lord in prayer their appreciation of the fact that present evil is not of his will, nor of his government, and their faith to the contrary that all holy desires will be fulfilled when his kingdom has come and when his will is done on earth as it is now done in heaven. —Matt. 6:10.

When we look at our Father’s great plan for the exaltation of the Church and the blessing through it of Israel and all the families of the earth by a restitution of all things, it reminds us of the song of the angels: “Glory to God in the highest; on earth, peace, good will toward men!” That will be the consummation of God’s plan— “the gathering together of all things in Christ.” Who will then say that God’s plan has been a failure? Who will then say that he has not overruled evil for good, and made the wrath of both men and devils to praise him?

The figure of a pyramid not only serves well the purpose of illustrating perfect beings, but it continues to answer the purpose of illustration in representing the oneness of the whole creation, as in the fulfillment of God’s plan it will be one when the harmony and perfection of all things will be attained under the headship of Christ, the Head, not only of the Church which is his body, but also of all things in heaven and in earth. Eph. 1:10 R. 1273 and A242



Christ Jesus was the “beginning,” “the head,” “the topstone,” the “chief (upper) corner-stone” of this grand structure, which as yet is only commenced; and into harmony with the lines and angles of the top-stone must every understone be built. No matter how many kinds of stones may be in this structure, no matter how many distinct natures there may be among God’s sons, earthly and heavenly, they all, to be everlastingly acceptable to him, must be conformed to the image of his Son. All who will be of this building must partake of the spirit of obedience to God, and of love toward him and all his creatures (so amply illustrated in Jesus), the fulfillment of the law—Thou shalt love the Lord with all thy heart, mind, soul and strength, and thy neighbor as thyself.

In the process (as God’s Word outlines this gathering together in one of all things, both heavenly and earthly, under one head), **Christ Jesus**, the Head, was first selected; secondly, **the Church**, which is his body. **Angels** and other spirit classes will rank next; then the **worthies of Israel** and **the world**. Beginning with the highest, the ordering shall proceed until all who will, shall have been brought into harmony and oneness.


One peculiarity is that this tried, chief, corner top-stone is laid first and called a foundation stone. Thus is illustrated the fact that the foundation of all hope toward God and righteousness is laid, not on the earth, but in the heavens. And those built under it and united to this heavenly foundation are held to it by heavenly attractions and laws. And though this order is the very opposite of an earthly building, how appropriate that the stone in whose likeness the entire structure is to be found should be laid first. And how appropriate also to find that our foundation is laid upward, not downward; and that we, as living stones, are “built up into him in all things.” Thus the work will progress during the Millennial age, until every creature, of every nature, in heaven and in earth, will be praising and serving God in conformity with the lines of perfect obedience. Acts 3:22,23 A243

In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. In whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory.

– Ephesians 1:13-14 –

The expression, “sealed unto the day of deliverance,” [Eph. 4:30] carries with it the idea that at an appointed day all of the sealed ones will be delivered. And the Apostle further emphasizes this thought when he speaks of the sealing as an earnest or pledge [or guarantee] of our inheritance until the day of deliverance. The seal which thus marks all of those worthy of deliverance is here declared to be “the holy spirit of God.” It is elsewhere called the spirit of Christ, because in Christ the spirit of God dwelt richly and without measure (Col. 1:19; 2:9; John 3:34); and whom God did foreknow as heirs of his exceeding great and precious promises, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son. —Rom. 8:29.

The use of the term “sealed” in this connection is very significant when we consider the importance of the seal, which has been in use from remote antiquity. A seal is an authoritative impression affixed to an important document. When affixed by the originator of the document it testifies to its genuineness, and to the deliberation with which it has been executed. When affixed according to legal requirement, it not only thus authenticates, but it also ratifies, confirms and declares the document legal; and thus it becomes the pledge or assurance of its fulfillment. Hence, any act or other instrumentality which legally confirms or ratifies a statement, promise or agreement may properly be called a seal to such statement, promise or agreement.



**This
“seal” is called
the “holy spirit of
promise” because it is of
itself a foretaste, a firstfruit,
a pledge, of that blessedness
into which those who
possess it and hold it fast
shall by and by be
delivered.**

It is thus that the inspired writers symbolically apply the term to God’s gift of the holy spirit to the Church, which testifies to their divine recognition as sons and heirs of God, and joint heirs with Jesus Christ, if so be that they suffer with him, even unto death. This sealing with the holy spirit is not accomplished by act of the individual sealed: it is the stamp of God, impressed by God upon all his believing and truly consecrated children. R. 2064

**He has also set His seal upon us, and has put His Spirit into our hearts
as a pledge and foretaste of future blessing.**

2 Corinthians 1:22

May the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him. The eyes of your understanding being enlightened, may you know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints.

– Ephesians 1:17-18 –

Our Lord was showing [in Matthew 6:22] the importance of a proper spiritual sight, in order to discern Truth clearly. Originally man had a clear eye, mental as well as physical. By reason of sin his discernment of right and wrong has been more or less blurred, and some are totally blind to the deeper and spiritual things. As St. Paul says, “The god of this world hath blinded the minds of all who believe not.” (2 Corinthians 4:4.) Again St. Paul prays for the Church, “I pray God for you, . . . that the eyes of your understanding opening, ye may be able to comprehend what is the hope of His calling,” etc. (Ephesians 1:15-18.) This is the same thought which our Lord sets forth. Whether the darkness is that which came by the fall of the natural man or whether it be a darkness which comes upon the Christian after having been once enlightened—either way—the darkness is the greater by reason of whatever light we once enjoyed.

The lamp of the body is the eye. If therefore your eye is good, your whole body will be full of light.

Matthew 6:22

In what way is the Church the Lord’s inheritance? the word used here would be in the sense of that which He possesses, that which He has come to possess; because, remember that the Lord does not possess us in the sense that He takes hold of us and says, “I have the authority, and you must submit, because you are mine.” No, He possesses us by giving us certain promises, allowing us to accept the promises, and if we take hold of them He will own and possess us, and we shall be His. We need to have the eyes of our understanding or hearts open, as the Apostle says, so that we may comprehend, and so that then the Lord can have us in His inheritance, or special treasure, as He puts it in another place.

[God] owns the whole world in one sense, yet He has given it up and He has allowed Jesus to purchase the world and to give it back at the end of the Millennial Age. During this Gospel Age He is sending out a special invitation to find those whose hearts are in the proper attitude to give them special favors to receive them to Himself, and then He will have a new inheritance on a new plane, or on a plane not formerly recognized. R. 5797 and QB359

And what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come.

Ephesians 1:19-21

And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins, in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others.

Ephesians 2:1-3

But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved).

– Ephesians 2:4-5 –

Our recovery did not begin with something in ourselves, —good resolutions, good works, etc. We did not improve ourselves, and thus commend ourselves to God: on the contrary, God was the prime mover in our release and recovery. He was inspired to give us aid by the benevolence of his character, for he is “rich in mercy.” He is rich in all of his attributes, rich in wisdom, rich in justice, rich in power, rich in love; but it is with the attribute of love and its corresponding benevolence, or mercy that the Apostle is here dealing. How necessary it is for us to get this thought of God’s richness of mercy well rooted and grounded in our hearts—that we may never doubt his generosity, his kindness, his sympathy, his mercy toward all those who desire and seek to know and to do his will! We need great faith in our heavenly Father, and it is only as we come to a clear knowledge of his glorious plan through the Word that we can exercise such a confidence in his love and mercy. R. 3165

And raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

– Ephesians 2:6-7 –

Counting the new life as beginning now—counting ourselves as members of the New Creation, which by and by is to be glorified, we ask ourselves with the Apostle, What great thing must God work, then, in us and for us, eventually, if present foretastes of his goodness and grace are so superlatively grand? The Apostle answers such a query (vs. 7) assuring us that “in the ages to come God will show forth the **exceeding riches** of his grace through [in] his kindness toward us [who are] in Christ Jesus.” He does not attempt to tell us what these riches will amount to. He would have us see that God is rich in mercy, rich in grace, and rich in every other grand and estimable quality, and he would have us trust that so rich a Father will do for his adopted children “exceeding abundantly more than we could ask or think.” Indeed, he assures us elsewhere that it is impossible for him to explain or for us to comprehend “the riches of our inheritance.” “Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of **man** the things which God hath prepared for them that loved him; but God hath revealed them unto **us** by his spirit.” —1 Cor. 2:9-10; Eph. 3:19.

Nevertheless, the revelation by his spirit is only an approximate one. We cannot clearly discern those unseen things, we cannot comprehend them with our finite natural minds. “It doth not yet appear

what we shall be;" but with the new mind we can, even though but vaguely, grasp the thought of our Heavenly Father's riches of grace and love, and can draw analogies from the things of this present life, and thus gain some idea of the glorious things which await us. As we see our heavenly Father's provision for the natural man,—a little lower than the angels,—as we look at the beautiful flowers of earth, and taste of its delicious fruits, it is but another step for the consecrated heart to realize that the rich Father who planned so beneficently for his human sons, and who permits so many of these blessings to come to mankind, even in its fallen condition, is no less rich in love and mercy toward his spiritual sons, and will make abundant provision for them also. And that as he has provided harmonies of music for the natural ear, and pleasant odors and flavors and scenes for the senses of the natural man, so, only on a more exalted plane, there will be gratifications for all the high qualities of heart and of mind for the New Creation;—there will be what will correspond to the present beauties of nature, but higher and grander, for those who shall gain the new nature. R. 3165

**By grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves.
It is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.**

– Ephesians 2:8-9 –

As members of the fallen race we were incapable of doing any work which our holy God could accept—we were dead, corrupted, foul, under condemnation as children of wrath, when he had mercy upon us, and opened up the way of life. Our present standing, therefore, as new creatures, is not the result of anything that the old creature did, or could have done. It is not of ourselves; it is a gift of God. This lesson must be thoroughly appreciated, else we will be continually in danger of falling. The grace is not of ourselves, certainly, and we may say also that although **we exercised** some faith at the beginning (else we could never have come to him at all, to accept his favors), yet the faith by which we were enabled to accomplish our consecration even unto death, and thus to become new creatures in Christ, was not of ourselves—we had no such faith when God laid hold upon us. He developed in us that faith by the revelations of his love, through his promises, through his Word. R. 3166

**For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works,
which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.**

– Ephesians 2:10 –

The Apostle assures us that God foreordained that this New Creation should progress in good works. To become new creatures in Christ we gladly surrendered our all to the Lord, that we might know his will and do it; and having accepted us in Christ, he informs us that it is his good pleasure that our entire life should be renewed, that we should discard entirely from our hearts, our minds, our wills, everything sinful, everything unholy, and that so far as possible our mortal bodies should be brought into subjection to our new minds, and that we should walk in newness of life, even on this side the veil—thus giving evidence of our sincerity, developing character and becoming meet “for the inheritance of the saints in light,” in glory. Whoever is not disposed to walk in the Lord's ways of holiness and opposition to sin, and in cultivation of the mind, the spirit of the Lord, the holy spirit, surely deceives himself, if he thinks he has passed from death unto life, and that he is a new creature in Christ Jesus. R. 3166

Therefore remember that you, once Gentiles in the flesh----who are called Uncircumcision by what is called the Circumcision made in the flesh by hands----that at that time you 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. But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.

– Ephesians 2:11-13 –

The children of Jacob, called Israel, subsequent to the division into the two kingdoms known as Ephraim and Judah, were God's specially covenanted people, and were dealt with in a different manner from other nations. The Word of the Lord on this subject is very explicit. Through the Prophet he declares, "You only have I known of all the families of the earth." (Amos 3:2) This nation alone had special divine supervision of its affairs and the promises and instructions, through the Prophets, the Law, etc. The Gentile nations, as the Apostle explains, were "strangers, aliens and foreigners from the commonwealth of Israel"—"without God, having no hope in the world."—Eph. 2:12.

The rejection of the unbelieving of natural Israel left the way open to engraft in the place of the broken-off branches, some from amongst the Gentiles, possessed of the faith of Abraham. And this, we see, has been the work of this Gospel age, —grafting into the original root of promise believers from amongst the Gentiles, who were once without God and having no hope in the world, strangers from the commonwealth of Israel, but are now brought nigh, united with Christ, and through him united with the Abrahamic root of promise, and inheritors of all its richness and fatness.

—Eph. 2:12-13; Rom. 11:1-36.

Faith—faith in Christ's finished work on our behalf—a **ransom**, corresponding price, given **for all**, is the only **ground** of reconciliation, on which the sinner can come to God. All his works and sacrifices are blemished, dead and unacceptable, until he is reconciled to God through the death of Christ, the just one who died for the unjust, to bring us to God. Thus we who were as sinners afar off, under condemnation, are brought nigh to God—within reach of divine favors, blessings, and promises, by the blood of Christ. —Eph. 2:13. R. 3467, R. 2442, R. 925

You are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone, in whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.

Ephesians 2:19-22

For Eph. 3:1-3, see page 38

To me, who am less than the least of all the saints, this grace was given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, and to make all see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the ages has been hidden in God who created all things through Jesus Christ.

– Ephesians 3:8-9 –

There is a secret connected with this subject which the Apostle repeatedly calls the “Mystery” of God (Rom. 16:25-26; Eph. 3:9; 5:32; Col 1:26; Rev 10:7). This mystery, as he explains, relates to the Gospel Church; —the peculiar relationship between the Gospel Church and its Head and Lord is not intended to be understood by the world or by the nominal Christian nor by even the true Christian who is not in a proper attitude of heart and fully consecrated to the Lord.

When we catch a glimpse of this “mystery” it explains the whole situation. It shows us that from the divine standpoint, the promised Messiah, the Deliverer of the world from the bondage of sin and death—the Restorer, the great Prophet, Priest and King, whose Millennial reign as “the seed of Abraham” is to bring blessing to all the families of the earth—is not our Lord Jesus alone, but also with him, and under him as its Head, the entire Church of God—the faithful in Christ Jesus—the “little flock,” whom God is selecting from amongst men during this Gospel age, —these, unitedly, are the Christ, the Messiah which God promised and is providing for the deliverance of the world.

**... according to a Plan of the Ages, which he formed for the
Anointed Jesus our Lord. (Diaglott)
Ephesians 3:11**

The length and breadth of God’s redemptive plan has been hidden by God until the Gospel age, when the apostles were commissioned to declare to men the conditions upon which they might become sharers with Christ in the execution of God’s loving plans; and the intent is, ultimately, to have all the heavenly or spiritual beings know, through the instrumentality of the Church, the boundless wealth that is in God’s great gift—His Son—and the different methods and steps his wisdom marked out for all his creatures. R. 3192 and R. 1679

Many are disposed to say that this simple message, so well supported by the Word of God, is too good to be true. But, dear friends, how could anything be too good to be true when we consider that the source is the Word of the living God, the very embodiment of wisdom, justice, love and power; the God who declares to us that his very name is love, and of whom the Apostle says that we are unable to appreciate the heights and depths and lengths and breadths, and to know the love of God which passeth all understanding. Eph. 3:18,19 NS544

May Christ dwell in your hearts through faith, that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

– Ephesians 3:17-19 –

It is only as we realize something of the greatness and perfection of the divine character that we are properly able to estimate our own littleness and imperfection; only as we see the beauties of his gracious character can we become intimately acquainted with God, familiar with his graces and virtues. The influence of this knowledge and fellowship with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, reacts upon our own hearts, and has a cleansing and sanctifying effect. Thus the Apostle prays for some that they might grow in the knowledge of God so as to be able to “comprehend with all saints what is the length and the breadth, the depth and the height of the love of Christ which passeth [human] understanding.” (Eph. 3:14-19.)

Knowledge, when it serves its proper purpose, brings us to the appreciation of “the love [that is] of God” and to a realization of the wisdom of copying his character, that we should seek so far as possible to be like our Father which is in heaven, copies of his dear Son, our Lord. The Apostle brings this position clearly to our attention [in these verses]. Let us think upon the divine character and plan and its various features. Let us study the divine Word and behold through it, as a telescope, the beauty of the divine character, the splendor of the divine plan, as revealed in God’s Word and plan...whose length and breadth and height and depth no man can measure, and only the saints can comprehend by the holy spirit, and that in proportion as they receive of the holy spirit, the holy mind, the holy thoughts, replacing and displacing the unholy thoughts and sentiments of the natural man. (Eph. 3:18.) What a splendid premium the Lord thus places upon the study of his Word in the esteem of all who are of this class addressed by the Apostle!

The joy, the confidence, the hopes which filled our hearts at the beginning, as we came to recognize the Lord and to have a clearer understanding of the divine plan—have these not continually been added to by the Lord, so that what we first saw and enjoyed seems but small in comparison with the riches of grace and loving kindness and tender mercies revealed to our eyes of understanding. As our mental vision widens we behold lengths and breadths and depths and heights of the love of God surpassing all of our expectations. —Eph. 3:18,19. R. 2137, R. 2649, R. 2892, R. 4118

Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.

Ephesians 3:20-21

I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

– Ephesians 4:1-3 –

Christian Union is an end greatly to be desired and sought for among God's children, yet it is of great importance that we have union on the true and Scriptural basis. Union on any other is as detrimental, as true union is advantageous. [The Apostle Paul] says it is a union in which all so united acknowledge the one Lord, are inspired by the one faith, are baptized with the one baptism, begotten of the same Father, filled with the same spirit, and discerning and striving to attain the same high calling, recognizing one another as fellow members of the same body, and fellow-heirs of the exceeding great and precious promises. Being in the world yet not of it, walking separate from it, misunderstood and despised by it, how natural it would seem for those of such common hopes and experiences, to feel bound together by an almost indissoluble tie of love and sympathy.

**There is one body and one Spirit,
just as you were called in one hope of
your calling. One Lord, one faith, one
baptism. One God and Father of all,
who is above all, and through
all, and in you all.**

Ephesians 4:4-6

Christian Union **is a possibility**. The same Spirit is promised for the guidance of the entire church—every member of it, and it is impossible to conceive that the Spirit would lead some into truth, and others into the exact contradiction of it. One member is not set to building up the body, and another to tearing it down; and where such work is being done, it behooves each one to see to it that he is not of the latter class, nor in the slightest sympathy with it.

If as Paul teaches true Christian unity is a possibility, let us note the conditions under which it may be attained: —First, he suggests that in all so united there must be lowliness of mind, meekness, a mutual bearing with one another's weaknesses and frailties covering all such things with the mantle of love; and then a constant watchfulness lest we grow weary in so doing. But the **one** Lord, **one** faith, **one** immersion, and **one** hope must be there as the primal basis of union.

We are not to think of different calls, but are to remember the declaration of the Apostle (Eph. 4:4), "Ye are called in one hope of your calling." It is a mistake, therefore, for any to think that they have any choice in this matter. Indeed, so far as the world is concerned, in the next age there will be no call: God will not, during that age, be seeking to select a special class separate and distinct from others and to a special position. Instead of calling the world during the Millennial age, the Lord will command them—command obedience to the laws and principles of righteousness. F92

The Apostle speaks of the hope set before us as though He would suggest that there are other hopes before the world, and invited some to one and some to another. Quite to the contrary, the Apostle assures us, "Ye are called in one hope of your calling." (Eph. 4:4) Hence, although there will be a "little flock" of the elect who will gain the Divine nature and a "Great Company" who will receive eternal life on a lower spiritual plane of perfection, these were not separately called. It was the one call, and each one had the opportunity of making his calling and his election sure. With this thought before our minds how careful should all Christians be to enter in and attain all the glorious things which God has in reservation for His elect—things beyond anything that eye hath seen or ear heard or the heart of man ever imagined. —1 Cor. 2:9 R. 768 and NS415

And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as proclaimers of good news, and some as shepherds and teachers, unto the perfecting of the saints, for a work of ministration, for a building up of the body of the Christ, till we may all come to the unity of the faith and of the recognition of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to a measure of stature of the fullness of the Christ. (YLT)

– Ephesians 4:11-13 –

Noting carefully the Apostle's argument in connection with our text, we perceive that the Master did not give these gifts for the conversion of the world. He does specify, however, what they were for, namely, "for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the Body of Christ"—the Church, the Bride class.

Notice the force of the expression, "the perfecting of the saints." It is not sufficient that believers have a little knowledge, a little faith, and a measure of sanctification or devotion to the Lord, for after they have received and attained all of these things they still need the instruction of the Apostles and ministers, pastors and teachers, provided by the great Head of the Church for their perfecting. Ah! there is a force and depth of meaning in that word perfecting. We remember that of our Head it is written, "Being made perfect through suffering, He became the Author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him." So His followers are made perfect through suffering.

That the Apostle did not understand the matter to be merely for a day, but throughout this Age, until the completion of the Church, is clearly evidenced by his statement, namely, that all these gifts were for the edification of the Body of Christ and the perfecting of the saints to the last—"until we all come to the unity of the faith and to the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect Man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ."

This is a wonderful statement, however we view it. Shall we say that it applies to each individual member of the Church of Christ, and that each individual must come into that full unity of faith, and that full knowledge of the Son of God, and the perfection of manhood in Christ, and to a developed stature of maturity in Christ? Or shall we understand the meaning to be, until the entire Church of Christ shall have reached a full knowledge and shall, as a whole, have come to the condition of a perfect Man, of which Christ is the Head and we are the members—to the full development or stature of the Anointed, the Messiah, Head and members? We believe that the latter is the Apostle's thought.

Nothing is more plain than that the individual Christian needs a great deal of instruction, edification, building up in the holy faith, testing, proving, chiseling, polishing, fitting, preparing before he shall be ready for a place in the Kingdom. This thought is confirmed by the succeeding verses, in which the Apostle tells us that by the assistance of these, the Divinely provided gifts, teachers, etc., God's people need no longer, like children, to be tossed to and fro, and be misled by the sleight of men and cunning craftiness of those who would deceive. On the contrary, being sincere, and speaking the truth in love, they are to grow up into membership in the Anointed One in all things—coming fully and completely into fellowship and obedience, under the Head, even Christ. —Verses 14,15. R. 5067

Speaking the truth in love, may we grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ—from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.

– Ephesians 4:15-16 –

The depth and the spread of the roots of a tree are shown by the vigor and the fruitage of the tree. A tree that is not deeply and firmly grounded can neither bring forth rich, luscious fruit nor furnish cool, refreshing shade to man. Depth of root is absolutely essential. So the Christian's faith must be deeply grounded in Christ; and thus shall we also grow up into Him, learning more and more what is the Divine will as expressed in Him. The rooting process is unseen, and can be judged only by its outward manifestations. When there is luxuriant foliage there is good rooting. But the growth must not stop there; fruit must be borne. And so the spiritual life of the child of God will manifest itself more and more in its likeness to



We sometimes see Christians who have little knowledge of worldly things and yet have deep spirituality, very deep rooting and grounding in Christ, a clear insight into the deep things of God, and a rich Christian experience. Perhaps their knowledge of the usages of polite society is less than that of many others of their brethren; they may have had fewer opportunities to learn all these details; and yet their ripe attainments in Christ may shame some who are more outwardly correct according to the social standards of the world. How careful we should be that our standards of judgment and our estimates of character are fashioned after the pattern of the Master; that we look beneath the surface; that we note rather the real, the essential traits, than any outward peculiarities of the flesh which in the sight of the Lord would have no weight in deciding the quality of the character or the place in the Kingdom. R. 5558

Christ. To vary the figure, the Christian will not only be a branch in the Vine, but will bear rich clusters of fruit, which should become more choice in quality and size year by year.

When the holy spirit is received into the heart as the actuating principle of a life guided and instructed by the counsel of the Lord, it will not only obey the Lord in the matter of symbolic immersion, but it will also soon manifest itself in the various affairs of life, to those with whom the “new creature” comes in contact. The **anointing** which comes upon the Lord’s people must soon or later affect their outward conduct by manifestations of greater meekness, patience, gentleness, brotherly-kindness, affection and generosity of word and deed. All of this is in the illustration of the anointing oil which typifies the spirit from which we have an **unction** or **anointing** or **lubrication**. Whatever friction may be unavoidable between the new creature and the world, which has a different spirit and which therefore operates along different lines

and on different principles, there should be no friction amongst those who are the Lord's people, and who have all received of the same spirit.

The Apostle's thought seems to be that while each new creature may be considered as a complete member of Christ, and have all the parts of his own character thoroughly lubricated with the spirit of love, yet in addition to this all the new creatures are to recognize themselves as members one of another, and of the body of Christ, the Church; and are to exercise toward each other in their various efforts toward cooperation in obedience to the will of the Lord, such love, such unction, such anointing, such lubrication, as will prevent friction and enable the whole body of Christ to cooperate for its own upbuilding in the graces as well as for its own completion in numbers.

R. 5558 and R. 2227

If we are to be the judges of the world in the next Age, how shall we be fitted for this position, if we do not learn now how to take the proper viewpoint, the Lord's viewpoint, in our estimates of our brethren? If our love and our esteem for them is gaged by trifles, yea, by matters even unworthy of notice in the eyes of the Lord, are we developing the qualities of character which will fit us to be the judges of the incoming Age? How are we growing up into Christ in all things? Let us judge ourselves rigidly along these lines, that we may indeed become like the Master and win His final approval. R. 5558

Put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and be renewed in the spirit of your mind. Put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness.

– Ephesians 4:22-24 –

Our begetting as New Creatures is at the time when we make a full consecration of our lives to the Lord and receive the merit of Christ as necessary to cover our blemishes. God's acceptance of this consecration is manifested by the impartation of the Holy Spirit, spoken of in the Scriptures as the begetting of the Holy Spirit. The work following this begetting is that of renewing the mind—"Be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God." The Apostle was not here speaking to the world, to sinners, or to any one except the brethren. Although the wills of these brethren are already renewed, yet it is another thing to bring every **thought** into harmony with the will of God in Christ. We should demonstrate to ourselves, first, what is the **good** will of God—what is his will as to our following **righteousness**, etc.; then what is wholly **acceptable** to him; and, thirdly, what is his **perfect** will. (Rom. 12:1-2.) This gradual development is to proceed with those who are Spirit-begotten.

Others of mankind have not duality of nature, and could not properly apply to themselves such expressions as that of Rom. 8:10-11, "If Christ be in you the body is [reckoned] dead because of sin; but the spirit alive because of [the imputed] righteousness" of Christ. The new nature of the saints, begotten by the word of truth, is really only the new will, which however is thenceforth addressed as the real person, and it alone is recognized of God who knows us not after the flesh but after the spirit of our new minds—Christ-minds. Notice also Rom. 6:3-4. These "new creatures" have an old man or outward man that is perishing, and a new man, inward man, or hidden man of the heart who is being renewed day by day. —2 Cor. 4:16; Col. 3:9-10; Eph. 4:23-24; 1 Pet. 3:4. R. 4830 and R. 2231

Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice.

– Ephesians 4:31 –

The Lord's Word admonishes us, "Let not the sun go down upon your wrath." No matter what provocation one may have had, he should see to it that the matter is settled as quickly as possible. Anger or wrath must not be harbored and cherished; for it is sure to lead to permanent bitterness and hatred. The word **anger** seems not to be so strong a word as **wrath**. Wrath in an imperfect, fallen being, seems to be deep, determined and lasting anger, something that is resentful, retaliatory. **Evil speaking** is a more refined, a more subtle matter, more deceitful, more malicious. Many people become so weak in character, so unbalanced, that they do not realize the proper application of the Golden Rule in their daily lives. They say things of others that they would not wish others to say of them. They treat others in a way that they would not wish to be treated. All such conduct should be put far away from the Lord's children, from those who have taken God's holy Covenant upon themselves and who profess to be God's ambassadors.

**"BE ANGRY, AND DO NOT SIN":
do not let the sun go down on your wrath.
Ephesians 4:26**

We are not saying that there is no such thing as **righteous** anger, righteous wrath. "God is angry with the wicked every day." Even now His righteous wrath is kindled against the nations of the earth, and He is smiting them to their final overthrow. If all anger is wrong, then God Himself would be guilty of sin. But God's wrath, His anger, is always of a proper kind. It is not fleshly anger or bitterness. God is angry with wickedness, and this anger signifies that He will punish it. The Scriptures, however, never refer to the Lord as being bitter or malicious. God is Love; He is patient and good, even to the wicked. He does everything in justice and love. Oh, that the spirit of love and kindness and consideration one for another might so richly dwell in every member of the Church of Christ that each one would not only refrain from speaking evil of a brother or sister, but that it would give pain to hear a defamatory tale about any one, and particularly about a fellow-pilgrim in the "narrow way"! R. 5973

Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you.

– Ephesians 4:32 –

Ah! Yes. Kindness is certainly one of the elements of love, as the Apostle says, and tender-heartedness must characterize those who would have a participation with our Lord in his Kingdom. Hardness of heart and cruelty are evidences of degradation—the loss of the image of God.

Our generous sentiments and helpfulness should not be confined to those who have claims upon us through love relationship. Our generosity is to go beyond, even to our enemies. "Yea, if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink." So shall we be the children of our Father in heaven; so shall we show that we have his disposition, "the mind of Christ," who, when we were enemies, died for us. We are not, however, urging the same degree of love and benevolence toward all. The Lord specially loves those who are in accord with him—and so should we, but our love and sympathy and assistance must not be confined only to these, for we have the admonition that "If ye love them that

love you, what thank have ye? And if ye do good to them that do good to you, what thank have ye? for even sinners do the same.” But God commended his love to us as an example of what ours should be in that his Son, “Christ, died for the ungodly.”

A forgiving spirit is kindred to the spirit of love, joy, peace, meekness, patience, brotherly-kindness, godliness. A malicious spirit is related to anger, back-biting, slander, wrath, jealousy, hatred and all the works of the (fallen) flesh and the devil. Recognizing these two spirits in the light of God’s Word, his people must surely desire and seek more and more to cultivate the forgiving disposition—a spirit of readiness or willingness to forgive, which would rather that the transgressor would penitently turn from his evil way to the way of righteousness, and which would take pleasure in receiving him back into fellowship again under such conditions.

Our spirit or disposition to forgive any one should be of the heart prompted by the spirit of love and brotherly kindness. It should not be a forgiveness forced out of us by importunity, nor by the appeals of many, nor by pity for the wrong doers’ sufferings or sorrow. It should be there pent up in our hearts, ready to pour forth upon the offender as soon as he repents and gives reasonable evidence of his sincerity. God waits to be gracious, desires to pardon sinners; and such must be our attitude toward those who trespass against us. But God always waits for repentance, and never grants his pardon to those who are unrepentant, nor receives them into fellowship as friends.

We should be very ready to forgive the blunders and errors of either natural or spiritual childhood, and to all the weak and inexperienced, even before they ask we should manifest our willingness to forgive. And with all who trespass against us, our willingness to forgive should be proportionate to the ignorance and lack of willfulness and malice on the part of the transgressor. Whenever malice, willfulness and knowledge have been factors in the transgression, it is our duty to be proportionately slow to forgive and to require proportionately longer and stronger proofs of repentance.

Moreover, our forgiveness must be from the heart (Matt. 18:35)—not a lip forgiveness and a heart hatred. The forgiven one may be held at a distance for a time to prove the sincerity of his repentance; but just as soon as we have good cause to believe him sincere we must be prompt and hearty in our forgiveness—as a heart with a forgiving spirit or desire will always be glad to do. But, even then, although fully and heartily forgiven, we may not put such a one into a place of the same responsibility as the one from which he fell until we have seen a stronger and truer character developed in him. And this would not imply a lack of full forgiveness, but merely a proper caution—not only for our own protection, but also for the good of the one who transgressed and his protection from too strong a temptation of same kind. R. 4269 and R. 1693

**So My heavenly Father also will do to you if each of you, from his heart,
does not forgive his brother his trespasses.**

Matthew 18:35

THE SEVEN WALKS *of Ephesians*

The Christian's walk of course means his course of conduct, including thoughts and words and acts. The Apostle indicates very clearly what this work or course of the Christian should be, outlining it in seven different ways:

- 1 The New Creature should walk not according to the course of this world, not according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit which now worketh in the children of disobedience. (**Eph 2:3.**) This is the walk of the world, the walk of evil-doers, the walk of the children of wrath; it is the very opposite of the walk of the children of the light.
- 2 The New Creation should walk in good works— “For we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ unto good works, which God has before ordained that we should walk in them.”
—**Eph 2:10.**
- 3 The New Creation should “walk worthy of the vocation wherewith they are called.” (**Eph 4:1.**) Their vocation is the very highest of all; they are the representatives of the Lord and Master; they bear his name, and should seek in everything to glorify it and never to dishonor it.
- 4 The New Creation are to “walk not as other Gentiles walk.” (**Eph 4:17.**) We are not merely to refrain from the sins and gross immoralities of the natural man, but we are to allow this principle or spirit to pervade all of life’s interests. We are to refrain from following foolish, worldly fashions, from being influenced by a worldly spirit; we are to have the Spirit of the Lord, the spirit of a sound mind to direct us in our joys, in our sorrows, in our wedding celebrations, in our funeral services—in fact, whatsoever we do we are to do to the glory of God and are not to be influenced by the spirit of the world, but contrariwise are to set a proper example for the world in all matters—in gentleness, kindness, patience, faithfulness to the Lord and to duty. The walk of the world is on the broad road; the walk of the Church is on the narrow path. As we progress in Christian experience, we find this path getting farther and farther away from the broad road which the world is traveling, and whoever tries to keep pace with the world will in many respects be apt to find himself leaving the narrow path or otherwise disadvantaging himself as a New Creature.
- 5 The New Creation is to “walk in love.” (**Eph 5:2.**) Their words, their deeds, everything with which they are connected, is to be governed by this law of the New Creation—love. “Love is the fulfilling of the Law.” “A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another, as I have loved you.”
- 6 The New Creation are also instructed to walk as children of light (**Eph. 5:8**); their course in life is always to be with respect to the things that are just, pure, loving, noble, kind, the things that are in harmony with the divine character and Word, the things that prove to be of greatest blessing to neighbors and to friends.
- 7 The New Creation should “walk circumspectly.” (**Eph 5:15.**) This word circumspectly signifies to look carefully all around at every step. R. 4189

Walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma.

– Ephesians 5:2 –

In compliance with this law of love and our Lord's glorious example, the Apostle says we ought to so love one another as to be willing to lay down our lives for the brethren. We should be ready to lay down a few months, a few years; we should be ready at any time we can find an opportunity of service for a brother, especially along the lines of his spiritual or higher interests as a New Creature. This spirit of love is to control our conduct with all; we are to love our neighbors and seek to do them good, to serve their interests. "Love worketh no ill to his neighbor," would not take advantage of his neighbor to cheat him, to injure him in any manner. Love would not prompt its possessor to speak evil of his neighbor, but would lead to a remembrance of the Scriptural injunction, "Speak evil of no man." Love would do this from principle, because it is right; but more than this, Love ultimately takes such an interest that the brother exercising it does not wish to do anything that would be harmful to another's interests, to his welfare, but rather to do something to his honor and blessing. Love, progressing as we walk in it, ultimately brings us to that blessed condition where we can love our enemies and be glad of the privilege of doing good to those who despitefully use us and persecute us. R. 4189

For Eph. 5:2, see also page 99

The incense represented the personal value of our Lord's personal sacrifice; it ascended up as a sweet odor and that smoke entered in beyond the veil and covered the mercy seat. I understand that sweet odor and perfume remained there, giving the high priest full right thereafter of access to the Most Holy. Q343

You were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light.

– Ephesians 5:8 –

It is after [the Christian] has arisen from the dead by the Lord's help, by the help of the brethren, by the assistance of the exceeding great and precious promises of the Word, by the indwelling spirit of the Word; —after he has arisen from the dead and indeed while he is arising from the state of sin and death, while he is attempting to bring his members into subjection to the new life, a new light is shining upon him—his light is increasing, his knowledge of the Lord, his knowledge of sin, his knowledge of righteousness, his appreciation of truth and righteousness "in the inward parts," as the prophet expresses it. The light shining upon him, and deep into the recesses of his heart, may sometimes cause distress, as he finds that his own natural weaknesses and imperfections are even greater than he had at first been aware of; nevertheless, as a child of the light, begotten by the Father of lights, he loves the right, and hates the sin; and the more clearly the light shines upon him and shows him the blemishes of his own mortal body, the more he runs for and strives for the perfection which the Lord assures him he shall attain to in the actual resurrection—of which the present "rising to walk in newness of life," [Rom. 6:4] is but the figure. R. 2967

Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them. For it is shameful even to speak of those things which are done by them in secret.

– Ephesians 5:11-12 –

We are to arise from all such low conditions of thought, word, and deed as we find prevalent about us; because as children of God, begotten by his spirit, we can have no fellowship with these things. We must regard them as the Apostle suggests, as “unfruitful works of darkness.” The Apostle by this word, unfruitful, no doubt intended to give us the thought that sin is **destructive** instead of **productive**—that its tendency is toward death. On the contrary, the tendency of the new mind of Christ is toward fruit-bearing, development, blessing, uplifting, refreshment. Not only is this true in the individual Christian, but as our Lord’s words suggest, the individual Christian exercises a preservative influence on others; wherever he may live he is a shining light dispelling the darkness of sin; he is the salt of the earth, preserving the mass from corruption. The moral standing of the civilized world today, is unquestionably largely due to the indirect influence of the holy spirit in God’s people; —which as the Apostle declares, reproves the world. Our reproof of sin may always be through the living epistles of our daily lives which, as bright and shining lights, should ever reprove by manner, look, act, and tone, everything tending toward darkness and sin,— “Let your light so shine before men that they seeing your good works may glorify your Father in Heaven.” Occasionally it may be proper, and still more occasionally it may be duty, for us to speak or to act in opposition to darkness; but the light of a godly life, testifying for the truth and exhibiting the holy spirit, is certainly one of the most forceful reproofs of sin that can be administered.

We might have in mind the Apostle’s words, “unfruitful works of darkness,” laying emphasis upon the last word. Sin is figuratively represented by darkness; and, additionally, it generally prefers literal darkness for the accomplishment of its purposes. The Lord’s children are children of the light, and are to walk in the light of truth; they are to have their hearts enlightened and their minds so illuminated as to make them burning and shining lights in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, blinded and darkened by the Prince of Darkness. And all such while endeavoring to arise from the dead and to live separate from the world are recommended to walk in the light of truth; and so far as possible to live in the light actually, —to see that their homes are well lighted, —recognizing that even the natural light is a foe to the darkness of sin. R. 2967



All things that are exposed are made manifest by the light, for whatever makes manifest is light.

– Ephesians 5:13 –

Light and Darkness are used as figures and as synonyms for truth and untruth, righteousness and sin. Thus, “God is Light and in Him is no darkness at all.” Thus also Jesus said, “I am the Light of the world.” Thus also He said of His followers when He was leaving them, “Ye are the light of the world”; “Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in heaven.” On the contrary, Satan is styled the “Prince of Darkness”; and his rule of unrighteousness is styled “the kingdom of darkness”; and those subject to his influence are styled “the children of darkness.” Evil works contrary to the Lord and righteousness are styled “works of darkness.”

Surely it is as true today as it was in Jesus’ day that a very small number of humanity, comparatively, have the true light of the Gospel of God, the Holy Spirit illuminating their minds and hearts, and who set this light upon a candlestick that it may give light in the midst of darkness. The Apostle is explaining the responsibility of these light-bearers. They represent God in this dark, benighted world; they represent the Justice, Wisdom, Love and Power of God. They are not able to let all of this glorious light so shine before men as to scatter the gross darkness of the present time, but they can do much to glorify their Father and can measurably scatter the thick darkness and bring in a sort of twilight at least to some. Obligation to do this is laid upon all of them. R. 5038

**This is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world,
and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.**

John 3:19

Therefore He says: “Awake, you who sleep! Arise from the dead, and Christ will give you light.”

– Ephesians 5:14 –

When the believing, converted, consecrated, begotten, sleeping, “new creature” has been awakened—when the eyes and ears of his understanding have been opened to see the true conditions of the world, and to realize himself as a “new creature” in Christ,—his next duty is to arise. His arising from the dead signifies the activity of the new mind, the new will, in directing and controlling his mortal body. This implies effort; the putting forth of all the energy of the new creature. It requires no effort to sleep, or to lie after one gets awake; but to rise requires the exercise of every muscle. Arising is not an instantaneous act, but a process requiring one movement after another, until it is fully accomplished; so also is the arising of the “new creature” from the dead conditions of sin and trespass against the laws of righteousness and truth and purity; it requires his every effort, and is a work of time. Indeed all experienced Christians who have followed the Apostle’s injunction to arise from the dead, have found that it requires days, months, years, of energetic effort to rise up above, superior to the fallen tendencies of his own flesh,—common to the world of mankind. He finds that even after he has risen fully up, so that he does not willfully practice sin, nor countenance it in any sense or degree, he still must be on his guard lest he be entrapped by the weaknesses of his mortal body; or by the allurements of the world; or by the temptations of the adversary; and thus stumble again over some of the things of sin and death from which he had arisen by the Lord’s grace. R. 2967

For Eph. 5:14, see also page 21

**See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise,
redeeming the time, because the days are evil.**

– Ephesians 5:15-16 –

The Apostle declares that the one who thus arises from the dead is not even then to stand still. He must walk—not after or toward the flesh and its standard, but after and toward the spirit and its standard. And he will need to walk circumspectly—with careful scrutiny of each footstep. The Apostle suggests that any other course than this would be foolish. We are to remember that our adversary was more disposed to let us alone while we were asleep, but that now, when we are awake and seeking to walk after the spirit, he will be on the alert to ensnare and entrap us; —hence the need of our circumspection. The Apostle says this circumspection is necessary in order to our walking “not as unwise but as wise.” There is a wisdom of the world which is foolishness with God, and there is a wisdom with God which is foolishness to the world. The wisdom of God is to be ours, and we are to exemplify it in all the affairs of life. R. 2967 and R. 4190

The followers of Jesus should be careful, circumspect in the walk of life, not foolish, but wise, not squanderers of time, but redeeming the time, purchasing it back from worldly cares and pleasures, to have the more to use in the Master’s service, realizing that the days are evil and that all our energies are needful if we would “fight a good fight” for the light as against the darkness of sin. To do this will require that we study and understand the will of the Lord. R. 5038



Do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is.

– Ephesians 5:17 –

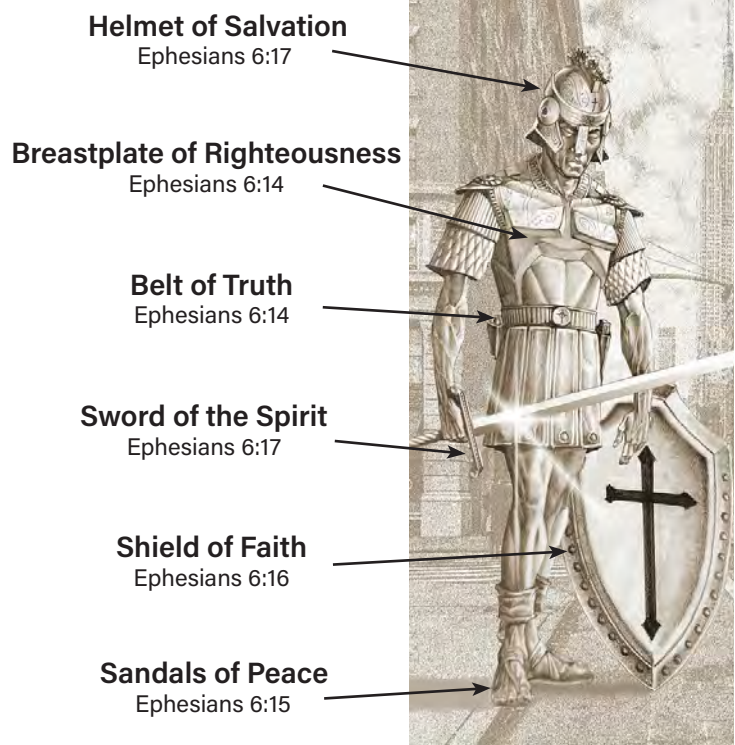
The Lord gives us light, not only on our own characters, and upon sin and righteousness in general, but, additionally, he gives us light upon the road we are to travel. This light upon our pathway is the light shining from the Scriptures of which the Prophet declares, “Thy Word is a lamp to my feet, a lantern to my footsteps.” He who neglects the lamp, neglects one of the very important means of walking circumspectly. And alas, how many Christian people today, with the Bible in their homes, are neglecting to trim and use it as a lamp; —if not standing in the dark they are walking in the darkness, stumbling, or in danger of stumbling, continually. Let us remember the importance of this lamp, and use it; to the intent that ours may be the “path of the just, shining more and more unto the perfect day.” [And] St. Peter said, “We have a more sure Word of prophecy, to which we do well that we take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place until the day dawn.” —2 Pet. 1:19. R. 2967 and R. 5038

Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

– Ephesians 6:11 –

After enlistment each soldier should expect his share of the provided armor—helmet, breastplate, sandals, shield and sword; and his first work must be to put on this armor—to prepare himself. The armory from which these articles can be obtained is the Word of God, which is so well stocked that “The man of God may be thoroughly furnished unto every good word and work.” (2 Tim. 3:17.) He who rushes into a fight without waiting to hear the Captain’s command and without waiting to put on the armor provided, is certain to meet with measurable defeat and a disaster more or less consequential. Would that every soldier who enlists could realize the necessity for hearkening to the Word of God, and appropriating to himself the armor of Truth which it provides. The helmet, representing the Truth, which would fortify the Lord’s soldiers intellectually by giving them a clear and intelligent appreciation of his plan, is necessary; the breastplate, which represents the knowledge of righteousness and an appreciation of God’s provision for our covering in the great redemptive sacrifice, is also essential as a covering for our hearts, for our spiritual protection; the sandals, representing our expectation of trials and difficulties in the narrow way and our readiness to accept them all, with the assurance that they would all work for our good, are indispensable; also the shield of faith, which grows larger and larger in proportion as it is handled and used, is very important; no soldier can possibly acquit himself acceptably to the Captain except he have such a shield—without it he would be exposed to the darts of the enemy. Notwithstanding his having on the whole armor, the sword of the Spirit, the Word of God, sharper than any two-edged sword, must not be forgotten. He who has not on part of the armor will be unable to keep the foes of righteousness at a respectful distance; and this sword becomes stronger and larger in the hands of the soldier as he grasps it firmly at the hilt and uses it in his battles for the Lord and the Truth. R. 3273

For Eph. 6:12, see also page 71



The Christian Soldier by J. Robinson

For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace. Above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

Ephesians 6:12-17

Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints.

– Ephesians 6:18 –

Prayer is a wonderful privilege. It is a very great favor to be permitted to approach the Supreme Ruler of the Universe with our petitions. We should come, therefore, in the spirit of deep appreciation, of earnestness and humility and reverence. The greater our earnestness, the more acceptable will be our prayers, and the more abundant blessings shall we receive.

There is a difference between **prayer** and **supplication**. The term **prayer** applies to **any** petition, great or small; whereas the term supplication means a special, agonizing desire for a thing—entreaty with **intense yearning**. But whether it is prayer in the ordinary sense, or intense prayer—supplication—we should always come in the spirit, with an appreciation of the fact that we are entering into the presence of the great Creator and that in thus doing we are enjoying a great privilege.

No one may offer prayer to the Father except those who have accepted His terms, and have come into relationship with Him as sons, through the great Advocate. Others are aliens and strangers. There is a difference between worship, or thanksgiving, and prayer. Any one may offer worship—adoration, homage. Any one may bow the knee and **express thanks** and **appreciation**. But the privilege of **making requests** of God is directly limited to those who have been accepted in Christ.

Watching seems to be an attitude of mental alertness. If we really **believe** that the Lord has indicated that we should **pray** for the things we need, and that He will give us these things, then we should be on the alert to recognize when we receive them. We should take heed as to the things for which we ask, and be **sure** that we ask for the things **promised**, the things for which we are **entitled to ask**. We should also watch for the Lord's providential leadings. The person who, after having prayed, forgets what he prayed for, and who cannot tell whether or not he has received an answer to his petition, has certainly missed a great blessing which it is designed that he should have.

Prayer is not to be offered to be heard of man, but of God. It is intended to be a stimulation to our hearts and to quicken us to an expectancy of certain things; and it should be our earnest endeavor to keep our lives in harmony with our requests. When Jesus told His disciples to pray the Lord of the Harvest that He would send more laborers into His Harvest, He did not mean that they were to tell the Heavenly Father His business; but that they should be solicitous that others come into the work, that God would send forth laborers into His Harvest field; and that the disciples themselves should watch for opportunities of service, in harmony with their prayers.

The Lord frequently called attention to the fact that we should be **persevering** in prayer. Perseverance is an essential quality in the sight of God. It includes patience, carefulness and interest. In short, it is related to every fruit of the Spirit which the Lord's people are to cultivate. **Patience** is good, but it needs **perseverance**. **Love** is good, but it needs **perseverance**. Perseverance does not **make** the will. The will is already there. It is the will that God recognizes in the beginning. But by various experiences, trials, difficulties, tests of endurance, the Lord would prove us and develop us. He would have us become very positive characters in all these qualities which have His approval. So our praying should all be in the spirit, from the heart. We should watch thereunto with perseverance day by day, until the Lord shall see that we have attained the character which He can honor with a share in the Kingdom. R. 5480



Letter to the Philippians

Written from Rome c. A.D. 62

At Philippi the Apostle and his companions, in seeking for those who revered the Lord, and hence most likely to have hearing ears for the Gospel, found a little group who met by the riverside for worship. Lydia, one of the number, became prominent for her thorough acceptance of the Gospel message, and her zeal in entertaining the Apostle and his company, and in forwarding, as best she could, the interests of the cause. The meetings were held outside the city, doubtless, on a similar pretext to that which, until recent years, excluded the worship of Protestants in the city of Rome, compelling them to go outside the city if they would hold any gatherings for worship. Philippi had its approved religious system, and would grant liberty for meetings to no other.

It was while the apostles were day by day passing from Lydia's home to the place of worship outside the city gate that they were met repeatedly by a young woman known in that city as a Pythoness, or Sybil (a sooth-sayer or truth-teller or fortune-teller; a foreteller of future events, or prophetess). She was evidently well known to all the people, and the exercise of her profession brought large income to a joint-stock company which owned her as its slave. As the evangelists passed daily she called out after them, "These men are the servants of the most high God, which show unto us the way of salvation." These words, though true enough, coming from such a source, and possibly in a jesting voice, might be understood by those who heard them to be sarcasm, ridicule, and, therefore, a hindrance to the Lord's work. This continued many days, the Apostle gradually becoming more and more grieved by it—probably because it was hindering his mission, and perhaps, also, because he was grieved to see a fellow-creature thus made a tool of by the fallen angels, the wicked spirits which controlled her.

Our Lord commanded evil spirits to come out of possessed ones, and they obeyed him; and in this case the Apostle Paul invoked the same divine power for the healing of this young woman—for her deliverance from the evil spirit being which had obtained possession of her and made her its slave, speaking through her, and otherwise using her mouth, ears, etc., as channels of communication. As this young woman was a money-winner for the people who owned her, we can imagine what consternation was aroused amongst them when they found that not only was their source of gain for the future gone, but also that the large amount of money invested in this slave was lost (for such spirit-possessed ones had a high market value): they became desperately angry.

The owners of the Pythoness evidently had influence, and succeeded quickly in arousing a mob determined to have revenge against Paul and Silas. Of course they did not attempt this by telling the truth. They ignored the truth of the matter, and raised spurious charges—that the prisoners were teaching a religion contrary to the laws of Rome, and likely thus to raise sedition. Under the circumstances the false charge, without proofs, was sufficient to bring down upon the Lord's representatives the severest penalties their judges could inflict: their clothing was torn from them, and the command was given that they should be beaten with rods and imprisoned. The customary sentence of the time was, "Go, victors! Tear off their garments! Scourge them!" This was one of the three times Paul was thus beaten. (2 Cor. 11:25.) He referred to it in his letter to the Thessalonians, declaring that he was "shamefully" treated at Philippi. —1 Thes. 2:2.

The prison was constructed with outer cells, which were more or less accessible to the light and air, and with an inner or central dungeon for the most vicious criminals. It was into the latter that Paul and Silas were thrust, and their feet made fast in the stocks, which often were so constructed as to

separate the limbs widely and to make any movement very painful. It was under these unfavorable circumstances, with their backs bleeding and raw from the scourging, that reflecting upon the wonders of the divine plan, and their own association with that plan, these faithful brethren were so filled with the spirit of rejoicing that they gave vent to their feelings in hymn-prayers of thankfulness for their privilege of suffering in connection with the Lord's service, of enduring tribulation for righteousness' sake.

How remarkable it must seem to the worldly, who have never tasted of the joys of the Lord, that these men could thus rejoice in tribulation—rejoice that they were counted worthy to suffer afflictions for the cause of Christ! How little the world knows of the peace of God which passeth all understanding, that rules in the hearts of the Lord's people who have grown in his grace and heart-likeness! How little can they appreciate the fact expressed by our Lord when he said, "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give unto you; not as the world giveth give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." And again, through the Apostle, "We glory in tribulation, also; knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience experience; and experience hope; and hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts." (John 14:27; Rom. 5:3-5.) And as these faithful servants of the Lord could rejoice in whatever experiences God permitted to come to them in the discharge of duty, so may we remember that ours is the same God, that he changes not; that he is equally able and equally willing today to grant the sunshine of his favor to those who trust him and seek to walk in his ways.

Since as Christians we have learned that it is our privilege to be always rejoicing—to rejoice evermore and in everything give thanks—we need not, like the world, wait for

**For I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content:
I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound.
Everywhere and in all things I have learned both to be
full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need.
I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.
Philippians 4:11-13**

special manifestations of divine favor to call forth our praise, our homage of heart and our grateful obedience to the Lord. Rather, learning that divine providence is in all of our affairs, ready to shape them for our good, we may rejoice "whatever lot we see, since 'tis God's hand that leadeth us."

We have no record of any Church that ministered to St. Paul as did the Church at Philippi. Apparently this little company of the Lord's people loved the Apostle as fervently as he loved them. His afflictions on their account bound their hearts to him in lasting gratitude. We find that on at least four occasions they helped to sustain the Apostle; once while at Corinth (2 Cor. 11:9), twice while at Thessalonica (Phil. 4:16), and once while he was a prisoner at Rome.

A contemporary writer, referring to the practical manifestation of love by the Philippian brethren makes the following comment: "The people of Malta were the only others recorded who expressed their love in this way to Paul. The Ephesians wept over him, but there is nothing said of their expressing their feelings by aiding him. Perhaps they did." Evidently the Apostle needed some such manifestation of affection and appreciation of his efforts on their behalf, for his own encouragement. It must have been hard, indeed, for him to love the Church at Corinth as he did—laying down his life on its behalf, as well as on behalf of the other Churches—while realizing keenly, as his epistles distinctly intimate, that he was but lightly esteemed in return. —1 Cor. 4:7-9; 2 Cor. 10:10.

In view of this close and dear relationship between the Apostle and the Church at Philippi, as between an under shepherd, or pastor and the flock, how full of meaning the first verse! [of chapter 4]:

***My brethren, dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and my crown,
--so stand fast in the Lord, my dearly beloved.***

These words from the pen of a conscientious and sincere man, such as the Apostle was, are fragrant with the very essence of Christian love and fellowship. How much they must have been appreciated, and how much they must have been deserved!

But if there was nothing in the condition of the Philippians to reprove, they, nevertheless, needed the exhortation to stand fast. They had already, by the Lord's favor, reached a considerable attainment in the graces of the spirit—they must needs be tested, however, to prove them, to try them; and for this ordeal, which every individual, as well as every congregation of the Lord's people must expect, the Apostle wished to prepare them—to urge that they do not retreat from the advanced steps of love and obedience already taken—that they continue firm, not, however, trusting to their own strength, but, as he expresses it, that they should “stand fast in the Lord,” trusting in his power, in his grace, sufficient for every time of need.

The general character of the Philippian Church is revealed in St. Paul's Epistle, written to them at a later period. We find in it nothing like correction or reproof, as we note in most of the Epistles written by the Apostle to other Churches. His Philippian letter is a particularly beautiful and loving one, and indicates a very close bond of sympathy between him and this Church. On four different occasions that are recorded, this Church rendered practical sympathy and service to St. Paul, by financial assistance, as well as by words of comfort and cheer. Twice he received gifts from them for his support while he was at Thessalonica. Again, while he was at Corinth, they ministered to him. When he was a prisoner at Rome this loving Church did not forget the Apostle. It was their messenger, Epaphroditus, who brought to him the last touching memorial of their love.

Epaphroditus, it will be remembered, was the brother who was brought “nigh unto death,” for the Gospel's sake—because of his faithful service in the assistance of the Apostle in the work of the Lord when there seemed little help coming from other sources. Upon his recovery from this severe illness, the Apostle Paul sent by him to the Church at Philippi this beautiful letter known to us as the Epistle to the Philippians. See Phil. 2:25-28; 4:14-19; 2 Cor. 11:9. R. 3122, R. 3127, R. 5810

I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine making request for you all with joy, for your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now, being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ, just as it is right for me to think this of you all, because I have you in my heart, inasmuch as both in my chains and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel, you all are partakers with me of grace. For God is my witness, how greatly I long for you all with the affection of Jesus Christ. And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in knowledge and all discernment, that you may approve the things that are excellent, that you may be sincere and without offense till the day of Christ, being filled with the fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.

Philippians 1:3-11

For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain.

Philippians 1:21

Let your conduct be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of your affairs, that you stand fast in one spirit with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel.

– Philippians 1:27 –

The little company of consecrated believers at Philippi were the firstfruits of his ministry, and were specially remarkable for their loyalty and faithfulness to the Lord, the truth and the beloved Apostle, who at this time was a prisoner in Rome. Being desirous that these disciples should continue to manifest the fruits of the spirit and to grow in grace, this epistle is one of encouragement and wise counsel—to stand fast in the faith and spirit of the gospel and to learn more fully how to deny themselves even as Christ did (1:27,29; 2:1-11); to work out their salvation with fear and trembling (2:12); to beware of false teachers and evil workers (3:2,18,19); and to seek to be all of the same mind—the mind which was in Christ Jesus; to esteem each other in the Lord; and to do nothing even for the cause of Christ through any spirit of strife or vain-glory. R. 1703

**For to you it has been granted on behalf of Christ, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake.
Philippians 1:29**

Fulfill my joy by being like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind.

– Philippians 2:2 –

St. Paul, then a prisoner in Rome, wrote these words to the Philippian brethren, whom he so dearly loved and from whom he had received so many proofs of their love for him. The Epistle to the Philippians has been styled an epistle of joy—so richly did the Apostle's heart seem to respond to the faithfulness of the brethren there. He would have them know that he appreciated their love, and that such love should abound toward each other and toward all. His joy would be filled full in proportion as he could realize that the brethren had the proper mind of Christ, its love and harmony. He exhorted, therefore, that they remember the conditions on which such character could be developed. Nothing should be done by them through strife or for vain-glory. All of their conduct should be marked by lowliness, humility and willingness to discern the good qualities of others—noting wherein others were superior to themselves.

This would not mean that they should deceive themselves, but that they should be on the alert to appreciate true quality and character wherever found—looking for noble qualities in others, and generously hoping that they existed even when not discerned—considering the interests of the Lord's cause, and ignoring self-will or pride. Therefore they should not look merely at their own things or interests, but also upon those of others—the rights of others, the ability of others. R. 5846

Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself.

– Philippians 2:3 –

Lowliness of mind, humility, is a mental quality which enables its possessor to look up with appreciation, not only to God, but also to earthly beings, recognizing their good qualities. The Apostle urges that this lowliness of mind should be in all of God's people; this fact proves it to be a quality that demands careful cultivation.

Not all of the Lord's people are lowly in mind. Some of them think more highly of themselves than they ought to think. Some of them may be proud of having the Truth or of their ability to serve the Truth. Any such pride is very objectionable in the sight of the Lord, and indicates that its possessor has a very small mind; for, with a proper estimate of matters, the best of us can see that we have nothing of which to be proud, nothing of which to boast. If we have received anything of the Lord, we should boast of our receipts, instead of glorying in something as if we had attained it of ourselves. So the Lord's people should spend earnest effort to stimulate and encourage humility. Some have this quality naturally; but the larger number have to contend against the reverse tendency—self-esteem, self-exaltation, pride—a feeling that they are superior to others.

As we look around in the Lord's family, we are bound to see the weaknesses and frailties of its various members. We are not to allow our thoughts to dwell too much upon their undesirable qualities, however, but are to remember all their good ones, especially their loyalty of heart. With ourself personally, it is always a recommendation in any one that God has called and accepted him. Whenever we see one who has come into the Truth, we say to ourself, "Well, no matter what he may be according to the flesh, God saw in his heart something good, noble and true; and since God is dealing with him as a son, he is therefore to be esteemed as a brother." Although we might not be able to esteem that man highly according to his natural qualities, yet we would do him good as we had opportunity. He might not be one whom we would select as a companion; yet God may esteem that brother more highly than He does us. Realizing this we would try to keep very humble and to learn whatever helpful lessons we might be able to get from that brother.

Our duty is plain. We are not able to read the heart, and hence we are to think kindly and generously of all those whom God has brought into His family. "Love beareth all things,... endureth all things." "As we have opportunity, therefore, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them of the Household of Faith." —1 Cor. 13:7; Gal. 6:10. R. 5842

Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.

– Philippians 2:4 –

For each to look merely on his own things, his own interest or welfare or comfort, or his own talents, and to ignore or forget the interests and comfort or talents of others, would be a manifestation of selfishness and a dearth of the Spirit of Christ, which is a spirit of love, consideration and generosity. In proportion as we are filled with the Holy Spirit of love, we shall find ourselves interested in the welfare and happiness of others. This was the mind, the disposition, which was in our dear Redeemer when He walked the earth, a disposition which He so wonderfully manifested; and we are sure that He has not since changed. And if we would be like Him we must develop in our characters these traits. If we are to be ultimately of the Bride class in glory, we must become copies of "God's dear Son." R. 5810

Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus. – Philippians 2:5 –

The Apostle Paul urges that the Church cultivate the mind of Christ. He had been reciting the qualities necessary to the Church in order that they could be acceptable to the Father. Amongst these was an eager desire to please God. The Apostle exhorts all such to pursue the course of humility and submission taken by our Lord as the only proper path for the Master's footstep followers. St. Paul was endeavoring to impress that the mind of Christ was eminently worthy of imitation and painstaking cultivation.

As a further evidence of the Master's great humility, the Apostle brings forcefully to their attention what Jesus was in His pre-human existence. As the Logos, He was in the form of God—the spirit condition. Yet He was not ambitious; He was not self-seeking. On the contrary, He made Himself of no reputation—divested Himself of His former glory and honor, that He might do the will of the Father. His spirit was directly opposite to that of Satan. The Logos thought not to usurp the Father's place, or to claim equality with Him, but manifested a very different disposition—an attitude of humility. Then “let this mind be in you,” urges the Apostle. “Humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time.” Consider that God has called you with the same High Calling, that you might attain to a place at the right hand of Christ, even as He attained to a place at the Father's right hand. Realizing this, permit this mind of Christ to be in you.

Who, being in the form of God, *did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.

Philippians 2:6-8

**did not meditate a usurpation to be like God (Diaglott)*

God was not seeking to force this mind upon Christ, nor is He seeking to force it upon us. Our Lord having taken this position of humility, in order to be man's Redeemer, it was needful that He maintain that mind in order to work out the blessed fruitage of patience. Three and one half years were required for Jesus to complete His work; and it was not until after He reached the Cross and could say, “It is finished,” that He was “set down with the Father in His Throne.” If we have become Jesus' disciples, if we have accepted the conditions of the High Calling, if we have received this mind, then we are to let, or permit, this mind to work out in us the character-likeness of our Head. R. 5844

Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Philippians 2:9-11

Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure.

– Philippians 2:12-13 –

We are not to understand that the Lord wishes His children literally to tremble with fear before Him. One called to a position of great responsibility will sometimes say afterwards, "I accepted that position with fear and trembling." He would not mean that he actually quaked with fear; but this is an expression used to indicate that one feels the need of great carefulness—that he realizes his great responsibility and his liability to fail to meet all the requirements without the most earnest attention. It means that one realizes that the matter is not one to be taken up lightly, as if it were a mere bagatelle, but that failure in it would bring serious consequences.

Just so when we read this Scripture, we are not to think that we should tremble with fear before our God; but we believe the Apostle's thought to be that in this great work that we have undertaken—of walking in the footsteps of Jesus that we may attain the prize of our High Calling—so much depends upon our faithfulness, our diligence. We have not undertaken a light thing. It is a very heavy responsibility. Our eternal interests are in the balance—the issue of life or death. Those who win the prize will be heirs of God to the highest honors and glories which have ever been offered—to a glory and honor beyond human power to imagine! We believe that no such offer will ever again be made.

Our salvation from death is entirely by faith. As men we have no opportunity of doing any works that would justify us before God. Until we have been accepted into God's family no works that we could do would be acceptable. God, who is perfect, is not pleased to receive anything imperfect, either works or anything else. But when we have received the forgiveness of our sins—not by works, but by faith—and have become sons of God, through consecration and Spirit-begetting, then comes the time when we can do acceptable works; for we are then members of the Lord's family, and the Holy Spirit within us through this begetting now has an opportunity to show itself, to do some works. In other words, as imperfect human beings, we cannot work out our salvation; but as New Creatures we can do this. —Phil. 4:13.

I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. Philippians 4:13

The Father works in us as New Creatures, through Christ. And as we as New Creatures exercise ourselves in the control of the flesh, we become strong. Thus, as the Apostle says, we more and more become copies of God's dear Son. "It is God that worketh in us both to will and to do His good pleasure," and as we thus will and do, we accomplish our salvation. The Apostle is speaking here, not about the natural man, but of the "beloved" class, and is explaining that God wishes us to know that now, as we are His sons, He is working in us to accomplish His will.

So God's work in us progresses. He works through the world, through the brethren, through all the varied experiences of life, and through His precious promises. The Lord continues to feed us upon His Word. Our progress is a matter of gradual development—a growing in grace, a growing in knowledge, a growing into God's character-likeness. Thus He works in His children to will and to do His good pleasure. He shows us more and more what His good pleasure is. Whoever becomes a child of God realizes later on more clearly than when he made his consecration what is the will of God, the mind of God. He comes to see things from an altogether different angle from his viewpoint when he first entered upon the narrow way. R. 5856 and R. 5758

Do all things without complaining and disputing, that you may become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world, holding fast the word of life, so that I may rejoice in the day of Christ that I have not run in vain or labored in vain.

– Philippians 2:14-16 –

The Apostle pays a beautiful tribute to the Church at Philippi, and expresses his great love for them. How he reveals his confidence in their loyalty! And how glad he was to pour out his own life on their behalf (see margin v. 17) that they might attain unto the fullness of the likeness of Christ! He lovingly exhorts, “Do all things without murmurings and disputings.” In following the Master in the narrow way, we are not to murmur as we go, finding fault with its difficulties and its narrowness; nor are we to dispute respecting it, nor to seek to have any other way than that which Divine providence marks out before us. On the contrary, we are to realize and believe that the Lord knows exactly what experiences are necessary to our development in the School of Christ; that He is supervising our experiences for our highest good and His glory; that He is not forgetful of His promises to those who are His, but will, as He has promised, cause “**all things** [that come to us in the line of faithfulness] to work together for good” to us. And even our blunders or stumblings, if properly received, will be overruled for our blessing.

Thus following the Master, dearly beloved, we shall “be sons of God without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom we shine as lights in the world, holding forth the Word of life.” Thus shall those who are over you in the Lord “rejoice in the Day of Christ [when our ‘change’ shall come] that we have not run in vain, neither labored in vain.” R. 5810

**Yes, and if I am being poured out as a drink offering on the sacrifice
and service of your faith, I am glad and rejoice with you all.
For the same reason you also be glad and rejoice with me.
Philippians 2:17-18**

**Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord.
– Philippians 3:1 –**

The Apostle gave us a good illustration of this spirit, one which should be helpful to all of us: We remember that when he and Silas were in prison at Philippi, their backs bleeding from the wounds received from the scourging and wet also with the salt, as was the custom in order to make the suffering more intense, so full were their hearts of faith in the Lord and the realization that they were suffering for Christ’s sake, suffering for righteousness’ sake, that the blessing of the Lord was with them and eventually would compensate them for their sorrow and trouble, that they were able through their abundant faith to so rejoice as to sing praises to God in prison. He tells us that the grand climacteric of Christian experience is this ability to rejoice in all the affairs of life as they come to us, rejoice that we can see Jesus and hear His Voice, saying, “It is I: be not afraid,” and appreciate the fact that all of life’s experiences are under divine supervision and will work out for us a blessing. HG374

For Phil. 3:4-5, see page 3

What things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ. Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ...

– Philippians 3:7-8 –

The Lord looketh at the heart, and if he sees there full devotion to himself, he is pleased to grant to such his blessing, his aid, saying, “I will never leave thee nor forsake thee.” “My grace is sufficient for thee—my strength is made perfect in weakness.” We, too, are desirous of sharing the Kingdom with our Lord, yet not from love of exaltation above others, but from a desire to have this evidence that we please our Father and our Lord Jesus—to have this closeness of relationship to him, and to have the privilege of participation with our dear Redeemer in the great work of blessing all the families of the earth in due time. It is well that we should have the Lord’s answer clearly before our minds, and know that unless we partake of his cup and are immersed into his death, we can have no share in his Kingdom of glory. Let us then count all things else as loss and as dross to obtain this necessary experience. As it comes to us let us not be fearful, nor think strange of the fiery trials that shall try us, as though some strange thing had happened unto us. On the contrary, even hereunto were we called, that we might now suffer with the Lord and by and by be glorified together with him.

**You will indeed drink My cup, and be baptized
with the baptism that I am baptized with.**

Matthew 20:23

...and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith, that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death.

– Philippians 3:9-10 –

It was to this intimate knowledge of or acquaintance with the Lord and its reward that the Apostle Paul referred, saying, —“That I might **know him** and [experience] the power of **his resurrection** [the First or Chief Resurrection, by] being made [fully] conformable unto his death [—which full surrender is possible to those only who **know him** well and have drunk in his spirit].” —Phil. 3:10.
R. 3362 and R. 2138

If, by any means, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.

Philippians 3:11

Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected, but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me. Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended, but one thing I do: forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal* for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

– Philippians 3:12-14 –

Looking back we find that Paul had superior advantages and prospects as a man. He had “much learning,” having been educated under one of the best teachers of that day, “Gamaliel.” Education was more rare then than now and more costly. Consequently the opportunities and influence of educated men were proportionately greater. Paul was a Doctor of Divinity, or, as they were then called, “Doctor of the Law”—a member of the Sanhedrin. Being thus a “Master in Israel,” all may see that he occupied a place of great influence and dignity among his fellow countrymen. Add to these honors the fact that by birth, he inherited “Roman citizenship,” and we find a man with brighter prospects than one in ten thousand of his countrymen for gaining a place of pre-eminent distinction either in the State government or in the nominal Jewish Church. Whether or not Paul also inherited wealth we are not informed, but it is reasonable to suppose so. At all events his “Roman citizenship” was worth “a great sum” (Acts 22:28).

But, summing up all these possessions, the ambitions which they stimulated and the prizes which they pointed out, Paul turned his back on them all when his eye caught sight of the heavenly prize of the high calling in Christ Jesus. He counted them all but as dross when compared to the true jewel.

Though Paul had sacrificed so much, there is no evidence that he ever regretted it, or desired to have those things back. On the contrary, his ambition seems to have been such that he could have wished that his possessions and hopes had been yet larger in order that his sacrifice might thus have been the greater. In his case there was no “looking back” like Lot’s wife, but a forgetting of those things which he had sacrificed. He thus avoided a temptation common to many today, who, though they have left very little, comparatively, continually look back at it and recount to themselves how much they have suffered and lost, thus hindering a completion of the sacrifice and race begun. Let us take a lesson from this, and forget, too, the things behind—forget our old hopes and earthly aims and ambitions, and fill our minds only with those aims and hopes which are before—laid up, in reservation for us.

This “mark for the prize of the high calling” is that of crystallization of character in the likeness of our Lord. After having attained a heart-likeness to Christ, we must hold it fast, and see that in all the testings which the Lord permits to come upon us, we are counted by Him as overcomers, not in our own strength, but in that of our Redeemer. The Apostle Paul had but one mind or will. “This one thing I do,” he said. He was not a double-minded man, at one time thinking he would like to serve the Lord, at another time himself, and then again the Adversary, etc. He had accepted the Divine proposition to give all his talents to the service of the Lord. He had before his mind the great promise that God had made. For him there was but one thing in life.

In view of what we already know of our Creator, especially as revealed to us in and through our Lord and Redeemer, Jesus, shall we not, as those who have come to see something of his glorious character, “press toward the mark” for the attainment of all that he may be pleased to reveal to us concerning himself, that thus we may be more and more partakers of his spirit, more and more conformed to his likeness, more and more acceptable, and by and by be actually and everlastingly accepted in the Beloved, to the full realization of all those blessings which God has in reservation for them who love him, and of which now we have the exceeding great and precious promises?

R. 478, R. 5080, R. 2136

* *“mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.” (KJV)*

Brethren, join in following my example, and note those who so walk, as you have us for a pattern.

– Philippians 3:17 –

The Apostle recommends us to mark, to observe closely, those who walk circumspectly, according to the rules laid down in the Scriptures, and counsels us to beware of the influence of those who do not so walk: “For,” he says, “many walk of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are enemies of the cross of Christ, whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is their shame, who mind earthly things,” which they covenanted to sacrifice. —Phil. 3:17-19.

The apostles were bold faithful advocates of the truth, and examples of its power to sanctify them wholly, as they gradually grew in grace submitting themselves to its transforming influence. They were men of similar and varied dispositions like ourselves. Mark those who so run and do likewise. Our Lord marked these, and kept a careful record of their course judging them by their motives and endeavors; and he shows us that their course thus judged, all their imperfections being covered by the imputed righteousness of their Leader, was acceptable to him. They left **all** and followed Christ. Their **all** was not so very much, not any more in many cases than we have to leave, but it was their all, and so was acceptable.

Now look at the warfare on this side and see how the faithful soldiers of the cross from the beginning of the age to the present time have contended for the faith delivered to the saints. Did they calmly and comfortably rest in luxurious ease, enjoy what they knew of the truth themselves, and say nothing about it where it would cause a ripple of opposition, and then flatter themselves with the idea that their lazy do-nothing tranquility was an evidence of their growth in grace? By no means. They endured hardness as good soldiers for the truth’s sake. They proclaimed it boldly, and took the consequences of public scorn and contempt, the loss of earthly friends, the sacrifice of business interests and earthly prospects, together with stripes, imprisonments, and perils to life on every hand, and met violent deaths in many cases. They not only enjoyed the glorious prospect of future blessedness, but they became active to the extent of their ability in carrying out God’s plan for securing that end. Had they done otherwise they would have been proving themselves unworthy of the high honors to which they were called. And so it has been throughout the entire age, and is still.

It is well that we should consider frequently such examples, that they may serve to spur our own zeal, and that we may the more lightly esteem the comparatively light afflictions which we are now called upon to endure, in our efforts to disseminate and defend the truth today.

We do not set ourself as a leader of the Lord’s sheep, and we neither ask nor expect any to follow us as their leader. We seek merely to be, so far as the Shepherd may be pleased to use us, his mouthpiece, to call attention to the Shepherd, and to the way in which he is leading. None should follow us, except as they discern that we are following the Master, as saith the Apostle. —1 Pet. 5:3; Phil. 3:17. See that ye walk circumspectly, not minding earthly but heavenly things, and not yielding to the temptations of those who walk otherwise. Thus we also shall be setting an example to others worthy of their imitation. R. 1041 and R. 2433

Our citizenship is in heaven.

– Philippians 3:20 –

The general sentiment amongst Christian people is that Christian citizenship implies engaging in political strife—and endeavoring to determine who shall be the rulers, striving to better the laws and have them obeyed, and putting forth efforts to oppose and rebuke bad laws. It will be noticed that the Apostle gives no such advice. On the contrary, he declares, “Your citizenship is in heaven.” (Phil. 3:20, R.V.) We are strangers and foreigners in the kingdoms of this world. Our Kingdom is yet to come; it is promised, and we are praying for it, “Thy Kingdom come; thy will be done on earth,” and we are expecting it; but meantime, as foreigners, “not of this world” (John 18:36), it is our business to render obedience to the laws, customs, usages, of this world, in so far as these do not infringe upon our conscientious obligations to the Lord and the truth; but this does not mean that we are to become partizans in political strifes, and contentions amongst men. Let the world elect its own rulers in whatever way it sees best; we put up with whatever it provides with thankfulness, with gratitude to God for whatever may come, with the realization that he will guide and care for us under all circumstances, and that in any event our highest interests are being conserved.

If it is an honorable matter to represent one great civilized nation of earth before another, how much more honorable it is to represent the heavenly Kingdom and its King of kings and Lord of lords before the “children of this world.” If we as Christians could keep this thought always prominent before our minds what a dignity it would add to our character! what a transforming power it would be! what an assistance to the new nature in its battle with the low and groveling tendencies of the old nature now disowned by us and reckoned dead! “Our citizenship is in heaven,” says the Apostle.

They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world,

says our Master, Jesus. [John 17:16]. While still living in the world we are not of it, but have transferred our allegiance and citizenship to the heavenly Kingdom, —set free through the merits of “him who loved us and bought us with his precious blood.” And now as the appointees of our Kingdom, while still living in the world amongst aliens and strangers, we as representatives and ambassadors should feel both the dignity and the honor of the position and the weighty responsibilities, and ever keep in memory the Apostle’s words, “Whatsoever ye do in word or deed do all in the name of the Lord Jesus.” R. 3179 and R. 3330

We also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself.

– Philippians 3:20-21 –

The Apostle had been for some time a prisoner at Rome, and while at times well treated by some of the Emperors, he was constantly liable to be put to death on some caprice. He wrote this Epistle in acknowledgment of a substantial gift from the Church at Philippi, and took the opportunity to tell them fully of his own condition, the progress of the Lord’s work, etc., and to encourage them to steadfastness to the end.

[The Apostle Paul] had a longing, an intense desire, for a thing he well knew was impossible, a thing which he knew, and had taught the Church, was a long way off (2 Thess. 2:1-8)—the returning of

Christ and being with him. Then, leaving the impossible and returning to the possibilities, he assures them that he has a conviction that God has a work for him yet to do for the Church, and that he would be released. And although the Scriptures give no account of it, tradition declares that he was acquitted by Nero and had some five years of liberty and service before being rearrested and executed.

For I am hard-pressed between the two, having a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better. Nevertheless to remain in the flesh is more needful for you. And being confident of this, I know that I shall remain and continue with you all for your progress and joy of faith, that your rejoicing for me may be more abundant in Jesus Christ by my coming to you again.

Philippians 1:23-26

No doubt Paul would have desired, especially in view of his knowledge that the Lord's second coming could not occur soon, that he might depart to heaven or anywhere else in order to be with the Lord at once. But he knew that such a desire could not be granted in harmony with the divine plan; and hence, although it would have been his earnest desire, it did not enter into consideration as one of the possible things. He was still left in a strait of indecision as to his own preference of the two possible things—to live and serve the Church in suffering, or to die and rest from his labors—waiting “for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God [our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ],” “who shall change our vile body that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body.” Titus 2:13; Phil. 3:21 F672

Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice!

– Philippians 4:4 –

The only ones who can rejoice **always** are those who are living very near to the Lord, and who can feel always their oneness with him, and that his protection and care are over them, and that his promise is sure, that all things shall work together for their highest welfare, as New Creatures. Others may rejoice today and be cast down tomorrow; only the faithful in Christ Jesus are privileged to rejoice always. The thought of the Lord's favors, past, present and to come, makes all the trials and difficulties of such to appear very light afflictions, as but for a moment, not worthy to be compared with the glory, honor and immortality promised, and the blessed privileges of divine service, both here and hereafter. The Apostle emphasizes the matter by saying, “Again I say, Rejoice.” We cannot have too many rejoicing Christians, nor can they rejoice too much, if they rejoice **in the Lord**. This rejoicing is not necessarily boisterous, nor of necessity the reverse. It implies serenity, happiness, peace, pleasure of soul, however, and does not mean that noisy demonstration is essential, as some seem mistakenly to think. R. 3128

Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand. (KJV)

– Philippians 4:5 –

We are expecting great changes to be ushered in when our King shall take to himself his great power and begin his reign. We are not to be struggling for the last inch or the last penny, nor for the extreme of our own rights; but, rather, to be so full of rejoicing in the good things coming, and already ours by faith, that it will make us generous as respects the things of this present time in our dealings with the brethren and with others. We are not expecting justice from the Lord, for nothing that we have or done or could do would justly call for such exceeding great and precious things as he has promised us. And as we are expecting grace or bounty in so large measure we can well afford to be generous and liberal in our sentiments toward others—especially toward the household of faith. R. 3128

Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God.

– Philippians 4:6 –

The Apostle's words correspond exactly to our Lord's injunction, "Take no thought," and signify, Be not anxious, burdened, full of care. It is proper that the Lord's people should be careful, in the meaning of the word careful as used today. We should not be careless, indifferent, loose in our conduct or words, but be circumspect.

Anxiety and burdens are unavoidable to those who are depending on themselves, their own wisdom, their own strength, their own skill; but the members of the body of Christ, accepted in the Beloved, adopted into the divine family, sons of God, are assured over and over again in the Word that if they abide faithful all things shall work together for their highest welfare. Why should they be burdened? Why should they feel anxious? He who guards their interests slumbers not. When Christians find themselves anxious, fearful, burdened, the evidence is that they are lacking in faith, and the probability is that they have either never grown to the point of having the proper faith in the Lord, or that they have allowed "earth-born clouds" and cares of this life to come between them and the Lord, so that they no longer have confidence that they are abiding in his love and in his care. All in such condition should go at once to the throne of heavenly grace, and to the divine promises, and obtaining mercy at the former, and feeding upon the latter, they should grow strong in the Lord and in confidence in him, and their corroding cares will give place to faith, confidence, peace of heart, whatever the outward conditions.

Such is the counsel of the Apostle—that instead of continuing in the anxious condition, we should lay all of our affairs before the Lord, supplicating his promised providential care, acknowledging our own lack of wisdom; —and gladly accepting his wisdom and the provisions of his love, we should make every request in a spirit of thanksgiving. This spirit of thanksgiving implies a recognition that the circumstances and conditions in which we are, have been supervised of the Lord, and that we are appreciative of his care and trust it for the future. Thanksgiving for what we have, and a full appreciation of the Lord's leadings hitherto and now, will preclude any anxiety for the future; for the thankful heart will conclude that he who favored us and redeemed us while we were yet sinners will much more favor and do for us now that we are his through the adoption that is in Christ Jesus.

**And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.
Philippians 4:7**

This peace of God rules the heart even amid turmoil and trouble; it is an inward tranquility and rest which is the direct result of a close, personal relationship of the soul with God. It is the peace *of* God because it is a peace that God only can give, a peace which only His very own can fully know.

This peace, or rest, is the special blessing of the Holy Spirit. Only in proportion as we receive the Holy Spirit, the holy mind of God, the holy disposition, can we have this peace fulfilled in us. It is a matter of simple ratio. As we grow in grace and in the knowledge of the Lord, in the knowledge of the Truth, we shall have this to comfort and strengthen us; and we shall thus have more of the peace of God every day, and be able to abide in His love. R. 3128 and R. 5432

GOD'S PERFECT PEACE

Like a river glorious is God's perfect peace,
Over all victorious in its glad increase.
Perfect; yet it floweth fuller every day;
Perfect; yet it groweth deeper all the way.
Stayed upon Jehovah, hearts are truly blest,
Finding, as He promised, perfect peace and rest.

Hidden in the hollow of His blessed hand,
Never foe can follow, never traitor stand;
Not a surge of worry, not a shade of care,
Not a blast of hurry toucheth spirit there.
Stayed upon Jehovah, hearts are truly blest,
Finding, as He promised, perfect peace and rest.

Every joy or trial cometh from above,
Traced upon our dial by the Sun of love.
We may trust Him solely, all for us to do;
They who trust Him wholly, find Him wholly true.
Stayed upon Jehovah, hearts are truly blest,
Finding, as He promised, perfect peace and rest.

—*Poems of Dawn*, p. 178

Brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things. The things which you learned and received and heard and saw in me, these do, and the God of peace will be with you.

– Philippians 4:8-9–

As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he. Many Christians have learned to govern their actions, to refrain from carnal strife. Many have learned to control their tongues in a measure, remembering that the same tongue with which we praise God could be used in doing injury to fellow creatures, as the Apostle points out. (James 3:1-10.) But restraint of conduct and of word is difficult unless the mind, the will, be brought into the line with the will of God. Hence God shows us the reason for what He requires, and sets before us exceeding great and precious promises. These are intended to work in us—to work in our minds and to work out in our words and actions the Lord's good pleasure, the Lord's will.

As the Psalmist says of the godly man, "His delight is in the Law of the Lord; and in His Law doth he meditate day and night." And of himself he declares, "Mine eyes prevent [anticipate] the night watches, that I may meditate in Thy Word," Law, precepts—the spirit, the purpose of that Law, not merely the outward form. So should we meditate upon the spirit of the Law of God. The sentiment of our heart should be the desire to get the Divine Mind as nearly as possible on every subject. All who are eager to be in harmony with God and to attain His character-likeness will think upon things that are good, pure, holy. —Psa. 1:2; 119:148; Phil. 4:8. R. 5908 and R. 5518



How richly the mind is rewarded that dwells upon these things. The law of God and its application to all the minutiae of life's affairs should be the most constant theme of meditation among the saints, since it is to be applied in all our business and social relations; and its often intricate problems require close discernment and discrimination. "Oh, how love I thy law! it is my meditation all the day," is the sentiment which the inspired Psalmist (119:97) would put into the mouth of all the Lord's people. Then the prophecies, so laden with good tidings of great joy for all people, and the promises, so exceeding great and precious, how full of blessing they are to all who delight in their contemplation! And in the light of the glorious gospel nature itself wears a brighter face and speaks a loftier language, emphasizing the love and power and praise of our God. R. 1703

For Phil. 4:11-13, see page 302

For Phil. 4:13, see pages 32, 153, 307

For Phil. 4:22, see page 160

[Thinking on these things] the Apostle saw to be the philosophy of the influence of the thoughts upon the will and vice versa. Therefore, he would have us set a watch and a governor upon our thoughts and feed them with wholesome and life-giving food, that thus the thoughts may re-inforce the will, and the will may govern and control the thoughts to the end that both the present and the future blessing of the pure in heart may be realized by those who are diligently seeking for them. R. 1704

1 Whatsoever things are **true**: That would exclude indulgence in visionary and foolish fiction, which does so much to corrupt the mind and squander time. It would also exclude all the idle speculative theories of men who, ignoring the true gospel, seek to draw away disciples after them. It would banish also the vain philosophies of the creeds of "Christendom," when once the symmetry and beauty of the divine plan of the ages has been seen. It would avoid all idle gossip and evil surmisings; and, having escaped the gloom and discontent and the perplexity, care and worry consequent upon entertaining such thoughts, the mind can be at peaceful leisure for the contemplation of that which is true. Then it may draw from the abundant storehouse which our bountiful God has supplied, both in his Word of law and prophecy and precept and promise and in the open book of Nature.

2 Whatsoever things are **[noble]/honest**: That would exclude all deceit and hypocrisy, all evil scheming and intrigue, as well as thoughts of deliberate plunder of falsehood or evil speaking, giving place to frank and open honesty of thought, developing daily into good and noble deeds.

3 Whatsoever things are **just**: This would discard all unjust weights and balances in estimating the character and motives of our fellow-men, and particularly our brethren in Christ. It would make all due allowances for the infirmities of the flesh, remembering that we also are subject to infirmity, if not so much in one direction, then in another. It would consider surroundings, estimate the bias of influences and calculate the force of temptations, in order to find, if possible, extenuating circumstances for favorable judgment. Yet it would not ignore facts, and so blindly encourage evil. The mind, where justice is enthroned, not only seeks always to judge justly, but it has also a fine appreciation of justice. It so clearly sees the value of justice, which is the very foundation principle of God's throne.

4 Whatsoever things are **pure**: Blessed are the pure in heart and mind. Pure thoughts, devoid of the slime and filth of sin, how they invigorate and energize the soul in every high and noble work! The pure mind demands a pure body and clean clothing, though it may be ever so coarse. It courts the society of only the pure and good and shuns the contamination of all others. It seeks also only that which is pure, in literature or in art. The vile insinuation, the rude jest, the unchaste in art, are alike an abomination to the pure mind. The pure mind finds delight in the society of the pure and in the contemplation of the virtues and graces and of the true and beautiful. The blessedness of such a condition of mind and heart is too far above the comprehension of the impure to be to any extent appreciated.

5 Whatsoever things are **lovely and good report**: Added to all the solid virtues of **truth, honesty, justice and purity**, let all the lovely graces and adornments of meekness, patience, faith, godliness, benevolence, kindness and charity occupy our thoughts. And as we hold these virtues before the mind's eye as a mirror, they gradually become more and more assimilated, and the transforming work goes on in our own characters. Thus, too, the will is strengthened and inspired with fresh energy to fulfill its great work in governing and controlling the whole man.



Letter to the Colossians

Written from Rome A.D. 60-61

**To the saints and faithful brethren in Christ who are in Colosse:
Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.
Colossians 1:2**

[In this epistle] the Apostle is addressing, not mankind in general, —not even believers in general, —but a specific class, namely, “the saints and faithful brethren in Christ” (Col. 1:2.) He is addressing, therefore, those who have taken the two steps of grace:

- 1 The step of justification from Adamic sin and death to reconciliation with the Father through faith in the atonement accomplished by his dear Son.
- 2 Having thus been justified reckonedly, or by faith, lifted out of the condition of sin and condemnation, these, according to the Lord’s invitation, have **consecrated** themselves in the fullest sense and degree to the Lord for obedience and service “even unto death.” This full consecration of every talent and power and opportunity is Scripturally called death—because the will has died, self-will has gone, and the Lord’s will has been accepted in its stead. And since the will is the real **ego**, the real person, the thought is that the old **ego**, will or person has died, and that the new creature, having no will of his own, but being wholly under subjection to the divine will as expressed in Christ, who is the Head of this body, has come into control.

Let us not lose the thought-picture here conveyed. We are not new individuals or persons, for it was individually and personally that we ceased to be when we gave ourselves over by full consecration to the Lord: our new condition is that of members or parts of the larger corporation or body of which our Lord Jesus is the Head. Whoever has a will of his own is properly to be considered an **individual**; but whoever has dropped his own will, and accepted instead of it the will of another, has ceased or figuratively has died as an individual. And this is the picture which the Apostle presents in this [epistle] and in various other presentations of this subject.

Paul was endeavoring with much carefulness and painstaking to [resuscitate and bring to the quickening stage] the church at Colosse. They had received the truth with gladness, and Paul was for a time greatly beloved among them as a messenger of the truth. But very soon after they lost confidence in the truth and were speedily drifting into error—the error of trusting to the law Covenant of God for salvation instead of humbly depending on Christ alone, who is “the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth” —that trusteth in him. R. 2479 and R. 1273





For this reason we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding, that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God, strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, for all patience and longsuffering with joy, giving thanks to the Father who has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light. You, who once were alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now He has reconciled in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy, and blameless, and above reproach in His sight—if indeed you continue in the faith, grounded and steadfast, and are not moved away from the hope of the gospel which you heard, which was preached to every creature under heaven, of which I, Paul, became a minister.

Colossians 1:9-12 and 1:21-23

I now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up in my flesh what is lacking in the afflictions of Christ, for the sake of His body, which is the church.

– Colossians 1:24 –

Not that the sufferings of Christ were completed more than eighteen centuries ago, and the glory failed to follow; but that the sufferings of Christ, which began in our Lord, the Head of the Body, are being filled up or accomplished in all the members of his body, and, as soon as the last member of the Body has been made perfect through suffering, and been fitted for his share in the glory, then at once the glory shall follow,—follow the completion of the sufferings. (Col. 1:24.) It is because there are some members of the Body of Christ still lacking to make up the elect and predestinated number, foreknown of the Lord (Rom. 8:29), that the glory has not yet been ushered in. And fortunate this is for us who hence still have hopes of attaining to this high calling of God in Christ Jesus, to become heirs of God, joint-heirs with Jesus Christ our Lord, to an inheritance incorruptible and never-fading, reserved in heaven for those who shall make their calling and election sure. The **glorified** Church, Head and Body, will be so filled with the spirit of Jehovah—his wisdom, his love, his power—that they will be fully qualified to do all the great work which divine love and wisdom has purposed and arranged for, since before the foundation of the world. R. 2373

For Col. 1:24, see also page 72

I became a minister according to the stewardship from God, which was given to me for you, to fulfill the word of God, the mystery which has been hidden from ages and from generations, but now has been revealed to His saints. To them God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles: which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.

– Colossians 1:25-27 –

Few understand God's great secret or "mystery" hidden during past ages and dispensations (Col. 1:26), that, during this long period of the Gospel Age a saintly "little flock" would be selected from amongst men to be Messiah's Bride, and joint-heir with him in his Messianic reign. Few see that this "little flock" has been selected during these nineteen centuries from every nation, people, kindred and tongue, and that they are all saints, in the spirit of their minds, at least, and follow the Lamb, whithersoever he goeth, walking in the footsteps of Jesus. Few understand that, as soon as these joint-sacrificers with the Master shall have filled up the measure of afflictions appointed, then the Kingdom of glory will be revealed and all flesh shall see it together and all shall be blessed by it, the Jew, Abraham's natural seed, first, and also the Gentile—all the families of the earth.

The wealth of God's wonderful favor to the church of Christ is briefly comprehended in that one expression of the Apostle Paul, "Christ in you, the hope of glory." (Col. 1:27.) Christ in you, dear ones, is the only Scriptural foundation for that good hope of the prize of our high calling of God in Christ Jesus. If Christ be not formed in you, then indeed is your hope vain, no matter how much truth or how many advantages you may possess. The object of giving the truth is not to satisfy mere idle curiosity, but to sanctify us wholly.

Though we may have been begotten by the exceeding great and precious promises to a good hope of life in Christ, the germ of the new life is in a dying condition and will never come to the birth unless it can be resuscitated and developed to the actual formation of the Christ character, which always manifests itself in loving zeal for the Lord's cause—for the advancement of his truth and the upbuilding of his consecrated ones. How important, then, that each of those who hope to have a share with Christ in his kingdom sees to it that his hope is founded upon the fact that Christ is now actually formed in him, and that as evidence of this he has manifestly reached the quickening stage in the process of development, when love, faith and obedience are all full of activity and zealous in seeking and improving every opportunity for the service of God. Be not satisfied, beloved fellow laborers, when those within the range of your influence are merely begotten by the Word of truth, but, by instruction, example and assistance, labor diligently to have Christ formed in them, the hope of glory; and then, so far as possible, minister also to their further development, that they may eventually be born in the glorious, divine nature. R. 4715 and R. 1273

Him we preach, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus. To this end I also labor, striving according to His working which works in me mightily.

Colossians 1:28-29

As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith, as you have been taught, abounding in it with thanksgiving.

– Colossians 2:6-7 –

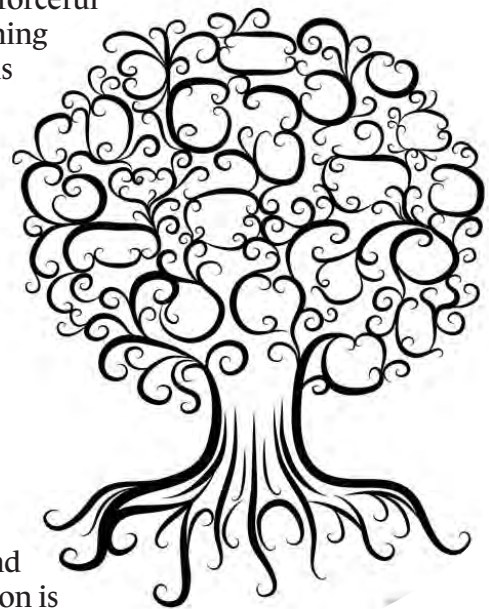
The Apostle Paul urged those to whom he wrote to continue in this faith, and not to try to combine earthly philosophy with this Heavenly Message. As they had received Christ as God's Anointed and their Sufficiency in all things—the One “in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge,” in whom “dwelleth all the fullness of the Deity bodily”—so they were to walk. As they had recognized Him as the Heavenly Teacher, so they were to continue to make progress in the same way—the path that leads to glory, honor and immortality. They were not to think for one moment that any human teaching could be mixed with the Divine Message; for any other doctrine would serve only to confuse the Heavenly Message in the minds of the hearers.

Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ.

Colossians 2:8

This would not mean, however, that the teachings of the Apostles were to be ignored, for the Master especially informed the Church that His Twelve Apostles would be His mouthpieces. It would, however, guard us against any supposition that there would be any other teaching or any other Church to take the place of Jesus and His Apostles. To these He declared that whatsoever things they would bind on earth would be bound in Heaven, and whatsoever things they would loose on earth would be loosed in Heaven.

Having stated the matter in this way, the Apostle then uses a forceful illustration to show how we are to progress in Christ. Turning from the figure of a man walking in Christ as a member of His Body, St. Paul gives us the picture of a tree, the root of which goes downward and the trunk of which reaches upward, to obtain that nourishment which will give it strength and stability. As the roots of a tree push themselves downward and imbibe the nutriment of the soil, while at the same time the trunk and the branches reach up into the atmosphere to obtain through the leaves the necessary elements of growth, so the mentality of the Christian takes hold of the great and precious promises of the Word of God, while at the same time he is building character through his heart appreciation of these promises, in connection with the experiences of life. The roots of faith push down deep into the knowledge of the Divine Plan, while the tree of character grows higher and higher, developing and maturing the rich fruits of the Holy Spirit of God; for instruction is a form of construction. R. 5557



While the Christian is thus growing up in character-likeness to our Redeemer, and his roots of faith are reaching deep down into the deep things of the Word of God, he is becoming established, settled. A tree that is well rooted in the earth is hard to uproot. It has a wonderful strength, a wonderful hold upon the earth, and requires years to die out. So it is with the Christian whose faith has been properly established; he should be so fixed, so established in the promises of God's Word, that no wind of doctrine could overturn his faith. R. 5557

For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. – Colossians 2:9 –

Jesus, our Savior, is God's great Gift. To appreciate the teaching of the Bible on this and on every subject, we must handle the Word of God honestly, not deceitfully. We must recognize that our Lord Jesus is one person, and the Heavenly Father another person. Only thus can we appreciate how God could give His Son, and how Jesus could consent to be the Gift of God to man. The oneness between the Father and the Son is not that declared by the creeds, a oneness of person, but is that declared by our Master Himself, saying that He and the Father are one in the same sense that He desires all of His disciples, His followers, to be one—one in mind, in purpose, in will, in effort. "That they may be one, even as we are one." John 17:21, 22 Jesus is God's unspeakable Gift in that it is impossible to tell the riches of God's grace in this connection—the numberless blessings and mercies which are ours through Jesus. He represents to us the very fullness of every Divine provision for our eternal welfare. "In Him dwelleth all the fullness of the Deity bodily." (Col 2:9) In a certain sense all of God's intelligent creatures are in His image and represent Him. Thus the angels and cherubim are Godlike; even Adam, made a little lower than the angels—of human nature—was an image of God in the flesh—fully in harmony in every line of his character and being with the Divine character. Adam, bodily, represented God in the world.

But all these things, true of angels and of men, are still more true of Jesus; and the Scriptures tell us that He was the "Logos," the Father's Word or Messenger-Jehovah's active Agent in all the work of creation.

He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist. And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence. For it pleased the Father that in Him all the fullness should dwell.

Colossians 1:15-19

Nor was this Gift compulsory; rather, the Logos entered full into the transaction.

He had absolute faith in the Heavenly Father's Wisdom, Justice, Love and Power; hence, when the proposition opened that He might leave the heavenly condition for an earthly condition, in which He would perform a great service pleasing to the Father and beneficial to men, the Logos delighted to do the Father's will. He was made flesh. The disciples and others, beheld that He as a man was not as other men, but was "holy, harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners."

**And you are complete in Him, who is the head of all principality and power.
Colossians 2:10**

The glory of our Lord Jesus' kingdom given him by the Father is that "He is at the head of all principality and power." (Col. 2:10) The Father's government and authority are never **contrasted** with that of the Son; for the latter is at **one** with the former and is his representative.

HG593 and E79

And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses, having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross.

– Colossians 2:13-14 –

After you had presented your body a living sacrifice, and God had accepted that sacrifice, and given you the holy spirit, —after you were thus begotten of the holy spirit, —then came the time, perhaps longer for some and shorter for others, when you began to be active; you were quickened, you were energized; you began to say, “What can I do to render my service to the Lord?” You said, “It is not sufficient that I should have given myself to the Lord; I want to use this mortal body, its time, opportunity and all that I have in the service of him who bought me with his precious blood.” That is the quickening time. Quickening means to make alive.

[The Apostle] pointedly declares (verse 13) that those believers who had been Gentiles were pardoned fully and freely from all condemnation, while concerning those who had been Jews he says (verse 14), Christ blotted out the **written Law** which was against **us** [believing Israelites], removed it from **our** way, nailing it to his cross; having stripped away from the original [law] and its authorities [all obscurities], he made a public illustration of them [in his life of obedience to them], triumphing over them by it [in obedience even unto death, even the death of the cross]. “**Therefore,**” reasons the apostle, because our Lord has made both you Gentiles and us Jews free, “**permit** no man to judge you in meat or drink, or in respect to a holyday, or of the new moon, or of the Sabbaths, which **are shadows** of future things, the **substance** [or antitypes] of which appertain to the Anointed [Head and Body].”

So let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or sabbaths, which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ.

Colossians 2:16-17

Glorious is the liberty of the sons of God! Let us stand fast in it! And let us enjoy to the full our rest of faith; for we can rest (enjoy Sabbath) whether the world has a Sabbath or not: whether any day or no day is commanded by human law, our rest abides. It lasts seven days in each week and twenty-four hours in each day, and is not broken by physical labor, nor is it dependent on physical ease. It is a deep and lasting rest, and can be broken only by doubt—by a rejection of the basis on which it must abide, the ransom,—or by living after the flesh, and thus disturbing conscience and our relationship toward God.

How blessed is the state of all in Christ, as mature sons of God under favor, not servants nor infants under Laws! (John 15:15; Rom. 8:15; Gal. 4:1-6.) How blessed to us is the true **rest** of faith in Christ's finished work, which rest neither the world nor the Law could give, and which, from us that are free, they cannot take away. CR2 and R. 1723

If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. For you died and your life is hidden with Christ in God.

– Colossians 3:1-3 –

As our own wills, ambitions, aims and hopes were consecrated and reckoned dead, so we should reckon ourselves as members of the Christ, risen from the dead: new creatures, possessed and controlled by the new will, the mind of Christ. It is this class that the Apostle addresses, and from this standpoint that he declares, “If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God.” We are to remember continually that joint-heirship with the Lord in that spiritual condition and in his heavenly power and Kingdom are the hopes set before the Church of this age, and we are to “**seek** those things”—“**seek**” chiefly the Kingdom of God”—**seek** to make our calling and election sure to participation with our Lord in the Kingdom honors and glories to which he already has attained as a reward for his faithful sacrifice.
—Col 3:1; Matt. 6:33; Rom. 2:7; 2 Pet. 1:10.

The Apostle wishes us to understand how we are to “**seek**” those things. We are not merely to seek them in prayer, although prayer is an excellent aid in the seeking. We are to seek them by setting our affections on those things, and by lifting our affections from earthly things.

This matter of **setting** the affections on Heavenly things, however, is something that must be repeated, persevered in; for the affections are inclined to slip off. We have nothing but our old brains with which to do our thinking, and these brains have tendencies toward the flesh. Therefore the necessity arises for a repeated and continual setting of the affections on the things Above, until they become securely fastened there, fixed, established. Heaven is to be our eternal Home, not the earth, not the fleshly condition. All the precious promises center Above. Christ our beloved King is there. We are being prepared to enter soon into Heaven itself, the condition beyond the veil. The glories of the Holiest of all are now ours by faith; and they will soon be ours in reality if we hold fast and continue faithful to our covenant with God.

Our minds are the foundation for everything in this matter. The Lord knows that we have imperfect bodies. So the testing will not be as to whether our bodies are perfect, but whether our hearts are perfect. If our heart is perfect before God, we shall bring our words, our actions and our thoughts into harmony with the Law of Love to the extent

of our ability. If we see to it that we **keep** our hearts thus loyal, we shall become more and more a copy of God’s dear Son, our Heavenly Bridegroom; and we shall enter in due time with exceeding joy into our “house not made with hands, eternal in the Heavens.” Then our Lord will present us before the Father—the “Bride adorned for her Husband.” R. 2479 and R. 5905

Our new life is not manifest to all, nor upon all occasions to any. This the Apostle intimates when he says, “Your life is hid with Christ in God”; it is a life of new desires, new aims, new aspirations, which the world can neither see nor fully appreciate, though it sees some outward manifestations of the new life in our daily conduct. Even the “brethren” may not be able to appreciate the progress of the new life in us; and we ourselves may at times be perplexed respecting the rapidity and strength of its growth; and we may need to look back over weeks or months, or perhaps years, in order to determine unquestionably that it is growing. Our new life, represented by our endeavors to follow the will of Christ, is hidden thus in Christ and in the Father. R. 4829

Put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him.

– Colossians 3:10 –

This “new man” —this spirit-begotten New Creature—is to develop by acting upon the knowledge that it gains. We had some knowledge before consecration, or we would not have thought of taking such a step. First, the Lord permitted a measure of knowledge to come to us. Then when we had accepted the terms and presented ourselves for sacrifice, the Savior’s merit was imputed to us, and we were received of God and begotten as New Creatures by His Spirit, His power; and the good work has been going on in all those who have met the necessary conditions of development.

We must grow in love. The Apostle tells us that we might have all knowledge and yet be as nothing. Knowledge alone will not suffice. However, knowledge is the basis of faith and obedience. Without knowledge we could accomplish nothing. Knowledge shows us the will of God on the one hand and the selfishness that appertains to the fallen human nature on the other. It shows us the love and generosity that belong to the new nature. It shows us the Lord’s character—the character that we are to imitate. We are to be “renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created us”—created us as New Creatures. R. 5685

As the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering, bearing with one another and forgiving one another. If anyone has a complaint against another, even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do. But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection.

– Colossians 3:12-14 –

With the thought before our minds of the oneness and equality of those who have been accepted into the Body of Christ, the Apostle urges upon our attention the necessity not only of putting off the evil dispositions of our fallen flesh, but also of putting on, cultivating, the various graces of the Spirit exemplified in our Head, Christ Jesus. The Apostle, as the mouthpiece of the Holy Spirit, is a thorough instructor. Not only does he tell us what **disgraces** to put off and what **graces** to put on, but, viewing the Lord’s Body arrayed in these qualities of heart—compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, patient endurance, forbearance and forgiveness, he adds, “And **above all these** put on **love**, which is the bond of perfectness.” Love is thus pictured as the “girdle” which binds and holds in place the folds of the robe of Christ’s righteousness with its various graces. In other words, the Apostle would have us see that forbearance, meekness, patience, etc., must not be matters merely of courtesy or merely of policy. However much they might partake of these qualities in the beginning, the wearers will not be perfected in heart, nor be fit for the Kingdom, until they have reached the place where these various graces of their wills, or intentions, are bound to them by the cords of love—love for the Lord, love for righteousness, love for the “brethren,” and sympathetic love for the whole groaning creation. Love is, indeed, “the bond of perfectness,” the very Spirit of the Lord.

R. 4828



Above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection.

– Colossians 3:14 –

Consider for a moment the joy of loving—the joy of loving your own sweet child, or the manly glory of your noble husband, or the womanly grace of your devoted wife, or the tender sweetness of your sainted mother, or the ripened glory of your aged father, or the blessed communion of tried and faithful friends—the communion of saints. Then, rising above these earthly loves, some have tasted the sweets of that divine love that surpasseth all other loves. As yet, however, that divine love is only manifest to those who have faith in the divine promises and who walk in obedience to the divine commandments.

Now with these illustrations of what it is to love and to be loved, let our imaginations widen the sphere of this noble virtue, and do we not see that, when it reigns in all hearts, it will prove to be just what the Apostle says it is —viz.: “the bond of perfectness,” and the greatest of all the Christian virtues? Indeed he shows that, though we might have all the other virtues combined, yet, lacking this one, we would be as sounding brass and as tinkling cymbals. In fact, the putting on of the other virtues, except as prompted by this virtue, would be mere sham and hypocrisy. Yet with this, though lacking the others to some extent, the heart would prove itself loyal, though the flesh might be weak to perform the dictates of love.

Love is the fulfillment of the law.

Romans 13:10

The Lord is saying a great deal for this virtue when he declares that love is the fulfilling of the law; or in other words, that if we had perfect love, we could easily and naturally keep the whole law of God. But here is our difficulty: we cannot love perfectly. Well the Lord knows that we cannot, but he wants to see us endeavoring to love more and more, and making actual progress in this direction. The child of God who is studiously endeavoring thus to manifest and cultivate the spirit of love will indeed become more and more like his blessed Master. R. 1330

And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body, and be thankful.

Colossians 3:15

Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.

– Colossians 3:17 –

Whether he realizes it or not, each one who professes to be a Christian speaks and acts in the name of the Lord Jesus. The thought of our text therefore must be that we should endeavor to keep this fact continually before our minds, to the intent that our actions and words may properly represent our Lord and honor the name which he has permitted us to bear. Imagine a maiden from the lower strata of society married to a prince of royal blood. We can imagine a true wife under such circumstances extremely careful of her every word and action, seeking to have these as nearly as possible comport with her new station in life—her new relationship. We can well imagine that from the moment of her espousal the thought of her husband's high position and of her responsibility as his helpmate and family representative, would lead her to guard particularly her every action and word. From the time that she assumes his name, or acknowledges that she is espoused to him, whatever she does or says must of necessity be either to the credit or the discredit of his name. Elsewhere the Apostle wrote respecting the Lord's people, likening them to a "chaste virgin espoused to one husband, which is Christ;" hence this picture very accurately represents our present responsibilities to the great name which our heavenly Bridegroom has granted us permission to use as his espoused. What an honor to be his representatives in the world! and what a responsibility to bear his name!

With some the tendency is that, whatsoever they do, whether in word or deed, they shall do all in their own name—for their own credit, for their own glory. This is a spirit and disposition contrary to those which the Lord is seeking, and he who maintains such a disposition will surely not be accounted worthy of any place in the Kingdom, whatever may be his ultimate end. The class which the Lord is seeking will be composed of those only who have such an appreciation of the Lord and his grace, manifested in their redemption and forgiveness of sins and call to fellowship with him in his suffering and subsequent glory, that they will take delight in crediting all the honor, all the praise, to him. Not only their honor and praise for salvation, but additionally their credit for any kind deeds or benevolences or services they may be able to render to any. They will be glad to be able to do something in his name—to the glory of him who did so much for them.

This loving devotion to him whose name we bear must with all "saints" be the power of God, working in us to will and do his good pleasure; —to honor his name and to serve his cause to the best of our ability. And the best of our ability, thank God! is accepted in the Beloved as perfection. How gracious are the divine providences! The more we realize these things the more careful and circumspect they will make us, —that whatsoever we do, in word or deed, it shall all be done in the name of Jesus and to his glory. R. 3329



First Letter to the Thessalonians

Written from Corinth, A.D. 52

When released from the prison at Philippi, Paul, Silas and Timothy went about a hundred miles direct to Thessalonica, the largest commercial city of that district—Macedonia. En route they passed two cities, where apparently they found no opening for their Message, no hearts prepared. Philippi was one of the few cities where the Gospel made any headway before the city had first come under the influence of Judaism to some extent. Evidently the scattering of the Jews throughout this region had more or less acquainted their neighbors with the true God, the observation of His Laws and respect for His revelations and for the promised Messiah.

Nothing daunted by their experience at Philippi, apparently not even waiting for their backs to thoroughly heal from the wounds there received, Paul at once began a vigorous presentation of the Gospel. As was his custom, he went first to the Jews.

At Thessalonica the missionaries found a Jewish synagogue; and in harmony with their usual custom they attended worship there. For three Sabbath days they reasoned with the congregation from the Scriptures. The word rendered reasoned in Verse 2 implies a dialogue or discussion.

Now when they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where there was a synagogue of the Jews. Then Paul, as his custom was, went in to them, and for three Sabbaths reasoned with them from the Scriptures, explaining and demonstrating that the Christ had to suffer and rise again from the dead, and saying, “This Jesus whom I preach to you is the Christ.”

Acts 17:1-3

The propriety of this course is evident: the Jews were familiar with the prophecies of the Messiah, and although making their home amongst the Gentiles, nevertheless, as the Apostle declares, they were continually hoping for the fulfillment of the grand promises made to Abraham, confirmed unto Isaac and unto Jacob, and that by divine oath, or affirmation. —Acts 26:7.

Not only were the Jews, acquainted with the prophecies and looking for their fulfillment in a Messiah, better prepared than other peoples for the message of the Gospel, but, additionally, it was part of the divine will that the first offer of the Gospel should go to the Jew, the natural seed of Abraham, who was, by divine intention, to have the first opportunity of becoming a part of the spiritual seed. Furthermore, the Jewish synagogues were ostensibly conducted on a liberal plane, anyone of reasonable ability being free there to show what he could of the teaching of the Scriptures. Thus the Apostle met with the Jews on three Sabbath days; and, according to his own narrative, he labored with his hands for temporal necessities between times. (1 Thes. 2:9.) It was during this stay of probably three to six months that he twice received financial aid from the brethren at Philippi.

Evidently the discussions of those three Sabbath days were all that the Jews as a whole could endure. Only a minority of the Jews could receive this Message. The remainder were embittered. Therefore they became jealous of the success achieved by these strangers, who had been in the city but a few

weeks, but who nevertheless had already made considerable impression upon Gentiles, whom they had been unable to influence and to convert to Judaism.

Apparently the ministers of the truth, thenceforth excluded, went to the house of a prominent believer, Jason, and from there continued their propaganda, —possibly holding meetings at his house. Meantime the opposing Jews at Thessalonica received information from their brethren, opponents of the truth at Philippi, respecting these servants of the Lord, and the message they carried; —and, doubtless, the Adversary persuaded them that they were engaged in a noble cause when they gathered a rabble of market-loungers, “roughs and toughs,” to raise a commotion, and as a mob to make an assault upon Jason’s house, to take the Apostle and his companions before the authorities and have their work stopped.

But the Jews who were not persuaded, becoming envious, took some of the evil men from the marketplace, and gathering a mob, set all the city in an uproar and attacked the house of Jason, and sought to bring them out to the people. But when they did not find them, they dragged Jason and some brethren to the rulers of the city, crying out, “These who have turned the world upside down have come here too. Jason has harbored them, and these are all acting contrary to the decrees of Caesar, saying there is another king—Jesus.”
Acts 17:5-6

Not finding Paul and Silas, the mob dragged Jason and others of the believers before the rulers. The charges were very serious ones—inciting to anarchy and treason—turning the world upside down, and teaching that there is another king, Jesus, whose kingdom is to be universal in due time. While these charges were fraudulent as respects the true standpoint, they nevertheless had in them a sufficiency of truth to make them appear serious.

It is true that the Gospel of Christ is revolutionary in its character; that whenever it enters the heart of a man it keeps turning things upside down continually, until it is either ejected or has produced a transformation of heart and life.

There is no peace between right and wrong, or light and darkness, in any heart. Peace can be secured only by giving way either to the light or to the darkness; either to the truth or to the error; and since the error is the more popular, the more general, the majority choose peace along that line. The Lord’s people, however, the sincere lovers of righteousness, can have peace on no other terms than those of loyalty to the Lord and his Word, and the principles of his righteousness. The same is true in respect to all the affairs of the world. It is the Gospel of Christ, the Gospel which **will be a Gospel of peace in due time**, that at the present time, because of evil and ignorance in the world, is setting on fire the very foundations of “the present evil world,” and will ultimately result in the great figurative conflagration which shall consume this present order of things, political, financial, social, religious, —that upon the ruins of present institutions the Lord may shortly erect his Kingdom of righteousness—with peace upon proper foundations of justice and love.

We must not be surprised if this Gospel of peace has the same influence today as it had in the days of our Lord and of the apostles. Mark the effect of the precious message at Thessalonica and at Philippi and elsewhere. Mark the effect when the message was delivered from the lips of him who spake as never man spake, and of whose wonderful words it is recorded that “all the people bare him record and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth. Nevertheless, however graciously stated, the truth is a sword which penetrates in every direction, and which, as our Lord foretold, frequently sets parents against children and children against parents, because the

darkness hateth the light and opposeth it in every possible manner.

Do not think that I came to bring peace on earth. I did not come to bring peace but a sword. For I have come to ‘SET A MAN AGAINST HIS FATHER, A DAUGHTER AGAINST HER MOTHER, AND A DAUGHTER-IN-LAW AGAINST HER MOTHER-IN-LAW’, and ‘A MAN’S ENEMIES WILL BE THOSE OF HIS OWN HOUSEHOLD.’

Matthew 10:34-36

The decrees of the emperors respecting riots and treason were very strict, and all rulers were held rigidly to account. Hence, when the charges were made of anarchy and treason, both the multitude and the rulers were “troubled;” the multitude, because more or less of a riot had occurred, seemingly because of treason; —and this might lead to the taking away of some of the city’s privileges and liberties, its loss of commerce, etc. The rulers were troubled because they were in danger of being called to account unless they took active steps for the repression of anything resembling treason. They knew, nevertheless, that the charges were fabrications, and, hence, got out of the difficulty by placing Jason and his companions under bonds to keep the peace—to see that similar riots did not occur again. This necessitated the sending of Paul and Silas away as quietly and as quickly as possible.

The result of [the Apostle Paul’s] labors was the nucleus of a flourishing church, to which two of his epistles were addressed. The Apostle’s attitude toward these brethren may reasonably be taken as the criterion of his general attitude toward all of the Lord’s dear flock. He dealt not with them as a lord or master amongst slaves or subordinates; but, using his own words, he was gentle toward them, as a nursing mother to her children. (1 Thes. 2:7.) He admonished, comforted, instructed them, “as a father doth his children.” (1 Thes. 2:11.) He lived an unblamable, unselfish life in their midst, giving them the Gospel, and with it his very life. —1 Thes. 2:5-8; 1 Thes. 2:10.

We were gentle among you, just as a nursing mother cherishes her own children. So, affectionately longing for you, we were well pleased to impart to you not only the gospel of God, but also our own lives, because you had become dear to us. For you remember, brethren, our labor and toil, for laboring night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you, we preached to you the gospel of God.

1 Thessalonians 2:7-9

In view of the Lord’s teaching regarding this subject, and of how the wisest presentation of it may be ultimately misconstrued, it behooves everyone who would serve the truth faithfully to be as careful as possible not to be misunderstood; —to let it be clearly understood that we neither participate in nor advocate anarchy of any kind; but, on the contrary, are standing for righteousness and the highest of all laws, the divine law; and that we believe that the poorest of laws are better than none, and that the anarchy that will inevitably come upon the world, according to divine predictions, will be a great curse, a great disadvantage in many respects; and that the only reason why we are able to look upon it with any degree of complacency is because of the assurances given us in the Lord’s Word that it will be speedily followed by the Kingdom of God’s dear Son; —in power and authority, to fully control all the turbulent elements. Leaving Timothy at Thessalonica, Paul and Silas journeyed about fifty miles to a rather obscure Grecian city, called Berea, and, according to their custom, realizing that the preaching of the Gospel of Christ was their chief business, they lost no time in engaging therein.

[The first epistle to the Thessalonians] is a very fatherly one, very gentle and loving. When we remember that the believers addressed were merely “babes in Christ” less than a year old we are inclined to amazement that the Apostle should consider them prepared for teaching on so high a plane. But the fact is that the cause of Christ was very unpopular because of the pureness of its message, because it presented no comparison with the worldly spirit and because it called for a full consecration, not only of heart, but also of daily living, to the will of God and to his providences.

Under the Apostle’s instruction, supplemented by Timothy’s, the Church at Thessalonica had in a very short time attained a considerable knowledge of the Divine plan; much more apparently than is enjoyed by a majority of Christian congregations today. For instance,

- 1 They knew what many today are ignorant of, that their hope centered in the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, and their being gathered to him then.
- 2 They knew that their friends who had died were “asleep,” and their hope was that they would be awakened from the sleep of death by the Lord at his second coming.

Realizing that all hopes of eternal life depended upon the second coming of the Lord as the great Life-giver, there was no danger that the early Church should ever lose sight of this inspiring hope set before us in the gospel. And it is because this fact (that the dead “sleep” and cannot be awakened until the second advent) has been lost sight of for several centuries past, that faith in and hope for the Lord’s second coming has so generally languished. It has come to be generally believed by Christian people that the dead do not “sleep,” but are more awake than they ever were—that they go to heaven or to hell in the moment of dissolution; and that these conditions are permanent, unalterable. With such unscriptural thoughts before their minds, who can wonder that to them the second coming of the Lord is an event without special interest; and hence regarded lightly, and by many wholly disbelieved, and declared to be a useless, uninteresting and pernicious faith.

However, “the brethren,” who have been instructed by the Word of the Lord, and who do not follow “cunningly devised fables” originated by the deceiver, find that the Scriptures as a whole from Genesis to Revelation are illuminated with the grand hope of the coming of Messiah in glory and power, to establish his kingdom of righteousness in the earth, and to awaken and lift up those who have fallen under the hand of death; to give beauty for ashes, and the oil of joy for the spirit of heaviness—to as many as will accept his blessing, under the terms of the New Covenant sealed at Calvary with his own precious blood.

Let us recall to mind the setting of this epistle. Less than a year before its writing the Apostle and Silas arrived from Philippi bruised and haggard, surely, as a result of their experiences in the riot and from the beating and other severe experiences connected with the dungeon at Philippi. It will be remembered that they had peace but a short time at Thessalonica, during which they made known the Gospel of God’s grace. Then the Apostle was obliged to flee again, but subsequently heard from the believers at Thessalonica through Silas and Timothy. With a fatherly love he assayed several times to revisit the believers, but was always providentially hindered. Possibly these hindrances led up to the writing of this epistle, more profitable for them, as well as advantageous to all of the Lord’s people throughout the world during eighteen centuries. Thus do God’s providences “work together for good to those who love him.” After faith has been instructed and developed through the wonderful lessons of God’s Word, it becomes a firm foundation for peace and joy, comfort and rest under all conditions. R. 3130, R. 5913, R. 4417, R. 2197 *For 1 Thes. 1:5, see page 167*

You became followers of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Spirit, so that you became examples to all in Macedonia and Achaia who believe.

1 Thessalonians 1:6-7

May the Lord make you increase and abound in love to one another and to all, just as we do to you, so that He may establish your hearts blameless in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all His saints.

– 1 Thessalonians 3:12-13 –

Not to sinners are these words addressed, but to saints. Not those who have not the Spirit of Christ, the spirit of love, and who therefore, are none of his, does the Apostle exhort; but those who already have been begotten of the holy Spirit of love. Increase in love signifies that love already has attained an ascendancy in the heart, a mastery in the mind, by which it is progressing, conquering and bringing into subjection all the thoughts and conduct of life. And this thought, that love is to increase in the hearts of God's people, is in full accord with the general testimony of the Scriptures, that we are to **grow** in grace and in knowledge and in love; approaching more and more and attaining and maintaining the "mark" which God hath set before us as the standard of character for which he will be pleased to award the prize in due time. It is as though a cistern were being filled more and more with pure water from hidden springs, until, increasing and increasing, it overflows with its abundance. Thus the Lord's people are to increase in love continually, until the love abounds or **overflows** in all the thoughts and words and conduct of life; not only carrying blessings to their own refreshment and to the refreshment of all with whom they come in contact, but also redounding to the glory and praise of God from whom this blessing is derived.

The Apostle's words, "Even as we do toward you," are full of meaning and force. Paul and his associates were not teaching a Gospel which they did not appreciate and practise; on the contrary, they were exemplifying in their daily course of life this very abounding love, which, overflowing, was leading them to sacrifice their own interests and rights and privileges for the sake of the Lord's people everywhere. They were laying down their lives for the brethren—daily, hourly; they were sacrificing for the sake of others, opportunities and privileges as respected their earthly life, earthly pleasures, etc. It is with particular force, therefore, that they exhort fellow-Christians to follow after them in the same way of self-sacrificing, loving obedience, as imitators of Jesus. And so it should be with all who exhort others to walk in the way of righteousness and love: In order that their words may have force and meaning they must exemplify them in their own lives. As they point to the "mark" of perfect love they must approximate that mark in their own daily lives, and certainly possess it in their hearts, their wills, their intentions. So whether they occupy pulpits, or whether they exhort others merely by the influence of their daily lives, they are living epistles read and known of all men who come in contact with them.

The Apostle in our text tells us why it is necessary that we progress. It is "to the end," or with the object in view, of our hearts being established, fixed, settled, rooted, grounded in holiness. It is not sufficient, from the Divine standpoint, that we learn something about love, and have the feeling of love thrilling our hearts, and that generous emotions shall occasionally be ours; what the Lord seeks is "a peculiar people," "a royal priesthood," thoroughly established, firmly fixed in love for righteousness—so that all unrighteousness, all sin, all injustice, would be an abomination to them. We perceive that this lesson comes up to date, in the sense that while it has been applicable to the Lord's people all through this Gospel Age, it is specially applicable to us who are now living in the "harvest" time, in the time of the presence of the Son of man. For mark the Apostle's words in our text, that all this development in the spirit of love is to the end that we may be established, fixed, "in the presence [**parousia**] of our Lord Jesus Christ, with all saints." We are now in this time of his **presence**, and it behooves us to inquire carefully of our hearts to what extent we are established in righteousness.

We are to remember that he who began the good work in our hearts, began while we were yet

sinners, by giving for us the great ransom price; that if he so loved us then, while we were yet sinners, much more does he love us now that we have accepted his grace, and are justified from all sin by faith in his blood, and are seeking to walk in his footsteps. And all who have this desire to receive the Lord's lessons, and to profit by them, and to become more and more copies of Jesus—all such have the assurance that it comes, not by their strength, but by the Lord's strength; and that if they submit themselves to him, he will perfect in them his spirit of love and righteousness and holiness; that they may be “meet for the inheritance of the saints in light.” R. 4662

Finally then, brethren, we urge and exhort in the Lord Jesus that you should abound more and more, just as you received from us how you ought to walk and to please God.

1 Thessalonians 4:1

For this is the will of God, your sanctification, that you should abstain from sexual immorality, that each of you should know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor.

– 1 Thessalonians 4:3-4 –

Our text, as well as many other portions of the Scriptures, teaches us that the great work which God asks of us is not for others, but is a work in **ourselves**, subduing, conquering, ruling **self**. Everything else, therefore, our doing service to the household of faith, our doing good unto all men, by home or foreign missions, etc., is subservient to this most important work within. For, as the Apostle by inspiration declares, though we should preach the Gospel eloquently to others, and though we should give all our goods to feed the poor, or become martyrs for a good cause, we should be nothing from the Divine viewpoint, without love—the Spirit of Christ and of the Father—developed in us as the ruling principle of life. (1 Cor. 13:3.) But before we can “put on love—the bond of perfectness”—and have its rule established, we have many enemies to **put out**.

Although we are now free, and are with the mind serving the Law of Christ, and although we have covenanted to battle for righteousness, truth, goodness and purity, we find our new selves harassed by the old, perverted tastes and inclinations of our own flesh toward the service of the old taskmaster. Not the least of our battles, therefore, is against these perverted tendencies of our flesh; and the battle with these is also a daily battle. With the great Apostle Paul we should be able to say, “**I keep my body** [my flesh and its desires] **under**”—in subjection to my new will, the New Creature. From the moment we make a full consecration of ourselves unto death in the service of the Lord, He reckons our flesh as dead, and begets us as New Creatures. Our new minds are alive toward God with a newness of life. Hence those motions of sin which we are seeking to bring into absolute subjection to the will of God in Christ are not recognized by the Lord as the will or the motions of the New Creature enlisted in His service, but merely as a part of the general enemy, Sin, pursuing after and battling with us. These we are pledged to resist, and to war against; and to overcome these He promises sufficient grace and help. R. 5126

God did not call us to uncleanness, but in holiness. Therefore he who rejects this does not reject man, but God, who has also given us His Holy Spirit.

1 Thessalonians 4:7-8

We urge you, brethren, that you increase more and more, that you also aspire to lead a quiet life, to mind your own business.

– 1 Thessalonians 4:10-11 –

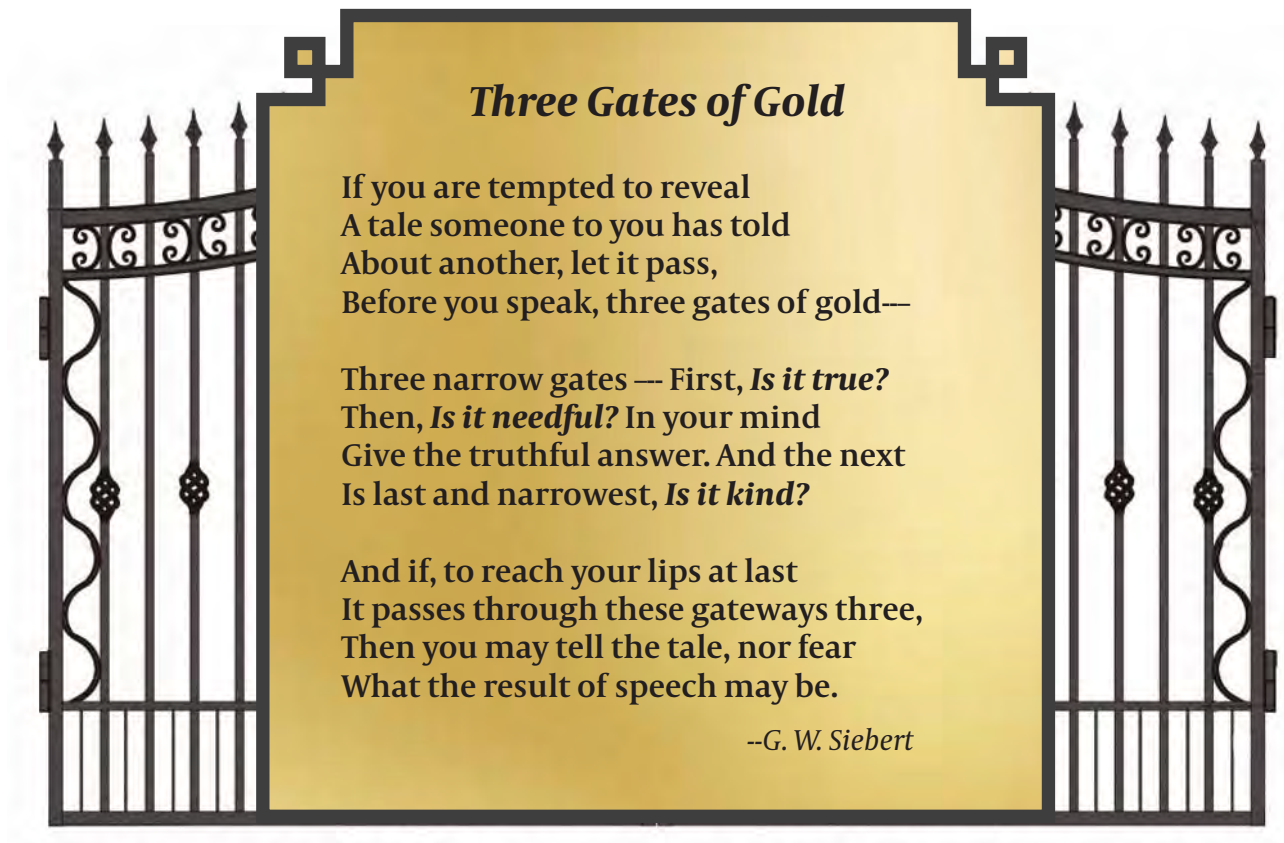
One of the first effects of a knowledge of the grace of God in Christ, and of a full, thorough consecration to the Lord, is this love for all fellow-servants— “brethren.” Would that the fervency and zeal of first love, both toward the Lord and toward the entire household of faith, might not only continue, but increase with all. But alas! many who start warmly and earnestly grow lukewarm—become captious, cynical, hypercritical, high-minded and self-assertive—and lose much of the simplicity, zeal and humility of their first faith and first love. This is the first attack of the great adversary through the weaknesses of the flesh, to re-ensnare those who have escaped his chains of darkness, and gotten to see some of the glory of God shining through Christ. If they do not resist these temptations, the effect is sure to be not only lukewarmness toward the Lord and his cause and the members of his body, but eventually the cultivation of the fruits of darkness, envy, malice, hatred, strife, instead of the fruits of the spirit of Christ, meekness, gentleness, patience, brotherly love and kindness. Hence, the Apostle urges the Church, “We beseech you, brethren, that ye increase more and more,” in love and service one for the other, which imply a growth in all the graces of the Spirit.

The expression “that ye study to be quiet” might be rendered literally “that ye be ambitious to be quiet,” or that ye have a quiet ambition—not a restless bustling for notoriety and great exploits, but a quiet earnest perseverance in well-doing; in which condition the fruits and graces of the Spirit thrive best.

This desirable quietness represents the graces of the Holy Spirit—meekness, gentleness, patience and brotherly kindness. While we are to be “fervent in spirit, serving the Lord” (Rom. 12:11), we are also to be obedient to the instructions of the Holy Spirit, in meekness, quietness and love. We are to endeavor to take a proper estimate of the affairs of life, and not to allow trivial things to excite us. This course, if faithfully pursued, tends to produce a quietness of spirit.

To mind one’s own business is a very important lesson to learn. Surely every Christian has observed that much of the trouble in the world results from interference one with another. In every difficulty, one or both of the persons involved failed to mind his own business. Some people are always seeking to find fault with others, and seem to think they are commissioned to correct the whole world. We find no authority given in the Bible for such a course.

A busybody is a person who meddles with the affairs of others with which he properly has nothing whatever to do. Sometimes he fancies that it is his duty to advise, criticise, investigate, chide and reprove others. The Golden Rule will prove a great help in deciding what is one’s duty in any case. This commandment of the Lord prohibits everything akin to busybodying. Each member of the New Creation should educate his conscience to discriminate between **brotherly-love** and **busybodying**.
R. 2196 and R. 5167



**Walk properly toward those who are outside, that you may lack nothing.
– 1 Thessalonians 4:12 –**

Not only have we duties and a ministry toward every member of the body of Christ, but we have certain responsibilities toward those who are without—in darkness, out of Christ. The Christian is to be a burning and shining light toward the world. The world sees not from the inside, as does the household of faith, but merely from the outside; hence the necessity that Christians should so live before the world as to be “living epistles, known and read of all men,” honoring to the Lord and to the teachings of his Word. The Apostle’s statement really is “walk honorably toward them that are without.” The Christian life should be seen by the world, not merely as just and honest, but also as noble and honorable. There are honest people who are mean, truthful people who tell the truth in a combative and repellant manner; in the true Christian, love should produce so generous a sentiment as would ennoble every virtue. In other words, as the same Apostle expressed it, “He that giveth, let him do it with simplicity (without ostentation);” “he that ruleth, with diligence”; “he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness,” etc., Rom. 12:7-20.

To this end, also, the Christian should strive “to have need of nothing” —So far as possible not to be dependent upon charity—but, rather, as the Apostle elsewhere states it, in harmony with the foregoing, he should “labor, working with his hands at useful employment [not to accumulate great wealth, but] that he may have to give to him that needeth.” (Eph. 4:28.) The Lord’s instruction to fleshly Israel that they should lend, but should not borrow, may well be applied in principle by spiritual Israel. R. 2196

**You are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read by all men.
2 Corinthians 3:2**

I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus.

– 1 Thessalonians 4:13-14 –

The Lord's people, having embraced the Truth, find themselves beset on every hand with oppositions from the Evil One and his servants; and were it not that they have the comfort and consolation of the Scriptures, and the joy and peace which the world can neither give nor take away, theirs would be a sad lot indeed. But under conditions, as the Lord has arranged them, it is their privilege, even while suffering the loss of earthly things for righteousness' sake, to rejoice in tribulation, and in everything give thanks.

What is the secret of this rejoicing in tribulation? Whence comes so great a comfort as this? We answer, it comes through the comfort of the Scriptures, made luminous by the holy Spirit. For instance, take the inspired prophecy respecting Rachel weeping for her children, refusing to be comforted, because they are not,—because they are dead. (Jer. 31:15-17.) The Lord's message of comfort to Rachel, and thus to all who have suffered loss through the great penalty of death, is, "Refrain thy voice from weeping, and thine eyes from tears; for thy little ones shall come again from the land of the enemy." Does this speak peace and comfort to the wounded heart of the parent, thinking of his child that is dead? Yes, verily; it brings a consolation, a comfort, with which no error can compare. There are, indeed, various delusive fancies which picture themselves before the minds of the bereaved, in which they fain would trust and hope; but they are weak, they are intangible, they have no foundation in the Word of God. Hence they cannot give real rest or peace in such a time of trial.

But when we hear the voice of the Lord assuring us of the resurrection, assuring us that the grave is indeed the land of the enemy, assuring us,—not that our little ones are more alive than ever, but that, having gone to the land of the enemy, they are secure, because Jesus has prevailed, has bought the world with his own precious blood. Jesus has "the keys of death and of the grave," as he declares (Rev. 1:18), and will shortly open and bring forth all the captive prisoners of death from the prison-house, the tomb. There is a comfort, a consolation, in this message, which can be applied with profit to every heart bleeding under such wounds.

All "the comfort of the Scriptures" is along this line. They show us that the present reign of sin and death is not to be an everlasting one; that a new dispensation is to be ushered in as the result of the great Redeemer's sacrifice, and that in this new dispensation a blessing shall come to all the families of the earth, and a special blessing to the Church. Favored now with a knowledge of the Lord, the faithful of this time shall be made heirs with Jesus in the great Kingdom work of blessing the world. Unquestionably this is a comforting assurance, not only for those who are striving to attain to the great prize of our high calling, but also for them in respect to those—their friends and neighbors—who shall be lifted up and blessed under that Millennial Kingdom.

It is of this deliverance that the Apostle speaks, saying, that the Lord's people should not sorrow as others who have no hope, because if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, let us believe also the record of the Scriptures, that his death was a sacrifice on our behalf, and on behalf of the sins of the whole world,—so that them which sleep in Jesus will God bring from the dead by and through him. (I Thess. 4:13,14.) What a blessed, **comforting** thought it is that the whole world of mankind, which went down into death in Adam, has been bought, so that the death penalty shall be repealed, and thus their death be turned into a sleep, from which all shall be awakened in the Millennial morning, to have an opportunity to learn of the goodness of God, and, if they will, to accept of his favor unto eternal life, by obedience. R. 3435

For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord.

– 1 Thessalonians 4:15-17 –

[St. Paul previously] in verse 14 refers to mankind in general, and here, in verse 15, to the Church. All mankind “sleep in Jesus” as we show on page 352 of VOL. V., and all mankind are to be awakened, but not all in the first order or first resurrection. The apostle passes from the consideration of the general fact to the consideration of the first order, the Church, which is always made most prominent throughout the New Testament as most interesting to the Lord’s people. Thus in verse 15 Paul speaks of the last members of the Church at the close of this age, indicating that the change of the remaining members will not precede that of the same class who have already fallen asleep. That this second class refers not to the world in general who “sleep in Jesus,” but to the saints, is clearly indicated in the 16th verse, where they are spoken of as the “dead **in Christ**.” The whole world sleeps in Jesus in the sense that Jesus bought the whole world, and is to be the quickener or lifegiver to the whole world; but only the saints are **dead in Christ**—members of Christ’s body, the Anointed body.

We are living now under the sounding of this great Trump of God; not that we are hearing anything with our natural ears, but that we are hearing with the ears of our understanding that God’s time has come, and that the great institution which He is arranging for the future is now being inaugurated. R. 5566

The chief work of our Lord during this “harvest” time, and especially in the forepart of it (when he calls his faithful servants of the Gospel age and reckons with them and rewards them), respects his Church as a whole, and not merely its living members. And here we should note the Apostle’s statement respecting this time and work. He informs us that the Lord’s dealings during this harvest will be first with “the dead in Christ,” saying, “We which are alive and remain to the coming [presence] of the Lord, shall not prevent [precede] them which are asleep [those of the Church already dead], . . . for the dead in Christ shall rise first.” (I Thes. 4:15,16). Taking this statement in connection with our Lord’s parable, it means that the faithful sleeping in death will be resurrected, reckoned with, rewarded, before the reckoning with and rewarding of the living members of the Church begins. R. 2528 and R. 2981

For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night.

– 1 Thessalonians 5:2 –

St. Paul tells us that God has so arranged His Program that the Day will come as a thief in the night—stealthily: and that those who are asleep will not be aware that the Day has come, and might therefore not be expected to be in a waiting attitude. Our Master's words are, "Take heed to yourselves, lest. . . that Day come upon you unawares. . . . Watch ye therefore." (Luke 21:34,36.) We believe that He leaves the matter in obscurity, because it will be better for us as a whole not to know the exact time. For instance, in the long period of the Dark Ages it was better that Christians did not know just when the time of Christ's return would come. There were wonderful events transpiring in their day, and have been, in fact, in every day, but so much the more, we read, as the Day approaches.

While the Adversary is ever active in his efforts to do harm to the Lord's cause, he will be still more seductive in his evil influences during the last days. We must therefore, as the Day draws near, be more and more alert in guarding every point of attack. The Lord allows us to do this watching, and He will reward the faithful ones, for He takes pleasure in the watchers. These will not be careless. Any who are careless will not be of the Kingdom class, for they are not of the kind that He wishes to glorify.

**But you, brethren, are not in darkness, so that this
Day should overtake you as a thief. You are all sons of light and sons of the day.
We are not of the night nor of darkness. Therefore let us not sleep, as
others do, but let us watch and be sober.**

1 Thessalonians 5:4-6

The Apostle says, "Let us watch and be sober." We cannot say that he here refers to abstinence from the use of liquors, tobacco and other things which have a stupefying effect on the nerves. The thought is that we should be watchful and sober in mind. We find a great many people who are excitable—carried about by every wind of doctrine. They cannot give the reason for what they accept. They do not know that the Truth is intended for only the one class of people—for those who are **watching**.

In one sense of the word, there might be many things to lead to excitability. We might merely jump up and down as we see the wonderful things, and clap our hands, etc. But not so! We are to be sober. Yet we are not to be stupid—stolid. We should remember that the Lord is giving us this knowledge to be used, and we should use it more and more. As we more clearly see our imperfections, we should watch and be sober, and we shall accordingly be circumspect, we shall be helpful to others, and will put on more and more the fruits and graces of the Holy Spirit—patience, meekness, gentleness, brotherly-kindness, love. And as we watch, we shall be putting off anger, malice, hatred, envy, strife. Thus we shall be pleasing and acceptable to the Bridegroom, and we shall thus be making ourselves ready to enter in with Him into the joys and blessings that are now so near—at the door. R. 5256

**But let us who are of the day be sober, putting on the breastplate of
faith and love, and as a helmet the hope of salvation.**

1 Thessalonians 5:8

We urge you, brethren, to recognize those who labor among you, and are over you in the Lord and admonish you, and to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake. Be at peace among yourselves. Now we exhort you, brethren, warn those who are unruly, comfort the fainthearted, uphold the weak, be patient with all.

– 1 Thessalonians 5:12-14 –

The Apostle in [this letter] takes for granted that the Church is acting in an orderly manner and has in the name of the Lord appointed some of their number to be over them in the Lord—to have a supervision and measure of control of the interests of the work. The Apostle urges that these be known, be recognized, not only personally, but in their capacity as servants in the Church and of Divine appointment through the Church. They are to expect admonishments from these. They are to realize that as faithful servants they must watch over the Church's interests. And all who love the Lord and the Truth should seek to cast as few difficulties in their way as possible and should do all in their power to uphold their admonitions and proper influence. These elect servants are supposed to labor amongst the brethren, as well as to admonish them. The service of the Church is not merely an honorary one. The word minister signifies servant and is a proper one and full of meaning—and more full of meaning than many seem to observe.

Continuing the Apostle urges, “Esteem them very highly in love for their works’ sake.” Permit no rivalry of spirit to come in to constitute in your own heart and in others a root of bitterness. Permit no unkind word of criticism to fall from your lips as against any servant of the Church. On the contrary, esteem them, honor them, as their position requires, for in a measure they represent the Lord. And honor them in proportion as their labors of love in the Church seem to merit. Thus, the more Christ-like will be the more loved.

We must assume that in these words the Apostle addresses the entire Church and that some features of this exhortation belong specially to the chosen representatives of the Church—the Elders. While it is true that any member of the Body of Christ might with propriety admonish any brother, encourage a faint-hearted one, give assistance to a weak one and be patient towards all, nevertheless some of these duties belong specially to the chosen Elders—they should be chosen with a view to the fact that they are more advanced in knowledge and in character, “Elder” brothers. The younger brethren, the brethren not specially designated by the Church as “Elder,” should indeed feel an interest and a care, but they should exercise great caution in respect to admonishing the disorderly, realizing that the Church has specially appointed certain ones as Elder-brethren, and that specially upon these such duties properly devolve. Even when the disorderly need correction, it requires to be wisely done, else more harm than good may result. R. 4418

See that no one renders evil for evil to anyone, but always pursue what is good both for yourselves and for all.

– 1 Thessalonians 5:15 –

This exhortation has a special force when we remember how much evil treatment was heaped upon the followers of our Lord at that time; and that the writer himself, as well as those specially addressed, had suffered much on account of their faithfulness in dispensing the Word of the Lord, the Word of life, the good tidings. The exhortation means that the Lord's followers are not to attempt to retaliate upon their enemies by doing them evil in return, or in any manner to "get even with them." The Lord's exhortation is that we seek to render good in return for the evil we receive, and includes our language as well as our conduct, we are not to give word for word, railing for railing, accusation for accusation, slander for slander any more than blow for blow. It includes also our very thoughts, for we are not even to render anger for anger, malice for malice, envy for envy. Two evils can never make a good—two wrongs will never make a right. Our sympathy for our blinded enemies is to cultivate our patience and forbearance toward them in thought, word and deed. —1 Pet. 2:21-23.

The Lord's people, so far from ever turning aside to render railing for railing or evil for evil, are uniformly to "pursue that which is good" —that which is right, that which the Lord approves. This will mean that each member of the Royal Priesthood will pursue righteousness to the extent of his ability—pursue every good and noble sentiment, and seek to live as nearly as possible up to the high standard of righteousness, perfection, exemplified absolutely in our Lord. This pursuit of goodness is to be maintained not only amongst the brethren, where all are professing the same pursuit, but also toward others—in our dealings with the world. R. 3136

Some of the world can learn more of the gospel through witnessing our avoidance of evil and our constant pursuit of righteousness, than by anything we can say to them; —and possibly as they discern the new life in us they may gradually come to have "an ear to hear" the message of good tidings which has wrought this change in us. R. 3136

– 1 Thessalonians 5:16-22 –

16 Rejoice always.

17 Pray without ceasing.

**18 In everything give thanks, for this is
the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.**

Having stated succinctly the Church's proper attitude toward the Lord to be one of continued rejoicing, prayer and thanksgiving and acceptance of his divine providences, the Apostle next briefly admonishes them respecting their attitude toward each other in the Church, in their feasting together on the Word of the Lord; —saying:

19 Do not quench the Spirit.

20 Do not despise prophecies.

21 Test all things. Hold fast what is good.

22 Abstain from every form of evil.

By following these admonitions, their fellowship in the Lord would be the more profitable—they would, as a congregation of the Lord's followers, be helped onward the more toward the grand standard to which we are called. The spirit of the Lord amongst his people is compared to "a flame of sacred love"¹ for the Lord and all connected with his cause: this flame is enkindled through the divine message in each one individually, when begotten of the holy spirit. R. 3137

¹ Watts, Isaac. "Come, Holy Spirit, Heavenly Dove." 1707. Published in 1062 hymnals.

Wesley, Charles. "O Thou Who Comest From Above." 1762. Published in 166 hymnals.

Test all things. Hold fast what is good.

– 1 Thessalonians 5:21 –

If we have proved that certain courses of conduct are injurious, we should profit by these experiences. If we have made a mistake, we should profit by the mistake. If we have had some blessing, we should profit by that. We should not be swayed by what some one desires us to do, but we should “count the cost,” as Jesus says. We should be guided by reason, seeking to read the will of God through the providences of life, its experiences, and through the Word of God. To our understanding, therefore, the Apostle meant by this statement that God’s people should be reasonable, rational people, and should use their very best judgment as to what they accept or reject.

Thus every individual in Christ is reminded of his own personal responsibility in matters of faith and conduct. Not until he has proved what is truth and righteousness, accepting the Word of God as the only standard of authority, is it proper to take a resolute stand; but, having proved “what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God,” nothing should be able to unsettle his faith or turn him from the line of duty, and no fear of man should bring him again into the snare of bondage to superstition or human traditions or opinions of others. If each individual prove his own work—his faith in the doctrines and his conduct in life—by the square and compass of God’s Word, “then shall he have rejoicing in himself and not in another”—i.e., his faith, no matter through what privileged human agent or agency it may have been received, will be so established by the Word of the Lord that it will be his own, and in no sense dependent upon another. R. 1788 and R. 4750

Abstain from every form of evil.

– 1 Thessalonians 5:22 –

There are various evils which present themselves; some in their true hideousness, and some under a cloak of hypocrisy—some openly and boldly admitting their evil character and endeavoring to decoy the Lord’s people into sin; others, garbing themselves as angels of light, would seek to mislead and to deceive. The exhortation is that everything that is evil, whether it have a good form or a bad form, is to be resisted and opposed. We may not say with some, “Let us do evil that good may follow.” The Lord’s people must be loyal to the **principles** of righteousness, under any and all circumstances. To do otherwise would be surely to undermine the character which they are seeking to build up.

To abstain from every **appearance** of evil is another thought—a different one from what the Apostle’s words in the original would warrant; nevertheless, they represent a sound principle. We surely should abstain not only from evil things, whatever their form or garb, but we should abstain so far as possible from doing things that we know to be good, which our friends or neighbors might misunderstand and consider to be evil things. The spirit of a sound mind dictates that not only evil in its every form, but everything that has an evil appearance, even, should be avoided—that our influence for the Lord and the truth may be the greater. R. 3137

It would not be consistent with righteousness to do otherwise than abstain from the appearance of evil, as well as from the evil itself. If we love righteousness and hate iniquity we will hate the very appearance of evil ourselves, and will shun the appearance as we would shun the thing itself. We will shun it, not only because we desire to have others think well of us, but because we love purity and delight in moral excellence. R. 1789

He who calls you is faithful, who also will do it.

– 1 Thessalonians 5:24 –

Loyalty to God is the test that is upon us, and so it was with Jesus. He is our exemplar and our forerunner in all these matters. What did He do, and for what did the heavenly Father honor Him with glory, honor and immortality? It was His loyalty to God that was tested, and His loyalty to God that was rewarded. He undertook to do the heavenly Father's will and be proved Himself loyal to all that He engaged to do. He was loyal to the Truth, to the brethren, and above all loyal to death, even the death of the cross, "wherefore also God hath highly exalted Him and given Him a name that is above every name," and our call is to walk in His footsteps in the same way of obedience and loyalty and share with him ultimately, if faithful, in His Kingdom. Let us then be faithful. If we are faithful we know that He will be faithful— "Faithful is He who called us who also will do it"—do for us exceedingly, abundantly more than we could have thought or asked according to the riches of His graces in Christ Jesus our Lord. CR274

By giving us His Holy Spirit God binds the contract into which we have entered with Him. In giving us this advance payment the Lord says, "Now prove to Me how faithfully you will keep your part of the Covenant into which we have entered. You keep your part, and I will keep Mine." "Faithful is He that calleth us, who also will do it." The only question is whether we shall do our part faithfully; for God will surely do His part. R. 5907

Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

– 1 Thessalonians 5:23 –

The Apostle carries his argument beyond the individual question to the Church, the Spirit of the Church, the Soul of the Church, the Body of the Church, which he prayed might be preserved entire and without blame to the coming of Jesus. Undoubtedly it would have remained unto this day had it maintained its early and proper relationship to the Lord. But departing from this the Church at Thessalonica was not preserved. There is no trace of it today. Let us, individually and collectively as an Ecclesia of the Lord's people, seek to have this sanctifying power of God wholly, fully in control of every power in us, and of our tongue, that we may glorify God in body and spirit which are his. We who are living in the end of the age may realize that the time has come, not only that judgment has begun at the house of God, but also that all the faithful may be preserved and experience part of the glorious change "in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye"—"the First Resurrection."

He who calls you is faithful, who also will do it.

1 Thessalonians 5:24

In other words, this condition of complete sanctification is the Divine ideal before you and God will complete it in you if you will but follow the directions prescribed. Following these, every blow with the mallet and the chisel of self-control, and experience will gradually transform and shape us to the character likeness of our Lord. R. 4420 and R. 4417



Second Letter to the Thessalonians

Written from Corinth c. A.D. 52

We ourselves boast of you among the churches of God for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that you endure, which is manifest evidence of the righteous judgment of God, that you may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you also suffer.

– 2 Thessalonians 1:4-5 –

Ah, yes; this is more of the Lord's counting. We are not worthy of the Kingdom of God. No human being is worthy; but the Lord purposes to count his faithful ones worthy. He will do this through the merit of his own great atonement-sacrifice which permits the acceptance of our wills, our intentions, as instead of the perfect works of righteousness. Thank God for this generous accounting! Let it encourage us, and let us remember the Apostle's statement that those who will be counted of our Lord thus fit for the Kingdom, will be such as suffer something for it. Let us then strive in a reasonable, rational manner, according to the divine Word and plan, to suffer for the Kingdom's sake.

We are not to seek suffering in a foolish way, by doing foolish things. We have no such example in our Lord's case, nor in the case of the apostles. It is not even necessary that we should suffer martyrdom or physical persecution. Possibly the extent of our sufferings may be the wounding of our feelings, when—"The workers of iniquity. . . whet their tongue like a sword, and bend their bows to shoot their arrows, even bitter words, that they may shoot in secret at the innocent" (Psa. 64:3.) Perhaps our sufferings, even, will be still less than this, as the Apostle explains (Heb. 10:33-35): "Partly whilst ye were made a gazingstock, both by reproaches and afflictions, and partly whilst ye became companions of them that were so used." Let us resolve to carry this good asset over into the new year, rejoicing that we have been privileged thus far to suffer some little for the Lord's sake and for the sake of the truth, and in companionship with the brethren; heeding the Apostle's words, "Cast not away, therefore, your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward." God wishes us to trust him according to his promises, and will reward such faith.

We also pray always for you that our God would count you worthy of this calling, and fulfill all the good pleasure of His goodness and the work of faith with power.

2 Thessalonians 1:11

This is our prayer for you, beloved in the Lord; and we trust also that this is your prayer for us. What more could we ask than that the Lord would count us worthy of the great high-calling of this Gospel age, —to joint-heirship with his Son in the Kingdom? We have his assurance respecting the terms on which he will count us worthy. We realize that the terms are very reasonable indeed, and that what we do sacrifice in conforming to those terms would be really only as loss and dross to us, so long as we were filled with a proper zeal for the Lord and his cause. And now notice the Apostle's words, that these good things which our heavenly Father has called us to receive—to prove ourselves worthy of receiving, according to his gracious terms in Christ—are not things which he offers us grudgingly, but things which he is well pleased to bestow. There was a time, perhaps, with each of us, when, under misinterpretations of the Lord's Word, we supposed that coldly and heartlessly, our

Heavenly Father preferred not to give many blessings, and would give them to but few, and to them in a grudging manner, because impelled thereto by Jesus; and that for the great majority he had determined, beforehand, that they should be delivered over to devils for an eternity of misery. Thank God for a clearer opening of the eyes of our understanding, by which now we may know him as our Father, and appreciate to some extent his wonderful plan! And, as respects our own share, let us settle it in our hearts that these gracious things to which we are called are “all the good pleasure of his goodness.” R. 3002



Now, brethren, concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, we ask you, not to be soon shaken in mind or troubled, either by spirit or by word or by letter, as if from us, as though the day of Christ had come. Let no one deceive you by any means. For that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition.

– 2 Thessalonians 2:1-3 –

That the Apostle did not mean to be understood that the Lord’s second advent might be expected momentarily, nor before his death, is evident; for elsewhere in his epistles he clearly sets forth his expectation to die, and to wait for the reward, the crown of righteousness laid up for him; elsewhere also he clearly intimates that the day of the Lord could not come until after the great falling away mentioned in the prophecies, and the manifestation of the Man of Sin, etc. (2 Tim. 3:7,8; 2 Thess. 2:2-10.)

The Apostle explains **how** that Day would come, and that there would be a time of trouble, and that the Lord would permit a strong delusion; that the man of Sin must first be revealed. He assured the Church that the Day would not come until first there was a great falling away. He reminded them: You have been told about an evil system arising. Know now that this Day of the Lord absolutely cannot come, until the Abomination of Desolation has been set up, as noted in the prophecy of Daniel. And he warned, “Let no man deceive you by any means.” —2 Thessalonians 2—the entire chapter.

During the Dark Ages God’s people were permitted to have only a measure of light, a measure of knowledge. Yet they had certain great landmarks. And so when the Papacy was developed, God’s people said, This is that Man of Sin—this is that falling away which was predicted. Thus they could locate themselves. We see that in the Dark Ages there was quite a clear understanding that the Papacy was the Man of Sin. Still it was not God’s intention to guide the Church into the fullness of Truth until the **due time**. And we are not claiming now that we know the day (the day in the shorter sense) and the hour of the setting up of the Kingdom. But we are not ignorant of the times and seasons. R. 3128 and R. 5339

The falling away, covering a period of centuries, was so gradual as to be much less noticeable to those who then lived in its midst than to us who see it as a whole; and the more deceiving was it because every step of organization, and every advance toward influence and authority in the Church and over the world, was taken in the name of Christ, and professedly to glorify him and fulfill his plans recorded in Scripture. Thus was the great Antichrist developed—the most dangerous, most subtle and most persistent opponent of true Christianity, and the most fiendish persecutor of the true saints. B287

We are bound to give thanks to God always for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God from the beginning chose you for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth, to which He called you by our gospel, for the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, brethren, stand fast and hold the traditions which you were taught, whether by word or our epistle.

– 2 Thessalonians 2:13-15 –

The Savior's words addressed to the Scribes and Pharisees, the religious leaders of His day, have reference to the theories and opinions that had been formed and handed down from the past that were not based upon the inspired testimony of the Prophets and the faithful servants of the Lord. Many of these teachings were in direct opposition to the instructions contained in the Holy Scriptures, and because they were being set forth by those who had been appointed to teach the people the true understanding of the message of the Lord, they were received as being true. In this way the commandment of the Lord had been made void. The Apostle's words had reference to the teachings of the Scriptures and also to his own instructions, which he had presented to those that he was addressing. In other words, there are true traditions and false traditions. All of those which are in harmony with the teachings of the Divine Word are true, and all those which are not in harmony are false and not to be accepted. We cannot be particular in our efforts to get the truth.

The true children of God love the truth because they have an affinity for it. They love righteousness, they love their fellow men, and desire to bless and help them. They have large benevolence and brotherly kindness. They are meek, too, and not anxious to make a show of self and to glory over their fellows in argument; nor are they mere curiosity-hunters. When they have found the truth they recognize its value; they prize it and meditate upon it; they view it as a grand and systematic embodiment of the highest ideal of righteousness, love and benevolence. They rejoice not only in its gracious provisions for the elect joint-heirs with Christ, but also for all mankind, as well as in the merciful dealings of God with the finally incorrigibly wicked whom he will mercifully destroy, but not torment. They say, It is just like God: it is the manifestation of his glorious goodness, the reflection of his loving, benevolent, wise and just character. And therefore they love the truth and the God who gave it: they treasure it up in their hearts and con it over again and again; and as they look into it, and admire all its symmetry and beauty, they strive more and more to conform their own characters to the same lines of beauty and seek to commend it by word and conduct to others, that they also may be blessed by it. This is what it is to receive the truth into good and honest hearts. For such the truth was intended; and it is not possible for them to be deceived by the sophistries of error. They know a good thing when they have it, and therefore hold it fast. Q747 and R. 1950

The belief of the truth will avail nothing if it be not permitted to produce its legitimate fruit in a good and honest heart—viz., sanctification of the spirit, a complete setting apart to the divine will and service. Let us lay this lesson well to heart, and so run as to obtain the prize of our high calling. "Buy the truth" at any cost of self-sacrifice, "and sell it not" for any paltry present advantage. R. 1950

Do not grow weary in doing good.

2 Thessalonians 3:13

First Letter to Timothy

Possibly written from Macedonia c. A.D. 63

**Let no one despise your youth, but be an example to the
believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity.**

1 Timothy 4:12

These words from the Apostle Paul constitute a part of his first Epistle to Timothy, a promising young Elder in the Church, one who had labored much with the Apostle in his work of the ministry. On one occasion Timothy was referred to by the Apostle as “my son Timothy.” This was due no doubt to the fact that it was through St. Paul’s instrumentality that the Truth had reached Timothy. On account of his youth he may not have realized his responsibility. He might have felt that many others in the Church were older than himself and would therefore be better examples to the brethren and better representatives of the Lord before men.

We remember that Timothy was an Elder in the Church, though young in years. Therefore, it was appropriate that St. Paul should impress upon his mind that He should be an example of the believers, an example to all the Church; and such instruction is implied in other parts of the Epistle. But note that the Apostle, in our text, does not say: Be thou an example *to* the believers, but, “Be thou an example *of* the believers.” How different! Being an example *of* believers means that one should show forth not only to his fellow-workers in the Gospel, but especially to the world, what believers stand for—what they believe, what they teach, how they live.

The Apostle’s counsel to Timothy: “Let no man despise thy youth,” should be looked upon as advice not only to Timothy, but to all Elders of the Church who are young in years, that they so conduct themselves as to be examples of the Flock, that their deportment and ability to “rightly divide the Word of Truth” be such that none will have cause to slight the Message they bring, or to think of them as immature and unfit to lead the Flock of God.

Let every child of God, the younger as well as the older, strive to be an example worthy of imitation—an example of earnest, faithful endeavor to copy the Master in his daily life, a pattern of active zeal in the service of our God.

**As I urged you when I went into Macedonia---remain in Ephesus that
you may charge some that they teach no other doctrine, nor give heed to
fables and endless genealogies, which cause disputes rather than
godly edification which is in faith.**

1 Timothy 1:3-4

There were plenty of errors and side issues in their day; but, ignoring them, the Apostles resolutely devoted themselves to the promulgation of the truth. Paul paid no attention to his fleshly genealogy, because he recognized himself as a new creature in Christ Jesus. It was easier for him to prove his fleshly origin as an Israelite than for any of us to do it; but he cared nothing for that. He did not care whether he was of the ten tribes or of the two tribes; for he had on none of the tribal righteousness of the Law. His only ambition was to be found “in Christ, not having on his own righteousness, which is of the Law, but that which is through the faith of Christ—the righteousness which is of God by faith.” (Phil. 3:9.)

**This charge I commit to you, son Timothy, according to the prophecies previously made concerning you, that by them you may wage the good warfare.
1 Timothy 1:18**

We have frequently noticed and called attention to the earnest exhortations and careful instructions given to Timothy by the faithful Apostle Paul. But while these instructions were applicable and profitable to Timothy in his day, they apply with still greater force to the Gospel Church as a whole, of which Timothy was a member, and of which we have reason to believe he was a figure, or representative.

Of this we have evidence in the general character of the epistles addressed to Timothy, which implies either that Timothy, or the class which he represented and of which he formed a part, would be living down into the end of the age. We believe, then, that in the person of Timothy as a representative, the entire Gospel Church is here addressed by Paul, and we notice that the name Timothy signifies — “honor of God.” The church honors God and is to have honor conferred upon her by God. In the present age the honor consists in the fact that so important a “charge” is committed to her trust. And those thus honored in this age, and who prove faithful to the trust, will in the next age be yet more highly exalted and honored.

Three times Paul most solemnly and earnestly repeats this charge. He thanked the Lord that though he had been a blasphemer and persecutor of the church, yet he had obtained mercy, because he did it ignorantly, and verily thought that in so doing he was doing God service, and had been put into the ministry, the glorious gospel of the blessed God being committed to his trust. (1 Tim. 1:11-13.) And now knowing that age was creeping on, and that perils surrounded him on every hand, and before writing the second letter, saying that he was about to be offered, he commits this charge to the faithful ones who must carry on the work after his departure.

The charge was to keep the blessed gospel untarnished and “without spot,” to keep it in its glorious simplicity and purity, unmixed with human theories and false doctrines, which even then the enemies of the cross of Christ were laboring to introduce. The rising errors must be guarded against, first, by maintaining a clear conscience; and secondly, by faithful study of the word of God. To study the Word of God with a clear conscience is to study it with the single and only purpose of knowing and doing God’s will. This, Paul says, some in his day did not do; they had theories and plans of their own, and endeavored to wrest the Scriptures to give their theories seeming support; and thus they made shipwreck of their own faith and turned others out of the way. As the end of the age should approach such false teachers he said were to multiply and gain great influence, and overthrow the faith of all who should not meekly and devoutly walk with God, trusting alone in his faithful word.
R. 5860, R. 5494, R. 3200, R. 1127

**Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, to which you were also called and have confessed the good confession in the presence of many witnesses. I urge you in the sight of God who gives life to all things, and before Christ Jesus who witnessed the good confession before Pontius Pilate, that you keep this commandment without spot, blameless until our Lord Jesus Christ’s appearing.
1 Timothy 6:12-14**



Now the purpose of the commandment is love from a pure heart, from a good conscience, and from sincere faith.

– 1 Timothy 1:5 –

The Apostle speaks here of “the end of the commandment.” The expression seems somewhat obscure. The thought seems to be this: the ultimate purpose of the Law, that which it is designed to produce, is love—to bring us to the place where we shall be in full harmony with the One who made the Law, and who is Himself the embodiment of Love. This will be the final result of God’s Law to all who receive it. He wishes that those who are perfect shall remain perfect, and that those who are imperfect shall see the proper standard for all Jehovah’s creatures to be a just standard, a loving standard; that God is to be obeyed, not from compulsion, but from love for Him and for the principles of righteousness. It is His ultimate purpose that all His intelligent creatures who will be granted eternal life must be perfect, in full harmony with their Creator.

The Apostle proceeds to point out that this love required by God’s Law must be of a certain quality. Godlike love would mean love for God’s Truth, love for His holy Law, love for His creatures. It is an unselfish love, as is the love of God. God has nothing to gain by all He is doing for the Church or purposes to do for the world. He does it out of a pure heart, out of a good, benevolent, loving heart—not to see what He can get out of it. A pure heart is one which has no selfishness in its motives; it has a desire to do good to all, to do evil to none, to see others blessed as well as itself; to love and serve God perfectly, with all its powers. Our Lord commended this condition of heart, saying, “Blessed are the pure in heart; for they shall see God.”

Here the Lord’s promises are helpful, assuring us that he knows our weaknesses and frailties, and the wiles of our great adversary, the devil, and the influence of the spirit of the world, which is contrary to the spirit of love: he tells us that we may go freely to the throne of the heavenly grace, and obtain mercy in respect to our failures to live up to the grand standards which our hearts acknowledge, and seek to conform to; and that we may also find grace to help us in every time of need. And, availing ourselves of these mercies and privileges provided through our great High Priest, we are enabled to fight a good fight against sin, to repulse its attacks upon our hearts, and to drive it off if it shall succeed in invading our flesh. Thus, and thus only, may the Christian keep himself pure in heart, preserving his stand as one of the fighters of the good fight, one of the overcomers of the world and its spirit.

We are, therefore, to have clearly before our minds the fact that the **ultimate object** of all the divine dealings for us and with us, and the ultimate significance of all the divine promises made to us, is the development of love, which is god-likeness, for God is love. And to have this love developed in us, in the sense and to the degree intended by the Lord, it is necessary that it shall come from a **pure** heart, in full accord with the Lord, and his law of love, and wholly antagonistic to the Adversary and his law of selfishness. R. 5756 and R. 2735

For 1 Tim. 1:13, see page 30

For 1 Tim. 1:13-14 see page 4

God, our Savior, desires all men to be saved and to come to 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.

– 1 Timothy 2:3-6 –

His good desires and plan are all centred in Christ; hence he has appointed no other name by which we must be saved, and no other condition than faith in his blood (in his ransom-sacrifice) and obedience to his precepts of righteousness. No man can come unto the Father except by him. He that hath the Son hath life, and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life. —John 14:6.

To this end, the sympathetic love of Jehovah toward all his fallen, disobedient creatures was manifested in the gift of his Son to be our redemption price—even while we were yet sinners. For the same reason, as a part of the same will of Jehovah concerning men, he has arranged to establish his Kingdom on earth, and that his King and representative shall reign to bless men, to bring them to a knowledge of his goodness, his perfection, his hatred of sin and his desire toward all that they might be saved from death and come fully back into harmony with him, and of his provision through Christ for them all to do so.

There is a due time connected with every feature of the Divine arrangement. “In due time God sent forth His Son,” “in due time Christ died for the ungodly,” in due time this favor of God shall be testified to all mankind. That due time has not yet arrived. Hence the testimony thus far has been only to those who have the ears to hear and who have been called according to the Divine purpose to be of the elect Seed class. But so surely as one part of the Divine purpose has been accomplished we may be confident that the other features will be. The Divine Word is sure, “the pleasure of Jehovah shall prosper in His hand.” With the close of this Age, with the completion of the Body of Christ, which is the Church, the great Redeemer will take unto Himself His great power and reign—to subdue everything evil, including the binding of Satan, and to liberate and scatter abroad everything favorable to truth and righteousness, so that the darkness of sin and degradation may all be scattered by the glorious sunlight of Divine grace, truth and power. R. 1781 and SM785

**Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise Him.
He has put Him to grief. When You make His soul an offering for
sin, He shall see His seed, He shall prolong His days, and the
pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in His hand.
Isaiah 53:10**

Let no one despise your youth, but be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity.

– 1 Timothy 4:12 –

The Apostle here exhorts Timothy to be an example of what a true believer should be. He urged him to “flee youthful lusts,” to “stir up the gift of God” which was in him. Timothy was to make a special use of the talents and opportunities which were his. And in so doing he would be a worthy example—not only **to** believers, but **of** believers, so that not only might the Church see his life and general course, but others, those of the world, might also see this, and thus have greater interest in the Lord’s Cause.

This example was not to be the wearing of a particular shape of coat or a particular cut of collar, nor was it in manifesting to the world eccentricities of life and manner—not so. His example was to be in his Christlike character. He was to glorify the Lord in his words—in what he would say, in how he would say it—in wisdom of speech. “Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.” Whoever would be careless in his language would reveal a careless heart. If Timothy had been careless in his words, others might have said, “You see that he thinks that he knows everything. See how he is always intruding himself.” This would be especially unbecoming in one who was young. Thus he would have been despised as an example of believers, and others would be offended rather than helped. Not only in word, but in his entire conversation was he to be an example.

Love would serve the interests of others in spirit; it would come from the heart, from the inward disposition, not be merely in word or in outward conduct. Kindness and good-will would not be feigned from a sense of duty or to appear polite and thoughtful. It would be genuine. The spirit in which a thing is said or done has a great deal to do with its effect upon others. One who had wounded another might say, “There was not a word in what I said to which you could object.” Ah, well! but it was the spirit in which it was said or done—the animus of it. This is an important matter to all the Lord’s people. We are to remember the spirit of the Master—the spirit of consideration, of self-sacrifice, of righteousness, of love.

In faith, also, Timothy was to be an example to all with whom he came in contact. Of course the Apostle would mean here his manifestation of faith. One must have faith before he can manifest it. We have known Christians who, if they have a doubt about a certain feature of Truth or a weakness of faith, would discuss their doubts in the presence of those who were weak in the faith or who were of the world. This is a great mistake and productive of much harm. One never knows when a weak one may be present who might be greatly injured by words of doubt or distrust. Whoever is troubled by such doubts should go promptly to the Lord for help, that his faith may be firmly established; he should not discuss his doubts and fears with others unless as mentioned above, with the One who alone can help him. The Lord’s people should not boast of how much faith they have—not so—but we should manifest our faith to others, our confidence in the Lord, by our peace under trial and difficulty. We should not merely say that we have faith, but should manifest it in our lives.

Timothy was counseled to be an example in purity. “Be ye clean that bear the vessels of the Lord.” (Isaiah 52:11.) As the typical priests and Levites were instructed to wash and keep themselves continually clean, so the people of the Lord today, the spiritual Priests, the spiritual Levites, should be pure, clean, in word, in action, in thought. Whoever is not pure in his thoughts is very apt to be impure, unclean, in his actions, his words. Out of the heart proceeds the impurity. One person of impure mind might poison the minds of many.

Impurity may be given a broad or a narrow view, as circumstances may indicate. In the broad sense, it would be uncleanness, dishonesty, insincerity, in general. But in every sense St. Paul would have

Timothy be a worthy example, so that all who took note of him would see how they ought to deport themselves. The Apostle expressed the same desire concerning Timothy that he expressed concerning all the Church—that he walk as the Apostle himself walked, that he be as self-sacrificing as he saw St. Paul to be. This was not a Pharisaical attitude—“I am holier than thou.” But the Apostle demonstrated those principles of righteousness in the life that he lived, and he wished that Timothy should do the same.

Let every child of God, the younger as well as the older, strive to be an example worthy of imitation—an example of earnest, faithful endeavor to copy the Master in his daily life, a pattern of active zeal in the service of our God. The Apostle Paul urged, “Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ.” (1 Corinthians 11:1.) St. Paul was a noble example of earnest endeavor to attain the perfect likeness of Christ, and his love, his zeal, his intense earnestness in striving to copy the Master and to accomplish His will should be an inspiration to us all. R. 5860 and R. 5493

Now godliness with contentment is great gain. **– 1 Timothy 6:6 –**

Discontent is the general malady of the world today. Selfishness is harassing the vitals of society, in its every class. The rich are generally grasping for more millions; the comfortably fixed are anxious to be wealthy; the poor are grasping for “rights” and for “hours” and for “more pay.” All are having beginnings of trouble already in the strikes, lockouts, etc., and all are finally coming to see that the Peace! Peace! cry is a delusion, and that more trouble instead of less lies ahead of them. Every day seems to spring some new complication.

The only safe place for God’s children is as far as possible out of all the strife. Remember the statement of the Bible, “**Godliness with contentment** is great gain,” and lay in a large stock of both. These two qualities will serve to separate you and your aims from the worldly and their aims, ambitions and greeds. Rather be willing to earn a humbler living with godliness and contentment and the great gain of peace of heart, communion with the Lord and some more time to spend in his service, doing good unto all as you have opportunity—especially to the household of faith.

A very few scattered here and there understand the real situation. These are God’s holy ones, his special friends. He has revealed to them the real situation through his Word. They know what others are ignorant of, that the blessings now beginning are but a foretaste of greater ones yet to come, and long promised by Jehovah “by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began.” (Acts 3:19-21.) These strive not so anxiously as the others for their full rights and full share of present blessings. They thankfully take what comes, acknowledging that every good and perfect gift comes from their Heavenly Father. And what they do get, even in the present time, thus affords them more pleasure than the greater number of comforts does to others. “The little that a righteous man hath is better than the riches of many wicked.” (Psa. 37:16.) Even their faces distinguish them from others. Whatever their condition, whether sickness or health, whether very poor or in comfortable circumstances, these have peace within and realize that godliness with contentment is a great gain. Theirs is indeed a peace that the world can neither give nor take away. (John 14:27.)

R. 1243 and R. 1245

For 1 Tim. 6:9-10 see page 354

But you, O man of God, flee these things and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, gentleness. Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, to which you were also called and have confessed the good confession in the presence of many witnesses.

– 1 Timothy 6:11-12 –

As the eyes of our understanding get opened, wider and wider, we see the great conflict that is progressing throughout the world between righteousness and sin, between our Lord and the god of this world and his blinded representatives, who ignorantly think that they are doing God service and are often found fighting against the truth and against the true soldiers of the Cross, their brethren, even as in the case of Paul. We remember how he, as Saul of Tarsus, persecuted the Church, mistakenly misusing his combativeness in a wrong way. In Paul's case we see how that as soon as the eyes of his understanding were opened he became a most valiant soldier of the cross, hesitating not to lay down his life in the service of the Lord and the brethren, who once he had ignorantly opposed. It was the same combativeness which made Paul a violent persecutor that subsequently made him the most valiant of the apostles in the defence of the truth.

But who are these fighters, referred to in our text, whom the Apostle Paul calls upon to fight a good fight? Does he call upon all men? or upon sinners? or upon merely nominal Christians? We answer, No; he addressed only the brigade of the "King's Own"—the body of Christ, the consecrated Church. The Apostle addresses these as the mouthpiece of our Captain of salvation, Christ Jesus, and it would be wholly out of order for a general or captain to issue orders to those who had not joined his army, and did not recognize his authority. Hence it is evident that the world in general is not addressed, and that nominal Christians who have never made a covenant with the Lord are not addressed. "The Lord knoweth them that are his." It is to these that the instructions come respecting the fight that is now on—that has been in progress since the Captain of our salvation began the war nearly nineteen centuries ago.

Our good fight of faith, as the Apostle explains, consists in a considerable measure in our defense of the Word of God, which includes also our defence of the character of God. This will mean our willingness to stand for the Truth at any cost and against any number of assailants—against the creeds and theories of men, which would misrepresent the good tidings of great joy which the Lord and the Apostles have announced, and which shall, thank God, yet be unto all people.

But we have already noticed that the soldier is the New Creature and not the flesh, that the enlistment was a surrender of the fleshly will and the acceptance of the headship or captaincy of the Redeemer. From that moment of full surrender to the Captain, enlistment under his orders and in the service of righteousness, the New Creature has experienced a conflict with its mortal body and its weaknesses, passions and tendencies for sin. The new will cannot free itself from the fleshly body, and although the reward promised by the Captain is a new body, perfect and in full harmony with himself and with righteousness, nevertheless the new will is required to demonstrate its loyalty to the Captain and to righteousness by its faithful combat with the flesh—with the desires and propensities of its own mortal body. Here is the great and continual battle.

Let us then as New Creatures be encouraged with every better understanding of the Captain's word and will respecting us, full of confidence in his wisdom and in his grace—that he is willing and able to bring us off conquerors in the full sense if we are obedient to him. Let us strive that we may be able to say with the Apostle at the close of our experiences, "I have fought the good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness which the Lord, the righteous Judge shall give me at that day."—2 Tim. 4:7,8. R. 2878, R. 2310, R. 3274

I urge you in the sight of God who gives life to all things, and before Christ Jesus who witnessed the good confession before Pontius Pilate, that you keep this commandment without spot, blameless until our Lord Jesus Christ's appearing.

– 1 Timothy 6:13-14 –

Three times Paul most solemnly and earnestly repeats this charge. He thanked the Lord that though he had been a blasphemer and persecutor of the church, yet he had obtained mercy, because he did it ignorantly, and verily thought that in so doing he was doing God service, and had been put into the ministry, the glorious gospel of the blessed God being committed to his trust. (1 Tim. 1:11-13.) And now knowing that age was creeping on, and that perils surrounded him on every hand, and before writing the second letter, saying that he was about to be offered, he commits this charge to the faithful ones who must carry on the work after his departure.

The charge was to keep the blessed gospel untarnished and “without spot,” to keep it in its glorious simplicity and purity, unmixed with human theories and] false doctrines, which even then the enemies of the cross of Christ were laboring to introduce. The rising errors must be guarded against, first, by maintaining a clear conscience; and secondly, by faithful study of the word of God. To study the Word of God with a clear conscience is to study it with the single and only purpose of knowing and doing God's will. This, Paul says, some in his day did not do; they had theories and plans of their own, and endeavored to wrest the Scriptures to give their theories seeming support; and thus they made shipwreck of their own faith and turned others out of the way. As the end of the age should approach such false teachers he said were to multiply and gain great influence, and overthrow the faith of all who should not meekly and devoutly walk with God, trusting alone in his faithful word.

Next to guarding ourselves thus—and those who thus do so have the power of God pledged to keep them from falling—is the charge to help others to stand: to help them by **earnestly contending** for the faith; by pointing out the snares of the adversaries of the truth, and by calling attention boldly and fearlessly to every pitfall and placing the light of truth over it.

To preach this “glorious gospel of the blessed God,” to present it in its purity and grandeur, to contend against the errors which friends and enemies seek to engraft upon it, is the charge given to and the duty devolving upon the church in the present time—the charge which we must keep and labor to sustain **until the appearing** (manifestation, or bright-shining) **of our Lord Jesus Christ**. Before the brightness and glory of his presence the darkness of ignorance and error shall flee away, and no hiding place shall be found for them; for the knowledge of the Lord shall fill the earth as the waters cover the sea, when his presence is fully revealed to all. R. 1127

Which He will manifest in His own time, He who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords, who alone has immortality,* dwelling in unapproachable light, whom no man has seen or can see, to whom be honor and everlasting power. Amen.

1 Timothy 6:15-16

* To apply this scripture to the Son seems to fit every condition perfectly, and by no means ignores the Father, Jehovah -- nor proves that our Lord Jesus is the Father, Jehovah -- for we are in all such cases to remember the invariable rule laid down by the inspired Apostle -- namely, that in comparisons, honors, etc., mentioned respecting the Son, the Father is always excepted as being inexpressibly above all comparisons. [1 Cor. 15:27] The correctness of this application is further attested by our Lord's own application to himself of the same titles. --See Rev. 17:14 and 19:16. E79 and R. 2747

Command those who are rich in this present age not to be haughty, nor to trust in uncertain riches but in the living God, who gives us richly all things to enjoy. Let them do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to give, willing to share, storing up for themselves a good foundation for the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.

– 1 Timothy 6:17-19 –

These words of the Apostle never were more in season than now. Those trusting in the uncertainty of riches need to arouse themselves. They need to learn the lesson that the pleasure they seek lies not in the direction of their indulgence of self, but rather in self-sacrifice—in the service of others. Indeed this is the great lesson for all to learn—both rich and poor. While millions are seeking for joy, pleasure, only a remarkably few have found them. Those few are God's saintly people—whether Catholics or Protestants.

The secret of their success in finding what others are still seeking for lies in the fact that they have been Heaven-directed, and that they have followed the guidance of God's Word. And the more fully they have heeded His instructions, the greater has been their blessing. God's Message to all is, Seek first God's righteousness, God's will, the Divine Rule or Kingdom. R. 5243

The bulk of the world's wealth is in the hands of the few. The inordinately rich are in great danger of injuring themselves. Some of these cannot devise ways and means by which to consume even their incomes. Luxuries of every kind are tasted in the hope of finding rest, happiness, joy, peace. Not finding these, mankind still pursue them, seeking new avenues to happiness. Wealth brings increased opportunity for sin in its various forms, including debauchery.

The influence upon the poor is notable. The latter, seeking pleasure, imagine erroneously that the rich and indolent are finding it, while they themselves are seeking in vain. Thus the poorer, surrounded by the wonderful blessings of our day, are often miserable, because their minds are discontented. They want happiness, joy, pleasure, and believe they can obtain these only through wealth. The result is that their hearts are filling with anger and malice, and jealousy of the rich. The way is thus paved for most evil and atrocious conditions. R. 5243

Those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.

1 Timothy 6:9-10

O Timothy! Guard what was committed to your trust, avoiding the profane and idle babblings and contradictions of what is falsely called knowledge---by professing it some have strayed concerning the faith.

– 1 Timothy 6:20-21 –

In the parable of the Wheat and the Tares, Jesus showed how after the Apostles had fallen asleep the great Adversary, Satan, would come and sow “tare” seed in God’s wheat-field, the Church. This tare seed would spring up and bring forth “tares,” imitation “wheat,” who would associate with the true Church and count themselves as of the Elect. This evil seed which Satan sowed in the wheat-field was largely the Greek philosophies. Prior to this time, when the persecutions of Nero and, later, Diocletian, Roman emperors, came upon the growing Church, there was a faithful company of disciples, which had held firmly to the Truth and were loyal to Christ; and they endured much hardness, many of them even unto death by violence.

Later came prosperity and freedom from persecution, and this proved the downfall of many. The Church attracted the attention of the Greek philosophers. They said, “You Christians teach much that is good. Your teacher Jesus was a great man, a great philosopher. But we also have great philosophers and teachers. We would like to come in with you, but in order to do that we must all be broad-minded; none of us must be narrow. We must each be able to see the great truths of the others. Socrates and Plato and others of our great teachers taught the doctrine of a future life long before Jesus was born.” So the Christians thought it would be fine if all the Gentiles could be united in religion. Thus the majority gradually worked in with the Greek philosophers and fraternized with them. Numbers of the adherents of paganism made a profession of Christianity—these all joining some of their heathen philosophies and theories with Christianity.

Why has God permitted these appalling conditions, is it asked by some? Why did He allow His wheat-field to become so overrun with tares? Our Lord knew that these conditions would later develop, as is shown in this parable of the Wheat and Tares. It was God’s purpose to permit this experience as a great lesson to the Church, to angels, and eventually to the whole world. These errors were to be permitted to be introduced, to grow and bring forth their bitter fruitage, and thus to manifest the terrible effects of error, unholy ambition and sin. It had the effect, too, of developing and separating in spirit the true saints of God from the great mass of tares. Both were to grow together in the Babylonian System, however, until the Harvest time. Then would come the entire separation of the two classes.

We can see that God has had a purpose in permitting the evil conditions which have prevailed—a purpose for the Church and for the world and for all His created intelligences, even those yet to be created. We hope and believe that when God makes the matter fully plain all will see that His ways are just and righteous altogether. We are waiting for Him fully to demonstrate His character in due time; and this time, we believe, is now very near at hand. R. 5910



Second Letter to Timothy

Written from a Roman prison c. A.D. 66

Paul wrote these his dying words to Timothy whom he dearly loved, and frequently refers to as his son. He was in prison in the city of Rome, and is supposed to have been sixty-three years of age at this time. His imprisonment in Rome referred to in a previous lesson, when he was permitted to live in “his own hired house,” had terminated by his being released from custody; and it is supposed that during the period of his release, about three years, he revisited some of the Churches previously established and also carried the gospel into Spain.

It was during this interim of his freedom that the great persecution arose in Rome under Nero. That brutal Emperor is supposed to have caused the city of Rome to be set on fire that he might witness a great conflagration from the tower of his palace, or possibly with a view to having it rebuilt in a more modern style a monument to himself. But the losses occasioned by this fire, which could not be gotten under control for six days, and which laid a large portion of the city in ashes, stirred up so great a commotion amongst the people, so aroused their anger, that he thought it discreet to let the blame be laid at the door of Christianity; —the charge being that the Christians were the incendiaries and responsible for the great destruction wrought. Following out this line of policy, Nero began a terrible persecution of Christians, thus directing the suspicion of the people away from himself and against those who had taken the name of Christ: who were unpopular anyway with the wicked and the idolatrous. Multitudes were slain with the sword, exposed in the amphitheaters to be torn by wild beasts, or covered with the skins of wild beasts to be torn to pieces by dogs, while some were wrapped in sheets covered with pitch and tied to stakes and set on fire as torches, to illuminate Nero’s garden.

This persecution commenced shortly after Paul’s release from his first imprisonment in Rome; and the spirit of bitter persecution thus aroused was still hot, when, three years later, he was again arrested.

**At my first defense no one stood with me, but all forsook me.
May it not be charged against them. But the Lord stood with me and
strengthened me, so that the message might be preached fully through
me, and that all the Gentiles might hear. Also I was delivered out of the mouth of
the lion. And the Lord will deliver me from every evil work and preserve me for
His heavenly kingdom. To Him be glory forever and ever. Amen!**

2 Timothy 4:16-18

This time, as he explains in chapter 4, it would appear that he had a public examination, possibly before Nero himself; but the fear of the people was so great, and quite probably the Apostle’s language so bold, that he was forsaken of all, as was his Master when before Pilate. He tells us nevertheless, that he had with him the Lord’s presence, which strengthened him to such an extent that he spoke the Word with a boldness which permitted the gospel to be fully known to the Gentiles thereabouts. He evidently was more anxious to make known the “good tidings” than to preserve himself from pain and death. He was a true and noble soldier of the cross—a close follower in the footsteps of our great Chief Captain, Christ Jesus.

Paul's prison was a very uncomfortable place we may be sure. We visited the place which tradition points out in the city of Rome as being the place of his incarceration. It is a dungeon below the surface, dark, damp and extremely forbidding. But notwithstanding all this the reader must be struck with the tone of triumph which pervades the Apostle's writings from there. What else than the power of God could so sustain an able and cultured man under the various trials and vicissitudes through which he passed, including this his last imprisonment and his final execution, which followed shortly after the writing of this epistle to Timothy? He was spared from crucifixion by reason of being a Roman citizen, and instead he was beheaded, says tradition. R. 2229

For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain.

Philippians 1:21

St. Paul perceived that the "great falling away" mentioned in his other Epistles and by the Lord might be expected to come in speedily after his death. The mission of the Gospel was not the conversion of the world, but to call out from the world the Church to be glorified with the Redeemer at his appearing and Kingdom. It might be necessary for Timothy to reprove, rebuke and exhort, but if so, all should be done patiently and with instruction, explanation, doctrine. Faithfulness was enjoined in view of the fact that the time was nearing when "*sound doctrine*" would not be appreciated, nor even be endured by the Church.

His fight, as the Apostle explains elsewhere, was not with carnal weapons. He, the New Creature, fought with and gained the victory over his mortal body, bringing it more and more into subjection to his new mind. Recognizing Satan as "the Prince of this world [age]" and the fallen angels as his assistants, he perceived and taught that these had much to do with the iniquity prevailing in the world—that they deceived mankind into false doctrines and evil practices. He blamed not men so much as the ignorance and blindness by which Satan deluded them. "In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ should shine into their hearts." (2 Cor. 4:4.) Recognizing the spirit of error as the spirit of the world, he resisted in himself and sought to assist all of the brethren to similarly fight a good fight against every pernicious influence, doctrine and practice. R. 4527



1 Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, according to the promise of life which is in Christ Jesus.

2 To Timothy, a beloved son: Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.

3 I thank God, whom I serve with a pure conscience, as my forefathers did, as without ceasing I remember you in my prayers night and day,

4 greatly desiring to see you, being mindful of your tears, that I may be filled with joy,

5 when I call to remembrance the genuine faith that is in you, which dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice, and I am persuaded is in you also.

– 2 Timothy 1:1-5 –

These words were addressed to Timothy, when the Apostle Paul was an old man, a prisoner in Rome, because of his testimony for the Lord. Nor was Timothy a child in years at the time this epistle was addressed to him. Timothy's mother and himself were converts to the gospel of Christ presumably at the time of Paul's visit to their home at Lystra during his first missionary tour. It is presumed that at the time of his receipt of this letter Timothy must have been about forty years of age. Tradition has it that he was about sixteen years old at the time of his own and his mother's conversion to the gospel. When he was about twenty-one years of age, he with Silas accompanied the Apostle Paul on his second tour through Asia Minor, and from that time on for some sixteen years he was closely identified with the Apostle in his service of the truth, until left by the Apostle with the Church at Ephesus, that he might help them over some difficulties into which they had fallen. It was while Timothy was thus serving the Church at Ephesus that he received the two epistles which bear his name.

Paul introduces himself not by calling attention to his personal qualities as a logician, nor by boasting of any service which he had performed as the Lord's servant and minister of the truth; but, properly, by reminding Timothy of his apostleship (one of the twelve, taking Judas' place) specially commissioned by the Lord to introduce his gospel, and specially prepared for the work by being made a witness of the Lord's resurrection, having been granted a glimpse of his glorious person on his way to Damascus and commissioned to declare the conditions for the fulfilment to men of God's promise of life, provided in Christ Jesus.

Although the Apostle had no natural children of his own, his tender address to Timothy as his "dearly beloved son," and his invocation upon him of a divine blessing, shows that he lacked none of those fine, noble and endearing sentiments, which belong to a true parent. Indeed, the very fact that he had no natural children seems to have broadened the Apostle's sentiments to such an extent that figuratively he took into his affections, as his own children, all who accepted the gospel. We remember that he frequently used this figure of speech, "Although ye have many teachers, ye have not many fathers in the gospel" — "I have begotten you in my bonds." On another occasion he represents his efforts for a development of a fully consecrated Christian life amongst the believers under the figure of a mother travailing for her children. This being true of the Apostle's general sentiment toward the household of faith, it would be much more true in the case of Timothy who had so nobly and truly filled the part of a son to him.

Incidentally the Apostle here points out the purity of his conscience toward God, before his eyes were opened to a recognition of the Lord Jesus, while making mention to Timothy that he prayed

day and night with great desire to see him, and a remembrance of Timothy's tears, when they parted company at Ephesus in the interest of the truth. It was not according to the personal preferences of either that they had separated, but both had sunk personal convenience and preference in the interest of the Lord's cause.

We note with appreciation the Apostle's care over this younger brother in the truth, in whom he sees such great promise of present and future service. He realizes, perhaps better than Timothy does, the snares of the adversary, by which one placed in so prominent a position is likely to be assailed. Would he become heady and high minded? —Would he lose his faith in the cross of Christ? —Would he fall into the snare of some of the philosophies, falsely so-called? —Would he become vainly puffed up by a fleshly mind, and get to feeling himself to be a "somebody?" —Or, would he, on the contrary, be a faithful soldier of the cross, meek, humble, gentle toward all, an example both in faith and practice to those with whom he came in contact? And withal, would he hold fast to the Scriptures and be apt to teach others to look to this divine source of information? He remembered that heretofore Timothy had been so close to himself in the work that he had been measurably shielded from many trials to which he would now be exposed; and yet, no doubt he realized that, if Timothy would be prepared to take the work of a general minister, which Paul the prisoner and growing old must shortly lay aside, it was time that he was learning how to stand, complete in the strength which God supplies through his Word, without leaning so particularly, as heretofore, upon any earthly prop.

These reflections no doubt had much to do with the Apostle's prayers for Timothy "night and day;" and he now writes with a view to strengthening him along these lines, reminding him of the genuine faith and piety which he had inherited both from his mother and his grandmother, and assuring him that he believed that this had laid a deep foundation of true piety and faith in Timothy's own heart. We pause here to notice the fact everywhere kept prominent in the Scriptures that according to the divine arrangement not only are the sins of the parents visited upon the children for several generations, but also that the faith and godliness of the parents, when rightly based on the Word of God and the true promises of that Word, lay the foundation of character in their children, upon which there is the greater hope that a life of godliness and usefulness may be built.

**Therefore I remind you to stir up the gift of God which is in
you through the laying on of my hands.
2 Timothy 1:6**

Not only does the Apostle strengthen Timothy's mind by a remembrance of the goodly heritage of faith and piety received from his mother and grandmother, but in addition he reminds him of the grace of God specially conferred upon him (Timothy) at that certain time when he made a full consecration of himself to the Lord, to be God's servant; when the Apostle, exercising his power as an Apostle, and as was common in those days, communicated to Timothy by supernatural power an outward gift or token of the holy spirit, through the laying on of his hands. The Apostle had evidently either heard or surmised that Timothy was allowing the fervor of his zeal for God to die out, and hence here he urges him to "stir up the gift of God which is in thee." The Greek word here rendered "stir up" has the significance of **re-enkindle**: as though the Apostle said, Reenkindle your gift by renewed energy. R. 2165

For 2 Tim. 1:3-5 see page 106

For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.

– 2 Timothy 1:7 –

The Apostle thought that Timothy was in danger of being overcome by fear, so as to allow his zeal to abate. And hence he reminds him that the spirit of the Lord imparted to his people is not a spirit of fear, but on the contrary a spirit of power, energy, zeal awakened by love; —loving devotion to God, and a desire to please and serve him; loving devotion to the truth, and a loving devotion to God's people and a desire to build them up in holy things, and to do good unto all men as we have opportunity. And yet, lest Timothy should get the thought that the spirit of God led only to a zeal or energy—that might at times be unwise in its exercise and do more harm than good,—the Apostle adds that the spirit of God which he bestows upon those who are begotten as his sons is a spirit of a “sound mind;” —a mind that is fortified and strengthened by the Word of the Lord on every subject, and hence, while thoroughly fearless of man, is wise in judging of times, seasons and methods for using the energy of love which burns as a fire within the consecrated heart. O that all of God's children might appreciate, and more and more obtain, the spirit of a sound mind, by which all of their talents might be used, not only fearlessly but wisely, in the Master's service. R. 2166

There is a proper fear or reverence and disinclination to offend our heavenly Father and our Redeemer, which we wish never to lose. Perfect love will not cast out this fear, but rather intensify it. The fear which love casts out is timidity, a servile fear or dread of the Lord or of Satan, or the fallen angels, or of men and what they might do unto us. Perfect love cannot be attained without knowledge, faith, courage and overcoming. It is the result of the exercise of all this divine arrangement that brings us nearer to God and makes us truly thankful and appreciative of his gracious purposes and omnipotent power for their accomplishment.

The spirit of courage needs special cultivation by the Lord's people. And this cultivation means growth in all the graces. For instance, if calamity befall us or threaten us we should immediately think of the fact that our Lord assures us that an insignificant sparrow cannot fall to the ground without the Father's notice and that we are of much more value than many sparrows. This thought at once strengthens the heart, nerves the arm, quickens the pulse of endeavor, provided we can realize that God is for us, that no earthborn cloud intervenes between our souls and the love for us which he has declared. If a cloud does obscure the Father's love we must the more earnestly, the more persistently get from behind it by getting our hearts right with the Lord, by going to him in prayer, by confessing our trespasses and by requesting mercy and grace to help and to restore us to his favor.

“Be of good courage and he shall strengthen thine heart,” is one of the blessings assured us in his Word. In the divine order courage is necessary in order to strength and victory. Some one has said, “One with God is the majority.” With the courage to grasp this thought and to hold it things almost superhuman seem possible to the Lord's people, while without this courage they may naturally be weak and easily vanquished. R. 4379

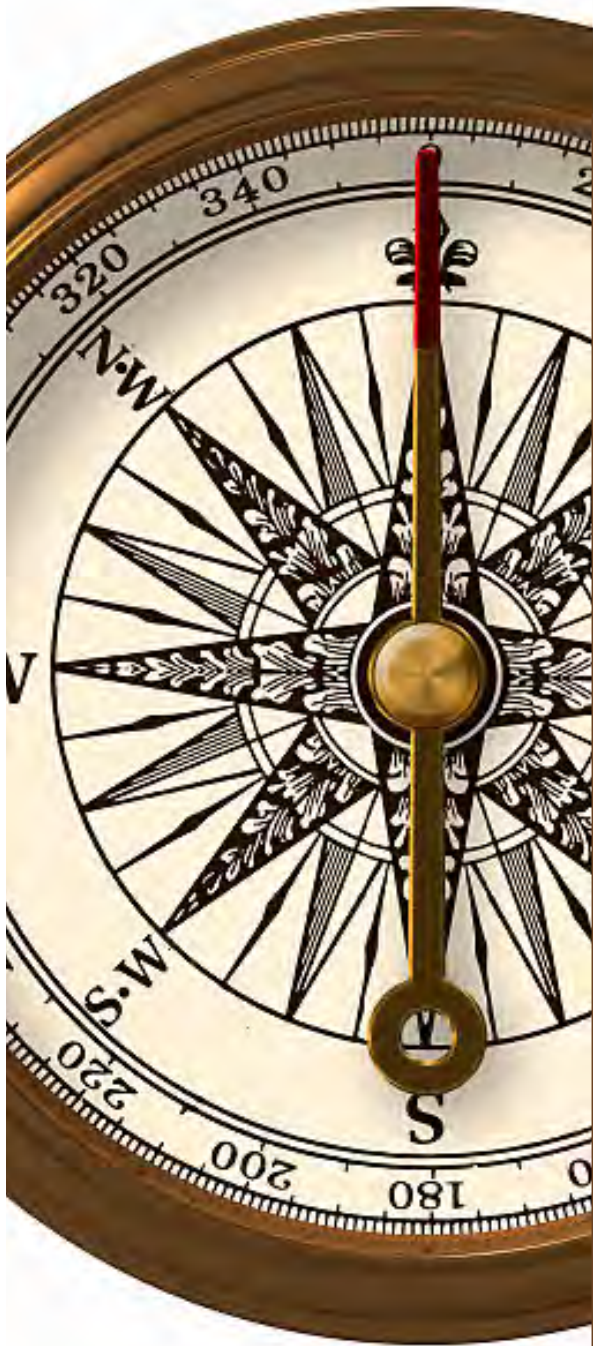
A Word on Fear

Individually considered, one of the most serious foes of those who have been begotten to holiness of spirit through the divine counsels and promises, is the evil **spirit of fear**. It would persuade us that probably there is some mistake: either that God did not inspire the exceeding great and precious promises, or that they are not for us, or that for some reason we can never attain them. All of God's people are liable to attack from this wrong spirit of doubt and fear—some more and some less persistently; and all have need to fight down this evil spirit courageously and to destroy it, lest it kill the fruits of the holy Spirit and finally quench it—drive it out of us entirely.

Yet “the spirit of fear” is neither a spirit god nor a spirit devil that has gotten into our hearts: it is simply a mental influence natural to every fallen human being of humble mind. It is begotten of the realization of personal imperfection and unworthiness of divine favors. The antidote for this spirit of fear is the holy Spirit of Truth, and its instructions accepted and held in full assurance of faith. The Spirit of Truth tells us that there were good reasons for our entertainment of the spirit of fear; but that those reasons no longer exist since we have come into Christ as new creatures. It points us away from our unintentional weakness to the great Atonement accomplished by our Lord Jesus, and cites us to the words of the inspired Apostle:

“If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up [to death] for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things [needful]? Who shall lay anything to the charge of those whom God chooses? It is God that justifieth. Who could condemn these? It is Christ that died [paying their penalty—making good all their deficiencies], yea, rather that [glorified and highly exalted Christ who] is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.” Rom. 8:31-34 If the “Spirit of faith,” one of the phases or operations of the “Spirit of holiness,” the “Spirit of the Truth,” thus comes forward and is accepted and supported by the new creature, the victory over the spirit of fear is speedily won, and peace and joy in the holy Spirit of faith and love and confidence in God results. Nevertheless, these battles must be fought time and again in every Christian's experience. And, indeed, the “spirit of fear” may be made a valuable **servant** of the new creature, while it cannot be tolerated as a master, nor as a friend and a resident of the heart. Make it the watchdog, and kennel it just outside the door of the heart, and it may serve a very useful purpose in calling attention to thieves and robbers who approach stealthily to rob us of our treasures of holiness, joy, peace, love and fellowship with our Father and with the brethren. As the Apostle urges, “let us fear” attacks from without after we have gotten all right with God by casting out all opposing influences and receiving his Spirit into our hearts. Let us fear lest as those who are ready to go forth with the Bridegroom in the early morning any of us should be overcome with a spirit of slothfulness, a spirit of carelessness, a spirit of slumber, and so, like the “foolish virgins,” be unprepared for the great event— “the marriage” —for which all our preparations have been made.

Let us remember, then, that however useful as a servant, the spirit of fear is not of God, and must never be admitted within the castle of the Christian heart, which must be fully given over to the occupancy of the various members of the holy Spirit family—love, joy, peace, etc., for perfect love casteth out fear as well as all the members of the unholy spirit family—anger, malice, hatred, jealousy, fear, discontent, pride, worldly ambitions, etc. The Apostle declares— “God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but the Spirit of superhuman strength, and of love, and of a sound mind.” 2 Tim. 1:7 E196-197



THE LORD OUR PORTION

No longer with divided heart
We seek, O Lord, the throne of grace:
With everything we gladly part
That hides from us Thy loving face.

No longer in the dust we grope,
In search of earthly treasures vain;
We lift our heads in faith and hope,
Desiring only Thee to gain.

In doing all Thy love demands
An all-absorbing joy we find;
We grasp the plough with both our hands,
And cast no longing look behind.

From worldly aims and wishes free,
We fix our gaze upon the goal;
Our aspirations flow to Thee,
As turns the magnet to the pole.

Thy love, dear Lord, has swept away
The last obscuring shades of night,
And now we pray that day by day
Our feet may travel **in the light**.

W. H. Pepworth

Those who have come into touch with God and with His Truth will be so attracted by the Truth that it will be like the needle attracted to the pole. God is the great Pole. Those really drawn to Him will be difficult to swerve. Although a magnetic needle may be temporarily diverted from the pole, yet it will surely swing back and point in the right direction. And so it is with God's true people. They have an affinity for the Truth, they are influenced by it, magnetized by it, drawn. R. 5800

Who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began, but has now been revealed by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ, who has abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.

– 2 Timothy 1:9-10 –

The first feature of this Plan began to be manifested when our Lord Jesus came into the world. So the Scriptures say that Christ “brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel.” What **good tidings** did He bring? Blessings for all of humanity who would seek Him in honesty and earnestness of heart! He brought the **good tidings** that all who would manifest their love for Him should have eternal life; and that a special class, who would manifest special love for the Lord, might become heirs of God and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ His Son. “So great salvation began to be spoken by our Lord.” —2 Tim. 1:10; Heb. 2:3.

God’s purpose was to make a “new creation,” of his own nature—the divine nature—of which new creation his Beloved Son, our Lord, was to be the chief or head, next to himself. God’s purpose was that this new order of beings should be selected from among the human order; not that the human family had specially pleased God in works, or in any other manner had merited this honorable preference; but of his favor he purposed it so. And it is in the carrying out of this purpose that our Lord Jesus has already been manifested, and that by his obedience he has not only secured to himself the Father’s favor and his own exaltation to the divine nature and glory and honor, but by the same act of obedience, even unto death, he has opened the way to two things; viz., **life** and **immortality**. **Life**, everlasting life, is opened up to the world in general; and each member of the race may secure it by conformity to the terms of the New Covenant: and **immortality** is brought to light for the special class, the foreordained Church, which, according to God’s purpose and wonderful favor, is now being called, and tested, and selected, for participation in the divine nature and association in the divine plan, as heirs of God and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ, their Lord and Redeemer.

R. 5275 and R. 1642

Not until Jesus came was the way of life opened up, made manifest. “He [Christ] hath brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel.” The essence of the Gospel was never even declared, much less known, before Jesus came. The Apostle Paul says that this salvation “at the first *began* to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard Him.” (Hebrews 2:3.) Our Lord *began* to speak it; but the secret of the Gospel, its *Mystery*, was not fully revealed until after Pentecost. It was not until after Jesus was begotten of the Holy Spirit that He Himself began to comprehend it clearly—not until then did He begin to set before us the way of life and immortality. And even then His words were parabolic, and it was not until His followers were begotten of the Holy Spirit that they were able to enter into “the deep things of God.” R. 5507

You therefore must endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. – 2 Timothy 2:3 –

Before taking His power and exercising it in the overthrow of Satan and Sin, Jesus, according to the Father's will, began the selection of a Church class, variously styled members of His Body, His Bride, His companions and brethren in the Kingdom, His Royal Priesthood, under Himself as the great Royal High Priest. These were informed at the very beginning that it would be necessary for them to fight a good fight. They were invited to enlist in the army to battle against Satan, and instructed that they should have full confidence that ultimately faith would have its victory. They were also told that they must suffer, laying down their lives as their Head and Forerunner laid down His life—not living for the world, but contrariwise, accepting His arrangement and living altogether for the purpose of carrying out their consecration with Him.

The final honor to which God has invited them is to a share in His great Kingdom, with His Son. This implies a change of nature to all who have become soldiers of the Cross, followers of the Lamb; for “flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God.” These are called to forego the rights and privileges of the present time, and by their lives to leave their mark, for a testimony to the world, for the benefit of mankind, and especially for the glory of God and for the calling out of others who might desire similarly to walk in the narrow way.

The warfare that these are called upon to wage is a warfare against sin and the powers of darkness. (Eph. 6:11.) They are pledged to the Lord for right, for truth, for goodness. They are thus to fight the good fight. These soldiers will find, too, that some of their greatest difficulties are right in their own person.



There are many illustrations used in the Bible, and all of them very forceful. The one which represents the Christian as a soldier, has a great deal of meaning.

*See also Eph. 6:11-17 on p.
See also 1 Tim. 6:11-12 on p.*

The New Creature is obliged to fight against and to control the flesh. This is a great battle which each fights for himself. Each soldier may more or less assist and set an example to the other soldiers, but the chief battle is with **himself**. It is a **hand-to-hand** conflict. Although he is expected at all times to be on the alert against the wiles of Satan and the world, yet his special fight is with the enemies in his own flesh. St. Paul himself had taken the shield of faith—wherewith to quench the fiery darts of the wicked—and the helmet of salvation, and the Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God. Timothy was a young soldier, and the Apostle was encouraging him with advice. He had already come into the Lord's company, under the Lord's standard.
R. 5404

Onward, Christian Soldiers!

This is a faithful saying: For if we died with Him, we shall also live with Him. If we endure, we shall also reign with Him.

– 2 Timothy 2:11-12 –

Putting ourselves exactly in the place of the apostles, we are much better prepared to understand the meaning of the Master's words,

If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.

Matthew 16:24

The Apostle Paul points us to the same thought, saying that it is only if we suffer with him that we shall reign with him; if we be dead with him, that we shall live with him. The reference is exclusively to those on the "narrow way," and does not at all refer to the world of mankind. The verses following, a part of the same discourse, declare that whosoever would save his life shall lose it, and whosoever shall lose his life for the Lord's sake shall find it; this also is exclusively applicable to those who had had their eyes opened, and had become his followers, and is not at all applicable to others.

All who become Jesus' followers first take two steps, viz., justification and consecration, or sanctification. Justification is imputed to them as the result of faith in Christ as their Redeemer, and its object is to place fallen sinful human beings on such a reckonedly perfect plane or standing before God as would permit them to present their bodies living sacrifices, "holy and acceptable to God" through Christ. Consecration, self-surrender, sanctification, called in our text self-denial, consists in the giving up of our wills to the will of the Lord: and our wills controlling this implies our all.

This class, having received their share of the ransom, (justification) and having used it exchanging its hopes of restitution for the heavenly hopes, "heavenly calling," spiritual prosperity and prospective joint-heirship with Christ, have no longer any earthly rights or hopes: hence such must either gain the spiritual life they have started out for or must lose all life. And the terms or conditions upon which the heavenly life is to be attained are the sacrifice of the earthly life and its interests. Therefore, as here stated, in respect to this class, whoever of them saves his earthly life (refusing to sacrifice it, etc.) after having made the consecration, loses it entirely—loses all hope of a future life. And on the other hand, those of this class who are now faithful in laying down the present life for the Lord's sake shall find life eternal under the glorious conditions of the Kingdom. "If we be dead with him, we shall also live with him." —2 Tim. 2:11,12. R. 2615

Our Lord's present invitation is to drink with him his "cup," to partake of it. This is the blood of the New Covenant, his blood, "shed for many for the remission of sins," of which we are all to drink, and it takes the entire Gospel Age to find the proper number of those who are thus invited in harmony with the Father's plan, and who are willing to drink of this cup, to be baptized into his death. R. 4617

Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?

Mark 10:38

Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

– 2 Timothy 2:15 –

Evidently the central thought of this expression is the approving of ourselves to God, not to men. It is proper enough that we should have the approval of all good men and good women. But our **study**, primarily, should not be along this line. First, we should **study to please God**—to be approved of God. We notice that there is a contemplative study, such as David speaks of when he says, “I meditate upon thy Law day and night” —to see how that Law would work out its height and depth, its length and breadth of influence upon himself. And so the Apostle’s thought here is that it should be our chief aim to please God.

The Apostle Paul gives Timothy the advice contained in our text, and urges him to be “a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of Truth.” And the intimation is that the ability rightly to divide the Word of God is to be gained by the study of His Word. “**Rightly dividing the Word of Truth**” would signify the **proper application** of the Word of Truth; the understanding of how and when and where it should be applied and what was the purpose and thought and Plan of the Divine Mind in the giving of this Word of Truth, the Word of God’s Message. Up to the advent of our Lord, God’s Message had been given chiefly through the Old Testament Scriptures. Then God’s Message was attested by Him who came from heaven. Additionally, our Lord left twelve chosen Apostles to be His special mouthpieces, to increase the Word of Truth, to increase the Word of knowledge, to increase the Word of explanation of the Divine Plan. Everything, therefore, that Timothy could recognize as being the Lord’s Message he was to give heed to.

The word **workman** suggests the thought of being engaged in service. This injunction of the Apostle applies to all who belong to the Church of Christ. We are God’s servants. A great work is going on; this work is the calling out of the Church class from the world. It is proper for us to seek the approval of the holy, of the saintly; but God’s approval should have the precedence. We must be **workmen**, not idlers and drones; for these will not have any place in the Kingdom. God is calling to service **now** those who are willing to serve under disadvantageous conditions. R. 4838 and R. 5511

**But shun profane and idle babblings, for they will
increase to more ungodliness. Nevertheless the solid foundation of
God stands, having this seal: “The Lord knows those who are His,” and,
“Let everyone who names the name of Christ depart from iniquity.”**

2 Timothy 2:16, 19

But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come.

For men will be:

lovers of themselves, (selfish)

lovers of money, (covetous)

boasters, (braggarts)

proud, (appearing above others, haughty)

blasphemers, (impious against God)

disobedient to parents, (willfully disobedient)

unthankful, (ungrateful)

unholy, (wicked)

unloving, (hard-hearted toward kindred)

unforgiving, (truce-breakers)

slanderers, (false accusers)

without self-control, (powerless, incontinent)

brutal, (savage, fierce)

despisers of good, (hostile to virtue)

traitors, (betrayers)

headstrong, (rash, reckless)

haughty, (high-minded, inflated)

lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God,

having a form of godliness (piety, holiness)

but denying its power.

And from such people turn away!

– 2 Timothy 3:1-5 –

Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof is the nineteenth charge. It does not follow that this class, in so many words, denies that there is any power to godliness. Rather, we are to understand that their course in life denies or repudiates the power of God. Outwardly they have a religious form; they know that churchianity is popular; they wish to be known as identified with some denomination for decency's sake, and as an entree to good social and financial standing for themselves and their families. But that is about all the use they have for Christianity. Their life as a whole denies the power of the gospel of Christ to control the heart and regulate, direct and guide the conduct.

From such turn away. True Christians are to reprove the false Christians by turning away from them, and from their course or walk in life. Whoever has the spirit of Christ, the spirit of Love, and is seeking to cultivate its grace, and to walk according to its rule, will more and more find his path turning away from the path of churchianity and general worldliness. As they are guided by different spirits or dispositions, so they tend to different directions or effort, different loves, different sympathies, different experiences. The true sheep are to walk in the narrow way, led by the true Shepherd, who has gone before, and who calls us to follow him. This means that in this harvest-time in a most natural way a separation will be made between the "wheat" class and the "tare" class, just as our Lord's parable illustrated. The separation of these classes must eventually be thorough and complete. R. 2461

From childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

– 2 Timothy 3:15-17 –

Here Timothy is first reminded of how great his privileges had been—that he was well born, under religious instruction from his infancy. He is reminded, too, in a most modest manner, of how he had received his understanding of the Scriptures through the Apostle, and had been assured that the instructions were of God—that the Apostle spoke as an oracle of God; “He that heareth us, heareth God.” The Apostle points to the Word of God as a great light, or lamp, able to make wise unto salvation. He must have referred chiefly to the Old Testament, since the New Testament was not yet completed; but no one will doubt that if the Old Testament is valuable for the instruction of the Lord’s people, the New Testament is still more valuable as its key and elucidation. The Apostle’s words give the thought that these divine instructions are for the purpose of making the Lord’s people wise unto salvation, —of showing them how they may please God and be acceptable to him under the terms of his covenant. However, the Apostle carefully guards the matter by indicating that such wisdom cannot be unto salvation except through the faith that is in Christ Jesus. Christ Jesus must be recognized as the antitypical Prophet, Priest and King, and must have reverence and obedience as such to the extent of our ability, else there can be no salvation. Ours is not a gospel of works merely, but a gospel of faith, which acknowledges that we cannot perform the works which we recognize to be perfect, but must needs have the merit of our Redeemer imputed to us. R. 3210

Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching.

– 2 Timothy 4:2 –

All of the Lord’s people are teachers; as it is written, “The spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach the good tidings,” etc. This anointing of the spirit which came upon our Lord, the Head of the Church, comes down to, and covers every member of the body, anointing each one similarly to preach the good tidings, the Word of God’s grace and mercy and peace through Jesus—to all who have an ear to hear. This cannot mean that we are to violate the laws of reason and decency by intruding the good tidings upon others at times inconvenient and unseasonable to them; but it does mean that we are to have such a love for the truth, such an earnest desire to serve it, that we will gladly accept the opportunity to do so, however inconvenient it may be for ourselves. It is the chief business of our lives, to which life itself even is subservient, and hence, no opportunity for service must be laid aside.

Doubtless many need reproofs and many need rebukes, but how few are able to administer these to profit and not to injury! The Apostle addressed these words in a particular sense to Timothy as an experienced elder in the Church of Christ, and to some extent an overseer amongst the elders. It would be a great mistake to apply these words in general, and for each of the Lord’s people to see to what extent he could administer reproofs and rebukes to his brethren. Even so experienced an elder and overseer as Timothy must see to it that his reproving and rebuking and exhorting should be done with all longsuffering—with patience, gentleness and forbearance, and with doctrine. R. 3211

For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.

– 2 Timothy 4:6-7 –

He had kept the faith and the faith had kept him. Many do not realize how important are knowledge and a correct faith. “My people perish for lack of knowledge” is the Lord’s testimony. And their faith can keep pace only with their knowledge, for faith must have a basis. A correct life depends greatly upon a correct faith. Why did our forefathers burn one another at the stake in a diabolical manner? Because they were governed by error. False doctrines, styled by the Apostle “doctrines of devils,” had been presented to them and they had believed them. And the legitimate outcome of the wrong belief, the wrong faith, was wrong doing. Believing that God purposed the torture of his creatures for centuries in Purgatory or for untellable millions of years in eternal torment, they copied the misconception of the Almighty in their lives, to our horror.

But St. Paul had kept the faith—the true faith once delivered unto the saints—faith in the Redeemer’s sacrifice; faith in its application on our behalf; faith in our justification by the Father on that account; faith in the glorious promises of God’s Word; faith in the Lord and faith in the brethren. Surely it means something to keep the faith—especially when we realize that our great Adversary, Satan, is on the alert continually to take it from us or to turn or twist it to our loss or injury. R. 4527

Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.

– 2 Timothy 4:8 –

The Apostle was not expecting his crown of righteousness, the crown of life, the crown of glory, at the moment of death; but pointed Timothy forward to the second coming of Christ, and the general giving of rewards, as the Lord has promised, “at that day.” We rejoice to believe that we are living “in that day,” and hence that the Apostle is no longer waiting, but has received his crown during this harvest time, and we expect that those who are now alive and remain need not wait, but that when the hour of death shall come to them there will be no need of sleeping to wait for a future time, but the death change will mean the immediate entrance into the glorious conditions referred to by the Apostle.

The Apostle distinctly points out that although he, with the other apostles, occupied a high position in the Church of Christ, this did not signify that only the Lord and the apostles were to be crowned as victors; on the contrary, he includes all of the faithful ones of this Gospel age; saying that the crown of righteousness is not for him only, but “for all those who love his appearing.” Ah! the loving of his appearing is indeed a close test, whether applied now or in the Apostle’s day! The Apostle himself could not have looked forward with joy to the day of Christ’s revelation in Kingdom power and glory, if he had not felt that he had fought a good fight and kept the faith courageously; and so it must be with all others who have named the name of Christ and started to run in this Gospel race for the

For 2 Tim. 4:6-8 see page 160

For 2 Tim. 4:16-18, see page 356

For 2 Tim. 4:17 see page 125



Letter to Titus

Written from Nicopolis, c. A.D. 63

The entire arrangement of the early Church was based upon:

- 1 confidence** in the Lord, and in each other as partakers of his spirit;
- 2 love** for the Lord and for all who possessed his spirit;
- 3 obedience** to the Lord's will, in whatever manner expressed.

They recognized the Scriptures as the substance of the Lord's revelation, but they did not forget that God declared that he would provide teachers, helps, etc., in the Church for its upbuilding in the truth and in its spirit. They were therefore on the lookout for those whom God might be sending as such helpers; yet they were cautioned not to receive every spirit or doctrine, but to try or prove by the Word of God whether or not the teachings and teachers were from God or false teachers transforming themselves to appear as servants of the light. Accordingly, even the Apostle Paul gave proofs of his teachings by repeatedly referring to the Old Testament Scriptures.

Knowing the superior ability of the Apostles, and noting to how large a degree the Lord had confidence in them and used them, the early Churches readily accepted the judgment of the Apostles as to which of their number would be best qualified, naturally and spiritually, to be their "Elders," or to have the chief direction and oversight of the work in their midst. And the Apostle shows that he judged of fitness in the same manner that we now should judge, and not by some super-human intuition. —See Titus 1:6-11.

But it is very evident that the Apostle appointed no "Elders" in any Church contrary to the will of the congregation. It was by the will of the Church that the Apostle chose for them; they having more confidence in his experience, disinterested judgment, etc., than in their own. Love and confidence were the grounds of obedience, and not arbitrary authority. These facts must impress themselves upon all who read the New Testament with their eyes open. The strongest utterance is merely advisory; it reads, "Obey your leaders and be submissive [then the reason for this advice is given], for they keep watch on your behalf, as those who shall render an account." (Heb. 13:17.) Even when the Apostles called or sent any of the younger brethren in the ministry, it was not as of arbitrary authority, but as of request which they were likely to follow, because of their confidence in him as a faithful and experienced servant of the Truth. (See 2 Cor. 8:17; 1 Tim. 1:3.) But those calls or requests were not always obeyed; and no offense was taken by the Apostle, if the brethren sometimes felt and acted differently from his suggestions or requests. (See 1 Cor. 16:12.) On the contrary, some of the "Elders" became self-seekers, and spoke evil of the Apostles, yet were not anathematized: the Church was merely cautioned as to how to judge, and another more suitable brother was suggested, not appointed (3 John 9-12) —indicating that full liberty was accorded to each congregation. But the caution was sometimes given that the spiritually minded would receive the Lord's counsel through his mouthpieces, the Apostles. —1 John 4:6; 1 Cor. 14:37,38.

So also in introducing brethren to the Churches, force and authority are ignored, while the liberty of all is respected even by the apostles, who write not commandingly but entreatingly, not arbitrarily, but giving the reasons why those commended should be held in esteem. (See Phil. 2:29,30; Philemon

12,17; Col. 4:10; 3 John 8.) In all this the apostles did nothing more than what all the “brethren” had full privilege to do. (Acts 18:27.) And those who received the letters were bound to act upon such letters only by their love and confidence; hence probably a letter of commendation from St. Paul couched in the very same words would have had a greater influence than if from some others, simply because of the unbounded confidence of the Churches in his judgment and carefulness of their interests.

Titus 1:1-4

- 1 Paul, a bondservant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God’s elect and the acknowledgment of the truth which accords with godliness,**
- 2 in hope of eternal life which God, who cannot lie, promised before time began,**
- 3 but has in due time manifested His word through preaching, which was committed to me according to the commandment of God our Savior.**
- 4 To Titus, a true son in our common faith: Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ our Savior.**

In the days of the early Church the printing press was not yet at the service of the truth, and even the manuscript copies of the Word of God were not in the hands of the people; nor had the masses the ability to read for themselves. The New Testament Scriptures, too, were only in process of construction. In course of time the Apostles’ letters were exchanged among the congregations and copied for reconsideration and instruction.

Their lack, however, of the things we now possess, was, according to their necessities, made up to them by the great Head of the Church in the various gifts—of tongues, of interpretation, of prophecy, etc., many of which have now passed away, as Paul declared they would (1 Cor. 13:8), being superseded by the richer blessings of later times—the complete and compact Word of God in the hands of the people, among whom education has become general; and all the wonderful helps to its understanding afforded by Concordances, Bible Dictionaries, etc., etc.

In order that the meetings of the Church should be profitable in those early days an orderly arrangement of their affairs was enjoined by the apostles, and acted upon by the various companies of believers. Those who had the gifts of tongues, or interpretation of tongues, or prophecy, were not all to speak at once; the unlearned and illiterate women of those days (especially in Corinth) were not to interrupt and confuse the meetings, etc., etc. And the whole service was to be characterized becoming dignity, sobriety and solemnity; yet with the greatest simplicity, all, in an orderly way, from time to time, according to their several ability, taking part in the work of edifying and building up the body of Christ. Some had the ability to instruct the Church in sound doctrine; some had the gifts of tongues or of interpretation; some were able to exhort and encourage; and all were able to unite their hearts in prayer and to lift their voices in praise, in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs. (1 Cor. 14:15; Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16.) And thus becoming acquainted with each other, they were able to bear one another’s burdens, and together to advance in Christian growth and development, their means of edification being supplied by the Lord, and their orderly methods through the advice of the apostles. R. 1821 and R. 1890



For this reason I left you in Crete, that you should set in order the things that are lacking, and appoint elders in every city as I commanded you.

– Titus 1:5 –

While order in the exercises of their meetings was thus indicated, and was acted upon by the Church, there was also an order in the leadership and various duties of the Church. Thus, for instance, Paul and Barnabas, when they had gathered companies of believers in Lystra, Iconium and Antioch, “ordained them elders in every church;” and then, commending them to the Lord, they took their departure. (Acts 14:21-23.) Paul also commissioned Titus to go from city to city, and in every place to ordain (appoint) elders, whose duty it was to take the oversight of the Lord’s flock in their vicinity, to feed them with the truth, to guard them against the wolves in sheep’s clothing, and, in a general way, to act as their representatives. (Titus 1:5; Acts 14:23; 20:17,28; 1 Pet. 5:1,2; Acts 15:6,23-28.) The qualifications of these elders were also clearly set forth by the Apostle. —1 Tim. 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-11.

If this order was necessary to the spiritual prosperity of the early Church, and, because necessary, was so authoritatively enjoined and so universally adopted, so that there were no exceptions to the rule in any place, it is certainly a question worthy of consideration whether the same necessity does not exist among the companies of believers today. We believe that the same necessity for order and for the appointment of elders does exist today, and for the same good reasons that it existed then, which reasons are as follows:

1 Because in the Church, as in a family, there are various degrees of spiritual development. Some are babes, and need the sincere milk of the Word, while others require the strong meat; and it is necessary therefore that some one “apt to teach” should be in a position to do so. There are also various temptations, trials, difficulties and dangers which all are not equally prepared to meet. Hence the necessity of wise and discreet overseers, men of some experience and ability, deeply interested in looking out for the spiritual welfare of all, and capable of instructing them in the truth.

2 Because now, as then amongst the early Church, there are wolves in sheep’s clothing who would “privily bring in damnable heresies,” against which the chosen elders should be able to defend the flock; and against which they should be able to arm them by leading them to a very thorough knowledge of the truth. Then, too, as the Apostle forewarned us, “Of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them;” and the faithful elders will be quick to discern and prompt to warn and defend the flock against all such influences. —Acts 20:28-30; Titus 1:10,11; 2 Pet. 2:1-3.

3 Because if no such arrangements and appointments had been made in the legitimate way indicated by the Apostles, some one will take the leadership and hold it indefinitely; and almost imperceptibly a whole company will find itself more or less in bondage to that one. Such cases have frequently arisen, and brethren have written to us for some suggestions as to how they might be released without offending or hurting the brother who had taken the leading position.

4 If no orderly arrangement exist in the Church, those who are most solicitous for her welfare, and anxious to spend and be spent in her service, may sometimes find themselves in a most embarrassing situation. Faithfulness to the truth often causes division. And some who dislike that faithfulness may strongly intimate that the services of the faithful are not desired, though such might not be the sentiment of all, nor even of the majority of the company. Such a one would therefore lack the support which a full expression would give, and must therefore fight the battle in defence of the flock almost single-handed and alone, or else leave them to the mercy of the adversary.

The fact that things are running smoothly in any locality without any systematic order having been agreed upon, or the duties, rights and liberties of the congregation thought of, is no guarantee that they will always run so. Our ever vigilant adversary will be sure at some time to take advantage of every unguarded place or principle in the Church collectively, as well as in the individual members of it.

In view of all these contingencies we have no hesitation in commending to the Churches in every place, whether their numbers be large or small, the Apostolic counsel, that, in every company, elders be chosen from among their number to “feed” and “take the oversight” of the flock. And in accordance with the teaching of the Apostle (1 Cor. 12:28,29), that God hath set some in the Church to be special helpers, teachers, etc., and that all are not so qualified, we should expect that the Lord will provide some such in every company, and should therefore seek to find them there as in the early Churches.

We suggest that in the matter of choosing elders the mind of the Lord may best be determined through the agency of his consecrated people. Let the Church (i.e., those only who trust for salvation in the precious blood of the Redeemer, and who are fully consecrated to him) express their judgment of the Lord’s will by vote; and if this be done periodically—say yearly—the liberties of the congregations will be conserved, and the elders will be spared much unnecessary embarrassment. If it still be deemed expedient, and so manifestly the Lord’s will, there would be no barrier to the reelection of the same elders year by year; and if a change be deemed expedient, the change could then be made without any friction or unpleasant feelings on the part of any.

A vote of the Church merely affords the opportunity to every justified and fully consecrated believer to express his convictions of the Lord’s will in the matter—not his own will; for if he be fully the Lord’s, he reckons his own will dead, and he realizes that he must act and speak as the Lord would have him do. This method secures to all equal rights and privileges. It was probably the method of Titus and others who looked after the matter in the early Church; for we cannot think they arbitrarily appointed the elders without any consultation with the people, who were of necessity better acquainted than they, comparative strangers, could be. This is also the method mentioned in Acts 6:3-5. Remember too that you are choosing servants (ministers) and not rulers or masters. This is very different from the methods in vogue in the various sects, many of which limit most of the privileges to a “clerical” class, who lord it over the people.

The occasion of choosing elders should always be a solemn one. It is the Lord’s business, and should be done with thoughtful consideration, as in his sight. The brother who acts as chairman of the meeting should endeavor to impress this upon all. If each one in the company seeks to know and do the will of God only, and, in harmony with his consecration, expresses what he believes to be the will of the Lord in the matter, then, on the strength of the promise,

**The humble He guides in justice, and the humble He teaches His way,
Psalm 25:9**

the result of such deliberations should be accepted by all as the mind of the Lord, the holy spirit thus speaking through his consecrated people. R. 1890 and R. 1891

6 If a man is blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of dissipation or insubordination.

7 For a bishop must be blameless, as a steward of God, not self-willed, not quick-tempered, not given to wine, not violent, not greedy for money,

8 but hospitable, a lover of what is good, sober-minded, just, holy, self-controlled,

9 holding fast the faithful word as he has been taught, that he may be able, by sound doctrine, both to exhort and convict those who contradict.

– Titus 1:6-9 –

In 1 Timothy 3:1-7 [See Diaglott] the Apostle describes the qualifications of an elder or overseer, and in verses 8 to 13 the qualifications of an assistant elder are described. In his letter to Titus Paul adds to these qualifications the following,— “**Holding fast the faithful word**, as he hath been taught, that he may be able by **sound doctrine**, both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers; for there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, . . . whose mouths must be stopped.” How necessary to the prosperity of the flock are these qualifications in their chosen elders! Above all things they should choose those “sound in the faith,” “holding fast the faithful Word,” and avoid most carefully those who deal in human speculations and vain philosophies. This caution indicates also that the Church should know positively what its faith is, and be able to judge of the soundness of the faith of its elders. The faith once delivered to the saints (“That Christ died for our sins”) must test every item of subsequent, advanced truth. And all fanciful speculations and philosophies should be disesteemed and discouraged as saith the Apostle. —1 Tim. 6:20.

Then, when the elders have been chosen and have accepted the service, the charges of Paul to Timothy (2 Tim. 3:16,17; 4:1-5) and to Titus (2:1,7,8,11-15), and of Peter in his general epistle (1 Pet. 5:1-11), might be read to them in presence of the company, followed by prayer that God would add his blessing upon the chosen elders, and upon all the company as they shall cooperate together in the service of the Lord. These words of the Apostles are most solemnly impressive. R. 1892

In all things showing yourself to be a pattern of good works. In doctrine showing integrity, reverence, incorruptibility, sound speech that cannot be condemned, that one who is an opponent may be ashamed, having nothing evil to say of you. For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age, looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works.

Speak these things, exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no one despise you.

Titus 2:1,7-8,11-15

For we ourselves were also once foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving various lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another. But when the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior.

– Titus 3:3-6 –

The Apostle Paul sums up this transformation from selfishness to the love of God in a few words. This newness of spirit, this new mind, this mind in accord with the love of God, the Apostle assures us is not received except by those who receive the holy spirit. Those who merely take the step of justification may to some extent experience a reformation of life, so that instead of living an openly evil course they will seek to live at least moral lives. But none can expect to receive the begetting of the holy spirit of love, and thus to become possessed of “the love of God,” a self-sacrificing love, unless he takes the step of consecration to the Lord, which brings him into the condition in which he may indeed have the holy spirit, the spirit of divine love, shed abroad in his heart. Let none then hope to obtain the love of God in any other way than the way which God has provided. Now, while we still have these mortal bodies that are imperfect, and while restitution has not commenced, there is only the one way of attaining the love of God—by obedience to the call of this age, to present our bodies living sacrifices, holy and acceptable to God, through Jesus our Lord. R. 2648

The new creature is to grow and to be more and more filled with the holy spirit—more and more filled with the love of God; hence we may expect that there will be differences of attainment in this matter, and we should know what to look for as evidences of our growth in grace and of our attainment of this love of God. R. 2648

All who are with me greet you. Greet those who love us in the faith. Grace be with you all. Amen.

– Titus 3:15 –

We would also briefly call attention to the Lord’s design that the whole (living) Church, however widely scattered over the world, should be knit together as one. It was so in the Apostle’s days, and it should be so still. It is a pleasant observation that, even with their limited means of communication, whenever there was opportunity the churches in one place were prompt to send Christian greetings and benedictions to those in other places (Acts 15:23; 1 Cor. 16:19; 2 Cor. 13:13; Phil. 4:21-23; Col. 4:14,15; 1 Pet. 5:13; Titus 3:15; 3 John 14); and all were subject to the same regulations instituted by the apostles, having the “one Lord, one faith, and one baptism.” Their earnest endeavor was to keep “the unity of the faith in the bonds of peace,” and to avoid any schism in the body of Christ. —Eph. 4:3-13; 1 Cor. 12:25.

It is noticeable, too, what a beautiful unity of spirit and of faith, and what steady cooperation, there was among the apostles and elders of the early Church. They were all zealously endeavoring to preach “the same things,” the “sound doctrine,” of the truth of which they were fully persuaded.

R. 1895



Letter to Philemon

Written from Rome while in prison, A.D. 57-58

1 Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus, and Timothy our brother, To Philemon our beloved friend and fellow laborer,
2 to the beloved Apphia, Archippus our fellow soldier, and to the church in your house:
3 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.
4 I thank my God, making mention of you always in my prayers,
5 hearing of your love and faith which you have toward the Lord Jesus and toward all the saints,
6 that the sharing of your faith may become effective by the acknowledgment of every good thing which is in you in Christ Jesus.
7 For we have great joy and consolation in your love, because the hearts of the saints have been refreshed by you, brother.
8 Therefore, though I might be very bold in Christ to command you what is fitting,
9 yet for love's sake I rather appeal to you---being such a one as Paul, the aged, and now also a prisoner of Jesus Christ---
10 I appeal to you for my son Onesimus, whom I have begotten while in my chains,
11 who once was unprofitable to you, but now is profitable to you and to me.
12 I am sending him back. You therefore receive him, that is, my own heart,
13 whom I wished to keep with me, that on your behalf he might minister to me in my chains for the gospel.
14 But without your consent I wanted to do nothing, that your good deed might not be by compulsion, as it were, but voluntary.
15 For perhaps he departed for a while for this purpose, that you might receive him forever,
16 no longer as a slave but more than a slave---a beloved brother, especially to me but how much more to you, both in the flesh and in the Lord.
17 If then you count me as a partner, receive him as you would me.
18 But if he has wronged you or owes anything, put that on my account.
19 I, Paul, am writing with my own hand. I will repay---not to mention to you that you owe me even your own self besides.

20 Yes, brother, let me have joy from you in the Lord. Refresh my heart in the Lord.

21 Having confidence in your obedience, I write to you, knowing that you will do even more than I say.

22 But, meanwhile, also prepare a guest room for me, for I trust that through your prayers I shall be granted to you.

23 Epaphras, my fellow prisoner in Christ Jesus, greets you,

24 as do Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, Luke, my fellow laborers.

25 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen.

As far as we can tell, Pastor Russell wrote very little concerning the letter to Philemon. It is one of five Books of the Bible with only one chapter. The others include: Obadiah, 2 John, 3 John and Jude. Unlike Paul's Epistles to the churches and even to Timothy and Titus, his letter to Philemon is of a personal nature. It is addressed to Philemon, "a beloved friend and fellow laborer."

In **verse 2**, we learn that the church congregated at Philemon's home. The early churches *were merely associations, not bound and fettered by creeds and traditions, as the organizations or systems of today are. These associations bound themselves only with love and truth, and were just such as we have today, and generally small, their usual meeting places being private dwellings or rented upper rooms.* R. 984

An initial glance at the letter immediately conveys the Apostle Paul's affection for his "beloved friend and fellow laborer," Philemon. Paul mentions him "always in his prayers." (**v. 4**) and takes great "joy and consolation" in the love Philemon and he share in Christ Jesus. (**v. 7**) The Apostle acknowledges Philemon's efforts to refresh the hearts of the saints and seems to lay out all this positive and loving acknowledgment before making his strong request or "appeal."

In Colossians 4:7-9, we learn that Paul is sending Tychicus along with Onesimus to Colosse. Apparently Onesimus had once belonged to Philemon as a slave but had robbed him and then escaped. In **verse 12** of his letter to Philemon, Paul says that he is "sending him back," and in his letter to the Colossians he refers to him as "one of your own people." Therefore we can conclude that Philemon lives in Colosse.

Tychicus will give you a full report about how I am getting along. He is a beloved brother and faithful helper who serves with me in the Lord's work. I have sent him to you for this very purpose---to let you know how we are doing and to encourage you. I am also sending Onesimus, a faithful and beloved brother, one of your own people. He and Tychicus will tell you everything that's happening here. (NLT)
Colossians 4:7-9

Verse 10 tells us that while Paul was in prison, he encountered Onesimus and that Onesimus became a believer and not only that, but he is as dear to Paul as his own heart. **(v. 12)** He would have preferred to have kept Onesimus with him to help spread the Gospel, but Paul did not want to force this good deed upon Philemon, nor assume anything. Onesimus belonged to Philemon and Paul is honoring this arrangement. **(v. 13-14)**

In **verses 15 and 16**, Paul suggests that perhaps the whole matter had been overruled for good. It was because Onesimus encountered Paul that he heard the Gospel message and became a believer. Now Onesimus would mean much more to Philemon—yes, still his slave, but much more than this, a beloved brother in Christ. The Apostle is asking that Philemon receive him back as a brother and to accept him just as he would accept Paul. **(v. 17)**

To further appeal to Philemon, Paul assures him that he will cover any loss that he experienced at the hands of Onesimus, but he also reminds Philemon that he owes Paul a debt! It was Paul who converted him. Without mentioning it, he “reminds” him. In other words, Paul’s request to receive Onesimus back is nearly impossible for Philemon to refuse. **(v. 18-19)**

After laying out his argument, the Apostle reassures Philemon that he has full confidence in him to do the right thing. He also clearly intends to visit and asks Philemon to prepare him a room. **(v. 20-22)** To our understanding Paul never did visit the church at Colosse, but we have his letter written to them and this glimpse into a personal matter that involved a member of the Colossians.

Perhaps one of the largest lessons of all from this letter:

There is no respect of persons with God. (KJV)
Romans 2:11

God is a respecter of character; but he is not a respecter of outward appearances, conditions, color of skin, nationality, etc. R. 2988

There is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave nor free, but Christ is all and in all.
Colossians 3:11

And finally:

Therefore, from now on, we regard no one according to the flesh.
Even though we have known Christ according to the flesh, yet
now we know Him thus no longer.
2 Corinthians 5:16

The Apostle’s advice, that those who have received the new mind—the spirit of a sound mind—we are not to know after the flesh, as men, but according to their real spirit or intention—as God knows or recognizes them. We are to remember that our relationship to one another in the Body of Christ is not according to the flesh, but according to the spirit; hence, as the Apostle declares, we know one another no longer according to the flesh, with its weaknesses, imperfections and ungainly and ungraceful natural tendencies. We know each other only according to the spirit, according to the intentions, according to the heart, —as “new creatures,” not as old creatures. (2 Cor. 5:16.) R. 1414 and R. 2446



Letter to The Hebrews

Written from Italy c. A.D. 64-65

No signature is attached to the Book of Hebrews, nor does the writer of it in any way identify himself, except as we see in its style, close reasoning, deep penetration and wide knowledge of the divine plan, strong evidence that it was written by the Apostle Paul. Who but he could have written it? It is not addressed to Jews, as if with the intention of converting those who did not believe in Christ—but to the Hebrews—to those who were the children of Abraham according to the flesh, but who had accepted Christ. The Apostle would strengthen and establish the faith of these (and indirectly of all others who would come to a similar knowledge of God's dealings with Israel). In this epistle he seeks to show that, so far from the new dispensation repudiating the old one, it was merely an advance step which was being taken because its due time had come. The Jewish system was not being repudiated as a divine institution, but was being established as such, everything in the new dispensation having an analogy to the things in the old one, but on a higher plane.

Thus all the Mosaic arrangements were honored, and shown to be of divine institution, good for the time, and serving a noble purpose as types and lessons of instruction and preparations for the Gospel. The time had now come for the establishment of the antitype—the antitypical Covenant through the antitypical Mediator, sealed with the antitypical blood of the Covenant, and to be followed by the antitypical Day of Atonement, preceding the antitypical blessing of the people and their full and permanent release from sin and condemnation.

In line with the foregoing, the Apostle is pointing to Jesus, ascended and in the heavens, as the antitype of the earthly high priests when they went into the “Most Holy” on the Day of Atonement to sprinkle the blood of the atonement upon the Mercy Seat. It will be remembered that on the Day of Atonement the high priest put on his linen garments (not his glorious garments) and with the blood of the sacrifice went into the Most Holy to present it as the ransom price—the atonement. While he was within the people had no evidence of divine favor resulting from his sacrifice, but waited on their faces in the dust, representing the prostrate and helpless condition of mankind in degradation, needing and waiting for the divine blessing. So, now, our High Priest is in the heavens, and we must not look for the blessings of restitution until all the work of atonement be accomplished, and until all the members of his body shall, with their Head, have put on the garments of glory and beauty, typifying honor, majesty and authority. Then the blessing will quickly follow, from the uplifted hands (manifested power), of our great High Priest; then, indeed, restitution blessings will prevail toward the whole creation now groaning and travailing in pain together. —Rom. 8:22.

It is in respect to this coming blessing that the Apostle declares our Lord to be a High Priest of coming good thing—coming blessings—obtained of God in a higher tabernacle or temple than the Jewish earthly one—a tabernacle, the Holy of Holies of which is heaven itself, from which in due time our great High Priest comes forth with the promised blessings of restitution.

To appreciate the necessity for the Book of Hebrews, we must mentally take our stand back in apostolic days and get our bearings as though we were living there under those conditions. Thinking

of matters from this sympathetic standpoint the answer to this question is very simple, very plain. The early Church for seven years after our Lord's baptism, for three and a half years after his cross, was composed exclusively of Jews. Not until the end of Israel's promised "seventy weeks" of special favor could the Gospel message go outside of that nation at all. We remember that Cornelius, a just man, who prayed always and gave much alms, was the first one from the Gentiles to be received. In his case we remember how it was necessary for God to specially prepare St. Peter for such a remarkable change in the Divine method of dealing.

We remember that years after this, the question of receiving the Gentiles and eating with them, or in any sense of the word recognizing them as being on equality with the Jews, was one which caused continual disturbance in the Church and amongst the most prominent of the apostles of the time. Years after Cornelius had received the holy Spirit teachers from Jerusalem went to Antioch and found that there Gentiles were received on an equal footing with the Jews in the Church of Christ without in any sense of the word subscribing to Moses and the Law Covenant. They were shocked and expressed themselves in such positive terms that the Antioch Church sent Paul and Barnabas with others to Jerusalem that a full conference on the question might be had. Guided of the holy Spirit the apostles reached right conclusions, yet even Peter was so little in sympathy with these conclusions that years after we find St. Paul reproving him for dissimulation and refusing to eat with the Gentile brethren when Jewish brethren were in the company—through deference to the Law Covenant, which somehow all Jews felt must be recognized and subscribed to. St. Paul seems to have been one of the apostles who early got the proper focus on this subject.

The Epistle to the Hebrews was written to prove that a totally new dispensation of Grace, and not of Works, had been ushered in through Jesus at Pentecost. He would have them see that Moses' faithfulness as a servant and Head of a typical priesthood, was inferior to Christ and the Royal Priesthood, of which he is the Head. He would have them see that Moses and his house were types and servants or illustrations of good things to come; but that Christ and his "elect" are sons of God, who will minister the real blessings in the future. He would have them see that there was a Canaan rest to which Moses led the willing and obedient priests and people of Israel, and that there is a greater rest which remains for the people of God, to which Christ will lead his people; and that those who by faith accept of Christ now may enter by faith into his rest in advance, now, in their hearts.

Let us never lose sight of the central purpose for which this Book was written—that it was to prove that the Law Covenant must give way, give place, to the New Covenant. Hence all the things connected with the typical Law Covenant should be expected to have antitypes in connection with the antitypical New Covenant. Thus the sacrifices of the Law, which came at the beginning of their year on the Day of Atonement, before the sins of the people could be forgiven, must here find parallel in "better sacrifices" than the bullock and the goat. The New Covenant cannot go into effect until these antitypical sacrifices are accomplished. He thus proved the inferiority of everything Jewish and connected with the Law Covenant; that all Christians might see that instead of going back to that or holding on to it, they should rather be grasping, looking forward to the antitypes, and grasping their share in the "better sacrifices." R. 4512

Noting that the Hebrews were long accustomed to look to the earthly priests and yearly ministrations for the cleansing away of sin, the Apostle calls attention to the fact that the Lord Jesus is the High Priest of a new order of priests and that his Church are those underpriests. Answering their objections that Jesus was not of the tribe of Levi, and therefore not entitled to the priesthood, he shows them that God had already foreshown that there would be a new priesthood of a different kind; that Melchizedek was a type of that new priesthood. He gives the intimation that while Jesus and his Church in the flesh in their sacrificing work were typified by Aaron and his sons, nevertheless the real work of this higher priesthood is a future one of glory, when Jesus, the great Priest, and the Church, his Body, an under priesthood, associated with him, will be installed in a kingly, as well as a priestly office, and in ruling, as well as teaching authority. These glories of the Christ in the Royal Priesthood of the Millennial Age were not at all represented in Aaron, but were quite well represented in Melchizedek, who was a king at the same time that he was a priest. His greatness was shown, in that Abraham did him homage and paid tithes to him. And since Levi, the Father of the priestly tribe, was in Abraham's loins at the time that the tithes were paid, therefore he and all his sons inferentially paid tithes to Melchizedek and thus the Melchizedek order of priesthood was recognized as higher than the Aaronic. R. 2821 and R. 4510

**For the law made nothing perfect. On the
other hand, there is the bringing in of a better hope,
through which we draw near to God. And inasmuch as
He was not made priest without an oath (for
they have become priests without an oath, but
He with an oath by Him who said to Him:
"THE LORD HAS SWORN AND WILL NOT RELENT.
'YOU ARE A PRIEST FOREVER ACCORDING TO THE
ORDER OF MELCHIZEDEK.' ")**

**By so much more, Jesus has become a
surety of a better covenant.
Hebrews 7:19-22**



God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things.

– Hebrews 1:1-2 –

The Apostle calls attention to the fact that our Lord Jesus and his testimonies were but further developments of the great divine plan of which God had been speaking to his people Israel, “at sundry times and in divers manners” in the past. He points out that if it was always appropriate to hearken to the Lord’s messengers, it is much more appropriate that we hearken to the great Chief Messenger of Jehovah, our Lord Jesus, “whom God hath appointed heir of all things.”

He next points out the basis of our good hopes of salvation through Christ—the basis on which divine justice and love may operate toward fallen mankind; viz., that this Jesus “himself purged our sins and has sat down on the right hand of the majesty on high,” far above angels and principalities and powers.

Who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, having become so much better than the angels, as He has by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they.

Hebrews 1:3-4

The word *character* in Greek is exactly the same as in English. Originally it was the name given to a sculptor’s tool—the forming chisel used in the development of the Greek statuary. Gradually the word broadened in its meaning to include not only the tool used, but the tooling process, the formation or shaping of the sculptures. Gradually also it came to signify the peculiarities or characteristics of a piece of sculpture. The word today in its English usage had reached a still higher plane and associates itself with the Divine character, which is the perfect example, and with humanity as it possesses more or less of the Divine characteristics.

When St. Paul writes in Hebrews 1 of Christ’s being the “express image” of the Father’s person, the phrase “express image,” in the Greek is the word *character*. How beautiful the thought that our Lord Jesus, through whom the Father has spoken to mankind, explaining his Justice and his Love and his provision for our reconciliation—this one was the express image, the character-likeness of the heavenly Father, full of grace and truth! Nor does it seem strange to us that the Father, in inviting a “little flock” to joint-heirship with the Redeemer in glory, honor and immortality, has decreed, foreordained, that the acceptable ones, the “elect,” must all be conformed to the likeness of his dear Son, who was the character likeness of himself. Truly there will be a wonderful family likeness in this Divine family—the Father, the Son, and the Bride, the Lamb’s Wife! Who is sufficient for these things? Who is worthy of such exaltation? Surely those who would attain it must lay aside every weight, every besetting sin, and must persevere in the great work of mastering self and developing character—the one kind of character which God can approve and reward.

When the Apostle points out the high exaltation of our Lord Jesus, and that it was a reward for his obedience in suffering death on our behalf, he proves four things:

- 1 That our Lord Jesus did give a ransom for our transgressions, which was satisfactory to the divine justice; so that through his stripes we might be healed, notwithstanding the sentence of eternal death which was against us through father Adam's transgression.
- 2 He proves this by the fact of our Lord's resurrection and high exaltation above angels, to share the Father's throne and nature in glory.
- 3 This exaltation of the Savior implies power—power to carry out the blessed provisions of the New Covenant, which he merely sealed with his precious blood. It must yet be made effective to mankind.
- 4 To make it effective will imply the use of the power and exaltation granted to this Life-Giver by Jehovah. Having bought the world from under the sentence of death he will in due time proceed to the establishment of the heavenly Kingdom: thus he shall bring in everlasting righteousness as the law of earth; lay judgment to the line and righteousness to the plummet; sweep away all the refuges of lies; bind the great Adversary, Satan; and, opening the eyes of the blind and the ears of the deaf, he then will cause all mankind to know respecting the love of God which passeth all understanding, which would not that any should even perish, but that all might turn unto him and live. —Isa. 11:9; 28:17; 35:5; 2 Pet. 3:9,13; Rev. 20:2.

The exalted and fully empowered Life-Giver will then stand ready, not only to make known to all mankind the terms of the New Covenant under which all may have eternal life, by obedience to God in him, but as the great Prophet he will stand ready to teach, and as the great Priest he will stand ready to help their infirmities and to direct their paths in the way of righteousness. R. 2407 and R. 4417

Therefore we must give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest we drift away.

– Hebrews 2:1 –

In the inspired words of the Lord and the apostles and prophets we have the divine will expressed, explained, illustrated and enforced, line upon line and precept upon precept. And yet, with all this teaching, it is possible, even for the consecrated people of God, to be forgetful hearers and readers of the Word, so that its most explicit directions for daily living, its most faithful warnings against snares and besetments, and its most careful expositions of the principles of righteousness and truth, may avail little or nothing in the education and training of character. For—

How shall we escape [the wrath of God] if we neglect so great a salvation?

Hebrews 2:3

—the salvation which comes only through faith and obedience to the Word of the Lord diligently laid up in our hearts, and its principles carefully and prayerfully wrought out in our lives. (Heb. 2:1-3.) The promise of the divine favor and blessing is not to the forgetful, listless hearers who fail to apply their hearts unto instruction, but to the attentive hearers and faithful doers of the Word.

—James 1:25. R. 2093

For if the word spoken through angels proved steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just reward, how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by those who heard Him.

Hebrews 2:2-3

Every doctrine, therefore, which has any claims upon our faith, should, from the foundation up, (as far as it seems worthy of investigation) step by step, be brought to the test of the word and the testimony; and all for which there cannot be found a “Thus saith the Lord,” must be promptly rejected, and all to which his word testifies as truth, “*held fast*” and not allowed to slip. R. 1206

For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.

– Hebrews 2:10 –

Captain of Our Salvation, Take

Captain of our salvation, take
The souls that here are trained for Thee,
And fit for Thy great service make
These heirs of immortality;
And let them in Thine image rise,
And then transplant to Paradise.

Unspotted from the world and pure,
Preserve them for Thy glorious cause,
Accustomed daily to endure
The welcome burden of Thy cross:
Inured to toil and patient pain,
Till all Thy perfect mind they gain.

Train up Thy hardy soldiers, Lord,
In all their Captain's steps to tread;
Then send them to proclaim Thy word,
Thy Gospel through the world to spread;
Freely as they receive to give,
And preach the Death by which we live! Amen.

Words: Charles Wesley, 1763.

Tune (Church Hymns): "Huntingdon" Henry J. Gaunlett, 1805-1876.

Our relationship to our Lord Jesus is specifically and repeatedly indicated to be that of brethren, and not sons. Speaking of the Church the Apostle says, "He is not ashamed to call them brethren," as had been prophetically stated; "I will declare thy name unto my brethren; in the midst of thy church will I sing praises unto thee"; and again, "Behold I and the children [of God] which God hath given me." These are the "many sons" whom the Father is bringing to glory, under the lead of the Captain of their Salvation, Christ Jesus, and as respects this Church, it is again stated that our Lord Jesus, in his resurrection, was "first-born among many brethren." Rom. 8:29; Heb. 2:10-13 E144

For both He who sanctifies and those who are being sanctified are all of one, for which reason He is not ashamed to call them brethren.

– Hebrews 2:11 –

“WHO IS MY MOTHER? AND WHO ARE MY BRETHREN?”



Art by James Tissot, c. 1886-1894

It is well for those who have entered into the new relationship of spiritual sons of God to consider carefully and frequently the changed relationship into which it has brought us. Our most intimate relationships are no longer those of earthly origin. Our interests, hopes, and aims are now bound up with those of the heavenly family; and as we come to realize this more fully, our affections reach out after the family of God and our communion one with another should be such as to deepen and broaden that love one for another.

The above expression of our Lord shows how he regarded the heavenly relationship. When one said unto him: “Behold thy mother and thy brethren stand without desiring to speak with thee,” he answered,

Who is my mother? and who are my brethren? And he stretched forth his hand toward his disciples, and said, Behold my mother and my brethren! for whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother and sister and mother.

---- Matt. 12:47-50.

As new creatures, we are spiritual sons of God, soon to be joined in heirship with his dear Son; we are the espoused virgin who, forsaking all earthly ties, is to be joined in marriage to our heavenly Bridegroom, and with joy we are now making all possible preparation for the great event. When this new condition is fully entered upon, we shall no longer be husbands and wives, parents and children, brothers and sisters, etc., with those on the earthly plane; for we shall be “kings and priests unto God,” prepared to rule and to bless all the families of the earth, every member of which will then be as dear to us as to God. Our love to our former dear ones will be no less than now. Our love will be greatly intensified, though not bounded by the former narrow limits of blood relationship. R. 943

Therefore, in all things He had to be made like His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people.

– Hebrews 2:17 –

Our Lord himself tells us who are his brethren saying,

**For whoever does the will of My Father in heaven is
My brother and sister and mother.**

Matthew 12:50

No sinner can measure up to this requirement; only the saints can fill the measure, and they, only by having their sins passed over, covered by Christ's meritorious sacrifice. Only these, in whom the righteousness of the law is reckoned as fulfilled through Christ—who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit, fully consecrated to God, are the brethren of Christ, brethren, too, whom he declares he is not ashamed to own, —brethren of **holy desires**, justified and sanctified.

He was not tempted with the depraved tastes and desires of a drunkard or dissolute person, nor with the besetments and frivolities of present day "society," nor with wealth, nor with the perplexing annoyances of a parent, nor in a thousand other ways that men and women are perplexed and annoyed; but he was tempted or tested in all points like as **we**, the consecrated, are tested. Thus: We as followers in his footsteps find three points from which our covenant of self-sacrifice is tested—the world, the flesh and the devil—and so did our Lord.

It is important that we notice the character of our tests. God is not testing us to see whether or not our *flesh* is perfect, for He knew all along that amongst men there is none righteous, no, not one. The Father's tests for those whom He receives as sons are tests of loyalty to Him, loyalty to the principles of righteousness, loyalty to the Truth, loyalty to the Divine methods—a refusal to take our own way or to seek our own glory or our own ease at the expense of Truth or of the Divine method.

From the fact that our High Priest was tempted and suffered, we may know that He is not one who is cold and indifferent. On the contrary, He is One who is full of sympathy, who has had the largest kind of experience. (Hebrews 2:18; 5:8.) If then, we have temptations, what must we do? We are to come to our great High Priest; and as we come to the Throne of Heavenly Grace, we may come with boldness (or, more properly translated, with courage, not doubting), knowing that the One who meets us there is fully able to sympathize with our every sorrow and need, and with our every temptation. [Heb. 4:15-16] R. 963, R. 5585, R. 4970

**For in that He Himself has suffered, being tempted, He is
able to aid those who are tempted.**

Hebrews 2:18

Therefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our confession, Christ Jesus.

– Hebrews 3:1 –

How few of those who read the Scriptures have ever followed the Apostle's suggestion? how few have ever considered Jesus from the standpoint suggested, —as the Church's Apostle or special teacher sent of God to specially guide and instruct the Church, and as the church's High Priest to whom the faithful occupy the relationship of under priests? Had more consideration been given by the Lord's people to these matters, a larger number would undoubtedly be much farther advanced than they are today, in the knowledge and love of God. They would have seen that if Christ is a special teacher, a special High Priest of the Church, and the Church his special pupils, brethren and under priests, then there must be, according to the Scriptures, at some future time, a still greater blessing in which both High Priests and under priests will be the agents of God in blessing all the families of the earth.

When we read, "Consider Jesus, the High Priest of our profession," the meaning is, the Chief Priest of our kind or order of priests. We are to consider him as our example, that, as his members, we may present our sacrifices as he, our Forerunner, presented him. As a priest in receiving us as members of his own Body, the Church, his attitude toward us would necessarily be as different as is the relationship into which we are received. Jesus received the Apostles on account of their faith and consecration before he died for their sins and before he "appeared in the presence of God for us" to make atonement for their sins and ours and to secure for them and for us the evidence of reconciliation to the Father—the holy Spirit begetting. He has appeared for all of the same class—not as Mediator, but as an Advocate applying his blood on our behalf because of our faith and obedience. R. 3313 and R. 4553

Christ as a Son over His own house, whose house we are if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm to the end.

– Hebrews 3:6 –

The first human son of God was Adam, and when he sinned, he was cut off from that relationship to God; and none others from Adam's time down to Jesus' time were ever recognized or spoken of in the Bible as sons of God. They were sinners, strangers, aliens, foreigners, convicts, under death sentence. But with Jesus came not only the new teaching but the new relationship.

God's method of dealing with the House of Servants would very properly be different from His method of dealing with the House of Sons. Commands are given to the servants without explanation why or wherefore. But the Apostle explains that God deals with us as with sons. To the true Christian the Heavenly Father makes known His plans, His purposes, His arrangements, in order that His sons, who have His Spirit, may sympathetically enter into those plans, by obedience to the extent of self-sacrifice, not because of command, but because of joy to do the Father's will. R. 5663 and R. 5405

Let us therefore be diligent to enter that rest, lest anyone fall according to the same example of disobedience.

– Hebrews 4:11 –

The Sabbath rest of the Jewish nation was typical of the higher and better rest of the house of sons. The Israelites were obliged to rest every seventh day, every seventh year and every jubilee year, that they might make a type of a better rest which God provided, and which would be entered into first by Spiritual Israel and subsequently by Natural Israel and the whole world. The Apostle explains this matter in Hebrews 4, where he speaks of a rest [Sabbath] into which the Spiritual Israelites now enter, represented by the Sabbath day of the Jew, and also of another rest that remaineth for the people of God which we should fear to come short of, namely, the great Sabbath, the Millennial Kingdom—the seventh thousand-year period. R. 4015

The Sabbath day has its fulfillment in the rest and peace of heart enjoyed by the antitypical Israelites. It is a perpetual Sabbath with them. They enter into rest. They have reached that place where they have the peace of God ruling in their hearts. They rest from their own works—from all hope that they could commend themselves to God by works of any kind, Sabbath keeping or otherwise. They enter into rest because they see that God has provided in Jesus the help necessary for all, that they are “complete in Him.” This rest or peace no man taketh from them. It is theirs so long as they abide by faith in Christ, in God. R. 5405

For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin.

– Hebrews 4:15 –

We are not to understand the Apostle to mean that our Lord was tempted in every manner that the **world** is tempted. He had none of the temptations peculiar to a drunkard, etc. His was not an unbalanced mind. He was tempted “like as **we** are”—The Church. Like our Master, we are not, as New Creatures, tempted as are the world. The world has its own kinds of temptation. We are not of the world. We are being tested as spirit-begotten children of God. We are tested as to our loyalty to Him, as to our faith and obedience. Of course, while still in the flesh, we are liable to temptations along the line of our natural tendencies as members of the fallen race, but these are not our temptations as New Creatures.

If we turn our eyes to the pattern, we see in our Lord Jesus one who was deeply moved at the sight of human degradation, moral and physical. So must it be with all his followers. Let us not forget to keep in touch with the groaning creation; to sympathize with its sorrows and its woes; to realize its deep degradation and misery; to remember its frailties, its awful burden of hereditary taints and consequent weaknesses; its present environments of ignorance and superstition; and its long established errors of public sentiment; remembering that we too are still in the sinful flesh, and that the motions of sin are still often painfully manifest in us, in some directions, at least, if not in many. And as the cries of the groaning creation come up into the ears of the Lord of hosts (Jas. 5:4) with strong and pathetic pleading to his loving heart, so let them come into our ears and gain our sympathies, and quicken our zeal to cooperate with our Heavenly Father’s plan for the establishment of his Kingdom of righteousness and peace.

But let us bear in mind that a real pity for the world, a full sympathy with every good work of reform, and an active cooperation with God in the necessary preparation for our great future work, imply

also that we have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness and that our lives be a standing rebuke to them. It should be our constant effort, therefore, to seek to discern the course of righteousness on every question of moral obligation, and to see to it that our conduct, our sympathies and our influence, however small, are on the side of righteousness. R. 5585 and R. 3067

Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

– Hebrews 4:16 –

From the fact that our High Priest was tempted and suffered, we may know that He is not one who is cold and indifferent. On the contrary, He is One who is full of sympathy, who has had the largest kind of experience. (Hebrews 2:18; 5:8.) If then, we have temptations, what must we do? We are to come to our great High Priest; and as we come to the Throne of Heavenly Grace, we may come with boldness (or, more properly translated, with courage, not doubting), knowing that the One who meets us there is fully able to sympathize with our every sorrow and need, and with our every temptation.

Our Father knows **all about** these experiences we are having, and **He** made the provision for our covering. He provided succor from our difficulties, that we might come in as members of the Body of Christ, even though imperfect. He knows that we cannot fully control our imperfect bodies. But as we become stronger, we should be better able to control the mortal body. The new will should subjugate the old mind, and have better success in conquering the flesh.

How precious and comforting the realization that our merciful High Priest is touched with the feeling of our infirmities! We should never, however, relax our vigilance because of this knowledge, or take any advantage of His mercy. But we rejoice that we have a Mercy Seat to which we can go as soon as we are conscious of our inability to be all that we would, and rejoice to know that we shall not be turned away. R. 5585

No man takes this honor to himself, but he who is called by God, just as Aaron was.

– Hebrews 5:4 –

The Apostle reasons (Heb. 5:1) that all the Jewish priests were taken from amongst their fellows and especially ordained, or set apart, for their work, to represent their people before God, offering for them both their gifts and their sacrifices for sins. In this arrangement the priests were able to sympathize with the people, because they were subject to the same weaknesses, and also had need of the forgiveness of their own sins. But even amongst these imperfect, blemished, sinful priests, who needed to make offerings for their own sins, none was allowed to take this office of himself. God must call him to the office. Thus it was with Aaron. God called him to be the head priest.

So, the Apostle points out, it must be with the antitypical priests on a higher plane. Christ, the High Priest spiritual, and His elect Church, the Royal Priesthood on the spirit plan, must also be called of God. They could not assume the office otherwise. “Christ did not glorify Himself to make Himself a High Priest.” God honored Him in this way, however, saying to Him in the prophecy of the Psalms, “Thou art My Son; this day have I begotten Thee”; and again, “Thou art a Priest forever after the Order of Melchizedek.” —Psalms 2:7; 110:4. R. 5472

Though He was a Son, yet He learned obedience by the things which He suffered.

– Hebrews 5:8 –

Though he was a recognized Son, and hence perfect, without sin, the Apostle speaks of him as being **made perfect**—as being perfected in **some sense** through a process of experience—of experience of humiliation and suffering. In what sense, then, we inquire, was he perfected? The answer is implied in the words of the text—“Yet learned he **obedience** by the things which he suffered; and, being made perfect [in this lesson], he became,” etc. Although he was a recognized Son of God in whom the Father was always well pleased, and one who had never disappointed in the slightest degree the fondest hopes of that righteous Father; although he had always recognized the Father as the source of his being, and the fountain of all wisdom, goodness and grace, and as that superior Being to whom he owed the deepest gratitude for life and all its manifold blessings, in whom also dwelt all wisdom and honor and glory and power, and whose perfect will was therefore the supreme law, the expression of the most perfect righteousness and truth, the profoundest wisdom and the deepest love and grace; to whom, therefore, was due the most loyal and loving obedience at all times and under all circumstances; and although he was a Son who had always recognized and delighted to do the Father’s will; yet he was not counted perfect in the sense of that established and demonstrated character which was the necessary requirement for the priestly office to which he was called. For this office he must be proved beyond all peradventure by the severest tests, and that before many witnesses, in order that all might know the strong foundation upon which they could build their hopes. It was for this purpose that his sense of loyalty was put to the severe test which it met in Gethsemane. Possibly even our Lord himself did not realize the strength of his righteous character until brought face to face with this last trial. There he was tried and proved to the uttermost, and under the fiery ordeal his character, always perfect to the full measure of its testing, gained by divine grace its glorious perfection of completeness.

Thus, through suffering, he learned obedience to the perfect will of God down to the lowest depths of self-abnegation; and God permitted it so to be, because such proving was necessary, both for the development and manifestation of that perfection of character which would be worthy of the high exaltation to which he was called.

**In the days of His flesh, He had
offered up prayers and supplications,
with vehement cries and tears to
Him who was able to save Him from
death, and was heard because of
His godly fear.
Hebrews 5:7**

Character cannot be developed wholly without trial. It is like a plant: at first it is very tender; it needs an abundance of the sunshine of God’s love; frequent watering with the showers of his grace; much cultivating through the applied knowledge of his character as a good foundation for faith and inspiration to obedience; and then, when thus developed under these favorable conditions, it is ready for the pruning hand of discipline, and is also able to endure some hardness. And, little by little, as strength of character is developed, the tests applied to it serve only to develop more strength, beauty and grace until it is finally fixed, developed, established, perfected—through suffering. In the case of our Lord, this valuable plant of character, perfect in its infancy, maintained its perfection through all the tests applied to it, until it was finally made perfect in completeness, being established, strengthened, settled. R. 1807

For God is not unjust to forget your work and labor of love which you have shown toward His name, in that you have ministered to the saints, and do minister.

– Hebrews 6:10 –

St. Paul declares that their labors of love were shown toward God's name. This honor toward God's name consisted in their ministering to the saints. This was a proof of their love for the Lord. This ministry, too, had been kept up. The saints represent God in the world. Whatever is done for the saints is, therefore, done for God. There is a distinction to be noted in the Bible as respects those who are in covenant relationship with God and those who are not in covenant relationship with Him. The Golden Rule is to operate always and toward all men. But we have not the same obligation toward the world that we have toward the saints. Whoever honors the saints and serves them, honors and serves God. This seems to be the Apostle's thought in the matter.

We are not to understand that the Lord would be displeased that we should do good to all men. Rather the Apostle urges, "Let us do good unto all men as we have opportunity." Be generous, be kind to everybody, but especially to the saints. (Galatians 6:10.) This is what is particularly pleasing to God. Every service lovingly and gladly rendered to the saints is rendered unto His glory. "God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labor of love." Such good works, if persevered in according to our ability and opportunity, will not fail of a blessed reward. R. 5818

And we desire that each one of you show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope until the end.

– Hebrews 6:11 –

Saint Paul speaks of the full assurance of hope and of full assurance of faith, as being the proper conditions for the Lord's people. (Heb. 6:11; 10:22.)—full confidence that he who has begun a good work in us is both able and willing to complete it. (Phil. 1:6.)

The consecrated are the only ones who really fully and truly enjoy this present life, for they indeed have a peace of heart which the world can neither give nor take away—a condition which all the world is coveting and seeking after, but finding not because they seek it not in the Lord's way of full self-surrender to him. We urge, then, upon the class now addressed that they promptly make their covenant with the Lord, and thus become heirs of his good promises pertaining to the life that now is, and also of that which is to come, and that thus they lay the **foundation** for entering into "full assurance of the faith" and full assurance of the hope that God's mercy and goodness shall follow them all the days of the present life, and that they shall dwell in the heavenly home forever.

Let such also remember the language of the Apostle, that if God loved us while we were yet sinners, so that he provided for us the great salvation in Christ Jesus our Lord, much more does he love us now, since we have been justified through faith in the great atonement, and have made a full consecration of ourselves to him, and thus come under the terms of adoption into his family. Let him remember too, that he who has begun the good work changes never, and that if our hearts are still in harmony with him, if our faith is still clear and firm in the great atonement, if our consecration is still full and complete, so that we seek not our own wills but his will to be done in our affairs, then we may indeed have the full assurance of faith, because knowing that God is unchangeable, and knowing that we are still in line with his promises and arrangements, we know that all of his gracious providences are still being exercised on our behalf. This is full assurance of faith—full confidence in the Lord. R. 2642

The Oath-Bound Covenant

For when God made a promise to Abraham, because He could swear by no one greater, He swore by Himself, saying, “Surely blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply you.” And so, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise. For men indeed swear by the greater, and an oath for confirmation is for them an end of all dispute. Thus God, determining to show more abundantly to the heirs of promise the immutability of His counsel, confirmed it by an oath, that by two immutable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we might have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before us.

– Hebrews 6:13-18 –

[Here we have] the greatest of all imaginable Covenants on record—the Covenant on which all of our hopes as Christians depend. Harken to the Apostle Paul’s estimation of this Covenant as stated in Hebrews 6. Urging the Israelites to patience and faith that they might inherit the promises, The Apostle thus shows that the Abrahamic Covenant (without a mediator, because it was unconditional) was firmly bound in a manner that would be satisfactory even amongst men, namely, by an oath.

How much more convincing is God’s oath, making sure, unchangeable that basic Covenant made with Abraham, assuring the **heirs** of the promise (“us”) that ultimately all mankind will receive a blessing, and that it would come through us. (Gal. 3:29.) The Apostle tells us that that oath was intended of God for us rather than for Abraham, to give **us** strong consolation, that **we** might lay hold firmly of the hope set before us in that promise—that Abrahamic Covenant. He adds (v. 19) that we have this hope as an anchor of the soul sure and steadfast within the veil, whither Jesus has entered as our forerunner, to whom we are approaching—as members to our Head. He is the Head of that Seed of promise. We, the members of his Body, will shortly follow him beyond the veil and share his glorious work of blessing the nations, beginning with Israel, under a New Covenant. We, as the adopted members of the Body of Christ, are directly the beneficiaries of the original Covenant, whose other features of blessing the world will all be worked out through us—under the New Covenant arrangement with Israel.

**This hope we have as an anchor of the soul,
both sure and steadfast, and which enters the
Presence behind the veil.**

Hebrews 6:19

St. Paul reminds us that God not only declared His coming blessing, but that He made oath to the same. God’s oath was not necessary to Abraham. He confidently believed; but, as St. Paul said, the oath was for **our** sake. The fulfillment of the promise would be so **long deferred** that we, who are so specially interested in it, might have feared some change in the Divine Program. St. Paul assures us that the oath was in order that, “by two immutable things (God’s Word and God’s oath), we might have strong consolation (we, the Church), who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us (in ‘the good tidings’, the promise), which hope we have as an anchor to our souls, sure and steadfast, within the veil, whither our Forerunner has for us entered.” (Hebrews 6:18-20.) We see, then, by the Apostle’s words, that the Abrahamic promise or Covenant has not yet been fulfilled—it is still an anchor for our faith. R. 4496 and R. 4939

The forerunner has entered for us, even Jesus, having become High Priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.

– Hebrews 6:20 –

Going back we hearken to the Apostle's statement to the Jews in which he admits that Christ was not of the tribe of Levi, but of the tribe of Judah, and could not have been an earthly priest under the Divine arrangement; for the earthly priesthood was confined to Aaron and his sons. But, says the Apostle, the priesthood of Jesus is not an earthly one, but a Heavenly one. It is the risen, glorified Christ who is the High Priest of this higher order than Aaron's—this Order of Melchizedek.

The Apostle points out that the priesthood of Aaron repeated the typical sacrifices year by year, but that this evidently could not be all that God designed; for these repeated sacrifices did not abolish original sin, but merely covered or condoned it for the year for which they were offered, and the purpose of God as everywhere set forth was evidently larger and broader than this, eventually a complete cancellation of sin. Hence the Aaronic priesthood could not have been the end of the Divine purpose. The Apostle proceeds to point out that God had already decreed a new priesthood to be established in His own due time, and that this Divine purpose was plainly stated through the Prophet David, who, as the Lord's mouthpiece, declares,

The LORD has sworn And will not relent, “You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.”

Psalms 110:4

The Apostle's logic is conclusive with all whose eyes of understanding are opened. The priesthood of Aaron, which had lasted for over sixteen centuries, was some day to terminate, and a new priesthood after the Order of Melchizedek was to be introduced, and the Chief of this order was to be Messiah Himself. The Apostle shows therefore that the Divine purpose was that “better sacrifices” for sin should be offered, and that this meant the passing at the proper time of the typical Aaronic priesthood. He proceeds to argue that the Lord Jesus, having come as the High Priest of this new Order, has already offered Himself a sacrifice to God well pleasing, and that on the strength of this sacrifice all who believe on Him, all who accept Him, all who seek to flee away from their sins and to return to harmony with God, are privileged so to do. SM138

But He, because He continues forever, has an unchangeable priesthood. Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them. For such a High Priest was fitting for us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and has become higher than the heavens, who does not need daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for His own sins and then for the people's, for this He did once for all when He offered up Himself.

Hebrews 7:24-27

In that He says, “A new covenant,” He has made the first obsolete. Now what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away.

– Hebrews 8:13 –

Not a single statement of Scripture identifies the New Covenant with the Gentiles. On the contrary, it is Israel's New Covenant given to displace the Old or Law Covenant. Let us note well that the great mass of the early Church were Hebrews and that the Apostle's references to the New Covenant are almost exclusively in his epistle to the Hebrews. One exception is in Rom. 11:27, where the Apostle, although addressing Christians of Gentile birth, tells them that natural Israel was cast off for their sakes, but is still beloved for the fathers' sake, and is again to have Divine favor, under a special Covenant. The other (2 Cor. 3:6) refers to the royal priesthood as able (qualified) servants of the New Covenant—dying with Christ for its sealing. —Mal. 3:1.

The more closely we investigate the New Covenant, the more we must be convinced of this fact—that it belongs to Israel alone, including the two nations into which they divided at the death of Solomon—Israel and Judah. Note the statement of the Prophet,

Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah---not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt.

Jeremiah 31:31-32

The Apostle, endeavoring to prove to the Jews that they could gain nothing under the Law Covenant, points out this prophecy, and tells them that the fact that God speaks of this as a New Covenant implies that a preceding [Law] Covenant had become old, valueless, and was preparing to pass away.
R. 4319

And for this reason He is the Mediator of the new covenant, by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions under the first covenant, that those who are called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance.

– Hebrews 9:15 –

St. Paul shows that there is a special work of Christ on behalf of the Jews: they being under the death sentence of the Law Covenant, Christ's death **on the tree** was necessary for them, because that was the special “curse” of the Law. Thus a basis is laid, whereby all the transgressions of the Hebrews under the Law Covenant may be fully cancelled, under the provisions of the New Covenant when it shall become effective. (Rom. 11:27.) Not only so, but this special redemption of the Hebrews enabled those called of God from that nation during this Gospel Age to receive a share in the promise of the eternal inheritance—as members of Christ under the original Abrahamic Covenant.

Then follows a statement of the general principle – that where a Will or Testament is made, the death of the testator is implied, and only after the death of the testator could its blessings be enjoyed. Our

Lord having earned a right to human perfection and human life by obedience to the Law Covenant conditions, laid down those earthly rights in sacrifice, in harmony with the Father's will. And, when raised from the dead a New Creature of the Divine nature, he possessed those earthly rights which he laid down as a ransom-price for mankind, with the right to dispose of them. His Testament or Will disposing of those earthly rights could have been so made as to give them at once to fleshly Israel by sealing for them the promised New Covenant. But instead the Testator gave those earthly blessings to the household of faith, those called out from the nominal Jewish Church during and after his earthly ministry, and to "us" of the Gentiles since, on condition that they **join in his sacrifice**, "suffer with him," "be dead with him," participate with him in the glorious privileges of the Abrahamic Covenant for the blessing of the world under the New Covenant provision.

Let us never lose sight of the central purpose for which this Book was written—that it was to prove that the Law Covenant must give way, give place, to the New Covenant. Hence all the things connected with the typical Law Covenant should be expected to have antitypes in connection with the antitypical New Covenant. Thus the sacrifices of the Law, which came at the beginning of their year on the Day of Atonement, before the sins of the people could be forgiven, must here find parallel in "better sacrifices" than the bullock and the goat. The New Covenant cannot go into effect until these antitypical sacrifices are accomplished. He thus proved the inferiority of everything Jewish and connected with the Law Covenant; that all Christians might see that instead of going back to that or holding on to it, they should rather be grasping, looking forward to the antitypes, and grasping their share in the "better sacrifices."

**In his Epistle to the Hebrews St. Paul wished the Christian Hebrew brethren to take the larger, broader, truer thought respecting the Law Covenant and everything pertaining to it—its sacrifices, its mediator, its Law. He wished them to recognize it as merely a typical Covenant; that it prefigured a New Covenant; that its mediator typified a better Mediator, The Christ; that its bulls and goats of sin-offering typified the better sacrifices by which the New Covenant would become operative, the better sacrifices being those of the better Mediator—
Jesus the Head and the Church his Body. R. 4624**

We are not, therefore, to consider the ones here "called" [Heb. 9:15] as referring to those who receive the High Calling—joint-heirship with Christ, the Spiritual Seed of Abraham—but we are to understand the Apostle here to mean the Jewish nation that was called—all of this Jewish nation who would come into accord with the Divine arrangement. The same Apostle (Rom. 11:27) says, "For the gifts and the calling of God are not to be repented of." That is to say, God having called the Jewish nation to be his peculiar people, having made them definite promises respecting the blessing of all nations, has no thought or intention of abrogating those promises. Every Covenant, every promise that God has ever made and every thing that he has ever done, he has foreknown its full import and its results, and he has done nothing hastily. Israel, therefore, is the nation which he has foreknown to be the one he will use in connection with his work of blessing all of the families of the earth; as the Apostle says (Romans 11:27), "For this is my Covenant with them, when I shall take away their sins." R. 4512 and R. 4624

For Christ has not entered the holy places made with hands, which are copies of the true, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us.

– Hebrews 9:24 –

the Apostle indicates how much of the sacrificing has already been finished; namely, that the High Priest has gone into the “most holy,” “now to appear in the presence of God for us” —for Spiritual Israel. But he adds we must not expect him to do this every year, as it was done in the type. We must not think that Christ’s sacrifice could avail us only in conjunction with the Jewish institutions as additional thereto. To so suppose would imply that such annual sacrifices would have been necessary from the foundation of the world. But this was not the case: Abraham and others were justified by faith before the Law Covenant was instituted. In the end of the age Christ appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. And as men-priests are appointed to die, as symbolically represented in the animals they sacrificed, and as they after this passed into the Holy, and were there put on judgment, or tested before they entered the “Most Holy,” so Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many, and, to them that are looking for him, he shall appear the second time, not as a sin-offering, but to grant the salvation secured by the merit of his sacrifice—to inaugurate the New Covenant, and as its Mediator to set up its Kingdom for the overthrow of sin and death and the establishment of righteousness and life.

Christ was **once** offered to bear the sins of many, the Apostle says. The type shows us **two offerings**, yet the two were parts of one. The first represented the Head, and the second, the Body. The two sacrifices of the Day of Atonement were really one, because the second was based upon the first. The offering as a whole was evidently for the sins of the whole world. Evidently, as the Apostle says, the next thing to be expected, to be waited for, is his finishing his sacrificial work, finishing the sprinkling of the blood the second time, and then coming out, as typed in the high priest clothed “in garments of glory and beauty,” representative of his elements of glory and power. He will stand forth as the Mediator of the New Covenant, the great Messiah, Prophet, Priest, King and Judge. R. 4512

By that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

– Hebrews 10:10 –

We, who have become his disciples, are sanctified by accepting his will and saying, as he did, “Lo, I come to do thy will, O God.” We are sanctified through the offering of the Body of Jesus Christ, because we, accepted as members of his Body, are set apart to this great priestly, kingly, mediatorial work with him. Incidentally notice here that previously we were “justified” through the merit of Jesus’ sacrifice, but that now we are sanctified through the offering of the Body. It is only as we obtain this great privilege of sacrificing as members of his Body that we can have any expectancy of participation with him in his glory. This Body was offered once for all. The individual members of the Church are not offered separately. The one “Lord’s goat” represented the one entire Body of Christ, the “little flock,” all who, during this Gospel Age will be accepted as members and lay down their lives in sacrifice with him. This one sacrifice of Christ (in two parts, Head and Body) having been offered (the Head at Jordan, the Body at Pentecost), our Lord rests from any further sacrificing, knowing that full satisfaction will be effected by the work already accomplished. R. 4512

This Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God.

Hebrews 10:12

Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh, and having a High Priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.

– Hebrews 10:19-22 –

In verse nineteen the Apostle reverts to the fact that while this great work is still **incomplete**, we, brethren [prospective under-priests], may have the boldness [courage] to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a **new** and living way, which he has consecrated **for us, through the veil**, that is to say, his flesh; we may by faith realize ourselves as under-priests, members of the High Priest's Body, joint-sacrificers with him and under his ministration. We may enjoy now the privileges and blessings of the Holy and be assured that, as members of the great High Priest, and Mediator, we may ultimately go beyond the veil, even into heaven itself, entering that glorious plane of life **through sharing with him in his death**. This special way he consecrated for us as the High Priest, by making the merit of his death, typified by the blood of the bullock, applicable to us, permitting us in the strength of that justification to sacrifice with him and to become his members in glory.

It is in reference to this proposition to advance from the "Court" condition of justification into the "Holy" or heavenly or spirit-begotten condition, reached through consecration (and the closest possible approach to God) that the Apostle urges, "Let us draw near." His language implies that there may properly be a diffidence on our part in respect to this privilege. We might properly hesitate to expect to have communion, fellowship, close approach to the great Creator, realizing that by nature we are imperfect, "children of wrath, even as others," and that in whatever degree we differ from others and are accounted worthy of such a privilege of drawing near to God, it is not on account of personal worth on our part, but on account of God's grace bestowed upon us through Jesus our Lord. The Apostle therefore speaks to believers in an encouraging voice: "Let us draw near;" let us have courage to draw near; let us have faith in God, who has made us such gracious arrangements and promises.

The Apostle intimates that a close approach to God cannot be effected, except we have first a "full assurance of faith." Only those who trust the Lord implicitly, "as a little child" (Luke 18:17) would trust its earthly parent, can expect to progress and to have the courage, the confidence, necessary to approach God in this very intimate manner; and the desire to draw nearer and nearer to God must be in the justified believer's heart, else he will never go on and attain to this his privilege. And this desire to draw near to God is a manifestation of our hunger and thirst after righteousness, which the Lord expects to see before he fulfils to such his engagement that they shall be filled, satisfied. —Matt. 5:6. R. 4513 and 2670

How very much is implied in this expression, "Having our hearts sprinkled from a consciousness of evil"! It not only means that we are to avoid sin, and to take heed that the words of our mouths and the meditations of our hearts are acceptable to the Lord, but it means additionally that our hearts, having covenanted self-sacrifice, shall be able to look up to the Lord confidently and realize his blessing and approval, because of the honest, earnest efforts on our part to comply with the terms of our consecration. But since we cannot fully comply with the terms ourselves, it is requisite that we shall apply to ourselves by faith the merit of the precious blood of Christ, the blood of sprinkling, the blood of consecration, and that we shall realize that our acceptance is only in the Beloved One. R. 2671

Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful.

– Hebrews 10:23 –

In harmony with the terms of our consecration, we confess to men that we have a faith that reaches beyond the present life, a hope that “entereth into that within the veil,” whither Christ, our Forerunner, has entered for us. We confess our hope that we shall have a part in His resurrection; that “we shall be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye,” and like Him be spirit beings, see Him as He is and share His glory on the Divine plane. We confess that we hope with Him to be instruments in the Father’s hands, bringing life and joy and blessing to all the world of mankind, the living and the dead; that we hope to uplift them from death, to raise them from all the sin and blight and sorrow and tears that have oppressed them for these six thousand years. Truly ours is a wonderful hope! Who would not rejoice to tell it!

If, then, we have this faith, this hope, and are properly confessing it before men, let us “hold fast.” Tests of our loyalty will continually come. The flesh will be inclined to rebel strongly at times. The questions will present themselves: Are you willing to confess Christ? Are you ashamed to own His name before the world, or do you esteem this your chiefest honor? There will be temptations to become discouraged. Our weaknesses will rise up before us, and the Adversary will take advantage of these circumstances to further dishearten us. And not only will there come these temptations along the line of our faith and hope, but there will come certain reproaches and persecutions, permitted for the purpose of proving our loyalty. Ours is a marvelous calling, and only heroic souls are wanted to fill the places in this elect class—only those who have the Spirit of the Master. R. 5497

And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works.

– Hebrews 10:24 –

Oh, how much the Lord’s people need to remember this injunction, if they would have proper forbearance and love one toward another, —to consider one another’s sacrifice, to think of each other’s imperfections, peculiarities or good qualities, as the case may be. With the Christian brother consideration always means to think kindly, charitably, even of the blemishes which love cannot hide. These blemishes are not to be considered lest they sour our hearts and arouse in our minds an opposition to one another; nor are they to be considered as an excuse for gossip or slander. The Apostle explains that we are to consider one another with a view to ascertaining how we can be most helpful to each other in the narrow way, most edifying, most strengthening, most inspiring. R. 3313

The word “provoke” signifies *to incite to*. Love should say and do those things that will incite to loving words rather than stir up bitterness, which leads to anger, wrath, malice, strife and evil-speaking. (Eph. 4:31,32.) In other words, it is much better to be a peacemaker than a strife-maker. Yet we are not to have *peace* at *any price*; rather we should have peace, if possible, where *principle* is not involved. We should stir up strife only where some good is sure to result. R. 5125

Of how much worse punishment, do you suppose, will he be thought worthy who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, counted the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing, and insulted the Spirit of grace?

– Hebrews 10:29 –

The Apostle is here evidently contrasting Moses and his Law with the Antitypical Moses and the greater Law. Any one who despised the Law of Moses, the arrangement made and established through the typical Law Covenant, was condemned to death, a sentence from which he is to be released through the merit of Christ. Since that condemnation was merely of a temporal character this does not affect his eternal interests.

It is evident that there is a difference between these two condemnations—that if any one should come under the condemnation of the Antitypical Moses his punishment would be even more severe. This severer, or “sorer punishment,” we understand to be the “Second Death” —utter annihilation. If any one despises the Law of God, in any particular, as expressed through Christ and the New Covenant arrangement, he will be worthy of the Second Death. This principle, we see, will apply all through the Millennial Age, in the sense that any and every one who, after being brought to a knowledge of the provisions and favors that God has brought to him through Christ, shall then treat the matter lightly and fail to reciprocate such love, fail to be obedient to this arrangement for his relief, will be counted unworthy of receiving any more favor of God and will go into the Second Death. Evidently, however, the Apostle is not here considering what will happen at the end of the Millennial Age, and we merely mention it incidentally to show the wide scope of the comparison between Moses and Christ.

The Apostle is not applying this text, however, to the world, but to the Church. All the context shows that he is addressing the Church, those who have been begotten of the holy Spirit, those whose sins have been covered by the imputation of Christ’s righteousness and who, in the strength of that covering, are justified, have presented their bodies living sacrifices. Now, if we should ever lose sight of this wonderful privilege, if we should ever come to the place where we fail to appreciate the fact that we have been invited to share in our Lord’s “Cup,” have been invited to participate with him in this blood of the New Covenant, this blood which is to ratify, to seal the New Covenant, it would be doing despite to all these privileges and favors which have been specially given to us, but never given to any other people in the world and never will be given again, a great privilege never offered to the angels, but offered only to the Lord Jesus Christ himself, and those who would have his spirit during this age.

If, then, we lose our appreciation of that “Cup” and say that it is only an ordinary thing, only such as all nominal Christians have thought it to be; only turning away from sin and trying to live an upright life; it is not a special sacrifice; it is not a participation in the blood of Christ at all, nor drinking of his “Cup,” then we are despising and rejecting all the privileges that were offered to us specially, above those offered to any other people. It would signify that we had despised the whole arrangement and that something was wrong with our hearts—providing, however, we did it intentionally, willingly, knowingly, after we had seen that this is the privilege of sacrifice, after we had known that we were accepted as members of Christ, to “suffer with him, that we might also reign with him.”

For all such as have ever had this clearer knowledge and appreciation, to turn away is to reject this “blood of the Covenant,” and to do despite to it, and to fail to use the privileges offered. In undertaking to use these privileges they had first, of necessity, to make the sacrifice of the earthly nature. It therefore follows that there is nothing left for them, for they have scorned the new nature

and the Lord's provisions which are obtainable only through participation in the sacrifice of Christ. No opportunity for restitution is left them. Hence the only thing for them is that which is appropriate for those who despise God's arrangement after they have once understood it, and that is the Second Death.

The "sorer punishment" mentioned by the Apostle (Heb. 10:29) is the "sin unto death." Are we competent to point out who have committed that sin? For our own part we would prefer not to exercise judgment in the matter, but merely to say that such judgment is for the Lord. We will not make any decision until we see the Lord's judgment.

We cannot imagine that if anyone would reject the Lord in any sense of the word it would still leave him in the light of Truth. We must understand that if anyone rejects the Lord, the light of Truth will gradually pass from him, and he will see no more than many do, no more than a nominal church-goer or any worldly person. Such passing into outer-darkness is a sign that the Lord's favor has been lost. To what extent it has been lost we might not wish to determine, but if, in conjunction with this, there is manifested the character of the Adversary, the spirit of Satan—anger, malice, hatred, envy, strife—then we should conclude that the Spirit of the Lord had left and that the loser was dead—"twice dead, plucked up by the roots"—Jude 12. R. 4606

It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.
Hebrews 10:31

Therefore do not cast away your confidence, which has great reward. For you have need of endurance, so that after you have done the will of God, you may receive the promise.

– Hebrews 10:35-36 –

The Lord wants us to have a faith that will continue in sorrow and in sunshine; that will trust where it cannot see, that will continue under all the leadings of Divine providence. If a follower of the Lord has been discouraged or has felt that his expectations have not been realized, he should not be weary in well doing. He should go to the Lord in prayer and renew his vow of consecration. He should rise from the ashes of discouragement and lift the cross with renewed zeal. He should endeavor to walk on a higher plane than ever. If he lose confidence, lose faith, he will easily be overcome by the Adversary.

St. Paul exhorts all such, saying, "Cast not away your confidence." Let such remember that the fact that they have received this Divine favor is an indication that their offering has had Divine acceptance. Faith, or confidence, in God and in the "great and precious promises" is the very basis of all Christian endeavor. Without this faith one cannot fight a good fight. In proportion as the promises are before our minds, in that proportion we have strength and courage to run the narrow way.

His promises, as well as His providences, are walls of salvation and protection on every hand. What shall separate us from the love of God in Christ? Shall tribulation? No! it shall but cause us to draw closer to Him; and under His protecting care we shall rest. His grace is sufficient for us. His strength is made manifest in our weakness. When we feel weak in ourselves, then we are strong in Him. He will never leave us nor forsake us. R. 5095

Hebrews Chapter 11

The chapter under consideration is one of the masterpieces of holy writ. Indeed, the entire book of Hebrews occupies a very commanding position in the Bible. Some, indeed, have questioned its authorship, but to us there seems no room for doubt that it was written by St. Paul. It is marked throughout by his masterful logic, reverence and personal humility. It gives insight into the Divine Plan of the Ages, which fully comports with St. Paul's other epistles and which far transcends in this respect all the other writings of the Bible. It has been noted by some that its style is more lofty than that of some others of St. Paul's epistles; but this may be easily accounted for. Those other epistles, although full of sound reasoning and logic, are written in a simple and fatherly style for the general reader. This one was written particularly for the benefit of the other eleven apostles and other learned Hebrews who were slow to discern the change of dispensation. Naturally, therefore, it was St. Paul's masterpiece, because upon it he evidently expended the greater labor—demonstrating the typical character of the Jewish Dispensation and indicating the antitypes of the Gospel Dispensation, as well as some reaching well into the Millennium. The references in the thirteenth chapter to Timothy and the statement, "They of Italy salute you," imply that St. Paul wrote this epistle from Rome, where he was in prison. R. 4385

Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

– Hebrews 11:1 –

Faith is more than hope. Faith implies a promise. And when a promise is made by the Almighty God, who changes not and who is as omnipotent as he is unchangeable, then faith can firmly trust him, come what may. Hope finds a foundation—finds in faith a substance, because the faith rests upon a Divine promise. Whoever, therefore, has hope that is without such a Divine promise has a foundationless hope. Thus we see the heathen with hopes and fears full of uncertainty; yea, many Christians, hoping for certain things, have uncertainty, fear and doubt, because they have not faith. And they have not faith because they are hoping for something which God has not promised and to many of them the things which he has promised are not known, not understood, and, therefore, not a basis for faith, nor a foundation for hope. Realizing these things, how careful we should be that our hopes should not soar away to uncertain fantasy, but build solidly upon the faith foundation of Divine promise.

The Apostle briefly sums up the matter of the Christian's present lessons in faith, saying, "We walk by faith and not by sight. The more carefully we walk with God the more peaceful and the more joyful may be our Pilgrim journey towards the New Jerusalem. Outwardly the world, the flesh and the Adversary may harass us, but no grief, no tribulation can shake our inmost joy, if it be well founded upon the faith foundation of Divine assurances that we are children of God, in touch with the Infinite, beloved by our Redeemer, who assures us that "The Father himself loveth you," and the Apostle, that "all things shall work together for good to them that love God, to the called ones according to his purpose." R. 4385

Without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.

Hebrews 11:6

Heroes of Faith

from Hebrews Chapter 11

The Apostle brings before our minds from the past a galaxy of faith heroes. He holds them up for our admiration, so that they shine and sparkle and excite our admiration and, we trust, stimulate us to similar faith-heroism. None of these enumerated by the Apostle was a heathen vagarist feeling after God and hoping against hope and soaring off in imagination. They were all positive, forceful characters, who knew in whom they believed and testified their faith by their obedience to God. R. 4385



These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off were assured of them, embraced them and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.
Hebrews 11:13

Heroes Named:

Abel
Enoch
Noah
Abraham
Sarah
Isaac
Jacob
Joseph
Moses
Rahab
Gideon
Barak
Samson
Jephthah
David
Samuel

Heroes Not Named but Referenced:

Joshua
Esther
Daniel
Shadrach
Meshach
Abednego
Widow of Zerepath
Shunamite Woman
Elijah
Elisha
Jeremiah
Zechariah
Isaiah
John the Baptist
(support for many more)

All these, having obtained a good testimony through faith, did not receive the promise, God having provided something better for us, that they should not be made perfect apart from us.
Hebrews 11:39-40

Abraham — Father of the Faithful

He waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God.

– Hebrews 11:10 –

Abraham is styled “The Father of the Faithful”—not because Noah and Enoch and Abel had not been faithful, but because with Abraham God started a faith family to whom were given many and great promises. That family became known as the nation of Israel, and latterly as Spiritual Israel. Again, Abraham was the father of the faithful, because while the heroes that preceded him exercised faith in God, it was more along abstract lines, whereas the Divine revelation to Abraham was the Gospel, the good tidings in definite form—that in and through his Seed all the families of the earth should receive a blessing. Thus the Apostle declares that God preached in advance the Gospel to Abraham, and thus all who believe that Gospel, of which redemption by Messiah is the essential, all such are called “the children of Abraham,” and he is spoken of as their father, the one through whom this Gospel hope was caused to descend.

**The Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel to Abraham beforehand, saying,
“In you all the nations shall be blessed.”
Galatians 3:8**

But in still another sense Abraham was the Father of the Faithful: in the sense that he typified the heavenly Father, as Isaac typified our Lord Jesus, and as Isaac’s bride, Rebecca, typified the elect Gospel Church.

Abraham’s call of God was the result of his having faith in God and because he lived at an appropriate time for the Divine purposes to begin to be expressed. First his faith was tested by the Divine command that he leave his native country to wander up and down through Palestine as a shepherd, dwelling in tents without any fixed habitation, without any attempt to take possession of the land and to establish himself in it by building fortresses, etc. The promise was that in after times God would bring his posterity to this land and give it to them for a possession.

The promise went further and declared that if obedient the Lord’s blessing would continue and that the seed of Abraham would become great and influential and that through it all nations would receive a blessing—and by implication all would come under its control. It required great faith to believe all this under the circumstances. And the test continued, as, year by year, Abraham’s wife grew older, until the time of motherhood was long past. Still we read that Abraham’s faith “wavered not.”

Still later, after Isaac the son of promise had been born and had grown to manhood, the Lord tested the faith of this wonderful man by telling him to offer his son as a sacrifice. The father love, the hopes of years, and apparently the Divine Word and Oath were all about to be wrecked. Yet his faith “faltered not,” for he accounted that God was able to raise his son from the dead and that surely God would fulfill his every promise to which he had bound himself, not only by his Word, but also by his Oath.

While we exclaim, Wonderful faith! let us remember that this was the very quality of Abraham which specially commended him to the Almighty as his particular friend. And let us remember that if we would have the particular friendship and blessing and fellowship of the Lord this is the channel through which it is to be sought—the channel of faith, of trust, of obedience. “Without faith it is impossible to please God.” The more faith we have the more pleasing we shall be in the Lord’s sight and the more we may be used of him as channels of blessing to others—however imperfect we may be in other respects.

When the Apostle declares that Abraham “looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God,” we must not think this to mean that in his journeying throughout Palestine, he expected some day to come upon a newly-built city of divine construction. Nor should we think with some others that Abraham was looking for the New Jerusalem to come down from heaven—a city built of literal precious stones with gates of literal pearls. No, Abraham knew nothing about that city, for nothing respecting it had yet been revealed.

A city, in olden times, stood for and represented a fortification, a government, a rule of authority. Abraham realized that the earth was full of sin and violence and out of harmony with God. He knew that Enoch, his ancestor, a man of God, had already prophetically declared that Messiah would come, the representative of Jehovah, and establish a Government, a Kingdom, a City of Righteousness. He longed for that righteous government and realized that its foundation of righteousness would be deeply laid, and that it would be an everlasting Kingdom. He knew that occasionally a monarch came to an earthly throne possessed of good intentions and partially able to exercise these, but that soon his throne, his kingdom, crumbled and passed to others.

Abraham, therefore, was not in sympathy with any in his day, nor since, in looking for an earthly kingdom, but he was looking beyond all these for the Kingdom of God’s dear Son—the Millennial Kingdom. His eye of faith looked down and beheld Messiah and the exaltation of Israel and the blessing of all the families of the earth during the Millennial day. Our Lord Jesus attested this, saying,

Abraham rejoiced to see my day (the Millennial day of Christ’s reign), and he saw it and was glad. [John 8:56]

The Jews misunderstood our Lord to mean that he had been with Abraham. Others misunderstand him to mean that Abraham saw by faith his work of sacrifice. It is true that our Lord did appear to Abraham. It is true that in a certain sense Abraham foresaw the sacrifice of Christ in the typical sacrifice of Isaac, but it is also true that “the Day of Christ” is the Millennial day for the world’s blessing and that it was that which Abraham saw and which gladdened his eye of faith.

We also see the same; and, sharing the same faith, we share the same joy and gladness of hope and expectancy. We indeed discern still more clearly than Abraham of what that city or Kingdom consists—that our Lord will be the great King, the Head over the Church his Body (his Members, his Bride) and that this Bride, the Lamb’s Wife, is pictured symbolically in the New Jerusalem, whose foundation stones in glory will be “the twelve apostles of the Lamb.” (Rev. 21:2,11-14.) We see more clearly than did Abraham (because guided by the holy Spirit through the Word) that the Ancient Worthies will be the earthly channels or agents through which this Heavenly City will send forth its blessings to Israel and to all the families of the earth. As it is written, “Ye shall see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the Kingdom.” Christ and his elect spiritual Bride will not be seen by men except as we now see our Lord, with the eye of faith. R. 4387

All these, having obtained a good testimony through faith, did not receive the promise, God having provided something better for us, that they should not be made perfect apart from us.

– Hebrews 11:39-40 –

St. Paul refers to these [heroes of faith] in Hebrews 11, and declares their loyalty to God. These are to have a “better resurrection” than their brethren or than mankind in general. The Apostle mentions such characters as Moses, Samuel, David, and many of the prophets and others who were not so honored and prominent as these in an earthly way, but who had the honor of having pleased God.

Their serving the Lord with all their heart and soul could not justify them legally; for they were imperfect and blemished through the fall. But all the powers they had were devoted to the Lord. These became heirs of God—not heirs in the highest sense, because this opportunity was not open in their time. No one could gain this highest position until the Redeemer had come and opened the way. So all these worthy ones who lived prior to the Christian Era, died in faith, not having received the promise, i. e., its fulfillment. But “they looked for a City which hath foundations, whose Builder and Maker is God.” And soon these faithful servants of the Lord will “stand up for their portion.”

But we, the Church, must all first be perfected. In this class our Lord Jesus holds the highest place, and by the sacrifice of Himself He opened the door of opportunity to His brethren of the elect class—“Israelites indeed.” Throughout this Gospel Age these true Israelites have been entering into this wonderful favor with all their heart and with all their soul. R. 5528

Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses*, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith.

– Hebrews 12:1-2 –

The Apostle points us back to those ancient worthies as a stimulus for faith and zeal. The fact that the Ancient Worthies were even then dead need not detract from the Apostle’s figure of speech. He wishes us to remember that this “**cloud of witnesses**” is surrounding us, and that therefore we should run this race faithfully. While those noble characters will not obtain the prize for which we are running, they are, nevertheless, to have a prize. As we recall how faithfully they endured and achieved what was set before them, how careful we should be in running the race set before us—a race for glory, honor and immortality!

This “cloud of witnesses” continually surrounds us. The experiences of the Ancient Worthies are our experiences. At every step of our journey we find encouragement, strength, from the contemplation of their course. The Apostle, in giving us the picture of our text, indicates that we are to consider ourselves as running a race. We are to view the affairs of the present life as from a race-course. No doubt St. Paul had before his mind the popular Grecian games of his day, especially the races. So his suggestions to those in the race for glory, honor and immortality are based upon that mental picture. As the runners in those races would strip themselves of all that was not absolutely necessary, so the Christian should lay aside all possible weights and hindrances in his course, and run with patience the race set before him. R. 2035 and R. 5318

*Greek: *marturon* – martyrs who so nobly witnessed for God and righteousness

Consider Him who endured such hostility from sinners against Himself, lest you become weary and discouraged in your souls.

– Hebrews 12:3 –

Alas, how many of God's true children become weary and faint in their minds, and are in danger of losing the chief prize because they have failed to think upon, to study out, to comprehend, to **consider** the Lord and what he faithfully endured of opposition. As they would consider his perfection and how, as represented in him, the light shined in darkness and was not appreciated, so they would expect that the light shining from them would not be appreciated either. (John 1:5.) As they would consider how the Lord suffered in every sense unjustly and for righteousness' sake, and then would reflect that their own conduct, even though well meant, is imperfect, it would strengthen them to endure hardness as good soldiers, and not to be weary in well doing, and not to faint under opposition. It would enable them to realize what the Scriptures plainly declare, namely, that experiences and testings are necessary to the Lord's people and if rightly received these all work out everlasting blessings. R. 3313

Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.
Hebrews 12:2

Make straight paths for your feet, so that what is lame may not be dislocated, but rather be healed.

– Hebrews 12:13 –

This text should never be forgotten by any of the Soldiers of the Cross. The strongest need to remember it, and surely the weaker ones need to obey it. We are all lame. None is able to walk uprightly, perfectly, in the footprints of our Lord. At very best, we limp. How necessary, then, that we do our best to avoid trials and temptations which would be a special strain upon us because of our weaknesses of the flesh! How we should seek to walk close to the Lord and to hold firmly to His hand while passing through the trials and the difficulties of the present time!

Does some one suggest that such a course represents weakness and dependence? Surely, it does; and surely the one who does not know of his weakness and dependence upon the Lord has not learned his primary lesson! Let us not be ashamed of regulating our lives so as to avoid temptations as far as possible; for this is the wise course admonished by the Lord's Word. To be proud, self-confident, and willing to trust in ourselves anywhere bespeaks the spirit which is not in close fellowship with the Lord, who shows His face to the humble and the meek.

We make the straight paths by choosing such a course as will not unnecessarily aggravate and excite our weaknesses, and thus make us the more lame. We are to seek to overcome the lameness, and, to do so, are not only to pray, "Abandon us not in temptation," but are to seek to avoid the temptations in all ways. R. 5975 and R. 4348

But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are registered in heaven, to God the Judge of all, to the spirits of just men made perfect.

– Hebrews 12:22-23 –

Again referring to the ancient worthies and their faithfulness (12:18-24), we are reminded of our much more favored position on the stream of time; for we are not approaching, as were they, the established typical kingdom of God under the typical mediator Moses; but, in point of time, we are approaching the glorious antitype of that—the Kingdom of Christ. How inspiring is this thought of the proximity in time to the glory of the Kingdom! And if this was true of the early Church, how much more is it true of us who are living in the end, the “harvest,” of the age?

For you have not come to the mountain that may be touched and that burned with fire, and to blackness and darkness and tempest, and the sound of a trumpet and the voice of words, so that those who heard it begged that the word should not be spoken to them anymore. (For they could not endure what was commanded: “And if so much as a beast touches the mountain, it shall be stoned or shot with an arrow.” And so terrifying was the sight that Moses said, “I am exceedingly afraid and trembling.”)

Hebrews 12:18-21

The Apostle would also lead us to a fuller appreciation of the glory to be revealed in the setting up of the real Kingdom—the antitype—by a reference to the glory that attended the setting up of even the typical kingdom, and the enunciation of its righteous code of divine law. (Verses 18-21; see also 2 Cor. 3:7-11; Exod. 19.) That was a scene whose majesty and glory caused all Israel to fear and tremble; and even Moses said, “I exceedingly fear and quake.” But, he says, that manifestation of glory was nothing in comparison to the glory that excelleth, which shall attend the setting up of the real Kingdom. That will be the glorious New Jerusalem, the true Mount Zion, the city (government or Kingdom) of the living God, the city for which Abraham looked afar off. It will be the general assembly of the Church of the firstborn in the midst of a welcoming host, “an innumerable company of angels:” it will be the gathering together of the Church unto Christ, the mediator of the New Covenant which speaketh better things than the blood of Abel—not vengeance, but peace, pardon and life, —and unto God, the Judge of all, and to the spirits [lives] of just men made perfect;—first the earthly phase of the Kingdom, and finally the full number of the restitution host.

What a glorious prospect! and how full of solemn import to us specially, who have approached to the very threshold of this blessed hope; —solemn, in that the overcoming to be done before we reach the goal will tax all our fortitude and faith and test every principle of righteousness to the utmost. To do this will require the greatest humility and dependence on Christ, not only for redemption but also for grace to help in every time of need. If we should allow pride and self-righteousness to come in and our ears to grow dull to the voice of him that speaketh from heaven, we shall no more escape the wrath of God than would an Israelite have escaped it had he disobeyed the voice which commanded that he should not touch the mountain where God appeared unto them and spoke to them through their mediator Moses; for our God is a consuming fire to all who attempt to approach him except through our mediator, Christ, just as, in the type, he was a consuming fire to any who disregarded the mediation of Moses. R. 2035

**For our God is a consuming fire.
Hebrews 12:29**

Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us have grace, by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear.

– Hebrews 12:28 –

The Apostle, in stating that the kingdom of God—the true Church, the elect—cannot be shaken, thereby intimates that it shall not be exempted from those blasts that shall shake and utterly remove all other organizations, but rather that the true, elect Church shall not be moved by them. Her foundation is sure. “God is in the midst of her, and she shall not be moved.” (Psa. 46:5.) As a matter of fact, we find ourselves today in the midst of these perilous and disintegrating influences. The storm is rising, and, as predicted, it is felt first by the Lord’s little flock of consecrated believers. Their faith and patience and zeal and endurance are being tried by every means that the adversary can devise. Every device of error is being put forth in its most pleasing and subtle form; and advantage is being taken of every weakness of the flesh to overcome those who are endeavoring to fight the good fight of faith and to overcome the world, the flesh and the devil.

And when we consider that “we wrestle not with flesh and blood, but against principalities, and powers, and against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places” (Ephesians 6:12), we realize that the contest is a very unequal one unless we lay hold upon the strength which God supplies to us through Christ.

The Apostle’s language further intimates that since only that which cannot be shaken will remain and will inherit the kingdom, all others will fall. And in this light the words of the Psalmist— “A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand” —are seen to be no exaggeration. Nor should the faithful few be at all dismayed when the various shakings sift out their number; for so it must be until only that which cannot be shaken shall remain. Thus the whole nominal church, both within and outside the various organizations, must be shaken until only the true and faithful remain; for God will gather out of his kingdom all things that offend. —Matt. 13:41.

But this shaking is permitted, not only to sift out of the Church all shakeable things, but it is to extend to all the nations; and so unprepared are they for the storm that is coming, and so unable to resist it, that the Apostle, with prophetic foresight, declares that their shaking signifies their removal (Heb. 12:27); and further, that their removal is not in order that anarchy may prevail, but in order that the kingdom of God, which cannot be shaken, may take their place.

Thank God for the prospect of an unshakeable kingdom, whose kings shall reign in righteousness and whose princes shall decree justice (Isa. 32:1; Prov. 8:15), and under whose dominion the whole earth shall be at rest. (Isa. 14:7.) This is the kingdom which the Prophet declares will indeed be “the desire of all nations,” when it is once established and its blessings begin to be realized by the world.

It is this body of Christ, this spiritual house of Israel, which, though lashed by many a storm, nevertheless “cannot be shaken,” because it is firmly founded upon the Rock Christ Jesus: it is this house that Paul calls “the temple of God” (1 Cor. 3:16; 6:19) that is to inherit the kingdom of God, and that Jehovah says he is going to fill with his glory. He will fill it with the glory of the divine nature: he will make every member of it like unto Christ’s glorious body: he will endue them with power from on high to execute faithfully all of the divine purpose for human restitution, and for the establishment of universal harmony and peace. Praise the Lord for such a prospect for both the Church and the world. May its inspiration be felt by every devoted heart! R. 3053

Therefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered outside the gate. Therefore let us go forth to Him, outside the camp, bearing His reproach.

– Hebrews 13:12-13 –

Israel's Atonement Day prefigured typically the work to be done by The Messiah—the reconciliation of God and mankind. The Day of Atonement had various features. It began with the sacrifice of a bullock, which typified the offering of the Lord Jesus Christ on behalf of the Church. The blood of the bullock was sprinkled on the Mercy Seat for the priest and his house, typifying the entire Household of Faith.

Then the Household of Faith was represented by two goats. One of these goats went through experiences exactly similar to those of the bullock. This goat represented that class of believers who daily follow in the footsteps of the Lord, who are sharers with Him in His sufferings and who will also partake of the glories to follow. —Rom. 12:1,2; Heb. 13:11-13.

The other goat represented that class of consecrated believers who do not go voluntarily to death, but who, without turning to sin, fail to make a **willing** sacrifice. Therefore this class is treated as the scape-goat and driven into the wilderness condition for tribulation experiences. St. Paul seems to refer to this class when he says that some are thus dealt with that the spirit may be saved in the Day of the Lord Jesus. —1 Cor. 5:5.

Because the Scriptures picture the Lord and the Church as the Sin-Offering, therefore we believe it. St. Paul addresses the Church as the antitypical goat class when he says, "The bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought into the Sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned without the camp. **Wherefore** Jesus also, that He might **sanctify the people with His own blood**, suffered **without the gate**. Let us go forth, therefore, unto Him without the camp, bearing His reproach." —Heb. 13:11-13.

What beasts were thus treated? Only the **bullock** and the **Lord's goat**. The Apostle plainly states that Jesus was typified by one of these beasts, and urges the Church—the "Us" class—to go forth unto Him without the camp, thus antityping the Lord's goat. Let us then go forth; let us walk in His footsteps, bearing His reproach with Him; for "if we suffer [with Him] we shall also reign with Him" —shall be glorified together. —2 Tim. 2:11,12. R. 5196

Jesus, as the antitype of the bullock, was not only crucified outside the gate of Jerusalem, but suffered as an outcast from the social and religious systems of the time. St. Paul urges that we, as the Royal Priesthood (typified by the Lord's goat of Leviticus 16), shall also go forth sacrificially outside the camp to suffer with Christ social ostracism, and with deadness toward the world. He fixes by this passage our identity with "the Lord's goat" of Leviticus 16 by assuring us that only the blood of the sin-offerings is taken within the vail—to sprinkle the mercy-seat. He also identifies this sin-offering by suggesting that the bodies of those beasts whose blood propitiated for sin were burned outside the camp. In exhorting the Church to follow the Lord in this experience, he clearly identifies our Lord with the bullock of the Day of Atonement and the Church with the Lord's goat, which followed all of the bullock's experiences. R. 4514

The Apostle says that our Lord thus suffered outside the camp and that we should arm ourselves with the same mind, with the full intention of suffering with him as *his members*. R. 4385

It should not be thought strange that the Lord used this great but humble man, St. Paul, as his mouthpiece in presenting many of the “deep things” of the Divine Plan. His early education and his association with the Gentiles combined with his deep spirituality—and fullness of consecration to the Lord well qualified him to be, as was foretold, the Lord’s “chosen vessel.” Let us remember, too, the order stated:

1 *To bear my name to the Gentiles;*

2 *And before Kings;*

3 *And to Israel.*

St. Paul’s missionary efforts were first directed of the Lord to the Gentiles. It was later on that he stood before King Agrippa and other notables of Palestine—still later that he was sent a prisoner to Rome, and to some extent doubtless bore witness there before the Court. Later through this epistle to the Hebrews God’s message through this Prince of the Apostles did much for “Israelites indeed” who were trammelled by the things of the Law Covenant and unable to disentangle themselves so as to rightly discern between the shadows in the types and the eternal verities antityped in the Christ, Head and Body, and his great work as the “antitypical Priest,” “antitypical Prophet,” “antitypical Judge” and “antitypical Mediator” of the New (Law) Covenant. R. 4385

Now may the God of peace who brought up our Lord Jesus from the dead, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you complete in every good work to do His will, working in you what is well pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.

Hebrews 13:20-21



EPILOGUE

I have fought the good fight. I have finished the race. I have kept the faith. Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.

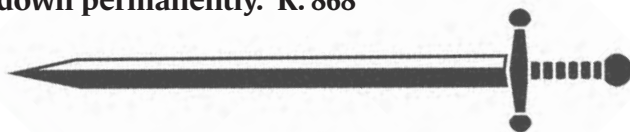
– 2 Timothy 4:7-8 –

How humble and yet how confident are the closing words of the great Apostle's testimony. He did not boast of perfection in his flesh, but on the contrary disclaimed it, saying, that he had constant need to keep his body "under," in subjection to the new mind. He did not boast of how many Churches he had established, nor how many converts he had made and baptized. He did not boast of his knowledge of the Lord's Word, nor of his ability as a speaker, nor of how many epistles he had written, nor of his imprisonments and sufferings for the sake of the gospel. His boast, on the contrary, was simply that he had fought well, fought faithfully, fought the best he was able, against sin abounding on every hand and weaknesses in himself. His boast was not that he had made a faith, nor that he had expressed the gospel in the most clear and positive manner which would descend generations after him to glorify God and to bless his people; but his boast merely was that he had "kept the faith," the faith which God through his Word had inspired, the faith which he had received, and was given to all of the Lord's people; he had kept it, he had been faithful to it, he had not bartered it for a mess of pottage, earthly advantages.

On the strength of these two points,—his having kept the Word of the Lord's testimony obediently, and his having fought in defence of it to the end of his course, to the best of his ability—on the strength of these two things he builds his hope for the crown of rejoicing in the Kingdom with the Redeemer and his faithful, at his appearing.

What an encouragement is here for the very humblest of God's people; not by intellectual or physical strength, not by wonderful works, not by anything that we can do or have done for the Lord, his cause, and his people, are we to hope for eternal glory; but simply with the Apostle we are to seek to use what talents we do possess and what opportunities the Lord provides for us, faithfully. We are to keep the faith, not denying the faith under any consideration—not to secure the favor of any, nor to avoid the frowns of any, may we be unfaithful to the Word of God's testimony. We too, are to fight the good fight against selfishness in its every phase, especially in ourselves, and to develop in ourselves more and more under the Lord's instruction, his spirit, the spirit of love, the holy spirit. R. 2230

Let us, like Paul, fight "a good fight" nor cease to wield the sword of the spirit, the Word of God in opposition to every device of Satan, until we lay our armor down permanently. R. 868



Noting that the Apostle Paul was so faithful a follower of the Lord Jesus, and that his enlightenment in many respects so clearly illustrates our own spiritual enlightenment in this harvest-time, let us lay well to heart the Apostle's words,

I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision.
Acts 26:19

Let us, dear brethren and sisters, who have seen in the light of this harvest-time the light of the Lord's presence (parousia), shining above the brightness of all earthly light, giving a light of the knowledge of the glory of God, showing us something of the divine character and plan—let us not be disobedient unto the heavenly vision, but faithful to our privileges and opportunities in letting the light that has shined into our hearts and minds so shine out to others in our words, and in the living epistles of our lives, that men may glorify our Father which is in heaven. R. 2825



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- B – Volume 2 Studies in the Scriptures: The Time is At Hand
- C – Volume 3 Studies in the Scriptures: Thy Kingdom Come
- D – Volume 4 Studies in the Scriptures: The Battle of Armageddon
- E – Volume 5 Studies in the Scriptures: The At-One-Ment Between God and Man
- F – Volume 6 Studies in the Scriptures: The New Creation

- CR – Convention Reports Sermons
- OV – Overland Monthly
- Q – The Question Book
- R – Reprinted article from Zion's Watchtower
- SM – Pastor Russell's Sermons
- T – Tabernacle Shadows of the Better Sacrifices

St. Paul's Epistles At a Glance

Romans – written A.D. 55-57 from Corinth, from the home of Gaius

The Epistle to the Romans is an answer to the errors of some converts from the Gentiles, who supposed Israel after the flesh to be **permanently** cut off from all divine favor, and themselves **permanently** grafted into their place of favor with God. In his correction of their errors, how beautifully and how clearly he sets forth the past favor of the Jew, and the present favor to all, both Jew and Gentile, who in Christ Jesus have become new creatures. How clearly he marks the steps of divine favor in justification, sanctification and honor, to the little flock who gladly hear and obey the call to suffer with Christ that they may be also glorified together. And finally, how beautifully he shows that there is a future favor for Israel according to the original covenants (11:26-28), and also to the world (8:19,21 and 16:20) to be accomplished through the elect church, called and tested during the Christian age. (11:31,32.) The conclusion of the Epistle shows that the mysteries therein unfolded, were intended to be the power of God to **establish** them in the faith by correcting their errors. R. 868

1 Corinthians – written c. A.D. 53-54 from Ephesus

The First Epistle of the Corinthians was mainly to correct **sectarianism** among those at Corinth, and to answer the erroneous teachings of some, that there would be no resurrection of the dead. (1:11-13 and 15:12.) What a valuable fund of blessing and knowledge came to the church down the ages in connection with the answer and refutation of these errors. He shows the false divisions (1:13) and where the divisions should be made. (5:9-13.) He shows the needful unity of all the true body, and that all truly connected with Christ the head, are of ONE BODY. (12:12-27.) He takes advantage of the doubt about the resurrection, to explain the entire subject, that all will be raised, though not all alike (15:22,40.) He shows how the saints will be raised first (15:23,41-44.) He shows that the world's order of time is afterward, in their own order (15:23); and he shows what they will be like (15:48), and other precious lessons. R. 868

2 Corinthians – written c. A.D. 56-57 from Macedonia

Paul found that the Corinthian church had been beset by false teachers, and that as a consequence their faith in his Apostleship and teaching was somewhat shaken. He therefore found it necessary to write to them; for, said he, I fear lest by any means your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. (2 Cor. 11:3.) Now if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus whom we have not preached, or if ye receive another spirit which ye have not received, or, in short, if they present another entirely different Gospel, better than that you have received, ye might do well to hear them (v. 4); but these do not pretend to bring you a different and a better Gospel, but rather to pervert the Gospel ye had received of us. "Such are false Apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the Apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light (as a messenger of truth). Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness, whose end shall be according to their works." (vs. 13,15.) Let us note the change which the full appreciation of the Gospel wrought upon the believers at Corinth. After the grace of God had entered more fully into their hearts, they began to appreciate the value of the Truth which they had received and to realize that it had brought them priceless blessings of hope, joy, faith and character. R. 551 and R. 5927

Galatians – written either c. A.D. 56-57 or c. A.D. 49 (two schools of thought)

In writing to the Galatians it was to correct false teachings concerning the Law and freedom of Christians from its bondage, and to caution them against false teachers and their doctrines, which were perversions of the true gospel. (Gal. 1:6-9; 2:16; 3:1, etc.) The Apostle Paul's epistle to the Galatians (who had been Gentiles) was written expressly to counteract the influence of the Judaizing teachers who mingled with the believers of Galatia and endeavored to subvert the true faith in Christ by pointing them away from the cross of Christ, to a hope of acceptance with God by keeping the Law of Moses in connection with faith in Christ: thus making the New Covenant merely an **addition** to the Law Covenant and **not** instead of it. This he calls "another gospel," yet really not another, for there can be but one; hence it was a **perversion** of the real gospel. (Gal. 1:7-9.) How grandly the light shines out upon the entire plan, the true gospel, while he exposes the errors. R. 868 and R. 1728

Ephesians – written A.D. 60-61 from Rome

It was from his Roman prison that the Apostle Paul wrote the Epistle to the Ephesians, one of the most beautiful of all his letters to the churches; full of deep spiritual instruction. Its keynote is "in Christ," this expression, or its equivalents, occurring at least twenty times in this Epistle. The Epistle shows that all of God's blessings and favors toward his people are solely upon consideration that they are in Christ Jesus—members of the body of Christ, members of the New Creation. In God's plan only the Church is being dealt with at the present time—that the world's hope is future, and very different from that of the Church, now being called as the body of Christ, "members in particular." R. 3165

Philippians – written A.D. 62 from Rome

The Apostle had been for some time a prisoner at Rome, and he wrote this Epistle in acknowledgment of a substantial gift from the Church at Philippi, and took the opportunity to tell them fully of his own condition, the progress of the Lord's work, etc., and to encourage them to steadfastness to the end. The epistle to the Philippians is one of the most loving of all the Church letters written by the Apostle Paul. It contains no reproofs, no chidings, such as appear in others of the epistles, but rather it is full of approval, commendation and special love. Apparently, too, this little company of the Lord's people loved the Apostle as fervently as he loved them. His afflictions on their account bound their hearts to him in lasting gratitude. R. 1827 and R. 3127

Colossians – written A.D. 60-61 from Rome

Paul says that as our own wills, ambitions, aims and hopes were consecrated and reckoned dead, so we should reckon ourselves as members of the Christ, risen from the dead: new creatures, possessed and controlled by the new will, the mind of Christ. It is this class that the Apostle addresses, and from this standpoint that he declares, "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God." The Apostle is not speaking of the future resurrection of the just—the completion of the first resurrection as spirit beings. He is speaking of the figurative resurrection, which the Lord's consecrated people experience in this present time. R. 2479 and R. 3203

1 Thessalonians – written A.D. 52 from Corinth

The first epistle to the Thessalonians is credited with being the first of the New Testament writings which have come down to us, A.D. 52. It was written from Corinth during the year and a half in which St. Paul labored with his associates there. The epistle is a very fatherly one, very gentle and loving. When we remember that the believers addressed were merely “babes in Christ” less than a year old we are inclined to amazement that the Apostle should consider them prepared for teaching on so high a plane. But the fact is that the cause of Christ was very unpopular because of the pureness of its message, because it presented no comparison with the worldly spirit and because it called for a full consecration, not only of heart, but also of daily living, to the will of God and to his providences. Less than a year before its writing the Apostle and Silas arrived from Philippi bruised and haggard. It will be remembered that they had peace but a short time at Thessalonica, during which they made known the Gospel of God’s grace. Then the Apostle was obliged to flee again. With a fatherly love he assayed several times to revisit the believers, but was always providentially hindered. Possibly these hindrances led up to the writing of this epistle, more profitable for them, as well as advantageous to all of the Lord’s people throughout the [Gospel Age]. R. 4417

2 Thessalonians – written A.D. 52 from Corinth

The Second Epistle to the Thessalonians was written to correct an error, a misapprehension regarding the Lord’s presence, some having gotten the idea that the Lord was **then present**. This occasion to correct error, became the channel through which God gave us such clear instruction regarding the “man of sin,” the “mystery of iniquity,” which has aided us materially in the understanding and applying of many of the prophecies relating to the same. R. 868

1 Timothy – written c. A.D. 63 possibly from Macedonia

St. Paul was the writer of his first Epistle to Timothy, a promising young Elder in the Church, one who had labored much with the Apostle in his work of the ministry. On account of his youth Timothy may not have realized his responsibility. He might have felt that many others in the Church were older than himself and would therefore be better examples to the brethren and better representatives of the Lord before men. But the Apostle here exhorts Timothy to be an example of what a true believer should be. He urged him to “flee youthful lusts,” to “stir up the gift of God” which was in him. Timothy was to make a special use of the talents and opportunities which were his. And in so doing he would be a worthy example—not only *to* believers, but *of* believers, so that not only might the Church see his life and general course, but others, those of the world, might also see this, and thus have greater interest in the Lord’s Cause. The First Epistle to Timothy was [also] to instruct him relative to false teachers (1:3,4,19,20 and 4:1,7.) R. 868 and R. 5860

2 Timothy – written c. A.D. 66 from a Roman prison

Some time around A.D. 66, St. Paul wrote his last Epistle to Timothy who was then Pastor of the Ephesus Church. The Emperor Nero was showing greater hostility than ever against Christians, and circumstances indicated that St. Paul was to be a martyr very soon. Sometimes he addressed Timothy as “his son” in the Gospel. He evidently felt great confidence in him as a sort of successor in a general “care of all the Churches.” Hence to him he now wrote special warnings and commendations and prophecies respecting the Church’s future.

The Gospel should be preached, and nothing else—when convenient and when inconvenient, to the preacher—whenever opportunity offers. The importance of having the Church well indoctrinated was emphasized by the fact that with prophetic vision St. Paul perceived that the “great falling away” mentioned in his other Epistles and by the Lord might be expected to come in speedily after his death. The mission of the Gospel was not the conversion of the world, but to call out from the world the Church to be glorified with the Redeemer at his appearing and Kingdom. It might be necessary for Timothy to reprove, rebuke and exhort, but if so, all should be done patiently and with instruction, explanation, doctrine. Faithfulness was enjoined in view of the fact that the time was nearing when “**sound doctrine**” would not be appreciated, nor even be endured by the Church. In the light of the foregoing circumstances, Paul’s charge to Timothy is, so to speak, his dying message; and so regarded, its solemnity and impressiveness are increased before our minds. R. 4526 and R. 2229

Titus – written c. A.D. 63-65, possibly from Nicopolis in Achaia (Titus 3:12) to Titus in Crete. The Apostle’s exhortation is that Titus shall speak and exhort the Church along the lines which he has laid down, reproofing them, whenever necessary (in love and gentleness, and yet with full authority, not doubting as to the meaning of the divine instruction). He was to let no man despise him, in the sense that he was to declare these principles of righteousness governing the Lord’s people in a plain, positive and authoritative manner. He was to speak with authority and not as with uncertainty and questioning. R. 2726

Philemon – written A.D. 57-58 from a Roman prison. The purpose of this Epistle is a unique one in the history of the early Church. Some thought that its inclusion in the New Testament was inappropriate because it is not only a personal letter to one individual, but basically it is not concerned with doctrine or prophecy. It *is* concerned with behavior, attitude, and the relationships among saints—regardless of their stations in life. Thus, it becomes, in all its brevity, an important lesson for the Church throughout the age.¹

Hebrews – written A.D. c. 64-65 from Italy. The Epistle to the Hebrews was written to the “twelve tribes instantly serving God” and hoping; especially such as were Israelites indeed and had accepted Christ: it is applicable therefore also to all those who from among the Gentiles have been grafted into the promises of God to Abraham, by union with Christ, the true, faithful “Seed.” The Epistle to the Hebrews was written to prove that a totally new dispensation of Grace, and not of Works, had been ushered in through Jesus at Pentecost. He would have them see that Moses’ faithfulness as a servant and Head of a typical priesthood, was inferior to Christ and the Royal Priesthood, of which he is the Head. He would have them see that Moses and his house were types and servants or illustrations of good things to come; but that Christ and his “elect” are sons of God, who will minister the real blessings in the future. He would have them see that there was a Canaan rest to which Moses led the willing and obedient priests and people of Israel, and that there is a greater rest which remains for the people of God, to which Christ will lead his people; and that those who by faith accept of Christ now may enter by faith into his rest in advance, now, in their hearts. R. 2085 and R. 4510

¹ New Albany-Louisville Ecclesia, “Big Lessons from Little Books,” 2014, p. 11

A Comparison of Paul and Moses

Description	Moses	Paul
Appointed spokesman and teacher of The Covenants	The Law Covenant Exo. - Deut.	The Grace Covenant Gal. 3:7-29; 4:21-31; 5:1-6; Romans 9 The New Covenant Heb. 8:7-13; Heb. 9:11-15
Chosen from birth to be a future leader	To Natural Israel Exo. 2:5,6,10	To Spiritual Israel Gal. 1:15-16
Received top education	Exo. 2:10; Acts 7:22	Acts 22:3; Gal. 1:14 Phil. 3:6
Escaped death in a basket	Exo. 1:22; 2:3	Acts 9:23-25 2 Cor. 11:32-33
Involved with murder immediately before his calling	Exo. 2:12	Acts 7:58 Acts 9:12
Talked to a Spirit Being after seeing a bright light	Exo. 3:2-4	Acts 9:3
Physically affected by the bright light of a Divine Being	Exo. 34:29-20 2 Cor. 3:7-8	2 Cor. 12:4-7 Acts 9:8-9
Immediately fled to Arabia to receive instructions after speaking with Divine Being	Exo. 2:15 Heb. 11:27	Gal. 1:16-17
Required assistance of a “right-hand man” to embark on his mission from God	Exo. 4:10,14-16	Acts 9:26-27
Rejected earthly riches and position of power	Heb. 11:26	Phil. 3:4-8
Was not an eloquent speaker but produced powerful written documents	Exo. 4:10	2 Cor. 10:10; 11:6 1 Cor. 1:17
Wrote major sections of Scripture	Pentateuch First five Books of the Old Testament	14 Epistles of the New Testament

Description	Moses	Paul
Performed extraordinary miracles	Acts 7:36	Acts 19:11-12
Taught Circumcision of the heart	Deut. 30:6	Rom. 2:29; Col. 2:11
Fellow Hebrews rejected his message of truth and salvation	Acts 7:39	Acts 18:4-6 Acts 22:18
Fellow Hebrews chose slavery and bondage over freedom and salvation	Exo. 14:11-12 Num. 14:3-4	Gal. 4:25-26 Gal. 5:1-4
Repeatedly asked God for a request but was denied	Deut. 3:25-26	2 Cor. 12:7-10
Loved and cherished his brethren so much, he was willing to give his life to save the people of Israel	Exo. 32:31-32	Rom. 9:2-3
Given a view of the Promised Land	Saw earthly phase Deut. 34:4	Saw spiritual phase 2 Cor. 12:1-4
Pointed to Jesus	Pointed forward to Jesus: Types in tabernacle to be fulfilled in the future. Leviticus 9 & 16	Pointed back to Jesus: Types in Tabernacle were fulfilled in Jesus. Hebrews 9
Instructed on The House of God	The literal Tabernacle Acts 7:44 Gen. 28:17 Ex. 25:9	The spiritual Temple 1 Cor. 3:16-17 Eph. 2:21 Heb. 9:11 1 Tim. 3:15
Instructed on the Priesthood	Aaronic Exo. 28:1-4 Heb. 7:11	Melchizedek Hebrews 7
Faithful to the end of his mission	Deut. 34:7,10 Heb. 11:2 Heb. 11:24-29	Phil. 3:13-14 2 Tim. 4:7
Will receive highest possible reward	Psa. 45:16 Isa. 32:1 Luke 13:28-29 Isa. 24:23	2 Tim. 4:8 1 Thes. 4:13-17 1 Cor. 15:23,51-52 Rev. 20:4

TEACHINGS AND DOCTRINES OF JESUS CHRIST

Expanded Upon by The Apostle Paul*

Jesus Taught/ The Gospels Taught	Teaching or Doctrine	Paul Expanded	Reference
Luke 1:54-55,72-73 John 8:56	Abrahamic Covenant	Rom. 4:3; Rom. 9:4 Gal. 3:6-9,16-18,29 Gal. 4:22-31 Heb. 6:13-18	R. 3944, R. 4370 R. 4451, R. 4496 R. 4681, R. 5177 R. 5226, R. 5300
Matt. 5:9 John 1:12	Adoption as Sons	Rom. 8:14-16,19 Gal. 3:26; Gal. 4:4-7 Eph. 1:5	E177 R. 1657 R. 5582, R. 5837
Matt. 11:11-13 Matt. 23:35 Luke 7:28; 10:23-24 Luke 11:49-51 Luke 24:27	Ancient Worthies	Rom. 15:4 1 Cor. 10:11 Heb. 11 Heb. 12:1	R. 2035, R. 4003 R. 4330, R. 4385 R. 4543, R. 4598 R. 5030, R. 5073 R. 5188, R. 5318
Matt. 18:10 Matt. 22:30 Matt. 26:53; Luke 15:10	Angels	1 Cor. 4:9; 1 Cor. 6:3 Heb. 1:4-7; Heb. 1:13-14 Heb. 2:7-9; Heb. 13:2	R. 4879 R. 5257 R. 5633
Matt. 6:25-34 Luke 12:22-32 John 14:1,27	Anxiety/ Worry	Phil. 4:6	R. 1864
Matt. 10:1-5; 19:28 Mark 3:13-19 Mark 16:14,20 Luke 6:13-16 John 15:27	Apostles	Acts 2:42; Acts 4:33 Acts 14:15; 1 Cor. 4:9 1 Cor. 15:7-10 Gal. 1:11-12 Gal. 2:8-9; Eph. 2:20	F208-233 R. 1521-1527 R. 5002
Matt. 3:11; 3:13-16 Matt. 20:22; Mark 11:30 Luke 3:21; John 4:1-2	Baptism	Acts 19:3-5; Rom. 6:3-4 1 Cor. 12:13; Gal. 3:27 Eph. 4:5; Col. 2:12	F421-456 R. 1278, R. 1540 R. 3152, R. 5962
Luke 24:26-27 Luke 24:44 John 5:45-47	Better Promises/ Better Sacrifices	Heb. 7:19-22; Heb. 8:6 Heb. 9:23-24 Heb. 11:40	R. 3318, R. 4034 R. 4390, R. 4426 R. 4510, R. 4655
Matt. 26:28 Mark 14:24 Luke 22:20 John 6:53-56	Blood	Rom. 3:25; Rom. 5:9 1 Cor. 10:16 1 Cor. 11:25-27; Eph. 1:7 Eph. 2:13; Col. 1:14 Heb. 9:12-14,20-22 Heb. 10:4,19; 10:29 Heb. 12:24 Heb. 13:11-12	R. 1229 R. 1335 R. 4426 R. 4605

*Not all references are included. This table is not an exhaustive resource.

Jesus Taught/ The Gospels Taught	Teaching or Doctrine	Paul Expanded	Reference
Matt. 26:26 Mark 14:8 Luke 22:19 John 2:21	Body of Christ	Rom. 12:5 1 Cor. 10:16; 12:12-27 Eph. 1:22-23; Eph. 4:4 Eph. 4:11-16 Eph. 5:30; Col. 1:18	R. 1278 R. 1570 R. 4965 R. 5212 R. 5230
Matt. 26:26; Luke 22:19 John 6:32-35, 48-58	Bread of Life	1 Cor. 10:16-18 1 Cor. 11:23-29	R. 2291, R. 2651 R. 3779, R. 4146
Matt. 12:50 Matt. 25:40; John 13:1	Brethren	Rom. 8:29 Heb. 2:11-12,17	E144, R. 963 R. 3219, R. 4994
Matt. 22:2; Matt. 25:1 John 3:29	Bride of Christ	Rom. 7:4; 2 Cor. 11:2 Eph. 5:22-33	CR214 R. 1386
John 15:2	Chastening	Rom. 5:3-5 Heb. 12:5-11	E231 R. 3132, R. 5147
Matt. 26:41 Mark 14:38	Christian Battle/ Flesh Verses the Spirit	Rom. 6:18-19 Rom. 7:25 Rom. 8:1,4-7; 8:13 Rom. 13:14 1 Cor. 9:26-27 Gal. 5:16-17,24-25 Eph. 6:10-18 Col. 3:2,5-10 1 Tim. 6:12	R. 1748, R. 2309 R. 2719, R. 3272 R. 3857, R. 3985 R. 4628, R. 4687 R. 4809, R. 5001 R. 5211, R. 5269 R. 5312, R. 5403 R. 5685, R. 5777 R. 5806, R. 5905
Matt. 5:3-9 Matt. 18:3-4	Christian Character	2 Cor. 3:18 Gal. 5:22-23 Col. 3:12-14; 1 Tim. 6:11 2 Tim. 2:22; Heb. 12:14	R. 2790, R. 4417 R. 4501, R. 4759 R. 5080, R. 5167 R. 5309, R. 5740
Matt. 18:20 Matt. 24:28 Luke 17:37	Christian Fellowship/ Assembling Together	Rom. 12:15-16; 14:19 1 Cor. 14:26 Phil. 2:1-5; Col. 3:16 1 Thes. 3:12-13; 5:11,14 Heb. 10:24-25	R. 2314, R. 3673 R. 4008 R. 4076 R. 4251 R. 4927
Matt. 13:23 Luke 8:15	Christian Growth/Transformation Christ in You	Rom. 12:2; 1 Cor. 13:11 2 Cor. 3:18; Gal. 4:19 Eph. 4:13-15; Heb. 6:1	R. 1273, R. 1906 R. 3250, R. 3655 R. 5977
Matt. 22:36-40 Mark 12:29-31	Christian Living	Rom. 12:9-21 Phil. 4:4-9 Eph. 4:23-32; Col. 3:17 1 Thes. 4:11-12 1 Thes. 5:14-28 Tit. 2:1-8	R. 2212, R. 2722 R. 3135, R. 3179 R. 3329, R. 3593 4871:344 R. 3830, R. 5644 R. 5097, R. 5773

Jesus Taught/ The Gospels Taught	Teaching or Doctrine	Paul Expanded	Reference
John 8:12 John 10:27 John 12:35	Christian Walk	Rom. 13:13; 2 Cor. 5:7 Gal. 5:25; Gal. 6:16 Eph. 4:1; Eph. 5:2,8,15 Phil. 3:16-17 Col. 2:6-7; Heb. 12:13 1 Thes. 4:12	R. 1840 R. 4188 R. 4401 R. 4687 R. 5097
Luke 10:20	Church of the Firstborn/ Church of the Living God	Col. 1:18; Eph. 1:22-23 1 Tim. 3:15 Heb. 12:23	R. 1074, R. 1570 R. 2413 R. 4163:115 R. 4823, R. 5294
Matt. 10:32 Luke 12:8; John 12:42	Confession	Rom. 10:8-10; 14:11 Phil. 2:11; 1 Tim. 6:12	R. 3071
Matt. 18:15-17	Conflict/ Correction	1 Cor. 5:4-5; 8:12 Eph. 4:32; Col. 3:13-14 1 Tim. 5:19; 2 Thes. 3:14-15	R. 4008 R. 4984 R. 4994 R. 5167
Luke 1:70-73 Luke 24:27,44	Covenants	Rom. 9:4; Gal. 3:17-19 Heb. 6:16-17	R. 3107, R. 4318 R. 4370, R. 5162
Matt. 10:38; Matt.16:24 Mark 8:34; Luke 9:23 Luke 14:27; John 19:17	Cross Bearing	2 Cor. 6:4-10 Gal. 2:20; Gal. 5:24 Gal. 6:14	R. 2615, R. 3235 R. 3843 R. 5221
Mark 15:30,32 John 3:14 John 12:32-33; 19:17-19	Cross of Christ	1 Cor. 1:18; Gal. 6:14 Phil. 2:8; Col. 1:20 Col. 2:14; Heb. 12:2	R. 3369 R. 3900 R. 5919
Matt. 20:22-23 Matt. 26:27-29 Matt. 26:38-42 Luke 22:42; John 18:11	Cup of Sacrifice	1 Cor. 10:16 1 Cor. 10:21 1 Cor. 11:25-28	R. 1898, R. 2778 R. 4433, R. 4547 R. 5341, R. 5421 R. 5599
Matt. 24:21-22;42-44 Mark 13:34-35 Luke 12:35-48 Luke 21:34-36	Day of the Lord	1 Cor. 3:12-15 1 Thes. 5:1-6 2 Thes. 1:9-10; 2:3 2 Tim. 3:1; Heb. 10:25 Heb. 12:26-29	A307, A320-322 R. 4728, R. 4798 R. 4976, R. 5256
Matt. 16:27 Matt. 25:14-30; 25:31-16 Luke 12:2-3 John 5:22-27 John 12:46-48	Day of Judgment	Acts 17:31; Rom. 2:5-6 Rom. 2:16; 1 Cor. 6:2 2 Cor. 5:10; Gal. 6:7 2 Thes. 1:7-8 1 Tim. 5:24; 2 Tim. 4:1	A137-147 R. 2303, R. 2430 R. 5139, R. 5442 R. 5530
Matt. 9:24 John 11:11-14	Death (Adamic)	Rom. 5:12; Rom. 6:23 1 Cor. 15:26; 2Tim.1:10	R. 4549, R. 5149 R. 5166

Jesus Taught/ The Gospels Taught	Teaching or Doctrine	Paul Expanded	Reference
Matt. 11:25-27 Matt. 13:11	Deep Things	1 Cor. 2:9-11 Eph. 3:3-6	T117 R. 2208
Matt. 24:24	Delusion	2 Thes. 2:11-12	F200, OV294 R. 2274, R. 4514 R. 4583, R. 5799
Matt. 28:19-20 Luke 14:33 John 8:31; John 9:28 John 13:35	Discipleship	Acts 6:7; Acts 9:26 Acts 11:26; Acts 13:52 Acts 14:20-22 Acts 21:4,16	R. 1595, R. 2997 R. 3153, R. 4568 R. 5172, R. 5425 R. 5506
Matt. 12:32; 13:39; 24:3 Matt. 28:20; Luke 18:30 Luke 19:41-44; 21:24	Dispensations/ Ages	Rom. 11:25; 2 Cor. 4:4 Gal. 1:4; Eph. 1:10; 2:7 Eph. 3:9; Heb. 2:5; 6:5	A219, OV26 R. 1846, R. 2150 R. 2995
Matt. 25:14-15	Diversity	1 Cor. 4:7; 12:12-30 1 Cor. 15:40-41	F135, 237-238 R. 732, R. 5284
Matt. 20:16 Matt. 22:14	Election	Rom. 8:28-30,33; 9:11 Rom. 11:5,7,28 Col. 3:12; 2 Tim.2:10 1 Thes. 1:4-5; Tit. 1:1	F178-192, OV35 R. 835, R. 2727 R. 3585 R. 4212
John 3:16; John 3:36 John 5:24; 6:40,47 John 11:25-26; 17:2-3	Everlasting Life/ Eternal Life	Acts 13:48; Rom. 6:23 1 Tim. 1:16 2 Tim. 1:10; Tit. 3:7	E383-388, E398 Q440-441, R. 3337 R. 3387, R. 4364 R. 4840, R. 5162
Mark 5:1-20 Luke 4:33-36,41 Luke 8:2; Luke 8:26-33	Evil Spirits/ Fallen Angels	Acts 16:16-18;19:11-20 Eph. 6:12; 1 Tim. 4:1 2 Thes. 2:9-10	R. 2169, R. 2178 R. 2185, R. 4976 R. 5084, R. 5799
Matt. 6:30; Matt. 8:10 Matt. 9:29 Matt. 14:31 Matt. 15:28 Matt. 21:21-22 Luke 7:50 Luke 8:25 Luke 17:5-6 John 20:27-29	Faith	Rom. 1:17; Rom. 3:26 Rom. 3:28; Rom. 4:5 Rom. 5:1; Rom. 10:17 2 Cor. 5:7; Gal. 2:16 Gal. 3:24-26; Phil. 3:9 Eph. 2:8; 6:16; Col. 2:7 1 Thes. 3:2,5-10 Heb.10:22-23; 10:38 Heb. 11:1,6; Heb. 11	R. 1719, R. 1798 R. 1938, R. 1967 R. 2907, R. 3786 R. 4385, R. 4588 R. 4884, R. 5114 R. 5243, R. 5424 R. 5433 R. 5698:167 R. 5716
Matt. 10:22; 24:13; 25:21 Mark 13:13; Rev. 2:10	Faithfulness	Heb. 3:6; Heb. 3:14 Heb. 6:11	R. 2642, R. 3103 R. 5492, R. 5913
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Matt. 18:7-10	Responsibility to Our Brethren	Rom. 14:19,21 Rom. 15:1-2 1 Cor. 8:13; 1Cor.10:24	R. 2166, R. 2198 R. 3144, R. 3665, R. 4919, R. 5555
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Matt. 4:23; Luke 19:10 John 3:17 John 11:25 John 12:47	Restitution/ Restoration	2 Cor. 5:18 Eph. 1:10; Eph. 2:7 Eph. 3:14-15 Gal. 3:8; Col. 1:20	R. 3754
Matt. 24:31	Resurrection of The Church/ First Resurrection	1 Cor. 15:23; 15:42-44 1 Cor. 15:51-53 1 Thes. 4:15-17	R. 1258, R. 3173 R. 4187, R. 4989 R. 5107
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Matt. 22:13 Matt. 25:41 Rev. 2:11	Second Death	2 Cor. 11:15 Phil. 3:18-19 2 Thes. 1:9; Heb. 4:1 Heb. 6:4-6; 10:26-31 Heb. 12:25,29	R. 4435 R. 4605 R. 5093
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Matt. 12:31-32 Mark 3:28-29 Luke 12:10	Sin Against Holy Spirit	1 Cor. 10:12; Eph. 4:30 Heb. 6:4-6 Heb. 10:26-29 Heb. 12:15-17	R. 1697, R. 4830 R. 5037, R. 5093 Part 1: R. 5438 Part 2: R. 5451
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	Matt. 16:17 John 3:6 John 20:17,19,26	Spirit Nature vs. Earthly Nature	1 Cor. 15:39-44,50 2 Cor. 3:17-18 2 Cor. 5:1-2; Eph. 6:12 Phil. 3:20-21 Heb. 10:5,10	A173-184 R. 853:3,4 R. 2317, R. 3485 R. 5020, R. 5237 R. 5415
	Matt. 13:11 Mark 8:21	Spiritual Knowledge/ Comprehension/Wisdom	Rom. 11:33; Eph. 1:17 Eph. 3:18-19; Phil. 1:9 Phil. 3:8 Col. 1:9; Col. 2:2-3	R. 2262 R. 3167
	Matt. 5:6; Matt. 24:45 Luke 12:37,42	Spiritual Food	1 Cor. 3:2; 1 Cor. 10:21 Heb. 5:12-14	R. 1898
	Matt. 11:15 Matt. 13:9,13-17,23 Matt. 13:43; 15:10 Mark 4:23-24; 7:16 Luke 4:21; Luke 8:10,18	Spiritual Hearing	Acts 28:25-28 Rom. 10:17; Gal. 3:2-5 Col. 1:4-6; 2 Tim. 4:17 1 Thes. 2:13 Heb. 2:1; Heb. 5:11	SM50-60 SM679, CR13 NS606 R. 1581:282 R. 1969, R. 3167
	Matt. 3:16 Mark 1:10	Spiritual-Mindedness	Rom. 8:6; 12:2,16 1 Cor. 2:12-16 Phil. 2:5; Eph. 4:23	E195 R. 4968
	Matt. 6:22-23 Matt 9:28-31; 13:16 Luke 2:29-30 Luke 9:28-32; 10:23-24 Luke 11:34-36; 24:16,31 John 12:45 Acts 26:17-18	Spiritual Sight/ Spiritual Vision	Rom. 11:8-10 1 Cor. 1:26 1 Cor. 2:9-10; 2:14-15 2 Cor. 4:18 Eph. 1:17-18 Eph. 3:8-9; Eph. 5:8 Col. 1:9, Heb. 5:14	R. 2729, R. 2823 R. 3167, R. 3518 R. 3793, R. 3891 R. 4148, R. 4444 R. 4968, R. 5484 R. 5688 R. 5951
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	John 1:47	Spiritual Israel	Rom. 2:28-29 1 Cor. 10:11	CR485 R. 2299
	John 8:44	Standing Fast	1 Cor. 16:13; Gal. 5:1 Eph. 6:13-14; Phil. 1:27 Phil. 4:1; 1 Thes. 3:8 2 Thes. 2:15	R. 4153 R. 4912
	Matt. 7:24-25 Luke 6:48	Steadfastness	1 Cor. 15:58; Col. 1:23 Col. 2:7	R. 1719 R. 5557

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Matt. 5:18	Types and Shadows	1 Cor. 10:6-12 Col. 2:16-17 Heb. 7:11,20-28; 8:4-5 Heb. 9:23-24; 10:1	R. 2299, R. 2821 R. 3951, R. 4390 R. 4397, R. 4504 R. 5776
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