

### March 15

*The just shall live by faith. Hebrews 10:38*

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appropriate spiritual nourishment, that we may grow thereby: we must walk by faith, following the leading of the Holy Spirit through the Word of truth.

The life of faith is an individual matter, as well of the heart as of the head. It is far

more than an acceptance of doctrines which we consider Scriptural and therefore true; it is the *assimilation* of that which we have proved to be the Truth, so that its principles become our principles, and its promises our inspiration. Z. '95-92,93 R1798:3; 1799:4

R1798 (From Harvest Truth Database V5.0)

## THE JUST SHALL LIVE BY FAITH

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

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

The promises of God made to this class are exceeding great and precious, and if they are really believed they cannot fail to powerfully influence the life; but if they are not received, it is manifest that they can have no power over the life. And more, if they be not fully believed, if they be not personally appropriated, they are not applicable, and no one can hope for anything in them. This is clearly intimated in the above words of the Apostle--"Now the just shall live by faith." <sup>(1)</sup>It is not enough that, by faith, we receive the first impulse of life, but, having passed from death unto life, by the same means, we must *continue* to receive and appropriate spiritual nourishment, that we may grow thereby: we must walk by faith, following the leading of the holy spirit through the Word of Truth.

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

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

deceptions to lead him farther and farther away from God, in whose favor alone is life.

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

<sup>(2)</sup>The drawing back may at first be a very slight departure from the narrow way of sacrifice--only a looking back, perhaps, with a sigh for the things behind, a little slowing up of speed in the race set before us; then a little disposition to compromise the truth in favor of the cravings of the fallen nature. Thus the way is prepared for the arts of the tempter, who is quick to note our weak points, and to take advantage of them in a manner best suited to our case. Subtle errors are brought to bear against the judgment; pleasing allurements, with a show of righteousness, are presented to the fleshly mind; and, almost imperceptibly, the soul forgets its "first love" for the Lord, and its first zeal in his service, and drifts away from the truth and the spirit of it, being no longer led of the holy spirit of God.

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

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

<sup>(3)</sup>The life of faith is an individual matter, as well of the heart as of the head. It is far more than an acceptance of doctrines which we consider Scriptural and therefore true; it is the *assimilation* of that which we have proved to be the truth, so that its principles become our principles, and its promises our inspiration. This is what it is to "believe to the saving of the soul." "As many as are led by the spirit of God, they are the sons of God." And however we may realize our insufficiency of ourselves to overcome the world, the flesh and the devil in this seemingly unequal contest, let us remember, for our encouragement, that he who has begun a good work in us will carry it on to completion, if we humbly submit ourselves to his leading and discipline. Our Lord's promise is that he

<sup>(1)</sup> ½ Mar. 15, Heb. 10:38

<sup>(2)</sup> April 8 Manna, Heb. 10:38

<sup>(3)</sup> ½ Mar. 15 Manna

will not suffer us to be tempted beyond what we are able to endure. Let us hold fast our faith and our confidence in his sure word of

promise--hold the truth in righteousness and faithfulness, and we shall not be of them who draw back and mind earthly things.

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## CAST NOT AWAY YOUR CONFIDENCE

*"But call to remembrance the former days, in which, after ye were illuminated, ye endured a great fight of afflictions; partly, whilst ye were made a gazingstock, both by reproaches and afflictions; and partly whilst ye became companions of them that were so used. For ye had compassion of me in my bonds, and took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing in yourselves that ye have in heaven a better and an enduring substance. Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward; for ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise. For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry. Now the just shall live by faith; but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. But we are not of them who draw back unto destruction, but of them that believe to the saving of the soul."--Heb. 10:32-39.*

WITH very many of God's people, as well as with the world's people, the ideal Christian life is one of constant peace and tranquility. They have never learned that "the peace of God which passeth all [worldly] understanding," promised to the Christian, is to rule in and keep his *heart* (Phil. 4:7; Col. 3:15), and does not apply to his outward life. They forget, or perhaps never learned, that our Master's words were, "In the well ye shall have tribulation," but in me ye shall have peace (in your hearts). "If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you." "If they have called the Master of the house Beelzebub, how much more them of his household?" "Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus, [in this present evil world or dispensation], shall suffer persecution." It is of a wicked class, and of the saints, that the Prophet declared, "They are not in trouble as other men."--John 16:33; 15:18; Matt. 10:25; 2 Tim. 3:12; Psa. 73:5.

Only to those who have some knowledge of God's great plan is this, his dealing with his people, understandable and readable. The world marvels that those whom God receives into his family, as sons by redemption and adoption, should be required or even permitted to suffer afflictions. But to the well-instructed saint the Apostle says, "Think it not strange concerning the fiery trial that shall try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you." And this one may now clearly discern the object and utility of present trials, afflictions and persecutions. He sees that these are in fullest accord with his high calling, his heavenly calling,--to be an heir of God and a joint-heir with Jesus Christ our Lord, "if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together."--Rom. 8:17.

But why should a share in the coming glory be made dependent and contingent upon present sufferings? We answer, for two reasons.

(1) Because severe trials and testings of our love for God and his truth, and of our faith in him and his promises, are only a wise provision on God's part, in view of the very high honor and responsibility of the great office to which he has called us. If it was proper that our Lord and Redeemer should be tested in all points as to faith and obedience prior to his exaltation to the excellent glory and power of his divine, immortal nature, much more so it is fitting that *we*, who were once aliens and strangers, far from God, and children of wrath even as others, should be thoroughly tested; not tested as to the perfection of our earthen vessels, for God and we well know that in our fallen flesh dwelleth no perfection, but tested as to our new minds, our *consecrated wills*, whether or not these are *fully* consecrated to the Lord, firmly established in the love of truth, purity and righteousness in general. And also to see whether we would *compromise* any of the principles of righteousness for worldly favor, selfish ambition, or for any of "the pleasures of sin for a season." Those who *love* righteousness and *hate* iniquity, who develop *positive characters*, these are the "overcomers" who shall, as members of Christ, inherit all things. The undecided, the luke-warm --neither cold nor hot--are far from having the spirit of the Kingdom class, and will surely be rejected--"spewed out."--Rev. 3:16.

(2) A share in the coming glory is dependent upon present sufferings, for the reason that the coming glories are to be bestowed only upon those who have the spirit of Christ, the spirit (disposition) of holiness. And whoever has received this holy spirit or disposition and been transformed by the renewing of his mind or will, so that no longer *selfishness* but *love* shall rule over his thoughts and words and deeds, that person, if in the world at all, could not avoid present suffering. His love for God, his zeal for God's service and people, his faith in God's Word and his uncompromising attitude respecting everything relating to these would be so greatly in contrast with the prevalent spirit of doubt, selfishness and compromise that he would be thought peculiar, called an extremist and fanatic, if not a hypocrite. Evil surmisings, out of hearts not fully consecrated, will

attribute every good deed to some selfish or evil motive, and therefore, "Ye shall be hated of all men for my [Christ's] name's sake;" for "the world knoweth [understandeth] us not, because it knew him not." (Luke 21:17; 1 John 3:1.) The reason for all this is evident: it is because "the god of this world hath blinded the eyes" of the vast majority of men; because the faithful, who appreciate the truth, who have new hearts (wills) and the right spirit on these subjects, are but a "little flock."

And these conditions will not be changed until the testing of the "little flock" is finished. God will permit evil to be in the ascendancy until that testing, sifting, refining and polishing of the Bride of Christ is fully accomplished. Then Satan shall be bound for a thousand years, and not be permitted to further blind and deceive the nations during that Millennial age of blessing; but, on the contrary, the little flock of overcomers, with Christ, their Lord and Head, will bless all the families of the earth with a full knowledge of the truth.

Therefore, dear brethren and sisters, let us give heed to the Apostle's words, and not cast away our confidence. Confidence in God, and in the outworking of his great plan, and confidence in all who trust in the precious blood and are bringing forth the fruits of the spirit in their daily lives--meekness, patience, brotherly-kindness, love.

The Apostle here clearly shows that there are two ways of enduring the afflictions of Christ: (1) to be made a gazingstock both by afflictions and reproaches, and (2) by avowing our sympathy for the reproached ones and thus sharing their reproaches and afflictions. For if one member suffer, *all the members* of the body of Christ suffer with it.

"Call to remembrance the former days," and note that your afflictions and trials came principally after you had been illuminated with the light of the knowledge of God, shining in the face of Jesus Christ our Lord; and that they have increased as the light of present truth has increased with you. It is not difficult to discern the reason for this. The great Adversary is not interested in disturbing those who are "asleep in Zion;" but he is ever on the alert to mislead and entangle those that are awake. And the more active we become in the service of the Lord and the truth, and consequently the more actively opposed to Satan and error, the more he will fight against us. And the more faithfully and vigorously we fight the good fight of faith, as good soldiers of the Lord Jesus Christ, the more we will have of the Master's approval now, and the greater will be our reward in the Kingdom.

No doubt there are many and more severe trials just before us. From God's standpoint, having been blest with great light, we should be able to endure greater trials and afflictions. From Satan's standpoint, we, as a Gideon's band, armed with the truth, are more injurious to his cause than all others combined. The only wonder to us is that he has not assailed us still more fiercely in the past. Perhaps he was hindered; perhaps he will be granted yet more liberty to buffet us, as the night draws on. Such is our expectation, based upon the direct statements and the types of Scripture.

But such reflections should bring us no sadness, no fear; for he that is on our part is more than all that be against us. (1 John 4:4; Rom. 8:31.) The Lord of hosts is with us. His promises, as well as his providences, are walls of salvation and protection on every hand. What shall separate us from the love of God in Christ? Shall tribulation? No! it shall but cause us to draw closer to him; and under his protecting care we shall rest. His grace is sufficient for us. His strength is made manifest in our weakness. When we feel weak in ourselves, then we are strong in him. He will never leave us nor forsake us.

"Watchman, what of the night?"

"The morning cometh, and a night also."

*See Poems and Hymns of Dawn, pages 62 and 286.*