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“KEEP THY HEART”

“Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life.” Prov. 4:23.

THE HEART is what we really are, not what we appear to be or perhaps would like to have others believe that we are. The Apostle Peter contrasts the outward adornment with what he refers to as “The hidden man of the heart.” (1 Pet. 3:4) It is the heart we are to keep; for God looks on the heart, not on the outward man. In other words, God sees us as we really are; and if we keep our hearts, He will note that and bless us accordingly. In Proverbs 23:6,7 we read: “Eat thou not the bread of him that hath an evil eye, neither desire thou his dainty meats: for as he thinketh in his heart, so is he: Eat and drink, saith he to thee; but his heart is not with thee.”

“MY HEART IS FIXED”

Psalm 57:7 reads, “My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed.” Here the marginal translation suggests the word prepared instead of fixed. We are to be prepared for all emergencies **in** our Christian lives, for we know not the details of the way which is before us. If we are properly prepared by our trust in God and in His promises for us, we will not be afraid of evil tidings. When we are passing through adversity and trials of various sorts, we will not be afraid of the outcome, because we will be assured that the Lord will be with us and continue to guide and strengthen us in all these difficult situations. How important it is that our hearts be prepared - through study of the Word, through fellowship with the Lord’s people, through prayer, and by all the means of grace which He has provided.

“AN EVIL HEART OF UNBELIEF”

Hebrews 3:12-15 reads, “Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. But exhort one another daily, while it is called today; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end.” This admonition follows a statement by Paul in which he reminds us that many of the ancient Israelites did have unbelieving hearts. It was because of this that they failed to receive the inheritance which God had promised to them. Surely it is important for us to remember this example of unbelief and the loss to which it led. Paul explains that an unbelieving heart leads to a departing from the living God. In other words, it means that one does not have full confidence in His Word, setting it aside and misinterpreting its meaning in keeping with worldly and fleshly ambitions.

To have an unbelieving heart leads to a hardening of one’s attitude toward the Lord through the deceitfulness of sin. May we ever remember that all of God’s precious promises to us are conditional upon our obedience to Him, and that we are actually made partakers of Christ “if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end.”

Let us continue, then, to draw near to God “with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for He is faithful that promised).” (Heb. 10:22,23) God has promised to do this for us if our hearts are pure before Him- “the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward Him.” - 2 Chron. 16:9

“CREATE IN ME A CLEAN HEART”

Imperfections of the heart can be partially removed through a proper and sincere use of the Word of God. Paul wrote, “The Word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart.” (Heb 4:12) If we are sincere in our use of the Word of God, we will find that it is indeed very exacting in setting forth the will of God for us. It will seem that many times when we read the Scriptures

directing the way in which we should walk, the Lord has directed us to these certain texts in order that we may be properly corrected - corrected in matters which we would perhaps hesitate to discuss with others. We should be thankful indeed that the Lord, as a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart, is assisting us through His Word in the perfecting of ourselves as new creatures in Christ Jesus.

How fortunate it is that the Lord does guide in this manner! We could not depend upon even our best intentions to accomplish what needs to be accomplished, because, as we read in Jeremiah 17:9, the human heart is "deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked." In other words, we could be deceived in our own hearts without the help of the Lord. Only by the Lord's help can our hearts be purified and kept pure.

In Psalm 51:10 we read, "Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me." Here the marginal translation reads "constant spirit." Our hearts need to be established, not wavering. We know that just as the Lord is the same yesterday, today and forever, we should endeavor likewise to remain constant in our devotion to Him and in our steadfast endeavor to know and to do His will. And we have the assurance of His Word, over and over again, that He will help us as we cooperate with Him through obedience to His word.

THE TEST OF LOVE

James gives us an example of the evil results of a deceived heart. He wrote, "If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain." (James 1:26) Here is a very strong warning against the improper use of our tongues. We may think that our words to one another and to the world are not important, and that we can give vent to our feelings any time it seems good to us to do so and the Lord will not take this into account. But if that becomes our attitude we are deceiving our own hearts, for what it means is that our religion is really vain.

The final test in keeping our hearts pure before the Lord is the test of love. The Apostle John wrote, "Let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and truth. And hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him." (1 John 3:18,19) Just as we know, for example, that if we do not bridle our tongues we are deceiving our hearts, we also know that if our love is true and full and sincere, our hearts may be assured that the Lord is caring for us, loving us and approving us both now and, if we continue faithful, approving us finally; and we will hear that welcome, "Well done, good and faithful servant...enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

(The Dawn)

Transformed

Through a cloud of earthly senses
Bursts upon my raptured sight
Such a vision of my Saviour
In His glory and His might,
In His justice and His wisdom,
In His tender, watchful care,
Manifested in my Saviour,
Rich in blessing everywhere.

Oh, my Saviour, in Thy mercy
As I gaze with unveiled face,
Let me see as in a mirror,
All Thy brightness, all Thy grace.
So in looking, so in longing,
Shall my homely features glow
With the radiance of Thy glory,
And Thy matchless beauty show.

Oh, it thrills with love and longing
Every fibre of my soul,
To be with Thee, in Thy presence,
While the countless ages roll.
Then a voice, "This be the pattern,
See that thou in all thy ways
Make according to the pattern,
To My glory and My praise."

All my days be crowned with gladness,
From the centre of my heart,
Praise to Thee that in the blessing
Thou wilt let me have a part.
So then, in a faithful service,
For Thy loving service sake,
Changed from glory unto glory,
I shall in Thy likeness wake.

Thou the pattern, blessed Saviour,
How can I a copy be
Of that gracious, sweet perfection

I shall see Thee in Thy beauty,
I shall in Thy beauty shine,
All the loving, all the longing,

Manifested, Lord, in Thee?
“Keep thine eyes upon the pattern,
Look not thou aside, behind,
And beholding but My glory,
Thou shalt be transformed in mind.”
(Carrie Beatty)

Merged in purest love divine.
Satisfied with the full sweetness
Of the bliss of heaven above,
All my future spent in blessing,
All my being lost in love.

“FROM GLORY TO GLORY” (2 COR. 3:18)

(Convention address)

There are some verses of scripture that seem to jump out and capture our attention. We can perceive that there are a message and an understanding in the words that are not immediately apparent, but that there is a wealth of meaning hidden there that some diligent searching will uncover. Such a verse is the one that contains the title of this address, viz. 2 Corinthians 3:18.

A useful starting point to begin the search is to consider the literary construction of this verse. Paul uses the same construction a number of times, such as -

***Romans 1:17: “For therein (referring to the gospel of Christ) is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith, as it is written, The just shall live by faith.” (AV)*

***2 Cor. 2:15,16: “For we are the aroma of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing, to one a fragrance from death to death, to the other a fragrance from life to life.” (RSV)*

The construction of his argument is the same in all of these verses. It begins with one factor or quality, the exercise of which leads on to a heightened and deeper expression of it. By the exercise of whatever faith we have, we are led to a fuller development of that faith. By the offering of our sanctified life to God, we confirm to those who are in the way of death and judgement that their conduct and life will lead to death, whereas to those who are in the way of life, it leads them to follow closer after life and on to eternal life.

TRANSFORMING GLORY

So in a similar way is the meaning of our text verse. The glory that we see in the message that was given in the gracious words that fell from the lips of our Master leads on to transform our own lives so that we gloriously radiate His own graciousness. The concept given in these words is quite remarkable. As we look at others and their outward appearance, and at ourselves, more wrinkles and grey hairs become more manifest, but, more importantly, we surely see in others the working of the Spirit, even though perhaps we fail to appreciate what a great work is being done to transform our lives.

But first let us consider the whole context in which the text verse is set, reading from verse 7 of 2 Cor. 3 to give the setting in which this transforming glory is placed. The subject is introduced by Paul defending himself against suggestions that he needed letters of recommendation rather than the recommendation of his preaching that had been effective in bringing them to God. From that, Paul rapidly moves on to contrast the ministry of Moses with the ministry of the gospel which he was preaching.

“Now if the dispensation of death, carved in letters of stone, came with such splendour that the Israelites could not look at Moses’ face because of its brightness, fading as this was, will not the dispensation of the Spirit be attended with greater splendour? For if there was splendour in the dispensation of condemnation, the dispensation of splendour has come to have no splendour at all, because of the splendour which surpasses it. For if what faded away came with splendour, what is permanent must have much more splendour

“Since we have such a hope, we are very bold, not like Moses, who put a veil over his face so that the Israelites might not see the end of the fading splendour. But their minds were hardened, for to this day, when they read the old covenant, that same veil remains unlifted, because only through Christ is it taken away. Yes, to this day whenever Moses is read a veil lies over their minds, but when a man turns to the Lord the veil is removed. Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being changed into His likeness from one degree of glory to another, for this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.”

TWO DISPENSATIONS

From the historical account of Moses going up the mountain to receive the Law Covenant, Paul draws a number of lessons that we may not have expected. First of all, he makes some contrasts between the two dispensations -

The **one was engraved in writing on stone, the **other** was not in a writing but of the spirit.

The **one was a ministration of death, while in the **other** the spirit makes alive.

The **one brings with it condemnation which awaits those who transgress, while the **other** has righteousness as its object and result, and as its characteristic attribute a law written in the heart bringing righteousness and peace and joy.

The **one was transient and failing, while the **other** is permanent.

The **one was linked with the face of Moses on which was placed a veil, while the **other** shines in the face of Jesus Christ. (2 Cor.4:6)

The **one had a veil that hid the fading splendour and transitory glory of the law, while the **other** is mirrored in the face of Jesus Christ and there is no need to cover it with a veil in case it should fade. (There is nothing hidden, the full and complete character of the Lord is laid before our sight; Paul states clearly that he has not held back any thing of the whole counsel of God. Acts 20:27)

With the **one the veil is used as a symbol of the barrier that lies over the Jewish heart and prevents their seeing the true purpose of the law which was passing through a period of extinction, while the **other** is able to change us into the likeness of the Lord.

A FADING GLORY

As in his other letters, Paul is constantly changing the meaning of his metaphor, in this case the metaphor of the veil. For a start, we need to amend the translation as given in the Authorised Version, the Revised Standard Version reading being better. It is sometimes thought for instance that Moses put the veil over his face so that the people of Israel were not blinded by the glorious light, but a correction to the translation shows that this was not so. Exodus 34:29-38 (RSV) reads-

*“When Moses came down from Mount Sinai, (he) did not know that the skin of his face shone because he had been talking with God. And when Aaron and all the people of Israel saw Moses, they were afraid to come near him.....(v.33) And **when** in AV should be corrected) he had finished speaking with them, he put a veil on his face; but whenever Moses went in before the Lord to speak with Him, he took the veil off, until he came out; and the people of Israel saw the face of Moses, that the skin of Moses’ face shone; and Moses would put the veil upon his face again until he went to speak with Him,”*

What is clear from this account is that the people saw the radiant brightness of Moses’ face (Paul’s words agree with this) and it was only after speaking to the people that he put a veil over his face. The lesson that Paul draws from these facts is that Moses put the veil over his face so that they **might not see the end, the fading away, of that transitory glory**. What the Jews of Paul’s day could not stand was the changing of the existing order. They could not abide the thought that their illustrious past should fade away and be replaced by a new order.

OTHER LESSONS

Paul also uses the metaphor of the veil that covered Moses’ face to teach a number of other lessons.

The veil is used as a symbol of the **unbelief of the Jews. There has to be a change in Verse 14 and it emphasises this fact. The word ‘veil’ in the AV is in italics, which indicates that it is supplied. The sense of the verse is that it is the ‘old covenant’ (testament in AV) that is meant as taken away in Christ.

**The veil is used as a figure of the blinding of the world in general by the influence of Satan. How needful it is for us to have our eyes opened to the glory of the gospel message. The commission given to Paul by the risen Jesus was “to open their eyes, that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God, that they (the Gentiles) may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me” Acts 26:18. This is a similar figure of speech, but brings out the point that the opening of our eyes, in the figure, is not our doing but is of God who calls us.

The veil is used in a metaphor showing the glorious transforming light of the gospel. (V18). *“But we all, with **unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory....”* A couple of changes from the AV are again necessary, substituting the word ‘unveiled’ for “open” and ‘mirror’ for “glass”, although strictly in the latter case, the word used is a verb rather than a noun. We see the glory of the Lord “mirrored”. This reminds us of the reference in 1 Cor. 13:12 to seeing through a glass darkly, and it suggests the thought that we do not see the glory of the Lord directly, but a reflection. On

the other hand, we are like Moses, who, when he went in before the Lord removed the veil and spoke face to face.

“WE BEHELD HIS GLORY”

The grand conclusion of the metaphor of the light that shone from the face of Moses and the veil that he used to hide the fading glory is in 2 Cor. 4:6- *“For it is God...who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.”* The subject of this picture is the glory of God, though the remembrance of Moses is still much in Paul’s mind. It is only in Christ that the glory is revealed, and this leads us to the question as to what were the things that revealed God’s glory in Christ.

The apostle John’s testimony is that *“we beheld His glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father... and from His fullness have we all received, grace upon grace.”* John 1:14,16. The glory of Jesus is seen in the outstanding beauty of His character. How often He was moved with compassion for others! His love overcame any feeling of revulsion towards those who were physically or morally corrupt. He touched the loathsome leper with an intimate touch of loving kindness. Unlike the Pharisee, He did not spurn the touch of the penitent woman. The thoughtless crowds that thronged about Him did not irritate Him, they rather excited his pity. He fed the five thousand lest, tired and weary, they should faint on the way home. He was never too hurried and never too tired to help others, at all times and under every circumstances.

He treated all ranks of men with equal courtesy and gentleness, whether nobleman or beggar. He stood and waited for blind Bartimaeus who cried after Him. He stopped to speak to and went to lodge with Zacchaeus, the publican, despised by his fellow Jews. He addressed as “daughter” the woman with the issue who touched Him secretly in the crowd, and His treatment of the woman taken in adultery was in marked contrast to the rough and heartless treatment of her accusers. He was tired, hungry and thirsty as He sat by the well waiting for his disciples to return with food from the city. Yet He exerted Himself to converse with the woman of Samaria, not only to her surprise, but to the astonishment of His disciples.

In Jesus was perfected the love that suffers long and is kind. Nothing could ruffle His composure or cause Him to show annoyance. On one occasion He had been so continuously besieged by people needing healing that He and His disciples had no time to eat. They were forced to retire to the desert for a little privacy and rest. On reaching this quiet haven, however, they found the people crowding about them as greatly as before. But Jesus showed no signs of impatience, His love seeking not its own was not easily provoked. In His compassion He saw and supplied their need of help and instruction. *“For even Christ pleased not Himself suffering the just for the unjust that He might bring us to God.”*

Strength and humility were blended together perfectly in the glory of Christ’s character. He knew that His words were established and conclusive, yet He patiently endured the contradiction of sinners against Himself and His authority, for many tried to discountenance Him at every opportunity. He was the only-begotten Son of God with the power to work miracles as no other, yet He entertained no exaggerated opinion of Himself. His disciples thought He was too exalted and important to bother with little children and they tried to send them away, but Jesus was indignant at their rough indifference.

He was not too proud to let others help Him; many women ministered to Him of their substance. In washing His disciples’ feet He demonstrated His humility and proved beyond question that He had come to serve others and not to be “ministered unto”. His kindness was often to those who were unthankful and it must have been with sadness that He asked the one thankful leper, “Were not ten healed, where are the nine?”

Jesus claimed “I am the truth”, for His every thought, word and deed would bear the full blaze of God’s light. Although the multitudes flocked to hear Him preaching, He would not misrepresent His message to advance His cause and He often drove away would-be followers by His fearless speaking. He was gracious in His teaching but He did not water down the truth in any way. He could be stern in rebuking blasphemy and hypocrisy for He was too true and holy to gloss over sin, yet He was never inconsiderate for the feelings of others.

“WITH UNVEILED FACE”

We could go on describing how in all His actions Jesus illuminated the glory of God, but hearing and reading about all that was accomplished by Him, recorded by those who were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word, brings us back to our text verse - *“And we all, as with unveiled face we continue to behold as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are constantly being transfigured into His image in ever increasing splendour, from one degree of glory to another”.*

As we look at and ponder the meaning of the actions of Jesus and as this enters into the heart, it has a transforming influence on our lives. In the figure we see the glory as if we were looking into a mirror, but not only do we see this mirrored glory but it also has the power to transfigure us. This is expressed in other words by “growing in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ”. 2 Peter 3:18. This growth is not by

our own efforts - like the flowers and the trees, we must be subject to a transforming influence from without ourselves but which works within us.

If this transforming work is going on, then we need to judge our brethren by a different standard. *“Therefore, we regard no one from a human point of view”*. 2 Cor 5:16. To know others from a human point of view is to know them by the outward accidents and circumstances of their lives, their wealth, rank, culture, knowledge. Paul had ceased to judge a person by those standards and we should do likewise. The question should be whether that person was, by their own act and choice, claiming the place which the death of Christ had secured for him or her and was living in Him as a new creature.

FROM GLORY TO GLORY

To summarise, the apostle first contrasts the transient glory of the old law covenant arrangements given through Moses, (which things are done away in Christ,) with the lasting and surpassing glory mirrored for us in the face of Jesus Christ. Moses put a veil over his face so that the fading glory of the former might not be seen, but we all, with unveiled face, can freely exercise our faculty of spiritual vision. As we contemplate the love and work of Christ, as we consider His gentleness and noble character, as we allow His example of obedience to the Father’s will to be our model of conduct, so shall we then be transformed into His image from glory to glory by the Spirit of the Lord. (CG.96/7)

Enticements and Tests

“For we have not a High Priest unable to sympathize with our weaknesses; but one having been tried in all respects like ourselves, apart from sin.” “A disciple is not above his teacher; but everyone fully qualified shall be as his teacher.” (Heb. 4:15; Luke 6:40, Diaglott.)

The world of mankind has its temptations and I trials, and so also have nominal Christians; but we shall confine our remarks to the temptations and trials of those who have left all to follow Jesus, those who have consecrated themselves and become pupils in the School of Christ, and have thereby submitted themselves to be tested in all points like their teacher. Everyone of these is to be perfected by the same means as his Master.

(1) ENTICEMENTS

Strong’s definition of the word “temptation” is -”an enticement to do evil,” or - “a test”. A temptation may mean, therefore, an enticement to do evil, or it may mean a test, that is, a means for determining the strength, quality, or quantity of a substance. Thus a temptation might be anything which would entice to evil and thereby test or try the strength of will to do the right; or it might be a test to prove the quantity or quality of the elements of the Christian character without any thought of enticement. All enticements or allurements are tests, but all tests are not enticements or allurements. For instance, to fail in business would be a test but not an enticement.

Satan is the great Tempter who is permitted to attend to the former; and our Heavenly Father will see to it that we get the latter in order that our characters may be fully developed and perfected. Our enticements come from Satan, but our trials from God. Even Jesus “was tempted in all points like as we are.” We need not think that we have temptations which Jesus never had. Let us look at the temptations of Jesus in order that we may know the lines upon which our temptations may come.

The Apostle states that Jesus was tempted in all points like his followers, and, additionally, that he thereby became able to help those who are tempted: - “In all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that he himself hath suffered, being tempted, he is able to succour (nourish) them that are tempted” (Heb. 2:17, 18).

JESUS’ TEMPTATIONS

In view of this thought let us consider Jesus’ temptations in the wilderness that we may know what to expect. These particulars are given us in the 4th chapter of Matthew, with which we are all familiar:-

1. To make stones into bread. A severe test, because Jesus was very hungry.
2. To cast himself down from the Temple.
3. To worship the Devil by co-operating with him.

Our temptations are similar to our Lord’s: -

1. Enticements to misuse the Divine blessing of Truth, by using it for our own aggrandizement. To use spiritual power in the interest of our natural or fleshly desires. Although Paul was given the power to heal the sick, he did not use this power for his own benefit nor for the benefit of the Church. Even though he asked God three times to remove his “thorn in the flesh,” the Lord did not remove it, but said “My grace is sufficient

for thee.” When Timothy was ill, Paul did not cure him miraculously, but advised him to take a little wine for his stomach’s sake.

2. Enticements to throw ourselves into unnecessary danger, trusting that God will uphold us. We are not to presume upon our Father’s goodness.

We are not to tempt God, although we know that if duty should lead us into danger, he will deliver us. Let us not be afraid. God has promised to keep those who trust in him so long as they are obedient; and, when enticed to tempt God, let us resist as Jesus did by giving a “thus saith the Lord.”

3. Enticements to worship Satan by co-operating with him. He does his best to get us to do this. He entices us to grasp, before the time, and by another way, those things which our Heavenly Father has promised us. The end does not justify the means. God’s work must be done in God’s way and in God’s time. We must get things in a legitimate way. “If a man strive for the mastery, yet is he not crowned unless he strive lawfully” (2 Tim. 2:5).

“COUNT IT ALL JOY”

When we are undergoing testing in any of these ways, let us remember “This is the way the Master went, should not the servant tread it still?” We are not to feel discouraged when passing through these experiences, but, as the Apostle James expresses it, “Count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations.” We cannot do this easily. It is hard for the flesh, but still the Apostle says we “must count it all joy.” Why? Because we know that by the testing of our faith our patience is developed, and that the man who endures temptation is blessed. But when any man is tempted along the line of enticement, let him not say that he is tempted of God, because God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man with evil. When God asked Abraham to sacrifice Isaac, he tempted him not by enticing him to do wrong, but by testing his loyalty. It was a test of Abraham’s faith in God. Likewise, it is a trial for us to give up all, to present out bodies a living sacrifice; yet it is not too great a test, but only a *reasonable* service.

When we have a temptation to do evil, this does not imply sin; it is the yielding to the temptation which brings forth sin. The Apostle reminds us that there hath no temptation taken us but such as is common to man, but God is faithful who will not allow us to be tempted above what we are able to bear (1 Cor. 10:13). It should be a very comforting thought to know that we can measure our development according to the degree of our temptations or trials.

If a great trial comes upon us, we may look upon it as a sign of the approval of God, because if he permits a great trial he knows that we are able to endure it. Only to the strong will he give great trials, and therefore if we get a great temptation, let us thank the Lord and count it all joy.

In 2 Pet. 2:9 we read - “The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptation,” - not : “The Lord knoweth how to keep you from going into temptation.” If we are godly, we may rest assured that he knows the best means for our deliverance when the temptation has had the desired effect, then he will deliver us as the Scriptures state.

(2) TESTS

Let us now consider the second portion of our subject concerning the trials or testings of those who are followers of Jesus. Professor Strong defines the Greek word translated “trial” as “a testing”, which implies trustworthiness. Nuttall’s Dictionary explains the word “trial” as a means to prove the genuineness of anything by experiments. The verb form is translated “prove” in Romans 12:2, “Be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your minds, that ye may *prove* what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.” Also in 1 Cor. 11:28, it is translated by the word “examine.” “Let a man *examine* himself, and so let him eat.”

We have the thought fairly before our minds that, besides being subjected to enticements, we must also undergo tests or trials, so that we may prove certain things by the transforming influence of the new mind. Also we must put ourselves through an examination, or our Heavenly Father will give us the necessary tests or trials. To illustrate. When a chemist wants to find out the quantity and quality of the component parts of a substance, he subjects the substance to a process of testing. So, when God wants to know how much love we have, he sends us a trial of our Love, - our Love for him, for the Brethren, and for the Truth. So also with the other fruits and graces of the Spirit. These trials are to demonstrate the extent of our love, so that our Father may show us that sometimes we have not so much Love as we thought we had, and thereby have an opportunity to correct ourselves. Love is represented as a cloak to cover a multitude of sins, - not our own, but the sins or transgressions of others. How often and to what extent do we use this mantle of Love?

The next fruit of the spirit is joy. Will this be tested? Oh yes! We shall be tested as to the amount we possess of that joy which rejoices at the blessing and prosperity of others. All people can rejoice when they are

receiving personal pleasure, but it is more difficult and praiseworthy to rejoice when others receive honour or blessing.

The joy of the world is a selfish joy, and it is possible for us also to look for selfish pleasure, but our rejoicing should be in the Lord. We must come to the meetings to meet the Lord and not for the selfish joy of meeting those we like. Let us not be selfish, but rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep. Jehovah will apply searching tests upon us if we are true children, and nothing will escape His notice. "His eyes behold, his eyelids *try* the children of men: the Lord *trieth* the righteous" (Psa. 11:4, 5).

"SEARCH ME, O GOD"

These tests are only for those who have presented themselves for that purpose, those who *desire* testings. At one time we did not desire them, but we are coming to more and more appreciate the value of temptations and trials. We are now better able to say with the Psalmist: "Examine me, O Lord, and prove me: try my reins and my heart." "Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me and know my thoughts: and see if there be a way of perverseness in me" (Psa, 26:2; 139:23, 24). We must not think it an extraordinary thing when we are tested. "Beloved, think it not *strange* concerning the fiery trial which is to try you as if some *strange* thing happened unto you, but rejoice inasmuch as you are counted worthy to take part in Christ's sufferings." "Think it not strange!" says the Apostle. Evidently there was a reason for this. Some of us may have thought that the fiery trials should be for others and not for ourselves; but the Apostle tells us that these fiery trials were intended for *us*. This thought was forcefully driven home to my mind when I was looking up the meaning of the word "strange". I found it to mean "belonging to another." Therefore, I now see that whatever trial shall fall to my lot, I must not think of it as "belonging to another," but as belonging to *me*, sent to me by my Heavenly Father. Let us get the thought before our minds that, by our consecration we have entered the School of Christ. The object of our entrance is that we may learn the various lessons set before us; and periodically we shall be tested or examined as to our progress. We shall each have our final examination - our Gethsemane experience - that will determine as to whether we have reached the standard as set before us in our Saviour Jesus Christ. Everyone who gets into the "pass list" will have been conformed to the image of God's dear Son.

In the meantime, let us pay great attention to our arithmetic, adding to our faith, fortitude, etc, and multiplying grace and peace. Also, we need to attend to our grammar, the proper use of words or the art of speaking correctly. Our teacher directs us that when any curse us, we should speak blessed words about them, when they despitefully use us we should pray for them, and that we should rejoice because we are counted worthy to suffer like Jesus. Just as Jesus' testing in Gethsemane was most severe, so we may expect the most severe trials at the end of the way, - but *let us count it all joy!*

In olden times people said: "I love my friends but hate my enemies." But Jesus, the great Schoolmaster, has come and taught us to love our enemies. Let us learn our grammar under our Schoolmaster's supervision. We may see some who are failing in their final examination, their final test. Surely we should not quarrel with any in the School of Christ who may be tearing up their examination papers. Let us be sorry for them and treat them kindly, and let us realize that "The Disciple is not above his Master," but that everyone who becomes fully qualified will require to be perfected by the same means as his Master. Amen.

(1909 Convention Report)

A HEART CONFORMED

O for a heart more like my God,
From imperfection free;
A heart conformed unto Thy Word,
And pleasing, Lord, to Thee.

A heart resigned, submissive, meek,
My great Redeemer's throne,
Where only Christ is heard to speak,
Where Jesus reigns alone.

A humble, lowly, contrite heart,
Believing, true and clean,
Which neither life nor death can part