

# THE HERALD OF CHRIST'S KINGDOM

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## The Fight for Liberty

*"Fight the good fight of faith." - 1 Tim. 6:12.*

ALL THE liberty there is in the world today has been paid for; none of it has been attained without sacrificers. Why? Because selfishness is so entrenched in the race that those who possess power, authority, privilege, opportunity, would hold these for themselves to the disadvantage of others, to the enslavement of others, were not the rights and liberties fought for. Looking back over the history of nations, without approving of wars, every reasoning mind can see, nevertheless, that only through wars have liberties come to the race. The mistake that is being made today is the supposition that humanity would ever be able to attain the condition of absolute equality and unselfishness through laws or wars or any other means within the power of Adam's race.

The Scriptures point out to us that there is a limit beyond which we must not expect selfish humanity to make progress-that any progress beyond that limit must come from on high, through the establishment of the Kingdom of God's dear Son that while wealth and influence and talents will yield to the pressure of the masses for their own protection and aggrandizement, they will not yield everything, but would permit the entire social structure to dissolve rather than to submit to a general equalization, as is the aim of Socialism. Hence Socialism, while not intending anarchy, will produce anarchy; while striving for greater liberty and universality of blessings of earth it will effect a wreck of all these. Thanks be to God that his program is that on this wreck of present institutions he will establish the true reign of liberty on the plane of love, under the guidance of the Master and his joint-heirs.

## THE CHRISTIAN'S FIGHT

If the world's liberty has required fighting for, much more may we expect a battle for those who take the still higher ground of the Bible, and who strive for the "liberty wherewith Christ makes us free." (Gal. 5:1.) For although this very Scripture declares that Christ gives this freedom, the Word shows us that he gives it only to those who desire it and who will fight for it. Their battle is not to be with carnal weapons which the law of love forbids, yet their warfare is to be mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds of error. Against what, then, do they battle? We answer that their chief fight is against the fallen tendencies of their own beings. They find that,

through the long centuries of the fall, sin has become inbred and entrenched in their flesh to such a degree that it necessitates a warfare in the new mind. They get the new mind or disposition through hearkening to the Word of the Lord, which while speaking peace and forgiveness of sins through faith in Christ, invites to a newness of nature and a joint-heirship with Christ through a full consecration of all to the divine service-to the service of righteousness and truth. The making of the consecration on the part of the believer was his entering upon the career of a good soldier of the Lord Jesus. It was his engagement to battle against sin and selfishness everywhere, according to the rules laid down by the chief Captain.

To the surprise of every soldier he finds that some of his greatest battles are within. True he finds the world an opponent to his full devotion of time and talent and influence to the service of the Truth. The world is not prepared for such an extreme, which more or less reproves it of sin and selfishness: the world, therefore, sneers and cries "hypocrite," "saint," etc., and seeks to turn aside the consecrated. To be a good soldier he must be prepared for this and have on the sandals of preparation afforded by the Gospel, else the difficulties strewn in his path by worldly opposition would soon make him so footsore that he would be disposed to turn back notwithstanding the term of his enlistment - "even unto death." The Adversary also is a foe who must be reckoned with, and whose subtle attacks may be encountered in various ways. The Christian soldier has the assurance of his Captain that all the arts of the Adversary are known to him, and that all his interests shall be guarded so long as he is loyal to his Captain and faithful to his consecration and enlistment.

But, as we have said, the chiefest of all the Christian soldier's opponents is the human foe -the weaknesses and cravings and demands and subtle persecutions, etc., of the fallen conditions of his own' mind and body. To his surprise he finds himself a slave to his own weaknesses, and that he must battle daily, hourly almost, for victory, in order to attain fully the liberty wherewith Christ makes free indeed. From this standpoint all battles against our own fleshly weaknesses, our own selfish instincts and propensities, are battles for liberty, battles for right, battles on the Lord's side. Our great Captain is not so much wishing us to fight his battles as wishing us to fight the good fight of faith in ourselves; and in this matter he is ready to assist us, and without him we can do nothing. True, our battles extend beyond ourselves sometimes when, either amongst the Lord's brethren, the Church, we need to battle for the Truth, the right, or in our contact with the world we may sometimes find hostilities necessary.

### **"IF YE BITE AND DEVOUR"**

Amongst the Lord's people, even in the Apostles' day, there was a tendency at times to fight each other rather than to fight the Devil and the spirit of the world and the weaknesses within. The organs of combativeness and destructiveness, which would serve a Christian soldier in good stead if directed against his own weaknesses and blemishes, are sadly out of place when, ignoring his own weaknesses, he merely becomes contentious with the brethren-often over nothing, or over questions whose importance he exaggerates, because of his contentious spirit. Such should remember the Scriptural statement that greater is he that ruleth his own spirit than he that taketh a city (Prov. 16:32.) The Apostle refers to that misdirection of Christian energy which bites and devours one another, and tends to the destruction of all that is spiritual amongst the Lord's people. Not that the Apostle favored slackness as respects the important principles of the divine revelation, for he himself urged that we contend earnestly for the faith once delivered, to the saints. (Jude 3.) But this earnest contending is not to be done in a biting and devouring manner-it is to be with patience and longsuffering, brotherly kindness, love.

The Lord's people have enlisted as New Creatures, Spirit begotten, to walk (to live) not after the flesh but after the spirit, and must continually recognize this fact, and keep watch that they are walking in line with the spirit of truth, and must know that in so doing they will not be fulfilling the desires of their fallen flesh. The Apostle states this as a positive rule, without exception, that the flesh, the natural inclinations, tendencies, lusts or desires, are contrary to the spirit, and likewise the spirit desires are contrary to the flesh. These two desires being opposed one to the other we cannot gratify both, and whichever is gratified it will be so at the expense of the other. If we ever want to attain to the true liberty wherewith Christ makes us free we should know that it can be only by a persistent warfare of the new mind against every sinful tendency and inclination of the old nature. It is not the new will warring against the old, for the old will we have reckoned dead. It is the new will warring against the flesh, which the old will used to control, and which flesh still has its evil tendencies.

The new will, therefore, needs all the sustaining strength and assistance which it can secure. Many of these are provided for it as food, nourishment, strength, through the Word of God, whose exceeding great and precious promises are given in order that the new will may be strong in the Lord and in the power of his might through faith, and conquer in all of its battles with the flesh.

The Apostle's declaration, "Ye cannot do the things which ye would," is in full accord with all our experiences. We can sometimes do as we would in some things, we can gain the victory over the flesh; but there are certain weaknesses, failings, blemishes in our flesh which are so powerful that the new mind never gets as complete a mastery over them as it desires. Nevertheless in all the battles being waged the new mind grows stronger and stronger while the flesh grows weaker and weaker. The Scriptural proposition, however, is that we must expect to have more or less of these battles until our dying moments. Thank God that will be the end of the strife, for in the resurrection we are promised new bodies, perfect, complete, in which the new mind will be able to exercise itself without conflict. That is the rest which remains for the people of God, and associated with it will be various other blessings, honors, dignities and responsibilities which the Lord has promised.

### **"AGAINST SUCH THERE IS NO LAW"**

The works of the flesh the Apostle enumerates, and they are all violations of the law of love under which the New Creatures in Christ are being examined; they all come under the head of selfishness and imply injury to our fellow-creatures. He enumerates these: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, malice, wrath, strife, divisions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like. The Apostle points out that anyone begotten of the spirit who walks, that is who lives, along the lines of these works of the flesh need have no hope of any share in the Kingdom of Heaven. He does not say that all such would share in the Second Death, but we know of a surety how such conduct persisted in would ultimately result in the Second Death. It is sufficient for our purpose, however, to leave the matter where the Apostle does, and to note that there is no prospect for a share in the Kingdom for any who do these works of the flesh and of the devil.

It is unfortunate for some that they seem unable to realize the scope of this testimony; they seem to think of adultery, drunkenness, and murder as being the crimes that would debar from a share in the Kingdom. They overlook the fact that the Lord defined adultery to be a desire to do evil where only the opportunity is lacking; that he defined murder as represented in that condition of heart which hates a brother. They overlook the statement of the Apostle in this very list that the

spirit of variance, the spirit of ambition and jealousy, the spirit of envy and division, are spirits of the flesh and in opposition to the New Creature

led by the holy spirit. O, if all of the Lord's people could have in mind these searching tests and apply them to their own lives, what a profit would result, what a blessing, what a fleeing from these weaknesses of the old nature, what a fighting against them for the liberty of the New Creature and its final attainment to glory, honor, and immortality with their Lord in the Kingdom!

- *Reprints*, pages R3857-9.

## Calamities -- Why Permitted?

*"I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the Lord do all these things." - Isaiah 45 :7.*

*Since the publication of the May-June issue of the "Herald," our country has experienced a number of hurricanes, tornadoes, and floods, with disastrous results, and reports have reached us that people in other countries have undergone similar calamities, including earthquakes. The severity and extent of these catastrophes brought forcibly back to mind an article written by Brother Russell in the early days of his ministry. Believing the lessons he drew at that time are peculiarly applicable to today's events, we have condensed the following paragraphs from his pen, written in February 1884 -- Editorial Committee.*

ACCOUNTS of the widespread and destructive floods of these past months, with their accompanying distress, have ere this reached you through the daily press. Such like events as floods, fires, earthquakes, tornadoes, pestilences, cyclones, etc., have always elicited much comment both from press and pulpit regarding their cause.

The most commonly attributed cause is that God has sent the calamity as a special punishment for supposed greater wickedness of the people of the suffering districts, and as *a warning to others*. Another and growing view is that it just *happened so* from *natural* causes; and that, if there is a God, he either cannot help such things, or does not care to do so. For our part, we cannot endorse either of these views.

The reasons which lead people in general to suppose these calamities to be "special judgments" are founded, we believe, mainly on the dealings of God with Israel, upon whom he sent calamities, captivities, etc., as national punishments for national sins. But let us remember that Israel was a peculiar people, chosen of God for a special purpose, and, like the saints of the Gospel Age, dealt with in a peculiar manner, different from the world. To them he said, "You only have I known of all the families of the earth." (Amos 3:2.) Israel was the only nation which Jehovah directly governed; therefore he chastised their sins, and made his promises to them, while other nations were left under the dominion of Satan, the prince of this world, until he whose right it is, shall have come and established the Kingdom of God under the whole heavens.

While remembering that God has used calamities, such as the Deluge and the destruction of Sodom, as punishments and examples of an overthrow of the ungodly, it should not be forgotten that those were examples of those who should afterward live ungodly. And these *examples* are not examples of God's dealings in the present time, but are examples of the punishment or destruction awaiting the finally incorrigible during or at the close of the Millennial judgment period, or day. That Peter so applies those calamities as examples of the *future*, see 2 Peter 2:4-9.

In Jesus' day some had the same impression, that great, disasters indicated God's special displeasure but Jesus corrected them, saying "Suppose ye that these Galileans were sinners above all the Galileans because they suffered such things? Or those eighteen upon whom the tower of Siloam fell, and slew them, think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem? I tell you, Nay; but except ye repent ye shall all likewise PERISH."

These words of Jesus contain the key to what we believe is the correct view of this subject in the last word, *perish*. The fact is that the *great calamity* DEATH, of which pestilences, earthquakes, floods, etc., are only *incidentals*, has passed upon ALL MEN, because all are sinners. (Rom. 5:12.) We have become so accustomed to *death*, the great calamity which is rapidly swallowing up the whole race, that it, the greatest of all losses, and the cause of all others, is looked upon as a

proper and natural matter. If, however, things were properly considered, *death* as a whole would be seen as the great calamity, and the floods, etc., which *only hasten* it to a few, would be of comparatively little importance.

As *death*, the great calamity and curse, was caused by sin, so all these calamities spring from the same cause, and are under the control of him that has the power of death, that is, the devil (Heb. 2:14), whose dominion and power, thank God, is soon to be taken away and given to the Prince of Peace. As death is the result of sin, so are pestilences, tornadoes, etc.

By one man's disobedience, *death* with its numerous channels of sickness and disaster passed upon all men, and those who meet it in one way avoid it in others; but all meet it in some form.

This will be apparent when we remember that when Adam became a sinner, not only did the curse of *death* fall upon him, but the entire dominion of his kingdom-the earth -suffered, and is in a cursed condition. (Gen. 3:17.) For a time Satan is permitted to usurp the dominion of earth, and while seemingly working out his own plans, he at the same time acts as the agent of justice, to execute the penalty of sin. This being true, he is the one who by permission exercises the destructive power upon the earth; and Jehovah does not interfere because mankind has justly come under the curse of a violated law, death; and because man is gaining a valuable lesson under the present dominion of evil and death, which will benefit him when the *curse is* lifted not only legally, but *actually*, by the Redeemer who for *this* cause was manifested "that he might destroy DEATH [the great catastrophe in all its forms] and him that hath the power of death, [and who brings to pass the various calamities] that is, the devil."

As soon as the new Prince, Immanuel, takes possession of the Kingdom, a great change will begin, both in the world of nature and of mankind. The curse being canceled will be removed, and the blessings purchased by the "precious blood of Christ" will be bestowed. So great will be the change under the new administration, that in symbol it is called a new heavens (new spiritual ruling power). Behold he will make all things new; he will *re-new* or restore all things to harmony with God, and to a condition which from God's standpoint, is "very good."

Hence we regard those disasters, not as special punishments, but as parts of the general curse, results of sin; but all working out in harmony with God's design an ultimate good to those rightly *exercised* thereby. We have heretofore seen that the Prophet Job was made a type of mankind; that the disaster and trouble and losses which befell him illustrated the losses sustained by mankind, and that his restoration to favor and after-blessing, foreshadowed the "restitution of all things" to mankind. (Acts 3:19.) And we call to mind that the source of his trouble was Satan (Job 1:12), whom God in wisdom *permitted* to have power over him. As then the whirlwind, etc., was the agent of Satan, so we claim it is today. So, too, it was in Jesus' day. Jesus did not go about opposing the Father's will. If the Father had *caused* the death of Lazarus, would Jesus have opposed him by undoing his work? If Jehovah had caused the storm on the Sea of Galilee, which nearly overwhelmed the Lord and his disciples, would Jesus have been justified in stilling the tempest? But if the sickness and death and storms which Jesus counteracted were the work of Satan, the present "prince of the world," then all is clear, and we and all creation groan and travail and wait for the glorious reign of the new prince, whose relief is foreshadowed by the acts of his earthly ministry, praying, "Thy Kingdom come, thy will be done on earth." When the night of sin and suffering and weeping is over, and the Sun of Righteousness arises with healing in his wings for the various troubles of man and of earth, the mists of ignorance will be dispelled, and it will be seen that not Jehovah, but man's sin and his present prince, Satan, has been the direct cause of earth's woe and sorrow.

## Christ's Knowledge of Our Heart Sincerity

*"Thou knowest all things, Thou knowest that I love thee." - John 21:17.*

THE sweetest and most inspiring thought that a Christian can hold in his heart as he faces life's responsibilities is that God knows the sincerity of his heart devotions. To be able to look up into the face of God and confess amid all the fluctuating experiences of one's life, "Thou knowest that I love thee," is to know a refuge and a place of rest for every glad and every troubled hour in life. It is a precious thing to remember in hours of vigorous and prosperous spiritual life, that God knows the sincerity of our love for him; for do we not feel at such times a sense of utter inability to express the depth of love that abides in our hearts for him. But particularly precious is this assurance that he knoweth all things concerning our affection for him, when we have wretchedly failed to demonstrate the degree of love by some sad mistake in word or act. It is then that this refuge seems most wonderfully sweet. At times when we seem lifted up into some fresh vision of the greatness of God's love to us, and we try with our feeble words to express our joy and gratitude, how often we have found "this poor lispings, stammering tongue" just falling back on these words coined by such a heart long ago, "Thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee." But when we have fallen in some crisis hour, and failed to attain a victory we had so confidently expected to have to our credit, and after trying to express some self-justifications, and to make some apologies for our failure, being painfully humiliated because we stumbled so -- ah then, how our heart has fled to this refuge as its final source of comfort: "Thou knowest that I love thee."

It is the blessed inheritance of every loving Christian heart to claim this refuge, and to realize that in it he possesses this last and this greatest haven of love, this final court of appeal -- God's knowledge of the sincerity of our hearts. What a boon it is! As we attempt to live out our consecrated lives today, endeavoring to express our devotion to God, as best we can, most of us encounter plenty of that foretold opposition promised all faithful believers. How often we would be crushed under it if we did not remember that God knows all about us.

Many elements enter into the experiences of God's people in days like these. All about us we may see the fulfillments of prophecy pointing out these last days as a time of special trial for the saints of God. From all three quarters, the world, the flesh, and the devil, influences are emanating which might well discourage even the most valiant heart, and would do so if it did not find faith strengthened by the assurance that God knows, and loves, and cares. But among the peculiar and particularly severe testings of this present hour, there is a prevailing sentiment -- a skepticism or doubting of the personal sincerity of others. We live in a world in which distrust, and the spirit of competition is rife, and these very influences all around us, seemingly in the very air, are sure to "try all them that dwell on the face of the earth," including the professed people of God. The spirit in the world is today a spirit of alertness, ready at an instant to spring into life and ripen rapidly into suspicion. To be on guard against others becomes in time so fixed a habit that love which "thinketh no evil," and which "rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth," ceases to be manifested in circles where above all others it should abound. Under such circumstances what a refuge tired and afflicted hearts may find in the confidence that they can come into the presence of him who knows all things, and say to him, "Thou *knowest* that I love thee."

## OFTENTIMES MISREPRESENTING OURSELVES

It cannot be denied that we are sometimes our own worst enemy. By a decidedly wrong course persisted in we become a worse enemy to ourselves than any other could be. But it often happens that while earnestly desiring to bring all our ways into full accord with the will of God, our lives come far short of expressing "the beauties of true holiness," and we are conscious of the fact. At such times what consolation there is for the conscientious heart in the assurance that God knows how much we wanted to "live and speak and act aright," and how deeply we feel the sense of humiliating failure.

In the effort to live our lives in the midst of present conditions, to bear unmoved the unfavorable judgments, which in some measure perhaps we have brought upon ourselves, we meet the difficulty of trying to make our true self known to others. There are many difficulties encountered in having our motives properly interpreted. Motives we have examined as in the presence of God, may seem questionable in the eyes of others because they judge by outward appearances. And many times we know they would find motives better than they thought they would, if they only understood. There are many tangled threads in every life, inevitably so because all are imperfect. "Mending the patchwork combined" would describe the kind of showing most of us make, and keenly conscious of how unprofitable we are, and knowing that it is only through his abounding mercy that we are permitted to go on seeking to prove our love to him, how ready we are to ask of him,

"Dear Lord, take up my tangled threads,  
Where I have wrought in vain,  
That by the skill of thy dear hands  
Some beauty may remain.

"Take all the failures, each mistake  
Of our poor human ways,  
Then, Savior, for thine own dear sake,  
Make them show forth thy praise."

And so it happens that we as often misrepresent ourselves as others misrepresent us. Our own missteps, our own blemishes, help to make our lives an enigma to others. The realization of this fact may at times bring us a bitterness of spirit, or discouragement, because we have so wanted to live out in daily life the impress of the spirit's inworking of the character of Christ. The sting of this bitter disappointment is in the knowledge we have of ourselves, that we are discrediting the deeper self which, beneath these failures and seeming inconsistencies, is after all our true self. We know that when, through all the faults and deficiencies we have to confess, Christ's pointed question, "Lovest thou me more than these?" comes to us and seems to search our heart to its depths, there is that confidence within which answers back, "Thou knowest that I love thee."

How blessed to realize in such an hour that we still have left this last and greatest refuge of love, this assurance of his knowledge of our sincerity. Whatever our own poor faulty words and ways may seem to say to others, and whatever the verdict of others may be concerning us, and whatever our own memory may hold up before us of mistake and failure, we can still look up to Christ and say, "Thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee." And who that really appreciates this refuge for himself, can fail to be inspired with the determination to let such love mellow, purify, strengthen, and fill his heart to overflowing with a glad conformity to the wish and prayer of Jesus -- that we should love and sympathize with one another even as he has



continued to love and fully sympathize with us, loving us in spite of all our lamented imperfections.

### **LOVEST THOU ME MORE THAN THESE?**

The text we are considering here brings before our mind that memorable day when Jesus propounded his heart-searching question to Peter. Thrice had Peter denied his association with Jesus, and thrice he is asked to affirm his love for him. And we may be sure this record has not been preserved all these years just to tell us of the over-confidence and subsequent fall of this Apostle. It is all too often a portrait of our own self-assurance, our own claims to love him better, and of being more loyal to him than are others. It is therefore full of needed lessons and warnings; yes, and comforting encouragements also to any who make Peter's mistake and need the same very searching but loving question brought home to them, "Lovest thou me more than these?" Peter had confidently affirmed that though all should forsake Jesus, yet he would even die with him unafraid. By inference at least he was rating himself much more faithful to Jesus than any of his fellow disciples. But to Jesus how clear it was that Satan specially desired to sift Peter out of the ranks altogether, and this boastful superiority complex expressed so boldly in Peter's claim revealed how unaware he was of the dangers besetting him. How much he needed the warning, "Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall."

"So Simon Peter stood before his risen Lord; and thrice that awful inquisition tore its way, like a relentless searchlight, through the shadows and failures of his life: 'Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me?' What could he say? Could he appeal to his record, and offer it in evidence as a demonstration of his love? Ah! should he try to speak of this, the memory of his own failures would choke him, the stains of his record would silence him. For he has as his portion a full share of the bitter memories of an undisciplined character; immature professions of fidelity, neutralized over and over again by unbalanced words, by jealous, presumptuous, unspiritual deeds; and upon him is even now the fresh blight of that immeasurable error when, unmanned by excitement, his very life, as he stood in the high priest's palace, had seemed to break under him, as the ice breaks up in the spring freshet, and, heedless of consequences, lost to honor, he had repudiated his Master in the open presence of men.

"Yes, what could he say, as the searchlight of the Savior's inquisition ploughs its way through the shadows of his life: 'Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me?' Could he appeal to his companions to speak for him, and testify on his behalf? Had they not known all the weakness of the undisciplined past, the lapse from faith when called by Jesus to walk on the water of the sea of Galilee; the jealous contention over who should be the greatest; the presumptuous, unseemly rebuke spoken to Jesus just before the Last Supper; the drowsy failure in Gethsemane, when the one request of the agonizing Jesus went unheeded, and sleep destroyed the vigil of sympathy for which Christ longed? Had they not known the story of the last desertion-its desperate, threefold insistence, its cowardice, its profanity? How then could he ask them to testify, when so much in the open story of his life spoke against his love for Jesus?

"Yet, in the face of these memories of an undisciplined character which forbade the appeal to his record and the appeal to his friends, this man has still a refuge, for he is a lover of Christ. The Savior's question does not convict this man of insincerity, however it may convict him of inconsistency and pierce him with penitence. 'Lovest thou me?' The words, in themselves so gentle, are keen as a surgeon's knife, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, laying bare the intents and thoughts of the heart; but, like the surgeon's knife upon the living subject, the pain they cause shows there is life and not death. 'Lovest thou me?' It is an appeal, not to his record, but to himself; not to his witnesses, but to himself; and the

appeal is answered in the depths of the man's self-consciousness. He cannot deny his record; there it stands, fraught with inconsistencies, failures, weaknesses. He cannot, it may be, overcome the prejudice in the minds of others which these inconsistencies, failures, weaknesses may have excited against him; but in those depths of self-consciousness, where he knows himself as no fellow-man can know him, there is that which meets the question of Jesus, 'Lovest thou me?' with an unflinching 'Yes.'

"But how shall he substantiate and prove that love? He cannot prove it from his record, blemished and discolored with many a failure; he cannot prove it from the vouchers of his friends, for they know too well how again and again he has been weighed in the balance of trial and found wanting. He cannot prove it by plaintive attempts to apologize for or to minimize past failures. An intuition tells him that were to weaken, not to strengthen his case. But, on the other hand, he cannot deny himself; he cannot discredit his own self-consciousness. In his self-consciousness he knows that he loves Christ. And to prove that love he has still one refuge, one appeal left -- the appeal to him before whom he now stands face to face, and from whom has come the question, 'Lovest thou me more than these?' So his love leaps to its heroic ultimatum, and discarding arguments, apologies, and refuges of words, appeals to him 'to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid'; 'Thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee.' "

### **THY GENTLENESS HATH MADE ME GREAT**

How much would have been lost to us if this experience of Peter had never been written. If we are willing to just substitute our own name for that of Peter in this story of vaunted loyalty and regrettable breach of faith, we will surely feel a greatly increased sense of gratitude to God for the gentleness with which he has disciplined us, and feel also a greater sympathy for others who may stumble in the way. Remembering the look that brought Peter to a realization of his failure, and that evidently saved him from Satan's clutch, and remembering that such tenderness on the part of Jesus has been our salvation in times of terrible deflections, surely we will find it in our hearts to emulate him in our attitude toward fellow runners in the race, "considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted."

Each heart knows its own bitterness. Hidden away from the sight of others there are the fiercest struggles being waged in many a life. Beneath a surface of what may indeed appear the most circumspect conduct there may be for aught we know, the deepest realization that "in my flesh dwelleth no perfect thing." The life in which love for Christ is a sentiment so deep it cannot explain itself in words, is the life that most clearly recognizes how it has tried the patience of Christ by the shortcomings written into every day's record. When he should have found strength, there has often been a new revelation of weakness, and denial when he should have had a brave and loving evidence of fidelity. But over all the long years of such incompleteness, Jesus has gone on spreading the covering of his forgiving love. Through the marvel of his forgiveness of our sins, through his patience, through the sorrow we ought to see oftentimes on his face as he turns and looks upon us, when in the moment of weakness we have denied him, he knits our affections closer to himself. And, though we still are failing and faltering, he makes us conscious of a deepening love for him that answers to his love for us, and finding this love for him as the deepest and truest part of our nature, he accepts as profoundly true our heartfelt affirmation, "Thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee."

## **"HIS LOVING KINDNESS O HOW GREAT! "**

Who can fail to marvel over the greatness of God's loving-kindness over years of stumbling and failures, such as every humbled heart freely confesses. And meditating on that loving tenderness as experienced by us, is surely calculated to make us loving and tender-hearted in our attitude toward all God's children. In fact, the real test of our appreciation of the mercy we have had extended toward us, lies in our spontaneous exercise of this virtue where its need is greatest. To whomsoever much has been forgiven, the same loveth much, is a beautiful truth. It means that the one who is most conscious of being in special need of forgiveness, will never fail to let the Lord know his depth of gratitude; and neither will the life fail to reveal in loving-kindness to others the touch of divine compassion. Deeds are much more expressive than words. If we rejoice in the compassion, the patience, the understanding love of Jesus as he helps us along so that our faith fail not when Satan well-nigh claims us, it is well that we tell him that he knows how fervently we love him. But there is still another answer he will look for, and an answer that must be just as readily given him. He is still saying to us, "Go thou and do likewise." "I have given you an example to follow; I want you to love others as I have loved you, to forgive as I have forgiven your imperfections, and to patiently bear with one another as I have borne patiently with you."

And how can we best do this? Perhaps in no better way than to just remember that the same warfare, the same sense of defeat, the same inward joy in having a refuge in the heart of Jesus' love, stirs within our brother's breast, and without which he would sink down into utter discouragement and despair. Let us believe that he too is trying faithfully to live at his very best, and perhaps is grieved deeply over the fact that successes and failures alternate so swiftly in his warfare. He too may be appearing at his worst, and be going out to weep bitterly over another inexcusable blunder, when he had wanted so much to live and speak and act aright. He too may be realizing that somehow his life and movements seem often stumbling against the ideas and ways of others, and he would give much to have it ordered otherwise. Can we fail to rejoice with such an one, when, with an abiding confidence in God's knowledge of his sincerity, he turns his face upward to One who never, never misunderstands or judges unjustly, and confesses to him: "Thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee."

Ah yes! Jesus knows the glorious ideals we fain would attain. He accepts the heavenward prayers which our wearied spirits breathe out to him under the pressure of daily trials such as are common to all his saints. He knows us not only as we are, but as we mean to be. And so to ourselves, and no less to our brother, there comes such a volume of comfort in the assurance we both have of God's knowledge of our sincerity. Precious knowledge! for how could any of us entertain any degree of assurance of being numbered among the Elect Bride of Christ, if our hearts were not fully known and lovingly interpreted by him who weighs our pure sincerity over against the frailties we lament? Let us then excel in reflecting the love of God as we journey on together, my brother and I, until we enter the happy abode awaiting those whose sincerity God has known to mean perfect love for him, and love for their neighbor as for themselves. Let us then remember --

"They are such dear, familiar feet that go  
Along the path with ours -- feet fast or slow  
And trying to keep pace -- if they mistake,  
Or tread upon some flower that we would take  
Upon our breast, or bruise some reed  
Or crush poor Hope until it bleed, We may be mute,  
Not turning quickly to impute  
Grave fault; for they and we  
Have such a little way to go -- can be  
Together such a little while along the way --  
We will be patient while we may."

- J. J. Blackburn.

## Discipline

*"Thou shalt consider in thine heart, that, as a man chasteneth his son, so the Lord thy God chasteneth thee." - Deut. 8:5.*

IN THE words of *one* observer "We are living in an undisciplined age. The old disciplines are breaking down, and *the* foundations of *society are* therefore crumbling. The discipline of the home seems to be vanishing in the new psychology which teaches 'parents, obey your children.' The discipline of the schoolroom is becoming unpopular according to the so-called Progressive Education, lest the personality of the child be thwarted by the imposition of a will higher than his own.

"Above all, the disciplines of divine grace are derided as legalism, or are entirely unknown to a generation that is largely illiterate as to the Scriptures.

"We need *the* rugged strength of Christian character that can come only from discipline, the discipline of spirit, of mind, of body, and of society. Otherwise, the home will lose its heart as well as its hearth, the schoolroom its strength and the textbooks their exactness, the Scriptures their sanction."

The thought of Christian discipline runs counter to the tendency of the fallen nature, and is therefore generally unpopular. Discipline, as such, is variously employed by all who hope that by its use they may the more quickly attain to a desired goal in such fields as scholastics, athletics, science, etc. In all of these fields we may find individuals who deprive themselves of many luxuries and comforts of life in order to complete a course of study that will fit them for their life's work, and a fair opportunity of attaining eminence in their particular field. The scholar will burn "midnight oil" in pursuit of knowledge. The athlete will submit to the most rigorous training whilst denying himself the pleasure of indulging his appetites. The scientist loses all consciousness of time and awareness of social responsibilities in pursuit of his laboratory experiments. In each case their interest or goal takes precedence over every other consideration. Would that every professing Christian would apply the same energy and zeal, the same oneness of purpose in living the Christ-life. The way would then not seem so hard or rough, nor the course so long as it appears to those who enter it half-heartedly and travel it with faltering steps.

### EXPERIENCES THAT DISCIPLINE

What experiences in life serve as disciplinary in our Christian walk! Our first step in response to the call involves a degree of discipline that is at once apparent, and suggested by the words of Jesus: "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me." Discipleship means discipline; the two words have a common root. The disciple is that one who has been taught or trained by the Master, having heeded his call, "Come unto me." Discipleship requires the discipline of conversion. Recognizing our lost estate because of rebellion against God, we come in repentance to our Lord Jesus, assenting with our hearts to the facts that "all we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way" (Isa. 53:6); that "all have sinned and come short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23); that "the Scripture hath concluded all under sin" (Gal. 3:22); and that we "were by nature the children of wrath, even as others " strangers from the covenants of promise; having no hope, and without God in the world." (Eph. 2:3, 12.) Such an admission requires a measure of discipline, for it is difficult for the natural heart

to humble itself to admit of its sin and shame, and the need for the provision made for us in Christ Jesus.

Discipline comes also in the consideration of the cost of discipleship. "He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me-, and he that loveth son or daughter more than me, is not worthy of me." (Matt. 10:37.) This is further exemplified in Luke 14:26, where the Master says, "If any man come after me and hate not his father and mother, wife and children, and brethren and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple." This is strong language. What can be the meaning of it? We know that love is the very essence of the character of our God and of our Lord Jesus whom we are endeavoring to follow. How then can we interpret such instruction in connection with discipleship? Does it not mean that we are to make our Lord Jesus supreme, permanent, and preeminent in our heart, so that no person, no thing, shares that place in our life? No person, no possession, nor life itself is too great to surrender for his sake.

This is doubtless the reason why Jesus advised each one considering discipleship to sit down first and count the cost. (Luke 14:28.) This denial of all, including ourselves, is the greatest of all disciplines. There are those who are dearer to us than life itself, but they should not be dearer than the Savior. For him and his cause we have died to these and to every other earthly creature or pleasure. It is "Jesus only!" And the step should not be taken lightly or thoughtlessly, as is illustrated in Luke 14:28-33.

Discipleship also requires the discipline of cross-bearing, one of the three things considered a daily necessity: our daily bread, our daily work, our daily cross. "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me." (Luke 9:23.) "And whosoever doth not bear his cross and come after me, cannot be my disciple." (Luke 14:27.) This cross is not that which our Savior bore to Calvary. We are, however, privileged to join with him insofar as self-denial is concerned, as seen in his ministry from Jordan to Calvary. It was the Son's chief delight to do the Father's will, and should it not therefore be ours also? The attainment of this standard will mean self-denial in the deepest sense of the word.

In Hebrews 12 the question of discipline comes up for consideration. Here the Apostle advises all to consider the great cloud of witnesses surrounding us, and to lay aside every encumbrance and the close girding sin, to run with patience the course marked out for us, looking not at self, but away from self to the Leader or Perfecter of our faith. His great motive was the *joy* that was set before him, enabling him to endure the cross and to disregard the shame. His chief delight was the doing of the Father's will. As he expressed it: "My meat and my drink is to do the will of him that sent me." I delight to do thy will, O my God; yea, thy law is within my heart. "

The Apostle urges us to consider Him attentively, and to note the opposition that he endured from his own people in order that we may not be wearied, nor discouraged, when brought face to face with the same difficulties, pointing out at the same time that we have not yet resisted unto blood striving against sin.

We are then reminded of an Old Testament Scripture which carries an obvious truth: "My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord; neither be weary of his correction For whom the Lord loveth he correcteth, even as a father the son in whom he delighteth. " (Prov. 3 11, 12.) And "Thou shalt also consider in thine heart, that, as a man chasteneth his son, so the Lord chasteneth thee." - Deut. 8:5.

The Diaglott rendering of this Old Testament Scripture, as quoted in Hebrews 12:5, 6, uses the word discipline as follows: "My son, slight not the discipline of the Lord, neither be discouraged

when reproved by him; for whom the Lord loves, he disciplines, and he scourges every son whom he receives. If you endure discipline, God deals with you as with sons. For is there any son whom a father does not discipline? "

### **DISCIPLINE A SIGN OF THE FATHER'S LOVE**

These Scriptures are suggestive of a close and remarkable relationship which exists between the believer and his God and Heavenly Father, pointing out the fact that discipline is based on love. This makes it more educational than punitive. In other words, it is for our Christian development and not merely for punishment. If there is no discipline in the Christian life, then we may have reason to feel concerned about our being true sons. "But if you are without discipline, of which all have become partakers, then are ye spurious and not sons." All of us have been subject to parental discipline in our early years, some of which, administered with the aid of "the rod," doubtless left a lasting impression, and very likely caused us to hold the parent in high regard, since we doubtless knew that the discipline was deserved, although it may not have been administered in the proper spirit. How much more satisfactory, then, to submit ourselves to the Father of spirits and live. Our earthly parents disciplined us in the way that seemed right to them, but the Heavenly Father disciplines for our advantage, in order that we may partake of his holiness. No discipline as it relates to the present seems to be joyous, but rather grievous, "yet afterwards it returns the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it."

### **LESSONS FROM THE DISCIPLINING OF MOSES**

We may gain some helpful lessons on this subject by considering the experiences of Moses and the children of Israel in their deliverance from Egypt, and in their wilderness wanderings. The story of Moses reveals divine oversight and protection in the preparation of one destined to play a most important role in the affairs of Israel. Educated in the palace of Pharaoh in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, Moses came to a time of life when it became necessary to make a most important decision, and "He chose to suffer the reproaches of his own people rather than enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season." Did this require discipline? It is obvious that for the advantage of the flesh, the thing for Moses to have done would have been to remain where he was and perhaps one day be a Pharaoh himself, and then by reason of his high position and mighty authority be able to emancipate the entire host of Israel. Is it not possible that some such thought occurred to him? His decision to abandon any hope of promotion in Pharaoh's court in favor of a less prominent position, and even one of reproach, shows a strength of character that would lend itself very easily to divine leading. He here displays a meekness that is precious in the sight of the Lord. "The meek will he guide in judgment; the meek will he teach his way." In this attitude Moses was teachable as subsequent events proved well.

First, however, he must learn the lesson of dependence on God, and waiting on him for instruction. This was very soon forthcoming when Moses, with very grave consequences, essayed to settle the personal quarrels and strivings of one of his own people with an Egyptian. The second attempt along this line resulted in Moses fleeing from Egypt to the land of Midian, where he almost drops from sight for forty years, during which time he tended the flocks of his father-in-law, Jethro. We should not assume either that they were wasted years even though spent at such a menial task as being a shepherd. Some of the world's great men have been those who were privileged to learn the lessons of discipline, amid the scenes of pasturelands, while caring for such submissive creatures as sheep.

Forty years seems to be a very long time, and how interesting that its end coincided with the end of the prophesied period of Israel's bondage, which meant that Moses' preparation for the divinely

appointed task was completed. This was signaled by a very remarkable event. There in the quietness of the desert a bush broke into flame, but, wonder of wonders, the bush was not consumed. Still more awful was the voice that came from the midst of the burning bush, "Moses, Moses." Moses replied, "Here am I," and the voice said, "Remove thy shoes from off thy feet for the place where thou standest is holy ground." This dialogue evidently illustrates the need for discipline in reverence.

Thus begins a new chapter in the life of one who in the years to come was to learn more and more concerning the disciplines of the Lord and the inestimable privileges of communion and fellowship that were necessary in order to fit and sustain him for the tremendous tasks that lay ahead.

Now the entire history of these great events presents a most interesting picture or type of the deliverance of the Church from the powers of Satan and the world as represented by Pharaoh and Egypt. Instructions divinely given were followed out to the last detail in the preparations for departure, so that when the final blow was struck and the "first born" of the land of Egypt fell under the power of the "angel of death," their taskmasters and rulers, including hard-hearted Pharaoh himself, were only too glad to let them go. So they came out, 600,000 men, besides women and children, with great substance because the Egyptians loaded them with jewels and gold and silver, so much so that they spoiled the Egyptians.

It is here that their discipline as a nation began, and very soon we find them confronted with a most distressing situation, and one in which their faith was sorely tried. With the Red Sea before them, hemmed in on both sides by mountains, and with Pharaoh's hosts in hot pursuit coming up on their rear, things looked very grim indeed, so much so that the people lost heart and began to murmur against Moses. "Because there were no graves in Egypt, hast thou taken us away to die in the wilderness? wherefore hast thou dealt thus with us? . . . It had been better for us to serve the Egyptians, than that we should die in the wilderness." Surely there is here a deep lesson for all who have come under the blood and taken up the cross to follow in the footsteps of the Master.

In Numbers 11:1 we are told "And when the people complained it displeased the Lord." Is it any less displeasing to him for us to fail in the same way? "Godliness with contentment is great gain." Discontentment disregards the divine presence promised to the Lord's own. In their wilderness journey the children of Israel had the pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night to go before them in the way, to defend them from their foes, to show them where they should pitch their tents and when and where they should journey. These were the outward, visible assurances of divine presence. By day or night they had only to look to the pillar above the Tabernacle to receive that assurance. To Moses had been given the encouraging promise: "My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest."

Discontent is an outward evidence of lack of faith in the promises of God. The children of Israel had been led out of the iron furnace of Egypt by the strong hand of God to go to the land promised unto their fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. When dissatisfaction gripped their spirit, they "despised the pleasant land," and remembered only "the cucumbers, and the melons, and the leeks, and the onions, and garlic." Complaint caused them to prefer these in Egypt's hard bondage, to freedom in a land flowing with milk and honey. Discontentment discounts the provision God makes for us. For the children of Israel there was the daily bread day by day in the form of manna, enough for everybody. To the hungry, grateful people to whom it came, it was like the coriander seed, white; and the taste of it was like wafers made with honey. When they became disgruntled they could say, "But now our soul is dried away; there is nothing at all, besides this manna before our eyes." By that time the taste of it was like the taste of fresh oil --

the taste of honey when they were delighted, and the taste of fresh oil when they were discontented.

Does this alteration of taste caused by a change of attitude seem altogether far-fetched, or do we remember seasons when the Word of God was exceedingly sweet to our taste, and then, when under a cloud of complaint we found it tasteless and commonplace? Discontentment displeases God, and our relationship to him can be so marred by it that our progress is greatly retarded and our pilgrimage made much more difficult. This, of course, is a lack of faith. Of Israel it is said, "they believed not his word, but murmured in their tents, and hearkened not unto the voice of the Lord."

Discontentment may be a part of our disposition, but contentment can become a major characteristic of our Christian life. The Apostle Paul said, "I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: everywhere and in all things, I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me."

The discipline of discontentment is to turn from a complaining spirit, from criticism that corrodes and the dissatisfaction that displeases God, to a thankful attitude, to faith and praise, that will be pleasing to him who said, "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee." We may boldly say, "The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me."

If we have to any degree succumbed to the spirit of the times, which is restlessness and discontent, the need for discipline is very urgent; and much good may result from mentally retracing our steps from the time we first enrolled in the school of discipleship to the present moment. Perhaps our sense of values has changed since first we sat down and counted the cost. If this be true, the cross will have become heavier as time has gone on, and the tendency to lay it down more marked. Let us then consider him who endured such contradiction of sinners against himself lest we be weary and faint in our minds; and in addition let us note the sense of values expressed by the great Apostle Paul in the words: "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us."

The true disciple is the one who sees in all of life's affairs the supervisory and overruling hand of the One who has enrolled him in the School of Christ, even our Heavenly Father; and if the lessons in that school be disciplinary even to the point of scourging, the response should be:

"Content whatever lot I see,  
Since 'tis God's hand that leadeth me."

- *J. B. Webster.*



## The Critic

A little seed lay in the ground,  
And soon began to sprout;  
"Now which of all the flowers around,"  
It mused, "shall I come out?"

"This lily's face is fair and proud,  
But just a trifle cold;  
The rose, I think, is rather loud,  
And then, its fashion's old.

"The violet is very well,  
But not a flower I'd choose ;  
Nor yet the Canterbury bell --  
I never cared for blues."

And so it criticized each flower,  
This supercilious seed,  
Until it woke one summer hour --  
And found itself a weed.

## Our Safety in the Last Days

*"Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine." - 1 Tim. 4:16.*

THE "LAST DAYS" are specifically mentioned in the Scriptures. There are many "signs" or events by which we can identify the "last days" as the time in which we now live. The Prophet Daniel designates this period as "the time of the end," at which time "there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation." The Apostle Paul names these days as "perilous times," "evil days," etc. St. Peter and St. Jude say that "there shall come in the last days scoffers" or mockers.

Our Lord speaks of this same period as recorded in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke. (Chapters 24 and 21.) According to Luke, Jesus spoke of events marking the last days thus: "On earth anguish among the nations in their bewilderment at the roaring of the sea and its billows; while men's hearts are fainting for fear, and for anxious expectation of what is coming on the world. For the forces which control the heavens will be disordered." (Luke 21:25, 26, *Weymouth.*) Then, in verse 35, the Lord explains that this anguish and bewilderment will be sudden and world-wide.

This being true, the question concerning our safety in these "perilous," "hard" or "critical," times, is very important. Since we are in the world, this present evil world, though not of it, some of us may be subjected to trials and difficulties similar to those through which the world in general will have to pass. The Apostle Peter says: "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you." - 1 Pet. 4:12.

These trials will react upon us according to our faith. If our faith in the Lord and in his promises is strong, our trials will be regarded as brief and light afflictions and we will rejoice "inasmuch as we are partakers [sharers] in the sufferings of Christ." However, if our faith is weak, and in our hearts there is room for uncertainty or doubt, then our safety will be greatly endangered. It behooves us to be steadfast, immovable, full of faith, and therefore able to meet whatever the heavenly Father permits to come upon us.

Referring to this same time, which is designated as the last days, the Prophet Malachi (Mal. 3:1-3) asks these questions: "Who shall *abide* the day of his coming? Who shall *stand* when he appeareth?" Where do we, the followers of the Lord, *abide*, and where do we *stand*? Let us remember the words of our Master "*Abide in me. . . . He that abideth in me and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me, ye can do nothing.*" (John 15:4-6.) Abiding in Christ and being "found in him" is the only safe place for the Christian in time of trouble.

In Psalm 91:1 we read: "He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High, shall *abide* under the shadow of the Almighty." These words of the Prophet are applicable to the Lord's consecrated saints, living daily in communion and fellowship with their Lord, the Good Shepherd, who, speaking concerning our safety, uttered these words: "My sheep listen to my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish, nor shall any one wrest them from my hand." - John 10 27, 28, *Weymouth.*

The Christian, therefore, gladly sings:

"Safe in the arms of Jesus,  
Safe from corroding care,  
Safe from the world's temptations,  
Sin cannot harm me there."

## **A SAFE HIDING PLACE**

Now let us consider the second question the Prophet has set before us: "Who shall *stand* when he appeareth °?" Where do we stand? The following quotations from the Scriptures will give us the answer

"Watch ye, *stand fast in the faith*, quit you like men, be strong." - 1 Cor. 16:13.

"Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the *Gospel . . . wherein ye stand.*" - 1 Cor. 15:1.

"By whom also we have access by faith into this *grace wherein we stand*, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God." - Rom. 5:2.

"*Stand fast* therefore *in the liberty* wherewith Christ hath made us free." - Gal. 5:1.

"So then, brethren, *stand firm, and hold fast to the teachings* which you have received from us [the inspired Apostles], whether by word of mouth or by letter." - 2 Thess. 2:15, *Weymouth*.

"Therefore, my brethren, dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, so *stand fast in the Lord.*" - Phil. 4:1.

"Only, do lead a life that is worthy of the Gospel of Christ. Whether I come and see you or only hear of you in absence, let me know you are *standing firm in a common spirit*, fighting side by side like one man for the faith of the Gospel." - Phil. 1:27, *Moffatt*.

Indeed, in all the above quoted texts are beautiful words of life, admonishing us to be firm, steadfast, unmovable, firmly rooted and grounded in faith. Not passive or inactive, but "always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord." (1 Cor. 15:58.) Nevertheless, while we, as good soldiers of Christ, are "fighting side by side like one man *for the faith of the gospel*," "earnestly contending for the faith which was once delivered to the saints," we will not be entirely free from danger. Knowing this, the Apostle says: "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall." - 1 Cor. 10:12.

## **WEAK SAINTS CAN BE OVERCOMERS**

To his disciples Jesus said: "Be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." (John 16:33.) His followers are invited also to "overcome, even as he overcame." (See Rev. 3:21.) No one could be an overcomer unless there was opposition, something to overcome. And in order to overcome, we need faith, real faith, strong faith; for it is faith that overcometh the world. The surest way to overcome our opposers is to quote Scriptures and explain God's Plan in a loving and understandable manner. The best answer is: "Thus saith the Lord," or, "It is written."

In Isaiah 26:2 we read: "Open ye the gates, that the righteous nation, which keepeth the truth, may enter in." To keep the truth, means to regard it as something precious, valuable; it means to guard it, to observe, and to defend it. If we will guard the truth, the truth will also guard us. The Apostle Peter tells us that we "are kept [safeguarded] by the power of God through faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time." (1 Pet. 1:5.) Again this mighty power of God that safeguards and sanctifies us is the Gospel Truth. - John 17:17; Rom. 1:16.

The Psalmist, who knew the safeguarding power of God and relied on it, said: "I will both lay me down in peace, and sleep: for thou, Lord, only makest me dwell in safety." (Psa. 4:8.) So sure was he of the Lord's safekeeping power, that in Psalm 121:4 he writes: "Behold, He that keepeth [safeguardeth] Israel, shall neither slumber nor sleep." Commenting on this text, Brother Russell suggests:

"Think for a moment of the memory that never fails; of the judgment that never errs; of the wisdom that plans for eternity without the possibility of failure, and that times that plan with unerring precision for the ages to come; of the power and skill which can harness even every opposing element, animate or inanimate, and make them all work together for the accomplishment of his grand designs; of the tireless vigilance that never ceases, nor seeks relief from the pressing cares of universal dominion -- whose eye never sleeps, whose ear is ever open, and who is ever cognizant of all the necessities, and active in all the interests of his broad domains." - *Reprints*, page R1560.

In Deuteronomy 33:12 we read "The beloved of the Lord shall dwell in safety by him; and the Lord shall cover him all the day long, and he shall dwell between his shoulders." These beautiful and heart cheering words were prophetic, and may well be applied to the 'beloved of God' during this Gospel Age; and particularly now, in the "last days," when God's protection and safeguarding is needed more than ever before. Note well the gracious words: "*and the Lord shall cover him all the day long.*" The Psalmist (91:4) says: "He shall cover thee with his feathers and under his wings shalt thou trust." Here is our sure and safe refuge, a mighty fortress, a Rock that is "higher than I"

In Proverbs 18:10 it is again written: "The name of the Lord is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it, and is safe." How fortunate and how glad are we because we know who is the "strong tower" -- the "name of the Lord." If the Lord had not revealed these things to us, we could not "run into it" and find refuge and safety. It is necessary to know and to accept the truth; to rely upon and to trust in God's promises, knowing that they will come to pass in his own due time. To acquire this knowledge of our place of refuge, and where and when to "run into" this safe hiding place, requires some effort on our part. This is in harmony with the words of the Apostle James (James 4:8): "Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you."

Again, in Proverbs (Prov. 3), the necessity of following the wisdom from above is linked with the safety and well-being of the man of God. In Prov. 3:21-23 we read "Keep sound wisdom and discretion [divine instruction]. So shall they be life unto thy soul, and grace to thy neck. Then shalt thou walk in thy way safely, and thy foot shall not stumble." Valuable words of divine instruction are found again in Prov. 3:5-6: "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths."

The same Prophet of the Lord, in Proverbs 29:25, again gives us sound words of wisdom: "The fear of man bringeth a snare: but whoso putteth his trust in the Lord shall be safe."

Having therefore before us such wholesome words of divine wisdom and instruction, let us remember, dearly beloved, that we are constantly reminded to watch, to be alert, to walk circumspectly, for the days are evil. Let us always be attentive and obedient to the voice of the Good Shepherd. Let us carefully study his Word of Truth and let us daily endeavor to apply his instructions to our lives, remembering that faith "without works is dead." "For if ye do these things, ye shall never fall."

-J. R. Muzikant.

## **The Song of the Lord**

*"When the burnt offering began, the song of the Lord began also." - 2 Chronicles 29:27.*

SONG expresses the characteristics of a person and of a people. In a majority of cases when you hear a person continually singing, if you will note the tone of the singing, of the subject matter of the singing, you will get an index to the singer's heart. Of some, you have heard the statement made that they "are saddest when they sing." This is true of those whose singing is invariably those songs whose notes or words are those of pathos and sadness. Song expresses the historical background of a person or of a people. How, for instance, could the history of the colored people have been more indelibly written than it is in their plaintive folk songs and touching melodies. And how could the past 2,000 years of Jewish history have been more clearly portrayed to one than to have listened to their wailing at their famous wall in the city of Jerusalem. The pent up emotions of many centuries of oppression were given vent in the "Marseillaise," the famous song of the French Revolution.

### **THE SONG OF MOSES**

Also, we hear singing from the lips of the children of Israel. For centuries they had toiled and suffered under the lash of the oppressor. Long since all song must have died upon their lips. Generation after generation had been born, had lived, and had died under the cruel heel of the tyrant, until the overwhelming majority of the Israelites had probably ceased to think of their lot as being abnormal. Finally God, through Moses, delivered them out of the hands of their oppressors. And then the song began again.

Moses led the children of Israel in what is known as the Song of Moses. What a jubilee of singing that must have been! (Exod. 15:1-19.) Afterward Miriam, the sister of Moses, took up the refrain, leading the women of Israel in that great song of liberty. Thus we see how quickly, in a matter of but a few hours, song that had lain dead for so many centuries, again sprang to the lips of God's liberated people. The absence of joy in the heart is expressed by the absence of song. Song expresses the feeling of the heart, and there can be no song of joy, no song of the Lord in the hearts of spiritual Israel if we feel that we are not pleasing to our heavenly Father, if we feel that we are not living in harmony with his will and purpose for us for only in the sunshine of his love and favor is there joy forevermore in the heart and a song upon the lips of his child. If we are living up to our privileges in Christ Jesus, we will be constantly rejoicing, and the song of the Lord will well up from our hearts and will constantly be upon our lips.

It is remarkable how quickly song can be restored to the lips of a people from which singing has long since vanished, even as a harp long silent can quickly burst into entrancing melody. Thus can song quickly return to the lips of an emancipated life or people. It is recorded that King Ahaz had fostered idolatry in its most vicious form. He caused to be removed from the temple its sacred vessels and altars, prostituting them to profane purposes, even to the giving of some of the temple furnishings to the heathen king of Assyria. (2 Kings 16:10.) Then Ahaz drove the priests and singers out of the temple, closing its doors. He then worshiped and offered sacrifices to idols. Finally he died and was buried in unhallowed and unconsecrated ground.

## **CLEANSING THE TEMPLE**

Upon the accession of his son Hezekiah to the throne, the scene changes, for he was as good as his father was evil. He loved the Lord, and he at once proceeded to restore to the temple those things of which it had been despoiled by his father and to start again the worship of God. With that object in view he summoned the priests and Levites together, instructing them to sanctify themselves, to set themselves apart for the service to which they had been chosen, for they had been chosen to stand before the Lord, and to minister to the people. After this he told them to cleanse the temple, to carry the filthiness out of the Holy Place. After the temple was cleansed and the vessels restored that King Ahaz had taken away, Hezekiah commanded that the sin offerings and the burnt offerings be laid upon the altar, and, in the words of our text, "When the burnt offering began, the song of the Lord began also." And it is recorded that they bowed their heads and worshiped and sang praises with gladness.

In his epistles to the Corinthians Paul in several places states that God's people are "the temple of the living God . . . I will dwell in them." "Know ye not that your body is the temple of the holy spirit" (2 Cor. 6:16; 1 Cor. 6:19.) As we look back over the years, we can see how constant have been the efforts of the great Adversary to remove from these temples -- the minds and hearts of God's people -- the vessels of truth, the vessels of Christian tolerance, the vessels of Christian liberty, the vessels of loyalty to Jesus alone, the Head of the Church. The song of the Lord has died out among many of the Lord's people by reason of their tendency to look to earthly leaders, to sing the song and praises of these leaders. Thus the dust and dirt and cobwebs of human interpretations of Scripture have accumulated, and in place of the harmony and beauty of the song of the Lord, the song in such instances resembles more the shoutings of confusion, of turmoil and of battle than the melody and harmony of the song of the Lord.

The contempt in which King Ahaz held the song of the Lord is shown not alone in driving the priests out of the temple but in his driving the singers out of the temple also. All this and his closing the doors of the house of God robbed Israel of her song. And if the song of the Lord shall ever go out of the life of spiritual Israel, it will be because of our closing the door of the temple of our hearts to God's holy spirit, a gradual closing of the door by a growing neglect of the study of God's Word. Earnest prayer to the Lord might become too much of a task. The worship of the Lord might lose its attraction. Then would the door to the temple of our heart be closed, and the song of the Lord would cease. How then could one get the song back that he knew when first he loved the Lord? Our text provides the answer: "And when the burnt offering began, the song of the Lord began also." What a beautiful picture is the burnt offering of our consecration and of the acceptance by our heavenly Father of that consecration.

## **THE ASCENDING OFFERING**

In the Hebrew, reference is made to the burnt offering as "that which ascends," or the "ascending offering." Thus is it with our consecration. It is not a consecration to this condition or to that condition, to this prize or to that prize, but it is to our heavenly Father, to the One on high, an ascending consecration to God alone. Also it is a full, entire, and complete consecration, nothing held back; not a part or partial burnt offering, but a whole burnt offering. In the trespass offering, meat offering, and other offerings, either the whole or a part of the offering became the portion of the officiating priest, and in some cases a portion was returned to the giver. But not so in the case of the whole burnt offering, picturing our consecration, which is full and complete, with

"Not my own!" my time, my talent,  
Freely all to Christ I bring,  
To be used in joyful service  
For the glory of my King."

The two important features in connection with the burnt offering are that it was flayed (skinned and stripped), and that it was entirely consumed. Not until that flaying was finished was the burnt offering laid upon the altar. For our consecration to be acceptable in the sight of God, we must be stripped of all fleshly coverings. In Hebrews 4:13 we read "Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight; but all things are naked and laid open before the eyes of him with whom we have to do."

The work of preparing the burnt offerings was a part of the duties of the priests. But in this case there were not sufficient priests to do this work. Many had failed to make themselves ready. What a sad state of affairs is here presented. Thus others had to step into the breach. Thus we read:

"But the priests were too few, so that they could not flay all the burnt offerings: wherefore their brethren the Levites did help them, till the work was ended, and until the other priests had sanctified themselves: for the Levites were more upright in heart to sanctify themselves than the priests." - 2 Chron. 29:34.

Is this not a lesson for us today? Are we maintaining our consecration? Have we completely given up self and self-will? Do our daily lives show forth the fact that we have been with Jesus? Are we continuing to cast off and to renounce all coverings of human creeds, of sectarianism, of self-righteousness? Have we been flayed, skinned and divested of all these, and in their place have we been invested with a covering robe of Christ's righteousness? Do we stand in that robe spotless and acceptable in the sight of our heavenly Father?

May self and self-will never again enter our lives, for with its entrance the song of the Lord and the joy of the Lord will take their departure, and some day we will awaken to find ourselves saying in the words of Cowper:

"Where is the blessedness I knew  
When first I found the Lord?  
Where is that soul-refreshing view  
Of Jesus and his Word?"

We read in 2 Chronicles 29:19 that they restored the holy vessels that had been taken away in the reign of King Ahaz. The question comes to those in spiritual Israel who may have lost the song of the Lord: Are there things that must be restored to my life as a new creature? Is it the study of God's Word? Have I neglected this? We are walking through a valley which is overcast with the shadow of death. If we would avoid the pitfalls along this shadowed way, then we must be in constant study of the Word of the Lord, we must feed from that table that God hath "prepared for us in the presence of our enemies." As the natural man cannot be joyful if he is starving for food, neither can a song be upon the lips of the spiritual man if he is cut off from access to spiritual food. Is it prayer that must be restored? Have we neglected this most important and most powerful function granted to the child of God? If so, then it is most essential that this shall be restored if the song of the Lord is to be restored to one's heart and life. Is it love and fellowship that must be restored? Have we become arrogant, heady, intolerant in our attitude toward others of the household of faith? Has sectarianism again taken control of our minds and hearts? Have we become like the Apostle John was in his early experience, when he endeavored to prevent others

from serving the Lord because they, as he said, "Follow not with us." We remember how Jesus rebuked him. If we are under the control of such a spirit, the Lord cannot take pleasure in us, nor can his song be upon our lips or within our hearts. "When the burnt offering began, the song of the Lord began also."

### **PICTURE OF CONSECRATION**

The burnt offering was the final beautiful picture of our consecration, and of God's acceptance of that consecration, and of our induction into that coming great work. Upon our realization of the glorious fact that our consecration had been approved and accepted by our Heavenly Father, what a joy was ours, and then from our heart and from our lips burst forth the song of the Lord.

Where unity of the spirit is absent, there can be no genuine song of the Lord. Paul has enumerated the cords of unity drawing God's people together:

"Giving diligence to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body, and one spirit, even as also ye were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord., one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all, and through all, and in all." - Eph. 4:3-6.

Jesus said that he "beheld Satan like lightning fall from heaven." Heaven lost one Lucifer, that "star of the morning," but there are to be exalted from among men 144,000 to be stars in the heavens from which he fell. They will also be stars of the morning, for their exaltation is in the morning of the Millennial Age, and of them it hath been written:

"They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever." - Dan. 12:3.

In the place of that celestial voice that has been missing from the heavenly choir for lo, these many millenniums, there will be 144,000 to blend their voices together in song-yes, a song that shall cause the heavenly host to again shout for joy. Has this earth anything of sufficient value to lure us away from being present when that great crescendo of song shall burst upon this universe? All that this great jubilee of celestial singing is waiting for is the completion of the antitypical burnt offering, the completion in death of the consecration of the last member of the glorious Church of the Gospel Age. And so shall we not endeavor to live a little more closely to our heavenly Father, a little more earnestly study his Word, to be a little more constant in prayer, a little more fervent in our love and consideration of the brethren, to a little more faithfully walk in the footsteps of our blessed Master, a little more patiently run the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith? And may we be found singing the "song of the Lord" until our consecrated course is finished, and we hear that "Well done, thou good and faithful servant; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

- *H. V. Warren.*



## Recently Deceased

James Army, North Reading, Mass.  
Bernard Bachul, Minneapolis, Minn.  
H. Walter Burge, Coventry, England  
Jens Copeland, Rutherford, N.J.  
Elizabeth A. Coulter, Portstewart, N. Ireland  
Edith M. Hallett, Vineland, N. J.  
Harvey E. Kincaid, Deer Park, Wash.  
Dora King, Union City, Pa.  
Grace Lawton, Arlington, Tex.  
May P. LeRoy, Oregon City, Ore.  
Mollie H. Morgan, Hayes, La.  
Mary Roberts, Asheville, N. Car.  
Elizabeth Secunda, Elmira, N.Y.  
E. Frank Skinner, Lynchburg, Va.  
Milne Summers, Rockville, Conn.  
Effie W. VanHorne, Pittsburgh, Pa.  
Martha Waytina, North Brookfield, Mass.