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The Church Called to Sanctification.

"...that ye may be sanctified, even your sanctification."—1 Thess. 4: 3

...the fully consecrated, as expressed by the Apostle Paul. He is calling them to full development as children, to their full setting apart for God. He would remind them that it is not sufficient to make a profession of consecration, to promise to live a holy life merely; but that it is of the utmost importance to fulfil their vows to the Lord, to day by day pay that which they have covenanted. Christians are to be more and more in the fruits of the Spirit, as the context enjoins. The sanctification means a setting apart for service. God is holy; and righteousness must also be holy. "Be ye holy, as I am holy," He says to us.

The Only Begotten of the Father was made man. He could not have been man's brother, for the Church must be holy, as He is holy, and with them. The Father calls us to the anointing, that we may be holy in order to have the witness of John. And so mankind must be holy before they can be united with Him. God has a will for the sanctification of the whole world of men. But He is not exerting that will at present; He is now seeking only those which is to compose the glorified Church of the future.

The world cannot be sanctified without the great Mediator. Hence God has provided for them in the Mediatorial Kingdom, through which His blessings will be secured. The willing and obedient will finally attain to full holiness, full freedom from sin. As many as during the Messianic Reign will take hold of the opportunity then granted will be made sinless by the class of that period; and they then stand their final test, and will be wholly acceptable to the Father. It is because the Father cannot accept man until they have been made perfect, and then have been tested as to their establishment in righteousness, that He now keeps the world at arm's length and is not in fellowship with Himself. Only the sanctified can be granted communion with God and recognition from Him.

THE CHURCH'S SETTING APART DIFFERENT.

The setting apart of the Church is different from the setting apart to righteousness, which will be the world's experience during the next Age. The Church's setting apart that they may be able to thus sanctify themselves, a special provision for the covering of their blemishes is necessary. So their perfection is reckoned on. The difficulty with our setting apart at this time lies in the fact that it means to go contrary to our own preferences, because of the present disordered condition of things in the world in which we live—a condition which is manifested in ourselves as human beings. Hence, the sanctification for which God now calls is a doing of His will under unfavourable circumstances, within and without. Those who are His will under these unfavourable circumstances have set before them the high reward of becoming joined in fellowship with Christ in His Kingdom, sharing of His glory and power.

This sanctification which begins in us at the time when we consecrate ourselves

to the Lord, and when we are accepted of the Father by the begetting of the Holy Spirit, thus bringing us into the anointed Body, must increase more and more. As we progress, our sanctification should take in a broader and deeper scope. As a Christian matures, there should be more of him, so to speak. Day by day, the Lord shows us more fully His will—things which we did not see at all at the beginning of our sanctification—because we are growing in grace and in knowledge. This increase in knowledge is not only a good sign that we have made progress in grace, but also an indication that we are more fully set apart to sacrifice. Thus we have still more grace, then more knowledge, then more sacrifice. The Christian way leads onward to fullness of character development, sweeter as the pilgrim toils along, clasping the hand of his unseen Guide.

Our daily experiences are testing our hearts, and this is by the will of God. He knows that if our hearts are loyal we will do the best we can to control our flesh; and it is our earnest endeavour, our duty of will, to walk faithfully in the narrow way that He is watching to see. After we have been set apart, sanctified, as a babe in Christ, we gradually become sanctified on a much larger scale. We become developed in the process of sanctification, growing more and more like our Lord.

NOT CALLED TO LIVE IN A CLOISTER.

To be sanctified does not mean, as some have mistakenly thought, that we must separate ourselves entirely from everyone else in the world, avoiding any contact with them. Such would have a very improper idea of our real calling. Their opportunities of service would be very circumscribed; and they would have little or no opportunity to cultivate sympathy with the sinful, suffering world, whom the Church are to judge and assist in the incoming Age.

To be sanctified does not mean the cutting of ourselves off from any contact with the world. If this had been our proper course, our Lord and Saviour would have so done. But, on the contrary, He sought opportunity to assist and bless those about Him, to point them to the way of Life. He was the friend of "publicans and sinners." He never assumed a "holier than thou" attitude. Yet our Lord was sanctified, set apart for God, in the most absolute sense. Those who think they must withdraw themselves completely from their fellows have failed to get a true grasp of the Scriptures. We are to avoid sin as far as possible, but sin could find us in a monastery, or in a convent as well as anywhere else.

The Master was constantly mingling with men, striving to uplift and instruct them, yet He was not of them. And so it is with the enlightened children of God, who are following in the Master's footsteps.

As Christians, our greatest work is in ourselves—subduing our own flesh, conquering and uprooting our earthward tendencies, and resolutely, persistently training them Heavenward. And we should be able to see in ourselves continued progress in this direction. The process of bending toward Heaven that which by

nature bends toward earth and the things of earth, is a painful one; and we often long for rest and complete deliverance. But let us cheer ourselves and one another with the thought that the struggle will soon be over and the victory won, if we faint not. How glad we are that the reign of sin and death is almost ended, and the full deliverance of the saints of God is so near!

TWO PARTS OF SANCTIFICATION.

The words "sanctification" and "consecration" are not improperly used interchangeably. Both refer to a devotion of both heart and life to the Lord and His service. This devotion, this setting apart, is a continuous matter, which ends only when our sacrifice is consumed in death.

There are two parts to sanctification. The first part is our own, and the second part belongs to God. He sanctifies only those who sanctify themselves. "Sanctify yourselves" and "I will sanctify you." We must first give up our own will and accept His will; setting ourselves apart for the Lord. In such He is pleased to do a great work. The initial part of that work is the begetting of the Holy Spirit. This makes us New Creatures in Christ, members of the Anointed Body. Our sanctification is then begun.

When the Master, in His closing prayer with His disciples, prayed for those "who would believe on Him through their word,"

He was praying that they would manifest their faith in Him by consecration, dedication of themselves to God. His petition, we see, was not that the Father would use some miraculous power to bring people in general to a conviction of the Truth and to a spirit of devotion to Him. This is not the thought: for those for whom He petitioned had previously reached that point. His time to deal with the world at large had not yet come.

When the work of sanctification has commenced in us, we are then prepared to grow, and not until then; for before that time there is no embryo New Creature, the new life has not even begun. But after the nucleus of the new nature is present in us, we are ready to make progress, both in grace and in knowledge. Having now come into the family of God, we are to learn of Him as dear children. We are to study—not the laws of gravitation, electricity, the sciences, etc.—although all true law and science is of God—but concerning spiritual Truth. The Lord's people must be inducted into a knowledge of God's glorious character and of His will concerning us, His children. Through this knowledge we shall be enabled to grow up into the likeness of our glorious Pattern, furnished us by the Father. Thus the work of development leads into all the avenues of our being. "This is the will of God, even your (complete) sanctification." The spirit of the Lord is to abound in us.

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Then, also, the children of God are to edify one another, to build one another up in the most holy Faith. The influences of the precious promises and of words of counsel have more and more a sanctifying effect upon our hearts and lives. This leads us to a still deeper appreciation of God and His love, and of those who are His. Thus we grow in grace, in further knowledge, and in all the precious fruits of the Holy Spirit—love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, self-control. Against such there is no law" (Gal. 5: 22, 23). This is the complete sanctification which God purposes to accomplish in all those who set themselves apart for Him, providing that they keep their sacrifice firmly bound to the Altar until it is wholly consumed.

DILIGENT CO-OPERATION ESSENTIAL.

All this preparation is necessary, that the children of God may make their "calling and election sure." It is not sufficient that at the beginning they say, "Here, Lord, I give myself to Thee." But it is absolutely essential that they develop a strong, enduring Christian character, a crystallised character, which cannot be injured either by pestilential doctrines of errors abounding in this "evil day" or by the fiercest winds of adversity. Thus only can we be fitted for the great work which the Lord has reserved for this noble class in the future—beyond the veil. So we see clearly that unless this work of sanctification progresses to completion we shall not enter into the Kingdom.

In connection with the Word of Truth, which has such sanctifying power, and without which we cannot attain a position with Christ on His throne, the Lord gives us disciplinary experiences. These are to assist in keeping us in the "Narrow Way," that we turn not aside into a wrong course. They are also designed to call our attention to our weaknesses, in order that we may correct them as far as possible. They are to develop us, to prove us, to establish us in righteousness. These experiences cause us to realise more fully our need of the power of the Word and of the power of prayer. Thus they drive us to the Source whence all our help comes.

The more we absorb and assimilate the Word of God, the stronger we shall be in character. To the faithful, the Apostle Peter assures us, the Lord will minister "an abundant entrance into the everlasting Kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." Whoever neglects to use the means provided for his development is not making progress. The sanctifying power of the Word and of prayer must accomplish their designed work in us; otherwise, we shall never gain the promised reward of the faithful overcomer.

OUR ALL-SUFFICIENT GUIDE.

Every child of God should beware of any teaching which is independent of the inspired Word of God, and which claims that Christ or the Holy Spirit speaks to advanced Christians directly. This is a dangerous delusion of the Adversary, which cultivates spiritual pride and boastfulness, rendering powerless the warnings and counsel of the Holy Scriptures. The deluded ones become possessed of the idea that they have progressed beyond the majority of God's children; and that now the voice of the Lord speaks to their inner ear, guiding them in all their affairs. Satan, taking advantage of this delusion, which he has brought upon them, leads them captive at his will. We have learned of just such cases. All the instruction which we receive from the Lord comes to us through the written Word. "The Word of God is sufficient" declares the Apostle, "that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." (2 Tim. 3: 15, 17).

"Christ loved the Church, and gave Himself for it, to cleanse it by water with the word, and to present it to Himself, a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; that she should be holy, without blemish." (Eph. 5: 25, 26)

Continued on next page.

Peoples Paper

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Falling Away from Steadfastness.

Ye therefore, beloved, seeing that ye know these things before, beware lest ye also be brought away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness.—2 Pet. 3: 17.

This exhortation applies to the Lord's consecrated people living at the present time. The proof of this is found in the context; the Apostle has just been portraying some of the events connected with the day of the Lord in which we are living—the "Day of Vengeance."

In verse 10 he has pointed out that the present age will end with the dissolution of the symbolic "heavens" and the symbolic "earth," which, as we have elsewhere shown, signifies the utter disruption of the present social and ecclesiastical order. In verse 13 he points out that we are looking for a new order of things, and not hoping either to patch up the old order ourselves, or that others will succeed in patching what the Lord has declared "shall pass away." And now in our text he refers to "these things." In the 17th verse he points out that those who have such expectations should be separate and distinct from all other people in the world, saying, "What manner of person ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness?" And then in our text and in the verse preceding it, he points out that at this particular time the Adversary will get advantage of certain ones, will beguile them, get them to wrest the Scriptures, and thus to deceive themselves to their own destruction—to the loss of present light at least.

Finding thus that the Apostle is particularly addressing ourselves, let us indeed give earnest heed to his counsel; for we well know that we live in what the Apostle Paul calls that "evil day." (Eph. 6: 13).

We notice, further, that the Apostle is not addressing the worldly; but he specifies that his warning is to the "beloved," who already had attained to "steadfastness." This implies that they had become rooted and grounded and built up, both in the knowledge and in the love of God; for only such ever become steadfast. It surprises us that the Apostle should address such a developed class of Christians and warn them of their own personal danger of falling into the "error of the wicked?" It does strike us as peculiar, and we are inclined to think that there must be some hidden meaning in the expression, "error of the wicked."

It would be past comprehension that such a class as the Apostle has just described should be in great danger of falling into such errors of the wicked as blasphemy, or murder, or arson, or theft. We must look the matter up more carefully, and see whether or not the translators have given us a faithful rendering of the Apostle's words. We find that they have not, and that the word wicked is too strong; the Greek word is *athemos*; according to Prof. Young's Analytical Concordance (undisputed authority), it signifies "unsettled," or "lawless." Now the passage seems more reasonable. There is danger, we can readily see, that those once established in the truth might be led so away as to become unsettled, and to wrest the Scriptures, "handle the Word of God deceitfully," and thus become lawless in the sense that they would set aside the Word or Law of God, and take instead thereof a twisted interpretation, which would the better suit some theory of their own. Such a wrong course, the Apostle points out, would surely unsettle them, and eventually mean the destruction of their spiritual interests; and that they would go into "outer darkness" in respect to "present truth." Beware, lest ye also being led away with the error of the unsettled fall from your own steadfastness.

The Apostle's language not only points to the present time, but seems to imply that there would be previous fallings away or siftings, which he calls "the error of the wicked"—literally, "the delusions of the unsettled or lawless." The implication seems to be that the not settled ones would first be shaken out, and that subsequently there would come a still more insidious trial which would test even the "steadfast." We inquire, therefore, have there been, during this "harvest" time (whilst we are waiting for the dissolution of the present order of things, and for the establishment of the new order of things)—have there been such siftings or fallings away by delusions which have affected those not settled?

We answer: Yes, there have been several: we might recount some of these. First of all came a shaking directly upon

the subject of the ransom. Certain lawless ones, "heady," rejected the testimony of the Lord's Word, denying the Lord having "bought us" with His precious blood. They would accept Christ as an example only and claimed to be able to follow that example, and that they needed no sin offering to compensate for their imperfections, inherited or personal. This, the Adversary's first move, was remarkably bold, yet it found adherents who were not rooted and grounded upon the testimony of the Lord's Word. Then came the "flat earth" theory, whose advocates strangely concluded that the shape of the earth is a part of the gospel: the result was that certain others of the "unstable" were led away in that delusion, by not settled leaders who wrested the Scriptures to their own confusion and to the extinguishment of what light they had enjoyed.

Then came another delusion, in effect, teaching the old doctrine of Universalism—that God would finally force eternal salvation upon all men, and even upon Satan himself. This theory, of course, also denied the ransom; because to have admitted that the condemnation of death pronounced in Eden could not be set aside without a ransom, a corresponding price would logically have implied that disobedience under the second trial, secured by the ransom for Adam, would similarly bring an everlasting punishment—everlasting death—from which there could be no resurrection. Hence, this theory boldly denied the ransom, wrested or twisted the Scriptures, which speak of the second death as "everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord," handling this and other Scriptures so deceitfully as to declare that the Second death would be a great blessing to all upon whom it would come. Of course, none but unstable souls would be beguiled by such open and arrogant perversions of the Word of God.

The Anglo-Israel question, and communistic and social questions, "led away" from the truth, and into more or less darkness and confusion, some others who were not rooted and grounded in the knowledge of the fact that all the present institutions will go down and that the new order of things to be introduced will not be of human institution, but the work of God through their glorified Christ.

But the Apostle comes in our text to a time after such delusions had "led away" those not established or settled; and his warning is given to the *steadfast*. The implication seems to be that the Adversary has more subtle delusions before us than any of those in the past; and the fully consecrated of the Lord's people may need to be more than ever on guard against "the wiles of the devil." "Ye, therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things (that all of the reforms, etc., of the present institutions will pass away, and that God is about to establish His own Kingdom in His own way, and knowing, further, that at just this particular time there will be a special sifting and testing of those who are in the light), beware lest ye ALSO, being led away with the error of the wicked (the unsettled or lawless, who do not bow implicitly to the Lord's Word, but wrest it to establish theories of their own), fall from your own steadfastness."

The Apostle, in our text, cautions that we beware against being "led away." The word here rendered, "led away," occurs in only one other place in the Scriptures (Gal. 2: 13), where the Apostle Paul says, "Barnabas also was carried away with their dissimulation." The words, "carried away," give the same thought as "led away," but a little more strongly: they imply that the danger to the steadfast will be along some line which would sweep away or carry away their judgments from the fixed statements of the Divine Word, through personal preference, or sympathy, or through the influence of some one held in respect or esteem. Let us all, therefore, be on guard, that whoever may, consciously or unconsciously, become the instrument of the Adversary, and seek to lead us away from the sure testimony of the Lord's Word (whether congenial to our natural tastes or uncongenial), we may not be "carried away" but that we may be more determined than ever that—

"To our Lord we will be true, Who bought us with His blood. Only Jesus will we know, And Jesus crucified."

While we see that the danger to the majority of God's people will be through being "carried away" by sympathy, influence, etc., we must remember that this implies that there will be certain leaders of thought whose conduct will tend to carry away the others. It is not necessary for us to suppose that these leaders into error will knowingly and intentionally get wrong themselves, and carry away numbers with them into their delusions and lawless disregard for the testimony of the Lord's Word, wresting its statements. We may rather assume that in the majority of instances these leaders will be themselves deceived; as the Apostle expresses it: "deceiving and being (themselves) deceived."—2 Tim. 3: 13.

All who seek to teach the divine plan to others are exposed to peculiar temptations, so that the honor of serving the Lord and His people demands a correspondingly larger measure of the Holy Spirit, as well as of knowledge. The tendency of knowledge, as the Apostle points out, is merely to puff up, make vain and conceited, and to become a temptation of the Adversary, to draw away followers after them (Acts 20: 30). Whoever, therefore, would be an instructor of others, a mouth-piece of the Lord, should cultivate all the various graces of the Holy Spirit, including meekness, that these, combined (love) with knowledge, may build up himself as well as build up those to whom he ministers. "Knowledge (alone) puffeth up, but love buildeth up."—1 Cor. 8: 1.

Let us not forget that there is a way, and one way only, whereby we may insure ourselves against falling into any of these traps of the Adversary. This insurance is not secured wholly by knowledge, although knowledge is a very important element in it; it is secured chiefly by obedience to the principle laid down in the Lord's Word, and illustrated in the life and character of our Lord and His Apostles. The same Apostle who addresses this caution against falling from our own steadfastness, tells us in the same epistle (1: 5-12): "If ye do these things ye shall never fall: for so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly, into the everlasting Kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."

What things? Does He give us the particulars of this work of grace that will so insure us against falling? Yes, He tells us that it is by continually adding to our stock of the heavenly graces: "Add to your faith fortitude, and to fortitude, knowledge, and to knowledge self-control, and to self-control patience, and to patience piety, and to piety brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love: for these things being in you and abounding, they will not permit you to be inactive or unfruitful in the knowledge (personal intimacy, acquaintance) of our Lord Jesus Christ. . . . Therefore, brethren, give earnest heed that you make your calling and election sure, for if ye do these things ye shall never fall."

News and Notes.

The Bible Students' Tract Society has now completed its first half-year, and its directors and supporters have every reason to be gratified with the work accomplished. Commenced under circumstances which seemed to allow of misconstruction of motive, we trust that as time proceeds that our intentions may be the better understood. As stated in our early issues, our object was to preserve a centre of interest for those who could not assent or continue to be associated with the questionable actions and new methods and publications of the Society with which we had been so long associated. Without the Bible Students' Tract Society these earnest Christians would have been without means of keeping in touch with one and another for mutual encouragement and co-operation in the service of promulgating the truth. The thought has been to provide such literature for the purpose, mainly from the writings of the late Pastor Russell, whose beautiful thoughts seem to carry even further weight now that he is no longer with us.

The movement has thus far been nicely supported, and it is the endeavour of the committee to prosecute the work according to what means may be provided by the Lord through His people. While much has so far been done, there has been a desire rather to wait on the Lord for His direction than that we should be found to be going before Him, and we have realised the Divine over-ruling in our concerns, and request the prayers of our readers to the end that we may have the necessary wisdom and quick discernment of the Lord's will, in order that the best interests of His cause may be served.

Himself for it, that He might sanctify and cleanse with the washing of water by the Word" again declares the same Apostle—Eph. 5: 25, 26.

We are not ignorant of the devices of Satan and of all the "wicked spirits in high places," which would lead us astray to our own downfall. Let us ever be on the alert, and keep close to the written Word, which is able to make wise unto salvation. We are told that God sanctifies the Church, and that the Spirit of God does this work in us. Both are true. It is the Holy Spirit, or power, of God operating through His Word that He has designed shall do this work in our hearts, in our characters.—2 Cor. 3: 18.

In the contemplation of all that is lovely as embodied in Christ, of all that is pure and holy and beautiful—as shown in the Bible—we are changed little by little into the same blessed likeness, from glory to glory. Let this good work of sanctification go on until every grace adorns the spotless robe of imputed righteousness given us by our Father through Christ. Let us mark well the love of the Master, His gentleness, His patience, His meekness, His zeal, His personal integrity, His self-sacrificing spirit. Mark well; then imitate His example.

It is by this means we are sealed, impressed, with the image and likeness of our Lord. This seal, this impression, is to grow as the days go by until it has become so indelible that nothing can remove it. Let us take diligent heed that we do not by any means mar or blur this precious seal, but that it may remain clear and bright. Let us be very careful not to do anything that will bring smiting of conscience. Nothing to wound our new mind. Let us not grieve the Holy Spirit of Christ in us. Let us keep close to the Heavenly Father by prayer and study of the Word. Thus shall we be wholly sanctified and "made meet for the inheritance of the saints in light."

I want a godly fear,
A quick, discerning eye,
That looks to Thee when sin is near,
And sees the tempter fly;
A spirit still prepared,
And armed with jealous care,
Forever standing on its guard,
And watching unto prayer.

THE CHURCH AND THE PEOPLE

A Striking Criticism.

Another report has been issued by the Archbishop of Canterbury's committee. Commenting on the Church's waning influence, the report complains of the clergy's intellectual sloth, and indecision. Their capacity and equipment had not increased like the people's and their sermons were often without substance and intellectual quality. They failed to arouse the interest of the laity, who lacked enthusiasm, and hung back from their share of the work. The report urges that authorised laymen should teach in the Church, and that Churchmen co-operate with Non-Conformists and Catholics for the explanation and propagation of Christian principles. The prompt and radical revision of the Catechism is also recommended.—The Age

An English clergyman was grieved to find his services for men poorly attended. He expressed his regret to the vergers. "I really think they ought to come," he said, sadly. "That's just what I've said to them over an' over again," said the vergers, consolingly. "I says to 'em, 'Look at me,' I says; 'look at me!' I goes to all them services," I says, 'an' wot 'arm does they do me?'"

Electing Kings

Give Diligence, Brethren, to Make Your Calling and Election Sure.—1 Pet. 1:10.

Throughout the length and breadth of this land of liberty, young and old understand full well the significance of election. Councilmen, aldermen, mayors of cities, county officials, State officials, United States Congressmen, Senators, the President and Vice-President are chosen or elected from amongst the people to their various official positions. They are chosen with a view to the blessing that will accrue to the electors by the exercise of their official positions. How strange, then, that we who are so familiar with these things should read into our text so very different a view of election!

The thought should naturally suggest itself to us that if God is electing or selecting a Church in the present time, it must be with a view to the use of that Church subsequently to serve in some manner the interests of the remainder of the world, from amongst whom they were elected. And this is just what the Scriptures teach, namely, that Christ Jesus himself is the Head, the Captain, the Chief Ruler, and that this "elect" company are, figuratively speaking, his "members," his associates, his under-priesthood. The Scriptures tell us that this selection is according to Divine foreknowledge and foreordination. They tell us that God foreknew our Lord Jesus as the one who would occupy the glorious position of Prophet, Priest, Mediator and King of the world during the Millennium. They tell us also that the same God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ foreknew us also and "predestinated" that there should be a Church class selected from amongst the world, to be their Redeemer's associate, his under-priesthood, his subordinate kings during the Millennium.

The Elect Now and Hereafter.

The Church is spoken of as God's "elect" now, before the election has been finished; before the testing is completed; before the called have been proven faithful and worthy. These are "elect" in the sense of having been nominated—"moved and seconded." God moved that they should be elected, and "called them with a heavenly calling." It remained for the called ones themselves to "second the motion" by presenting themselves in full consecration of heart to the Lord. But this was not sufficient; for the invited ones were recognized as imperfect and unable to come up to the requirements of the call. Hence it was necessary that the Lord Jesus Christ should become their surety and agree out of his own fulness of merit to supply all of their lack, their imperfection. And this he gladly does by applying for such the merit of his sin-atoning-sacrifice finished at Calvary.

Making the Election Sure.

Keeping before our minds that the heavenly Father made the motion or the call, that we seconded it by accepting the call upon its terms of faith and consecration unto death, and that our Lord Jesus is our surety who will make good our unintentional blemishes, what shall we say of the prospects of our being elected and at whose door shall we lay the responsibility if we are not elected? Surely the unchangeable God who nominated us has made every provision for our election and will co-operate. Surely our Redeemer, our Surety, our Advocate, will give us every assistance in the way and, according to his promise, cause all things to work together for our good. Just as surely, therefore, the entire responsibility for failure would lie at our door. And this is what St. Peter in our text declares, "Make your calling and election sure."

From this standpoint we have a special interest in our own election, such as we never had before when we misunderstood the entire matter. Once in our ignorance we thought that St. Peter had written foolishly about our making the election sure; for according to the erroneous theory which we had "swallowed" without proper meditation, God was doing all the electing himself, and had unalterably fixed our destiny as eternal glory or eternal suffering, long centuries before we were born.

This erroneous view blinded our mental sight from all the various incentives which now are so precious and so helpful. What had God elected us to be and to do? To sit upon a cloud and to play upon a harp and to sing to all eternity, cheerfully looking over the battlements of heaven to see our dear friends writhing in torment, and striving hard to praise God for it all and to think of his course in our election and their damnation as the simplification of Justice and of Love?

We read indeed in the Scriptures respecting a Kingdom, for which our

Lord taught us to pray, "Thy Kingdom come, thy will be done in earth as it is done in heaven," yet the threat of error upon us was so tense that we recognized not the inconsistency between these promises and our false hopes. Now, thank God, "the mystery" is revealed to us in God's Word and by his Spirit, and we perceive that the Millennial Kingdom is to be a reality and that its blessing to mankind in general, "to all the families of the earth," is to be most thorough, most systematic, most complete, and in the end entirely satisfactory.

Kings to Be Elected.

What an interest we properly take in this matter of our election, after learning that the office for which we are running is a combination of priesthood and kingship! The elect are to be priestly kings, or, otherwise styled, "a Royal Priesthood." Their glorious service is to be for a period of one thousand years, during which they will be kings and priests unto God and will reign on the earth (Revelation xx, 4).

They will not "reign on the earth" in the sense of being earthly beings, having earthly courts and thrones, their resurrection "change" will constitute them heavenly or spirit beings, they will be invisible to mankind, as now the "Prince of this world" is invisible and as the holy angels are invisible. But they will possess heavenly power and authority and wisdom and grace. By these glorious attributes they will be able to serve God and humanity by a reign of righteousness, whose up-biting or restitution influences (Acts III, 21) will begin with the living generations, but eventually extend to "all the families of the earth," who have been going down for the past six thousand years into the great prison house of death—"prisoners of hope," however, because of the promise of God's Word and the redemption sacrifice of Jesus.

My beloved hearers, if your hearts are not moved by this message of God's grace and this information respecting his Kingdom and of your prospects of becoming kings and priests in that Kingdom, it is because you do not believe the message—because your faith does not properly grasp the "exceeding great and precious promises" of God's Word (1 Peter 1, 4). I am aware that this whole message by Jesus and his apostles has been so long covered by the rubbish of "the dark ages" that it was lost to our sight for a long while, and sadly we missed its encouragement to faithfulness. I am glad, however, that now our eyes of understanding are opening to see the length and breadth and height and depth in the great Divine Plan of the Ages.

The Value of Earthly Crowns.

Consider for a moment what fabulous prices have been paid for earthly crowns! Thousands of lives have been sacrificed and millions of money, to gain an earthly crown. And thousands who paid this price knew well that "uneasy rests the head which wears the crown." They knew well, too, that its tenure would be precarious and that the attainment of it would bring them lasting hatred from others who aspired to the same position and who considered that their right to it was as good or better.

What comparison should we institute as between the value of such a crown and the "crown of glory," honor and immortality which God has promised to his elect—to such of them as make their calling and their election sure? Has God placed too high a valuation upon the heavenly crown, in demanding that those who would share it with the Redeemer must prove their loyalty to him and to the principles of righteousness, and to the spirit of love, to the extent of laying down their lives in his service and in "doing good unto all men as they have opportunity, especially to the household of faith"?

Our Lord asked wherein would be the profit to any man if he were to gain the whole world and lose his own soul—lose his future life. For the purpose of our present topic we might ask a modified question, namely: If one should gain the empire of the whole world and all of its riches, and if another should gain this heavenly election to the heavenly Kingdom of one thousand years and to subsequent eternal blessings with the Lord, which of these would choose the better part—which would show the real wisdom, and which would be the foolish one? But the contrast increases when we note that the dominion of earth cannot be secured by our sailing through bloody seas, and that a mere competency of earthly wealth is attained by only one of a thousand

who strive for it day and night. Surely from the standpoint of the Father's Word all earthly honors are vanities, in comparison with the heavenly glories and blessings which may be surely attained by the "called" of this Gospel Age: if they will but follow the Divine directions.

Terms and Conditions of Election.

In our context St. Peter tells us upon what terms the called and accepted may make their election sure. After calling our attention to God's exceeding great and precious promises he tells us that they were given us to the intent that they should operate in our minds so as to influence our lives, in harmony with the Divine will, and that thus we may "become partakers of the divine nature, after having escaped the corruption that is in the world through desire,"—selfishness, lust (verse 4). He proceeds to amplify, and urges that such as have this hope shall give all diligence to the matter of adding to their faith virtue or fortitude. That is to say, faith of itself is very good as a start, but God requires more than this. As a condition of our acceptance for election he requires that our faith shall be of a strong kind, giving us fortitude for all of life's affairs, for all of our covinants with the Lord, for a faithful endurance of opposition, contradiction, etc., that thus we might be copies of our Lord Jesus Christ, as God has ordained all of "the elect" must be (Romans VIII, 29).

Not only must we have a strong faith combined with fortitude, but we must also add "knowledge." We require some knowledge of God and of our Lord Jesus and of the Gospel message before we could come unto the Lord at all, but the Apostle is not referring to this, our earliest knowledge. He is addressing Christians who have already taken the first steps. He assures us that they need knowledge to enable them to go onward in Christian development—knowledge in addition to their faith and fortitude. We have nothing to say against worldly knowledge, scientific knowledge, etc., when these do not cross or interfere with the Divine Revelation, but we are confident that the Apostle did not intend to refer to worldly knowledge, but to the greatest of all scientific knowledge—the knowledge of God.

How shall we know God? By study of his character. Our Lord Jesus it was who declared, "This is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent" (John xvii, 3). This knowledge at the present time is a secret knowledge and, as the Apostle says, a "hidden mystery," which can be known only by those who put themselves into a certain attitude of heart and mind and conduct toward the Lord and his revelation. We are to study God's character—to learn respecting his Justice, his Wisdom, his Love and his Power, by studying his revelation—the Bible. In it we see his dealings past, and his promises respecting his dealings future. And a correct appreciation of these gives us a knowledge of God's character as exemplified therein. But since this knowledge is not stated in terms for the world to understand, it follows that only those in proper condition of heart and enlightened by the holy Spirit can receive this knowledge. It is taught only to the pupils in

the School of Christ. "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him; and he will show them his Covenant."

Other Graces to Be Added.

The Apostle continues his advice as to things necessary to be added by those who would make their calling and election sure. They must keep adding, and the adding must be little by little and day by day. The knowledge we gain of God through his Word should lead us to greater moderation (translated, temperance, in our common version). "Let your moderation be known unto all men" (Philippians IV, 5), moderation or balance in thought, in word, in action. God's people may be called extremists by those who are not begotten of the holy Spirit and who know not "the mystery." But even they should be able to charge immoderation only on the one score—our low moderation, our faithfulness to the Word of the Lord and to our covenant of self-sacrifice as followers in the footsteps of Jesus. Our lives should be so moderate as respects business and pleasure and food and resort, etc., that we should be examples of wisdom and moderation to all—extremists only along the same lines that Jesus and the Apostles were counted extremists by those who knew not what they did understand "the mystery" of their endeavor to be of "the very elect."

Patience must not be forgotten. In addition to moderation, "Let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing." Next add godlikeness—general goodness, benevolence, benignity toward all. Add next brotherly kindness—in the natural family relationship, and also in the spiritual family, the Church. "Love as thy brethren" (taught to love). "We ought also to lay down our lives for the brethren." Still further the Apostle urges that while all of the foregoing are elements of love we super-add love itself in the fullest sense toward the Lord, toward the brethren, toward humanity, toward the brute creation and toward our enemies. While all of these cannot be loved in the same degree, all should profit by the spirit of love in our hearts for all.

"Ye Shall Never Fail."

Now comes the climax of the advice to those seeking to make their calling and election sure (verse 8). "If these things be in you and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ." And then, as our text declares, if these things abound and if we give diligence to the making sure of our calling and election and do these things, we shall never fail—we shall in no case fall of securing our election. God seeketh such for joint-heirship with their Redeemer in the Kingdom. God "seeketh such to worship him as worship him in spirit and in truth."

The grand consummation of our election—our Kingdom honors and glories—is specifically referred to by St. Peter in the next verse, saying, "For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting Kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." If, dear Brethren, we believe these things, let us permit them to control our lives—our words, our deeds and our thoughts.

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