

January 18

Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord. Romans 12:11

LET all who would run the race successfully look well to their zeal and activity in the Lord's work. If we bury our one or

many talents under a weight of worldly cares and encumbrances which might be avoided or set aside; if we bury them under worldly ambitions for either self or family--whether this be by wasting consecrated time upon science, philosophy, music or art, or

upon business, politics or pleasures, or in pampering pride and appetite--then as unfaithful servants we will sooner or later go into outer darkness. Z.'91-9 R1282:5

R2220 "PAUL'S HEART REVEALED... ACTS 20:22-35 -- "Remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive." -- Acts 20:35.

Perhaps no other words give us a clearer insight into the heart of the Apostle Paul than his address to the elders of the Church at Ephesus. They show us what were the moving impulses of his active life. He sought not for ease or fame or worldly pleasure. He was thoroughly imbued with his Master's holy spirit which delighted in honoring God and doing good to all, regardless of earthly reward, persecutions, insults, slander and misrepresentations...

What a noble testimony by the grace of God Paul was enabled to give: "I have coveted no man's silver or gold or apparel." He not only had used his trade as a tent-maker for his own support, but also to help financially those who were associated with him in the gospel work. Praise God for so noble an example of devotion!...

And now we come to the grandest expression of the whole discourse: "I have showed you [illustrated to you, in] all things, how that so laboring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'" Would that these words might be deeply

graven upon all our memories. The world's rule, the general disposition of the fallen nature, is to give adherence or support to the strong, and expect weaker ones to rally around and support or uphold us. This is self-pleasing--the way of the fallen nature: but the method of the "new creatures" is to be the reverse of this--they are to be on the lookout for the welfare, interests and comforts of others, especially in their own families; and applying the Apostle's words to the Church they inculcate carefulness for the weaker members of the "household of faith." Each of the stronger should take pleasure in helping the weaker and the less learned, and so far as possible in bringing all up to the stature of manhood in Christ.

And the Apostle here shows that the secret of his success as a servant of the Lord, and the reason why his life could be pointed to as a pattern, was that he was remembering and putting into practice the words of the Great Teacher. The art of *giving himself* is one of the secrets of a happy Christian life. He first gives his will to the Lord, then his time, his energy, his talents, to the service of the Lord and for the Lord's people. He has pleasure in the giving and a blessing, whether others know and appreciate it or not; and by and by his time for receiving will come--the Lord's time for giving. The Lord will give unto such eternal

life, eternal glory and association with himself in his Kingdom."

R2488 "To make our studies of the divine plan as profitable as possible, we should spend as much time daily in dispensing the truth to others as we spend in seeking to feed ourselves, and Christian experience proves the truth of the words of Scripture, "He that watereth shall be watered also himself:" so that gradually the servant of the Lord will become more and more interested in handing forth the truth to others and finding that his own growth in knowledge and in grace came either in preparing to dispense the truth to others or while dispensing it to them. A state of lethargy, indolence, etc., respecting the duties of life, and respecting opportunities for presenting the truth to others, is a sure indication of spiritual poverty. It is well that all of the Lord's people keep ever before their minds the inspired words, "Not slothful in business, fervent [warm, zealous] in spirit, serving the Lord."

As to the amount of time each can devote, no rule can be laid down except that of fervency of spirit. One fervent in spirit will be serving others temporally and spiritually nearly all the time--with his might, as his hand finds to do."

R5334 (From Harvest Truth Database V5.0 2006)

FERVENCY OF SPIRIT NECESSARY TO OVERCOMING

"Not slothful in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord."--Romans 12:11.

THIS text might very properly be transposed to read: "In serving the Lord, be not slothful in business, but fervent in spirit." The primary thought, the central thought, is that the Lord is to be served, and on this account we are to be careful to learn what kind of service is acceptable.

We ask first, Why should the great Creator of all things, the Upholder of all things, need our service? And the Bible answers us that God needs no service whatever, that He is quite competent to carry out His own Plan, but that He is pleased to have the co-operation, the sympathy, of His own servants--not only of the human family, but also of the spiritual family--that God is not making an exhibition of His own power, but that all of His intelligent creatures are permitted to become more or less participants in the one Plan of which He is the Center.

This is particularly true of the earth. God permitted the Adversary to overturn things, and has permitted sin to have its course, in order to illustrate certain great principles that operate in the universe, according to certain laws. Whoever violates the principles of righteousness will have proportionately an unsatisfactory experience, as sin is contaminating and contagious. And so what might appear as God's inability to control sin and its evil influences will ultimately be seen from a different standpoint --illustrating His Justice, Wisdom, Power and Love.

As some great business firm might say, Now we do not need any capital, but we will hold the balance of stock, and allow some to go out amongst the employees, so that each one may be associated in the business--have an interest in the business; just so God makes use of capital, having plenty otherwise Himself. God therefore arranged the Plan just as it is.

In God's Plan, the Logos was to have the first opportunity of becoming man's Savior and of bringing everything earthly to a condition of full perfection. God so arranged the matter that it would require a *death* to redeem mankind. God could have imposed a different penalty. He *could* have put a penalty of ten years of disfavor,

or what not, for the first act of disobedience. But *He did not*. He put the penalty of *death*. And then He made the proposition to the great Logos that if He would carry out His Plan of being the Redemption-price for Adam and his race, which would cost Him His life, He would be granted still greater honors.

So the Logos left the glory that He had with the Father and humbled Himself to become a man and to die, even the death of the cross. "Wherefore God hath highly exalted Him." In this way our Lord Jesus was permitted to be a co-laborer with God. He was required to be faithful, zealous in spirit, fervent in spirit. And we read of Him, "The zeal of thine House hath consumed Me." He was to be self-sacrificing and not self-seeking.

The pictures of these things were given aforetime-- before He came into the world. As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so should the Son of Man be lifted up, etc. It required a great deal of fervency of spirit to carry our Lord through all the bitter experiences of His earthly existence. He needed to have a great deal of faith in the Father and a great deal of devotion to the Father. And the fact that He overcame the difficulties shows that He had the faith and the fervency.

WHO SHALL BE ABLE TO STAND?

But our Heavenly Father's Plan is even broader than this. He planned that Jesus should have associates. And so the Apostle declares that God, who foreknew our Lord Jesus as the great Shepherd of the sheep, foreknew us also by Him--with Him. And if we partake of His sufferings in this present time, we shall also share with Him in the glories to follow. This was premeditated in God's Plan from before the foundation of the world.

This feature of the Plan began to operate at Pentecost. Those who had already believed in God as a Savior, and who had tendered their hearts to the Lord, could not be accepted until Jesus ascended up on High and made application of His merit for them--on behalf of all such. The Holy Spirit was given at Pentecost. Immediately they were privileged to begin a service for the Lord-- a service that was

made necessary in God's arrangement. He could have *done without* this service, but *He did not*--He arranged to have this very service. He purposed that a witness should be given to the world, to gather out a people for His name, and that those who should give the witness should show their faithfulness in the trials and tests that would come to them.

The Father is seeking such to serve Him as serve Him in spirit and in Truth. Therefore He allows the way to be made narrow by the opposition of the Adversary, the flesh and the world, so that none but those who are fervent in spirit will stand the tests. Others will not enter this work, or will fall out by the way. They will say that it is too hard. If you are God's servant they will say all manner of evil about you. They will say that you are a hypocrite, etc. God does not cause the Adversary to do this, but He permits it, not because He is limited in Power and could not cause it to cease, but because He is testing all who would be followers of Jesus. And He wishes to have no others in that Elect company than those who are fervent in spirit. Therefore are there such services and such tests.

THE CAUSE OF OPPOSITION

The great business in life of those who would honor and serve the Lord is to serve the brethren and the Truth. Everything that represents the Truth these soldiers of the cross are to uphold--everything that is right, just, true. They will give their approval to such things and their disapproval to other things. This is what causes the opposition of the flesh and of the world and of the Adversary.

So, then, Christians have become dead to the world and alive toward God. Having thus been received and counted in as a member of Christ, every such one has as his special business the service of the Lord, the brethren and the Truth. And according to his abilities and opportunities is he to engage in this business. And this is to be his mind or disposition--to serve the Lord. And he is to be fervent in spirit, not indifferent, not lukewarm. As the Lord Jesus was fervent in spirit, even so are we to be. The fervency of His spirit for God and His arrangements consumed His life. So it must be with all those who serve God--those who walk in the Master's footsteps. This must be, necessarily, the chief business in life for these people of God.

HOW TO REDEEM THE TIME

It is necessary for us to engage in some kind of occupation in order to secure a livelihood. God has so arranged in order to prove our faithfulness. Further, as other people are engaged in these same occupations, laboring for the comforts of life, we are compelled to compete with these to some extent. But as we see that we have a nobler business, we shall see to it that all these secular things in life are cut off, as far as possible, in order that we may have the more time for the Lord's service. The old ambition to gain earthly things

would lead us to lay up treasures on earth. But the hope set before us in the Gospel leads us rather to lay up treasures in Heaven, "where moth doth not corrupt," etc.

So this class do with as few luxuries in life as possible, in order that they may lay down their time and strength in His service. And the more they do this, the more they become copies of God's dear Son. Thus, if any one is engaged in the carpenter business--the same in which our Lord engaged when He was a youth--he will say, How can I minimize the affairs of life so that I can give more of my time to the Lord and less to earthly matters? And so it will be his endeavor to cut off the desire for earthly luxuries. More and more he will count the affairs of this life as loss and dross in comparison with the glory of the life beyond.

In proportion, therefore, as we imbibe the Truth, in that same proportion will be our desire to be fervent in spirit--in that same proportion we shall be striving to sacrifice, to cut off, to devote to the Lord this time and talent and energy. We do not think that the Lord would wish us to be too particular regarding earthly things and waste valuable time. For instance, we might say, I will keep this house as *unto the Lord*. And we might give too much of our time and attention to different matters about the house. But the Lord is inviting us to choose the better part and not to give too much time and attention to procuring and caring for ornaments and bric-a-brac. Whoever would give too much time to the housework or to other earthly affairs would show that he did not appreciate the privilege of the Lord's service.

When we look about us, we find that all men need so much and the Household of Faith need so much. "What do they need?" They need the *Truth*. "Is the Truth, then, to go now to the world?" Yes, to all who have the hearing ear. There is a satisfaction and a blessing in having the mind properly sustained. We would rather be without all the luxuries of life, and have this Truth. We would rather suffer the loss of everything else than suffer the loss of our being.

If everything else in life were taken from us, and we were without a penny in the world, we would still be rich toward God if we had the Truth. And so we all are needy in respect to this intelligence, this knowledge. When we perceive this, how could we be indifferent to the telling forth of the praises of Him who has called us out of darkness into His marvelous light! So, then, God has so arranged this matter that all those who believe and become children of God may have a share with Him in His great work. And since we know these things, they become a test of our loyalty and our love. And the Lord seeing or not seeing this character in us will determine whether or not we shall be associated in the honorable work on the other side of the veil.

R5227

THE TIME, MY SOUL, IS SHORT!

No time to linger by the way,
No time for ease, no time for play;
No time for earthly loves or joys,
No time for worldly cares or toys--
The time, my soul, is short!

No time to murmur or complain,
No time to heed the heart's dull pain;
No time for tears or mournful song,
No time to ask, How far? How long?--
The time, my soul, is short!

Ah, yes! 'tis short--yet time enough
To run thy course, so steep and rough;
Just time to reap "the fields," so white,
Before the coming of "the night"--
Just time, my soul, just time!

Just time to make thy heart more pure,
Just time to make thy "calling sure,"
Just time to enter through "the door,"
To reign with Christ for evermore--
Just time, my soul, just time!

R1281 (From Harvest Truth Database V5.0 2006)
THOUGHTS FOR THE NEW YEAR
OUR TALENTS AND THEIR USE

Exhortation.--"Consecrate yourselves to-day to the Lord,...that he may bestow upon you a blessing this day." "Offer unto the Lord thanksgiving; and pay thy vows unto the Most High."

Promise.--"And call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me." "The Lord will give strength unto his people."--Exod. 32:29; Psa. 50:14,15; 29:11.

The dawn of another new year is properly a time for solemn reflections, both retrospective and prospective. In the retrospect how abundant is the cause for thanksgiving. We who have been blessed with the richest favors of divine grace in that knowledge of divine truth which reveals to us the high privilege of becoming sons and heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ to an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for the called and chosen and faithful according to his purpose, have a never failing cause for deepest gratitude. Great indeed was the favor which revealed to us the hope of everlasting life as justified, human sons of God--of full restitution to the divine favor and likeness, as at first possessed by our father Adam. And great was our joy when first, by faith, we appropriated this precious promise and realized that legally, through merit of the precious blood of Christ shed for our redemption, we had passed from death unto life, and that in God's appointed time the everlasting treasure with all its attendant glory and blessing would be ours. But beyond even this favor are the "*exceeding great and precious promises*" to those of this justified class who have been called, according to God's purpose, to become the bride and joint-heir of his dear Son.

Then, in addition to all these blessings of hope and promise, was the blessed realization during all the year, and with some of us for many years past, that though we walk through the valley of the shadow of death, as the Psalmist aptly represents the present life, our blessed Shepherd's rod and staff have been our comfort and our safeguard. How often has the friendly crook of the Shepherd's staff stayed us from wandering off into by-paths and kept us in the narrow way; how his chastening rod has from time to time aroused us from dreamy lethargy and urged us on our way. And at such times we have recalled the comforting words: "My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him; for whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards and not sons."--Heb. 12:5-8.

Spiritually, we have feasted on the bounties of divine favor, while in things temporal, under whatsoever circumstances we have been placed, having the assurance that *all things* work together for good to them that love God, we have realized that godliness with contentment is great gain, having promise of the life that now is [so long as God wills to have us remain here], and also of that which is to come. Wherefore, we can and do most heartily "offer unto God thanksgiving." And shall we not render unto him, not only the praise of our lips, but also the incense of truly consecrated lives, throughout the year upon which we are just entering. Dearly beloved, consecrate yourselves anew to the Lord today --not in the sense of invalidating the consecration made once for all, possibly many years ago, but rather in the sense of re-affirming and emphasizing that covenant. Tell the dear Lord that you consider yourselves entirely his, and that it is still your purpose to keep your all upon the altar of sacrifice during this new year and until it is wholly consumed in his service. Then let us proceed with studious care from day to day to pay these, our vows of full consecration, unto the Most High.

As we look back and with sorrow view the imperfections of even our best efforts, and then forward and see the lion-like difficulties that seem to obstruct our onward course, we will need greatly to re-inforce our waning courage with the special promises of divine grace to help in every time of need. We have the blessed assurance that "the Lord will give strength unto his people." "Call upon me in the day of trouble," he says, "and I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me." As soldiers under our great Captain, we have enlisted in no uncertain struggle, except our own faint-heartedness or unfaithfulness should make it so. We are fully supplied with the whole armor of God, and will be amply protected against all the fiery darts of the adversary if we will accept it and carefully buckle it on; we

are forewarned of all the snares and dangers that beset our onward way, so that we may avoid and overcome them; we are fully informed as to the policy and course of the Captain under whose banners we have enlisted, and of the part we are to take under his leading. We have his constant presence with us, even to the end of our course. His inspiring voice may always be heard above the clash and din of battle --Fear not, it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom! Be of good cheer: I have overcome! Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid! Greater is he that is for you than all they that be against you. If we are weak and incline to faint-heartedness we have only to remember the blessed promise, "The Lord will give strength unto his people;" and by our faithfulness in the service we shall glorify God and he will deliver us gloriously from all our foes, both seen and unseen.

HOW SHALL WE PAY OUR VOWS?

This is an important question with all the truly consecrated, and one surely of paramount importance. Let us consider, then, that when we consecrated ourselves fully to the Lord, we thereby signified that we would hold nothing back for self. That consecration included all our possessions, our time, our physical energies and our mental attainments. And it implied the sacrifice of all our former earthly ambitions, hopes and aims, so that we should no longer pursue them to any extent. This, and nothing less, is what our vow of full consecration signifies. But it signifies, further, that these possessions or personal qualifications, which the Lord terms talents, are not only to be released from the service of the worldly ambitions, etc., but that they are to be so released, not for aimless inactivity, but for the purpose of being utilized in an opposite direction--in the service of God, of his plan and of his children.

In the parable of the talents (Matt. 25:14-30) the Lord illustrated very clearly how we are expected to pay our vows of consecration to the Most High. He says: "It is like a man who, intending to travel, called his own servants and delivered unto them his goods. And to one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; to each according to his respective capacity; and straightway took his journey."

This master had important and valuable interests to leave in charge of his servants; and as these servants had all engaged to serve him, he had a right to expect of them a sincere and faithful interest in the work. Yet he did not expect more of them than they were severally able to accomplish. He rightly expected larger returns from the one who had five talents than from those who had one or two talents. And in the reckoning, it will be observed that the servant who had doubled his two talents was just as highly commended as the one who had doubled his five. The reply to each was the same--"Well done, good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things; I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." And had the servant with the one talent been similarly faithful he would have received the very same commendation. Notice also that the parable does not represent the obligations of the world of mankind in the use of their talents, but merely of "*his own servants*"--the consecrated believers only. And notice also that no servant was left without some talent of usefulness and responsibility. Each servant had *at least* one talent; and for the right use of that one talent he was just as accountable to his master as were those who had more.

But the professed servant with the one talent was unfaithful to his master, and yet he evidently wanted to be considered a servant still, and probably thought he was worthy of commendation and reward for not perverting his Lord's money to other uses. He had taken good care of the talent; he had not turned it in opposition to the Lord, but he had simply buried it-- failed to use it. At the reckoning time, he who had received the one talent said, "Lord, I knew thee, that thou art an exacting man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou has not scattered. And I was afraid, and went and hid thy talent in the earth; lo, there thou hast thine own."

"His Lord answered and said unto him, Thou wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I have not scattered: thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the exchangers; and then at my coming I should have received mine own with interest." It will be observed that this servant

was not what men would generally call wicked. He was simply an idler, willing, if he could, to draw a servant's approval and compensation, but lacking any real, active interest in his master's business. He had no ill will toward his master, he was probably very glad that the other servants kept the business from going to wreck and ruin, he did nothing to hinder them from using their talents, but he did not feel the responsibility he had assumed in becoming a "servant," nor take a proper interest in his master's affairs. Yet, as a faithless, slothful servant, he was really a covenant-breaker, and therefore "wicked" and certainly unfit to be trusted with still greater responsibilities on the master's return.

But let us remember that this was not a real case: it was simply a parable used to illustrate real cases. And if the illustration fits your individual case, let it not lose its effect upon you. The very object of the parable is to arouse such to a sense of their short-comings, and to recover them from the lethargy into which they have relaxed, by reminding them of their responsibilities. Activity in the Lord's service to the full extent of our ability or talents is what the Lord has a right to expect of all who profess to be his servants; and it is what he does expect. Therefore, if you have but one talent, do not bury it, but cultivate and use it; do what you can, and all you can, in the great work to which we have already consecrated our lives. And those who have several talents, let them see to it that they too are faithful to the extent of their abilities, not being content to do merely what the one-talented man can do or ought to do. Such a one would not be a good and faithful servant, and could not expect the Master's approving "Well done!" His approval will be given to those only who are faithful to the extent of their opportunity.

Those who find the truth and make the consecration before they are encumbered with the cares of this life, who have no families dependent upon them and who have a reasonable degree of health, have at least two talents--time and health--which can and ought to be utilized in the service to the best possible advantage. Then there are those who have a money talent, or a business talent, and such should consider how these are being used. Are they largely swallowed up in luxuries or a superabundance of the good things of this life, for either self or family? Or are they being laid up as treasures upon earth--in banks, store-houses and investment securities, to enrich and to cultivate the spirit of pride in friends or children, and for them to quarrel over after you are dead?

Our talents for use in the Lord's service consist of all those things and opportunities which are over and above what we need for the necessary and reasonable maintenance of ourselves or our families, if we have families, and the reasonable provision against distress in case of a sudden calamity or approaching old age, etc. Aside from these, all we have should be in active service, be they many talents or few. If we have five talents and are using only one or two, how can we expect the Master's "Well done, good and faithful servant." Did we not covenant to give and to use *all* for him?--all our money, all our time, all our influence, all our mental activity, all our physical ability? How faithful have we been during the past year? How do we stand at the bar of our own judgment? And how faithful will we be during the coming year? After providing things decent and honest for ourselves and those dependent upon us, let us judiciously appropriate our talents to what we profess to consider the chief business of life. Here are the testing points of true loyalty and devotion. Let us ponder them well, and not lightly set them aside.

But observe further what the Lord has to say about this "wicked and slothful servant." He says: "Take the talent from him and give it unto him which hath ten talents; for unto every one that hath [made use of his talents] shall be given, and he shall have abundance; but from him that hath not [made use of his talent] shall be taken away even that which he hath. And cast ye the unprofitable servant into *outer darkness*: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." The outer darkness here referred to is in contrast with the inner light of the holy place of favor and communion and instruction from God, symbolized in the Tabernacle. The testing comes on the return of the Master. Then the faithful servants shall enter into fuller joys and privileges and blessings, while the unfaithful will go into the outer darkness of error and ignorance concerning God's plans and ways, which envelopes the world in general, and their neglected opportu-

nities for more abundant service will go as a reward to those who are already earnest and active, and whose abundant labors will in due time be abundantly rewarded.

As we thus view our Lord's teaching, we see that our only security as sons of God and joint-heirs with Christ is in activity in the service of the truth. Well, says one, I see very few doing that. Very true: only a few will do it. But that precious few are the Lord's jewels. Are you one of them? Ah, that is the point to be considered. No matter how few they are, or whether you ever saw or knew of any such, that does not alter the conditions of our calling. This is the way: walk ye in it. One, at least, has trodden it before. Look for his foot-prints and follow him, and "He will give strength unto his people," even though they walk alone, as he did, without the cheering companionship of fellow-travelers.

But think not that you are traveling alone in this narrow way. The Lord has now a consecrated people, a faithful band of servants who, with every talent consecrated, are steadily pursuing their course in the narrow way. We know some of them by name and by character and by their steady and progressive activity in the blessed work. Not many of them have five talents, but a good many have two or three, and some only one. Quietly and unobtrusively they go about from day to day preaching the wonderful words of life, and God is with them and is leading them on. Their hearts are full of joy and hope and they are kept securely amidst all the perils of this evil day. None are so clear in their apprehension and appreciation of truth as those who are fully enlisted in its service. ^[1]Let all who would run the race successfully look well to their zeal and activity in the Lord's work. If we bury our one or our many talents under a weight of worldly cares and encumbrances which might be avoided or set aside; if we bury them under worldly ambitions for either self or family--whether this be by wasting consecrated time upon science, philosophy, music or art; or upon business, politics or pleasures; or in pampering pride and appetite--then as unfaithful servants we will sooner or later go into outer darkness, by being caught in some of the snares of this "evil day," and will be led farther and farther into error and away from truth.

Mark well that it is not a case of such unfaithful servants being *liable* to get into outer darkness, into error: it is a case of *must*. The Master's orders are peremptory and decisive: "*Cast* the unprofitable servant into outer darkness." The light now shining is *not for* the unfaithful, but for the faithful servants; and no matter how clearly the unfaithful may have seen and understood the deep things of God, and no matter how he may have enjoyed them, if he has not loved them so as to serve them and sacrifice his conveniences for them, he is unworthy of them and *must* go out into the outer darkness of the world in general. With these as with the world the disappointment of theories and plans in the great time of trouble will ere long bring the weeping and gnashing of teeth foretold.

It is indeed a notable fact that in no single case have we seen one drift away from the truth into the snares of these perilous times who was very active and fully enlisted in the Lord's work, whose one aim and endeavor was to herald the truth and to bless others with it. To such the Lord says, "My grace is sufficient for thee"--"Ye shall never fall, for so an abundant entrance shall be ministered unto you into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Let us, then, dearly beloved, have for our watchword during the year the word DEVOTION; and let each of us write upon his heart the gracious PROMISE--"The Lord will give *strength* unto his people." Let us be faithfully "his people," and let us earnestly desire and faithfully use the *strength* promised. Faithful is he that hath promised, who also will do it. So, then, if you lack the strength to use faithfully your talent, the fault is yours, not God's. You either have not his service closely enough at heart or else do not make use of the strength he provides. "The Lord will give strength unto *his people*"--his trusting, faithful servants-- those who are using to his praise the talents consecrated to their Master, however many or few those talents may be.

[1] Jan. 18 Manna, Rom. 12:11

The joys of time, of little worth,
Should not confine our thoughts to earth;
Why grasp at transitory toys,
So near to heav'n's eternal joys?

Shall aught beguile us on the road,
The narrow way that leads to God?
Or can we love earth's ties so well,
As not to long with God to dwell?

Lord, we would grasp the joys divine,
Find present joy in works of thine,
And press along the narrow way
That leads to realms of endless day.