



Volume 76 No. 5 MELBOURNE, SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER, 1993

Qualified for the Kingdom

(Convention Address)

"There's the wonder of springtime and harvest, The stars, the moon and the sea; But the wonder of wonders that thrills my soul Is the wonder that God loves me."

One aspect of that wonder of all wonders is that God through the Lord Jesus Christ has qualified us for His kingdom! The word 'qualification' is a very important one. The Australian people have recently held a general election and the question on peoples' minds was - who is most fit, most qualified for the tasks at hand? Americans have not so long ago gone through a Presidential election and the question was - is Mr. Bush who has been in power for four years best qualified to deal with the problems the country is facing or should the people trust someone else?

Mr. Clinton won out because he was deemed to be better qualified to handle the problems of the country. One of the first appointments which he made was of a woman as Attorney-General for the country. However the Congress rejected this appointment because they felt that she was not qualified to fill that position. One of the things which she would have to deal with was that of aliens who come into the country illegally and in fact she had earlier hired three aliens to work in her home. She was therefore not considered qualified for the position.

The apostle Paul says in Col. 1:12 - "giving thanks unto the Father who has made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light." That phrase 'has made us meet' is from a Greek word which means that God has made us fit, or has qualified us, to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light. The same verse in the Diaglott is rendered - "giving thanks to the Father, who called and qualified us for the portion of the saints' inheritance in the light." This is our text for consideration.

The apostle goes on to say - "who delivered us from the dominion of darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of the Son of His love, in whom we have redemption and forgiveness of sins." Let us now consider that statement by the apostle, which is part of a prayer, in the context of what he is saying to the Christians in Colosse and what he is saying to you and to me.

As we go through these scriptures, we want to view them as Paul's prayer on our behalf, to personalise the things which he is saying, to realise that he had us in mind, that he was offering his prayer not just for the Christians in Colosse but this was very much the apostle's desire for you and for me.

Verses 1 & 2 of Col. 1 are the introductory comments of the apostle, his salutation or greeting. "Paul an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God and Timothy our brother to the saints and faithful brethren in Christ who are in Colosse." What a wonderful opening statement - to realise that you and I, in the eyes of God, are called and chosen and His desire is that we be faithful until the end of our lives. So therefore to God we are saints, we are the called-out ones, we are of those who have been set aside by God for His ultimate glory and to His praise.

Paul continues - "grace to you and peace from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ." This is indeed a great desire by the apostle that God's grace, His unmerited favour, might be a portion in our lives, that a desire to serve God might continue to grow in our hearts and minds, as we seek to know that perfect will of God and to accomplish the purpose that He has for each one of us in our lives.

Verses 3 to 8 are a prayer in and of themselves; they constitute a prayer of thanksgiving. It is rather profound that the apostle in this prayer is thankful for their faith, for their love - for the intensity of their faith

in the Lord Jesus Christ and their love for all saints, which he indicates springs forth from the hope that they have in the promises of God, indeed the hope laid up in heaven for them, of which they had heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel.

Elsewhere Paul reminds us that as Gentiles we were at one time without hope but now by the grace of God we have come into that prospect of hope. So Paul says that as a result of their hearing the word of truth and because of the hope which they have in the promises of God, their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and their love for all saints has become known to all. What a wonderful proclamation that is, we have love for one another because we share in the common hope that God has given us of reigning with our Lord eternally.

He is thankful for one other thing which we do not want to lose sight of; he is thankful for Epaphras by whom the Christians in Colosse had been instructed in the gospel. Often perhaps we take one another for granted, when in reality we should be thankful for each other, for those brethren whom God has brought into our lives. Not that we want to be man-worshippers, God forbid, but we have an example from the apostle Paul, who says - "Be ye followers of me, as I am of Christ." So God brings into our lives individuals who do influence us, who do have an impact on our lives, and we need to be thankful for them.

The apostle then proceeds to his second prayer, a prayer of petition, and in this the apostle has two fundamental requests on behalf of all saints. In verse 9, he starts off by saying - "for this cause" or for this reason, a common phrase in God's word. Following what the apostle Paul has just said, based on his appreciation of their faith in Christ, the fact of their intense love for all saints, that they have a marvellous hope in the promises of God, that they were receptive to the word of truth, the apostle acknowledges that all that, in and of itself, is still not enough.

This is a wonderful lesson for us too, that you and I can never come to a point in our lives where we can say that we have reached the pinnacle, attained the ultimate - there is always room for progress, for further development, for the work of the Holy Spirit to be accomplished in us. So Paul is saying - for this reason, the good news concerning the experience that the Christians in Colosse had already had in Christ, he is grateful, but he prays for further enrichment of their lives. So he proceeds in his prayer as we read starting from verse 9.

The prayers of the apostle Paul can leave one exhausted, emotionally exhausted; he says so much in one sentence, clearly the work of the Holy Spirit in one who is open to its power. What is the apostle then saying here - for the reason I have just explained since the day I heard of it from Epaphras, I do not cease to pray for you and to ask, **first**, that you be filled with the knowledge of God's will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding. The word 'knowledge' here is from the Greek EPIGNOSIS. The word for knowledge, pure and simple, is GNOSIS, but the word the apostle is using here is defined by Vine as 'thorough, deep and accurate knowledge' of God's divine will. Another commentator says that the word means knowledge which grasps and permeates into the object under study.

What the apostle is asking for therefore is that you and I might be filled with a thorough, deep and accurate knowledge of God's divine will, not just a superficial or inaccurate knowledge. So much of Christendom is filled with inaccurate knowledge concerning the Lord Jesus Christ, concerning who He is and what his relationship is to the Father. We cannot please God when we do not know His Son and therefore Paul would have us possess a thorough, deep and accurate knowledge of God, of the Lord Jesus Christ and of God's divine will.

"In all wisdom and spiritual understanding" -indeed it is only through the power of the Holy Spirit that we come to understand God, only thus we can know the deep things of God. So God would have you and me gain an accurate knowledge of His will through all spiritual wisdom and understanding; not through the wisdom and teaching of humans but through the wisdom and teaching of God's power. But why is it important to have this accurate knowledge of God's divine will? This is very clearly portrayed in the **second** phase of Paul's request, the second fundamental of his petition - that you and I might live a life worthy of the Lord, pleasing Him in every way, that we might walk worthy of Him, 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 long-suffering with joy.

Let us pause to consider this prayer of petition. Again the apostle Paul is asking for two fundamental things, first that we be filled with this accurate knowledge of God's will so that we might live worthy of the Lord, pleasing Him in every way. Knowledge of itself is dangerous because it tends to puff one up. Knowledge directed and guided by God's Holy Spirit has the end result of changing our conduct, our behaviour, of conforming us to the glorious image of the Lord Jesus Christ. That is the purpose of God's workmanship in each one of us; that is the destiny of the Church, the purpose to which God has predestined us - that we might be conformed to the blessed image of Jesus, that we might stand before Him in that day, unashamed, because we indeed shall be what He is.

The end of all knowledge must be to impact on our lives in such a way that there is a complete transformation taking place in our hearts and minds, that we are converted from being human-minded into the mind of

the Lord, into the likeness of Jesus, to a life which is worthy of the Lord and pleasing to God in every way. We must know His will in order to live worthily and please Him. There are indeed four components in a believer's life which ultimately make it worthy and pleasing to God in every way. These are given in verses 10 to 12 of Col. 1 -

1. we must BEAR FRUIT in every good work
2. we must continually GROW spiritually
3. we must be continually STRENGTHENED unto greater patience and long-suffering with joyfulness
4. we must have a spirit of continual THANKFULNESS

First of all, the apostle reminds us that we must bear fruit in every good work and we are reminded of the words of the apostle in Titus 2:11-15 - "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works. These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority."

As the grace of God works in our lives, it creates a desire within us to do those things that are pleasing to God, to be fruitful in every way, to bear the fruit of the Spirit, because we desire to be like our Lord Jesus Christ. We are reminded again of John's words in 1 John 3:1-3 - "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the children of God; therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew Him not." (Indeed, if the world does know us, we need to look upon that as a red flag, as it were. Why do they know us? Is it because we are conforming to their standards? The world should not know us, because they did not know Christ.)

John continues - "Beloved, now are we the children of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is." What a glorious prospect that is! We do not know what we will be, but we know we will be like Him for we shall see Him as He is! In that prospect, John adds - "And everyone that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as He is pure." It is that glorious hope that brings about a purification in our lives, a sanctification, because we desire to do only those things that please God in every way. So first of all, to live worthily and please Him, we must bear fruit in every good work.

In Titus 3:8, the apostle Paul says - "This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works; these things are good and profitable unto men." We please God when we allow the Holy Spirit to urge us on to the production of the fruit of the Spirit and to the doing of those deeds which are pleasing to our Heavenly Father.

Secondly, the apostle says - not only must we be fruitful but we must also continuously grow spiritually, increasing in the knowledge of God. A good fruit tree not only bears fruit but simultaneously grows stronger. We must continuously grow in the spirit, continuously grow in knowledge. The apostle Peter reminds us in 2 Peter 3:18 - "Grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To Him be glory both now and forever. Amen." Again, we can never reach a stage where we feel we have learnt it all. The Bible is an inexhaustible book, it is a book full of gems, and we only begin to scratch the surface of it. God in His wisdom has planned it that way, so that we throughout our lifetime may continue to grow in the spirit, grow in accurate knowledge of God, simultaneously bearing fruit as the Spirit works in our lives.

The third thing that the apostle reminds us must occur in our lives, if we are to live worthy of God and pleasing in every way, is that we must be strengthened by all might according to His glorious power, so that we may ultimately have that patience and great endurance that God would have us display. What does this mean? Nehemiah tells us in Neh. 8:10 - "that the joy of the Lord is your strength." Paul reminds us that we fight not against flesh and blood but against the powers of darkness. The only way that we can survive is to be continually empowered by God, through the power of the Holy Spirit, as we are so beautifully reminded in Eph. 1:16-21 - "I cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers, that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him; the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of His calling, and what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power, which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places 79

The profound reality is that God would have us experience the very power that He used to raise Jesus from the dead; He would have us experience it in our daily walk with the Lord. To be continually empowered by God's power means that we make right decisions in our lives, that every phase of our lives is permeated by God's will, that we desire to do only what will please Him and not what will please men or will please our-

selves: that is to be fully empowered by the Spirit. The same word for 'strengthened' is used in Phil. 4:13 where Paul says - "I can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth me." It is hard to imagine just what the apostle Paul means when he would like us to experience the same power that God used to raise Jesus from the dead. Jesus was in the grave for three days; there was no life there. We cannot begin to grasp the power that was needed, not only to raise Him from the dead but to transfer Him from flesh and blood to a spirit being, given a name above every name, at which every knee must bow and tongue confess; but whatever power it took, God has pleasure in making it available to you and me.

To have our hearts and our minds transformed so that our greatest desire in life is to do only what is pleasing to Him and to fulfil only His will in our lives is to be empowered according to His glorious power. Again the Greek phrase for 'His glorious power' points to a never-ending source of power. When we seem to run out of energy, run out of grace, become discouraged because of circumstances in our lives, the grace of God is there to be tapped into, because the source of God's power is infinite.

Such empowerment by the Holy Spirit, says Paul, leads to great patience, that is, the opposite of cowardice or despondency, a willingness to see things through, knowing that God has a blessing for us at the end of the line. It leads also to long-suffering, which is the opposite of wrath or a spirit of revenge, a spirit of retaliation. We can withstand all things, no matter who hurts us or how badly we are hurt, because we know that this is a part of the training that God has designed for us.

Fourthly, the apostle would have us live worthily unto all pleasing by living a life of continual praise. "Giving thanks unto the Father, who has made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light." To live a life of thankfulness means that our hearts and minds are set on Jesus twenty-four hours a day and that can be at our work, or at school if we are students, whenever there is a free moment we must let our hearts and minds focus on Him. We must let our lives become lives of praise, lives of thanksgiving, lives that reveal indeed that we have been redeemed by the precious blood of Jesus, that we have understood His purpose for us in this life and that we are looking forward to that grand and glorious day when He shall receive us unto Himself so that we may be with Him throughout eternity.

Our lives must be lives of complete gratitude. Why? Because He **has** qualified us, not that He will qualify us; He has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in the kingdom of light. The Greek word means that we are made fit by God, there is no fitness in us, of ourselves we are not fit, not sufficient, not competent. He makes us fit, sufficient, competent to inherit with the saints in light. He makes us able to live in His kingdom for He has transferred us from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of the Son of His love. Praise his holy name! (Verse 13)

This is God's doing, it is not ours. God's dealings with the nation of Israel revealed that they, of themselves, were not worthy of life. Of ourselves, we are not worthy of life. We are not fit or sufficient or competent to inherit with the saints in the kingdom of light, but God has qualified us through the Lord Jesus Christ. The Greek word for 'transferred' (A.V. translated) is very specific, a military word which is used when a soldier is taken from one country and transferred to a totally different country. This is a beautiful analogy - that is what God has done, He has taken us out of the kingdom of Satan, the kingdom of darkness, and He has transferred us into the kingdom of His dear Son.

So you and I then are to be living as children of the kingdom, children who experience the fullness of God's power in our lives, children who have been qualified because of the deep love of God for the Church. Nor does it end there - not only have we been qualified as believers to share in the inheritance of the saints in the kingdom of light, transferred from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of the Son of His love, but God continues to qualify us for greater work which is yet to come. His work continues in us because we are being qualified to function as a kingdom of priests in the age to come. "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection; on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years." (Rev. 20:6)

Has any of us ever desired to be Prime Minister or President or Attorney-General of our country? What we are being called to is something far superior to that. We are being qualified to be a kingdom of priests, for a task that will be performed in the next age, and that is the restitution of all mankind. We all know these things, but we need to encourage one another, to stir up our pure minds to remember the calling to which we have been called. God has not only qualified us to be partakers of the saints' inheritance in light, not only transferred us from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of His Son, but He is qualifying us to be a kingdom of priests, to reign with Christ a thousand years, to minister to the needs of humanity, to teach them the righteousness of God. What a standing is ours! Is this not reason enough for us to live lives of thanksgiving and praise; is this not reason to stand out as brilliant lamps in the midst of a dark and decaying world!

Then will be fulfilled the glorious promise of Rev. 22:17 - "And the Spirit (i.e. the Lord Jesus Christ) and the Bride (i.e. the Church) say, Come; and let him that heareth say, Come; and let him that is athirst say,

Come; and whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.” How wonderful it will be to be a part of a kingdom of priests, to dispense the blessings of God, to restore humanity and bring them into a right relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ, as they ultimately accept Him as their Lord and Saviour.

Are we qualified? Yes, we are qualified because it is by the grace of God that we stand before Him in the completeness of our Lord Jesus Christ. Are we being qualified for the majestic role that we have been called to, to reign with Christ for a thousand years? This is up to you and to me, this is the choice we must make, this is the invitation extended to each one of us. Surely, we will desire more than anything else in the world to hear that wonderful statement of commendation, that verdict by our Lord and Master - “Well done, thou good and faithful servant, thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.” (Matt. 25:21) May God bless us each one as we continue to seek to know His will accurately for our lives.

(A.P: 1993)

Be still and know that I am God

(Psalm 46:10)

Be still, my child, let not some dark foreboding,
Some nameless dread, destroy or steal thy rest;
Bid of things unknown desist its goading;
Thou art my child and should not be distressed.

Be still, my child, nor contemplate disaster;
The Hand that led still leads thee on thy way;
While world events move on - both graver, faster,
For thee they lead to life's eternal day.

Be still, my child, though future ways are shrouded,
What matters it since thou doth walk with me.
Would life be sweeter were its skies unclouded,
Or safer were its future thou could see?

Not so, my child, to have all limits ending,
To see or know all would not give thee rest;
'Twill be to wait on me, depending,
Nor could I, would I, leave my child unblest.

(J Danson Smith)

The Will of God

Laid on Thine altar, O my Lord Divine,
Accept my gift this day, for Jesus' sake;
I have no jewels to adorn Thy shrine,
Nor any world-famed sacrifice to make:
But here I bring within my trembling hands
This will of mine, a thing that seemeth small,
Yet thou alone, O Lord, canst understand
How, when I yield Thee this, I yield Thee all.

Morning Request

Lord, this is the day that You have made,
And all events it holds are in Your hand;

Before Your Throne the schedule's clearly laid;
Lord, help me live this day the way
You've planned.

—Arva Morris

A Sanctified People

The increase in knowledge of the past two centuries has brought many advances and benefits to mankind, but with added sorrows and new difficulties for the root problem of human sinfulness and its consequences upon the race are still with us. Indeed, they will remain until the King, our dear Saviour Himself, takes up His great power to reign in that coming and glorious kingdom, for which His people have so long prayed.

The apostle Paul, writing to his son in the faith, tells Timothy that “in the last days perilous times shall come” and he goes on to detail various forms of ungodly and corrupt behaviour which have probably never been more in evidence than in our day. He further warns that some shall even depart from the faith into unprofitable ways, retaining a form of godliness but in their lives and conduct denying its power. How important that each of the Lord's people not only keep their own zeal aglow but be watchful to help or encourage others who may be disheartened, for surely we are living in perilous days.

The apostle Peter, in turn, points us forward to the time when all those institutions which for so long have been the bulwarks of society will begin to crumble and fall away. Our own eyes and ears tell us that this is already well under way and so the apostle's question comes very pertinently to us - “what manner of persons ought we to be?” Modern translations bring this out even more pointedly to each of us - “what kind of people ought we to be? We ought to live holy and godly lives as we look forward to the day of God and speed its coming.” This exhortation to the “sanctified life” then is daily the challenge for each one of us.

This will need to be lived out in the midst of an un sanctified and troubled world and we do well at the outset to remember that while we cannot be untouched by the problems and fears on all sides, we have a solid base for hope and assurance and, by God's grace, may be able to say with the Psalmist - “God is my refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble, therefore will not we fear.” All of Psalm 46 from which these words are taken might indeed well be our personal motto for each passing year.

One verse that might have our special attention is 1 Thess. 4:3, where the apostle tells his readers, and us - “this is the will of God, even your sanctification” - and then goes on to give practical examples of the sanctified or spirit-filled life. These words were written, as we realise, to those who had already progressed some way along the Christian path. Paul had earlier commended them for their works of faith, labours of love and patience of hope, so here he is evidently referring not to the initial step of discipleship which each had taken but to a continuing and developing process in their lives.

The word “sanctification” is one of the beautiful words of scripture. The Greek words from which it and the related verb “sanctify” are translated originate in a root which has to do with awe or reverence, and the basic thought is apparently of preparation and purification for reverent purposes. The corresponding Hebrew word has the thought of making, pronouncing or observing as ceremonially or morally clean. This word is used of the sanctifying of the tabernacle and its furnishings by Moses, and finally of Jehovah's glorious sanctifying presence in it.

Parallels in the Christian experience come readily to mind. The Lord's people have been sanctified and cleansed by Christ, who “loved the church and gave Himself for it. That He might sanctify and cleanse it by the washing of water by the word, that He might present it to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish.” Eph. 5:26. Meantime each member is to be set apart for His service.

Here the apostle speaks of the church as a whole, but this work of sanctification begins in each one as he or she comes into God's family by faith in Christ Jesus. The commission of the risen Christ to Paul on the Damascus road was to preach the gospel to the gentiles, so that they too might “receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in Jesus.” Acts 26:18 (N.I.V.) Faith is the starting point; without faith none can be pleasing or come to God at all, but once justified by faith, the work of sanctification can go ahead as each day passes. For it is in His people that our Heavenly Father graciously deigns and desires to dwell by His spirit.

Paul had to remind the Corinthians more than once of this - “know ye not that your body is the temple of the

Holy Spirit, which is in you, which ye have of God and ye are not your own?" 1 Cor. 6:19. and again - "ye are the temple of the living God, as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them, and I will be their God and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch no the unclean thing and I will receive you." 2 Cor, 6:16. This is exactly the thought of sanctification - separation, cleansing and departure from all that would defile and render unfit for holy service. Such words as those of the apostle are surely the remedy for any spiritual complacency.

The process of sanctification then is the work of God's Holy Spirit in our hearts, as we read in 2 Cor. 1:21 - "He which establisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God who hath sealed us and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts." Again in Tit. 3:5, Paul reminds us that God's salvation is not the product of any good works of righteousness on our own part, but is being worked out in us by "the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit." By His spirit, the new mind, the mind of Christ, is being developed within each one of God's children, so that their delight will more and more be to do their Father's will.

As already noted, our sanctification is a continuing process; it commences as we first come into Christ by faith, it continues daily and culminates only when the earthly course is complete. It is furthermore a co-operative process, in which the Christian himself or herself has a part to play. Just as we are told to work out our own salvation because God Himself is working in us, so here too each one has a responsibility. In our Lord's prayer for His people, He asked the Father to "sanctify then through Thy truth; Thy word is truth." This is the source and secret of the sanctified life, to have His word abiding in our hearts, guiding every thought and word and action.

This work of sanctification, we can be sure, will not continue regardless of our own will and actions. If we would be pleasing to God and be used by Him, separation of ourselves from all that is contrary to or competitive with His will for us will be necessary at all times. Paul's advice to the younger man, Timothy, is good for all God's children, regardless of age - "in a great house there are not only vessels and some to dishonour (or less honour). If a man therefore purge himself from these (that is, the ungodly and unprofitable things he had previously described), he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the Master's use, and prepared unto every good work." 2 Tim. 2:20,21. The process of sanctification in each one is the work of God's Holy Spirit, implanting and developing within heart and mind His word, which is the word of truth. This alone is truth, this alone can sanctify, this alone can bring into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ. There are three aspects to this process, as reflected in the Old Testament tabernacle arrangements; first he cleansing, then the anointing and then the setting apart for holy purposes. In like manner, it is the privilege of the Lord's people today to be prepared and fitted for His service.

This is God's will for us and must surely be the heart's desire of every child of God, our hope, our resolve, that we may be His sanctified people, each one a cleansed and purified vessel of our Lord, set apart for consecrated service, that each heart may be a place wherein He will delight to dwell by His Spirit, and that our lives may be such that He can use in however small a way to His Praise.

May the words of the apostle to the Christians at Thessalonica encourage us also, as we press on in the narrow way:

"We are bound to give thanks to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth." 2 Thess. 2:13.

Our God is faithful, our God is able.

They who trust Him wholly find Him wholly true.

This Day Is Thine

This day is thine, a shining gift from heaven,
Gleaned for thy use from treasuries of time,
Given in trust to hold until the even,
This day is thine, a sacred charge sublime,

This day is thine, to be what thou shalt make it,
Hidden in self or used in service fine;
When thou shalt bring it back to him who gave it,
What will it be, this golden day of thine?

This day is thine, thy yesterdays are finished,
Soon will the present join the changeless past;
Will its bright hours be greater for thy keeping

Or by the dreaded rust of waste o'ercast?

This day is thine, there may be no tomorrows,
This day is thine from dawn till setting sun;
May thou at even, like a worthy steward,
Hear in thy heart the Master's words, "Well done."

—Verna Whinery

A Personal Testimony

In younger days the driving force was to learn, to acquire knowledge and understanding of God's Word and Will. The intellect was sharper, points were quickly picked up. It becomes more difficult with the passing of the years, not only to tackle the knotty problems presented, but to retain the knowledge acquired. No matter how much we learn, acquired knowledge seems but to impress "how little we know." The creations of our Creator are unfathomable, a mine that will never fail to yield treasure. The experiences of this short life upon earth will prove but an initial stepping stone, serving as but preparation for the unfolding of glories to come, not only for those who walk the "narrow way" in the steps of Christ now, but for all men in "due time."

When the author of "The Divine Plan of the Ages" commenced his work over a century ago and pointed out that God's Word held out no hope for "this present evil world", but that it would bring about its own destruction and pass away in a great time of trouble, he was bitterly assailed by many. He sought no vindication of his work apart from the Holy Word of God itself. It alone never fails. The same author went on to show that the end of such a world would not prove a calamity for mankind, but the opening up of a new order of things which would usher in untold blessings. The "times of restitution of all things spoken of by all God's holy prophets", was as sure to come as the morning follows the night. Today, a century on, the opposition to his first claim is fading; the ultimate collapse of "this present evil world" is so obvious. No society based on greed and selfishness can survive indefinitely, but the second part of the message - that the collapse of the present order will introduce the Kingdom of God upon earth wherein only absolute righteousness will prevail - is not yet so patent. Faith is required to accept it and that is still sadly lacking. When the Son of Man cometh, shall He find faith on the earth?

The mills of God grind slowly, but they are sure, and we must wait. There is still much not clearly comprehended in detail in the prophecies of God's Word, but the main outline of God's purposes relating to the salvation of men through Christ, can be clearly traced by the Bible Student today. Yet, only too few people are interested-

Of all we meet on life's great stream,
There's but one here and there
Who treasure most the better things;
Each man to self most tightly clings,
For self he toils, for self he sings,
Except one here, and there.

I am fully assured that the Bible is God's Holy Word; it alone contains the words of life. Other schools of learning have their place if based on God's Word, but without it all knowledge will prove empty glory.

We've travelled together, my Bible and I;
Through every condition, with smile and with sigh.
In darkness and sunshine, in tempest and calm,
Our friendship's unchanging, my Lamp and my Psalm!

This wonder of wonders, that breathes from above
A sweetness of spirit and goodness and love,
Is due to our God who is gracious and high,
He brought us together-my Bible and I!
(Psalm 119:105)

The search for further details of Truth continues. The Bible is the Text Book. (W.S: 1974)