

April 8

If any man draw back, My soul shall have no pleasure in him. Hebrews 10:38

THE drawing back may at first be a very slight departure from the narrow way of sacrifice--only a looking back perhaps, with a sigh for the things behind; a little slowing up of speed in the race set before

R1876 "Many grow weary in well-doing, and zeal abates, and love grows cold, and faith declines, and they fail to push on to the end. Beloved, let us not be of those who draw back, or of those who faint by the way; for glorious will be the victory of faith and zeal. Blessed is he that shall endure unto the end. Such shall indeed be 'a peculiar people, zealous of good works.'"

R5332 "Let us be watchful, active, alert, and co-labor with God and with the Lord Jesus Christ. We are to consider the offer made to us--the great High calling--the most wonderful thing ever known in all creation! We shall never have another opportunity of showing God and our Lord Jesus our zeal for righteousness and our earnestness of spirit."

Q680 "It is through the sufferings of the flesh that the new mind is tried and tested as to our loyalty to God; and at the cost of the flesh we are proving ourselves worthy of the High Calling with which we have been called. If any draw back from the sufferings, then he will also be drawing back from the crown of glory, and he shall not reign with Christ (Heb. 10:38)."

R2405 "ABANDON US NOT IN TEMPTATION" The lapidarist takes firm hold upon the jewel which he has already tested, and proved to have the requisite jewel quality, and encasing it in a suitable instrument, he presses it against the friction, a lap-wheel, with just the required amount of pressure to cut away the roughness and unevenness, and to effect the necessary shaping and polishing. The process requires great skill, otherwise at times much of the value of the stone might be lost through

us; then a little disposition to compromise the Truth in favor of the cravings of the fallen nature. Thus the way is prepared for the arts of the tempter, who is quick to note our weak points, and to take advantage of them in a manner best suited to our case. Subtle errors are brought to bear against the judgment; pleasing allurements, with a

misshaping; hence only skilled workmen are employed in this department....Much of a diamond's value depends on *skilful cutting*...

So it is with the polishing of the Lord's jewels: their value depends much on proper cutting; and this is entrusted only to the skilled hands of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom we are assured in advance that he was tempted in all points like as we are--that he himself passed through similar experiences of testings, etc., at the Father's hands. He knows just what we need to perfect us, so that we will be pleasing and acceptable to the Father, to reflect and refract the light of his glory when it shall fall upon us in our finished state. A part of our lesson is to have *faith* in this great Master-workman whom the Father has appointed to shape and polish us. We may require much more trimming on some sides of our characters than on others; and the disposition often is to "draw back," to be not fully submissive, to fear that the Lord has forgotten and abandoned us in trial. But infinite wisdom assures us, guarantees us, that this is not so and that to draw back would leave us "*unfit* for the Kingdom."--Heb. 13:5; Luke 9:62.

R1774 "WHAT LACK I YET?...*MARK 10:17-27. (MATT. 19:16-30; LUKE 18:18-30)*—Golden Text—"Seek ye first the Kingdom of God."--*Matt. 6:33.*

WE have in this lesson an illustration of the great difficulty of getting a full, fair view of one's self. Hence the value of every applied test of character. These tests open our eyes to our real condition of heart as we could not otherwise realize them. Sometimes the test comes in the shape of a searching question which leads the thoughtful to a close scanning of his ways--as, for instance, the Lord's repeated question to

R1798 (From Harvest Truth Database V5.0)

THE JUST SHALL LIVE BY FAITH

"Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. But we are not of them that draw back unto perdition, but of them who believe to the saving of the soul."--Heb. 10:38,39

THERE is a solemn significance about these words of the Apostle which the thoughtful Christian will not fail to perceive. Those addressed are not worldly people, but consecrated believers, justified by faith in Christ as their Redeemer. By faith they have passed from death unto life; to them old things have passed away and all things have become new; they are new creatures in Christ Jesus; they are sons and heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ, if so be that they suffer with him, following in his footsteps of self-sacrifice, even unto death. They are begotten again to a hope of life (eternal), to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that fadeth not away--an inheritance, however, into which they are not immediately ushered, but which is reserved in heaven for them.

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 above words of the Apostle--"Now the just shall live by faith." ⁽¹⁾ It is not enough that, by faith, we receive the first impulse of life, but, having passed from death unto life, by the same

show of righteousness, are presented to the fleshly mind; and, almost imperceptibly, the soul forgets its "first love" for the Lord, and its first zeal for His service, and drifts away from the Truth and the spirit of it, being no longer led of the Holy Spirit of God. Z. 95-93 R1799:1

Peter—"Lovest thou me?" Sometimes it is a direct showing of the line of duty through difficulties and dangers from which the flesh shrinks; and sometimes it comes in tempests and storms of persecution which prove the heart's loyalty to God and its powers of endurance. But in whatever shape the tests of character are applied to us we have reason to be thankful for their good office in the better acquainting us with our own hearts...

No matter how heavy may seem the cross, how severe the trial, or how weak we feel in consideration of it, if we simply and sincerely surrender ourselves to God, he will carry us through: with him, with his grace and guidance, it is possible for the weakest and the most severely tempted and tried to make their calling and election sure. He will infuse courage into fainting souls; he will apply the balm of his consolation to wounded hearts; he will grant wisdom to him that asketh it; and he will furnish the armor of God to every true soldier of the cross. O blessed promise! With God it is possible to enable even those tempted with the subtle influences of riches of any kind to run the race of self-sacrifice with diligence and patience to the end.

Then let the sincere inquiry of every child of God be, "What lack I yet?" Surely there is none so perfect that he lacks nothing. And when in answer to our inquiring prayer the Lord applies some test to prove our standing before him, let us bravely determine that by his grace we will not draw back; for it is written, "If any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him;" and again, "No man having put his hand to the plow and looking back is fit for the Kingdom of God."--Heb. 10:38; Luke 9:62."

means, we must *continue* to receive and appropriate spiritual nourishment, that we may grow thereby: we must walk by faith, following the leading of the holy spirit through the Word of Truth.

In this way of faith there is much of present privilege, as well as future prospect. It is the way in which we may enjoy the fellowship and the abiding presence of our Lord Jesus and our Heavenly Father, in which we may have intimate personal communion with them, and in which we may also have the witness of the holy spirit to our adoption and continued acceptance as sons of God, and the comfort of the Scriptures, the communion of saints, and the blessed inspiration, assistance and encouragement of all the means of grace. These present privileges, together with the glorious hopes they inspire and keep alive within us, are the meat which we have to eat which the world knows not of, enabling us to live a new life apart from the world--apart from its spirit and its fellowship. This is what it is to walk by faith. It signifies a course of life quite contrary to the usual order of the world, which is to walk by sight and after the desires of the flesh. Men of the world look at the things that are seen: they judge of their relative values, but only with reference to temporal interests, entirely ignoring their eternal interests and the claims of the Creator upon them. Lacking faith in the divine Word, they lack substantial hope beyond the present; and upon their own judgment of the relative values of earthly prizes and their hopes of winning them, they exercise themselves in their pursuit, leaving the

⁽¹⁾ ½ Mar. 15, Heb. 10:38

questions of the future and of present responsibility to God practically out of consideration.

But not so is it with the true child of God. He walks by faith and not by sight: he looks not at the things that are seen, but at the things that are unseen (2 Cor. 4:18), ever bearing in mind that the things that are seen are temporal, uncertain and unsatisfactory, while the things that are unseen are eternal, sure to the faithful, and of inestimable value. He is living, not for the present, but for the future—for the things revealed to the eye of faith in the promises of God, all of which are yea and amen in Christ Jesus, to them that believe. In this life of faith the motives, hopes, aims, ambitions and joys are all of a higher, nobler order than those of the world; but they are such as depend entirely upon faith. If the Christian's faith be overthrown he must of necessity to that extent cease to live the life of faith; that is, he will cease to be actuated by the same motives, etc., which his faith previously inspired. And if, through unfaithfulness, his spiritual vision has become dim, so that he can no longer see or rightly estimate the value of spiritual things, the world, the flesh and the devil are still busy presenting allurements and deceptions to lead him farther and farther away from God, in whose favor alone is life.

Weariness in well doing and desire for the rewards of unfaithfulness are first steps in drawing back from the way of faith and also from the favor of God. In the light of our text, this drawing back is a most serious matter. The intimation of *verse 39* is that it is a drawing back unto perdition, destruction—"If any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition, but of them that believe to the saving of the soul."^{2}

The drawing back may at first be a very slight departure from the narrow way of sacrifice—only a looking back, perhaps, with a sigh for the things behind, a little slowing up of speed in the race set before us; then a little disposition to compromise the truth in favor of the cravings of the fallen nature. Thus the way is prepared for the arts of the tempter, who is quick to note our weak points, and to take advantage of them in a manner best suited to our case. Subtle errors are brought to bear against the judgment; pleasing allurements, with a show of righteousness, are presented to the fleshly mind; and, almost imperceptibly, the soul forgets its "first love" for the Lord, and its first zeal in his service, and drifts away from the truth and the spirit of it, being no longer led of the holy spirit of God.

Few indeed are the children of God who have never been tempted in this direction; for we all have the treasure of the new

nature "in earthen vessels," and between the new and the old natures there is a constant warfare; and only by continued vigilance can the new nature keep the old in abeyance. In the wearisome life-long struggle we often need our Father's chastening hand to guide and keep us in the way. "What son is he whom the Father chasteneth not?" By instruction, discipline, experience, he leads us on, and if at heart our disposition is to be led of the spirit—to gratefully receive the instruction, humbly accept the discipline, and meekly profit by the experience, then will the Lord have pleasure in leading us on from grace to grace and from victory unto victory. To merely stand and battle on the defensive is *very* wearisome, and gains no victory. To gain the victory we must not only put on the armor of God, but we must be heroes in the strife, and wage an *aggressive* warfare upon the lusts of the eye and flesh and pride of life and all the foes of righteousness and purity. *Love*--love for the Lord, for the truth and for righteousness --must inspire us, or we shall never be victors. Love alone will keep us faithful even unto death, and make us meet for the inheritance of the saints in light. Where fervent love rules in the heart it implies that the heart is *fully submitted* to the Lord, and that means that nine-tenths of the battle is already won. But even then, as the Apostle says (*Jude 21*), we must *keep* ourselves in the love of God, in watchfulness and prayer and zeal; and grace will abound where love abounds.

In such faithful obedience to the truth, and earnest endeavor to conform to its principles, the way and the truth grow more and more precious, and our willing feet with joy are led in the paths of righteousness and peace-- into life everlasting.

^{3} The life of faith is an individual matter, as well of the heart as of the head. It is far more than an acceptance of doctrines which we consider Scriptural and therefore true; it is the *assimilation* of that which we have proved to be the truth, so that its principles become our principles, and its promises our inspiration. This is what it is to "believe to the saving of the soul." "As many as are led by the spirit of God, they are the sons of God." And however we may realize our insufficiency of ourselves to overcome the world, the flesh and the devil in this seemingly unequal contest, let us remember, for our encouragement, that he who has begun a good work in us will carry it on to completion, if we humbly submit ourselves to his leading and discipline. Our Lord's promise is that he will not suffer us to be tempted beyond what we are able to endure. Let us hold fast our faith and our confidence in his sure word of promise--hold the truth in righteousness and faithfulness, and we shall not be of them who draw back and mind earthly things.

^{2} April 8 Manna, Heb. 10:38

^{3} ½ Mar. 15 Manna

R5332 PATIENCE A CARDINAL GRACE OF CHARACTER "*Ye have need of patience [cheerful endurance], that after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the [fulfilment of] the promise.—Heb.10:36*

THE Apostle is addressing the Christian Church... "*Ye have need of patience.*" To a certain extent you did the will of God when you made your consecration to be dead with Christ. But that will of God was more deeply impressed upon you when you began to realize more than at first what this *sacrifice* would *mean*, and that only those who *suffer* with Christ shall *reign* with Him.

"After you were illuminated" you saw the matter clearly, and "endured a great fight of afflictions." This was well. But St. Paul goes on to show in the context that some, after having demonstrated their zeal for a certain time, become cold. They become weary in well doing. And he tells us that these thus cut themselves off from the favors, privileges and blessings belonging to the Church of Christ. His exhortation is that those who are still loyal to God at heart continue so and exercise *patience*, remembering that this is one of the cardinal graces of Christian character. Many have naturally a little love, a little gentleness, a little patience, a little meekness, etc. But after we begin to grow in the graces of the Holy Spirit, we need *patience* to control the flesh,

the spirit of the world, the spirit of selfishness.

Our text does not mean that we must do the will of God in the perfect and complete sense... God does not expect us to do that which is impossible.

THE PURPOSE OF OUR TESTING

What is this will of God? Stated in concrete form, "This is the will of God [concerning you], even your sanctification." (*1Thes.4:3*) As the Apostle teaches, consecration is a full and complete setting apart...

We are doing the will of God when we fully consecrate ourselves to Him, and attain a place in the New Creation. But He wills to put us to the test. How much do we love God? How sincere are we? A soldier in an army might be loyal in time of quiet, but how would he be in time of stress? Would he desert the flag then, or would he prove himself a good soldier? He would need a great deal of patience. If he says he loves his country, his endurance and faithfulness will be tested in her time of need. He must go on picket duty; he must sometimes do menial work. He must endure wearisome marches, and many privations. All these things are required of a faithful soldier...

So we are tested as to our *loyalty*. What are we willing to *endure* for Christ's sake? How *fully* are we submitted? How *deep* does our submission go? Are we wholly in

harmony with the will of the Lord? Is our interest merely superficial, or does it enter fully into our hearts? The question is not merely, Shall we make the consecration?—but after the Christian has taken all of these preliminary steps, to what extent will he manifest patient endurance and obedience and loyalty?

God puts us to these tests because He has great honors to bestow on those who will be overcomers. They are to be a select company, and these will receive the Promise. As the Apostle says, it is after we have *proved* our loyalty to the very last, that we shall receive the Promise; i.e., its fulfilment.

THE ESSENCE OF THE PROMISE

When, where, what is the Promise? Undoubtedly the promise will be received in the resurrection. The promise includes all that God has in reservation for them that love Him—that love Him more than they love houses and lands, or children, or parents, or friends, or husbands or wives, or self, or any other thing... This is the essence of the Promise—that those who receive the Promise shall be the Seed of Abraham to bless the world... *Now* the selection is being made of those who will inherit the Promise... The Apostle is in our text urging that we continue to be Christ's and to abide in Him... In order to remain faithful, we must have His spirit of devotion."