

August 21

Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness. Matthew 6:33

THE Lord's people of spiritual Israel will do well to bear this thought continually in mind--that spiritual interests are to be given the preference always; that temporal affairs are to be managed and controlled

from the standpoint of the everlasting welfare; -- from the standpoint of spiritual growth and development and prosperity;-- from the standpoint of the best interests and influences upon their children. They should not only hesitate to follow any suggestion that would take themselves and their families into unfavorable, godless surroundings,

but they should determine that not under any consideration would they follow such a suggestion;--that on the contrary the Lord's people should be their people, even though this meant less of the comforts and luxuries of this present life. *Z. '02-350R3110:6*

R2259 (From Harvest Truth Database V5.0)

"YE CANNOT SERVE GOD AND MAMMON"

--FEB. 6.--MATT. 6:24-34.--

"He careth for you."--1 Pet. 5:7.

PROBABLY no other period of the world's history ever had as great need, as our own, for this lesson. The spirit of our times seems to lead directly to the service of Mammon--wealth, earthly advantages and comforts. The attainment of Mammon's reward would appear to be the main object of life, to which every other interest is made subservient, so far as Christendom is concerned. As we look into the far East this is less so; the millions of India and of China know far more contentment in their ignorance, than do the millions of Christendom with their large degree of knowledge. Knowledge evidently is not conducive to peace, happiness, contentment:--"Godliness with contentment is great gain."--1 Tim. 6:6.

What is known as the *progress* of civilization is in many respects good, excellent; but it has a wrong motive power. The motive power of modern progress is selfishness--Mammonism--and increasingly so. Nor can we imagine that the civilized world, intellectually awakened but not in heart regenerated, not possessed of the spirit of Christ, the holy spirit, the spirit of love, could be in its present condition moved by any other spirit than that which possesses it--the spirit of selfishness, the spirit of Mammon. We are not, therefore, surprised to see what we do see on every hand--a mad rush and struggle for wealth, and for position and fame which are wealth of another kind and bring financial wealth. The spirit of selfishness in the millionaire stirs him to activity and to the use of his opportunities, not because he needs more, but because he is possessed of the spirit of avarice, the spirit of Mammon: the same spirit exactly takes hold of the artisan who, with a moderate income, has secured for himself and family a modest little home and a frugal competence. Many of these are now reaching out after wealth, and finding by experience the truth of the Apostle's words, "They that will to be rich [whether they succeed in carrying out their will or not, if they have the will, the Mammon spirit] fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts [desires and habits] which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money [the Mammon spirit] is a root of all evil: which, while some coveted after, they have *erred from the faith* [crowding out the spirit of love and wisdom from above, and losing the spirit of the truth, also the letter of the truth and the faith], and pierced themselves through with many sorrows."--1 Tim. 6:10,11.

It is impossible for us to read each other's hearts and to know positively the mainsprings of activities in each others' lives; and hence the Lord's people are likely to be misunderstood by the world. The child of God is commanded to be "not slothful in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord;" he is also commanded to provide things needful for those dependent upon him: thus required to labor for his daily bread, he is brought in contact with others not begotten of the heavenly spirit like himself, but who have as the mainspring of activities the love of money--Mammon. It may be difficult from the world's standpoint to note the difference in the two spirits in the two classes, for both are active, energetic, patient and persevering; and both are paid at the end of the week in the same coin, and both are counted by the world as servants of Mammon. Wherein then lies the difference?--Which are the servants of God? and how can we know them?

"By their fruits ye shall know them," said our Master. What will be done with the proceeds of the labor, is the only outward evidence we could have respecting what was the *motive* of the laborer. If the proceeds of the labor are merely accumulated in property or in banks or in old stockings, or if the proceeds of the labor over and

above the necessities of life are merely used in gratification of the flesh, in trinkets, bric-a-brac, or other forms of self-gratification, or for evil purposes, the only reasonable deduction would be that the laborer was inspired to his energy by the spirit of selfishness, and that he is a servant of Mammon. But if on the other hand the proceeds of energetic labor, after appropriating for the necessities of life, are used benevolently in the Lord's service, in the service of the Lord's people, in "distributing to the necessities of the saints," either temporally or spiritually, or to the necessities of "the groaning creation;"--if this be the use to which surplus moneys are put, the reasonable inference is that the laborer was energized not by a spirit of Mammon, a spirit of selfishness, but by the spirit of the Lord, the spirit of love; because the use of the same in the Lord's service would be a proof of the motive and object of the laborer.

This simple rule (by which we may all test ourselves, even if we may not measure others by it too carefully) would seem to show us that the great mass of mankind are servants of selfishness, servants of Mammon, and not servants of God, whose main object in life after providing things decent, and honestly, for themselves and their dependents, would surely be to use it to glorify God and to bless their fellow creatures. Let each one who has named the name of the Lord judge himself very carefully along this line:--scrutinizing his own objects and methods, and determining according to this lesson whose servant he is--a servant of selfishness and of Satan, or the servant of love and of God.

Nothing in what we have said is intended to imply that it would be wrong for any of the Lord's people to own his own home or to enjoy some of the comforts of life; nor to make a reasonable provision for tomorrow, with a view to the necessities of his family, and for such uses as he may consider to be the Lord's will respecting him and the means entrusted to his stewardship. (2 Cor. 8:21.) But it would be a great mistake for the child of God to make, should he conclude that he must spend no money in the service of the Lord and of humanity until he has attained a certain competency in life. Whoever adopts this theory and plan will almost assuredly find by the time he obtains a competency, that he has gained so much of the spirit of Mammon as to be less satisfied, less contented than ever; and that he has lost so much of the spirit of the Lord, the spirit of love and generosity, that he has little disposition to spend his strength for anything that will not selfishly minister to his personal comfort or the gratification of selfish aims. And if he who earns \$1,000 a year should have the spirit of devotion and is sure to be blessed in its exercise, the same is true of the man who earns but \$100 per year: even if he have difficulty in obtaining the necessities of life, he will be blessed in heart, in mind, in spirit, if he will deny himself, sacrificing something of earthly gratification, in order to render some thankoffering to the Lord.

The great argument which the Adversary uses to enlist servants for Mammon, and to get the servants of God to attempt to serve both God and Mammon, is fear: fear of want, fear of distresses. In our lesson, therefore, the Lord takes up this feature first, urging his followers, not as *verse 34* would represent the matter, to be thoughtless, indifferent and careless in respect to our food and clothing, but, to be without worry--*not anxious* and fearful and troubled about tomorrow and its affairs. The plowman, when he breaks up the land, and the sower, when he scatters the grain, are taking thought for the morrow, in a proper, legitimate manner that has the divine approval: if they are God's children they are to plow in hope, and sow in hope,

and wait for the crop in hope; and to trust that, if the Lord should permit some blight or drouth to render their labors unfruitful, he nevertheless will not leave them destitute, but will care for them and provide for them in some way. And they are to exercise their confidence in his goodness and to expect that all the lessons of life are profitable ones in preparation for the eternal life, if they will be rightly exercised by them.

Our Lord's words in this lesson in which he encourages confidence and trust in the Heavenly Father, are not addressed to mankind in general--not addressed to the "children of wrath," but addressed to those who have become "children of God" upon the terms of his Covenant. This point cannot be too strongly urged: it is very necessary that those who have never made a covenant with the Lord should know that the promises and blessings of the divine Word are not theirs and will never become theirs until such times as they come unto God in his appointed way, and take upon them his prepared covenant. All his promises are yea and amen only to those who are in *Christ Jesus*.

This class, while just as busy, just as active, just as fervent in spirit as any of the worldly, have not the fret, have not the worry of the others; because the Lord Almighty has covenanted with them that he will do for them according to heavenly wisdom what would be for their highest welfare. So then, these can rejoice--

"In every condition, in sickness, in health,
In poverty's vale or abounding in wealth."

The Lord's people, while active in the affairs of life, are not

working for the things of this life, but are seeking the Kingdom of God: it is the first thing, the principal thing, the principal object of life and energy. God has promised his people a share in an everlasting Kingdom which shall bless the whole world, and this exceeding great and precious promise fills the heart, fills the mind and constitutes with love and hope the mainspring of every question in life. And in seeking the Kingdom, they are also seeking God's righteousness; because no one who loves unrighteousness will love God's Kingdom which will be the foe of all unrighteousness and sin. And only those who love righteousness and who labor for righteousness are in any proper sense seeking God's Kingdom and its reign. An earnest Christian traveling salesman was once asked the question: "What is your business?" He replied, "I am preaching the Lord Jesus Christ, and selling hardware for _____ & Co. to meet my expenses." This is the relationship between God's people and their earthly occupations that should be recognized and fully lived up to by all who win the prize.

Our Lord assures us that if the main thought of our hearts is his service and the promotion of righteousness and an attainment of the Kingdom which God has promised to them that love him, then we need carry no anxious cares respecting the future. As his disciples we will have trials and tribulations enough, day by day, and will need daily to lean upon the Bridegroom's arm as we seek to walk the narrow way. Sufficient for each day will be the evil of itself: and thanks be to God also, we have the promise that daily his grace shall be sufficient for us.

R3110 (From Harvest Truth Database V5.0)

"THY PEOPLE SHALL BE MY PEOPLE"

--RUTH 1:16-22--DECEMBER 7--

"Be kindly affectioned one toward another."--Rom. 12:10.

WHILE THE BOOK OF RUTH is not prophetic, but merely historical, it is valuable to us in various ways. (1) It furnishes an important link in the chronological chain leading down to King David and, hence, a part of the chronological line leading down to the Man Christ Jesus. (2) It gives a glimpse of the habits and customs of the Israelites in general as an agricultural people. In this respect it is in marked contrast with the Books of Judges, Kings and Chronicles, which dealt more particularly with the rulers, generals and wars. (3) The story of Ruth points a very beautiful lesson of fidelity, sympathy and love amongst the people at that time, and inculcates a similar lesson of kindness of disposition amongst the spiritual Israelites, guaranteeing them, along this line, blessings both for the present and for the future.

Somewhere about Gideon's time, when scarcity amounting almost to famine prevailed in Palestine, as a judgment of the Lord upon his people for some measure of coldness or unfaithfulness to him and to their covenant, Naomi's husband determined to emigrate with his family to the other side of the Dead Sea--to the land of Moab. The Moabites were the descendants of Lot, but, nevertheless, the Lord marked out to his people Israel that they were not to be considered the children of Abraham--that they were not fellow-heirs of the promises made to Abraham, and, therefore, they were not subjects of special dealings, disciplines, providences, etc., as were the Israelites. Naomi and her two sons went with her husband apparently without regret, to the land of Moab, hoping thereby to better the prospects of the family. It was a mistake, however, as she afterwards realized, to attempt to regulate their own affairs when they were specially under the Lord's protection and guidance.

As Israelites they should have esteemed the divine promises so highly that they would not have left the land of promise and the people of promise to commingle with those who were strangers to those promises and more or less idolaters. To be on the Lord's side amongst the Lord's people should have been esteemed far more important than earthly prospects. Naomi, however, is not to blame in connection with this matter; the responsibility rested with her husband, and it is evident that her heart was never fully in sympathy with the move, because about ten years subsequently, when her husband and two sons died, she promptly determined on a return to the Lord's people and to the land which he had given them.

Human nature is much the same everywhere and always. How many there are to-day who mistakenly seek to map out their plans for the present life in disregard of their highest interests, in disregard of the Lord's promises and the relationship which they have entered into by covenant with him! How many there are who forget that the Lord's arrangement with all of his covenant people is that he will supervise their affairs and cause all things to work together for good to them! Instead of making temporal interests the chief concern, Naomi's husband should have been making the religious interests of himself and family his chief concern, so that if he had been living in Moab under greater prosperity, he should rather have been willing to go into the land of promise amongst the Lord's people, though such a course would seem to mean a blighting of some of his earthly interests.

^{1}The Lord's people of Spiritual Israel will do well to bear this thought continually in mind--that spiritual interests are to be given the preference always; that temporal affairs are to be managed and controlled from the standpoint of the everlasting welfare;--from the standpoint of spiritual growth and development and prosperity;--from the standpoint of the best interests and influences upon their children. They should not only hesitate to follow any suggestion that would take themselves and their families into unfavorable, godless surroundings, but they should determine that not under any consideration would they follow such a suggestion;--that on the contrary the Lord's people should be their people, even though this meant less of the comforts and luxuries of this present life: it would surely mean greater spiritual blessings and favors for the present time, and persevering would mean the gaining of the glorious reward which our Lord has promised to the faithful who love him more than they love houses and lands and kindred, etc.

Evidently Naomi's life and example and her faithfulness to the Lord had made an impression amongst those with whom she was specially in contact,--her two daughters-in-law, both of whom resolved to go back with her to the land of Canaan. On the journey, however, she reflected that these two young women would be sacrificing much--leaving kindred, homes, acquaintances, customs, and

^{1} Aug. 21 Manna Matt. 6:33

good prospects to go with her to a land where they would be considered foreigners and probably be discriminated against. She, therefore, urged them to return to their own people, to the religious worship, etc., to which they had been accustomed. She feared that their resolution to accompany her would result in disappointment later on. Her disinterested course in this matter reminds us very much of our Lord's words to some who proposed to become his disciples. He advised them first of all to sit down and count the cost; this he did, not because he wished to stumble or to turn back any who had inclinations to follow in his footsteps, but because it is best on general principles that people should not undertake that in which their hearts are not fully and deeply interested; because, otherwise, they are sure to make a failure. They who sit down and count the cost and then rejoicingly follow in the Lord's footsteps of suffering and trial, glad to be accounted worthy to suffer for his name's sake, and to walk in his footsteps, --they alone are the kind who will gain the prize. Those who would follow without the spirit of sacrifice would be sure to miss the prize, and all the sacrificing they might do would be burdensome and measurably disappointing.

Naomi's argument appealed to one of her daughters-in-law, who did return to her Moabish home, concluding that after all it would be too much of a sacrifice for her to part with her kindred, etc. Ruth, on the contrary, had come to love her mother-in-law so deeply and to respect her religion so thoroughly that although it cost a tear to part with home and kindred and to contemplate the trials of poverty in a foreign land, she, nevertheless, fully resolved that such a home amongst those who revered the true God and were heirs of his promises was more to be esteemed than anything she was leaving. Her impassioned words to her mother-in-law are noted throughout the world as being amongst the most beautiful expressions of sympathy, kindness and devotion. Some one has arranged them in poetic form, thus:--

"Entreat me not to leave thee,
And to return from following after thee;
For whither thou goest, I will go;
And where thou lodgest, I will lodge;
Thy people shall be my people,
And thy God, my God;

Where thou diest I will die, and there will I be buried.

The Lord do so to me, and more also,
If aught but death part thee and me."--Vs. 16,17.

A good and faithful, God-fearing, God-serving, God-honoring mother-in-law, Naomi surely was, to have so deeply interested Ruth in herself and in her God and in his promises to her people. There is a lesson here, not only for mothers-in-law, but for all of the Lord's people. Not all are able to preach and to teach the Word of God publicly or privately, but all can teach through their daily lives and glorify their Father in heaven in their bodies and spirits which are his, by living a godly life, by telling in the simplest manner of the hopes and promises which control their own hearts and inspire their own courage and devotion. The Apostle Paul had in mind this same thought of the general influence of life and character when he said, "Ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ." Our Lord had the same thought in mind when he declared, "Ye are the light of the world...Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." That Naomi had told her daughters-in-law respecting her God and his promises to his people is evident; but to have told them of this and not to have acted and spoken and lived in accord with this faith and hope, would have been contradictory and, undoubtedly, never would have influenced Ruth to forsake her own people and her father's house, and to cast in her lot with her mother-in-law and the Israelites.

Arrived at her home city, Bethlehem, Naomi, who had been well known ten years before, and whose friends probably never expected to see her again, was greeted by her name; but she replied, Call me no longer Naomi (which signifies lovable, pleasant), but call me rather Marah (which signifies bitter). She explained to them that the Lord's providences in respect to her affairs had been severe afflictions;--the Lord had testified against her course--had not prospered herself and family in the course they had taken. No doubt later on she came to see that the Lord's afflictions upon her had really

been for her good, bringing her back to the land of promise and to fellowship with her people, so that her last days were probably the best of her life.

So at times it may be with some of the Lord's spiritual Israelites; his chastisements and afflictions and disciplines may seem to indicate his displeasure, but really, from the standpoint of faith and knowledge, they may afterward be seen to have been blessings in disguise. However, much depends upon the way in which the Lord's disciplines are received. Had Naomi suffered herself to become sour and morose and rebellious against the Lord, no blessing would have followed her trying experiences; but the fact that she permitted these to draw her closer to the Lord and to his people formed the channel of her blessings. And this lesson also is easily applied by us all as spiritual Israelites to our experiences.

The remainder of the lesson gives us an insight into the customs of the time, and incidentally shows us how the Lord rewarded the noble character and faith of Ruth. That she did not come to Bethlehem with great expectations and selfish motives is evidenced by the fact that she set out to earn a living for herself and her mother-in-law. She was young and strong, and could, after the manner of the times, go into the harvest fields and glean such stray handfuls of the grain as were missed by the men who did the reaping. This was permitted by the Jewish law; the grain growing in the fence corners might be gathered by any of the poor for their own use. Providentially Ruth was guided in her humble efforts to make a living, to the field of a man who was a kinsman to Naomi, and to whom she (Ruth) was subsequently married and became one of the mothers in Israel, from whom descended King David and ultimately Mary, the mother of Jesus.

It is well that the Lord's people note even in this little incident something that may be helpful to them. We are to commit our way to the Lord and sincerely and unselfishly determine to follow the path of righteousness; then the Lord shall be our God; then his people shall be our people. Testings will come as to whether or not we are willing to do our duty in respect to the common affairs of life, laboring with our hands, providing things honest in the sight of all men. As we go forward in the line of duty, the Lord guides our steps and overrules in our affairs and brings us blessings, but if we fail to take the proper steps and to do with our might what our hands find to do, we miss the blessings.

The fact that these two women could journey from Moab to Bethlehem by themselves and without molestation, and the fact that Ruth, unknown and unprotected, could safely glean in the fields without interference of any kind, speaks to us strongly of the general law and order prevalent amongst the Israelites--the general recognition of the divine law and the general conformity thereto. We are to remember, too, that at this time the laws were liberally administered, and that, so far as we are made aware, there was neither army or police organization to enforce them. The people were comparatively free and evidently in some respects moral, noble and trustworthy. This is illustrated further in the course of Boaz. How few employers of labor to-day, as they visit their farms, would be in any degree inclined to salute their laborers as Boaz did him; saying, "The Lord be with you!" And how few farm laborers of to-day would respond as did these of Boaz; --"They answered him, The Lord bless thee." Evidently the employers and employees of our day could learn some profitable lessons from the past, notwithstanding the fact that Evolutionists would endeavor to convince us that back in the days of Boaz men must have been much nearer the monkey condition than to-day. The facts are to the contrary.

Furthermore, we notice the generosity of Boaz, that instead of dealing selfishly and miserly in respect to the gleanings of the woman, he gave directions to his servants that they purposely let fall an occasional handful when binding the grain, that Ruth's gleanings might thus be enlarged. Christian employers and employees need not to go back to the Jewish Law and to the customs of the Jews as illustrated by Boaz and his laborers; for we have a still higher law and much advantage every way over them. If their knowledge of the Lord led them to kindly salutations and kindly actions, much more should the Christian's greater knowledge of the divine will and his anointing of the holy spirit enable him to be kind, considerate and affectionate toward others--doing good unto all men as we have

opportunity, especially to the household of faith.

Our Golden Text is an exhortation to spiritual Israelites and is in full accord with the sentiments of this lesson as witnessed by the conduct of Naomi and Ruth and Boaz and his laborers. Let us with increasing light and knowledge and privilege make still further progress in all the fruits of the spirit of love.

Finally,--It is unsafe to neglect to have the Lord for our God,

R1774 "WHAT LACK I YET? -- MARCH 10, 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 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.

This young man who came to Jesus inquiring, "What lack I yet?" was, evidently, one who was in many respects very exemplary... He came to him openly... and sincerely inquired what he should do to inherit eternal life...

The Lord's reference to the law brought the quick response, "All these things have I kept from my youth up: what lack I yet?" He was anxious for a perfect conformity to the will of God; and so anxious that he manifested his willingness to bear reproach for it in thus coming to Jesus. That was a long step in the direction of full consecration to God. His heart was very nearly right; but still there was a lack; his attitude, although he did not realize it, was not that of entire consecration to the will of God; and in answer to his sincere inquiry the Lord sought to show him wherein he lacked, what was the weak spot in his character.

This he did by applying a test which instantly discovered to him the fact that he loved self more than either God or his neighbor; consequently that he had failed to keep the law in those two important principles upon which hang all the law and the prophets--viz., supreme love to God, which manifests itself in singleness of purpose to do his will and please him; and love to the neighbor as to self, which in the present age implies self-sacrifice and daily cross-bearing in imitation of Christ.

"And he was sad at that saying, and went away grieved; for he had great possessions." No doubt the heart of Jesus was sad

and to neglect to make his people our people. Acceptance of the Lord means ultimately a change in all of life's interests and affairs if we would abide in his love and favor. The sacrifice of earthly things may cost us tears and heart-aches at first; but eventually we will be more than compensated--as was Ruth, only in higher, spiritual blessings.

also when he saw the blight of selfishness and self-will attacking that promising half-blown rose of character. A crisis had come in the young man's life which he failed to pass successfully, and thenceforth the beauty of character so far attained must surely decline. We hear nothing of his subsequent conversion, but in all probability he remained in sympathy with the Jewish teachers and partook more and more of their spirit of opposition to Christ and his teaching.

"And Jesus...saith unto his disciples...How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the Kingdom of God!" He had been showing the way into the Kingdom -- the way, not for this young man only, but for every man who would lay up the treasure of such a hope. Every aspirant to the Kingdom must travel this narrow way of sacrifice, and with one motive of supreme love to God and desire to bless his neighbor as himself. He must go, and sell all that he has and give to the poor, and take up his cross daily and follow Christ. The simple significance of this to all of us is a life of loving devotion to the good of others, along the lines of God's plan and prompted primarily by love to him. "Go, sell *all that thou hast*"--all thy possessions, all thy time, all thy reputation, all that hitherto has been dear to thee; and then, having dropped all the weights of earthly ambition, take up thy cross and follow Christ; for the labor of love and sacrifice for others will not bring its due reward of gratitude in this age, but, on the contrary, it will bring ingratitude and even persecution, as it did to our Master. But, no matter, "the servant is not above his lord:" like the apostles who followed closely in his footsteps, we should be able to say, "Being reviled, we bless; being defamed, we entreat; being persecuted, we suffer it."

It should be considered also that to follow Christ is not to make unwise disposition of our possessions and talents, but, as wise and faithful stewards, to use them to the best possible advantage in his service. To feed the poor would not necessarily mean to feed the hungry with the bread that perisheth, but first, rather, to feed the spiritually hungry with the bread of life. In a word, it signifies to spend self for the highest good of others, not looking for any present reward, except a sense of the Master's approval.

The Lord indicates that though it is very difficult for the rich to enter into the Kingdom, it is not impossible. With men, it might seem impossible that a man could have riches and use them conscientiously;--be a sacrificer. Riches of any kind--whether

of money, or reputation, or friends, or anything upon which the heart has been set, form such barriers to the formation of truly noble characters--after God's own heart--that the natural man, unaided by divine grace, cannot surmount them. But, nevertheless, however insufficient we may feel in ourselves, we need only to remember that "our sufficiency is of God:" it is

"When thy weakness leaneth

On his might, all seems light."

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.

"You cannot manufacture a conscience out of expediency, the voice of conscience says not. It is better not to do so; but--Thou shalt not."

"It is the crushed olive that yields the oil, the pressed grape that gives forth the wine; and it was the smitten rock that gave the people water. So it is the broken, contrite heart that is most rich in holiness and most fragrant in grace."

"We have two ears and but one tongue, that we may hear much and talk little."

"We are in hot haste to set the world right and to order all its affairs. The Lord hath the leisure of conscious power and unerring wisdom, and it is well for us to learn to wait."