Let Us Hold Fast

"Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised.)"
—Hebrews 10:23

THE LORD'S CHILDREN who have been enlightened by the glorious Truth of the Divine plan of the ages may recall the great joy that was experienced upon their first having received of the wonderful blessings from the Word of God. Those who have lived during the closing years of this Gospel Age have been witnesses of an abundant and rich pouring forth of Truth that has now been revealed to the consecrated watchers during this present harvest time. This enlightenment on the Scriptures has been a rich blessing and encouragement to the children of God, and they have shared in proclaiming this message of Truth throughout the world.

What a thrill it has been to be given an understanding of God's plan of the ages which includes the plan of reconciliation for the sin-sick and dying world, and the promised restoration for all of the obedient of mankind under the administration of Christ's future thousand-year kingdom. These blessings will surely come to pass during the times of restoration of all things as promised in his blessed Word. (Acts 3:19-21) May we continue to

rejoice in this knowledge that our loving Heavenly Father has given us, and let us hold fast the profession of our faith in these blessed promises.

THE HIGH CALLING

During this period of time, God has been drawing faithful believers to himself through the provision made by our degree of faith in our Lord Jesus and the merit of his sacrifice on our behalf. Jesus explains,"No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day. It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me."—John 6:44,45

Concerning this wonderful calling, the encouraging words from the Apostle Paul inspire us to greater appreciation. He says, "Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded: and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you."—Phil. 3:13-15

The spiritual phase of Christ's kingdom will be made up of Christ and his glorified church. The earthly phase of the kingdom will consist of the resurrected Worthies of old who will be the teachers of Truth as "princes in all the earth." (Ps. 45:16) They will serve as earthly representatives of the glorious kingdom to assist mankind in the ways of truth and righteousness.

FAITHFUL UNTO DEATH

Another blessed portion of present Truth was the revealed fact that we are now living in the closing years of the Gospel Age, and that the millennial kingdom of truth and righteousness under Christ will soon be established. The present age has been the period during which the great salvation is still being offered to the followers of Christ, the time referred to by Paul when he wrote, "Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation." (II Cor. 6:2) Since we are living in the closing years of this 'accepted time' the question may arise as to just when there will be no further opportunity to enter the race for the prize of the High Calling of God in Christ Jesus, and when that door will be closed. We are encouraged to watch the signs of the times as an indication of the times in which we are living, but not to seek an answer to our request concerning a specific date when the last members of the church may be taken. Our calling is one of faith, and we need to remember that our consecration is one of sacrifice "unto death." (Rev. 2:10) We leave all other matters in our Lord's hands.

God gave his Word to Jesus, and, concerning his followers, Jesus said to his Father, "I have given them thy word." (John 17:14) Jesus told his disciples the use that he wanted them to make of the Word that he had given them. They were to go into all the world to preach the Gospel, and thereby to make disciples from among "all nations." (Matt. 28:19) He had already outlined the manner in which one could be his disciple, which was to "deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me." (Matt. 16:24) He promised that those who would

do this would have treasure in heaven.—Matt. 19:21

GENTILES CALLED

In giving this commission to his disciples, Jesus told them to begin at Jerusalem. (Acts 1:8) This was because the seventy weeks of exclusive favor to the Israelites had not yet ended, so the time had not come for the Gospel to be extended to the Gentiles. Peter was given the keys of the kingdom (Matt. 16:19), with the privilege of opening up kingdom blessings, first to the Jews, and later to Cornelius who became the first Gentile convert.—Acts 10:34-36

How wonderfully and miraculously the Lord overruled in the case of Cornelius, in order that Peter, as well as the entire church, might know of a surety that the door to the High Calling had actually opened to receive Gentile converts. Testifying on the matter, Peter later said, "God at the first did visit the Gentiles." (Acts 15:14) It was difficult for some of the Jewish Christians of that day to become reconciled to the fact that Gentiles could then become fellow heirs with them, but the evidence was clearly before them and they had no alternative but to accept the Lord's will in the matter. God's Word was going forth, and it was accomplishing that which he wanted accomplished.

We have seen how definitely the Lord opened the door to the High Calling, first to the Jews at Pentecost, and later to the Gentiles through the conversion of Cornelius. These providences of God left no doubt in the minds of those in the Early Church, regardless of whether they were Jews or Gentiles.

They knew that if God's Word reached them, and their hearts responded to it in the spirit of full con-secration, they would be accepted.

It is unreasonable to suppose that God would deal any less definitely with his people now in the closing years of this Gospel Age. His love and justice would not permit him to allow his Word to engender false hopes in the minds of those reached by it, and he is abundantly able to prevent this from occurring. If our consecration is accepted it is ac-cepted for only one reason, which is that God has made us probationary members of the body of Christ. There is no other calling during this age.

The Apostle Paul declares, "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together." (Rom. 8:16,17) Let us therefore continue to hold fast the profession of our faith that we may have a place in the wonderful High Calling of God in Christ Jesus. ■