

February 18

The Lord your God proveth you, to know whether ye love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul. Deuteronomy 13:3

THE Kingdom is only intended for those who by God's grace shall at heart

(Deu 13:1-3 KJV) "If there arise among you a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams...saying, Let us go after other gods...(3) Thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams: for the LORD your God proveth you, to know whether ye love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul."

R4446 "Truth tests the character, and God desires that it should do so."

THE FAITHFUL SEEK GOD'S GLORY NOT THEIR OWN

R2190 "Many comparatively ignorant men have been greatly used of the Lord in the gospel service--great learning in the philosophies often proving a snare, a temptation to preach these and to make a show among men rather than to preach the divine philosophy -- redemption through the blood..."

(Joh 7:16-18 KJV) "Jesus answered them, and said, My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me. (17) If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself. (18) He that speaketh of himself seeketh his own glory; but he that seeketh his glory that sent him, the same is true, and no unrighteousness is in him."

(1Th 2:4-6 KJV) "But as we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel, even so we speak; not as pleasing men, but God, which trieth our hearts. (5) For neither at any time used we flattering words, as ye know, nor a cloke of covetousness; God is witness: (6) Nor of men sought we glory, neither of you, nor yet of others..."

(Jn 8:31-32 KJV) "Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; (32) And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

R5508 "THE REWARD OF TRUE DISCIPLESHIP... Since we desire to continue to be Jesus' sincere disciples, let us mark the expressed condition: "If ye continue in My Word, then are ye My disciples indeed"..."

The reward of continued discipleship is, "Ye shall know the Truth"—not, Ye shall be "ever learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the Truth." (2 Timothy 3:7.) Here is the mistake many make; failing to continue in the Word of the Lord, they delve into various human philosophies, which ignore or pervert the Word of the Lord and set up opposing theories. To those who seek for Truth among these human theories, there is no promise that they shall ever find it, and they never do....

If we thus continue in the Word of the Lord as earnest and sincere disciples, we shall indeed "know the Truth," be "established in the Present Truth" [the Truth due], and "be rooted and grounded in the Truth"; we shall be "firm in the faith," and "able to give a reason for the hope that is in us"; to... "endure hardship as good soldiers of Jesus Christ," even unto the end of our conflict."

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 of full submission to the Lord can make us acceptable for the Kingdom; for no other condition represents

R2453 "How firm a foundation we now have for faith, hope and love! What a contrast to our former vague hopes, dim faith or credulity, and cold love--three-fourths fear!

But as we claim that what we present is not *our own*, not *new*, but "The Old Theology"--so old that it had been lost sight of for centuries--we must disclaim any credit even for the finding and re-arrangement of the jewels of truth. "It is the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes." The writer wholly disclaims superior ability or qualification for the reorganization of the truth in its present solidarity. As the time had come for the bringing together of the scattered thoughts of past centuries in the marvelous inventions of our day,--so the time had come for the bringing together of the fragmentary hopes and promises of God's Word scattered through Christendom. To deny that the Lord has simply "poured out" this harvest time blessing of "present truth" in his own due time and in his own way, would be as wrong as to claim it as of our own invention. "Poured out" exactly expresses the truth on this point too, for he neither "burned the midnight oil," nor racked his brain, nor otherwise forged the chain of truth with heavy sledge blows of human reason on the anvil of knowledge. On the contrary, it came gradually, silently, as comes the morning dawn: the only effort necessary was to keep *awake* and face in the right direction. And the greatest aid in so doing was the effort put forth to awaken others of the "household of faith" and point them to the light and in turn to urge upon them the necessity for serving also, if they would overcome the lethargic "spirit of the world," and be ready to go in to the marriage of the Lamb.

To deny that the "marvelous light" of present truth is of the Lord's providence as truly as was the light of the Jewish "harvest," and the lesser light of the period of "The Great Reformation," would be to deny that we are in the "harvest" of this age, in which the Lord specially promised his people just such refreshment --"meat in due season," "things new and old"--set forth afresh under his own supervision."

THE FAITHFUL SEEK GOD'S TRUTH NOT THEIR OWN OPINION

(1 Pet 4:10-11 KJV) "As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. (11) If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen."

(Titus 1:9 KJV) "Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers."

R768 "The great Nominal Church [is] attempting to form a certain kind of union, and then calling it "Christian Union." This

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. Z. '98-40 R2258:2

union is effected not in the manner Paul indicates--through a common faith, hope, and experience; but by ignoring doctrine...

The plan which the Lord has adopted for building up and cementing the body of Christ, is by the appointment of various members to various offices for the general good of all: He gave some apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some shepherds and teachers, not that the other members should receive their teaching without investigation, but in order to aid them in that work. Every thought suggested and every exposition of Scripture advanced by these must be brought to the test of the Word; and the testing may be of great service, if the assemblings of the saints be largely devoted to this important work, not in the spirit which so often marks controversy, each more anxious to maintain and establish his own opinions than to discover truth, but in the spirit of meekness which totally ignores such base considerations, in an all-absorbing desire to discover the Lord's will and plan."

R5799 "WHY GOD HAS PERMITTED SATAN'S LYING DECEPTIONS "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..."

Since all that happened to fleshly Israel was for our admonition (1 Corinthians 10:11), our text has a very forceful application to Spiritual Israel...

The Apostle Paul, in referring to the close of this Gospel Age, declares that false doctrines will be multiplied. He tells us why many will be misled and deceived. He says, "They received not the love of the Truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe *the lie* [Genesis 3:4]: that they all might be condemned who believed not the Truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness." (2 Thessalonians 2:10-12) The intimation here seems to be that those who have come into touch with God and with His Truth will be so attracted by the Truth that it will be like the needle attracted to the pole. God is the great Pole. Those really drawn to Him will be difficult to swerve... They have an affinity for the Truth, they are influenced by it, magnetized by it, drawn...

The Lord will not permit those who receive the Truth in the love of it to be turned aside. But He will send strong delusions to those who receive it from any other motive or for any other reason. These strong delusions He will permit to be spread abroad because He purposes to demonstrate the real heart attitude of each of those who have named His name and taken His vows upon them. Thus the loyal-hearted ones will be made manifest, and of them He declares, "They shall be Mine...in that Day when I make up My jewels."—Mal. 3:17

FALLEN SPIRITS ESPECIALLY

ACTIVE TODAY...

New "garments of light" are assumed continually; and every feature of Present Truth sent by God as "meat in due season"

for His saints is promptly *counterfeited* to "deceive if possible the Very Elect"...

God so uses Satan's wrath in the out-working of His plans that He may be said to *send* the strong delusions which are now misleading all whose faith is not securely founded on the Rock Christ Jesus, who have not put on the "whole armor of God," supplied in His Word.... We have now come to the time when every child of God needs all the panoply of Truth—the armor of God. He who has not on the "whole armor of God" is sure to fall into error in this "evil day"

R766"THE LORD YOUR GOD PROVETH YOU -- *Mat 24:11-24, Deut 13:1-3...*

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.

Peter reminds us that there were false prophets in Israel, even as there should be false teachers among us; (2 Peter 2:1) and Moses declares that it was permitted to prove Israel. If faithful to God, no consideration of a personal character, should lead them to turn away from God's truth after these false teachers. When we remember that these things happened to Israel as types for our instruction, the words of Moses become very significant:—"If thy brother, the son of thy mother, or thy son, or thy daughter, or the wife of thy bosom, or thy friend which is as thine own soul, entice thee secretly, saying, Let us go and serve other gods...thou shalt not consent unto him, nor hearken unto him..."

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 reso-

lutely 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..."

R3726 "Our Lord's discourses were along the lines of divine revelation—the Law and the Prophets, and the fulfilment of these. This is clearly indicated by his declaration, "I speak not from myself; but the Father which sent me he hath given me a commandment what I should say and what I should speak." (John 12:49.) Again he said, "My teaching is not mine, but his that sent me."—John 7:16.

We pause here to remark that the teachings of all the Lord's representatives should be along this same line—not human speculations and philosophies, but the Word of God—"He that hath a dream let him tell a dream, but he that hath my Word let him speak my Word." (Jer. 23:28) "To the Law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this Word it is because they have no light in them." (Isa. 8:20) "Teach the Word, be instant in season," and even when inconvenient to yourself. (2 Tim. 4:2) "The Word of God is powerful and sharper than a two-edged sword." (Heb. 4:12) "Sanctify them through thy Truth, thy Word is Truth." ...Thus it is that those who are faithful and loyal to the Lord and the word of his testimony speak not vaguely and indefinitely to the world, but declare the message of God, the "good tidings of great joy which shall be unto all people"

R651 "FALSE HUMILITY... Under the influence of this false humility, how many take pride in saying on nearly all important religious subjects, "I tie to no man's opinion, and have none of my own--I want only the truth." They consider this a saintly humility, which never reaches any conclusion, for fear they should be considered bigoted. They say they are seeking truth, but if so, they never know when they find it, and might as well not have sought. These are covered by the language of our text--"Ever learning, but never able to come to [arrive at] the knowledge of the truth." Such, because not rooted and grounded in faith, are always tossed to and fro--"carried about with every wind of doctrine." (Eph. 4:14.)"

R3215 "There are those--and such is the general sentiment among the teachers of false doctrine--who think that it is not either necessary or advisable to be established in the faith. To be established is to be a bigot, is the idea they advance... But he is not an unreasoning bigot who, in simple faith, on the authority of God, accepts the Word of God... The truth has made him free from all doubts and misgivings, and from all desire to delve into the muddy pool of human speculations. To all such Paul says, "As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him, rooted and built up in him, and established in the faith, as ye have been taught [by us, the apostles], abounding therein with thanksgiving."--But, "Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ."--Col. 2:6-8"

R3215 "GROW IN GRACE" "*Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness. But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and forever. Amen.*"--2 Pet. 3:17,18.

Let us observe the manner in which the Apostle would have us guard against being led away by the error of the wicked. Is it by a careful investigation of all the claims which every new false prophet that arises may intrude upon our attention, thus giving heed to every seducing spirit (1 Tim. 4:1)? No; that would be quite contrary to the teaching of "our beloved brother Paul," to whom Peter so affectionately refers, and whom he so fully endorses; for Paul had given no uncertain counsel on this subject; saying, "Shun profane and vain babblings; for they will increase unto more ungodliness, and their word will eat as doth a canker;" and "I entreat you, brethren, to mark those who are making factions and laying snares contrary to the teaching which you have learned, and turn away from them; for they that are such are not in subjection to our anointed Lord, but to their own appetite [for honor and praise among men, as great teachers--1 Tim. 1:6,7]; and by kind and complimentary words they deceive the hearts of the unsuspecting. ...I wish you to be wise with respect to that which is good, and harmless with respect to that which is evil."--2 Tim. 2:16,17; Rom. 16:17-19.

Peter felt the force of Paul's wise and earnest counsel, and with emphasis echoed the same sentiments...

But what is it to grow in grace? It is to grow in favor with the Lord through an intimate personal acquaintance and fellowship of spirit with him..."If a man love me he will keep my words; and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him."-- John 14:23...

To grow thus in grace and not grow in knowledge is impossible; for the very object of such communion is to build us up in a more perfect knowledge and acquaintance with the Lord--to bring us into closer fellowship with the divine plan, and to give us the privilege of being "workers together with him" in executing that plan. If, therefore, we love and obey the Lord and desire to grow in his favor, his written Word is our daily meditation and study; and thus we grow in knowledge: not, however, by finding out each year that what we learned last year was false, but by adding to what we learned last year, by putting on more and more of the armor of God until we realize its glorious completeness in the full discernment of the divine plan of the ages. We are then ready to do valiant service for the cause of truth in withstanding the encroachment of error (Eph. 6:10-13), being established, strengthened and settled in the faith (1 Pet. 5:10.) But even to those thus established in the faith there is abundant opportunity to grow in knowledge; for while they will see nothing new or different in outline or design, they will be continually charmed and cheered with newly discovered lines of harmony and beauty in the divine drawings of the wonderful plan of the ages. As pupils we may ever study the master workmanship of the Divine Architect,

"And still new beauties shall we see,
And still increasing light."

"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 approbation--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 right-

eousness 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 ⁽¹⁾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.

⁽²⁾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 fullness 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 their 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 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 fullness 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."

⁽¹⁾ Feb. 18 Manna, Deut. 13:3

⁽²⁾ Dec. 9 Manna, James 1:12