

May 22

God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power and of love, and of a sound mind. 2 Timothy 1:7

THE spirit of the Lord imparted to His people is not a spirit of fear, but on the contrary a spirit of power, energy, zeal awak-

ened by love;--loving devotion to God, and a desire to please and serve Him; loving devotion to the Truth, and a loving devotion to God's people and a desire to build them up in holy things, and to do good unto all men as we have opportunity,... a spirit of a "sound mind;" a mind that is fortified and

strengthened by the Word of the Lord on every subject, and hence, while thoroughly fearless of man, is wise in judging of times, seasons and methods for using the energy of love which burns as a fire within the consecrated heart. Z.'97-170R2166:1

E249-251 "THE SPIRIT OF A SOUND MIND... *"God hath not given us the spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind." 2 Tim. 1:7...*

In proportion as the Lord's people are filled with his holy Spirit or influence, and are expanded more and more by it, and enlarged, they have the less of the spirit of fear. The spirit of fear in a Christian is the spirit of doubt, and marks a lack of faith, a lack of the holy Spirit. The spirit of fear is a fruitful source of evil in spiritual matters, in every feature of the Christian growth, individually and as a Church; and it is also closely identified with physical weakness and disabilities. The child of God who is filled with the holy Spirit is a giant in comparison with his own natural self; because his fears are quelled, his heart is established, his faith is rooted and grounded, and his soul is anchored sure and steadfast, within the veil. Thus he is held from being driven onto the rocks of disaster, when the stormy winds of trouble prevail. The holy Spirit is thus a power to those who possess it, which has often caused amazement to their enemies.

It is not our claim that the Gospel of Christ takes hold upon the strong minded and strong bodied, and that therefore those who are his are strong; quite to the contrary of this, we hold, as a matter of fact, as well as a matter of Scriptural testimony, that the Gospel of Christ usually takes hold upon the weaker ones, who feel their weakness, and who realize more than do the stronger their need of help. Yet such is the transforming influence of the holy Spirit upon those who receive it, that in their weakness they are made strong. The weak things of this world are made mighty through God (through the Spirit, the power of God) to the pulling down of strongholds of error and sin, and to the endurance of a good fight as good soldiers of the Lord Jesus Christ, much to the surprise of those naturally their superiors. 1 Cor. 1:27; 2 Cor. 10:4; 2 Tim. 2:3,4

This was true in times past, when the weak ones of the world espoused the cause of Christ, and were firm to the very end of life, as martyrs, enduring unwaveringly trials and difficulties before which the strongest of the world quailed. And the same thing is still true of the same class, for although the particular features of persecution have greatly changed, nevertheless it is still necessary to "endure hardness as good soldiers," and to "lay down our lives for the brethren"; and the weak things of the world, yea, those that are naught, whom God hath chosen, are still confounding the wisdom

and might of this world. 1 Cor. 1:27,28

This Spirit of God in us is not only a Spirit of power, but a Spirit of love, says the Apostle. The love here mentioned is not the natural love possessed to some extent by all mankind, and even by the brute creation--in large measure a spirit of selfishness. In those who receive the holy Spirit of love this natural love should become intensified, broadened, deepened, and should more and more lose its selfish characteristics, and become a generous love, a self-sacrificing love, based not upon selfishness, but upon principles of righteousness, truth, goodness, and the possession in general of the Spirit, disposition of God. And this Spirit of love should continue, increasing and abounding more and more, until that which is perfect is come and that which is in part will be done away. 1 Cor. 13:10"

R1079 "Sometimes the children of God get cold and listless and almost cease to aspire to and seek this soundness of mind, but let such remember that this is the lukewarm condition of which the Master declares his abhorrence. (Rev. 3:16.) Let the consecrated ones who look for the reward of our high calling remember that ceaseless vigilance and earnest striving against the dispositions of the old unsound mind, and a constant submission to the divine will in the smallest affairs of every-day life, are the most thorough proof of our faithfulness to God."

E259-261 "The Spirit of a sound mind sees in the present life opportunities for the attainment of riches of character, riches of grace, and for the laying up of treasures which neither moth nor rust will consume, but which will be enduring-- eternal joys. Not that the Spirit of a sound mind leads us to live in the future, to the neglect of the present: rather it lives wisely in the present, by keeping in memory the future.

The Spirit of a sound mind broadens and deepens character along all its good lines; it not only helps its possessor to take correct views of himself, but also to take correct views of his fellows in degradation, and it enlarges his sympathies. He realizes the impairment of his own mind and body through the fall, and his own need of mercy and helpful correction, as well as the similar derangement of the whole world of mankind, and the general need for sympathy and aid for correction. As he learns to rectify the deficiencies and inequalities of his own mind, he sympathizes the more with others who are without this regulating principle, this Spirit of a sound mind, and who are

hindered from accepting it by reason of the opposition of the Adversary, "the god of this world," who blinds the minds of them that believe not, lest the glorious light of divine goodness, in the face of Jesus Christ, should shine into their hearts, and should bring to them the Spirit of a sound mind. 2 Cor. 4:4

In proportion as he develops in this holy Spirit of his adoption, a "new creature in Christ Jesus," he becomes, through its operation, gradually more patient, more sympathetic, more generous, more loving--more Godlike. And these benevolences of character will affect not only the outward acts of his life, but also his words and his thoughts. In proportion as his holy Spirit discountenances a dishonorable or dishonest action, in the same proportion it discountenances a dishonorable or a dishonest word, in respect to friend or neighbor or enemy; and similarly it discountenances the slightest injustice or unkindness of thought to any of these.

The Spirit of a sound mind will therefore gradually but surely make the husband a better husband, the father a better father, the son a better son, the wife a better wife, the mother a better mother, the daughter a better daughter. It will do this, because the basis of thought and word and conduct has changed from selfishness to love. The one possessed of this Spirit of a sound mind, the holy Spirit, the Spirit of love, will, in proportion as he comes into possession of it, be less touchy in respect to his own rights, privileges, preferments, and more considerate for the rights and feelings and preferences of others. The will of the Lord must, of course, stand first, but next to pleasing the Lord he will take pleasure in pleasing others...

It does not follow that the man or woman who has received the Spirit of a sound mind will therefore be the best husband, the best wife, the best brother, the best sister, the best father, the best mother, in every particular; because, as we have already suggested, the mission of the gospel of Christ, in its effect upon the civilized world, is to take hold of the mean things of this world, and the things that are not [of value], and to uplift these...

The thought we wish to impress is that on whatever plane of mental decrepitude, immorality or unwisdom the truth and grace of God shall reach a man or woman it will lift him up and make him or her the nobler, the purer, the kinder, the gentler, the more considerate of others--in proportion as he or she receives this new mind, the Spirit of a sound mind."

R4378 (From Harvest Truth Database V5.0 2008)

"NOT THE SPIRIT OF TIMIDITY"

"For God hath not given us a spirit of timidity; but of courage, of love and of a sound mind."--2 Tim. 1:7.

THERE is one kind of fearlessness which is begotten of self-esteem, lack of humility. This is not the kind enjoined upon the Lord's people. They are to be both tender-hearted and humble-

minded. The spirit of courage possessed by the saints is based largely upon their faith in the Lord. Realizing the divine love and providential care, these can apply to themselves the gracious assurance

that "The Father himself loveth you" and that "All things shall work together for good to them that love God, to the called ones according to his purpose." It is this realization of divine all-wisdom and all-power that gives the strength of heart referred to in our text. It will be readily seen, then, that this courage is based upon faith, though of course the faith must have a foundation of knowledge. The proper relationship of our growth is primarily knowledge: faith, courage, activity, and all of these continue to grow, and in their maturity make us wise, faithful, courageous overcomers in respect to the spiritual matters to which we have been called.

Sometimes we realize our deficiencies and are not able to locate the cause. Some one says, I want to be an overcomer, to gain the victory over the spirit of the world, over the tendencies of my own fallen flesh and over the wiles of the Adversary, but somehow I cannot; I fail. Such should learn to look for the source of failure, the deficient element, and should fortify himself in respect to the same. Let him ask first, Is my failure to overcome due to a lack of courage? Am I fearful, and hence unable, to fight the good fight of faith and, by the Lord's assistance, to gain the victory? If he has the courage he may find that he has not been sufficiently trusting the Lord, but leaning too much on his own strength. Such should remember the Apostle's words, "When I am weak, then am I strong"; reversely, "when I am strong in self-assurance, I am then weak," because the Lord wishes me to rely not upon myself, but upon him, his strength, his grace. If the courage be found deficient the reason evidently is that the faith is lacking, and if so, there is a reason for it: either a lack of knowledge on which to build faith, or a lack of exercise and development of faith. The knowledge is to be sought from the right quarter, in harmony with the Lord and his Word, and the faith is to be exercised, continually recognizing the Lord's interest in us as his children, as testified to by his Word and by noticing the leadings of divine providence in our daily affairs.

LOVE CASTS OUT FEAR

There is a proper fear or reverence and disinclination to offend our heavenly Father and our Redeemer, which we wish never to lose. Perfect love will not cast out this fear, but rather intensify it. The fear which love casts out is timidity, a servile fear or dread of the Lord or of Satan, or the fallen angels, or of men and what they might do unto us. Perfect love cannot be attained without knowledge, faith, courage and overcoming. It is the result of the exercise of all this divine arrangement that brings us nearer to God and makes us truly thankful and appreciative of his gracious purposes and omnipotent power for their accomplishment.

The spirit of courage needs special cultivation by the Lord's people. And this cultivation means growth in all the graces. For instance, if calamity befall us or threaten us we should immediately think of the fact that our Lord assures us that an insignificant sparrow cannot fall to the ground without the Father's notice and that we are of much more value than many sparrows. This thought at once strengthens the heart, nerves the arm, quickens the pulse of endeavor, provided we can realize that God is for us, that no earthborn cloud intervenes between our souls and the love for us which he has declared. If a cloud does obscure the Father's love we must the more earnestly, the more persistently get from behind it by getting our hearts right with the Lord, by going to him in prayer, by confessing our trespasses and by requesting mercy and grace to help and to restore us to his favor.

"Be of good courage and he shall strengthen thine heart," is one of the blessings assured us in his Word. In the divine order courage is necessary in order to strength and victory. Some one has said, "One with God is the majority." With the courage to grasp this thought and to hold it things almost superhuman seem possible to the Lord's people, while without this courage they may naturally be weak and easily vanquished.

COURAGE IN THE EVIL DAY

Never before, perhaps, was courage so needed as it will be needed in the evil day just before us; but the Prophets' descriptions of the great trouble time before us are very figurative when they speak of fire and clouds and pillars of smoke, saying of this time, "I will show wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood and fire and pillars of smoke," etc. But the consecrated children of God need have no timidity in respect to these matters if they have the proper courage, developed by proper exercise and built upon proper faith,

founded upon the knowledge of divine revelation. His attitude of heart will be, "I will fear no evil, for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me." Whether, therefore, storms financial, political, religious or demoniacal, come his way, the child of God may rest secure and be of good courage. The Lord is both able and willing to care for his interests and bring him off victor. Should the fallen angels be permitted to again materialize and personate either the dead or the living, this class need have no fear. Their perfect love for the Lord, based upon a knowledge and appreciation of his Truth, will lead them to triumph courageously over all the wiles of the Adversary and his hordes.

THE ELECT TO BE UNDECEIVABLE

The Scriptures abound with testimonies to the effect that the severe trials of the near future will be along the lines of deception. They speak of lying angels and deceivableness of unrighteousness and "lying wonders" and tell us that the Lord will send or permit a strong delusion that they may believe a lie. If we gain the right conception of the matter these deceptions are to affect the whole world, including its wise men, and indeed practically everybody except the "very elect"; and the "very elect" will be preserved, not through their own wisdom or superiority, but through the power of God, "For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect."--Matt. 24:24.

Our Lord in the parable of the wheat and tares tells of the harvest work and how in the present time he would gather "together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other." (Matt. 24:24.) It is by thus gathering them that they will be protected in the time of strife and trouble when others will be deceived. But they are not to be gathered physically into one place, but spiritually; their minds, their hearts, their affections are to be gathered together, centered. Our text tells us that our Lord is this great Center to which his Elect must all be gathered if they would have rest or peace, if they would overcome the world, the flesh and the peculiar snares of the Adversary, which will now be laid for the feet of all and will more or less entrap all except the Elect class.

"GATHER MY SAINTS UNTO ME"

Figuratively all of these "very elect" ones are gathered, and the place is thus described, "I will say to the Lord, he is my refuge; in him will I trust"; and again, "He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty." (Psa. 91:1.) Ah! no wonder that we also read, "No harm shall come nigh them." How could harm come to any who are thus close to the Lord? A thousand shall fall at thy side; ten thousand at thy right hand; but it shall not come nigh thee; because thou hast made the Lord thy refuge; thou hast made the Most High thy habitation."--Psa. 91:7.

This nearness to God, into which his "very elect" will be gathered, will be the source of their protection. And the dangers to others will be in proportion to their distance to this great citadel of strength, this fortress, this refuge or tower.

^[1]"Then let our songs abound,

And every tear be dry;

We're trav'ling through Immanuel's ground,

To fairer prospects nigh."

"ALL POWER IS GIVEN UNTO ME"

These were our Lord's words after his resurrection. They were true then. They have been true throughout this age and they are still more completely true today, because we are now living in the time of which it is written, "He shall take unto himself his great power and reign." His reign has in some senses of the word already begun. He has already marshaled forces which will complete the overthrow of everything opposed to his Kingdom and its righteous laws. And we may be sure that the members of his Body still in the flesh this side of the veil are no less subjects of his providential care than is the world and its affairs. We may be sure that nothing is transpiring, either in the nominal Church or amongst the kingdoms of the world; amongst socialistic or political parties or in the financial world contrary to what will best serve our Lord's purposes in connection with the events just before us and the outworking of the same in fullest accord with the prophecies.

[1] Hymn 40

Oh, that we could get this thought rightly settled in our minds! Yea, as the Scriptures say, "Settle it in your hearts" --that our Lord is at the helm superintending all of earth's affairs at the present time in a much more practical sense than ever in the past. And have we not seen his graciousness towards the Church in the thirty-four years of the harvest period that are already past? And can we doubt his continued supervision of the affairs of his betrothed to the grand consummation? "He who hath begun the good work in us is able to complete it," and he who has thus far conducted the Harvest work is able still to direct it, order, bless it and use it to his own praise and to the blessing of his people.

⁽²⁾"Who led thee first will lead thee still;
Be calm and sink into his will."

Let us not be timid either as respects the affairs of the harvest work in general, or as respects our own personal relationship to it and to the Lord. Let us learn more and more to be on the lookout for the leadings of his providence and utilizing knowledge which he has given us from his Word. Let us not be surprised concerning the fiery trials which may try us and the stormy billows which may at times seem about to overwhelm us, "For greater is he that is in our part than all that are against us"--however numerous, however strong, and whether demons or men. Let us remember that we are called to be overcomers and that the victory that overcometh the world is our faith.

"Resist the devil and he will flee from you" is the Lord's testimony. This implies an assault by the Adversary. It implies that he should be resisted and can be resisted and that in the end he will flee from us, not because of arrogance or power on our part, but, as our Master said, "He hath nothing in me"; so if he finds it useless to continue his assaults he will probably flee also from us to other fields of service. We remind all of our readers that whoever comes under the influence of Spiritism, Christian Science, Hypnotism or any other form of Occultism is thereby endangering himself, not only for the moment, but also for the future, because the evil spirits operating through these various channels seek, some in one way and some in another, to delude, bewilder, confuse the reason and bring into subjection the minds of those with whom they have to do. Hence, any of the Lord's people who have had affiliation at any time with any of these are specially warned of liability to intrusion by

these spirits. We remind all that the special channel through which they have had special success is human curiosity. We urge all of the Lord's people to restrain their curiosity and rely on the Lord's Word and have no dealings whatever with any of these occult systems.

One dear sister told us recently that before coming into the Truth she had dabbled with Christian Science and Spiritism and had been entrapped with mediumship. She was a writing medium and could distinctly feel something take hold of her hand and guide her pencil while she wrote on topics of which she had no personal knowledge. After coming into the Truth, and realizing the source of this power, she resolutely repelled it in every way, asking the Lord by prayer for assistance. She gained strength to resist this influence, but has again been annoyed by the spirits taking her hand and endeavoring in various ways to arouse her curiosity so that she would yield her hand to them to learn their message for her. She remarked that she has now a fear and a dread of the evil spirits and a strong desire to be free. She finds herself freer from their influence when in the company of other people. We advised her against fear and against refusing to remain in a room by herself. By so doing she would be cultivating fear and subserviency and bringing herself into a condition of mind much more amenable to their intrusions. We advised her, and now advise all similarly affected, to resolutely set their wills in opposition, to refuse all communication, to ask no questions, receive no answers in any manner, but in the name of the Lord to command the evil spirit to depart, meantime going to the Lord in prayer "for deliverance and grace to help in every time of need."

In conclusion, then, dear friends, be of good courage, of strong faith, of heroic determination, and see that your faith is not in yourself, nor in your vows, nor in your very best endeavors, but in the Lord. Trust in the Lord and the practise of your faith to control your thoughts and words and deeds and to bring you closer to our Father and Redeemer. We live in a time when worldly wisdom is taking hold of this need of courage and is advising people that it should be based upon self-confidence, self-assurance, self-esteem. This is the world's counterfeit, the Adversary's counterfeit of the true courage which the Word of God inculcates and through which we may not only rejoice in all of the present experiences of life, but ultimately "come off conquerors; yea, more than conquerors through him that loved us."

⁽²⁾ Hymn 233

R2165 (From Harvest Truth Database V5.0 2008)
APOSTOLIC ADVICE TO A YOUNG CHRISTIAN

--JUNE 13.--2 TIM. 1:1-7; 3:14-17.--

"From a child thou hast known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation."--2 Tim. 3:15.

THE WORDS of this lesson, addressed by the Apostle Paul to Timothy, are sound advice to all Christians, especially to such as are young in the truth, and particularly if they have consecrated their lives to the Lord and his service, and are seeking to be useful according to their consecration as his ministers or servants --whether in a public or in a private service, according to their talents and opportunities.

These words were addressed to Timothy, when the Apostle Paul was an old man, a prisoner in Rome, because of his testimony for the Lord. Nor was Timothy a child in years at the time this epistle was addressed to him. Timothy's mother and himself were converts to the gospel of Christ presumably at the time of Paul's visit to their home at Lystra during his first missionary tour. It is presumed that at the time of his receipt of this letter Timothy must have been about forty years of age. Tradition has it that he was about sixteen years old at the time of his own and his mother's conversion to the gospel. When he was about twenty-one years of age, he with Silas accompanied the Apostle Paul on his second tour through Asia Minor, and from that time on for some sixteen years he was closely identified with the Apostle in his service of the truth, until left by the Apostle with the Church at Ephesus, that he might help them over some difficulties into which they had fallen. It was while Timothy was thus serving the Church at Ephesus that he received the two epistles which bear his name.

Paul introduces himself not by calling attention to his personal

qualities as a logician, nor by boasting of any service which he had performed as the Lord's servant and minister of the truth; but, properly, by reminding Timothy of his apostleship (one of the twelve, taking Judas' place) specially commissioned by the Lord to introduce his gospel, and specially prepared for the work by being made a witness of the Lord's resurrection, having been granted a glimpse of his glorious person on his way to Damascus and commissioned to declare the conditions for the fulfilment to men of God's promise of life, provided in Christ Jesus.

Altho the Apostle had no natural children of his own, his tender address to Timothy as his "dearly beloved son," and his invocation upon him of a divine blessing, shows that he lacked none of those fine, noble and endearing sentiments, which belong to a true parent. Indeed, the very fact that he had no natural children seems to have broadened the Apostle's sentiments to such an extent that figuratively he took into his affections, as his own children, all who accepted the gospel. We remember that he frequently used this figure of speech, "Altho ye have many teachers, ye have not many fathers in the gospel" --"I have begotten you in my bonds." On another occasion he represents his efforts for a development of a fully consecrated Christian life amongst the believers under the figure of a mother travailing for her children. This being true of the Apostle's general sentiment toward the household of faith, it would be much more true in the case of Timothy who had so nobly and truly filled the part of a son to him.

Incidentally the Apostle here points out the purity of his conscience toward God, before his eyes were opened to a recognition of the Lord Jesus, while making mention to Timothy that he prayed for him day and night with great desire to see him, and a remembrance of Timothy's tears, when they parted company at Ephesus in the interest of the truth. It was not according to the personal preferences of either that they had separated, but both had sunk personal convenience and preference in the interest of the Lord's cause.

We note with appreciation the Apostle's care over this younger brother in the truth, in whom he sees such great promise of present and future service. He realizes, perhaps better than Timothy does, the snares of the adversary, by which one placed in so prominent a position is likely to be assailed. Would he become heady and high minded?--Would he lose his faith in the cross of Christ?--Would he fall into the snare of some of the philosophies, falsely so-called?--Would he become vainly puffed up by a fleshly mind, and get to feeling himself to be a "somebody"?--Or, would he, on the contrary, be a faithful soldier of the cross, meek, humble, gentle toward all, an example both in faith and practice to those with whom he came in contact? And withal, would he hold fast to the Scriptures and be apt to teach others to look to this divine source of information? He remembered that heretofore Timothy had been so close to himself in the work that he had been measurably shielded from many trials to which he would now be exposed; and yet, no doubt he realized that, if Timothy would be prepared to take the work of a general minister, which Paul the prisoner and growing old must shortly lay aside, it was time that he was learning how to stand, complete in the strength which God supplies through his Word, without leaning so particularly, as heretofore, upon any earthly prop.

These reflections no doubt had much to do with the Apostle's prayers for Timothy "night and day;" and he now writes with a view to strengthening him along these lines, reminding him of the genuine faith and piety which he had inherited both from his mother and his grandmother, and assuring him that he believed that this had laid a deep foundation of true piety and faith in Timothy's own heart. We pause here to notice the fact everywhere kept prominent in the Scriptures that according to the divine arrangement not only are the sins of the parents visited upon the children for several generations, but also that the faith and godliness of the parents, when rightly based on the Word of God and the true promises of that Word, lay the foundation of character in their children, upon which there is the greater hope that a life of godliness and usefulness may be built.

Not only does the Apostle strengthen Timothy's mind by a remembrance of the goodly heritage of faith and piety received from his mother and grandmother, but in addition he reminds him of the grace of God specially conferred upon him (Timothy) at that certain time when he made a full consecration of himself to the Lord, to be God's servant; when the Apostle, exercising his power as an Apostle, and as was common in those days, communicated to Timothy by supernatural power an outward gift or token of the holy spirit, through the laying on of his hands. The Apostle had evidently either heard or surmised that Timothy was allowing the fervor of his zeal for God to die out, and hence here he urges him to "stir up the gift of God which is in thee." The Greek word here rendered "stir up" has the significance of *re-ignite*: as tho the Apostle said, Reignite your gift by renewed energy.

The next verse enforces this view, implying that the Apostle thought that Timothy was in danger of being overcome by *fear*, so as to allow his zeal to abate. And hence he reminds him that ⁽²⁾the spirit of the Lord imparted to his people is not a spirit of fear, but on the contrary a spirit of power, energy, zeal awakened by love;--loving devotion to God, and a desire to please and serve him; loving devotion to the truth, and a loving devotion to God's people and a desire to build them up in holy things, and to do good unto all men as we have opportunity. And yet, lest Timothy should get the thought that the spirit of God led only to a zeal or energy--that might at times be unwise in its exercise and do more harm than good,--the Apostle adds that the spirit of God which he bestows upon those who are begotten as his sons is a spirit of a "sound mind;" --a mind that is fortified and strengthened by the Word of the Lord on every

subject, and hence, while thoroughly fearless of man, is wise in judging of times, seasons and methods for using the energy of love which burns as a fire within the consecrated heart. O that all of God's children might appreciate, and more and more obtain, the spirit of a sound mind, by which all of their talents might be used, not only fearlessly but wisely, in the Master's service.

Continuing his exhortation (3:14-15) the Apostle impresses upon Timothy two things: (1) That he had been taught of God, and (2) that this teaching of God had come to him through the Scriptures, which, he assures him, are sufficient to bring him all the way to the complete realization (in the resurrection) of that salvation which God has provided through faith in Christ Jesus. ⁽³⁾It will be well for us all to remember that all the graces of the spirit, all the progress in the knowledge of divine things to which we already have attained, that may have really helped us nearer to God and to holiness, have come to us through the Scriptures of the Old Testament and through the words of our Lord and his inspired apostles: nor will it ever be necessary to go to other channels for the true wisdom which would prepare us for the salvation promised.

Proceeding the Apostle shows (Vss. 16,17) that the Scriptures which God inspired are profitable in every direction, and quite sufficient for the man of God. Needing no supplements of visions or dreams, either his own or other men's. They are profitable for doctrine, containing the full statement of the divine plan; and no human authority is competent to add thereto.-- Who hath known the mind of the Lord?--Who hath been his counselor? They are useful also for reproof toward others: No words that we can use in correcting the errors of others either in word or doctrine could possibly be as forcible for reproof, as the inspired words of Scripture. They are useful also for "correction," literally, "to bring up and establish one in the right." No standard of morals or of discipline can so thoroughly search out the heart and correct its waywardness as the Lord's Word.

Not, however, that God's Word is merely a statement of platitudes and moral instruction: it is far more than this; it searches the heart, the motives, the intentions, the thoughts, the ambitions, the aspirations. It pronounces a blessing upon the "pure in heart," those whose intentions are upright, honest, clean. The Word of the Lord as a correcter "in righteousness" takes hold upon all the affairs of life, and to those who are exercised thereby gives not only the spirit of a sound mind so that they are able to weigh and appreciate things from the true standpoint--God's standpoint of righteousness; but it also inculcates a righteousness toward God, and the propriety of seeking that holiness of which God is the perfect example. Moreover, it reaches down to the relationships between husbands and wives, parents and children, friends and neighbors. If permitted, it settles every matter for us on lines of justice and love.

The Apostle assures us, accordingly, that God's teachings through the Scriptures are given--"That the man of God may be furnished completely unto every good work."--Revised Version.

Here the Apostle has reference to perfection of *character* (he makes no reference to perfection in the flesh, elsewhere assuring us that even in his own case he realized "in my flesh dwelleth no perfection"). The perfection of character here pointed out as the proper and desirable aim of all Christians, and prepared for by the Lord through the giving of his inspired Word, should be the aim, the mark, toward which all the soldiers of the cross running in the race for the great prize should bend their energies. Perfection of character was exemplified to us in the person of our dear Redeemer, whom God has exalted to the right hand of majesty and power; and we are informed by the Apostle that the Father has predestinated that all of the "little flock" who will share the Kingdom with Christ must be conformed to this glorious image of his Son-- must have perfected characters, hearts, minds, fully submitted to the will of the Father and to all righteousness, in all things;--however imperfect the earthly vessel may be, and however incompletely we may be able at our best to carry out in every thought and word and deed all the desires of our hearts and the endeavors of our transformed minds,--new characters, the earnest or beginning of the new natures which will be completed in the first resurrection.

⁽²⁾ May 22 Manna, 2 Tim. 1:7

⁽³⁾ May 21 Manna, 2 Tim. 3:16-17