

## December 9

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those who have made the covenant of sacrifice with the Lord, is intended to *prove them*, to test their love, to see whether or not their characters are fixed, rooted and grounded in righteousness, and being built up in love, it would put all these trials, difficulties and temptations in a new light before us, and greatly assist us in fighting a good

fight and overcoming. We would say, if by these little trials the Lord is proving my love and devotion to Him, then, however trifling they may be or however important, I will diligently use them as favorable opportunities to demonstrate to my Lord the fullness of my love and devotion to Him and His cause. Z. '98-41 R2258:3

R2257 (From Harvest Truth Database V5.0)

### “TO WHOM SHALL WE GO?”

*“Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life.”—John 6:68.*

THERE are numerous voices in the world, calling mankind to follow in the pursuit of pleasure, of riches, of wisdom, etc., and various are the inducements presented, and to the young and inexperienced the bewilderment of so many attractions is great. But experience has taught many of us, that these seductive *Siren* voices would but lead us to shipwreck upon hidden rocks and shoals, and that “all that glitters is not gold.” We have learned that the cravings of our own human natures are quite unreliable, that we are fallen beings, that our tastes and appetites are perverse, and so depraved that frequently we crave the things that tend to do us injury, and are inclined to reject the things which are best for us. Our Lord speaks of these various voices calling mankind and leading astray, and contrasts them with his own call of his own “sheep” who hear and obey it, saying, My sheep hear my voice, and they follow me; strangers will they not follow, because they recognize not the voices of strangers. —See John 10:3-5.

Not all are able to hear and recognize the Shepherd’s voice in the present time; the majority are deaf on this subject, however acute their hearing may be as respects the inducements held out to them by the world, the flesh and the devil. Consequently the Scriptures say, “He that hath an ear to hear [the gospel] let him hear.” But the opening of our ears to hear the good tidings, of which Christ is the center, does not close them to the various voices of selfishness, ambition, pride, avarice, and vain-glory, and the other voices proceeding from the world, the flesh and the devil: it would seem indeed that, after accepting us to be his sheep, and after giving us some opportunity to learn the sound of the Shepherd’s voice, the voice of Truth, we are intentionally exposed to the various voices which would call us away from our Shepherd, and from following in his footsteps. And Oh, how many stray away! “Walking after their own desires.” How many thus become side-tracked on the way to the heavenly city! How many are ultimately entirely switched off into another direction! How many have thus gone “back and walked no more with him!” How few, what a “little flock,” they are that follow on, day by day, to know the Shepherd more fully, to walk in his paths, and ultimately with him to reach the heavenly Kingdom!

It will be remembered that the words of our text were called forth by a certain *sifting* of the discipleship. Our Lord’s ministry had progressed considerably: at first, the people hung upon his words and said, “Never man spake like this man,” and “great multitudes followed him.” But towards the close of his ministry, as the jealousy and animosity of the “Doctors of Divinity” and the Pharisees began to manifest itself, he became less popular, and in our context we find that many of his hearers were leaving him, and he said, “Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given him of my Father. From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him. Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away? Then Simon Peter answered and said unto him, Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life.” Such siftings and testings of the Lord’s disciples have been in progress throughout the Gospel age, and still continue. Many have directly or indirectly, intentionally or unintentionally, repudiated the great Shepherd, his leading and his instruction. Some, because the chief priests, scribes and Pharisees said, “He hath a devil and is mad. Why hear ye him?” Some, because they did not understand his teachings, and they said, “This is a hard saying: who can believe it?” Others, because his teaching drew the line too sharply between righteousness and sin, between God and Mammon; and we may understand as literal our Lord’s statement that eventually only a “little flock” will be found worthy of the Kingdom.

It may sound harsh to some, because of their misconception of the subject, when we say that the Lord’s message and leading were as much intended to shake off and repel one class, as to attract and to hold another class. That would be inconceivable, if the ones repelled and shaken off were understood to be shaken into a hell of eternal torment, and such is the general misconception of the subject. On the contrary the attraction and the drawing was to the Kingdom, and the repulsion was from the Kingdom, and the sifting and separating of our Lord’s day, and since and at the present time, is to

the intent that the Lord may gather out and separate from those who nominally profess to be his followers, and to be seeking heirship with him in his Kingdom, all who are unworthy of those blessings. As it is written, concerning the end of the Gospel age, and the final glorification of the “little flock,” “He shall gather out of his Kingdom [class] all things that offend and them that do iniquity....Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the Kingdom of their Father.” We may rest assured that none who are fit for the Kingdom will be sifted out. Of such it is written, “No man is able to pluck them out of my Father’s hand;” and again, “If ye do these things [hearken to the voice of the Lord and cultivate his spirit and walk in his ways], ye shall never fall [for so doing], and an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting Kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.”

How all-important then it is, that we have our minds thoroughly made up respecting the voice that we will obey and the footsteps that we will follow—for “a double-minded man is unstable in all his ways.” We “cannot serve God and Mammon,” however much we try. We cannot hear and obey the voice of Satan and Sin and the World and Self and the Flesh, and at the same time hear and obey the voice of the Good Shepherd, the voice of Truth, the voice of Love. Let this be settled and fixed in our minds, that it may keep us from all wavering after we have once taken our place amongst the Lord’s sheep.

In order that the decision may be the proper one, and in order that it may be the final decision, from which we will not think to turn, it is well that we should note the different voices calling us, and to what they lead. We will not notice these voices as they appeal to the world in general, but merely as they appeal to those who have already heard the voice of the Good Shepherd. They assume that they will not antagonize our faithfulness to the Shepherd, but that they will heartily cooperate. The Shepherd, however, declares that this will not be the case; that the selfish voices of the world are calling, influencing, drawing away from him and the path in which he leads his sheep.

Wealth calls to us, holding out its golden charms, and promising great things; suggesting meanwhile that our religious zeal is right enough, but overwrought, fanatical, and that in this measure only it is in opposition to wealth; and that even if obliged to leave the Lord for the sake of wealth it need only be temporarily, and that soon, having acquired wealth, we could pursue after him with redoubled energy and thus gain the Kingdom. Alas, how delusive! And yet how many are attracted by this call and presentation! Well does the Apostle say that “The love of money is a root of all evil, which some coveting after have erred from the faith and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.” Then, too, how false are these hopes, how few amongst the many who pursue wealth ever attain it! Indeed, it is not the wealth that is the evil, for God is rich above all; it is the love of earthly wealth and the manner in which it absorbs the heart affections, away from the truth and its service and heavenly things, that constitutes the evil and the snare of wealth which remarkably few ever resist, overcome and bring into subjection to the divine will.

Many hear the voice of Fame, and pursue it, if peradventure they will become famous, highly esteemed among men. The impelling motive here is, in part at least, pride and approbateness—ambition for self—not for God, nor for righteousness. And how few who turn aside from the Lord’s way, in whole or in part, to gain fame, worldly renown, honor of men, ever attain to fame in any considerable measure! It is a false voice leading on to false hopes, soon shattered in death, if not before: it would induce us to turn aside from the humble path of obedience and self abasement in the divine service whose reward is “Glory, honor and immortality” at God’s right hand of favor.

Others hear the voice of worldly pleasure, and see the millions of earth seeking it in the gratification of the flesh: and there is a great drawing to go with the multitude, seeking pleasure through the gratification of our perverted natural tastes. How long it takes us to learn assuredly that worldly pleasures are fleeting, and that they

have a bitter which counterbalances every sweet, and that the tendencies of Vanity Fair are quite contrary to the new ambitions, new hopes, new desires of our new natures! How many efforts all of the Lord's people have made, to blend or mix the pleasures of the world with the heavenly joys, only to find that they will not blend, and that true happiness for those who would abide in Christ and follow in his footsteps, means the rejection of all pleasures which have a sinful combination or tendency! How long it takes us to learn that the only pleasures which the new creature can truly enjoy, are those in which our Lord can be our companion, those which we can discuss with him and in which we can enjoy his fellowship!

All of these besetments, be it noticed, have their roots in selfishness—they are all in some form inclinations to self-gratification: on the other hand the voice of the Good Shepherd is calling us away from our debased selfish conditions, moods and desires, to a higher plane of sentiment, a plane of benevolence, love of God and righteousness and fellow men, which seeks to “do good and to communicate.” We see, too, that having set before us the new conditions, our Lord, our Teacher, is permitting the selfish tendencies of our natural hearts and of the world in general to call us in other directions; so that by learning to resist these, we may more and more establish for ourselves strong characters, rooted, grounded, fixed, in righteousness and love, strong and able to resist the weaknesses of our own flesh as well as the influence of friends and of the world in general.

Only such as thus develop character can possibly be “overcomers” of the world, and only such will be accepted of the Lord as his joint-heirs in the Kingdom. It will thus be seen that the Lord is not merely seeking for those who will make a covenant with him, but by lessons of trial and discipline and testings by the way he is seeking to prove his people—to test them, to find and to separate to his own service not those who are strong in self-will, strong according to the flesh, but those who, abandoning the will of the flesh, give themselves so completely to the Lord that they become transformed by the renewing of their minds,—“strong in the Lord and in the power of his might.”

In harmony with this thought are the words of the Lord to fleshly Israel, the typical people,—“The Lord your God *proveth you* to know whether ye love the Lord your God with *all* your heart and with *all* your soul.” (Deut. 13:3.) This explains the object and intent of the divine course with us, the true Israel, throughout the Gospel age: he has been proving his people, testing them, to ascertain the degree and the strength of their love for him. He tells us that “Not everyone that saith, Lord, Lord, shall enter the Kingdom:” that many who make the covenant of full consecration will fail to keep it, fail to obey its requirements, and that their failure will indicate a deficiency of love for him, and that self-will still reigns in their hearts, giving God only the secondary place. And <sup>(1)</sup>the Kingdom is only intended for those who by God's grace shall at heart become like to the Lord Jesus, in that they will love the Lord with *all* their hearts, with *all* their souls, and be able to say, “Not my will, but thy will, O Lord, be done.” No other condition than this condition of full submission to the Lord can make us acceptable for the Kingdom; for no other condition represents full self-submission and full love to God. And let us not forget that all the heavenly things which “eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man,” God hath reserved for them that love him supremely.

Hence, however desirable it may be that our friends and neighbors should surrender themselves to the Lord on their death-beds, if they will not sooner surrender, it is nevertheless very evident that those who so repent in their dying hours, are not to be regarded as in any sense of the word, “heirs of the Kingdom;” for it is not supposable that in the few short hours or days after their repentance they could develop the requisite staunch characters: they have not passed through such testings of faith and love and zeal for the Lord as would develop in them the characteristics of “overcomers”—the Kingdom class. Those who surrender to the Lord on their death-bed may, however, be encouraged to hope for his blessing in the Millennial age, and for an opportunity to come to a fuller knowledge of the Lord and to have an opportunity to cultivate character in that Paradisaic condition—as the Lord promised to the dying thief.

<sup>(2)</sup>If we could but keep in memory the fact that every trial, every persecution, every difficulty of life, permitted to come upon those who have made the covenant of sacrifice with the Lord, is intended to *prove them*, to test their love, to see whether or not their characters are fixed, rooted and grounded in righteousness and being built up in love, it would put all these trials, difficulties and temptations in a new light before us, and greatly assist us in fighting a good fight

and overcoming. We would say, If by these little trials the Lord is proving my love and devotion to him, then, however trifling they may be or however important, I will diligently use them as favorable opportunities to demonstrate to my Lord the fulness of my love and devotion to him and his cause. Thus viewed and thus met, every trial and every difficulty would prove to be a blessing: as the Apostle puts it, “Beloved, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations;” “greatly rejoice, tho now for a season ye are in manifold temptation, that the trial of your faith, being much more precious than that of gold that perisheth, tho it be tried by fire, might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ.” “Blessed is the man that endureth [faithfully under] temptation; for after his trials he will receive the crown of life which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.” “These light afflictions, which are but for a moment, *work out* for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory”—if rightly utilized.—1 Pet. 1:7; Jas. 1:2,12.

Thus we are again assured that those who love the Lord, and who in consequence will receive the Kingdom, will be those whose love will have been tested by trials and temptations on the way to it. Those who do not love the Lord with *all* their hearts, in whom self or some other idol has first place, will be seduced by the world, the flesh or the devil into some form of rebellion against the divine Word or divine providence: they will have schemes and theories which they will prefer to the Lord's plan, and their own theories and plans when analyzed will usually be found to be based either upon selfishness or ambition or upon an evil spirit of envy, hatred, jealousy, etc.

The Lord's leading and the Lord's words lose t'eir attraction to such, and they lose their interest correspondingly, and like those who turned away from the Lord at the first advent, saying, “This is a hard saying”—they walk no more with him. But some will continue to walk with the Lord; some will not be driven from him by any of the arts and wiles of the evil one. They are such as are at heart fully the Lord's, not their own; they will follow wherever the Lord may lead, because they have no will except his will. These will follow the Lord in the narrow way of trial, discipline and testings during the present life, and by and by, as he has declared, “They shall walk with me in white: for they are worthy.” (Rev. 3:4.) Nor will this company lack in numbers by reason of the falling away of some. No, it will be full, complete, the predestinated number which God foreordained he would select to be joint-heirs with his Son, our Lord Jesus. His foreknowledge permitted him to make full allowance for all who would turn back, as well as to foreknow that the requisite number would go on.

Those who go on will all have the general character of Christ—faithfulness to the Lord and to his word of promise: and when various voices call in various directions, away from the narrow way of consecration and sacrifice, humiliation and self-denial, they, in answer to the Lord's query, “Will ye also go away?” will answer as did the apostles of old, “Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life.” They know nowhere else to go; they cannot turn back, for they can see clearly that to turn back on their part would be as the Scriptures express it, to “turn back unto perdition,” to the second death. Having heard the calls of the world, the flesh and the Devil, they have seen also the emptiness of all their false promises, and how none of them can give a satisfying portion. But in our Lord's call they have recognized not only righteousness, justice, but have recognized, also, the promised reward of righteousness through Christ, which he has promised to them that love him—namely, eternal life.

Nowhere else is there such a promise; from no other quarter comes such a hope; in no other service, therefore, could they think of engaging but in this service. With the hope of obtaining this prize of eternal life, they could rejoice even in laying down this present life. Truly, this is that “blessed hope.” With such hopes before them, clearly understood, and with the narrow way distinctly marked out, and with an understanding of why it is so narrow and why so few find it (because it leads to the great exaltation of the Kingdom and its joint-heirship with Christ), who could think for a moment of turning aside, or even listening, to the voices calling to wealth, honor, fame, pleasures of this life, etc., seeing that even hearkening to them would interrupt our progress in the way to the Kingdom, and thus frustrate our hopes and make the exceeding great and precious promises of none effect to us. The rather, therefore, will we lay aside every weight and the sin that doth so easily beset us, and run with patience the race set before us in the gospel.

As the faithful disciples realized a meaning in the Master's teachings at the first harvest which the majority could not realize, so now at the second advent his words have a preciousness and a meaning and a force to those who are in heart-harmony with him, which

<sup>(1)</sup> Feb. 18 Manna, Deut. 13:3

<sup>(2)</sup> Dec. 9 Manna, James 1:12

they do not have to others; hence now, as at the first advent, some are stumbling and going back, and others are being drawn to the Lord more closely than ever, by the "present truth" which he is supplying as "meat in due season." As we progress in the way, toward the close of this harvest, we shall not be surprised if the way should grow still narrower, more difficult, and if the tendencies to "stumble" should become more frequent. Let us each, therefore, more and more be on our guard against the wiles of the Adversary; and let the

perfect love of God rule in our hearts, driving out self-love and world-love, and their pride and ambition and folly; and let this devotion to God bring into our hearts the promised fulness of joy and rest and peace; and let us abide in him, the Vine, and be fruitful branches, responding to all the prunings of the great husbandman with more abundant fruitage; and if beguilements come to us, let us view the matter as did the apostles and say, "Lord, to whom should we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life."

#### THE PURPOSE OF OUR TRIALS

R5688 *"Blessed is the man that endureth temptation; for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love Him."--James 1:12.*

The Church is now especially on trial. This trial of our love, endurance, faith, patience, is for the purpose of demonstrating which of us will be found worthy of the chiefest of all blessings--the Divine nature, which God has promised to those who love Him--love Him more than they love houses or lands or bonds, more than they love wife or husband or parents or children or self, or any other thing. God will have a reward for others, also; but it will not be this highest crown, which He offers to the Bride of His Son alone...

It is very easy to think how much we love the Lord and how much we would like to do for Him. Then comes the temptation to sloth, and to do something for ourselves instead of for the Lord. It is easy for us to think we love His will, and to sing:

"I love Thy will, O God."

Then we are severely tried on that line, and we sometimes find out that our love for His will needs yet farther development and greater fixity...

The Lord permits these trials and temptations and difficulties to come to us. The way we meet these, we think, will have much to do in deciding whether we shall be worthy of the highest crown of life."

R5651 "THE NECESSITY FOR PATIENT ENDURANCE... Consider the work to which we are called--the work of blessing all the families of the earth, as God's Millennial Kingdom, in joint-heirship with the Only Begotten Son of God, our great Redeemer. That will be a mighty work; and it is eminently proper that Jehovah should require that those whom He shall account worthy of that exalted position shall not only appreciate His goodness and His glorious character, and prefer His service to sin and iniquity, but demonstrate their thorough loyalty to the principles of righteousness and to His will to the extent of a joyful willingness to suffer on behalf of these principles. A transitory endurance of one or two or three brief trials would not prove the individual to have an established character for righteousness; but a patient, cheerful, endurance even unto death would be necessary to demonstrate such a character.

#### TRIALS ABSOLUTELY ESSENTIAL

Our ability and strength to patiently endure should increase as we progress in the narrow way. We should grow "strong in the Lord and in the power of His might." But we cannot possibly develop this essential trait of character without trials--experiences intended to call for the exercise of cheerful endurance... The virtue is not merely in the bearing; for the world has much to bear, but it is particularly in the manner in which we endure."

#### R5499 THE PURPOSE OF OUR TRIALS

*"Blessed is the man that endureth temptation; for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love Him."--James 1:12...*

Evidently the thought is not the enduring of one temptation for one time or for many times. Even the world must endure trials. The reference is to the retaining permanently of the attitude of *patient* endurance and faithfulness when tempted, of remaining true to God under temptation and stress. Temptations come from a variety of sources. They may come from friends, who may tempt us to live a life of more or less self-indulgence, to relax in a measure our fidelity to the Lord. The enticements of wealth or worldly society, a natural love of ease and disinclination of the flesh to endure hardness--any or all of these may prove strong and subtle temptations...

#### THE PROPER VIEW OF OUR TRIALS

There is a special love required by God of the Gospel Church--this peculiar class now called of Him. They are to have a love that is so unselfish that it will be willing, yea, glad, to lay down the earthly life in the service of God, that they may bring blessings to others. To these God has promised the *special* crown of life--immortality, His own nature. These are to be the blessers of their brethren, those of the nature formerly their own. As Isaac was the blesser of Ishmael and of the sons of Keturah, and as the first-born of Israel were the blessers of their brethren, so these will bless all the peoples of the earth, from among whom they were chosen. How thankful we should be for an honor so great!

If these favored children of the Heavenly King could always keep in mind the fact that every trial and testing, every persecution and difficulty, permitted to come upon those who have made the Covenant of Sacrifice with the Lord, is designed to develop them, to prove and test their love, to demonstrate whether or not their characters are fixed, rooted and grounded in righteousness, it would set all their painful experiences and temptations in a new light, and would be a great assistance to them in fighting the good fight of faith successfully.

R5459 "TRIALS ESSENTIAL TO CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT *"My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations."*--James 1:2...

The Apostle James intimates that temptations may overtake these followers of Christ, into which they will fall as into a snare. As for an army, traps are set by the enemy, so the great Adversary sets traps and snares for us. He endeavors to misguide our minds and to lead us away from proper conceptions of truth and righteousness. We should be very careful to avoid his snares. Nevertheless, in spite of diligence, we may fall into a trap.

The Apostle says we are to rejoice when we fall into various temptations--not that we are to rejoice if we fall into *sin*

when tempted, but that we may rejoice if we find ourselves suddenly precipitated into temptation. Temptation is not sin. If we could but keep in mind the fact that every temptation, every trial, every persecution, every difficulty in life, permitted to come upon us who have made the covenant of sacrifice with the Lord, is intended to *prove us*, to test our love, to see whether or not our characters are *fixed*, rooted and grounded in righteousness and being built up in love, it would put all these trials, difficulties and temptations in a new light before us, and greatly assist us in fighting a good fight and overcoming. When we find ourselves suddenly in temptation, trial, we should say, If by these temptations, or trials, the Lord is proving my love and devotion to Him, then, however trifling they may be or however important, I will diligently use them as favorable opportunities to demonstrate to my Lord the fulness of my love and devotion to Him and His cause. I must fight a good fight against this thing--the world, the flesh or the Adversary--whatever it might be that had brought the snare.

Thus viewed and thus met we can rejoice in every such experience; every trial and every difficulty will prove a blessing; for we shall, first of all, have an opportunity to show the Lord that we will endure, and not compromise His cause or our own position as His servants. We can rejoice also because we know that under such trials our characters will make advancement toward crystallization, if we overcome; and because we know that the Lord would not let us fall into any temptation which He would not cause to work out for us a blessing if we are wholly loyal... "Blessed is the man that endureth [faithfully under] temptation; for after his trials he will receive the crown of life which the Lord hath promised to them that love Him..." 1 Peter 1:7; James 1:2,12.

#### "HE THAT ENDURETH"

...As there are some substances which are short and brittle, so are there some which have fibre, strength, endurance. The Lord chooses for Himself such characters as have the strong, enduring qualities--fortitude, patience, long-suffering, etc. Some there are who walk close to the Lord, who will not be driven from Him by any of the arts and wiles of the Adversary. They are such as are at heart fully the Lord's--not their own; they follow wherever the Lord may lead, because they have no will except the will of God...

#### FAILURES AS "STEPPING-STONES"

All will rejoice when the testings are over and we are accepted as overcomers, to share with the Lord in His Throne. But patience, trust and love must first do a refining work in our hearts, making us mellow, submissive and obedient to God. Let the good work go on! Let us rejoice if our trials have made us stronger in character, more humble and Christlike, more aware of our blemishes and imperfections, more watchful and earnest in our endeavors to correct them so far as possible.

Even the conflicts in which we have

had only partial victory may have resulted in blessings to us. Even in those experiences where we have suffered absolute failure, there may be, through the humiliation and the pain of defeat, a strengthening of our character, a firm determination for greater watchfulness in that direction, and a more fervent prayer for the Lord's sustaining grace, the need of which has been more deeply impressed upon our hearts. Thus even failures may become "stepping-stones" by which we rise toward God and Heaven. Only through much tribulation shall we enter the Kingdom of Heaven at all. If, therefore, the Lord's people find themselves involved in temptations, tribulations, instead of feeling downcast they are to rejoice and say, These are evidences that the Lord is preparing me for a place in the Kingdom. This should give one courage to fight the good fight against the world, the flesh and the Adversary. The flesh is suffering; but the new mind, the new will, has this joy; and the New Creature can rejoice, knowing that these trials are not for his harm, but for his good.—1 Peter 4:13.

#### A WAY OF ESCAPE PROVIDED

The Heavenly Father will with every temptation provide a way of escape. Hence when we find ourselves in difficulty we are to say, The Heavenly Father is permitting this trial—the Lord Jesus will help me, and so I will rejoice in the fact that the Lord will not allow me to be overthrown; for He has promised that all things shall work out for my good...

Our joy is largely dependent upon our study of the Word and our knowledge of the precious promises contained therein for those who overcome. The Lord wants those who will endure a great fight of afflictions, who will endure patiently, though the temptations continue long and the tribulations become more and more severe. But if they should lose faith, all their previous good resolutions and standing for what is right would not make them overcomers...

We are building character for all eternity; and patience could not be thus developed and maintained except by repeated difficulties, tests—by our resolving again and again to be stronger and firmer in building the character-likeness of our Heavenly Father and our Lord Jesus Christ.

#### A WORD OF WARNING

To those who are of this anointed company and who are striving to attain the glory promised to the faithful followers of Christ, the Apostle Peter issues a word of warning. In the first chapter of his second Epistle, he urges the Church to add quality after quality of character-preparation, that thus they may be fitted for the glorious things that God has promised to the faithful. He specifies *faith* as the primary qualification. To this he says that we are to add fortitude, knowledge, patience, self-control, godliness, brotherly kindness and a broad, generous love for all mankind. The reason why the Scriptures declare that our judgment will be according to our *faith* is that while in the flesh we shall never be able to perform *works* such as God could approve...

"If ye do these things," says the Apostle, "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."

Faith is necessary *all along the line*. Without faith we could not have courage to

go on. If we did not have faith what would be our source of encouragement? The fall mentioned in the text above quoted (2 Peter 1:10), is evidently a fall from the position to which we have been invited... If there is a fall in our case, it will be due to failure to do our part. If we fail to cultivate character, we shall fail to gain the Kingdom."

#### R4514 "A FRENZY OF DELUSION"

*"For this cause God will send them a strong delusion [literally, a frenzy of delusion]; that they may believe a lie—because they had not pleasure in the truth."—2Thess. 2:11...*

Now according to this prophesy we are come to the time when God will test all—or allow Satan to test the whole world with a "frenzy of delusion"! What may we not expect in the way of hasty and irrational conduct inspired by these delusions! Some may be so exercised in respect to the Truth—new and old; others may be influenced thus in respect to their personal, social and political affairs.

It is this frenzy that is precipitating trouble, religious, financial and social, and leading on to the anarchy which is shortly, according to the Bible, to envelop and swallow our civilization in the indescribable time of trouble which will precede the reign of righteousness.

The saints, the consecrated, will not escape from this testing. Who will be able to stand? Some seem to be under the strain already. Let us pity them and do all in our power to succor them. But our chief concern should be ourself—that we may each maintain and increase our "spirit of a sound mind."

What then should be our course if we would stand the test successfully?

We should not only square our every act and word with strictest justice, but beyond this we should scrutinize our every *thought* and "bring every thought into subjection to the will of God" as expressed in Christ. Love, do you say? Yes! in its proper order, "Love is the principal thing." But Justice must come first to be in line with the Divine precepts. "Just before generous" is an old and a very true adage. After learning to think justly of the words and acts of others we are prepared with a proper mental foundation to think generously—lovingly...

Whoever does not love righteousness; yea, whoever does not *hate iniquity*, is surely in danger of being frenzied by delusions in this evil day."

R4583 "ALL DECEIVABLENESS OF UNRIGHTEOUSNESS" *"The energy of the Adversary, with all powers and signs and wonders of falsehood, and with every deception of iniquity to those who are perishing, because they admitted not the love of the Truth, in order that they might be saved. On this account God will send an energy of delusion to their believing the falsehood."—2 Thess. 2:9-11--(Diaglott)...*

We are now in the time above all others when we may expect strong delusions, not only upon nominal Christendom, but upon those who have been specially favored with the light of Truth now shining...

Your great Adversary's endeavor, therefore, is to poison our minds, to introduce thereto impurity, anger, malice, envy, hatred and other works of the flesh and of the Adversary. To the extent that he suc-

ceeds in poisoning our hearts he alienates us from the Lord and from all those who are in accord with him; and this is his object...

It is incumbent, therefore, that all who would be recognized of the Father as possessing the character-likeness of the Lord Jesus should resist and put away, mortify, deaden, every unholy, unloving, unjust sentiment, as they would avoid the virus of hydrophobia or of a contagious disease... We must not dare to render evil for evil, nor railing for railing, but "be kind and gentle towards all." In fact, we must not even entertain an unkind thought respecting those who oppose us..."

R766 "THE LORD YOUR GOD PROVETH YOU"... *"Many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many."...*

Even after coming out of these anti-christ or false-christ systems, there are many false prophets who assume authority to direct the consecrated, who teach theories subversive of the truth and pervert the Scriptures to support them. Such false prophets always have been and always will be found, so long as Satan has power in his hands; that is, until he is bound.

And our Heavenly Father permits it so to be: why? To prove his people: "For the Lord your God doth prove you, to know whether ye love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul." The Lord would prove whether we have received the truth in the love of it and of its Author. It is very often the case that truth is received by some because of their love for those who bear it, and without personal searching to prove that it is from God. Such have not received the truth in the love of IT, and sooner or later some circumstances will unsettle them. If the prop falls into error such will surely fall with it; or if love for the prop grows cold, the love for truth thus received grows cold with it. But love for our brethren in Christ, and special love for those who serve us most, will never overthrow the faith of those who receive the truth in the love of it.

Should controversy arise because the way of truth is evil spoken of even among those through whom the blessed Gospel has been received, and who have been greatly loved for their work's sake, it will only impel those who are wholly the Lord's, to a more diligent searching of the Scriptures, and thus more earnest inquiring of the Lord to make very plain the way...

Thus the Lord proved Israel's determination to obey him at the sacrifice of any earthly friendship if need be. And in this Israel was a type of both the world in the age to come, and also of the church in the present time. Temptations even from dearest friends to depart from the living God and serve idols, whether those idols be self-exaltation, or any other thing, must be resolutely met with a fixed purpose to follow the Lord wholly...

Ever bearing in mind that the Lord your God doth prove you, to know whether ye love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, and whether your love to him is paramount to every other love, however strong, we may meet the trials of severing friendships and dissolving earthly ties, with firm unflinching confidence in God, who will crown with everlasting joy, the faithful overcomer who has fought to the end the good fight of faith."