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IF GOD BE FOR US.

(Convention Address.)

(Read Exod. 14:10-31, Rom. 8:28-30.)

“What shall we say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?”—Rom. 8:31.

THE Scriptures provide us with many examples of God’s care and protection over His typical people. His mighty power was shown in the deliverance of -Israel out of Egypt, and across the Red Sea when Pharaoh and all his hosts were destroyed.

God had been with the fathers of Israel, with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and His faithfulness was made known in all His dealings with and on behalf of the fathers, and then the time came when God would save Israel from the oppression of Egypt and bring them into the land of promise. God was for His ancient people and because He was for them, He was with them, guiding, instructing and providing for all their needs.

Moses was sent to deliver the people out of Egypt and later to give them the law of God and to instruct them in the right ways of the Lord. The majority of the people were lacking in faith and failed to please God, but Moses was the one strong man, at that time. When all Israel would have cried, “Why were we brought out of Egypt?” Moses said,.

“Be still and see the salvation of God.” The Psalmist describes the condition of the people under the Law Covenant— See Psalm 78:12-42. It was because of their lack of faith that they could not enter the promised land of Canaan, but must wander in the wilderness for forty years.

However, amidst all the backsliding and disobedience of Israel there were a few whose faith was pleasing to God and His favor was with them even in the midst of the sufferings which they endured for the Lord’s sake, and we can take encouragement from the examples of faith and loyalty of the prophets and faithful ones of the past. We can also take lessons from, the failures of Israel. In 1 Cor. 10:11, the Apostle tells us that “All these things happened unto them for ensamples; and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages are come.”

We of this age have greater responsibility than those of the past, because we have the advantage of the lessons to be learned from their failures. We have been favored much more than those of past ages. God has given us an understanding of the great Divine Plan of the Ages. We can see that God is for us of this Gospel Age in a sense and to a degree that was not possible to those of past ages.

In the opening chapters of his letter to the Romans, Paul shows how helpless mankind has become as a result of the fall. He shows how both Gentiles and Jews are alike guilty before God; they are all unworthy of life and not able to make themselves worthy—Rom. 3:10, 20. He then tells us what God has done in order to assist us out of our helpless state— Verses 21-20. What a blessing is this faith-righteousness — justification by faith. We could do nothing to commend ourselves to God, so “God commendeth His love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us,”— Rom.:3:8. So then, “Being justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ..”—Rom. 5:1, 2. Also in Eph. 2:4-8, the Apostle speaks of the great mercy and love of God toward us in Christ.

It is indeed a favour to be living during this “acceptable day”—the period of the Gospel Age—the time when God is pleased to receive the offerings of those who come to Him by faith in Christ. It is only a “little flock” that God is dealing with now. To these the Lord said, “Fear not little flock, it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the

Kingdom.”—Luke 12:32.

This class is now being drawn of God and invited to follow in the footsteps of Jesus. Our Lord said, “If any man will come after Me let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow Me.” The call of the Church is to share in Christ’s sufferings now, and to share His Kingdom and glory by and by. “If we be dead with Him we shall also live with Him: If we suffer, we shall also reign with Him.”-2 Tim. 2:11,12. See also Col. 1:24; Phil. 1:29.

Paul appreciated fully the great privilege of being associated with Christ in suffering now, that he might, by being faithful to the end, receive also in due time the crown of righteousness. What a grand faith the Apostle Paul exhibited at all times! He was fully persuaded that God had called him according to His foreknown purpose, and he was confident that, having accepted God’s call, all of his life’s affairs were under Divine supervision and overruling. How helpful are his words as we read them there in the eighth chapter: what assurance they seem to convey to us. There was nothing uncertain about Paul. He knew just where he stood, exactly what he was aiming for, and he knew that God was for him. He says, “And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to His purpose.” What does he mean there, “all things”? That is, we take it, all his life’s affairs, everything that had to do with Paul, was working together for good for his highest good; and so it is, friends, with us. We know that all things work together for good to them that love God. We are assured of that; all things work together for good to those who show their love by their efforts to do His will. These are the ones who are called according to His purpose--See 2 Tim.:8, 9.

This helps us to see distinctly that those with whom God is dealing during this age are not dealt with in a haphazard kind of way. No, God does not call people to-day and turn them aside tomorrow. God has called us according to a fixed purpose, which was foreknown before the world began. He purposed to have a New Creation, a class of saints on the Divine plane of life, and the Heavenly Father decided that unto Jesus Christ, his well-beloved Son, should belong the honour of being the Head of this class of sons, and the members of His body were to be selected from among the human family, to be composed of those whose consecration would be so full, so complete, as to enable them, by God’s grace, to become changed in character, transformed by the renewing of their minds, until ultimately they become conformed to the image of His Son.

In verse 30 of this 8th chapter of Romans, the Apostle shows that there are various steps in respect of the development of this New Creation class. “Moreover whom He did predestinate, them He also called; and whom He called, them He also justified; and whom He justified, them He also honoured.” The last word in the Authorised Version is “glorified,” but it should be rendered “honoured.” It should be understood to refer to the honour conferred upon all, who during this age, are brought to any knowledge of Christ—the true light. This “honour” went first to the Jews and selected “a remnant,” but when that nation proved unworthy of this honour it was turned to the Gentiles, to gather out of them a peculiar people, an holy nation, to bear the name of Christ. One might naturally expect the Apostle to begin with present conditions and trace them up to future conditions, while on the contrary, he begins at the other end and traces the result downwards. He does not begin by saying God honoured you with the Gospel of Christ and when you believed he justified you, and after that called you, and if you are faithful to your calling He will by and by exalt you. Indeed, it would not be possible to state the matter truthfully from that side, because many are honoured with the Gospel of Christ who are not justified, because they do not receive Christ and of those who do accept Christ and who are thus justified, it would not be true to say that they are all to be sanctified. Nor would it be correct to say that all who once are sanctified will reach the condition of glory, for “many are called but few are chosen ;” few “make their calling and election sure.”

The Apostle argues the matter from the only proper standpoint. Having said that God has foreknown the election of the Church, he steps forward to the time when God’s intention will be completed and accomplished, the time when the election will be finished and the Church accepted to glory. From that future standpoint he indicates the steps which led up to it, saying, all those of the foreknown ones, glorified, will previously have been called. “No man taketh this honour to himself, but he that is called of God” — As “the Head of the Body,” so with each member of the body. And, says the Apostle, every one thus “called” will previously have been “justified,” because God calls no unreconciled sinners to this high position. It was for this reason that Christ died, that through faith in His blood believers might be “justified” and thus prepared to be “called” Thus it is evident that the high calling to this glorious position of joint-heirship with Christ is a very different thing, indeed, from the calling of sinners to repentance. Sinners are called to repentance anywhere and everywhere, and when they repent the Lord in due time points them to “the Lamb of God who taketh away the sins of the world.” When they have exercised faith in the Redeemer, they reach the condition of justification, and are ready to be “called” to sonship.

But the Apostle is still going backward in the argument and, having told that the foreordained class would all be “called,” and that they would all previously have been “justified,” he declares that the justified ones would all previously have been favoured or “honoured,” not glorified, but honoured or favoured with a knowledge of the Truth, a

knowledge of the Gospel.

Perhaps we as Christians do not always fully appreciate the extent to which we have been honoured in having the light of truth brought to us at this time, when there is so much of darkness and ignorance of the true God everywhere. Comparatively few of earth's millions have really seen the true light—2 Cor. 4:4. We see then, that God has been "for us," or favourable to us, in bringing us into contact with the light and truth of the Gospel and helping us to appreciate it.

(To be Continued)

PEOPLES PAPER AND HERALD OF CHRIST'S KINGDOM.

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While it is our intention that these columns be used for teachings strictly in accord with the Lord's Word, we cannot accept responsibility for every expression used, either in the correspondence or in the sermons reported,

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Protestant church ministers

THE expressions of protestant church ministers regarding the death of Pope Pius XI. seem significant and in line with the spirit of this Laodicean period of church history, as foretold in Rev. 3:15, 16. It is a spirit of indifference regarding doctrine or practice—"neither hot nor cold," lukewarm—willing to compromise truth and principle so long as they can be comfortable, "rich and increased in goods, lacking nothing"—Just let us overlook all the zeal for truth and godliness which our fathers showed and for which so many nobly died.

The remarks of Church of England dignitaries would indicate that they no longer, recognise in the Roman Church, as did the fathers of the Reformation, "the great antichrist," "the man of sin," "the abomination that maketh desolate," the great system of deception and wickedness which so polluted the teachings of Christ and the Apostles, and which kept the people over which she ruled in ignorance and oppression and tortured and killed thousands who opposed her

pernicious doctrines and practices and dared to preach the gospel of Christ. The Roman Church is the same today, she boasts that she changes not; she would do the same things again if she had the power.

The Archbishop of Melbourne, Archbishop Head, is reported to have said:—

"Although we differ from Roman Catholics, as Christian men and women we are conscious of the great part his Holiness played in the very difficult times since the war, and I am sure we ought to thank God for the work he did under very difficult conditions, especially in Central Europe, where he had to fight the battle of the Christian faith." No doubt the late Pope was a better man than many of his predecessors, some of whom were notoriously wicked, but his policy was entirely directed for the prosperity of the great anti-christian system of which he was "head'."

If in fighting the battle for Roman Catholicism some good incidentally came to some protestants, such was not his object; it would be something undesired by him. Archbishop Head seems to see good that Pius XI. has done since the Great War, but has he forgotten the part that the Pope took in supporting the rebellion in Spain, against a duly elected constitution government, thus participating in the cruel slaughter of men, women and children by the thousands. Then, too, did he not give his blessing to the troops and their weapons as they went to slaughter the Abyssinians and to seize their land, and this in defiance of the League of Nations..

It would seem that many Church of England clergy might feel more at home and do less damage to the cause of true Christianity and protestantism and of liberty of conscience if they would leave the junction station and take the train for Rome.. The Lord spoke of blind leaders and what the result would be (Matt. 15:14), and His admonition to His true people to leave. both the mother and daughter systems is just as applicable to-day as at any previous period of the Gospel Age, and as necessary to be obeyed by all worthy of the name, "My people."—Rev. 18:4, etc.

Adelaide Easter Convention.

The Adelaide brethren desire to make known to all interested friends that they are arranging for the usual Convention to be held over the Easter holiday season., and extend a hearty ,invitations to all able to attend tile gatherings.

The 'Convention will continue for four days, from Good Friday, 7th April, to Easter Monday the 10th, the last day's meetings being held at Gawler, D.V.

Programmes and further information may be obtained front the secretary—Mrs. H. H. Bartel, 10 Forest Avenue East, Clarence Gardens, Adelaide, South Australia.

Memorial Services.

As previously announced, the date of the Memorial falls this year on Sunday, 2nd April. The Services arranged for Melbourne and Adelaide are as follows, and for believers in the ransom sacrifice of Christ will be welcome.

Melbourne-Sunday, 2nd April, 7 p.m. — Clyde House, 182 Collins Street (near Town Hall), First Floor, Room 7. Study on the Memorial in the afternoon.

Adelaide-Sunday evening, 2nd April-O.B.I. Hall, Wakefield Street.

Take Heed.

Take heed, beloved! lest the many cares
Of earth surcharge you in the passing years;

And so that day o'ertake you unawares
The day when Christ appears. Luke 21:34.

Take heed, beloved! lest the midnight skies
Draw you to sleep and dreams that bear you far;

And ye forget with watchful, eager eyes
To greet the Morning Star. 2 Thes. 2:2.

Take heed, beloved! lest that coming tryst-
Delayed—discourage you till hopes depart;

Into the patience beautiful of Christ
The Lord direct your heart. 2 Thes. 3:16.

Take heed, O friend! lest ye should fail to love
His blest appearing, and thereby should miss
The crown He promised to those who prove
Their glorious goal is this. Rev. 2:10.

W. I. A.

The Power of the Spirit.

(Convention Address) (Read 1 Pet. 1:3-5)

THESE words of the Apostle Peter reveal to us a wonderful hope indeed, and the Gospel Age is the only acceptable time for any to become participators in it and eventually be joint-heirs with Christ our Redeemer. It is not held out for the world in general to obtain, but only for a "little flock," who are kept by the power of God, and to whom it is the Father's good pleasure to give the heavenly kingdom.

There are different influences or powers at work in the world to-day and many tend to draw away rather than lead nearer to the prize of the high calling. The desire for wealth, pleasure or fame are influences swaying different ones, but the Christian seeking the heavenly kingdom should not be drawn away by any of these. He has given up all to follow Christ and having been begotten of the spirit has come under the power of the spirit of God.

Some rather mysterious beliefs about the holy spirit are held by many, the idea being that it is one of three persons in the godhead—the trinity. They say this is a mystery that cannot be explained and no wonder, for it neither appeals to reason nor has any Scriptural support. The Lord's Word assures us that the holy spirit or spirit of God is simply the power or influence of God exercised in any manner, and that it is always along the lines of justice and love. In the Christian it is a power from God in harmony with His Word, keeping and strengthening him in the way of life.

We might liken the holy spirit to the sun's rays. The sun would represent God, and while we cannot see its rays, nevertheless we feel their influence. Without the sun there would be no life on the earth. Its influence is also purifying and health giving to animal and plant life. So with the holy spirit, though unseen we feel its holy influence upon us and without which we cannot have any life as new creatures. The holy spirit sheds its light about us and reveals things in God's Word that are hid to most people. As Christians we dwell in the light of the spirit; its healing rays give the health and comfort which flow from the great source, hence we are able to walk in the light.

We cannot expect to have the full measure of the spirit as this was given only to Christ. (John 3:34) However, there are two important ways of obtaining a greater measure of the indwelling spirit of God—by diligent study of God's Word and prayer. In studying the Word we should seek to know the truth fully, that we may be sanctified thereby (John 17:17), and as this progresses we are brought more and more under the spirit's influence, because in His Word, God is fully manifest—His love, wisdom, justice and power. To be profited by the truth we must be thoroughly emptied of self, and having a very tender conscience may hear "each whisper of His \\\lord," and having heard, "to obey Him first of all." But while it may be easy to hear the Word of God, it is not so easy to keep it, and this is where the second matter of importance comes in—prayer. This is a privilege of which we should never refrain from taking advantage.

By this we are able to grow strong in the Lord and to subdue and overcome the many deceptive influences of Satan, as well as the daily weaknesses and shortcomings that so often mar the peace and joy of real fellowship with Christ. See Luke 11:10, 13.

In 1 John 4:12, 13, we read that the spirit of God is love. If God so loved us even while we were enemies of Christ through wicked works, how much should we show the spirit of love and forgiveness to our brethren who are not our enemies, but who profess, and indeed are doing their best, to walk the same narrow way.

Then the Apostle says, "Walk in the spirit and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh." Gal. 5:16. The Greek word here from which 'walk' is translated, refers to the way we live, our deportment or manner of living. How easy it is to let ourselves drift and to become careless as regards our daily walk. Not only do we need to keep a constant watch over all our utterances but our actions also need to be kept strictly in line with the spirit of God.—Acts 24:16.

The Apostle Paul is one of those noble examples whom we may well endeavour to copy, for no doubt there was a rich indwelling of the spirit of Christ in his heart, When he was confident that anything was in accord with the Lord's will, there was nothing on earth that could withhold him from the accomplishment of that purpose. See Acts 21:10, 14.

In Christ our Lord we have the perfect pattern, the one of whom it was said, "Full of grace and truth." And yet He said Himself that it was only by the spirit's indwelling that He was able to do so great works. John 14:10. The power of God was manifest in His righteous life and it kept Him in all the varied and trying experiences of His three and a half years of ministry on earth. Oft-times He was tempted severely but He always had that sufficiency of the Father's spirit to enable Him to come off victor. Greater is the Father and His guardian angels than Satan and his angels.

In John 14:23, our Lord sets forth the only means by which we can expect to have a fuller measure of the spirit in our lives. This text, in short, means the keeping of all His commandments, of which love is the basis. If there is not this

love for Christ and His ways, but on the contrary a chief love for pleasure, or business, or family, or wife, or husband, or anything but the heavenly things, then we cannot expect that Christ and the Father will make their abode with us. See Luke 11:34. Again our Lord said, "The Father Himself loveth you, because ye have loved me." Yes, those who love Christ are special objects of our Father's love. In these the Father and Son take up their residence, as their dwelling place, as stated by Paul —1 Cor. 19.

There are certain things which tend to hinder the spirit's power in our lives, and one of these is 'discouragement. It is one of the Adversary's weapons liable to beset the person of humble mind. A failing to live up to what is desired sometimes causes one to become discouraged, and if the mind is allowed to dwell on this and worry over it, despondency and a loss of courage and confidence will result. While we need to be repentant when we grieve the holy spirit—the new mind in us—we need to remember that we have an Advocate with the Father who will cover all our unwilling blemishes and make up that which is lacking in our sacrifice. This wrong spirit of discouragement needs to be fought with great energy, for "God hath not given us the spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind."

The Apostle Paul was a great example in many ways; in all the varied and trying experiences that came upon him he never lost confidence, but kept a steadfast faith in God and His promises-2 Tim. 1:12; 4:8. It was Paul's faith that kept him and we need faith also, the faith that will take Him at His Word. His promises are all sure and nothing can prevent them from having fulfilment in us if we just exercise our faith and remember that what He has promised He is also able to perform. And then faith is a basis of things hoped for, a conviction of things unseen. May it be then, that our faith will convince us of the great power of our Father, who is able to keep us from falling, for to Him belongs all power and majesty in heaven and earth.

The Life of Stephen.

(Convention Address)

THE words of our Lord and the Apostle in Rev. 2:10, and 2 Tim. 3:12, seem specially applicable to Stephen, as he was one of the 'early Christians who was literally stoned to death on account of his loyalty to His Master and the truth. What we know of Stephen is recorded in Acts 6 and 7, which consists mainly of a discourse of defence given by him when brought before the Jewish council charged with blasphemy. It has been said that his words read more like the language of the Apostle Paul than that of any other New Testament writer, and we can trace through his statement a character worthy of being copied by all who are endeavouring to follow in the footsteps of the Master.

We first read of Stephen when he was chosen as a deacon along with six others to relieve the Apostles from the service of temporal things; he was a man full of faith and the holy spirit, an eloquent speaker and very zealous in proclaiming the truth—Acts 6:8.

The Church at this time was in its infancy and was rapidly increasing. This caused much opposition and hatred from a class of scribes and rulers who were endeavouring to uphold their traditions, and they wrongly accused Stephen of blasphemy. See Acts 1:12-14. After the false witnesses had given evidence He had the opportunity of defending himself in this very dangerous position which no doubt he realised to the full—set before a council of excited and angry people who were determined to take his life at any cost. Yet the record says, "All that sat in the council looking steadfastly on him, saw his face as it had been the face of an angel." What a testimony this is of Stephen's faith and confidence in God; well did he know that the Lord was on his side and had confidence in His words—Luke 21:15.

Stephen's discourse was based on Jesus and the resurrection. Beginning with Abraham he traced the history of Israel down to his own day, showing the Lord's leadings with them and making particular reference to Moses—Acts 7:37. He was drawing attention to the fact that just as Moses had at first been rejected by Israel, so the one "like unto Moses"—Jesus—had been rejected by them. Nevertheless, as Moses afterwards became the leader and deliverer of the people, so also Jesus in due time would be the greater Deliverer. Continuing, he showed that God at first established the tabernacle in the wilderness and then the temple at Jerusalem, and further that God has now provided that a still higher temple should take the place of the building made with hands. As it was not blasphemy to accept the temple of Solomon instead of the tabernacle of Moses, so neither should it be so considered to accept the higher spiritual temple of which Jesus is the Head, in place of the earthly temple. His words were so logical and convincing that his accusers could not resist the wisdom and spirit by which he spoke.

The words of chapter 7:51-53 were evidently the outcome of interruption by his hearers, and given as a rebuke, indicating that they were responsible for the death of Jesus, and which made them more angry. They could see that he was innocent of the accusations, yet were determined to kill Him. We realise that Stephen's face was still aglow with joy and peace of mind' in the privilege of the last opportunity of proclaiming his faith in the resurrected Jesus and seeing the angry faces of his accusers caused him to cast his eyes heavenwards—verses 55, 56. This vision was no doubt given to strengthen his faith for his death just at hand. The explanation of it gave his accusers the opportunity they were waiting for, as they evilly construed it to be additional blasphemy—verses 57-60. Thus we have recorded the death of the first Christian martyr—"They stoned Stephen . . . and he kneeled down and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge; and he fell asleep."

The events leading up to Stephen's death were very similar to those preceding the death of his Master. Our Lord was falsely accused of blasphemy against God and the temple and brought before the Jewish council and condemned. Stephen no doubt had all this in mind throughout his own trial; he had consecrated to follow in his Master's footsteps even unto death, and had the faith and courage to fulfil his vow. What an example he is to all who have entered into the same covenant; we should also be faithful unto death by whatever means our Father may permit. It has been said of the life of Stephen, "The lesson for us all is faith, courage, zeal, a loyal heart, a shining face, love and prayers 'for our enemies—to see that none render evil in return for evil.'"

Let us all be copies of Stephen and do good unto all in the face of the greatest opposition. We may not be persecuted as was Stephen and other early Christians, but we all need to develop the same traits of character as manifest in them. The following quotation seems to sum up Stephen's life: "The beneficent influences of the Gospel of Christ since Stephen's day so permeated the civilised world, and so affected it, that the followers of Christ are not at present in danger of being stoned to death for preaching the Gospel. Nevertheless, the Apostle's words still hold good-2 Tim. 3:12. It is still necessary to suffer with Christ if we would be glorified with Him and share with Him in the coming Kingdom. But the persecutions of today are more refined than in any previous period. The faithful today are not stoned with literal stones, or shot with literal arrows, or literally beheaded, but it is still true that the wicked shoot out arrows at the righteous, even bitter words, and many because of faithfulness are reproved and slandered and cut off from

fellowship—beheaded for the testimony of Jesus—Rev. 20:4. Let all such emulate Stephen, the first Christian martyr. Let their testimony be given with radiant faces like his. Let their eyes of faith perceive Jesus at the right hand of God', as their Advocate and Deliverer. Let their words be with moderation as was Stephen's, and let it be true of them as written of him, "full of grace and power" and "filled with the holy spirit."

Self-Examination.

(Convention Address.)

-Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves."-2 Cor. 13:5.

THE Apostle's words to the church at Corinth contain very sound advice for Christians at all times. How beneficial it is to be continually examining ourselves — as to where we stand and how we are standing. While thus occupied we will be saved from much examination of others, which is not so profitable. It is impossible to know ourselves by looking at the present; none of us really knows the strength of his will until he is put to the test, so it is well that no one becomes too sure of his standing.

Some people are so minded in their judgment that they cannot see anything wrong with themselves, while others cannot see anything commendable in themselves. There is a difference between heart searching and life searching. If any one would judge correctly of his acceptableness with God by his perfection in thought, word or deed he would certainly have to condemn himself, but it is possible to come up to a standard of perfection as regards his will and intention. The Christian only grows godlike as he learns to look away from himself to the Lord.

In regard to self-confidence let us consider the Apostle Peter. He was the first to acknowledge the Master as the Son of God; and he was the first to deny Him. He was the only one who drew his sword in the Master's defence, and the only one who later swore that he never knew Him. By divine arrangement he was given the keys with which to open the door to the high calling—first at Pentecost for the Jews, and later for the Gentiles, which showed that the middle wall previously separating Jew and Gentile had been broken down. Yet, subsequently, he dissembled to the extent of ignoring God's grace to the Gentiles. In all these experiences St. Peter displayed the fact that his heart was loyal to God and righteousness, and that the faults and weaknesses of his character were of his flesh and not of his real heart intention.

The same 'exhibition of human nature makes David attractive. He was not so saintly that he could not make a mistake; he was not so far above general humanity that they could not realise in him a fellow creature. His weaknesses were fully offset by the evidence of his heart loyalty to God. David's very experiences in stumbling and recovery have so saturated his Psalms that they touch a responsive chord in every heart which is loyal to God, and has had experience with sin—his own, and that of others.

One of the great lessons the Master impressed was that of being "wise as serpents and harmless as doves." This wisdom is not of the selfish kind which looks out for its own interests, merely, but that which is generous, looking out for the interests of all and the Lord's cause generally. All need to be continually on guard to "keep their hearts with all diligence" and examine themselves by past records of those who have gone before and left us examples and footprints on the sands of time.

There was much that the Master could not tell His disciples while He was on earth, because they could not bear it, but what a change the cross of Christ wrought in them when their eyes were opened. The sufferings of Christ for us should also lead us to self-examination. Let us look for every trace of malice, or guile, hypocrisies and envyings. Let us see if there be any evil speaking in us, or the desire for the same, and let us do this with openness, seeking the truth with honesty of purpose. Let us see if Christ dwells within us and whether we love the brethren; this is our great test to-day. —1 John 4:7, 8.

The experiences 'of this life are needful that the joint-heirs with Christ may be: helpful for the uplifting work in the next age. The sufferings of the Master can be explained only from the standpoint that they were for others; He suffered as the Good Shepherd, giving His life for the sheep. The Apostle Paul says, "Christ died for us," and Peter declares, "Christ suffered for us," and as this great truth became clear to these apostles they were lost to all material considerations, and opened their hearts to the ministry of the holy spirit. It was by suffering that they perfected characters pleasing to God, and all the Body members must be made perfect by the same means—filling up the sufferings of Christ which are behind.

It is our Lord's atoning sacrifice that makes all our progress possible. It is the sure ground upon which is based our peace, our confidence, our joy. By His sufferings He has left us an example that we should follow in His steps; but do we realise fully what that means? The Master's chief source of strength was His nearness to the Father—"The Father

and' I are one." This, then, is our guide as to how we should follow Him; filled with the spirit of God', emptied of self, the fruits will manifest themselves in our lives in an ever increasing measure, thus verifying the promise of God,"Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace., whose mind is stayed on thee."

In those who have understood the words, "take up thy cross and follow Me," we find the greatest transformation of life and character, and as we see them going on before us unfolding still more the beauties of the new life, we pause as the conviction comes to us that God has also given ear unto our voice, that our prayers have ascended before Him, and we ask with the Psalmist—"Set a watch O Lord, before my mouth; keep the door of my lips. Incline not my heart to any evil thing."

In our self-examinations let us make an introspection regarding patient endurance. The Master spoke much concerning patient endurance toward such who persecute the Church. "In your patience possess ye your souls," is His advice to those who suffer by following His steps, for by so doing they are building character that will prove them over-comers. Faith in the power of God produces in the humble of heart a poise which indicates a victory over the forces of evil, a confidence in the promises, which, like love, casteth out fear.

Much of the suffering which comes to the Christian could be avoided if he learns to cast all his cares or anxieties upon the Lord in a whole-hearted way. He suffers from doubts which darken his spiritual horizon and from fears as to his ability to stand the storms of temptation and trial. He is disturbed as to the proper solution of the problems confronting him in his daily life; the seeming trifles multiply at times so greatly that they threaten to become overwhelming. But whatever may be the cause of our sufferings, we can find comfort and peace as the Master found it—by full trust and communion with the Father; "dwelling in the secret place of the Most High."

Let us proceed to make an audit of present assets and balancing of past accounts. Let us scrutinize the privileges and mercies enjoyed during the past, and the use we made of them and the blessings derived. May we note carefully which features of our daily course have been most helpful to us and which have to any 'extent retarded our spiritual progress, hindered our fellowship with the Lord or prevented our running with patience the race set before us. Each should consider also not merely how much time he has spent in talking about the Lord, but also how much time he has spent in listening to the Lord's voice, in searching the Scriptures, in seeking to know' the divine mind and plan as it pertains to himself. Consider whether or not you have been faithful in serving the Body of Christ to the best of your ability. It is the Lord's provision that he who watereth shall be watered himself.

In our reckonings, let us take good advice from the Apostles; let us note how they counted things — which were set down to the profit account and which to the loss account. The Apostle Paul says—"Neither count I my (earthly) life dear (precious, valuable) unto me." In another place he says, "I count all things (earthly) but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but refuse that T may win Christ and be found in Him." The Apostle James gives further advice on how to count, saying—"Count it all joy, when you fall into divers temptations, knowing that the trial of your faith worketh patience." (James 1 2). What do these temptations bring us? What value are they to us? One value is the lesson of forbearance; they prove to us that we are still in the schooling time, that we may demonstrate our loyalty to the Lord and our worthiness through His merit to share in His kingdom . The Apostle Paul summed up his account by saying, "I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us." In our counting up over past times, let us similarly reckon the things which we have suffered whether they be few or many, small or great; and let us rejoice and endeavour for the future to be more faithful in all these respects, that it may be our high privilege of suffering something further for the name of Christ and His cause.

How much we may thank the Lord that by His grace we are still what we are, and still have the opportunity of persevering -and running with renewed zeal. and patience the race set before us, even though our words and deeds come far short of the glory of God and of our own ideals, desires and efforts. I-Tow consoling it is to know that our imperfect work shall be acceptable through Christ to God; that the Lord counts us according to our intentions.

The Apostle rejoiced that he was counted worthy of a place in the ministry; may we similarly rejoice and let us remember that the word "ministry" signifies service, and the word "minister" signifies servant. The Lord has put us into the ministry and there is a service of kindness and love toward Him in honouring His name and declaring His righteousness unto tile brethren that they may appreciate more the lengths and breadths and heights and depths of the Lord's character. This is indeed a great privilege and if neglected to any extent brings corresponding loss in spiritual progress and character.

In 2 Thes. 1:5 we read, "That ye may be counted worthy of the Kingdom, for which ye also suffer." This is more of our Lord's counting, as no human being, of himself, is worthy of the kingdom, but the Lord purposes to count His faithful ones worthy. We are not to seek suffering by doing foolish things. Our Lord and the Apostles did not set such an

example, so may we use the spirit of a sound mind and wait upon the Lord for His guidance at .all times.

In the wood-working trade there are different processes through which the material goes to bring it up to a proper finish. There are several stages of planning and sandpapering before the polishing process, all of which entails much care and patience. So with the Christian's development; he may be somewhat rough in the early stages, but if he keeps on examining his workmanship he will endeavour to put on a better finish, so that the finer processes can be accomplished, resulting in a lovely smoothness and beautiful gloss. All this is brought about through much patience and perseverance on the part of each workman.

In examining ourselves we need to get right down to bedrock —to consider well our thinking-. It is because the power of thought is recognised to such a considerable extent that it is appealed to on every hand, The difficulty- is that so many will not use a logical and discerning mind, but the Lord has protected His people along this line by providing us in His Word with the proper basis for reasoning on all subjects involving our duty to OUR Creator and fellow creatures: Wherever the Bible has gone it has been the torch which has led civilisation, but few walk close to its light and within its prescribed limitations of reason and conduct, and these few are the true Christians, "the first fruits unto God of His creatures."

Some are inclined to believe that since the brains of men differ to some extent, therefore their thinking, must necessarily be different—that a man can only think in harmony with his brain construction. But not so, as each may learn to weigh and balance his own thoughts, to curb some and encourage others. But to do this, each must have before him an ideal of character to copy. It is necessary to strive to control thoughts in the same manner as words and actions. The will is at the helm, and must decide which thoughts and sentiments it will entertain and encourage and which it will repel. It is necessary, therefore, for the will to be • rightly directed first of all, and secondly to be strong and to use its power in the control of thought. The will thus given to God seeks to know the divine will, to catch the divine thought and to obey it, and in proportion as this condition of the new mind is attained, in that same proportion will there begin to be a newness of life in every respect. May we therefore examine ourselves continually, and strive to bring our every thought into harmony with the divine will, that we may do everything to the honor and glory of God.

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