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Has Judgment Day Begun?

"God hath appointed a day in the which He will judge the world in righteousness by that Man whom He hath ordained, whereof He hath given assurance unto all men, in that He hath raised Him from the dead." - Acts 17:31.

BEFORE WE attempt any answer to the question "Has judgment day begun?" we wish to offer a few remarks on the general subject of Judgment Day.

A very vague and indefinite idea prevails in regard to the day of judgment. The view generally held is that Christ will come to earth seated upon a great white throne, and that He will summon saint and sinner in rank and file before Him, to be judged, amidst great convulsions of nature-earthquakes, opening graves, rending rocks, and falling mountains; that the trembling sinners will be brought from the depths of everlasting woe to hear their sins rehearsed, only to be returned to an eternal and merciless doom; and that the saints will be brought from heaven to witness the misery and despair of the condemned, to hear again the decision in their own case, and to return. The entire time supposed to be assigned to this stupendous work of judging billions is a twenty-four hour day.

This is a very crude conception, and is entirely out of harmony with the inspired Word of God. Let us look at a more Scriptural as well as a more reasonable view of the work and the result of the great Judgment Day which, according to our text, God hath appointed.

The term "judgment" signifies more than merely the rendering of a verdict. It includes the idea of a trial, as well as a decision based upon that trial. And this is true not only of the English word judgment but also of the Greek word which it translates.

The term "day," both in the Scriptures and in common usage, though most frequently used to represent a period of twelve or twenty-four hours, really specifies any definite or special period of time. Thus, for instance, we speak of Noah's day, Luther's day, Washington's day; and thus in the Bible the entire time of creation is called a day, where we read of "the day that Jehovah God made the earth and the heavens" (Gen. 2:4) -- a long, definite period. Then we read of "the day of temptation in the wilderness"-forty years (Heb. 3:8, 9); also of the "day of Christ," the "day of

judgment," and "His day"; terms applicable to the Millennial Age, in which Messiah will reign over, rule, and judge the world in righteousness, granting trial as well as rendering sentence. Those who will carefully consult a complete concordance of the

Bible with reference to the day of judgment, and note the kind and amount of work to be accomplished within that period, will soon see the absurdity of the common view of a twelve or twenty-four hour day, and the necessity for giving to the term "day" its wider significance.

The Scriptures make mention of a number of judgment days. Two of these relate to the human race as a whole. Between these two, several others are stated as taking place.

The first of the world's two judgment days was at the beginning, in the garden of Eden, when the whole human race was judged representatively in Adam, its head. Some have -been disposed to resent this judgment, insisting that Adam misrepresented rather than represented them, but God, whose wisdom is infinite, states the contrary to be true.

The World's Second Judgment Day

But according to our text, God has appointed a day in the which He "will" judge the world. How can this be? Has God changed His mind? Has He concluded that His decision in the trial of the first man and the general sentence were unjust, too severe, that He now concludes to judge the world individually? No; were such the case, we should have no better guarantee of a just decision in the future trial than in the past. It is not that God considers His decision in the first judgment unjust but that He has provided a redemption from the penalty of the first judgment in order that He may grant another judgment-trial, under more favorable conditions, to the entire race; all having then had experience with sin and its results.

Who Will Be the Judge?

We are further informed that when God gives the world this individual trial, it will be under Christ as Judge, whom God will thus honor because of His obedience even unto death for our redemption. God has highly exalted Him, even to the divine nature, that He may be a Prince and a Savior (Acts 5:31), that He may be able to recover from death and grant judgment (including trial) to all whom He purchased with His own precious blood. Since it is the plain declaration of Scripture that "God has committed all judgment unto the Son," and has given Him "all power in heaven and in earth," there is nothing to dread, but on the contrary, there is great cause for rejoicing on the part of all, in looking forward to Judgment Day. The character of the Judge is a sufficient guarantee that the judgment will be just and merciful, with due consideration for the infirmities of all, until the willing and obedient are brought back to the original perfection lost in Eden. With this conclusion *all* the prophetic declarations agree. It is written: "With righteousness shall He judge the world, and the people with equity." - Psa. 98:9.

By What Law Will the World Be Judged?

This coming judgment will be on exactly the same principles as the first. The same law of obedience will be presented, with the same reward of life and the same penalty of death. And as

the first trial had a beginning, progressed, and culminated in a verdict and sentence, so also will the second; and the sentence will be life to the righteous and death to the unrighteous. The second trial will be more favorable than the first because of the experience gained under the results of the first trial. Unlike the first trial, the second trial will be one in which every man will stand the test for himself alone and not for another. None will then die because of Adam's sin . or because of inherited imperfections. It shall no more be said, "The fathers have eaten a sour grape and the children's teeth are set on edge; but he that eateth the sour grape, his teeth shall be set on edge." "The soul that sinneth, it [and not its children] shall die." - Ezek. 18:4; Jer. 31:29, 30.

Under the reign of Christ, mankind will be gradually educated, trained, disciplined, until they reach perfection. And when they have reached perfection, perfect harmony with God will be required, and any who then fall short of perfect obedience will be cut off, being judged unworthy of life. God had a right to demand perfect obedience of Adam, since he was created perfect; and He will demand the same of all men when the great work of restoring them is complete. None will be permitted to have everlasting life who then in the slightest degree fall short of perfection. To fall short of perfection, then, will be to sin willfully against full light and perfect ability.

We do not wish to be understood as ignoring the present responsibility of the world, which every man has, according to the measure of light enjoyed, whether it be much or little, whether it be the light of nature or of revelation. "The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good," and "God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good or whether it be evil." (Prov. 15:3; Eccl. 12:14.) The good and evil deeds of the present time will receive a just recompense of reward either now or hereafter.

Judgment of the Nations

Between the world's two judgment days discussed foregoing, a period of about six thousand years intervenes. During this long period, God has been selecting two special classes from among men, and specially trying, testing, disciplining, and training them to be His honored instruments during the second of the world's judgment days.

These two classes are respectively designated by St. Paul as the "house of sons" and the "house of servants" (Heb. 3:5, 6), the former being composed of those overcomers tried and found faithful during the Christian dispensation (the Gospel Age), and the latter being composed of the faithful overcomers who lived before the Christian dispensation. Those who successfully pass the trial for either of these special classes will not come into judgment (including trial) with the world but will enter upon their reward when the world is coming into its second judgment day. They will be God's agents in the blessing of the world; in giving to men the instruction and training necessary for their final testing and judgment. "Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world?" - 1 Cor. 6:2.

The world's second judgment day is immediately preceded by a judgment of the nations, as such. They are to be judged politically, ecclesiastically, and socially. Many Scriptures make this clear. However, while noting these, it is important to bear in mind the difference between national judgment and individual judgment. While the nation is composed of individuals, and individuals are largely responsible for the courses of nations, and must and do suffer greatly in the calamities which befall them; nevertheless the judgment of the world, as individuals, will be distinct from its judgment as nations. The day of individual judgment for the world will be the Millennial Age, as previously noted. Then, under the favorable conditions of the New Covenant, and granted a clear

knowledge of the truth and every possible assistance and incentive to righteousness, all men individually, and not collectively as nations, will be on trial, or judgment, for eternal life.

The judgment of the nations which precedes this individual trial is a judgment of men in their collective capacities. The civil institutions of the world, social, political, religious, have had a long lease of power. And now, as the "Times of the Gentiles" come to a close, they must render up their accounts. And the Lord's judgment, expressed beforehand by the prophets, is that not one of them will be found worthy of a renewal of that lease or a continuance of life. The decree is that the dominion shall be taken from them and that He whose right it is shall take the Kingdom, and the nations shall be given to Him for an inheritance. - Ezek. 21:27; Dan. 7:27; Psa. 2:8; Rev. 2:26, 27.

Let us listen to a few passages from the pen of other prophets which bear directly on this subject. "Come near, ye nations, to hear, and hearken, ye people . . . for the indignation of the Lord is upon all nations, and His *fury* upon all their armies." (Isa. 34:1, 2.) Again: "The Lord . . . is an everlasting King; at His wrath the earth shall tremble, and the nations shall not be able to abide His indignation." (Jer. 10:10.) "A noise shall come even to the ends of the earth; for the Lord hath a controversy with the nations. Thus saith the Lord of hosts, Behold, evil shall go 'forth from nation to nation, and a great whirlwind [that is, intense and complicated trouble and commotion] shall be raised up from the coasts of the earth. And the slain of the Lord shall be at that day from one end of the earth even unto the other end of the earth." - Jer. 25:31-33.

In calling attention to this subject, it is not our intention to arouse a mere sensation or to seek to gratify idle curiosity. Nor can we hope to produce in the minds and hearts of men such a condition of repentance as would work a change in the present social, political, and religious order of society, and thus avert the calamity. All the powerful causes which produce the trouble have been long at work; and no human power is able to arrest their operation and progress toward their certain end. No hand but the hand of the Lord could stay the progress of the present current of events, and His hand will not do so until the bitter experiences of this conflict shall have sealed their instruction upon the hearts of men. Our only object, therefore, in mentioning the subject at all, is to forewarn, forearm, comfort, encourage, and strengthen the "household of faith," so that they may not be dismayed but be enabled to look beyond the severest measures of divine disciplining in the chastening experiences of the world and see by faith the glorious outcome in the precious fruits of righteousness and enduring peace.

Has the Judgment Day of the Nations Begun?

As we look about us and note the conditions in the world today, it is difficult to escape the conclusion, especially when these conditions are considered in connection with time prophecies, that the nations have already entered their judgment day, that they are even now being weighed in the balances and found wanting. Indeed, for years it has been seen that the gathering of the nations and assembling of the kingdoms, preparatory to pouring upon them His indignation, "even all His fierce anger," as yet another prophet (Zephaniah 3:8, 9) graphically describes it, has been in process. Modern discovery and invention have made the remotest ends of the earth neighbors to each other. Travel, mailing facilities, the telegraph, the telephone, and the radio have brought all the world into a community of thought and action hitherto unknown. Truly, the nations are "assembled" in a manner not expected, yet in the only manner in which they could be assembled, namely, in common interest and activity; but alas, not in brotherly love, for selfishness marks every step of this progress. The spirit of enterprise, of which selfishness is the

motive power, has prompted the construction of the railways, the steamships, the telegraphs, the cables, the airplanes, the telephones, the radios; selfishness regulates commerce and international relationships, and every other energy and enterprise except the preaching of the Gospel and the establishment of benevolent institutions; and even in these it is to be feared that much that is done is inspired by motives other than pure love for God and humanity. Selfishness has gathered the nations and has been steadily preparing them for the predicted, and now fast approaching, retribution which is so graphically described by the prophet as the "fire of God's jealousy," or anger, which is about to consume utterly the present social order. Yet this is speaking only from the human standpoint. From the standpoint of the prophet this gathering of the nations is ascribed, not to man's own efforts, but to God. Both standpoints are true; for while man is permitted the exercise of his free agency, God, by His overruling providence, is shaping human affairs for the accomplishment of His own wise purposes. And therefore, while men and their works and ways are the agents and agencies, God is the great Commander who now gathers the nations and assembles the kingdoms from one end of the earth to the other, preparatory to the transfer of earth's dominion to Him "whose right it is" -- Immanuel.

The prophet tells us why the Lord thus gathers the nations, saying, "That I may pour upon them Mine indignation, even all My fierce anger." This message would bring us sorrow and anguish only, were it not for the assurance that the results shall work good to the world, overthrowing the reign of selfishness and establishing, through Christ's Millennial Kingdom, the reign of righteousness referred to in the words of the prophet: "Then will I turn unto the people a pure language [their communications ,with each other shall no longer be selfish but pure, truthful, and loving, to the intent] that they may all call upon the name of the Lord, to serve Him with one consent."

Closing Thoughts

We see the deepening clouds of trouble. We hear the thunder-tones of judgment that "call the earth from the rising of the sun unto the going down thereof" (Psa. 50:1) -- from the east to the west. We see the lightning flashes of truth and righteousness, and observe how the whole earth is now in the shaking process which will eventuate in the complete overthrow of all existing institutions, systems, and governments. Present events indeed speak in trumpet-tones. Even as these words are being set up in type, a military expert (note-not a preacher but an army general) ends his radio newsbroadcast with a quotation from the Bible: "A sound of battle is in the land, and of great destruction." (Jer. 50:22.) How shall we regard these things? Surely, dear reader, it will be with thoughtful and reverent hearts! In this eventful period everything that can be shaken will be shaken, that only the unshakable things of truth and righteousness may remain. (Heb. 12:25-29.) Every one called to a share in the coming Kingdom must be a lover of righteousness, one who will courageously and loyally exercise an influence which is always favorable to righteousness, justice, mercy, and peace. All others will be shaken out. In the end only the true will remain. "Seeing that we look for these things [let us] be diligent, that we may be found of Him in [inward] peace, without spot, and blameless," as the apostle exhorts. - 2 Pet. 3:14.

When our Lord was here in the flesh, the destruction of Jerusalem and the utter ruin of Palestine were close at hand. In those days our Savior forewarned His disciples against laying up treasures for themselves on earth. His counsel and advice to them was to lay up their treasures in heaven, and in the end they would find them there. The Lord's true people of today occupy a similar position. The great, symbolic-burning day is near. Christendom is about to be destroyed. In this great symbolic conflagration the possessions of earth will be valueless. The opportunities for

laying up treasures in heaven will soon be overpast. Let us, therefore, brethren, heed the Master's words, dedicating, or rededicating, as the case may be, our all of earthly life and fortune upon His altar and seek to employ time, talent, and ability in the service of Him who hath called us from darkness to light; of Him who will at last welcome the faithful to the place that He has gone to prepare, in the Father's house of many mansions; for there we shall find the heavenly treasures that can never fade, never tarnish, never rust, and the glory and luster of which will abide throughout all time. Amen.

In the belief that the subject considered in the foregoing article is timely, we are having it printed in separate pamphlet form, slightly abridged, for distribution to all who may seem to have a "hearing ear." Readers and Class Secretaries are invited to order freely as many copies as can be judiciously used. In ordering, please specify the number desired.

The Meek Will He Teach His Way

"Ponder the path of thy feet, and let all thy ways be established." - Prov. 4:26.

WITH what frequency the Scriptures remind us of the importance of noting well the paths in which we may walk. What striking contrasts are made as between the paths of the wicked and of the righteous. How clearly portrayed are the ultimate endings of the path leading to destruction, and of the way to life and happiness. With what reiterations the inspired Word identifies for us the character of pseudo lights never wanting around the way of our feet, and the characteristics of the true light which is to lighten the path of the just unto the perfect day. And with what emphasis the Scriptures teach that only the pure in heart are permitted to walk with God.

Many, therefore, are the reasons why the admonition of our text should be heeded. We need only remember that it is written, "There is **a way** that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death" (Prov. 14:12), to see that there is a special need to ponder carefully the path of our feet. And with the ever-present danger of Satan's power to make his darkness appear as heavenly light, what alertness of spiritual discernment is constantly needed by every child of God. A proper conception of the imperative need of divine guidance in the matter of our walk will, more than anything else, produce the habitual practice of pondering with soberness the paths we tread. Moreover, this recognized need of carefulness in watching our steps also will lead us, more than anything else, to seek for the aid essential to ordering our steps aright. It will make the prayer of the Psalmist ours also: "Order my steps in Thy Word: and let not iniquity have dominion over me." (Psa. 119:133.) And like him we will recognize that the power of the Word to thus constitute our guide will necessarily require more than a mere knowledge thereof. Like him we must be able to say, "Thy Word have I **hid in mine heart**, that I might not sin against Thee." (Psa. 119:11.) When the Word of God dwells richly in the heart, then it is that its force and blessedness combine to keep the feet in the paths of righteousness.

Much depends on the attitude of the heart toward the revealed will of God as to how little or much the need of guidance is recognized. To the devout and fervent heart God's commandments are never grievous but delightful. To the lukewarm and self-centered those same requirements will be burdensome, and largely joyless. Similarly, the degree of godly fear or reverence one possesses will determine the measure of ability to ponder the path of the feet. The one who treads softly before the Lord, remembering that "the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom," will assuredly find the needed guidance, repeatedly promised him in the Word. But the one who fails

in a proper reverence toward God and His Word, will find himself the easy victim of a most serious deception. This seems well illustrated in Psalm 18:25, 26, which reads: "With the merciful Thou wilt show Thyself merciful; with an upright man Thou wilt show Thyself upright; with the pure Thou wilt show Thyself pure; and with the froward Thou wilt show Thyself froward." Is this not suggestive of the principle of finding just what we look for? Is it not intended to remind us that even the Word of God can become to us the accepted guide in a froward course we have a preference to pursue? Admittedly, the Bible can be made to support just what we want it to teach; therefore, who but those who approach that Word in a spirit of humble reverence may really expect to find it a light unto their feet? As Israel's table eventually became "a snare and a stumbling-block" to them, though that table was of God's own providing, so in like manner His Word can become to us the very opposite of God's intention, if so be that any "hardness of heart" represents our approach thereto.

"The Ground Whereon Thou Standest is Holy Ground"

It requires no special study to grasp the important principle set forth in the text reminding us that "the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." In the nature of things, that wisdom is one of those blessings our wise and holy God reserves for such as revere Him. It would be wholly inconsistent with His character to bestow such favors on the irreverent, and on those who have no love for His law. It follows, then, that wherever there is a fuller vision of God enjoyed and a pathway truly illuminated by His Word, the one knowing this experience has learned to walk humbly before the Lord. And the most important discovery made by the humbled student of the sacred Word is the discovery of his own ignorance, his own nothingness, and thus his unworthiness of the great privilege of being taken into that "secret of the Lord" which the Word tells us He chooses to make known to those who reverence Him.

To illustrate how this nearness to God produces the consciousness of unworthiness and thereby prepares the heart for His revelations, we call to mind just a few such examples. Moses testified to the effect upon himself when God spoke directly to him in the Mount. Job confesses himself as humbled into dust and ashes when God spoke to him. Isaiah similarly cried out in a painful realization of his uncleanness when he beheld the Lord high and lifted up. Daniel fell at the angel's feet as dead; and John likewise. Peter catches for a brief moment the unveiled glory of his Lord, and contrary to his habitual rushing in where angels might fear to tread, he entreats, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man." Whenever He whose dwelling is in the "light which no man can approach unto" has chosen to come near to man, inevitably the results are the same as that experienced by Peter. The consciousness of inherent unworthiness is immediately realized.

But this is all designed for the greater good of God's beloved servants. Is this not the deep meaning of the admonition given us by the Apostle in his words, "Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God that He may exalt you in due time"? In the present as well as pertaining to the future, the principle holds good, "He that humbleth himself, **shall be** exalted." "The meek will He guide in judgment; and the meek will He teach His way." To all such the promise is sure to be fulfilled "What man is he that feareth the Lord? Him shall He instruct in the way that He shall choose. His soul shall dwell at ease: and his seed shall inherit the land. The counsel of the Lord is with them that fear Him; and He will show them His covenant." - Psa. 25:12-14.

Deeply significant were those words spoken to Moses from the midst of the burning bush, "Put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereof thou standest is holy ground." (Exod. 3:5.) It was hallowed ground because the great "I Am that I Am" was present there. Moses was standing

alone before a striking and wonderfully important revelation of God and within the range of His clearly heard spoken word. He was there in the very presence of the supernatural and sublime. A holy place indeed! In subsequent days Moses was again alone with God. Called up into Mount Sinai apart from the camp to be shut in where "the radiance of the Eternal rested on the mountain of Sinai.; for six days the cloud covered it, . . . and Moses was on the mountain for forty days and forty nights. . . . Now when Moses was come down from the mountain of Sinai with the two tablets of the law in his hands, Moses did not know, as he went down the mountain, that his face was in a glow after speaking to God." - Exod. 24:16, 18; 34:29, Moffatt's Translation.

The Apostle refers to this experience of Moses in 2 Corinthians 3:7-11 and employs it to show the greater grandeur of that which **we may behold**. Again we make use of Moffatt's Translation: "Now if the administration of death which is engraved in letters of stone, was invested with glory-so much so, that the children of Israel could not gaze on the face of Moses on account of the dazzling glory that was fading from his face; surely the administration of the Spirit must **be** invested with still greater glory. If there was glory in the administration that condemned, then the administration that acquits abounds far more in glory (indeed, in view of the transcendent glory, what **was** glorious has no glory at all); if what failed had its glory, then what lasts will be invested with far greater glory." How suggestive this is of the relatively greater effect God's revealed glory should have upon those under this later administration of the Spirit than the effect experienced by Moses long ago. If the glory of God was thus transmitted to Moses while receiving a law which would be found to be unto death, then how great should be the effect produced on those of this age who have been privileged to receive the impress of the divine character, as it is revealed in the gospel of abounding grace? Who can deny that God expects this transcendent glory to be revealed in our daily life?

By the direct call of God, Moses had gone up into this unusually close intimacy with Him. During those momentous days and nights an administration which in its outworking would leave the sincere subjects under it crying out, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death," was being unfolded, and yet, the countenance of Moses was having stamped on it the unquestionable evidence of his being in the presence of God. Surely, then, there should be desired, yea, confidently expected, similar results by those who are now living under the administration of acquittal. If on the holy ground where Moses stood, such results accrued to him, oh, how holy, then, is the place whereon we walk in grace! where "the light of the glory of God as it shines in the face of Jesus Christ" may be stamped upon us in all its **unfading** reflections. If listening to God's voice as it set forth a law of works beyond frail flesh to perform, could cause the face of His servant to glow with a radiance too dazzling for human eyes to gaze upon, then how great should be the radiant transformations stamped on those who ponder a revelation gloriously revealing the effulgence of the God of all grace. If writing a law of condemnation on tables of stone simultaneously wrote a supernatural glory on the face of Moses, then how blessedly real and permanent should be the growing impress on our characters as the Spirit of God transforms us into the living epistles of Christ. If the atmosphere of the mount that burned with fire left its glowing radiance on the face of a **natural man**, how immeasurably greater can the glory of God's imparted character be on those who as **spiritual men** are in holy aspirations saying, "One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, **to behold the beauty of the Lord**, and .to inquire in His temple." - Psa. 127:4.

Lo, these many years we have said to the Lord, "When on Thine own image in me Thou hast smiled, O! I shall be satisfied then." Satisfied we shall surely be' then, and only then will our Lord be satisfied with the work of His grace in us. May we ever remember the holy ground on which we tread, and earnestly entreat the Lord that no earthborn cloud may arise to obscure the vision of

His face and thereby remove from us that "open face" by which we may now receive and gloriously reflect His likeness in us.

Letting the Word Dwell Richly Within the Heart

In far-off, remote times, long "before the foundation of the world," when we were chosen in Christ, the ultimate purpose in the Father's heart was "that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love" and thus be "to the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein He hath made us accepted in the Beloved." (Eph. 1:4, 6.) Looking forward to so great an end, what holy ground it is on which we stand "and rejoice in hope of the glory of God." Then how great the need of pondering well the paths of our feet. With what undivided attention we should meditate on the eternal issues which are now determining how much or little of the divine impress we are daily receiving. His Word makes plain the fact that "out of the heart are the issues of life." This means, in its practical outworking, that the power of Christ **must** be operating **in the** heart, the likeness of Christ **must** be daily more and more stamped on the character, and the love of Christ constantly reflected in the daily walk. This is the significance of that profound statement of 2 Corinthians 3:18: - "We all with unveiled face **receiving** and **reflecting** the glory of the Lord, into the same image **are being** transformed, from glory into glory." (Rotherham.) Is it so with us? Are we, through a close intimacy with God, thus receiving and reflecting His glory? He expects it of us; we **must** expect it of ourselves.

Many are the steps we take in the walk we hope will eventually lead us into the heavenly terminus. Alas! many of these are wayward steps. Too many of them are careless steps. How often we have failed to make straight paths for our feet and found ourselves suddenly awakened to the sad fact that there has not been enough careful pondering over the way our feet have been treading. Alas, how many of our steps have been of a retracing kind, getting our feet back again into the upward way after being lured into some by-path. And, saddest of all, there have been those regrettable, measurably willful, disloyal, disobedient steps. We knew better at the time; yet failed. These were steps a wily adversary helped us to justify, and in disregard of conscience we persisted until in mercy the rod of correction saved us from disaster. All these steps serve to teach us the need of the admonition of our opening text. With what thankfulness we praise our loving God that His mercy endureth so marvelously. And this He will continue to do for us as we ponder the path of our feet, to the end that all our ways may be fixed and established -- established in the paths of faithful obedience to His Word, in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake, and in the paths of love wherein we increasingly receive and reflect the life of Christ.

There are progressive steps in the path of the Christian. There are those first steps, initial steps suggestive of the beginnings of the journey toward the, heavenly goal. Later on there are the more definite, assured, and steady steps of the matured, advancing Christian, a more perfect keeping step with Jesus, "walking as He walked." And with this advancement in understanding of the really essential requirements of the true, spiritual walk, there will be given a richer measure of peace and quietness of spirit. With the ability, God given, to discern between such things as "meats and drinks as ordinances and "peace and joy in the Holy Spirit" as the real facts of the life that pleases God, will assuredly come the happy realization that the steps have been graciously kept by divine love in the right way. This is the established walk our text and context indicates will be the path trod by those who ponder the steps their feet should take.

In an effort to get the full import of our text and its context, it will be helpful to turn to Moffatt's Translation for a somewhat elaborated and very pleasing reading. It reads, from verse. twenty-

three to the end of the chapter: "Guard above all things, guard your inner self, for so you live and prosper; bar out all talk of evil, and banish wayward words; let your eyes look straight ahead, gaze right in front of you; keep a clear path before you, and ever make your footing firm; never turn to right or left, draw back from a wrong step." How wonderfully complete is this inspired advice. Two statements are worthy of special notice: first, "Guard your inner self"; second, "and ever make your footing firm." Only let the inner self be guarded with uncommon care and the feet placed firmly on the solid rock of **inspired** doctrine, reproof, correction, instruction in righteousness; and an established 'character-likeness to Christ must result. Well may we pray with the Psalmist "Let my heart be sound **in Thy statutes**; that I be not ashamed. **Thy Word** is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path. Thy testimonies have I taken as an heritage forever: for **they** are the rejoicing of my heart." (Psa. 119:80, 105, 111.) "The Word of God, which liveth and abideth forever," is the unchanged and unchangeable place for our feet. And therein the sum total of all the will of God as it pertains to our present life is contained in the nutshell text, "For this is the will of God, even your sanctification." - 1 Thess. 4:3.

The End of the Way is Near

And think of where we walk today. Our first steps were taken long ago. Intervening days and years have been multiplying the steps behind us. Now the signs along the way in our present stage of the journey all point to the fact that we are in the time when the last steps are being taken by heaven-bound pilgrims. Day by day these signs become eloquent. So eloquent are they, that feet in danger of growing weary because of the unexpected length of the waiting time, are being wonderfully quickened again. And, as one by one these indications that the journey's end is near are carefully considered, there is not only a renewed impetus of joy experienced but there is also an increasing realization of the solemn nature of the Apostle's very timely question "Seeing that all these things are thus to be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye all the while to be, in holy ways of behavior and acts of godliness, expecting and hastening the presence of the day of God." And how timely is another of Peter's admonitions: "But the end of all things bath drawn near: Be of sound mind, therefore, and be sober for prayers; before all things keeping fervent your love among yourselves." - 2 Pet. 3:11, 12; 1 Pet. 4:7, 8, Rotherham.

The fundamental laws of God never change. Whether men have stood before the bar of God's judgment in the past ages, or in the present higher order of administration, or when they stand before that bar in an age to come; there could never be any deviation from the principles laid down in the ever forceful statement, "And what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do **justly**, and to love **mercy**, and to walk **humbly** with thy God?" (Mic. 6:8.) Solemn indeed are the reminders given again and again in the Word wherein this rule, in principle, applies to each testing hour and points. unmistakably to the fact that probation has its limits, beyond which the sentence is passed beyond repeal. "He that is **unjust**, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is **righteous**, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still.... Behold, I come quickly; and My reward is with Me, to give to every man according as his work shall be." - Rev. 22:11, 12.

With what care we need to ponder the path of our feet now, lest they be out of the way of these divine requirements. Some day the door will close behind the completed Church. Some hour not far distant the word will go forth, "The marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife hath made herself ready." Yes! ere long there will be surprises. Devout and loving souls will know the ecstasy of "a sweet and glad surprise," "in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye." But to -how many will come the surprise suggested in the fateful words, "And they that were ready went in,

and the door was shut." Oh, which of these surprises will be our own! The answer is clear and plain: They who are just, clean, and **righteous**, they who have put **on Christ**, shall enter in triumph through those "pearly gates." Shall you? Shall I?

- *Contributed.*

Quit You Like Men, Be Strong

"God gave us not a spirit of fearfulness; but of power and love and discipline." - 2 Tim. 1:7, A.R.V.

TODAY the faith and consecration of every thinking Christian is being tested as never before. Christians in all denominations indeed, right-thinking men and women outside the church as well as inside-today stand aghast in a world shocked by the presence and triumph of evil as it has never been seen before, and faith is reeling under the blow. It is hard to have faith in the eternal verities, faith in the ultimate triumph of right over wrong, faith in a God who doeth all things well, faith in a Prince of Peace, when evil marches, and brute force causes millions to suffer, when innocent nations are crushed beneath the heel of an oppressor who knows no law save that of the brute and the jungle. It is hard to keep our faith when we see the sweetest things in life the higher things, the better things-go down into dust before a military machine. It is hard to keep our faith when we see civilization, after years of patient and painful building, torn to shreds by forces which know no law, have no respect for human personality, and have no love for man or God; and the forces of evil sweeping like a fire across the world, and all those influences which make for peace and brotherly love, all the hopes and dreams of those who have lived most nearly as Christ would have us live, "blacked out." It is hard to see small nation after small nation fall before the victory crazed forces of iniquity, brutality, and treachery, hard to see the Jews shamefully persecuted. It is hard to keep our faith, nay, our faith is shaken to its very foundations, when we see the beautiful tulip-beds of Holland watered with the blood of its peaceful people. It is hard to keep our faith when we see our own nation so concerned about saving its body and standing in such great danger of losing its soul.

Yet, if we are to remain Christian and practice the Christian virtues, we must retain our faith, and not only retain it but strengthen it, exercise it, and nurture it as never before. As one writer recently wrote: "My prayer is that God will give us all an unshaken faith in His power, and in His purpose, as we face this dark hour of the world's great agony." Surely this is a prayer in which readers of this journal may properly join, instructed as they are in God's purpose to "bless all the families of the earth."

Then, too, as day by day we approach the throne of grace and express our heartfelt thanks to our heavenly Father that our own country has not yet become engulfed in this present madness, we surely cannot do so without remembering that people next door to us are at war, and countries overseas to which our people are kin. Can we be thankful for ourselves without thinking of their plight? Can we be thankful for ourselves without being sympathetic towards them? Not less gratefully, therefore, but more humbly than hitherto must we daily seek our Father's face, for it is not because we are better than other peoples that we have thus far escaped the evil thing that has befallen them. If we were to be judged by our maintenance of law and order, if we were to be judged by the energy and wisdom with which we have sought to find the answer to the depression problems, such as unemployment and agriculture, or by our adherence to the most elementary principles of morality, or by the staunchness of our loyalty to the basic principles of Christian democracy during these past years of national testing; we should find our rating, as a noted radio speaker recently observed, "inferior to that of some other peoples." But there are certain elements in our national history, not created by us but by others for us, by which we are now upheld. We of today are utterly without ground for boasting. We may not exult because, for the present, we are exempt from terrors that distress our fellowmen we are not better than they; our deserving is not higher than theirs. There, but for the grace of God, goes the United States! Having that in mind

and knowing it to be true, we shall surely be assisted in removing far from us any of the spirit of the man who, in the parable, thanked God that he was not as other men were. We shall be thankful, deeply thankful, for our own highly favored lot; but it will be a thankfulness characterized by a genuine humility and with a clearer recognition of the duty devolving upon us of doing all the good we can, to all men, as we have opportunity, and in the realization that opportunities will press upon us, rather than having to be sought, if, in the spirit of Christ, we are prepared to sacrifice time, money, health, or whatever we may have, for their service.

Be Strong in the Lord

For the strengthening of our faith and the stimulation of our courage and zeal, let us consider the text which appears at the head of this article, and the circumstances under which it came to be written. It is part of a letter written to Timothy by St. Paul while he was in the Roman prison, not long before his death as a martyr for his Lord.

The time in which St. Paul wrote was one of great danger. Persecution was in the air, and the furious hatred which was raging against the Christians was so severe that very few were remaining steadfast. Timothy, while heartily supporting the Apostle in his labors, did not possess the qualities of leadership with which St. Paul was so well equipped, but was of a timid, retiring disposition, a brother whose meekness might, under pressure, degenerate into weakness. This is not expressly stated in the Scriptures, concerning Timothy, but there are unmistakable allusions to this trait in his character-. For example, in 1 Corinthians 16:10, 11, the Apostle admonishes the church at Corinth: "Now if Timotheus come, see that he may be with you- without fear; for he worketh the work of the Lord, as I also do. Let no man therefore despise him, but conduct him forth in peace, that he may come unto me; for I look for him with the brethren." We could hardly imagine the Apostle writing in this strain about a man possessed of John the Baptist's make-up or that of the Apostle Peter.

These very differences would only serve to bind the two men closer together in the Lord. The strong Apostle would find a special joy and comfort in the devotion to him of the less strong, while the younger and - weaker man, Timothy, would be at his best, and experience his chief happiness, in the presence of his talented yet most humanly tender leader.

It is not difficult, too, to visualize the dismay which must have chilled the heart of Timothy as he saw his beloved leader torn from him by the police or soldiers and carried out and away for martyrdom-a dismay which, it would seem from verse four, had reduced Timothy to tears. With the Gospel apparently destined to be suppressed; with its most capable defender shut up in prison and soon to -be martyred; with the brethren scattering on every side; with a keen realization that he himself was personally powerless to stem the tide; and with a disposition which would naturally incline him to shrink from making the attempt, the outlook must have seemed, as indeed it was in fact, very dark for Timothy. To him, in such a plight, came this letter from Paul, and we can well understand the effect it would have, overflowing with comfort, as it is, for Timothy's sorrow and arousing him to renewed hope and courage to press forward in the strength of his own living Lord and Savior, the Anointed Jesus. "Wherefore," he says (verse 6), "I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God which is in thee by the putting on of my hands. For God hath not given us the spirit of fear, but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind. Be not- thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me, His prisoner; but be thou a partaker of the afflictions of the Gospel, according to the power of God."

None of us can afford to ignore this word of Paul's to Timothy: "Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord." On the contrary it may be seen from our Lord's own words that the maintenance of a clear and constant witness to Him and His truth is vital to our spiritual life and health. "Whosoever shall have been ashamed of Me and My teachings, of him the Son of Man shall be ashamed when He comes in His own and the Father's glory." - Luke 9:26, Weymouth.

Our Twofold Witness

The proof that we are unashamed of Christ and His teachings will be manifested in two ways; first, by our lives, and second, by our "word of mouth" witness. In the Philippian letter the Apostle suggests this twofold proof in the following exhortation: "Do all things without murmurings and disputings, that ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world, holding forth the word of life." - Phil. 2:14-16.

Throughout the New Testament the Apostles stress, above all things, the supreme importance of holiness, at all costs, in the common, everyday life. But they take it for granted that the spirit of loving-kindness, derived from Christ, will not be allowed to degenerate into a mere amiability which makes itself pleasant to every one and forgets the solemn fact that the consecrated ones are servants of a Master, whom the world knows not, the messengers of a King, against whom it is in revolt. The truth and beauty of a life possessed by Christ was to be the basis of the Christian's witnessing activities. But the witness was to be articulate, not merely implied; he was to hold out the "word" of life; he was to seize occasion to give a reason of the hope that was in him, although remembering always to do so in meekness and fear. In benign and gracious conduct he was to be as a luminary moving calm and bright in the dark hemisphere of the world. But he was to be a voice as well as a star. He was not only to shine; he was also to speak. And if this was to be true of all Christians, it was to be especially true of Timothy, who, aroused to a holy courage by this last letter from St. Paul, is to carry on the good fight after he himself shall have laid down his life as a martyr in the cause of Christ.

The power to let our light shine by living holy Christian lives and to tell forth, on all suitable occasions, the glorious Gospel, will be given us by God. When our witness is performed, not as a mere duty, difficult to avoid-still less when it is done under fear of penalty of dire punishment if omitted-but when it is performed because of a flame of love burning within, it will be characterized, first of all, by an absence of fear. God hath not given unto us a spirit of cowardice or timidity or fearfulness; on the contrary, the spirit He gives is one of power, of courage, of strength.

However, if that were all, if the spirit God hath given unto us were one of power merely, it might not work to our highest good. We recall that of this very church, Ephesus, in which Timothy was serving as Pastor, there came a time later, when they displayed great strength and courage but still did not meet the Lord's approval. "I know thy works," said our risen Lord to the angel of the church at Ephesus (Rev. 2:2), "and thy toil, and thy patience, and that thou canst not bear evil men, and didst try them that call themselves apostles, and are not, and didst find them false, and thou hadst patience, and didst bear for My name's sake, and hast not grown weary." Such a record took a liberal supply of the spirit of power, of courage, of strength, to make it true. And yet, with all that to their credit, this church failed to secure, the Master's approval. For He goes on to say: "I have this against thee, that thou didst leave thy first love."

"God hath not given unto us the spirit of fear [or cowardice] but of power"-that is true and important, and it was very necessary that Paul should reassure Timothy of it just at this critical time in his life. But the spirit God hath given us is also one of love, which must be blended with the power, the courage, the strength, and harmonized with the spirit of a sound mind. Some translators use the word "self-control" or "self-discipline" instead of the word "sound mind." God hath not given us a spirit of fearfulness, but of power, of love, and of self-mastery.

In his own strength Timothy would have been unable to stand against the tests which confronted him in his day. In our own strength we cannot hope to fight the good fight of faith in our day, either. But just as we have every reason to believe that in the power of God Timothy came off more than a conqueror against the powers which assailed him, so may we confidently rely on the same mighty One who strengthened him, to make us daily overcomers and eventually to give us final victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

We Worship Thee

"O Bringer of salvation
Who wondrously hast wrought,
Thyself the revelation
Of love beyond our thought!

"In Thee all fulness dwelleth,
All grace and power divine:
The glory that excelleth,
O Son of God, is Thine.

"We worship Thee! we bless Thee!
To Thee alone we sing!
We praise Thee and confess Thee,
Our Savior and our King.

"O, grant the consummation
Of this our song, above,
In endless adoration
And everlasting love."

By Thy Words Acquitted; by Thy Words Condemned

"Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things; and an evil man, out of the evil treasure, bringeth forth evil things. But I say unto you, that every idle [unprofitable or pernicious] word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in a day of judgment. For by thy words thou wilt be acquitted, and by thy words thou wilt be condemned." - Matt. 12:34-37.

REALIZING that we, the Church, are at the present time under the inspection of our kingly Bridegroom, who is now present (Matt. 22:11) to gather out of His Kingdom (in its present embryo or formative condition) "all things that offend" (Matt. 13:41), and to gather unto Himself His jewels, His bride (Mal. 3:17), we cannot too carefully consider the principles upon which this judgment and this selection are made.

The above words of our Lord indicate that the heart and the mouth are under very special scrutiny, the former representing the individual character, and the latter being an index of the character. It is in this same view of the matter that those words of wisdom were penned: "Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life. Put away from thee a froward mouth, and perverse lips put far from thee." (Prov. 4:23, 24.) The indication is clear that a right condition of heart is necessary to right words, for "out of the abundance of the heart the, mouth speaketh," as experience testifies to every man. It is therefore just that our words should be a criterion of judgment in the Lord's estimation, as He tells us they are. True, honeyed words are sometimes only the masks of deep hypocrisy, but the mask is sure to drop off sometime, as soon as selfish policy renders a change of tactics necessary. The fact therefore remains that the words, the entire course of conversation and conduct, are an index of the heart.

Our first concern, then, should be for the heart -- that its affections and dispositions may be fully under the control of divine grace; that every principle of truth and righteousness may be enthroned there; that justice, mercy, benevolence, brotherly kindness, love, faith, meekness, temperance, 'supreme reverence for God and Christ, and a fervent love for all the beauties of holiness, may be firmly fixed as the governing principles of life. If these principles be fixed, established, in the heart, then out of the good treasure of the heart the mouth will speak forth words of truth, soberness, wisdom, and grace.

Concerning our Lord Jesus, whose heart was perfect-in whom was no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth, it was said, "Grace is poured into Thy lips"; and again, "All bare Him witness, and wondered at the gracious words that proceeded out of His mouth." (Psa. 45:2; Luke 4:22.) Moses, personating Christ, foretold the blessed influences of the Lord's words, saying, "My doctrine shall drop as the rain; my speech shall distil as the dew, as the small rain upon the tender herb, and as the showers upon the grass." (Deut. 32:2.) And Jesus said, "The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life." (John 6:63.) So wise, just, and true were the Lord's words, that, though His enemies were continually seeking to find some fault, it is said, "They could not take hold of His words before the people; and they marveled at His answers and held their peace." (Luke 20:26.) And others said, "Never man spake like this man." - John 7:46.

Thus our Lord left a worthy example to His people, which the Apostle urges all to follow, saying, "Let your speech be always with grace [with manifest love and kindness] seasoned with salt [a

purifying and preservative influence]." (Col. 4:6.) And Peter adds, "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God" -- wisely, and in accordance with the spirit and Word of the Lord. Again, it is written, "Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips from speaking guile [deceit]." "Whoso keepeth his mouth and his tongue, keepeth his soul from troubles." "The words of a wise man's mouth are gracious words: but the lips of a fool [an unwise, reckless talker] will swallow up himself. The beginning of the words of his mouth is foolishness, and the end of his talk is mischievous madness." "Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thy heart be hasty to utter anything before God; for God is in heaven, and thou upon earth therefore let thy words be few." - Psa. 34:13; Prov. 21:23; Eccl. 10:12, 13; 5:2.

Job, in the midst of all his afflictions, was very careful not to sin with his lips. (Job 2:10; 31:30; 1:21, 22.) He knew that his words would be taken by the Lord as an index of his heart, and he was careful to keep both the heart and the words right, saying, "What! shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil [calamities, troubles-for discipline or refining] ? ..The Lord gave, and the Lord bath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord." There was no spirit of rebellion in a heart out of whose abundance came such words of loving submission, patience, and faith under severe testings, -and that, too, without a clear apprehension of the divine wisdom in permitting them.

The Psalmist puts into the mouth of God's consecrated and tried people these words of firm resolution: "I said, I will take heed to my ways, that I sin not with my tongue. I will keep my mouth with a bridle, while the wicked [who tempts and tries the righteous] is before me." - Psa. 39:1.

How necessary to the stability of Christian character is such a resolution, and the self-control which develops under a firm adherence to it. In an unfriendly world we can expect to receive only the reproaches of our Master, for the servant is not above his Lord. The world, the flesh, and the devil oppose our way: there are fightings within and fears without, and many are the arrows and fiery darts aimed at the righteous. But what is the safe attitude of the soul under afflictions and severe testings? Is it not in silence before God, waiting and watching first to see-His leading, His will, in every matter before presuming to touch things that often involve so much? So the Psalmist suggests, saying, "I was dumb with silence: I held my peace, even from good [even from doing or saying what seemed good in my own sight]; and my sorrow was stirred. My heart was hot within me, and in my self communing there burnt a fire [description of a fiery trial]. Then spake I with my tongue"-not to the revilers, nor to others, but to the Lord.

Yes, it is always our blessed privilege to carry our sorrows and vexations to the Lord;

"For He knows
How to steal the bitter
From life's woes.

He does it, as the Psalmist suggests (verses 4-6), by showing us, through experience, the vanity of all earthly things and their utter inability to satisfy the soul's cravings or to comfort the wounded spirit. Then comes the thought that the present life, with its cares, vexations, and sorrows is passing away, that our days are but as a handbreadth, and however vexing our experiences, they will soon be over; and if we permit them to do so, they only will work out in us the peaceable fruits of righteousness, and develop in us strong and noble characters, disciplined to thorough self-control, thoughtful consideration, patient endurance of affliction, and loving loyalty and faithfulness and trust in God. Then the assurances of the blessed rewards of righteousness in the life to come begin to have a new and deeper significance, and we are made to realize that this is not our continuing city, but we seek one to come. Thus the heart is separated from earthly things and made to realize

the superior worth of heavenly things. Nothing but the Lord Himself can satisfy the longings of the soul, which, tempest-tossed and tried, comes to realize

"How vain is all beneath the skies,
How transient every earthly bliss,
How slender all the fondest ties,
That bind me to a world like this!"

Thus chastened and comforted, we learn to look beyond the present to the glory that shall by and by be revealed in the faithful overcomers, who, by patient continuance in well-doing in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, seek for the prize revealed to faith alone. Thus disciplined and blessed under fiery trials by going to the Lord for comfort and help, the child of God begins to realize what it means to be dead to the world and alive toward God, with a keen appreciation of His love and goodness and grace; and being thus separated from the world, and more firmly united to Christ, the language of the heart is, as the Psalmist further suggests, "And now, Lord, what wait I for? my hope is in Thee." (Verse 7.) Thus

"E'en sorrow, touched by heaven, grows bright
With more than rapture's ray,
As darkness shows us worlds of light
We never saw by day."

Such is the blessed result of bridling the tongue under circumstances of trial and vexation, and humbly taking all our cares to the Lord in prayer, to the end that, when we speak, our speech may be with grace, seasoned with salt, and that under all circumstances we may speak as the oracles of God.

Considering our Lord's words above quoted that we must give an account for "every idle [unprofitable or pernicious] word" -- in view of the fact that the present is our (the Church's) judgment day, we see what great importance attaches to our words. All our words are taken by the Lord as an index of our hearts. If our words are rebellious, or disloyal, or frivolous, or flippant, or unkind, unthankful, unholy, or impure, the heart is judged accordingly on the principle that "out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." Thus our words, in all the varied circumstances of our daily life, are bearing testimony continually before God of the condition of our hearts. So our Lord's words imply: and in this view of the case how timely is the admonition: "Be not rash with thy' mouth; and let not thy heart be hasty to utter anything before God [And remember that "all things are naked and opened to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do." - Heb. 4:13]; for God [our judge] is in heaven [upon the throne], and thou upon earth [under 'trial before the bar of God]: therefore let thy words be few." Let them be thoughtful and wise; as uttered before God, and not rash, hasty, and illy considered.

Again, in harmony with the Lord's statement of the responsibility incurred by our words, it is also written, "He that keepeth his mouth, keepeth his life: but he that openeth wide his lips shall have destruction." (Prov. 13:3.) What a fearful responsibility attaches to the tongue that wags in an evil or even in a flippant way, which is also dishonoring to God! And how necessary is the injunction of the Apostle Peter, "-Be sober and watch unto prayer!" - 1 Pet. 4:7; 1:13; 5:8.

The Psalmist puts this prayer into the lips of all who feel this responsibility: "Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth: keep a guard at the door of my lips. Permit not my heart to incline after any evil thing." "Let the words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart be acceptable in Thy sight, O Lord, my strength and my Redeemer." "My lips shall utter praise when Thou hast taught

me Thy statutes. My tongue shall speak of Thy Word; for all Thy commandments are righteousness. Let Thy hand help me; for I have chosen Thy precepts. I have longed for Thy salvation [from all sin, and for the perfection and beauty of holiness], O Lord; and Thy law is my delight." Psa. 141:3, 4; 19:14; 119:171-174.

That, as imperfect beings, we may always be perfect in word and deed is not possible. Despite our best endeavors we will sometimes err in word as well as in deed, yet the perfect mastery of our words and ways is the thing to be sought by vigilant and faithful effort. But, nevertheless, for every idle word we must give an account in this our day of judgment. If, in the daily scrutiny of our ways, which is the duty of every Christian, we discover that in any particular our words have been dishonoring to the Lord, we should remember that "if any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous" (1 John 2:1); and in the name of our Advocate we may approach the throne of grace, explain to our heavenly Father our realization of the error, our deep regret at our failure to honor His name and His cause by a holy walk and conversation, and humbly request that the sin be not laid to our charge but that it may be blotted out through His gracious provision for our cleansing through Christ, humbly claiming that in His precious blood is all our hope and trust.

Thus we should render up our account for every idle word; and by our words of repentance, supplemented by the merits of Christ applied by faith, shall we be acquitted. Otherwise, the idle words, dishonoring to the Lord, will stand against us and condemn us, and we will be obliged to suffer the consequences. The first consequence will be self injury, for every evil thought or word indulged hardens the character and inclines it the more toward unrighteousness. The second consequence is a bad example to others and the stirring up of evil in them. "A soft answer turneth away wrath, but grievous words stir up anger." (Prov. 15:1.) Thus, as the result of unwise or unkind words, we may stir up about us difficulties which will become the agents of retributive justice to teach us the lesson of self-control and consideration for the feelings and opinions of others. It is often the case that the Lord (or the devil) is blamed for sending trials which are simply the natural results of our own mistakes. And those who fail to locate the root of the trouble (**in themselves**) pray in vain for the Lord to remove miraculously what they themselves could obviate by obedience to the Word and vigorous self-discipline. "If we would judge [and correct] ourselves, we should not be judged; but when we are judged we are chastened of the Lord [largely by the experiences through which our own faults put us], that we should not be condemned with the world." (1 Cor. 11:31, 32.) But even should it be admitted that the difficulties are not directly caused by God, or the devil ("every man is tempted [tried] when he is drawn away of his own lusts [desires] and enticed"), the natural tendency is to blame the matter on some one else, and to think that our loss of patience, our hasty word or act, was the fault of another. How many deceive and encourage themselves with the thought: "If everybody else had as reasonable and as generous a nature as I have, our family or church gathering or community would be a veritable heaven upon earth!" Beloved, let us examine ourselves, let us be very humble, lest the very words of self-congratulation and self-satisfaction

which we consider in -our hearts (if we do not utter them aloud) bring our condemnation. "If ye love them which love you, what thank have ye? for sinners also love those that love them. And if ye do good to them which do good to you, what thank have ye [what merit is there in it]?" (Luke 6:33-38.) It is only when we "endure grief, suffering wrongfully," that our suffering is acceptable to God as a sacrifice of sweet incense. "What glory is it if, **when ye be buffeted for your faults**, ye take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God; for even hereunto were ye called." (1 Pet. 2:19-21.) Beloved, let us see to it that our sufferings are for righteousness' sake only, and let us not charge God or our neighbors for tribulations resulting from the indulgence of our inherited or cultivated faults.

"In many things we are all faulty. If any one does not err in word, he is a perfect man, able to control the whole body." (James 3:2.) But such a man does not exist. We all need and must continually plead the -merit, of our Redeemer and Advocate, while we strive daily to bring every thought into captivity to the will of Christ, and to perfect holiness in the fear (reverence) of the Lord.

In view of this fact, which we trust all of the Lord's people will endeavor more and more fully to realize, viz., that we now stand before the bar of judgment, we inquire, in the words of Peter, "What manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness?" Godlikeness certainly cannot include any harmful gossip, any unclean or unholy conversation, any disloyal or rebellious words. Let such things be put far away from all who name the name of Christ in sincerity and truth. And let us remember daily to settle our accounts with the Lord, to make sure that no record of idle words, unrepented of, and consequently unforgiven, stands against us. "Let your conversation be as becometh the Gospel of Christ." "Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever thing= are honest, Whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things." Thus out of the good treasure of the heart we shall be able to speak the words of truth and soberness, to honor our Lord by a godly walk and conversation, to sub= due the evil tendencies of our fallen nature, and to have our conversation "honest among the Gentiles that, whereas they speak against you as evil-doers, they may, by your good works which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation." - Phil. 1:27; 4:8; 1 Pet. 2:12.

If daily we render up our accounts to God and seek His grace -for greater overcoming power with each succeeding day, we shall be acquitted it judgment and stand approved before God through Christ, having the testimony of His Holy Spirit with our spirit that we are pleasing and acceptable **to Him. - Reprints, Feb. 15, 1896, page R1937.**

Among Those Mentioned

"Love vaunteth not itself." - 1 Cor. 13:4.

MANY PEOPLE go through life without "making the first page." And that is often to their credit. Unhappily, the conspicuous place in the headlines is not always given for merit. Too frequently, it is awarded those whose deeds are shameful. And yet that fact is not wholly without its consoling implications. It is the departure from the normal course of life which makes news and wins publicity; and the reason great prominence is given to acts which shock and horrify (or, to use the language of the President, "shock and anger") is precisely that these are the unusual happenings.

For every cruelty and betrayal which figures in display type, there are a thousand acts of kindness and fidelity we never hear about. Smiles are less dramatic than tears. We may pass a hundred smiling children on the street, and beyond the fact that their cheerful faces will warm our hearts and gladden the day, our attention will not be held by them. But a crying child will halt us, will gather about him a crowd of curious sympathizers. We should not allow the more compelling interest of crime and scandal and pain and grief to make us think that these things are typical of life.

There are, of course, deeds of love and fidelity and unselfish heroism which rise into the high light of thrilling drama, and some of these find their way to the first page and hearten us all with their proof of human worth; but the number that attains this advertisement is far less than the number of which we never learn, unless, by chance of some sort, we happen on them. This is because, as St. Paul tells us: "Love is not boastful. It does not put on airs. It is not rude. It does not insist on its rights. It does not become [improperly] angry." Love goes quietly and patiently about its work. But hatred and malice and envy and passion are strident, bold, violent. They violate the amenities; they break the rules of social relationship; they transgress the laws. The man who is living according to the principle of love is not sought by the police; but the policeman is on the trail of the evil-doer, and wherever the policeman goes, there goes the reporter.

Now while it is comforting to bear all this in mind, it is no less an occasion for regret that we do not hear more about the people who are doing the little kind things and brave things. We have not made enough of their importance, for they are, in truth, the saving element in the world's life. They should at least be among those mentioned when we are recounting the splendid deeds and great names which honor mankind. One of the beautiful things about St. Paul, who in such self-effacing fashion lived the life of love, is the fact that he found occasion, often to mention those men and women of his acquaintance concerning whom he could speak some words of praise.

For more than a thousand years these names have lived, and millions of persons have read them. They are among the immortally commemorated, not for any great, news-making achievements but for quiet, kindly, faithful service, which too frequently goes unrecognized. It is perhaps encouraging for some of us who are . inconspicuous to know that according to that standard of values by which St. Paul measured life-the standard he learned from Jesus-these people are "among those mentioned."

There is, for example, Ampliatius. We know little about him except that he lived in Rome, and, probably, was a Roman by race., But St. Paul calls him "my dear Christian friend." That phrase suggests much. This was a man who had impressed himself upon the great Apostle by his

sympathy, his consideration, his , kindness. His name is on the roll of honor for no outstanding deed but for a friendly attitude toward a man who was in sore need of friends at times. And there are "Tryphena and Tryphosa," manifestly sisters, possibly twin sisters. Paul mentions them because they were "hard workers for the Lord's cause." Not brilliant workers, but hard workers. There are many "Tryphenas and Tryphosas" in the world today. They are keeping our ecclesias going, doing the drudgery of religious service, and they deserve a place among those mentioned. And there was the mother of Rufus. Her name is not given. St. Paul calls her son an "eminent Christian," but he says of the mother, "She has been a mother to me." And all the mothering hearts, whether they have -eminent sons by whom they may be identified, deserve a place on the roll. Gaius is more than once referred to. St. Paul names him as his host, and the "host of the whole church." Gaius was a hospitable man. His door was open. "There was welcome in his house for any follower of the Master. Thus he wins, unsought, his honorable mention.

In Philippi lived Euodias and Syntyche. They were a human pair, sisters in faith if not by blood. But they did not always pull together. St. Paul writes: "I appeal to Euodias and I appeal to Syntyche to agree together, as Christians; and I beg you, my true comrade, to help them, for they toiled at my side in spreading the good news." Faithful workers, both of them, zealous in spreading the good news, and this fact overshadows the minor discord which interfered with their teamwork. St. Paul's "true comrade" could do a bit of quiet, worth while service by helping them to agree as Christians. There are plenty of chances today to qualify as "true comrades" of the great Apostle by a like service.

There are not many Pauls, but there are multitudes of such people as St. Paul delighted to mention in his letters. They may never make the first page, but they are doing something better, vastly better -- they are making life endurable for the rest of, us; they are weaving beauty and love and hope and joy into the fabric of our days; they are the players of the chamber music, which, when we are weary of the flaunting flags and the blare of the brass band on the crowded streets, steals into our souls with its softer harmonies. They are help and comfort and peace. They live by the unseen realities, and in their presence the faith in God and goodness strengthens. - 1 Cor. 13:4, 5 Rom. 16:8, 12, 13, 23; Phil. 4:2.