

References listed on the question sheet for the Portland Study Convention for the Exceeding Great and Precious Promises study.

Helpful references: EGPP, R5381, HG1:445, R5677, R2136, R1113, R2037, R4808, R3585, R2154, R3089

I copied only the preface to the EGPP, not all of the promises. I couldn't locate HG1:445. R 1113 was listed, but it seems to be a duplicate of R 4808, so I did not copy R 1113 over.

Exceeding Great and Precious Promises

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE PROMISES

Angels of His mercy -- His promises exceeding great and precious -- minister unto us and strengthen us. R2412:c2,p3

As we fill our minds with God's promises, the whole character, the whole life, becomes more transformed. R5739:c1,p1

In proportion as the promises are before our minds, in that proportion we have strength and courage to run the narrow way. R5095:c1,p4

The Lord's people should so thoroughly apply the precious promises of Divine care that their hearts would be entirely free from anxiety. F572:p2

Those who can and will exercise full confidence, in all the Divine promises, may go from victory to victory, from blessing to blessing, from joy to joy, from one attainment to another, and have a glorious victory in the end over the world, flesh and Adversary, through the imputed merit and continued assistance of Him who loved and bought us. To this class the giants of opposition and despair lose their power, even as did Goliath before the sling stone of David. R4046:c2,bottom

"Feed" upon the promises.

These promises that are given to us are the spiritual food upon which we, as embryotic New Creatures, must feed. No matter how much food may be supplied, if, for any reason, we fail to appropriate the necessary spiritual nourishment, we will be deficient to some extent. The Apostle's words seem to corroborate this thought -- "To us are given exceeding great and precious promises that **by these** we might become partakers of the Divine nature" -- that is to say, If we do not use these we will not be partakers of the Divine nature, but by the use of these we may "make our calling and election sure" and become joint-heirs with Christ. R4665:c2,p4

Must not be neglected. Must be continually used.

The promises of the Divine Word were given to us as the basis of faith, -- as the fuel to produce the power in us to **will** and to **do** God's good pleasure. And hence these gracious promises must not be neglected; they must be continually used and must continue in us to energize us. And the energy must be applied, and we must progress proportionately against the course of this world. R2879:c1,top

"Delve" into them.

Delve into the promises of God more and more. As you do this, the roots of faith will draw up the nutriment and send it out into your life, and you will grow, just as a tree grows, because nourished, fed. Thus alone will you become established in **The Faith**. R5559:c2,p1

The heart must be filled with the promises.

If the promises of the Divine Word be not received into the heart to satisfy its cravings or longings, it will feed upon other things; and the world, the flesh and the devil are all crowding upon it, offering various attractions, some of which will be received if the heart be not filled and kept filled. R3552:c2,p1

No greater stimulus to true Godliness can be found than the precious promises given unto us. R2228:c2,p5

Our joy is largely dependent upon our study of the Word and our knowledge of the precious promises contained therein for those who overcome. R5460:top

Endeavor to realize their import.

Soberly, thoughtfully, we are to weigh and endeavor to realize the import of the promises and to gather from them their invigorating inspiration. R3149:c1,p6

Their value more fully realized as we live closer to the Lord.

As the Spirit of God draws our hearts into closer fellowship and sympathy with the Divine mind, the value of these precious promises is more and more fully realized, until there glows in our hearts the same holy enthusiasm that so filled the hearts of the Apostles. R3149:c1,p3

Appropriating them to ourselves is growing in grace and knowledge.

After the promises are ours, it requires time and a continual application of faith, in order to rightly appreciate God's promises, and appropriate them to ourselves; and this is Scripturally called "growing in grace and knowledge." We grow in knowledge as we take note of the promises of God, and by faith apply them to ourselves, and seek to discern in our lives the fulfillment of these promises; we grow in grace simultaneously, for unless each item of knowledge be received into a good and honest heart, and bring forth its measure of obedience and righteousness (grace) we will not be prepared for the next step of knowledge, and would be thus stopped, or possibly turned back. R3156:c2,p1

Precious promises are these, wonder words of life! Let us count them over and over again, that all their sweet significance may sink deep into our hearts and bring forth their blessed fruitage in our lives. May they cheer us in every dark and trying hour and reinforce our waning powers with renewed vigor, courage, and zeal, that we may press along the narrow way until indeed our "eyes shall see the King in His beauty." R5863:c1,p2

Give them more attention.

That the year shall be one of more than usual progress and spiritual blessing, we recommend that each of us give more attention than ever before to God's **promises** to us as His Church and to the **conditions** upon which they shall be made sure to us. R2240:c1,p2

Courage and strength from the promises.

There are many difficulties to be surmounted, and it requires courage to surmount difficulties. But the courage born of faith in God and in His "exceeding great and precious promises" strengthens them when otherwise they might be overwhelmed. It gives them a strength to which all others are strangers. If a child of God becomes discouraged and loses his hope and strength, it is because he has lost his hold upon the Lord's promises to help. To lose courage is to lose faith. Loss of faith and courage make a child of God powerless before his foes. We must trust our Father even when the meaning of His providences is veiled from our eyes and when our efforts to serve Him seem to be hedged up. R5712:c1,p7; c2,p1

Must be Really, Fully Believed and Personally Appropriated. A Powerful Influence.

The promises of God made to this class are exceeding great and precious, and if they are really believed they cannot fail to powerfully influence the life; but if they are not received, it is manifest that they can have no power over the life. And more, if they be not fully believed, if they be not personally appropriated, they are not applicable, and no one can hope for anything in them. This is clearly intimated in the words of the Apostle -- "Now the just shall live by faith." R1798:c1,p6

Faith so Tenacious that the Promises Become Living Realities.

Paul reached forward to the things that were before, his faith took hold of the promises of God with such tenacity that to him they were living realities, inspiring zeal and faithfulness. Upon the Heavenly themes he allowed his mind to dwell, as he also advised others, saying, "Whatsoever things are true, honest, just, pure, lovely, of good report, virtuous or praiseworthy, -- think on these things." This is the way he reached forward to the things before; and thus also we must gather our inspiration to holiness and our courage to endurance and persevering faithfulness, even unto death. R1885:c2,p2

Each should **cultivate** faith in his own heart: (a) By refreshing his memory continually with the Divine promises, becoming very familiar with these in the Father's Word. (b) He should seek more and more to remember that having made his covenant with the Lord these promises are his, and in his heart and with his lips he should claim them as his before the Lord in prayer with thanksgiving. He should claim them as his in his own thoughts, and in his conferences on holy things with the brethren. When trials or difficulties or perplexities arise, he should think of these promises, remembering that they **belong** to him -- because God has promised them to such as love Him, -- who have made a covenant by self-sacrifice. R2642:c2,p7

R 5381**LET YOUR FAITH GROW STRONG BY MEDITATION UPON THE PROMISES.**

The workman melteth a graven image, and the goldsmith spreadeth it over with gold, and casteth silver chains. He that is so impoverished that he hath no oblation, chooseth a tree that will not rot; he seeketh unto him a cunning workman to prepare a graven image, that shall not be moved. Have ye not known? have ye not heard? hath it not been told you from the beginning? have ye not understood from the foundations of the earth? It is He that sitteth upon the circle of the earth and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers; that stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain, and spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in; that bringeth the princes to nothing; He maketh the judges of the earth as vanity. Yea, they shall not be planted; yea, they shall not be sown; yea, their stock shall not take root in the earth; and he shall also blow upon them, and they shall wither, and the whirlwind shall take them away as stubble. To whom, then, would ye liken Me, or shall I be equal? saith the Holy One. Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these things, that bringeth out their host by number; He calleth them all by names by the greatness of His might, for that He is strong in power; not one faileth. Why sayest thou, O Jacob, and speakest, O Israel, my way is hid from the Lord, and my judgment is passed over from my God? Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? there is no searching of his understanding. He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might He increaseth strength. Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall: But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint.--`[Isa. 40:19-31](#)`.

And call upon Me in the day of trouble; I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify Me.--`[Psalm 50:15](#)`.

The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and His ears are open unto their cry. The righteous cry, and the Lord heareth, and delivereth them out of all their troubles. --`[Psalm 34:15-17](#)`.

For Thou, Lord, art good and ready to forgive; and plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon Thee.--`[Psalm 86:5](#)`.

The Lord is righteous in all His ways and holy in all His works.--`[Psalm 145:17](#)`.

For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek; for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon Him.--`[Romans 10:12](#)`.

If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.--`[James 1:5](#)`.

Let us, therefore, come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.--`[Heb. 4:16](#)`.

And I say unto you, Ask and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.-- `[Luke 11:9,10](#)`.

And whatsoever ye shall ask in My name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.--`[John 14:13](#)`.

Hitherto have ye asked nothing in My name; ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full.--`[John 16:24](#)`.

R 5677**"THESE THINGS" THAT WE MUST DO**

"If ye do these things, ye shall never fall."--`[2 Peter 1:10](#)`.

THE CONTEXT preceding the words of the above text shows us that the Apostle has been urging the development of the fruits of the Holy Spirit in the heart, and so far as possible in the life--in the words, the deeds, the thoughts. He sums up his argument by saying that those who, following his advice in this matter, add one after another of these qualities and so build up their Christian character, will **"never fall."** The implication is that there would be some tendency to fall, some testings; and that this development of character would be necessary in order that the individual might be able to stand these tests. So the Apostle's assurance is that those who do not fall, who stand all the tests, will be granted an **abundant** entrance "into the everlasting Kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ"--the very thing that all of the Lord's people are invited to share.

We whose eyes of understanding have been enlightened can realize the strength and reasonableness of the Apostle's argument; yet these things have not been much taught in a logical way. Errors of the Dark Ages have hindered and made void the teachings of the Apostles. The thought given out by the creeds of the past is that only a mere handful would be saved, and that the rest of the world would be banished to an eternity of torture and woe unspeakable. Many of the world have taken this in a light way, have been incredulous--declaring that they would stand their chance, etc. Others, who were of the Lord's people, have been frantic in their efforts to save as many as possible from the threatened eternal torture. Some had it that unless they belonged to a certain class, or cult, or had a certain kind of baptism, or turned away from sin and joined some church, they were sure of never-ending and unspeakable suffering beyond this life.

With these ideas in their minds, it is not strange that they were too busy to study the Word of God with sufficient care to see what it really teaches, and that therefore they adopted plans of their own for saving the world. These deluded ones seem to be quite active in what they term soul-saving work. We cannot but admire their courage and zeal, even though it be not according to knowledge. If their premise were correct, then every Christian should be rushing around as though demented, in his endeavors to save the world.

Suppose that a great fire broke out but a few doors from us, that there were no fire department accessible and that hundreds were in imminent danger of being burned to death, though we were ourselves safe from the fire. Suppose that then some one would say to us, "Come, let us have a Bible Study." We would be sure to answer quickly, "No indeed! There are many people in that building who will be burned to death unless they are quickly rescued!" We would be in such haste and such eagerness to save the lives of the endangered ones that we would stop

for nothing else.

DOCTRINAL CONFUSION OF MANY CHRISTIANS

So the great Adversary has filled the minds of many Christian people with the vagary that the world is in imminent danger, not of being burned to **death**, but of being precipitated into a lake of burning brimstone or into an abyss of unimaginable horror and woe, there to be preserved in torture throughout unending ages! He has thus engaged Christians in an imaginary assault upon the Devil, to rescue souls from this eternity of torment. Not until our eyes are opened and we see that there is no such provision for the heathen, or for anybody, can we begin to exercise the spirit of a sound mind. When we come to understand God's arrangement, everything changes before our mind's eye. We then see that God has made full provision for the heathen and for all men, and we realize that

"Faith can firmly trust Him,
Come what may."

We see that our work as Christians is to co-operate with God in the salvation of the **Church** class--not a salvation from eternal torture, but from **death**, and to a glorious inheritance with Christ in His coming Kingdom. We see that this great work has been progressing during the Gospel Age, and in an orderly manner.

This blessed union with Christ which God has arranged for the Church is to be soon consummated by a marriage feast; and then, in the Kingdom to be established under the whole heavens, she as His Bride will with Him have the blessed opportunity of uplifting and delivering fallen humanity, the entire race of Adam, of restoring men, "whosoever will," to the glorious estate which was lost by Adam and redeemed by Christ Jesus the Lord through the blood of His cross. How wonderful it is to realize how all-embracing is God's marvelous Plan of salvation--that it includes in its gracious provision not only those now living, but also all who have gone down into the tomb! With the eyes of our understanding thus enlightened, the delusions are taken away from our minds, and we begin to use our reason and to see the beautiful, wonderful things which God planned from before the foundation of the world.

DOCTRINE OF SANCTIFICATION LOST TO MAJORITY

As we reason, we see that the primary consideration with **us** is our **sanctification**. "This is the will of God [concerning **you**], even **your** sanctification." When we thought that the salvation of the world was dependent upon our feeble efforts here in the flesh, we had little time to study the Bible or to think particularly about our sanctification. Indeed, the thought of sanctification faded away from the minds of the majority of professing Christians; and for a Christian to press the importance of this doctrine was to brand himself as a

religious fanatic. The general thought has seemed to be that those who were really thus set apart were surely so small a number that sanctification could not be God's Plan for the Church. So the many drifted apart from the Scriptures, and thought that only those guilty of most heinous crimes would be punished with eternal torment, and that all others would be some means get into Heaven. People have thought, and this thought seems to prevail today to an increasing extent, that unless one dies a murderer or a lawless, disreputable character, he will somehow be saved.

"If a person can squeeze into Heaven without any sanctification, so much the better," is the thought. "Do not try to get up too high. Do not try to get one of the chief seats in Heaven. Take a lowly place"--crawl in under the gates, perhaps! And thus many have tried to believe that they and their friends would go to Heaven. Our Catholic friends have been taught that they must go to Purgatory for awhile. But nearly all others have hoped that they would get to Heaven at once. This idea of sanctification, of being holy as our Lord was holy, of walking in the footsteps of Jesus, is not the Bible view at all, according to their thought. They did not consider it the Bible view because they did not know the Bible teachings, and because they did not wish to conform themselves to so narrow a way--the broader, easier way

::R5677 : page 134::

was much more pleasant to the flesh. They could not believe that God would be intent upon roasting nearly everybody --surely He would be content to roast the most degraded heathen and the worst characters of Christendom.

OUR "REASONABLE SERVICE"

So these have accepted what seemed to them to be a reasonable moral standard, instead of endeavoring to find out what the Bible calls our "reasonable service." The great Apostle Paul in his Epistle to the Church at Rome ([Romans 12:1](#)), says, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your

::R5678 : page 134::

reasonable service." When we get rid of these erroneous thoughts and ideas and get the spirit of a sound mind, we begin to see more of God's wonderful Plan--of His Justice, Wisdom, Love, Power, of His purpose for His children now, and His arrangement for the world by and by.

When light begins to break in upon the mind, and a glimpse is seen of God's gracious Plan of salvation, there is a danger that those whose hearts are selfish and lacking in gratitude will lapse into even greater worldliness, that they will pay very little attention to Bible study for the development of the fruits of the Spirit,

feeling that it will be well with them in the future in any event, and they will delve into business, money-making, pleasure, etc. Others, on the contrary, feel an earnest desire to render thanks to the Lord for His great mercy and love as manifested in His glorious Plan of the Ages; they seek to know what is the Lord's will for them that they may do it, and say, "The fact that God is not such a demon as to torture eternally any of His creatures, but has so marvelous and loving a Plan for all, makes me want to serve Him all the more." As the Apostle Paul said, the Truth is "to the one the savor of death unto death; and to the other the savor of life unto life," and reveals the real sentiment of the heart.--`[2 Cor. 2:16](#)`.

THE CHRISTIAN'S NEED IN THIS "EVIL DAY"

Thus those who receive the Truth in the love of it become students of the Bible. As they study, they learn more and more how each one of the true Church is to be sanctified by the Truth, that each may be "made meet for the inheritance of the saints in light." They realize that the Church is now being called out to be saints of God, to be separated from the world, and to have a share with the Lord Jesus in blessing and uplifting the whole world in the Age to follow this, the Millennial Age--now so near at hand. To such the exhortation of the Apostle is, "Add to your faith virtue [fortitude]; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance [self-control, self-restraint]; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness love [a broad, generous love, taking in the whole world, even our enemies].--`[2 Peter 1:5-7](#)`.

The Apostle then adds, "If these things be in you and abound, they make you that ye shall be neither barren [inactive, idle] nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ." At this juncture the Apostle shows the contrary effect of the spirit of the world upon those who profess to be children of God--the result of a neglect to study and to assimilate the Word. He says, "But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins." Then he counsels all, "Wherefore, the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure; for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: for so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting Kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ."--`Vs. 8-11`.

NEED OF "THE WHOLE ARMOR OF GOD"

By seeking to know God's will in order to do it, the Lord's people are preparing themselves for the glorious inheritance of the faithful. Fortified by development of character, these will not fall, no matter what the trial that the Lord may permit to come upon them. The Apostle Paul, in his `Epistle to the Church at Ephesus`, speaks of some who will be able to stand in the "evil day," and implies that a great many at that time will not be able to stand. He declares that those who hope to stand will need to put on "the whole armor of God." The various pieces of the Christian's armor will then be indispensable, and he intimates that only those

fully armored would be ready for the onslaughts of that Day.

The Lord did not reveal to the Apostles when the "evil day" would come. They knew that it was then future, but how far into the future they did not know. They did not expect it before their death; for some of them said that they expected to put off the present body, to die, and to awake in the First Resurrection, and that they believed the Second Coming of Christ to be some little time distant. Evidently it was a part of God's Plan to keep His people uninformed concerning the exact time of the Day of the Lord, until due; but He provided for them that they would be able to stand when the "evil day" arrived, if they would diligently put on the armor.

And now we have come to this "evil day"; and the urgent message to us is: "Put on the whole armor of God!"--prepare yourselves for the great testing that will come, that you may be able to stand! Get ready! Each piece of the armor, each fruit of the Spirit, is a part of the necessary preparation for this "evil day," this "hour of temptation," now present. So these should all be added with great care. Read [`Ephesians 6:13-18`](#); [`2 Peter 1:4-11`](#); [`Galatians 5:19-26`](#).

WHY THOUSANDS ARE FALLING

This is the time long foretold, when "a thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand." Why will all these fall? Because they have neglected this necessary development of character; because they have failed to put on the whole armor of God; because under the delusions of the Adversary and the spirit of the world and of Babylon they have become twisted in their minds. They have tried to raise money for the heathen or for building fine church edifices; they have gotten up church fairs and entertainments, etc.; not appreciating the fact that it is necessary to build up their own characters, that character, built up after the instruction of the Word of God, is absolutely necessary to an entrance into the Kingdom of Christ. And so these are falling all around us.

If the whole armor of God was important in the Apostle's day, it is still more important today. We need all that is represented in the breastplate of righteousness, in the shield of faith, in the helmet of salvation, the covering of protection for the intellect, in the sandals of Gospel preparation, in the sword of the Spirit, the Word of God. We need that our loins be girt up with Truth. Thus shall we be enabled to preserve our vital relationship with the Lord and His House and to daily grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

"In the last days," said the Apostle, "all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." Therefore we need to be **fully** established in the faith, and able to **fully trust the Lord**. Let us keep the Sword of the Spirit sharpened and well in hand, that we may be ready for service in the protection of others and in the defense of ourselves. We need to be continually on the alert respecting

::R 5678 : page 135::

our own fleshly weaknesses and besetments, that we may war a successful warfare, and prove faithful to the end of our course, and thus share with our Lord His Kingdom and crown.

"As I near the Time of Trouble,
Bid my faith in Thee increase;
While the thousands round are falling,
Keep me, keep in perfect peace.
Refuge! Fortress! Thou hast set Thy love on me!"

R 2136**THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD--ITS VALUE.**

"Grace and peace be multiplied unto you, through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus Christ our Lord, according as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto God and life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us by his own glory and virtue."--` [2 Pet. 1:2,3](#)` --**Reading of Sinaitic manuscript.**

THE FIRST question coming to us in connection with these words of exhortation is, To whom were they addressed? Are these the instructions given to sinners? Is this the way by which sinners are to approach to God? No. These instructions are addressed to those who are already justified through faith in the precious blood of Christ, as indicated in the preceding verse. They are addressed--"To them who have obtained like precious faith with us [the apostles] through the righteousness of our Lord and Savior,* Jesus Christ."

The suggestion clearly is that to become believers in Christ Jesus-- even justified and fully consecrated believers--is not sufficient; there is to be a progress in the life just begun which will continue as long as we are "in this tabernacle," and, if faithful, be completed in "the first resurrection." The thought of the Apostle is not year by year revivals with year by year backslidings, but rather a continued **progression** in the new life. This thought is quite in contradiction of the experiences of very many who assume the name of Christ, which, alas! are too often expressed in the lines of the hymn:--

"Where is the blessedness I knew, when first I found the Lord? Where is the soul-reviving view of Jesus and his Word?"

The prevalent idea amongst this class of Christians might be termed alternate subtractions and additions of grace and peace. They first get a blessing, then lose it, then find it again to lose it again, and thus continue. There is a logical reason why this course is so prevalent, and why so few know anything about the multiplication which the Apostle here mentions-- "Grace and peace be **multiplied** unto you." The reason is that the majority of Christians lack a knowledge of those things which are necessary to preserve to them the grace and peace found through their primary faith in the Lord as their Redeemer; and

much more do they lack a sufficiency of knowledge to **multiply** their grace and peace. The vast majority occupy the position mentioned by the Apostle Paul ([` 1 Cor. 3:1 `](#)) "I, brethren, could not write unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal--even as unto babes in Christ;" "when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God."--
[` Heb. 5:12-14 `](#) .

*Reading of Sinaitic MS.

::R2137 : page 114::

An error on one subject often leads to many errors on many subjects; and so it is in this case: the doctrine of eternal torment as the penalty for the fall, from which only believers will escape, has distorted the judgment and misdirected the efforts of many of the Lord's people. With some of the most earnest the first thought is personal escape from eternal torment, and naturally the second thought is to help as many others as possible to escape such an awful eternity. With this thought as the mainspring of conduct, we cannot wonder that by such chief attention is paid to "saving sinners" and bringing them into the condition of "babes in Christ." But after they become babes comparatively little is done to develop them in the knowledge of God, that they may grow up into the full stature of manhood in Christ. As babes they are continually fed upon the milk, and hence are unused to the strong meat, so that when they do attempt its use, they are more likely to be choked by it than to be strengthened.

The Apostle points out the proper course by which the believer, having made a proper start, shall continue onward and upward in his Christian development-- multiplying his grace and his peace. It is all-important, however, that he begin right, that he be truly begotten "by the word of truth," "the faith once delivered unto the saints"--which the Apostle here terms "**precious** faith." This is not the faith promulgated by the higher critics. Their faith is far from precious. Their faith denies the fall, denies the ransom and all necessity for it, and consequently denies the resurrection based upon that ransom. Their faith consists in believing in their own judgments as the criterions of what is truth and what is error, and in doubting the testimony of Moses and the prophets, of the Lord and the apostles. Such a faith is not the "**precious** faith," is not "the faith once delivered unto the saints." And those who are building upon such a faith are not of those here

addressed by the Apostle, and we need not expect that either their grace or their peace will be multiplied. We trust, however, that the majority of our readers are of those who can sing with the spirit and the understanding also,--

"My hope is built on nothing less than Jesus' blood and righteousness; I dare not trust the sweetest frame, but wholly lean on Jesus' name. On Christ, the solid Rock, I stand: all other ground is sinking sand."

The true foundation, upon which we should build, is,--faith in the righteousness of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ,--faith that his sacrifice for sin was once for all a full and complete ransom-price for Adam and all his posterity, so that all of these, as in due time they shall be brought to a knowledge of Christ, may,

::R2137 : page 115::

if they will, obtain cleansing and eternal life under the gracious terms of the New Covenant. It is those who build upon this foundation that may hope to multiply their grace and peace. How?

The Apostle answers--"Through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord." At first it may occur to some that this has but a slight meaning, and that it simply signifies that we come to know that there is a God, and that there is a Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. But the knowledge of God means far more than this to the advancing and developing Christian: to him it means an intimate acquaintance with the Father and with the Son, a knowledge of the "mind of Christ," which is a full and clear representation to us of the mind of the Father. We are to grow in this knowledge by studying the Word of God, by discerning through that Word the principles which govern the divine conduct, as to how divine justice, wisdom, love and power operate. These are progressive studies. Something may be learned the first day of our Christian experience, but the end of the first year should show considerable progress in the knowledge of the divine mind; the second year should show us a still further increase, and so on.

As our **intimate** knowledge of the divine plan and character increases, so must also our grace increase; for those who do not attempt to come into harmony, step by step, with that which they see of the divine character will soon lose interest in such knowledge, while those who have the interest which leads to further and further study must of necessity be growing in grace continually. And as they grow in grace, so also will they grow in peace; for peace also is a progressive thing.

We had peace when first we found the Lord and realized the forgiveness of our sins; but those who have made progress in the knowledge of the divine plan and character have found their peace to be an ever-increasing one; and those who have advanced some distance in the good way can speak of it in the language of the apostles and realize it in their hearts as being "the peace of God which passeth all understanding."

The Apostle, continuing, assures us that through this knowledge of God is imparted to us as by divine power **"all things that pertain unto life and godliness."** What an assurance! This statement of the importance of knowledge for our Christian development in every direction reminds us of the words of our Lord, "This is life eternal; that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent." ([` John 17:3 `](#).) To **know God**, as the Apostle here explains, signifies an **intimate acquaintance** with "him that hath called us by his own glory and virtue." It is only as we realize something of the greatness and perfection of the divine character that we are properly able to estimate our own littleness and imperfection; only as we see the beauties of his gracious character can we become intimately acquainted with God, familiar with his graces and virtues. The influence of this knowledge and fellowship with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, reacts upon our own hearts, and has a cleansing and sanctifying effect. Thus the Apostle prays for some that they might grow in the knowledge of God so as to be able to "comprehend with all saints what is the length and the breadth, the depth and the height of the love of Christ which passeth [human] understanding." ([` Eph. 3:14-19 `](#).) Those beholding the divine character, even though but dimly, as through a glass, are thereby changed from glory to glory as by the spirit of the Lord.--` [2 Cor. 3:18 `](#) .

The thought here brought to our attention is well illustrated in the modern art of photography. In photography there is necessary first of all a sensitized plate upon which the picture is to be reflected. Not any or every plate will serve such a purpose, but only one which has been specially prepared. This corresponds to the preparation of our hearts through repentance and justifying faith toward God through our Lord Jesus Christ. This first step is necessary before we can receive upon our hearts the impress of the divine character, its glory and virtue or strength. The second step is to bring the sensitized plate into good range with the features which are to be impictured upon it. This represents the proper attitude of heart; **viz.**, full consecration to the Lord, and a desire to have his will to be our will and to have his character represented in our lives. The third step is the removal of all

obscurity, all darkness, allowing the light to shine fully in upon the features to be copied. This finds its counterpart in the knowledge of God, which, as the light of truth scatters the darkness of error and sin and gives us clearer views of the divine character, and thus permits it to impress our prepared hearts and to stamp thereon his glorious character-likeness. Fourth, the sensitized plate must then be subjected to acids in order to the clearer development of the likeness. This also finds its correspondence; for our hearts, after we have gotten a clear view of the Lord, and been freely impressed with the glories of his character, require nevertheless the "fiery trials" of life, which, like the acid, only tend to develop the likeness the more perfectly. Fifth (for the correspondence continues), it is a well known fact that although photographs may be taken without the use of the precious metals, gold and silver, yet only when these are used will the photograph retain its color without fading. As heretofore seen, gold represents the divine nature, and silver represents the truth; and only in proportion as the likeness of our Lord is **fixed** in our hearts upon the basis

::R2137 : page 116::

of the truth and the divine nature can a lasting likeness be hoped for.-
-` [Rom. 8:29](#)`.

The world in general, of course, "knows not God," and very evidently the great mass of professing believers know very little about him. The Apostle Paul explains, that Satan, "the god of this world," is particularly interested in hindering any from obtaining the light upon the Lord's character and plan necessary to impicture it upon their hearts. He declares, "The god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the glorious light of the gospel of Christ (who is the image of God) should shine unto them." (` [2 Cor. 4:4](#)`.) Here we see the constant and irrepressible conflict--the battle of darkness against the light, as our Lord explained it in his day, saying, "The darkness hateth the light, neither cometh to the light." But all who receive and rejoice in and obey the light are the "children of the light;" and after the image of the Lord has been impressed upon their hearts, such become light-bearers to others and so shine forth upon all with whom they come in contact, reflecting the light which is shining upon them from the divine source unseen and unappreciated by the world.

At present the influence of these lights is but small in comparison with what it will be hereafter. Now, the Lord's people are like lights set upon a hill which cannot be hid, and yet their influence upon the world

is comparatively small. It is still true of the

::R2138 : page 116::

body of Christ as it was true of the Head, "The light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehendeth it not." But of the by and by it is written, "Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father;" "The sun of righteousness shall arise with healing in his beams." This will be the great Millennial day; and as a result of the shining forth of the elect Church, we are assured that all darkness will disappear and the light of "the knowledge of the Lord shall fill the whole earth."

Proceeding, the Apostle assures us that, in order to the attainment of this intimate knowledge of God which multiplies our grace and peace and gives us all things that pertain to life and godliness, God has "given unto us exceeding great and precious promises." Looking about us, we find that the majority of our fellow-Christians in the world, even of those who have the "precious faith" and trust in the "precious blood," must be "babes" in even elementary knowledge; for evidently they do not know much concerning these exceeding great and precious promises. If we would inquire of them with reference to these promises, the vast majority would answer,--Our hope is that by the grace of God, if faithful, we shall escape eternal torment and get to heaven. And many would add, If I can get just inside the door of heaven, it will be all I could ask or hope for.

What? Do they know **nothing** of the "exceeding great and precious promises" mentioned by the Apostle? Alas! apparently very little. But what are these promises, and who have knowledge of them?

Only those who are following in the pathway which the Apostle here marks out; who multiply their grace and peace, through an ever-increasing, intimate knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord,--those who are seeing more and more clearly the divine character and plan, and whose hearts are in a susceptible and impressionable attitude, and upon which is being **fixed** more and more distinctly the image of God's dear Son, who is the express image of the Father. ([Rom. 8:29](#) .) Before these, shining out as helps by the way, in letters of light, are the "exceeding great and precious promises" of God's Word, which to other hearts are unilluminated, dark and almost meaningless.

Which and what are these promises?

Oh, they are so many and so precious that it is difficult to know which would rank first. Perhaps first of all is the precious promise, "It doth not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when he shall appear we shall be **like him**, for we shall **see him as he is.**" Another is, "If I go away, I will come again, and receive you unto myself;" in harmony with which is the prayer, "Father, I will that these may be **with me**, where I am, that they may behold my glory." Another is, "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne." Another is, "They shall be mine...in that day when I make up my jewels." Another is, "Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." Another is, that we are "Heirs of God, joint-heirs with Jesus Christ, our Lord, if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together." Another is, that we are "**Begotten again** to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time." Another is, "To him that overcometh I will give power over the nations"--authority, dominion as "kings and priests unto God" to "reign on the earth." Another is that these kings and priests will reign to bless, as it is written, "In thy Seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed." Another promise is that Israel according to the flesh shall yet obtain mercy and blessing through the mercy of these kings and priests of the Gospel age.--` [Rom. 11:32](#)`.

Finally, all of these exceeding great and precious promises are summed up by the Apostle in his declaration that, through this knowledge of God and

::R2138 : page 117::

through the influence of these precious promises, it is God's will that we who by nature were children of wrath even as others "might become **partakers of the divine nature.**" Oh, what a rich promise is here! How exceedingly great and precious! Who could have thought such a thing? Our highest thought might possibly have been perfection of the human nature, the earthly image of God, or perhaps, as some have sung, we might want to be angels and with the angels stand. But although angelic nature is higher than human nature, our God has not been content with offering to the "elect" Church angelic nature, but in the riches of his grace and wonderful provision he has far outdone the highest flight of human fancy and has promised that the overcoming Church, the "little flock," to whom it is his good pleasure to give the

Kingdom, the bride, the Lamb's wife, shall be exalted to share the **divine glory and divine nature of her Lord**, as well as to share his heavenly Kingdom.

Such knowledge is too wonderful for us: we cannot comprehend why our great Creator should exalt to his own nature such poor, helpless creatures of the dust as we by nature are. But this and all the other gracious promises exhibit to us more and more the heights and depths, the lengths and breadths, of the love of our God, which surpasses human knowledge.

In view of what we already know of our Creator, especially as revealed to us in and through our Lord and Redeemer, Jesus, shall we not, as those who have come to see something of his glorious character, "press toward the mark" ([` Phil. 3:14 `](#)) for the attainment of all that he may be pleased to reveal to us concerning himself, that thus we may be more and more partakers of his spirit, more and more conformed to his likeness, more and more acceptable, and by and by be actually and everlastingly accepted in the Beloved, to the full realization of all those blessings which God has in reservation for them who love him, and of which now we have the exceeding great and precious promises?

Such promises and such knowledge properly inspire our hearts to love, obedience and self-sacrifice, that we may please him who has called us to his own nature and fellowship; and, as the Apostle says, "He who hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he [the Lord] is pure."

It was to this intimate knowledge of or acquaintance with the Lord and its reward that the Apostle Paul referred, saying,--"That I might **know him** and [experience] the power of **his resurrection** [the First or Chief Resurrection, by] being made [fully] conformable unto his death [--which full surrender is possible to those only who **know him** well and have drunk in his spirit]."--` [Phil. 3:10](#) `.

R2037**QUESTIONS OF GENERAL INTEREST.**

Question.--Some define **gnosis**, rendered "knowledge" in [` 2 Pet. 1:5 `](#), as "the spirit of judicial investigation and inquiry." If we are always willing to add to our faith the **gnosis**, the spirit of judicial investigation and inquiry, the **epignosis**, the exact, sufficient knowledge, will certainly be the reward. Do you consider this the Apostle's meaning?

Answer.--Reference to other passages in which the word **gnosis** occurs shows that the above definition is not adequate. See [` 1 Cor. 8:1 `](#); [` 2 Cor. 4:6 `](#); [` Eph. 3:19 `](#); [` 2 Pet. 3:18 `](#); etc.

To our understanding the Apostle's meaning is not, "Add to your faith an investigating disposition," but as follows:

Beginning with those who already have some knowledge, enough to be a basis for **faith**, he exhorts them to add to their faith fortitude (common version, "virtue"); that is to say, he implies that if they hold to their faith against the attacks of the enemy it will develop **fortitude**, an added grace of character. And when he says, "Add to your fortitude knowledge," we understand him to mean that if faith be held firmly, and fortitude of character result, this, under the Spirit's guidance, will bring the faithful one to deeper and wider expanses of **knowledge**; or, as the same Apostle suggests ([` 2 Pet. 3:18 `](#)), the faithful one will **grow** in both grace **and** knowledge, and the holy Spirit, through its begetting, will enable such to know (appreciate) the deep things of God, the things freely given unto such by God, the knowledge of God resulting from our experience in the school of Christ. It is concerning this knowledge, not merely concerning the intricacies of doctrinal matters, but the heart sympathy and communion with the Lord himself, that the Apostle Paul exclaimed, "I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge **of Christ Jesus my Lord.**"--[` Phil. 3:8 `](#).

This knowledge, received into a good and honest heart, will bring forth the fruitage or grace of character here termed "**self-control**" (common version, "temperance"). As is elsewhere stated, "He that hath this hope in him, purifieth himself," controls himself, purges out more and more of the old leaven. Following and connected with the

attainment of such self-control would come **patience**: for the self-mastery would teach the necessity for sympathy with and patience toward others. This patience in turn would lead to and develop the next grace mentioned; namely, **piety**--a condition in which the love of God is shed abroad in the heart, influencing all the thoughts and words and deeds. This condition in turn develops **brotherly kindness** --a love for all who are brethren and yoke fellows in the cause of righteousness and truth, the cause of God. And brotherly kindness in turn leads to that still broader and deeper experience designated the chief of all graces; namely, **love**, love for God, love for the brethren, love deep and pure and true, which thinketh no evil and doth not puff itself up, and is not easily offended, rejoices always in the truth and never in iniquity, the climax of Christian attainment in the present life; the grace of all graces, which never fadeth, and which will but be perfected when we receive the new resurrection body.

R 4808**SPIRITUAL GROWTH**

"If ye do these things, ye shall never fall."--` [2 Peter 1:10](#)`.

THERE is a philosophy in the growth and development of Christian character, just as truly as in the growth and development of vegetation; and the more thoroughly we acquaint ourselves with the natural processes and conditions of development and growth in either case, the better we shall understand how to cultivate and to secure the desirable end--maturity and luxuriant fruitfulness. The farmer who puts into practice only what he has learned by accident, in a haphazard way, and who is goaded to effort only by sheer necessity, must not expect the fruitful fields, the abundant harvests and the well-earned approbation of the enterprising, thrifty farmer who has made a study of the business and has brought knowledge, carefully gleaned, together with enterprise and energy, to his assistance in the work.

Take, for example, a fruit tree. If one, knowing nothing about the necessity for cultivation, simply plants the tree and lets it alone, its strength, instead of producing fruit, will generally go toward making wood and leaves; worms and decay may attack its roots, insects may sting and blight its scanty fruitage; and if it continues to stand, it will be only a useless, fruitless lumberer of the ground, an advertisement of the farmer's negligence and worthy only of having the axe laid to its root. Had it been pruned and trimmed and kept free from insects, etc., under the blessing of God's air and rain and sunshine, it would have been a fruitful, creditable tree; for the laws of nature are true and faithful in all their operations.

And none the less rigid are the operations of moral law in the growth and development of moral character. Under proper conditions and with proper, diligent cultivation, the character will grow and develop according to fixed laws, and will become beautiful and fruitful in blessings to self and others; or, lacking the necessary cultivation, even under favorable natural conditions, it will be deformed, worthless and fruitless.

When we presented our bodies as living sacrifices to God, holy and acceptable through the merit of our Redeemer, we there received the spirit of adoption to the spirit plane, as spiritual sons of God; and from that time the faculties and dispositions of our mortal bodies were reckoned as our new being, now under the direction and control of the

Spirit of God. The faithfulness with which we cultivate this reckoned new nature, by persistently weeding out old habits of thought and action, supplanting them with new virtues, and training them to activity in the Divine service, is to prove our worthiness or unworthiness of the actual new nature to be received at the resurrection, to which perfect spirit condition our present reckoned condition stands related as embryotic; for the character and disposition of the embryo New Creature will be the disposition of the perfected New Creature, when born in the resurrection.

The Apostle affirms ([` Rom. 8:11 `](#)) that if we really have the Spirit of God in us--unless we quench it or put it away from us--it will quicken our mortal bodies, make them alive toward God, active in growing into his likeness and fruitful in Christian graces and activities. Again he adds, "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ he is none of his," and "As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God."-- [` Rom. 8:9,14 `](#) .

It is our business, therefore, to **grow**; to cultivate in ourselves those dispositions which are worthy of us as spiritual sons of God, called to be "heirs of God and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ."

THE DEVELOPMENT OF CHRISTIAN CHARACTER IS A GRADUAL, DAILY LIFE-WORK

The Apostle Peter tells us how to proceed in the matter of cultivating Christian character, intimating that we cannot do it all in a day, nor in a few days, but that it must be a gradual, daily life-work, a process of addition --adding virtue to virtue and grace to grace, day by day and hour by hour. He says, "Giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue [fortitude]; and to virtue, knowledge; and to knowledge, temperance [self-control]; and to temperance, patience; and to patience, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, charity [love]." Then he adds, "If ye do these things ye shall never fall."-- [` 2 Pet. 1:5-7,10 `](#) .

This is a very strong assurance--that if we do these things we are **sure to stand approved of God**. We do well, therefore, to consider them with **special care**. Here are eight elements which must go toward making up the Christian character, the one to be added to the other and assimilated by the spiritual germ of the new nature, until the embryo New Creature is formed; and then it must continue to grow and develop. Look at them again. They are:

1. Faith. 5. Patience.
2. Virtue [fortitude]. 6. Godliness.
3. Knowledge. 7. Brotherly kindness.
4. Temperance [self-control]. 8. Charity [love].

"A THUS, SAITH THE LORD," SHOULD BE THE END OF ALL CONTROVERSY

Now for a little self-examination. Let each ask himself: (1) Have I the **faith** to which the Apostle here refers; not faith in every thing or every person, but faith in God--in his Plan of redemption through the vicarious, or substitutionary sacrifice of Christ, and in all his rich promises built upon that sure foundation? Do I trust him implicitly? Is a "Thus saith the Lord" the end of all controversy, the solution of all doubts and the restful assurance in every perplexity?

(2) Am I endeavoring to lead a **virtuous** life? This, to the child of God, consecrated to be a living sacrifice, implies much more than merely abstaining from evil. It implies living truthfully, that is, **true to his covenant**, which to wilfully violate would be equivalent to swearing falsely. It is **fortitude**, strength of character in righteousness. It implies the cultivation of the strictest integrity in our dealings, both with God and with our fellowmen, scrupulous honesty, justice and truth being the only standards.

The Psalmist clearly defines it thus, saying, "He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth **in his heart**. He that backbiteth not with his tongue, nor doeth evil to his neighbor; in whose eyes a vile person is condemned; but he honoreth them that fear the Lord. He that sweareth to his own hurt and changeth not [who will not violate a contract found to be unfavorable to himself]. He that putteth not out his money to usury [taking unjust advantage of the necessities of others], nor taketh reward against the innocent. He that doeth these things shall never be moved." ([Psa. 15:2-5](#).) Such a one is a virtuous man, a man of fortified or strong character. How we need to invoke Divine assistance here! and how critically to judge ourselves!

(3) Am I endeavoring day by day to gain a more thorough and complete **knowledge** of God, of the Plan revealed in his Word, and of the special features now in operation, that I may co-operate with him in its execution; and of his will concerning **me** in the particular relationships

::R4808 : page 135::

and conditions in which I now stand--**irrespective of my own will and disposition in any matter?** Am I striving to gain this knowledge of God and of his righteous will concerning us, as revealed through his Word, by the holy Spirit? Neglect of this Divinely appointed means of knowledge is equivalent to setting up our own imperfect standard of righteousness and ignoring the Divine standard. It is, therefore, important that we give **all diligence** to the study of the Divine Oracle, that we may be fortified in faith and works accordingly.

(4) Am I **temperate**, moderate, exercising **self-control** in all things--in eating, in drinking, in home arrangements, in conduct, in thoughts, in words, in deeds? Do I realize that self-control is one of the most important elements of good character? "He that ruleth his spirit is better than he that taketh a city," is the counsel of the Wise Man; and many a victorious general has yet to learn to conquer and control **himself**. Self-control has

::R4809 : page 135::

to do with all our sentiments, thoughts, tastes, appetites, labors, pleasures, sorrows and hopes. Its cultivation, therefore, means a high order of character-development. Self-control, accompanied by faith, fortitude, knowledge from on High, implies increased zeal and activity in Divine things, and increased moderation in earthly things. In judgment, in conduct, in the regulation of temporal affairs, etc., "Let your moderation [temperance, self-control] be known unto all men." ([`Phil. 4:5`](#) .) Let them see by our thoughtful (not rash and hasty), careful and considerate demeanor, in every affair of life, that we honor our profession.

(5) Am I **patient** under trial and discipline, keeping my feelings always under the control of enlightened reason, letting patience have its perfect work in cultivating the character, however severely the plow and the harrow may break up the sub-soil of the heart, meekly submitting to the discipline in every case? and am I submitting **cheerfully** under the mighty hand of God, in his work of preparing me for a place in his Kingdom soon to be established? The Greek word from which patience is here translated means **cheerful endurance**.

(6) Am I carefully observing and endeavoring to **pattern my character** and course of action **after the Divine model?** If a parent, or in any position of authority, am I using that authority as God uses

his--not for selfish purposes, to make a boast of it, or in any way to oppress or trample upon the God-given individual rights of those under such authority, but for the blessing and advantage of those under it, even to the extent of self-denial, with patience, dignity and grace, and not with boastful imperiousness, which is the attitude of tyrants?

If a son, or one under authority to any extent, do I consider the example of loving obedience furnished us in the example of our dear Lord? His delight was to do the Father's will at any cost to himself. As a man, under the kingdoms, authorities, of this world, and as a youth, under the authority of earthly parents, he was loyal and faithful ([`Matt. 22:21`](#); [`Luke 2:51`](#)); yet all of this earthly authority was exercised by his personal inferiors, even though they were his legal superiors. How beautifully we shall be able to grace and fill whatever station we occupy in life, if we carefully study and copy **godliness** (God-likeness), whether we be princes or peasants, masters or servants!

(7) Does **brotherly-kindness** characterize all my actions? Does it cause me to make due allowance for the inherited weaknesses and circumstantial misfortunes of others? Does brotherly-kindness deal patiently and helpfully so far as wisdom, with a view to the correction of those faults, may dictate; and even at the expense of self-interest, if necessary and prudent?

If, as I look myself squarely in the face, I recognize deformity of character, do I thankfully accept a brother's proffered aid and meekly bear reproof, determining that by the grace of God I will overcome such dispositions, and prove myself a help rather than a hindrance to others, if it should even cost my life to do it; and that I will no longer foster my old dispositions, but will plunge into activity in the service of God with those who should have my co-operation in service, instead of being a burden to them?

(8) Have I **charity (love unfeigned)** for the unrighteous and unlovely, as well as for the good and beautiful--a love which is ever ready to manifest itself in wise and helpful activity for saint and sinner; a love which pities, helps, comforts, cheers and blesses all within its reach; which longs for the grand opportunities and power and glory of the incoming Age, chiefly for its privileges of scattering universal blessing; and which, in harmony with that sentiment, utilizes every present opportunity wisely and in harmony with the Divine Plan for the accomplishment of the same end--thus manifesting and cultivating the disposition which must be found in every member of

that glorious company which will constitute the King's Cabinet in the incoming Age? If this disposition is not begun, cultivated and developed **here**, we shall not be considered worthy of that office **there**.

Just as in a well-kept orchard pruning, trimming and cultivation are necessary to accomplish the desired end of fruitfulness, so must we be watchful and take necessary precautions to prevent blight and decay of character, and to guard against the intrusion of evil powers and influences calculated to sap the life of the New Creature. By resisting the Devil he will flee from us; and by patient continuance in well-doing an increasing measure of development will result. "If these things be in you and abound," says the Apostle Peter (that is, if you have them in some measure and keep on cultivating them, so that they abound more and more and **rule** in you), "they make you that ye shall be neither barren [idle] nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ." The Truth is for such: "Light is sown for the **righteous**," and they are **sure to get it**. They shall not walk in darkness. If any man will **do** the will of God, he shall know of the doctrine. ([` John 7:17 `](#).) "But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath **forgotten** that he was purged from his old sins."

LET US GIVE ALL DILIGENCE IN THESE MATTERS

"Wherefore, brethren, **give diligence** to make your calling and election sure; for if ye do these things [if you diligently cultivate this disposition] ye shall **never fall**." Being justified fully, by faith in the sacrifice of Christ for your redemption and sanctification (setting apart from the world and devotion to the service of God) by the Truth, your final selection to that position of glory, honor and immortality, to which you are called, shall be **sure**. For "so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting Kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ."

"Wherefore," again says our beloved Brother Peter, "I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things. Yea, I think it meet so long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up by putting you in remembrance....Moreover, I will endeavor that you may be able after my decease to have these things always

::R4809 : page 136::

in remembrance." This Peter did; and the Church to this day may profit by his brotherly counsel.

While the Apostle Peter, addressing the consecrated, thus clearly and explicitly points out the way in which we may make our calling and election sure to the chief favor of God, the Apostle Paul, addressing the same class, shows that wilful and continual neglect to develop and cultivate the Christian character, involves the loss, not only of the chief favor of the High Calling, but, eventually, of all favor. He wrote, "If ye [ye who have solemnly covenanted to sacrifice your **very life** in the service of God, for the eradication of evil] live after the flesh [with selfish effort, merely to gratify self] ye shall die." ([` Rom. 8:13 `](#).) God has no use or place for wilful covenant-breakers and covenant-despisers, after they have been brought to a knowledge of the Truth and of his will, and have covenanted to do it faithfully.

With all our striving and watchfulness, however, we shall not be able, in our present condition, to reach our ideal. Perfection is something which can only be approximated in the present life. But **the measure of our effort to attain it** will prove the measure of our faithfulness and earnest desire to do so. And that effort will not be unfruitful. If no fruit appears, we may be sure that little or no effort is made at cultivation, pruning, etc. The fruit will appear, not only in the development of the Christian graces of character, but also in increasing activities. We must not wait for our immortal bodies, promised us in our resurrection, before our activity in God's service begins. If we possess the spirit [the will, the disposition] of that new nature, our **mortal** bodies will be active in the service of God's Truth **now**. Our feet will be swift to run his errands, our hands prompt to do his bidding, our tongues ready to bear testimony to the Truth, our minds active in devising ways and means to do so more and more abundantly and effectively. Thus we shall be living epistles, known and read of all about us--an honor to him who called us out of darkness into his marvelous light.

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::R4809 : page 136::

KEEPING THE BODY UNDER

"I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air."--` [I Cor. 9:26](#) `.

THE Apostle Paul had definite knowledge as to what constitutes the prize. He was not uncertain about it; it was not a question with him as

to its being one thing or another. St. Paul knew that the "high calling in Christ Jesus" is that we may be heirs with him, if we suffer with him--that we shall be with him in glory. Neither was the Apostle uncertain as to the terms and conditions of the race. He knew that they were even unto **death**; and that if he should seek to save his life he would lose it. Neither was he uncertain as to his own determination. He knew positively that he had entered the course. He was not of those who merely say, "I hope to do so some time." He had made with the Lord his covenant of sacrifice unto death.

Nor was the Apostle uncertain as to his opportunity to gain the prize. He knew that it remained with **him** to will and to do in harmony with God's good pleasure. He knew that nothing impossible was required of him in this race; that the terms and conditions of the race include "grace to help in every time of need"; and that

::R4810 : page 136::

this grace and help would come from the Lord. Hence, the Apostle's expression that, for the runners in this race-course, there was no uncertainty, from first to last.

Thus it may be with all under the guiding eye of the Great Redeemer. We may each make our calling and election sure: "If ye do these things, ye shall never fall, for so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting Kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ."--` [2 Pet. 1:10,11](#)` .

"I KEEP MY BODY UNDER AND BRING IT INTO SUBJECTION"

The Apostle tells us that he **kept his body under**, lest, having preached the good tidings to others, he himself, should be a castaway. "I keep my body under, and bring it into subjection,...lest I myself should be a castaway," he declares. (` [I Cor. 9:27](#)` .) One translation has this, "I brow-beat my body"; that is to say, I use coercive measures upon my body.

The body originally belonged to the natural man, the natural will. When the old will gave place to the new will, the latter became the owner of the body. The new will cannot properly be served by the old body, because the new mind is perfect and the body imperfect. When the new mind, the mind of God, the mind of Christ, therefore, takes into possession the mortal body, it has more or less difficulty. The

mind is not suited to the body, nor the body to the mind. It is the work, therefore, of the new will to show its obedience to the Lord, its full loyalty to the Divine will, even though the body should be, in some respects, treated shamefully, its claim, its supposed necessities, etc., being ignored.

Not only are we all thus to mortify and brow-beat the body, but, additionally, we are to bring it into subjection. We are to make it serve the New Creature. The Apostle says, "But if the spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his spirit." ([` Rom. 8:11 `](#).) The holy Spirit, which comes to us more and more as we feed upon the Lord, assists us to conform our lives to his will, and also quickens or makes alive our mortal bodies to the service of the Truth.

There are not two creatures, but one; we cannot be two creatures at once. It is not until the old creature submits and we are transformed, so far as the will is concerned, that we become New Creatures, so that, henceforth, we really are New Creatures. But the New Creature has not its new body as yet. In our text the Apostle evidently refers to the New Creature, the New Man. There is an outward man, which the world may think is the individual, but in proportion as the outward man is brought into subjection and service, the New Creature is growing stronger, until eventually, with the death of the human body, God will give the New Creature a new body, in the resurrection. Then the new Creature will be satisfied, when it shall be found in his likeness.

There is a tendency for the body, the flesh, to arise from its condition of reckoned deadness. Hence the New Creature needs to be continually on guard in the good fight of faith. These battlings of the new mind against the flesh are a "good fight," in the sense that they are fightings against sins and weaknesses that belong to the fallen nature. The entire course of the New Creature is the course of faith. It would be impossible for one to keep up this battle against the flesh and its propensities and desires, unless he exercise faith in the promises and in the Lord as his Helper.

THE APOSTLE HAD NO THOUGHT OF HIS COMING SHORT

There is another passage in which St. Paul says that we should "fear lest a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of **you** should seem to come short of

::R4810 : page 137::

it." ([` Heb. 4:1 `](#).) He had no thought of coming short of it **himself**, but he urged those to whom he was writing to make their "calling and election sure."

It will be a great help to the overcoming of the weaknesses of the fallen nature to have rightly made a full consecration of the will, a full enlistment of every power and talent of mind and body to the service of the Lord. He who takes this proper view of his consecration to the Lord and of his enlistment in the Lord's army, realizes that he has nothing more to give to the Lord. Hence, whatever struggle of the will he may have had, is all ended when he has finally decided to give himself to the Lord. How important it is, therefore, to realize that the service is until **death**, and that there is no room even to consider any suggestion to withdraw and cease to fight the good fight of faith!

We are to remember that it is **not the flesh**, the old creature, which has entered the School of Christ, and is under instruction and preparation for the Kingdom, for "flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God." ([` I Cor. 15:50 `](#).) Our acceptance of the Divine call to the spirit nature means, not only the renunciation of the earthly nature **in every sense of the word**, but also our begetting as New Creatures, "sons of God." The New Creature, the new mind, the new will, is in the School of Christ, to be perfected, to be brought into full accord with the Divine will, to become a copy or likeness of the Lord. We shall never succeed in bringing our **flesh** into absolute harmony with the Divine Law, because of its imperfections, inherited and otherwise. Hence, the necessity that it be covered with the robe of Christ's righteousness. He who looks for perfection of his flesh, and who rests his faith therein, must of necessity have a poor hope of ever attaining to the likeness of Christ-- of ever becoming one of the predestinated class--of becoming "the image of his Son."-- [` Rom. 8:29 `](#).

"WE DO THOSE THINGS WHICH WE OUGHT NOT AND LEAVE UNDONE WHAT WE OUGHT TO DO"

In joining the Lord in faith and consecration we are proclaiming ourselves, **not** as graduates and heirs, but as **students**, disciples, who **desire to be prepared to inherit** "the things which God has prepared for them that love him." ([` I Cor. 2:9 `](#).) If this thought be kept in mind as the Divine teaching on the subject, it will tend to prevent our discouragement with ourselves when we find that,

unavoidably, we do those things which we ought not to do, and leave undone those things which we ought to do; for in our flesh dwells no perfection.-- [`Rom. 7:15,18,19,25`](#) .

It is unnecessary for us to point out that the new mind, in proportion as it develops in likeness to the mind of Christ, will relax no efforts to keep the body under, with the motions of sin--to keep the will of the flesh dead. Surely no spirit-begotten son of God could allow sin to **reign** in his mortal body. Should sin to any degree control him, it will not be willingly, and hence could be but momentarily--until the new mind, the New Creature, seeing the uprising of the flesh, would conquer it, obtaining the promised grace and help in every time of need, from the heavenly storehouse of grace--Christ.

This thought, rightly entertained, will help true disciples to appreciate their own position, and not to be utterly cast down if overtaken in a fault of the flesh, so long as they realize that their **hearts** are not in sympathy with the sin and unrighteousness, but, on the contrary, in full sympathy with the principles and instructions of our Teacher, and longing to be cleansed and acceptable in his sight. Moreover, this thought will also help all such to exercise fervency of love amongst themselves, toward the brethren who similarly are **disciples, pupils in this School**--New Creatures, not according to the flesh, but according to the spirit of their mind. If, therefore, each should see blemishes in the flesh of the brethren, disapproved and striven against, he should remember that the evil which he sees is his brother's enemy, and not the brother himself, the New Creature--if so be that he gives us the assurance that his heart, his will, is in harmony with the Lord and his law of Love; and that he is daily seeking to fight a successful warfare against the weaknesses of the flesh.

"A MAN IS TEMPTED WHEN HE IS LED AWAY OF HIS OWN DESIRES"

When studying this subject we must keep two facts in mind: (1), The Scriptures ascribe **no sin** to the New Creature, and (2), **no perfection in righteousness** to our fallen flesh. The New Creature (whose flesh is reckoned dead), which is represented by the new mind, and which is begotten of God, CANNOT SIN; for in its very essence, as the seed or germ implanted by the Truth--"the **spirit** of the Truth"--it is opposed to sin. This New Creature is so fully in accord with righteousness, so fully imbued with the spirit of the Lord, the spirit of holiness, that it delights in holiness and not in sin; and this must be the case so long as this begotten or Holy-Spirit-condition continues. "He that is

begotten of God sinneth not [willingly--neither approves of sin nor takes pleasure in it]; because his seed remaineth in him" [the holy seed of the Truth, the spirit of Truth with which he was begotten]; "and that Wicked One toucheth him not."-- [`I John 3:9`](#); [`5:18`](#).

We are not to suppose that every trial or difficulty which besets us is of the Devil; but rather to remember the Apostle's words, "A man is tempted when he is led away of his own desires and enticed." ([`James 1:13,14`](#).) Such temptations, then, are of the flesh, and the result of our being members of the fallen race, whose weaknesses and imperfections have been aggravated and intensified for now six thousand years. So, then, we are to recognize as among our chief foes our own inherent weaknesses and predisposition to things selfish, depraved, sinful.

The whole world, thus depraved and under the control of the spirit of selfishness, are largely, though unconsciously, the tools of Satan, "who worketh in the hearts of the children of disobedience." ([`Eph. 2:2`](#).) To the children of God the world has become an enemy and a

::R4811 : page 137::

tempter by reason of the fact that we [the Church] have been "begotten again" to **new** hopes, **new** ambitions, **new** aspirations, **new** desires, which are along radically different lines from anything the world knows or has sympathy with.

"THE FLESH DESIRES CONTRARY TO THE SPIRIT, AND THE SPIRIT CONTRARY TO THE FLESH"

Our begetting is of the Holy Spirit, and its tendencies are heavenly and spiritual, in harmony with righteousness and love. Yet it is only our **hearts** that are thus changed--our **flesh** is much more in harmony with the **world** than with the new order of things **established in our hearts and wills** by grace and truth, through Christ. Consequently, when the world, through the words or writings or general spirit of any of its children, comes into contact with the Lord's people, immediately they-- the Lord's people--find that, although their hearts are loyal to the Lord and loyal to all the gracious things which he has promised them, and to the spirit of righteousness, love and truth, yet nevertheless, their flesh has an affinity for and an attraction toward the world, its views, its arrangements, its pleasures, etc.

::R4811 : page 138::

For this reason the Christian is called upon to reckon himself **dead**, not only to sin, but to his own natural desires, appetites, inclinations, and also to the world, which is in harmony with sin and has perverted tastes and appetites. As the Apostle intimates, there is a constant battle between the New Creature, the new will, and the old creature, the fleshly and depraved disposition. He says, "The flesh desires **contrary** to the spirit, and the spirit **contrary** to the flesh." ([Gal. 5:17`](#).) And even though the advanced Christian has reached the place where he is enabled to reckon his flesh and will completely dead and buried, nevertheless, he has need continually to re-examine himself lest the flesh should become alive again. This was the Apostle's method. He says, "I keep my body under [dead, buried] and bring it into subjection [to the new mind]; lest having preached to others I myself should be a castaway." ([I Cor. 9:27`](#).) This keeping of the body under, this watching it lest it should become alive again, is a constant necessity to those who would be overcomers; for it is the victory of the new mind, the new will, over the old will, the will of the flesh, that constitutes us victors, by developing in us strong, holy character--character like unto that of our glorious Lord and Redeemer.

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R 3585**MAKE SURE OF WINNING IN GOD'S ELECTION.**

"Brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure."--` [2 Pet. 1:10](#)`.

INTEREST in the recent election of a President of the United States has been general throughout the whole world, and especially amongst English-speaking peoples: in fact, the exercise of the franchise by the public, whenever and wherever, is generally a matter of absorbing interest to "the children of this world"--whether the office be a high one, as that of President of the United States, or Member of Congress, or Member of Parliament, or whether it be a lower one, for some petty office of ward magistrate or constable. The candidates for these offices and their friends, in proportion to the dignity of the office, do not hesitate to spend money for printing, brass bands, banners, flags, banquets, traveling speakers, etc. And this is looked upon as thoroughly reasonable, and engaged in by the reputedly more intelligent and sane of all nations. But there is another election in progress--an election of a hundred and forty-four thousand to a higher position than that of any earthly magistrate or potentate; and for not a few years merely, for the elect are promised this highest of all honors for all eternity.

Does the world know about this election? We answer, No. True, many have heard something about an election--that God is "taking out of the nations a people for his name," a "little flock," who, as joint-heirs with Jesus Christ their Lord, will be given the Kingdom which God hath promised to them that love him,--the Kingdom for which we pray, "Thy Kingdom come; thy will be done on earth as it is done in heaven." But though they have heard of this Kingdom and the election now in progress, to make up the foreordained number of its kings and priests, they do not really believe it, but regard it as a fantasy, "as a tale that is told," a fairy story, which none but the simple-minded and children would take seriously. Ah, yes! and so the Redeemer-King informed us it would be; and so he prayed to the Father, saying, "I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent and revealed them unto babes; even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight."--` [Matt. 11:25,26](#)`.

If the wise and prudent, the keen and the shrewd, the learned and the great, really comprehended the situation,--if they really believed in this election which is in progress under divine direction, according to

the divine Word, what haste there would be amongst them to "make their calling and election sure," as the Apostle exhorts. It is not that people are not appreciative of such honors and dignities of power and influence as this Kingdom offers, that they pass by God's election and treat it with indifference; for their love of power, their love of influence, their love of position and prestige, is abundantly in evidence in connection, not only with the governments of this world, but also in connection with even the trifling offices in the nominal churches. The spirit of "Which shall be greatest?" has apparently not died out.

But while those who seek for earthly offices of a brief tenure and comparatively small dignity are willing to sacrifice time, energy, money, etc., to attain these petty offices and honors, and while they can arouse enthusiasm among their friends and neighbors, leading to the expenditure of time, money and energy to an astounding degree, and though they think it strange that we "run not with them to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of us" ([` 1 Pet. 4:4 `](#)), nevertheless, they affect to think it remarkable that we who are candidates for the superlatively high office for which God has nominated us should spend time, influence and means in making our calling and election sure, and in assisting "brethren" in their election work; they consider our time wasted. Although they spend millions of dollars in speeches, brass bands, editorials, parades, etc., to determine which of two men should hold the most honorable office of this nation for four years, they consider it remarkably strange that we should spend a fragment of the amount or make the one-thousandth part of the commotion to secure for **ourselves** and to all of the "elect" the great "prize of our high calling."

DIFFERENT STANDPOINT--DIFFERENT VIEW

All this only illustrates the two very different standpoints from which matters may be viewed. From the world's standpoint the Lord's consecrated people who seek to make their calling and election sure to the heavenly Kingdom are counted fools, because to

::R3585 : page 198::

attain that they are willing to sacrifice present temporal interests; and this sentiment of the public is the same today that it was in the Apostle's time, when he wrote, "If any man among you seemeth to be wise, in this world, let him become a fool that he may be wise." ([` 1 Cor. 3:18 `](#); [` 4:10 `](#).) From our standpoint, seeing the eternal things and the glories attaching to them, we cannot avoid the feeling that it is

"the children of this world" who are foolish, in that they expend so much breath and energy upon things which, if attained, last but a short time, and bring with them large measures of perplexity and trouble and criticism of opponents to their election: and sometimes untellable injury to themselves, the ruled.

But why this difference of opinion? Which party is sane, and which is lacking in sanity? We answer, that the difference is that the one class sees what the other class does not see, and that because God has specially revealed it unto the one. As it is written, "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man [the natural man, unilluminated by the holy Spirit] the things which God hath in reservation for them that love him; but God hath **revealed them unto us** by his Spirit,...which searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God."-- [1 Cor. 2:9,10](#) .

The fact, then, is that the Lord's consecrated people, through faith and by God's holy Spirit, have inside information respecting "the things not seen as yet." Hence we see that the two parties--the one seeking earthly honors and advantages, for themselves and each other, the other seeking the heavenly advantages, or election, for themselves and each other --are both laboring for what they see, for what they consider to be the most valuable thing they see and may attain. O, how precious, then, is the eye of faith, which the Lord's consecrated people have! No wonder our Lord said to some of his disciples, "Blessed are your eyes for they see, and your ears, for they hear." Other eyes do not see and other ears do not hear these heavenly things. And in that sense of the word comparatively few even in civilized lands have been called or **nominated** of the Lord for his election --comparatively few know anything about it or the terms which must be understood and obeyed in order to make the calling and election sure.

IGNORANCE RESPECTING GOD'S ELECTION

Even amongst professing Protestant Christians the majority do not know that there is an election. The leading denomination, Methodists, positively deny that there is an election; and even the large denominations which hold that an election is in progress (Presbyterians and Baptists, etc.) have totally false conceptions of its character. They regard God's call or nomination as being the election itself, and hence the words of the Apostle in our text confuse rather than help them. They think of the matter from the standpoint of divine foreknowledge and predestination; they consider the election as

something done by the Almighty wholly regardless of the character and works of the elect, saying in their Confessions of Faith that it takes place without consideration of any worthiness or merit on the part of the elect, but solely of divine grace. They thus make void the Word of God

::R3586 : page 198::

and the election inducements which it holds out-- confusing their own minds, and in the end traducing the character of the divine ruler and his law.

Would that they could see what is so plainly set forth in the divine Word, **viz.:** (1) That the predestination on God's part was that he would choose a Church,--from amongst those whom his grace would redeem from the curse of death through the precious blood of Christ. (2) That he predestinated that this Church should be of a fixed, positive, limited number; --we believe literally 144,000--of whom the nucleus was found in the remnant of Israel which accepted of Christ at and after Pentecost--the number being constantly added to throughout the Gospel age, and to be fully completed with the end of this age. (3) That he predestinated what must be the fixed character of each one whom he would recognize as a member of this elect Church, the body of Christ--as the Apostle says, he "predestinated that we should be conformed to the likeness of his Son." ([` Rom. 8:29 `](#).) Consequently the predestination meant that none could be of the elect Kingdom class (however plainly they heard the call or nomination) unless they made their calling and election sure by cultivating the graces of the Spirit and thus coming into heart-likeness of our Lord Jesus Christ--copies of him who set us an example, that we should walk in his steps.--` [1 Pet. 2:21](#) `.

Here we have an election which accords with every definition of the Scriptures and the Scriptural facts relating to the divine plan of the ages. It is this election which we feel justified in securing at any cost, at any self-denial, at any self-sacrifice; and these self-denials and self-sacrifices are **works** which must be performed if we would be of the elect; as the Apostle says, we must "**work** out our own salvation with fear and trembling." ([` Phil. 2:12 `](#); [` Jas. 2:22 `](#).) Yet these works are not ours (as men) but as "new creatures," members of the body of Christ. And they are God's works, in the sense that they are incited by his Word and Spirit, for "it is God that **worketh** in you to will and to do."--` [Phil. 2:13](#) `; [` Eph. 3:20 `](#).

Let us not be misunderstood, however. Our justification, the **basis** of our call or nomination to this high position in the Kingdom was secured, not by works, but by simple faith without works. We were justified by faith, and had peace with God, before it was possible for us to do any works which would be acceptable in his sight. But when we were accepted in the Beloved, having made full consecration of our mortal bodies, and every interest pertaining thereto, then the works began, the sacrificing began, the self-denials began, the overcoming of the world began, the battle with the world, the flesh and the devil began. This battle must be won in our hearts (even though we will not attain perfection in the flesh) else we will not make our election sure and receive the crown of glory, the symbol of our joint-heirship with him who bought us with his own precious blood.

So, then, we see **(a)** that only those who have heard something at least of the grace of God in Christ have been in the remotest sense in contact with the privileges of this election--because "faith cometh by hearing." And **(b)** faith, the result of hearing, rightly received, brings justification from the sins that are past, and peace with God. And **(c)** only those who are at peace with God (being justified by faith) are

::R3586 : page 199::

called to joint-heirship with Christ in his sacrifice, walking in his footsteps and thus attaining to joint-heirship with him in his Kingdom. And **(d)** only those thus called or nominated by God have the remotest opportunity of becoming the elect. And then mark, **(e)** the Lord's own declaration, "Many are called; few are chosen [elected--from the same Greek word]."--` [Matt. 22:14](#) `.

Let us not only assure ourselves of the fact that there is an elect class being selected during the Gospel age, to a special position of honor and service with the Lord, but let us at the same time note the lessons enjoined upon this class of called or nominated ones--the instructions given them of the Lord whereby they may make their calling and election sure.

OTHER SCRIPTURE REFERENCES TO THE ELECT

"I endure all things for the **elect's** sake," writes the Apostle Paul. (` [2 Tim. 2:10](#) `.) The Apostle's sufferings whereby, as he said, he sought to "fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ [were] for his body's sake, which is the Church" (` [Col. 1:24](#) `)--not for the world. The reason for this is evident: The Apostle knew the Lord's plan to be

to call and to elect during this Gospel age a little flock of overcomers of the world, faithful even unto death, as a Royal Priesthood, to share with the Lord Jesus in the Millennial Kingdom. He knew, therefore, that labor on behalf of the world before the world's day of trial or judgment would come, would be to a large extent at least love's labor lost; and hence he was not of those who would "beat the air" in the service of the Lord, accomplishing nothing; he would work according to the divine direction and thus be a co-worker together with God, that in due time as a member of the elect company, faithful to the Lord's call, he would be granted a share in the Kingdom which is to bless all the families of the earth.

ELECTION ACCORDING TO GRACE

"Even so, at this present time there is an **election** according to grace....Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for, but the **election** hath obtained it and the rest were blinded." ([Rom. 11:5,7](#) .) Here the Apostle is speaking of this same elect Church, and is referring to the Jewish remnant out of all the tribes with which this elect Church was started, and to which, after Israel's national rejection of the Lord, the special invitation went forth to the Gentiles, to "take out of them a people for his name [to bear the name of Christ]" to complete the predestinated number of the elect 144,000 (twelve thousand **accredited** to each of the twelve tribes of Israel). Thus we who are being called from amongst the Gentiles are invited to fill up the deficiency in the elect number of Israel, and will be, so to speak, divided amongst the twelve tribes, tho according to what rule of distinction the Scriptures do not show.

GOD'S ELECT, HOLY AND BELOVED

"Put on, therefore, as God's **elect**, holy and beloved, a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, long suffering, forbearing one another and forgiving one another." ([Col. 3:12,13](#) .) Here we have an intimation of the character-likeness to God's dear Son which the same writer tells us God has predestinated respecting everyone who will make his calling and election sure.-- [Rom. 8:29](#) .

God has called us with his high calling, and from the time we accept the call and make requisite full consecration of ourselves to him he gives us the earnest of our inheritance, **viz.**, the spirit of adoption, the spirit of sonship: it remains, however, for us to be tested,--to prove the depth of our consecration, the sincerity of our professed love. If we love the Lord with all our hearts we will seek to do these things which

are pleasing to him, and these the Apostle is specifying in this Scripture, showing us that God's requirements are all in harmony with his holy spirit of love; that "Love is the fulfilling of the Law," and that we must attain to this condition of perfect love in our hearts if we desire to finish our course with joy, and make our calling and election sure--making sure a share in the inheritance to the spiritual body and the Kingdom glories of which our spirit of begetting is but the earnest or foretaste.

THE FAITH OF GOD'S ELECT

"Paul, a servant of God, and an Apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God's **elect.**" (`[Titus 1:1](#)` .) Here the Apostle not only reiterates that there is an elect class, but he specifically points out that this class has a special faith, a peculiar faith, that is not shared by others, neither can others know it, for "it is spiritually discerned."-- `[1 Cor. 2:14](#)` .

AVENGE HIS OWN ELECT

Shall not God avenge his own **elect**, tho they cry day and night unto him?" (`[Luke 18:7](#)` .) Here our Lord himself testifies respecting this elect class. He gave a parable of an unjust judge, who, tho careless respecting the doing of justice to a poor widow, nevertheless was so careful of his own convenience that he would give her justice, lest by her continual coming she would annoy him. And our Lord's inquiry is, if an unjust judge would thus render justice from a selfish motive, could we expect less from the all-wise, all-loving and all-just Heavenly Father? Verily, God shall avenge the cause of his **elect**, altho he has permitted them to be maligned, slandered, misrepresented, for over eighteen centuries; the time will come when he will give them justice, when he will exalt them; and when those who have wilfully and maliciously injured them shall certainly be punished --in the great time of retribution in which every such evil deed of mankind shall be rendered a recompense, and every good deed receive its reward--in the Millennial day.

GATHER TOGETHER HIS ELECT

"He shall send forth his angels [messengers] and shall gather together his **elect** from the four winds of heaven." (`[Matt. 24:31](#)` .) Here our Lord not only testifies to the fact that there is an elect class, but he assures us that he himself will gather this elect class in due time; in the end of this age when he is ready to establish his Kingdom, in

which, as the overcomers, the elect of God, they will be joint heirs and sharers, as in the present life they have been sharers in the sufferings of Christ.--` [Rom. 8:17](#)` ; `[2 Tim. 2:12](#)` ; `[Matt. 13:43](#)` .

FOR THE ELECT'S SAKE

Those days shall be shortened." (` [Matt. 24:22](#)` .) Our Lord here refers to the great time of trouble

::R3587 : page 200::

with which this age shall end, "the day of vengeance," the time of retribution, the day of avenging his elect; and he assures us that the trouble then coming upon the world, and which will largely, we see, be brought about by the world's own course, would, if not interrupted by the Kingdom and its intervention with power from on high, mean the utter obliteration of the race at the hand of its own selfishness. But for the elect's sake those days should be shortened, and the time of trouble will not be permitted to run the length which otherwise it would run. As at first, "He shall speak to them in his wrath and vex them in his sore displeasure," so afterward he shall not permit their utter destruction: his Kingdom will stay the trouble, for "He shall speak peace to the heathen [peoples];" he shall say unto them, "Be still and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations; I will be exalted in the earth."--` [Psa. 46:10](#)` .

THE ELECT ARE UNCONDEMNED

"Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's **elect**?" (` [Rom. 8:33](#)` .) The Apostle is here pointing out that altho this called class accepted of God to be his elect, and to run with patience the race set before them, and make their calling and election sure, have weaknesses of the flesh, in the overcoming of which they, as new creatures, are not always wholly successful, nevertheless, God looks upon the heart, and their judgment is not according to the flesh, but according to the spirit, the will. Lest such should fear failure after all, he points out that in the great heavenly court there would be none to condemn them;--because God the judge who once condemned us in Adam has himself justified us in Christ,--accepting on behalf of the Adamic sin and the resultant weaknesses the sacrifice of Christ. He then points out that Satan, our Adversary, will have no hearing before the heavenly Court, and that there will be none to appear against us, and that on the contrary our Lord and Master, who redeemed us with his precious blood, will be our Advocate. Who then could lay anything to the charge of God's elect?--

those whom God has justified, whom God has called, whom God has accepted, and who, according to the divine arrangement, make their calling and election sure. Who would they be who could find fault with these whom God accepts on his own terms? Surely none! "Yea, we are more than conquerors, through him who loved us and bought us with his own precious blood!"

THE ELECT FOREKNOWN

"**Elect**, according to the foreknowledge of God the Father...through sanctification of the spirit unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ." ([` 1 Pet. 1:2`](#) .) The Apostle here marks out the terms of our election; none can remain in this elect company, nor make his calling and election sure, without being under the sprinkling of the blood--justification through faith in the great sacrifice; nor can any attain it without sanctification, a setting apart to God; and such a sanctification as will lead to obedience to God--to the full submission of his will to the will of the Father in heaven.

Such must be the character of those who will be of the elect, and this class of which we are seeking to become members was predetermined, foreordained by God; it was not a new thing, but the carrying out of the original divine purpose, in which also our Lord Jesus shared. This the same Apostle shows ([` 1 Pet. 2:4-6`](#)), declaring that our Lord Jesus himself was the elect of God, and that we who are now being chosen from amongst men to be "members of the body of Christ," members of the elect class, are chosen in him, chosen as members of his body, and as such must be conformed to the likeness of his character. He says: "To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but **chosen [elect]** of God and precious, ye also, as living stones, are built up, a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up sacrifices* acceptable to God by Jesus Christ."

"Wherefore also it is contained in the Scripture, Behold I lay in Zion a chief corner stone, **elect**, precious, and he that believeth in him shall not be confounded." ([` 1 Pet. 2:6`](#) .) Thus the Church of Christ, the elect little flock, are now being shaped, fitted and prepared for positions in the Temple of God, of which the dear Redeemer himself is the chief cornerstone, the foundation.

"They that are with him are called and **chosen [elect]**--the same word in the Greek] and faithful." ([` Rev. 17:14`](#) .) Here in symbol our Lord Jesus tells John, and us through him, of the glorious exaltation of the elect in the Kingdom, when they shall be with him and share his glory

as the Apostle declares, and with him judge the world;--granting trial, with gracious opportunities to every member of Adam's race to return to full harmony with God through the merit and by the assistance of him who redeemed the race.

GOD DELIGHTS IN HIS ELECT

"Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine **elect**, in whom my soul delighteth: I have put my spirit upon him. He shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles." "I will bring forth a seed out of Jacob and out of Judah, an inheritor of my mountain: and mine **elect** shall inherit it." "They shall not build and another inhabit; they shall not plant and another eat; for as the days of a tree are the days of my people, and mine **elect** shall make them continue long." --`[Isa. 42:1](#)`; `65:9,22`, margin.

Here our Lord Jesus, the Head, and the Church, "members in particular of the body of Christ," are unitedly declared to be God's elect, in whom he is well pleased. The Father was well pleased in the Son, who came not to do his own will but the will of him that sent him, and by his obedience won all the gracious things promised under the Law Covenant, and redeemed Adam and his race; and the Father is well pleased also in us, whom, tho "we were children of wrath even as others," he has accepted in Christ, justified and sanctified by his Word and spirit, and who, if we abide in Christ, faithful unto death, will be fitted and prepared for his promised Kingdom.

In these statements of the Prophet reference evidently is made to the work of the Lord's anointed (Head and Body) in conferring restitution blessings upon the world of mankind during the Millennial age; and this in full accord with all the New Testament declarations respecting the work of the elect.

*The word **spiritual** is omitted in this verse as spurious by old MSS. The **flesh** is sacrificed, not the new creature.

::R3587 : page 201::

STRIVE FOR YOUR ELECTION

"Brethren give diligence to make your calling and **election** sure." This our text is one of the most forceful of the many references to God's

elect, and is particularly clear in marking out the conditions upon which election may be surely attained by each one whom the Lord our God shall **call** or **nominate** to this grand office--the Royal Priesthood. The Apostle has been mentioning the various graces of the Lord's spirit which those who are seeking to be of his royal and priestly class must develop in their characters. He shows us that there is more or less of an addition in the matter: we put on one grace and add to it another, and to that another, and so on; and do this repeatedly in respect to all the graces, which keep growing, developing in us and rounding out and deepening and broadening us as spiritual new creatures. And he shows that those who do not have such experiences of growth in grace and in knowledge are deficient, and cannot hope to make their calling and election sure.

But seeming to understand that some would question the **possibility** of their gaining so great a prize, the holy Spirit, through the Apostle, gives to this called and chosen class a word of special encouragement, saying, "For if ye do these things ye shall never fall." There may be more or less stumbling on the part of the elect, not through weakness of the spirit, the heart, the new mind, but "through manifold temptations" of the flesh, the earthen vessel, in which temporarily resides the new creature, begotten of the spirit, the elect.

The Apostle proceeds to give further assurances, saying, "For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting Kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." The **elect** will not be received of the Lord with chidings and upbraidings for the imperfections of the flesh, which were unwillingly theirs, but on the contrary all the weaknesses of the flesh will be ignored, and the intents of the heart alone will be judged, and the heart-character formed will alone be tested and approved; and this will determine whether or not we shall stand the Lord's approval and be granted the glorious things which he has promised to them that love him-- "glory, honor and immortality" and a share in the Kingdom and its work of blessing.

THE ELECTION HOPE PURIFYING

"He that hath this [election] hope in him purifieth himself even as he [the Lord] is pure." But how is it with those who have not this hope, and who are totally ignorant of this election,--even though they be Christians, in the sense of believing in the Lord Jesus Christ as their Redeemer? Surely they are at a great disadvantage, lacking as they do the proper conception of the exceeding great and precious promises

which are the channel of the power of God working in the elect both to will and to do of his good pleasure.

If we have seen that there is an elect class, it follows that there must be a non-elect class--those who are not making their calling and election sure, and it is proper in this connection that we see something respecting this class, and what provision God has made for them. This phase of the subject is treated elsewhere.*

*See pamphlet, **Hope for the Innumerable Non-elect**, sample free, this office.

R 2154**IF YE DO THESE THINGS.**

"For if ye do these things, ye shall never fall; for so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ."--` [2 Pet. 1:10,11](#)` .

THIS statement of the Apostle Peter is suggestive of several important thoughts: (1) It indicates the possibility to the class addressed of "an abundant entrance into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." This is the prize of the high calling of the overcoming saints of the Gospel age. True, when we consider its exceeding glory, faith is prone to stagger at the promise that, poor and imperfect though we be, God proposes in the ages to come to show the exceeding riches of his grace in his

::R2154 : page 146::

kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. (` [Eph. 2:7](#)` .) Nevertheless, such is the case: "unto us are given the exceeding great and precious promises, that by these we might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust" -- through the worldly desires, "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life."--` [2 Pet. 1:4](#)` ; `[1 John 2:16](#)` .

These exceeding great and precious promises contemplate the adoption of these called ones by the great Sovereign of the whole universe as his sons and heirs; as joint-heirs with his only begotten Son, the heir of all things: they shall be with him where he is and behold his glory; and they shall put off this mortality, and, like him, who is "the express image of the Father's person," they shall be clothed with immortality. So shall they be forever with the Lord, and see him as he is; for they shall be like him. Having overcome the world, they shall sit with him in his Kingdom, even as he overcame and sat down with the Father in his Kingdom.--` [Rev. 3:21](#)` .

"Fear not, little flock," says the prospective Bridegroom of the Church, "for it is your Father's **good pleasure** to give you the Kingdom," "for the Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me and have

believed that I came out from God." Nor will he give the Kingdom to his beloved grudgingly; for Peter says, "an entrance shall be ministered unto you **abundantly:**" there will be a glorious welcome, a joyous greeting and a coronation jubilee among all the heavenly hosts when the laurels of victory are placed upon the heads of all the overcoming soldiers of the cross, the heroes who nobly fought the good fight of faith--who kept the faith, fought the fight against the world, the flesh and the devil, and finished their course in faithfulness even unto death.

All this abundance of grace and glory is the possible inheritance of even the weakest saint who, trusting not to his own ability to make his calling and election sure, humbly looks to God for strength from day to day to endure hardness as a good soldier. If any man attempts to do this in his own strength, he must surely fail; for the **fiery trial** that is to try **every one** will prove too much for the mind of the flesh; but God who worketh in the consecrated to will and to do his good pleasure, will so fortify and equip those who depend upon his grace, that, with the Psalmist, they can say, "It is God that girdeth me with strength....By thee I have run through a troop, and by my God have I leaped over a wall;" and with Paul, "I can do all things through Christ, who strengtheneth me."--` [Psa. 18:32,29](#)` ; `[Phil. 4:13](#)` .

(1) Let us not fear, then, to lay hold upon the exceeding great and precious promises when we are so fully assured that he who has begun the good work in us will finish it, if we let him. (` [Phil. 1:6](#)` .) "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even your faith"--not faith in ourselves; for we can have no confidence in the flesh. The poor, weak and faltering flesh does not warrant us in reposing confidence in its ability for the great responsibilities of soldiers of the cross. We must draw our supplies of wisdom and strength from above: they are not within us except as implanted there by the spirit of God.

(2) We next notice that while Peter's words encouragingly indicate the possibility of the glorious inheritance to all who are called, there is also the implied possibility of failure to enter into it. There is an **"if," a contingency**, upon which the scales of divine judgment as to our worthiness or unworthiness of the inheritance must turn. And it is in view of this contingency that Paul urges all the called ones to great sobriety of mind and carefulness of conduct, saying, "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall;" and again, "Let us therefore fear lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it." It is not enough, therefore, that we have **consecrated** ourselves to God as living

sacrifices; that we have **covenanted** to follow in the footsteps of Jesus; for the consecration, the covenant, the promise, will avail nothing if we prove unfaithful to it, except to rise up in judgment against us. "Better is it that thou shouldest not vow, than that thou shouldest vow and not pay."--`[Eccl. 5:4,5](#)` . See also `[Deut. 23:21-23](#)` ; `[Prov. 20:25](#)` ; `[Heb. 10:38,39](#)` ; `Psa. 15` ; `[Luke 9:62](#)` ; `[John 15:6](#)` ; `[Acts 5:4,5](#)` .

(3) Our attention is next drawn to what is implied in this expressed contingency--"If ye **do these things.**" What things?--The reference is to the things mentioned in the `preceding verses` ; **viz.,** that with all diligence we add to our faith fortitude; and to fortitude knowledge; and to knowledge self-control, and to self-control patience; and to patience godliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness love."

It is important to observe here that while all of these virtues are imperative requirements of those who would be esteemed of God as faithful, they are only of value as they are added to, or built upon, a foundation of faith--"Giving all diligence **add to your faith,**" --your "precious faith," as described in `verse 1` . This faith is our abiding confidence in the divine plan of salvation, which centers in the redemption accomplished through the precious blood of Christ, who freely gave himself a ransom for all. No righteousness of our own without this foundation of faith can avail anything to commend us to God. All our works of righteousness must be built upon this faith.

But is not faith in Christ sufficient unto salvation

::R2154 : page 147::

without the subsequent **doing** of any thing? To this the Scriptures plainly answer that a faith that Christ will save us in our sins--while we still love sin and do the works of sin--is a misplaced faith; for Christ never proposed to save us **in** our sins, but **from** our sins; and God is faithful and just to forgive sins and to cleanse from all unrighteousness those who come unto him by Christ,--through faith in his shed blood (sacrificed life) as the propitiation or satisfaction for our sins, and in his cleansing power. "He that saith, I know him [Christ, as my Lord and Savior], and keepeth not his commandments [to **do** the works of righteousness, and to bring forth the fruits of repentance of sins], **is a liar,**" says the Apostle John, "and **the truth is not in him.**" (`[1 John 2:4](#)` .) Therefore the Apostle Paul also exhorts believers, saying, "**Beloved, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling;**

for it is God who worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure."--` [Phil. 2:12,13](#)` .

It was God that provided for us the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, and it is God that has drawn us unto himself and that has promised us all needed grace to walk in the paths of righteousness; and more, even to follow in the footsteps of Jesus in the way of self-sacrifice. While, therefore, with fear and trembling, --with great carefulness--we endeavor to work out our salvation, it is our privilege always to realize the promised grace to help in every time of need, and to be confident that our best efforts toward righteousness are acceptable

::R2155 : page 147::

to God when presented through the merit of the righteousness of Christ, imputed to us by faith. (Manna 12-17)

Having this foundation, then, and "having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust" --through the desires of the flesh--and having by faith laid hold also on the "exceeding great and precious promises" of being made partakers of the divine nature and joint-heirs with Christ of his Kingdom and glory, and being anxious to make our "calling and election sure," let us consider these **additions** to our faith, which, if possessed and continuously cultivated, are the assurance that we shall never fall, and that an abundant entrance into the Kingdom shall be granted to us.

The first addition (**virtue**) is **fortitude** or strength of character in righteousness. This implies the cultivation of the strictest integrity in our dealings, both with God and with our fellow men,--scrupulous honesty, justice and truth being the only standard. The Psalmist clearly defines it thus, saying, "He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth **in his heart**. He that backbiteth not with his tongue, nor doeth evil to his neighbor, nor taketh up a reproach against his neighbor; in whose eyes a vile person is condemned; but he honoreth them that fear the Lord. He that sweareth to his own hurt, and changeth not [**i.e.**, who will not violate a contract found to be unfavorable to him]. He that putteth not out his money to usury [taking unjust advantage of the necessities of others], nor taketh reward against the innocent. He that doeth these things shall never be moved." (`Psa. 15`.) Such a one is a virtuous man, a man of fortified or strong character.

The second addition is **knowledge**--the knowledge of God and of his righteous will concerning us (revealed through his Word, by the holy spirit). Neglect of this divinely appointed means of knowledge is equivalent to setting up our own imperfect standard of righteousness and ignoring the divine standard. It is therefore important that we give all diligence to the study of the divine oracles that we may be fortified in faith and works accordingly.

The third addition, **self-control**, is one of the most important elements of good character. He that ruleth his own spirit is greater than he that taketh a city, is the counsel of the wise man; and many a victorious general has yet to learn to conquer and control himself. Self-control has to do with all our sentiments, thoughts, tastes, appetites, labors, pleasures, sorrows and hopes. Its cultivation, therefore, means a high order of character-development. Self-control, accompanied by faith, fortitude, knowledge from on high, implies increased zeal and activity in divine things and increased moderation in earthly things, in judgment, in conduct, in the regulation of temporal affairs, etc. "Let your moderation be known unto all men."

The fourth addition is **patience**. Time is a very necessary element in the process of perfecting every good thing. The fruit hastily plucked is the unripe, hard, sour, bitter fruit. Time, as well as pruning and fertilizing and cultivating and shower and sunshine, is necessary to the ripe and luscious fruitage that delights the taste. So it is also with the fruitage of plans and purposes, of education and of grace. God's deep designs work out slowly, not only in his great universal government, but also in the hearts and minds of his intelligent creatures. God is operating all things according to his own will along the lines of the fixed principles of his wise and righteous laws--physical, moral and intellectual. To be impatient in any case is foolishly to insist upon having the unripe, hasty, sour, bitter fruitage, which, if the Lord grant it, will prove a sickening penalty for the impatience that demanded it. "Let patience have her perfect work," wait God's time: "Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for him." Wait the Lord's time and way and the indications of his will in every case, both with regard to ourselves and others and "they that put their trust in him shall never be confounded."

::R2155 : page 148::

Faith, fortitude and knowledge prepare God's people to have patience with every effort toward good, however weak,--patience with the poor,

blinded world, with the "babes in Christ," with the slow and stupid, with the excitable and blundering, with the over-confident Peters and the skeptical Thomases. But to have patience or fellowship with "the unfruitful works of darkness" and sin, is the perversion of this grace; for these, wherever found, should be promptly and sharply reprov'd and rebuked according to their **evil intent**; with patience, nevertheless, toward the repentant prodigals, and always with meekness.

It is noticeable that the Lord seems to forewarn his people of great need of patience in the "harvest" or end of this age: patience toward fellow men and patience, in the warfare against evil, and in waiting for the Lord's time and method of setting right the wrongs of "the present evil world." The poor world, lacking faith, fortitude, knowledge of the divine plan and patience will fall a ready prey to unrest and anarchy in the near future. The Word of the Lord to his people is,--"**Ye** have need of patience."

The fifth addition is **godliness**, godlikeness, piety, --that devout, controlling reverence for God which yields a hearty, cheerful, loving conformity to his will --fervency of spirit in serving the Lord. This is a later development and vital element in the Christian character. Piety, godliness, springs spontaneously from appreciative and grateful hearts, whose delight is in the law of the Lord, in meditation upon his precepts and promises, and in secret communion with God in prayer and praise. Loving, cheerful activity must result from such an inner life; for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh, and the whole being is quickened to new life. Only those who have a living faith in God, and who are fortifying their characters against evil and growing in knowledge and self-control and patience are prepared to appreciate the grandeur of the divine character; and only such are really energized by a desire for God-likeness.

The sixth addition is **brotherly kindness**, which of necessity grows out of godliness. As God-like-ness presupposes the other graces mentioned, so its development implies an appreciation of divine justice and beneficence, and will broaden and deepen our sentiments toward all the well-disposed, however imperfect, and especially will it enlarge our hearts to all who are of the household of faith--"the brethren."

The seventh addition is charity, **love**,--the bond of perfectness which unites all the other graces, and as a name stands for them all.

Love to God alone is not the full manifestation of this grace; nor can

there be, according to the teachings of God's Word, a sincere love for God, without a corresponding love to man: "If a man say, I love God," says the Apostle John, "and hateth his brother, **he is a liar**, for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?" ([` 1 John 4:20 `](#).) And Jesus said, "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, **if ye have love one to another.**"--` [John 13:35](#) `.

It is the abounding of these graces of character **added to** our faith in Christ as our Redeemer and Savior that insures the soul against the possibility of falling: "If ye do these things, **ye shall never fall.**" The contingency is not in the doing of these things **perfectly**, and regardless of the righteousness of Christ to cover our transgressions and compensate for our daily shortcomings; but if, **added to** our faith in the imputed righteousness of Christ, we have cultivated all these graces **to the extent of our ability**, we shall not fall. When we have done all that we can do, we are still unprofitable servants, not daring to trust in our own righteousness, but in the ample robe which is ours by faith in Christ, while, with consistent "diligence," we work out our own salvation with fear and trembling, knowing that the righteousness of Christ is only applied to such as desire to forsake sin and to pursue that "holiness without which no man shall see the Lord."--` [Heb. 12:14](#) `.

R 3089**THOUGH YE BE ESTABLISHED.**

"I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though you know them, and be established in the present truth."--` [2 Peter 1:12](#) `.

WHAT things are here referred to? Assuredly the necessity of giving all diligence to add to our faith virtue [fortitude]; and to virtue, knowledge; and to knowledge, temperance [self-control]; and to temperance, patience; and to patience, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, charity [love]:... For if ye do these things ye shall never fall; for so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting Kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.--` Verses 5-11 `.

To be established in the truth signifies that we have carefully studied and thoroughly proved it by "the law and the testimony" (` [Isa. 8:20](#) `), and that as a consequence we are convinced of its verity, so that our faith is steadfast and immovable: we know whom we have believed; we have tasted and seen that the Lord is good; we have partaken of the sweets of fellowship with him; we have partaken of his spirit of meekness, faith and godliness to such an extent as to be led into a joyful realization of the fulness of his grace as manifested in the wonderful divine plan of the ages; and we have been permitted to see, not only the various features of that plan, but also the necessity and reasonableness of all its various measures in order to the full accomplishment of its glorious outcome in the fulness of the appointed times. This is what it is to be "established in the present truth." It is indeed a most blessed condition, bringing with it such peace and joy as the world can neither give nor take away.

But though we be thus established in the present truth, we need to bear in mind that our election to the high position to which we are called is not yet **made sure**. The race for the prize of our high calling is still before us, and we are yet in the enemy's country, surrounded by many subtle and powerful foes, so that if we would be successful we must "fight the good fight of faith," remembering, too, that "the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but [God's Truth is] mighty to the pulling down of the strongholds" of error and superstition and of inbred sin; and remembering, also, that "we wrestle not with flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of

the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places."-- [` 2 Cor. 10:4`](#) ; [` Eph. 6:12`](#) .

It is in view of these facts--of the warfare before us, of the subtlety of our temptations and of the weakness of the flesh--that the faithful Apostle Peter urges all diligence in the cultivation of the Christian graces and a continual calling to remembrance of the precious truths we have learned, that we may be strengthened thereby to make our calling and election sure. Faith is a good thing; but faith without virtuous works is dead; and to hold the truth in unrighteousness is worse than never to have received it. The truth is given to us for its sanctifying effect upon our hearts and lives. Therefore let it have free course and be glorified. Let its precious fruits appear more and more from day to day. Add to your faith virtue--true excellence of character, such excellence of character as will mark you as separate from the world and its spirit. In all such the world will see those moral qualities which they must approve, however they may oppose our faith. Add sterling honesty, truth and fair dealing in all business relations; moral integrity, in all social relations; manifestly clean hands and a pure heart, and a bridled tongue that works no ill to a neighbor. All of these the world has a right to expect from those who call themselves Christians; and all of these are indispensable features of that virtuous character which must be added to our faith. The clean hands will not dabble in anything that is not virtuous: they will have nothing to do with unrighteous schemes or

::R3090 : page 308::

projects in business. The pure heart will not devise evil things, or harbor evil thoughts, or plot mischief. And the bridled tongue will not be given to evil speaking, but will hold its peace when it cannot speak well and wisely. But the promptings of virtue go further than merely these negative features which refuse to do anything which would work ill to a neighbor; they incite not only to passive, but also to active, goodness--in benevolent charity which seeks to alleviate suffering, to sympathize with sorrow, to comfort those in distress and to elevate and bless others --to assist "all men as we have opportunity."

To such a virtuous character we are counseled to add knowledge--the knowledge of God's character, that we may the more thoroughly imitate it, and of his truth, that we may more fully conform to its teachings: and to knowledge, temperance--moderation, self-restraint, in all things. "Let your moderation be known unto all men." We are not to be hasty and hot-tempered, or rash and thoughtless. But we should

strive to be evenly balanced, thoughtful and considerate: our whole manner should be characterized by that carefulness which would indicate that we are ever mindful of the Lord's pleasure, of our responsibility to him as his representatives, and of our influence upon our fellow-men, to see that it always is for good, never for evil.

"And to temperance, patience." "Let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing." Yes, this grace smooths the way for every other, because all must be acquired under the process of patient and continuous self-discipline. Not a step of progress can be gained without the exercise of this grace of patience; and not one of the graces more beautifully adorns the Christian character, or wins the approval of the world's conscience, or glorifies the God of all grace whose truth inspires it. It is long-suffering meekness earnestly striving to stem the tide of human imperfection and weakness, and endeavoring with pains-taking care to regain the divine likeness. It is slow to wrath and plenteous in mercy; it is quick to perceive the paths of truth and righteousness, and prompt to walk in them: it is mindful of its own imperfections and sympathetic with the imperfections and shortcomings of others.

"And to patience, godliness"--a careful study and imitation of the divine character as presented in the divine Word.

"And to godliness, brotherly kindness"--an exercise and manifestation of the principles of the divine character toward our fellow-men.

"And to brotherly kindness, charity"--love. Kindness may be manifested where but little love exists toward the subject of such kindness; but we cannot long persevere in such acts of kindness before a sympathetic interest is awakened; and by and by that interest, continually exercised, deepens into love. And even though the subject may be unlovely in character, the love of sympathy for the fallen and degraded grows, until it becomes tender and solicitous and akin to that of a parent for an erring son.

Peter indeed describes a most amiable character, but who can consider it without feeling that to attain it will be a life-work. It cannot be accomplished in a day, nor a year, but the whole life must be devoted to it; and day by day, if we are faithful, we should realize a measure of growth in grace and of development of Christian character. It is not proper that we know the truth, and are contented to hold it in unrighteousness. We must see to it that the truth is having its legitimate and designed effect upon the character. And if the truth is

thus received into good and **honest** hearts, we have the assurance of the Apostle that we shall never fall, and that in due time we shall be received into the Kingdom of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Hence we see the necessity of ever keeping the instructions and precepts of the Lord fresh in our minds, and of drinking deep into its inspiring spirit, although we are already established in the faith. To be established in the faith is one thing, but to be established in Christian character and in all the graces of the spirit is quite another.

A PRACTICAL SUGGESTION.

Feeling as we do the necessity of a deeper work of grace, both in our own hearts and in the hearts of all of the dear household of faith, the thought has occurred to us that more special effort in this particular direction on the part of us all would probably be of great benefit. We do not know through what discipline of faith and patience we may yet be called to pass in the approaching dark night of which we are forewarned, but "sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof," and also, thank God, sufficient unto the day is the grace thereof, if we earnestly lay hold of it and patiently continue in it. As each day brings its trials, so, if we have been rightly exercised by the trials, each day should bring its victories--thus leaving us strengthened and more firmly established in character, as well as in faith.

With the end in view of specially promoting the growth of Christian character, our suggestion, which has already been made and adopted by the congregation in Allegheny and many other places, is that wherever a few of the consecrated can arrange to meet together, it would be well to appoint a midweek meeting for this special purpose. Such a meeting should be devoted to worship, prayer and praise, and to brotherly exhortation, conference and counsel, but not to Bible study or controversy. All discussions of doctrinal matters should be eliminated from such a meeting, and such subjects as would elicit controversy avoided, leaving such matters for another meeting, at an appropriate hour on the Lord's day, when all meet together; the object being, not to ignore doctrine, nor to discourage Bible-study; but, while meeting this necessity at the one meeting (on the Lord's day), to devote the other (the mid-week meeting) to the other equal necessity, without distraction.

Our arrangement here in Allegheny and Pittsburgh is as follows: As our congregation is much scattered, we have them parceled into as many neighborhood gatherings as is necessary for the accommodation of all

desiring to attend; and a leader is appointed

::R3090 : page 309::

for each meeting, discretion being observed as to capability. They should be brethren established in the faith--sound in doctrine, faithful and pious. These meetings are held on Wednesday evenings at the residence of some member of each little group. The meeting is opened with a hymn and prayer, the reading, by the leader, of Sunday afternoon's text; then each one is asked to give his or her personal experience as to progress in the narrow way--as to how he or she is growing in grace and striving to overcome the world, the flesh and the devil. Here they may humbly tell of their victories, or speak of their trials, or ask for Christian counsel and sympathy in hard places, speaking more freely in such little gatherings than would be possible or proper in larger assemblies. Here they can hear each other's petitions for each other, and Christian love and sympathy flow the more freely from heart to heart.

The object kept in mind at these meetings is a fresh, living, weekly and daily experience with the Lord and in his service, and not merely a stale experience of the remote past. A clear past experience is good, but a clear present experience is better;-- much more vitally important. Doctrine is ignored at these meetings except as the word doctrine applies to all Scripture teachings, including hope, trust, obedience, godliness, prayer, etc. Too many, we find, have been contenting themselves with **knowing** the truth, without making special efforts to live it, daily and hourly. As honesty of heart and faith in the Redeemer's finished work and consecration to his service are necessary to a full entrance into the "holy," where the deeper features of the divine plan can be discerned and fully appreciated, so these qualities must remain, must abide, or the light will become darkness-- you will be cast out of the light into the outer darkness in which the world and the nominal church grope after the phosphorescent glimmerings of error--Spiritism, Christian Science, Theosophy and Universalism.

The leader of such a meeting should study to adapt his counsel, correction or encouragement to the special needs of each of the little group over which he is placed, and his reverent piety and personal interest in each should inspire the confidence of all. We believe that such mid-week meetings prove steppingstones to higher attainments in the divine life, and that thus all may be greatly blessed and profited; and the whole body will be able the more effectually to

minister to one another in spiritual things. On the middle Wednesday evening of each month the prayer feature is given more attention and an opportunity granted for all to address the throne of grace two or three in immediate succession. At a quarterly Sunday evening general meeting of the same character, we hear of the spiritual progress of the various little groups both from the leaders and the various attendants, and quarterly the leaders are transferred to other groups.

May the blessing of the Lord go with the suggestion, and may the outcome be a strengthening of the bond of Christian love and mutual sympathy and fellowship everywhere.