

Things Pertaining to Life and Godliness

*“Grace and peace
be multiplied unto
you through the
knowledge of God,
and of Jesus our
Lord, According as
his divine power
hath given unto us
all things that
pertain unto life
and godliness,
through the
knowledge of him
that hath called us
to glory and virtue.”*

—II Peter 1:2,3

ALL TRUE FOLLOWERS OF

Christ have entered into a covenant with the Heavenly Father to do his will. The Scriptures describe it as a covenant into which we enter “by sacrifice.” (Ps. 50:5) We pledge with God to sacrifice all that we possess in his service, even as Jesus did. However, this is not a one-sided covenant, for, after he has accepted our consecration pledge to serve him, God has promised to do all things necessary to

help us meet the terms to which we have agreed. It is important to realize this, otherwise we might easily become discouraged. We are blessed, however, through the knowledge of God, and of his Son Christ

Jesus our Lord, to be assured that heavenly grace abounds toward us and that all our needs are continuously supplied.—Phil. 4:19

Our opening verses explain that “all things that pertain to life and godliness” are supplied to us by “divine power.” The Greek word which is here translated “power” means strength or ability, even to the extent of performing miracles. It is used in Acts 1:8 to describe the power of the Holy Spirit, which is the power of God. Jesus referred to the Holy Spirit as the “Spirit of truth,” and a “Comforter.” (John 14:16,17) This divine power operates in our minds and hearts through the Truth of God’s plan.

While this is partially understandable to us, actually it is something which goes beyond human comprehension, for it is miraculous. It involves our begetting, and ultimately, if we are “faithful unto death,” our birth as New Creatures in Christ Jesus. (Rev. 2:10; II Cor. 5:17) In Ecclesiastes 11:5 we read concerning the work of the Spirit in bringing forth life: “As thou knowest not what is the way of the spirit, nor how the bones do grow in the womb of her that is with child: even so thou knowest not the works of God who maketh all.” While we do not always understand how God assists us in the carrying out of our covenant of sacrifice, we do experience and appreciate the benefits of his Spirit being “poured out in our hearts” and lives. (Rom. 5:5, *Rotherham Emphasized Bible*) The Apostle Paul gives us the assurance that “since God is for us,” no opposing forces can successfully work against us.—Rom. 8:31, *The Emphatic Diaglott*

We know that as members of Adam’s race, we are fallen and imperfect human beings, and Satan takes

advantage of this in his efforts to discourage us. However, our loving Heavenly Father has given us righteousness, or justification, through Christ, as one of the “all things that pertain to life and godliness.” Thus, as Paul wrote in Romans 8:33,34, “It is God who justifies. Who then is the one who condemns? No one. Christ Jesus who died—more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us.”—*New International Version*

THE SPIRIT’S BEGETTING

It is by the divine power of the Holy Spirit, that we are “begotten ... again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.” (I Pet. 1:3-5, *New King James Version*) Even before we enter into a covenant with God by sacrifice, and are begotten by his Holy Spirit, divine power draws us to Christ. We then learn to know something of the privilege that is offered to us to take up our cross and follow Jesus into sacrificial death that we may attain the “prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.”—John 6:44; Phil. 3:14

When, through the drawing power of our Heavenly Father, we become so overwhelmed by his love that we surrender all in order to do his will, we know that the exceeding great and precious promises of the divine nature belong to us, and they become a life-giving energy in our minds and hearts.—II Pet. 1:4

Those drawn to Christ by the Heavenly Father originally were sinners, but their minds are enlightened

to the need of a Redeemer. Those who accept Christ as their Redeemer and Advocate, and come to the point of full consecration, are said to be begotten of God by “the word of truth.” (I John 2:1; James 1:18) Thus they become New Creatures in Christ Jesus, and all things needed for their spiritual nourishment and growth continue to be provided by divine power.

Realizing their weaknesses and imperfection, through the Word of Truth these true Christians are assured of divine help and gracious forgiveness. Their need for guidance in the narrow way is also assured, for they can ask God for wisdom—spiritual wisdom—and know that they will receive it liberally, and not be upbraided for asking.—James 1:5

Every precious promise of God pertaining to our nourishment and development contributes to the exercise of divine power in bringing us forth as his New Creation. It is by feeding upon these promises that we grow “strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.” (Eph. 6:10) It is by the influence of the Spirit of Truth in our lives that we mature from “babes in Christ” to manhood in the Lord. (I Cor. 3:1; Eph. 4:15) Only those who do thus mature will come to spiritual birth through a further exercise of divine power. The Heavenly Father will not exalt spiritual “babes” to the divine nature.

THE DIVINE COMMISSION

There is a divine purpose behind our calling and begetting. We are not called by God merely to be delivered from sin and death, although the divine arrangement provides for this. God’s New Creation is being prepared to be the channel of his promised blessings to all the families of the earth. When

exalted with Jesus in the first resurrection, to live and reign with him, they will be associated with the Master in giving health and everlasting life to all the willing and obedient of mankind.—Rev. 20:6; 21:1-5

Before the members of the New Creation are exalted to the divine nature in the kingdom, their mission is to be the bearers of God's Truth to all who will hear and respond to the message. Indeed, they are commissioned to proclaim the message even though the world gives but little or no heed to it. This divine commission to work for the Lord is symbolically referred to in the Scriptures as the "anointing" of the Spirit. (II Cor. 1:21,22; I John 2:27) This symbolism of anointing is based upon the ancient custom of Israel to anoint kings and priests to office. It was the official designation to office, a symbol of the authority invested in them.—Exod. 28:41; I Sam. 15:1

The Scriptures reveal that all who are begotten by the Holy Spirit as New Creatures are also anointed by the Spirit to be coworkers with God in the outworking of his plan of salvation. (I Cor. 3:9; II Cor. 6:1) This is a wonderful arrangement of divine grace. Actually, in our weakness, and with all our imperfections, we can do nothing for the Lord that is really worthwhile from his standpoint. We cannot imagine that the great Creator of the universe really needs us. There is nothing we can do that he could not accomplish in some other way. Nothing that we can give to him will make him rich, nor will our withholding make him poor.

It is only by divine grace and favor that we are invited to work for the Lord, and this grace is the

more abundant because of the many assurances of the Scriptures that our Heavenly Father really wants us to be partners with him and with his beloved Son, Christ Jesus. This assurance is given to us through the anointing of the Holy Spirit.

One of the principal texts referring to the anointing is Isaiah 61:1-3, which reads: "The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn; To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that he might be glorified."

This outline of the Spirit's anointing comprehends briefly the outworking of the entire plan of God. Jesus quoted and applied it to the work he was commissioned to do. (Luke 4:16-21) Jesus not only proclaimed glad tidings to the meek, and the opening of the prison of sin and death to those who are bound, but also gave demonstrations of what the good news of the kingdom would ultimately mean to all the sin-cursed and dying world. The divine commission covers both these aspects of the Master's ministry. It will be under this same divine commission that Jesus will conduct the future kingdom work of healing all the sick and raising all the dead.

Thus it is with us, the Master's followers. We are anointed by the Spirit to be partners with Jesus,

both in proclaiming the Gospel of the kingdom, and by-and-by to be associated with him in the great restitution work foretold by all God's holy prophets since the world began. (Matt. 24:14; Acts 3:19-21) What a marvelous blessing this is! Through our understanding of his plan we have come to know God. To know God is to want to talk about him. We "love to tell the story," and through the anointing of the Holy Spirit we are assured that our Heavenly Father wants us to tell the story, that his name might be glorified.

Proper preparation is needed in order to utilize the anointing of the Spirit. When we see a signed and sealed certificate in a doctor's office, it means that the one to whom it applies is authorized and qualified to serve the public as a physician. It means that he or she has made a thorough study of all those things necessary in order to be a doctor of medicine. So it is with our anointing, our authority to be "ambassadors for Christ." (II Cor. 5:20) God expects us to become acquainted with his plans and purposes so that when we speak for him, and in his name, we will not misrepresent his plan with respect to the recovery of the world from sin and death.

The Apostle Paul wrote to Timothy, saying, "Give diligence to present thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, handling aright the word of truth." (II Tim. 2:15, *Revised Version*) The Scriptures, Paul further wrote, are "profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." (II Tim. 3:16,17) Indeed, the "all things that pertain unto life and godliness," which have been

furnished to us by divine power, include an understanding of the instructions in the plans and purposes of God that we might, through their faithful use, be completely “furnished unto all good works.”

THE SPIRIT’S WITNESS

Another of the “all things” that the Lord has so graciously furnished, is the witness or testimony of his Holy Spirit that we are his children. It is a blessed thing to be assured that we have been begotten by the Holy Spirit, and thus possess the “spirit of sonship.” (Rom. 8:15, *Revised Standard Version*) How can we know this? The Apostle Paul gives us a definite answer to this question. He wrote, “The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: And 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. 8:16,17

Here Paul says we have the witness of the Spirit that we are the children of God if we are suffering with Christ. Why did the apostle state this so definitely? It is because the holy prophets of God, who wrote “as they were moved by the Holy Spirit,” had foretold the “sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow.” (II Pet. 1:21; I Pet. 1:11) The Scriptures reveal clearly that those who enter into a covenant with God through sacrifice have the privilege of suffering with Christ, encouraged by the glorious hope of reigning with him. Thus, if we are having the privilege of suffering with Christ, of being ostracized by the world—looked upon as not belonging because of our faithfulness to the Truth—then the Spirit of God which

foretold this is testifying to us that we are the children of God!

This does not necessarily imply that we will be incarcerated, or have physical pain inflicted upon us. It does mean that if we are faithful to the Lord and to the Truth, it may cost us the friendship of this sinful, selfish world. It perhaps could also mean that before we finish our earthly course some severe tests of faith will come upon us in the way of suffering, or threatened suffering, for the Truth's sake. To whatever extent we come face to face with these experiences, be they mild in nature, or severe, we have this as a witness of the Spirit that we are the children of God.

THE SEAL OF THE SPIRIT

The symbol of a seal is sometimes used in the Bible in connection with the work of the Holy Spirit in our hearts as it molds us into the image of Christ. This is one of the very important "all things" which the power of God is accomplishing for us as New Creatures in Christ. This sealing begins with a knowledge of the Truth, and a knowledge of God, its Author. It is described in Revelation 7:3 as a sealing of "the servants of our God in their foreheads." It is important in this connection that we continue to yield ourselves fully to the molding influences of the Holy Spirit, that our every thought, word, and deed might be more and more fully conformed to the will of God in Christ Jesus.

The Scriptures also use the word "seal" from the standpoint of a guarantee or pledge. It is thus used by Paul in Ephesians 1:13,14. This text reads: "In him [Christ] you also, who have heard the word of

truth, the gospel of your salvation, and have believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, which is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.”
—*RSV*

Paul says that we are sealed by “the promised Holy Spirit.” It was through the power of God’s Holy Spirit that all the precious promises were recorded in his written Word. Many of these promises seal, or guarantee, our victory through Christ by assuring us of divine help in every time of need. (Heb. 4:16) The sum of all these precious promises is that nothing can hinder us from making our calling and election sure except ourselves, and this would be as a result of our own unfaithfulness.

Paul explains that this seal is the “guarantee of our inheritance”; that is, it is the down payment, so to speak. What a joy it is to realize that this initial payment will, in the first resurrection, be followed by the fullness of the promised inheritance—even glory, honor, and immortality—and the great privilege of living and reigning with Christ a thousand years.—Rom. 2:7; Rev. 20:4-6

PRECIOUS PROMISES

All the promises of God pertaining to his New Creation have been given to us by divine power. In the verse following our opening text Peter writes, “Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature.” (II Pet. 1:4) It is not enough, however, merely to know of these promises, and to rejoice in them. They constitute the very basis of our faith. If God’s promises are to accomplish

his intended purpose in our lives, however, we must, as Peter explains, give “all diligence” in adding to our faith virtue, knowledge, temperance [self-control], patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, and charity, or love.—vss. 5-7

“If these things be in you, and abound,” Peter explains, “they make you that ye shall neither be barren [Greek: inactive] nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for 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. Wherefore I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though ye know them, and be established in the present truth.”—vss. 8-12

An abundant entrance into the kingdom of Christ, to be joint-heirs with him in the blessing of all the families of the earth, is one of the things made possible for us by divine power. We must be willing to do these things mentioned by Peter, and give “all diligence” to this end. However, actual growth in grace and knowledge is possible only as God gives us help. We can work out our own salvation only as God works in us “to will and to do of his good pleasure.”—Phil. 2:12,13

PROPHETIC TRUTHS

Peter’s second epistle, in which our text appears, has much to say concerning the return of Christ,

and the establishment of his kingdom. He uses the prophetic truths of God's Word as an incentive to faithfulness. After describing, symbolically, the destruction of Satan's world, Peter adds, "Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness."—II Pet. 3:11

We are now living in the time when Satan's world is crumbling under its own weight of sin and selfishness. There is, therefore, more reason than ever for giving diligence in making our calling and election sure. The world and her pursuits are perishing; her beauty is fading like a flower, so what type of persons are we to be in all holy conversation and godliness? The Greek word here translated "conversation" denotes more than simply what we talk about. It refers to the entire demeanor of life—to all that we say and do. We are to give diligence in bringing our every thought, word, and deed into conformity with the will of God in Christ.—II Cor. 10:5

The prophecies pertaining to the presence of Christ and the destruction of Satan's world were not put in the Bible to frighten God's people, but to enlighten and encourage them. We are encouraged to understand that we are now living near the close of this "present evil world"; that Christ is invisibly present; and that his kingdom will soon be established for the blessing of all the families of the earth. (Gal. 1:4; 3:8; Acts 3:25) The joy of knowing this is yet another of the "all things" given to us by divine power, and is a great incentive to faithfulness.

Of Jesus it is written that he, "in view of the joy set before him, endured the cross, disregarding its shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the

throne of God.” (Heb. 12:2, *International Standard Version*) The joy of participating with Jesus in the future kingdom work of blessing mankind has also been set before us by the Holy Spirit. This joy helps us to bear our cross and to disregard the shame which is attached to following the Lamb “whithersoever he goeth.”—Rev. 14:4

After telling us about the impending destruction of Satan’s world, Peter adds: “Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.” (II Pet. 3:13) “Wherefore,” Peter continues, “seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless.” Here Peter explains the “manner of persons” we ought to be.

“Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” (Rom. 5:1) As long as we remain under the protection of faith in Jesus’ blood, our Heavenly Father will look upon us as being without spot and blameless. However, this does not relieve us of the responsibility of “giving all diligence” in conforming our lives as nearly as possible to the perfect pattern set before us in Christ Jesus our Lord. We still must add virtue, knowledge, self-control, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness and love. If we lack these things we will become spiritually blind, and the prophecies of the good things to come will fade from our spiritual vision.—II Pet. 1:9

On the other hand, if we diligently “do these things,” we shall “never fall.” (vs. 10) This does not mean that we will never make a mistake. It does not mean that we can have peace with God apart from the righteousness of Christ. It does mean, however, that we will not fall away from divine grace, from

the keeping power of God. The promises of God assure us of this, and these promises are among those things that "pertain to life and godliness."

"A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand," wrote the psalmist, "but it shall not come nigh thee." (Ps. 91:7) What a blessed assurance this is of the keeping power of God! Through the psalmist, the Holy Spirit also gives us the assurance which reads: "The angel of the LORD encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them." (Ps. 34:7) What a wonderful protection is thus assured to all who "do these things."

"Great peace have they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend them," the psalmist further wrote. (Ps. 119:165) The thought here is that they shall not be permitted to stumble and fall. The reason is that they love God's laws, his righteous ways, his plan, and his Word. If we truly love the Lord and his instructions, we will give all diligence to conform our lives to them. Making our calling and election sure will not become an incidental, half-hearted effort of life, but will continue to be an all-consuming work, indeed, the working out of our own salvation.

If we truly love God and his Word, we will not be like those who, according to Peter, pervert the Scriptures, "unto their own destruction." (II Pet. 3:16) Instead, we will take God at his word and obey his instructions without hesitation. We know that the human heart is deceitful. (Jer. 17:9) It can influence our minds to interpret Scriptures in such a manner as to make the narrow way of sacrifice a little less narrow, if we permit it to be so. However, if we give all diligence to study, and then sincerely apply the Lord's instructions, we will be protected

against all influences which would take us out of our Heavenly Father's loving care. Even Satan will not be permitted to harm us as New Creatures, if we remain devoted to the doing of God's will and submissive to all the providences which divine power permits and overrules for our good.—Rom. 8:28

Just as divine power has provided all things pertaining to life and godliness, we can also be assured that it will not allow anything to interfere with the accomplishment of God's purpose in our lives. Surely this is a blessed promise, for we know that greater is he who is for us than all who are against us. (Rom. 8:31; I John 4:4) Let us daily rejoice in the abundance of God's grace as we continue zealously to fulfill the terms of our covenant with him by sacrifice, strengthened by the certain knowledge that our Heavenly Father will be faithful to us. (I Thess. 5:24) If we do this, when the due time comes, we shall have an abundant entrance into that glorious kingdom which is to uplift and bless the people of all nations.—II Pet. 1:11 ■