

## August 19

*Abstain from every form of evil. (RV)*  
*1Thessalonians 5:22*

THE exhortation is that everything that is evil, whether it have a good form or a bad form, is to be resisted and opposed....To abstain from every *appearance* of evil is

### AVOID EVEN APPEARANCE OF EVIL

R4839 "Only the *studious* find the way to Divine approval and acceptance. Let us *study* to see that our lives are an honor to the cause we have espoused; that we abstain from even the appearance of evil; that we are circumspect in all our conversation, in our conduct--watching our thoughts, our lips, our lives. Let us *study* to be diligent in every duty, performing it with a ready mind and with joy and gladness of heart."

(Col 3:23 KJV) "And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men"

(Eph 6:6-7 KJV) "Doing the will of God from the heart; {7} With good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men:"

R1151 "Love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, fidelity, meekness, and self-control... No preaching of the truth, however eloquent, reasonable, and logical, is likely to be productive of results to the glory of God, if not backed by the silent yet potent influence of a consistent Christian life.

Here is a way of preaching the gospel which may be measurably overlooked by some who are anxious to do more active service in the cause we love... Our families, our relatives, our neighbors, are judging of the truth by its effects upon us. Let us not forget this for a moment. We must be transparent and let the light of God's truth shine through all our doings."

(Php 1:9-11 WNT) "And it is my prayer that your love may be more and more accompanied by clear knowledge and keen perception, for testing things that differ, {10} so that you may be men of transparent character, and may be blameless, in preparation for the day of Christ, {11} being filled with these fruits of righteousness which come through Jesus Christ -- to the glory and praise of God."

### TRUE PRINCIPLED GODLIKE LOVE AVOIDS APPEARANCE OF EVIL

R2198 "Every one knows how easy it is to meddle with the delicate machinery of a watch, and thus to render it absolutely useless. So the conscience is a delicate mechanism, and we should be on guard against any and every influence which might injure either our own conscience or the consciences of others."

(1Cor 8:9,12 KJV) "Take heed lest by any means this liberty of yours become a stumblingblock to them that are weak...When ye sin so against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, ye sin against Christ."

R4831 "If one should be influenced by another to violate conscience, one might thus be started on the downward course which would lead him from righteousness. It might be a small matter to begin with, but shortly it would lead off into sin. We should so

another thought--a different one from what the apostle's words in the original would warrant; nevertheless, they represent a sound principle. We surely should abstain not only from evil things, whatever their form or garb, but we should abstain so far as possible from doing things that we know to

guard our actions and our words that others would be made stronger and more tender in their consciences; we should try as far as possible to help them in the right way.

The Apostle speaks of our liberty becoming a stumbling-block to those that are weak--"For if any man see thee which hast knowledge sit at meat in the idol's temple, shall not the conscience of him which is weak be emboldened to eat those things which are offered to idols?" (1 Cor. 8:10) Thus we might, unintentionally, not only offset the good that we might do, but do harm when we are not aware of it. If the same tongue can curse men and praise God (James 3:9), how careful we should be to speak that only which will be helpful and uplifting and not destructive and injurious!"

R3248 "The class who have become dead to sin and alive toward God will desire to abstain from "every appearance of evil," which certainly will include intemperance, concerning which the Lord's Word is very explicit, in declaring that "No drunkard shall enter into the Kingdom of heaven."

R4919 "DO NOTHING WHEREBY THY BROTHER STUMBLETH *"It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor anything whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak."* -- Rom. 14:21.

VERY EVIDENTLY the Apostle was not in these words endeavoring to put any bounds upon the liberties of God's people. Elsewhere he declares that the liberty of Christ makes us *free*. But he points out that while we have liberty to do things not sinful and not injurious to ourselves, yet it is part of our privilege and of our contract with the Lord to abstain from anything which would be injurious to others; and that we should seek to regulate our lives so as to be a help to others and not use our liberty merely for the flesh, for self-gratification. We are representatives of righteousness and should so deal with others, "Doing good unto all men, especially unto those who are of the household of faith." -- Gal. 6:10...

### SELF-DENIAL IN THE INTEREST OF OTHERS

There might be some weak brother to whom *wine* might be a great temptation, a snare. The Apostle urges that, while there is nothing in the Scriptures to forbid the use of wine, and while he really recommended it to Timothy, whose stomach was weak, nevertheless, *our liberties should be limited by the surroundings.* We know that wine was used much more *then* than *now*, and is much more used in Europe than in this country; nevertheless, we know that the effect of alcohol is much more hurtful to the nerves of people *now*, because the race is so much weaker than in our Lord's day...

Similar arguments might be used respecting the use of tobacco, cards and the various implements which the Adversary uses in luring mankind into sin. The whole, be it noted, is the argument of *Love.*"

R1631 "*Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging; and whosoever is deceived thereby is*

be good, which our friends or neighbors might misunderstand and consider to be evil things. The spirit of a sound mind dictates that not only evil in its every form, but everything that has an evil appearance even, should be avoided--that our influence for the Lord and the Truth may be the greater.

*not wise."* Pro 20:1....It benumbs the sensibilities, beclouds and stupefies the judgment, weakens the will, enslaves and degrades the whole man, and finally wrecks his health and all his manly hopes and aspirations, and brings him in haste and disgrace to the grave....Let us flee, therefore, from every sin, and from every appearance of evil..."

R4920 "Let us take our stand with the Lord and determine that, in regard to using our liberties in any manner that might do injury to others, we will *refuse so to use them*; and will rather *sacrifice* them for the benefit of others, even as our Master, our Redeemer, gave *all that He had.*"

### YIELD NOT TO TEMPTATION

R4420 "The first step in abstaining from every form of evil is to *resolve* or *vow* so to do. The fixing of the will, the purpose, the intention, must come before successful battling can be done."

(Mat 26:41 KJV) "Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation..."

R5202 "It is one thing to be *tempted*, and quite another thing to *enter into* temptation. Our Lord was "in all points tempted like as we are, yet *without sin*"--He did not in any manner *give way* to the Tempter... If we think, "Oh, a little indulgence this once will not hurt us!" we are in danger. The only safe position for us to take is to watch and pray *continually*, for if we should *enter* temptation we know not where the matter may *end*. As some one has aptly said, "We cannot prevent the birds from flying over our heads, but we *can* prevent their nesting in our hair."

On the night in which our Lord was betrayed, St. Peter was amongst the most confident of the Apostles. He said to the Lord, "Though all men shall be offended because of Thee, yet will I never be offended." (Matt. 26:33)...

Peter's very courage led him into a trap placed before him by the Adversary. This quality he showed when he went into the courtyard of the palace and mingled with those who were there. St. John, who accompanied him, was a relative of one of the priests; but St. Peter, who was recognized by his speech as a Galilean, was courageous enough to enter, even after having cut off the ear of one of the priest's servants. --John 18:15,16.

Our Lord had foretold what would take place, saying, "I tell thee, Peter, the cock shall not crow this day, before that thou shalt thrice deny that thou knowest Me." (Luke 22:34.) After this had happened on the night of the trial, St. Peter remembered the words of Jesus, "and went out, and wept bitterly." (Luke 22:62.) Had he not done so, we know not what might have happened to him. The weeping showed that the denial was merely the result of weakness of the flesh...

A good story is told which illustrates the wisdom of not entering into temptation.

A man who desired to hire a coachman had a number of applicants for the position. They were ushered into his office, and he asked them, "How near could you drive to the edge of a precipice without danger of accident?" One said he could drive within a foot without fear of falling over; another thought he could safely come within six inches of the edge; and so on. Finally, one man who had listened in silence to the others, said, "I do not know how near to the edge of the precipice I could safely drive; but I do know that I would keep as far away from it as I possibly could." This man was given the position.

This is the principle upon which we should act. The one who keeps the farthest away from temptation is on the safe side. Those who feel too confident of their own strength and power and go too near the danger line are liable to slip over the edge. Let us ever pray that we may not enter into temptation; let us also *watch* that we may keep out of danger."

#### ABSTAIN FROM EVERY FORM OF EVIL

R4728 "The Apostle has enumerated some of these forms of evil, namely, "Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envying, murders, drunkenness, revelings, and such like, of the which I have told you before, that they that do such things shall not

inherit the Kingdom of God." (Gal. 5:19-21.)...We are to remember, however, the Scriptural admonition that all of these grosser evils have, for the Christian, a more refined form, as, for instance, when our Lord declared that "He that hateth his brother is a murderer." This is quite a fine line of distinction that applies to the Christian. We can see that that spirit in a Christian which would content itself with hating, instead of killing, a brother would be a very evil condition for the heart and would mean death to the New Creature.

Our Lord defines adultery as not merely the outward act, but also the having of an adulterous feeling in the *heart*--the having of a purpose or willingness in the heart. Hence the New Creature, taking this standpoint, should be earnest and zealous to guard his heart. And so with Covetousness. It is covetous to be discontented with what we have and desirous of obtaining what others have. This is one form of *selfishness*, and the spirit of selfish desires is evil. In fact, we might say that every form of evil, so far as we can discern, is a form of selfishness. No evil thing that we can think of in humanity would be apart from selfishness--the desire to have something, to be something. These things, leading on to their culmination, would mean a desire to be a usurper of power--to grasp things that are not our own--an improper condition of lust for power, lust for wealth, etc.

ACTIONS, WORDS AND THOUGHTS  
Evils may be summed up into three

R3135 (From Harvest Truth Database V5.0)

### "HOLD FAST THAT WHICH IS GOOD"

1 THESSALONIANS 5:14-28 -- JANUARY 25.

OUR LESSON is a summary statement of the proper attitude for the Lord's people to maintain in order that they may grow in grace and through faithfulness finally come off conquerors through their Redeemer. Although addressed to the saints at Thessalonica, these noble words have been a source of strength, encouragement and discipline to the faithful in Christ Jesus from their writing to the present time. No child of God can afford to ignore nor to neglect these words of divine counsel, and in proportion as each of us gives heed to them our lives will surely be the more Christ-like, and we will thus be the more pleasing to the Lord, and eventually make our calling and election sure to joint-heirship with him in the Millennial Kingdom, and its glories and its service to the world of mankind. Let us take up these apostolic injunctions seriatim.

Not the elders alone are exhorted by the Apostle, as though they were a separate class, exercising control and treating the brethren as their wards; he addresses the "brethren"--the entire Church, including the sisters also. But this does not signify that the counsel would not apply specially to the elders; because they were selected as amongst the brethren most advanced in Christian doctrine and practice, and as the representatives of the Church, to specially look after the interests of the Lord's flock. These apostolic words apply to each member of the flock in proportion to his capacity and ability, but would naturally come with special force to the elders who, under God's providence, had the oversight of his Church, "to feed the flock." (Acts 20:28.) While, therefore, all the brethren are to see to the carrying out of the injunctions here given, the elders in every Church should feel a special responsibility respecting them--a responsibility derived from the position they occupy as representatives of the Church,--its standard-bearers.

The unruly are here contrasted with the feeble-minded or faint-hearted and the weak. The divine arrangement is full of order as well as full of liberty; and, rightly understood, liberty can best be conserved by order; and order best be maintained through a reasonable recognition of personal liberty. The mistake frequently made, not only by earthly law-givers and disciplinarians, but also in the Church of Christ, is along the line of extremes, either in one or the other of these directions. Some misunderstand liberty to mean lawlessness, disorder, unruliness. Others with equally good intentions, no doubt, are disposed to carry order and obedience to such an extent as to dwarf the individual liberties of the flock. Great grace

forms -- actions, words and thoughts... If, by reason of the weaknesses we have inherited and which belong to our mortal body, we be not fully able to master these evil propensities, we must show God that we are striving against them to the best of our ability...

To our mind, *evil thinking* is one of the greatest evils with which God's people have to contend. They can restrain actions and words to a considerable extent and they are, as the Apostle says, to seek to bring also every *thought* into obedience to the will of Christ. This does not mean that an evil thought would not cross the pathway of the mind. But the character of the thought should be discerned, whether it is mean or hurtful, and if so, it should be considered as a deadly foe...

The flesh is merely *reckoned* dead. It is the duty of the New Creature to see that the evil thought is battled against... It is to wage this warfare against sin that we have enlisted with the great Captain of our salvation. He showed his own fidelity to righteousness and is the Father's Agent for abolishing sin...

The Scriptures tell us to fight a good fight in our own flesh -- not against sin in someone else. According to our zeal we will have the Lord's approval."

R1631 "Let us flee, therefore, from every sin, and from every appearance of evil; and let us manifest our hatred of sin by a continual and lifelong striving against it..."

is needed along this line, to prevent friction amongst the Lord's people--to preserve the unity of the spirit in the bonds of love and peace.

We are not to have such false ideas of personal liberty as would ignore rules, law, order, in the assemblies of the Lord's people; and those disposed to be unruly, self-conscious, thrusting themselves forward, without the request of the Church, need to be held in check--to be "warned"--to be shown that their course is contrary to the spirit of the Lord and all the arrangements instituted by the apostles, his representatives. They need to be "warned" also that their course would mean injury to the Church, instead of blessing and peace and joy and development; and injury to themselves, in that it would develop in them a combativeness or self-esteem, already too large, and might thus not only work injury to the cause, but hinder themselves from attaining the character-likeness necessary to a share in the Kingdom.

But while some might need thus to be warned and held in check, others, faint-hearted and weak, would need aid, support, encouragement;--naturally backward, diffident, lacking in combativeness and self-esteem, they need to be pushed to the front a little, in order to bring out what talents they really possess, for their own encouragement and for the blessing also of the entire household of faith.

<sup>(1)</sup>"Be patient toward all" seems to imply that the better balanced amongst the Lord's people should look with sympathy upon and exercise patient forbearance toward the classes above mentioned;--not only toward the weak and those who lack courage, but toward *all*; including those who have too much courage and self-push. The Scriptures repeatedly admonish us, "Ye have need of patience," and day by day the advanced children of the Lord realize the truthfulness of this, and come to appreciate patience as one of the chief Christian graces. (1) <sup>(2)</sup>Growth in knowledge helps us to grow in this grace of patience, for as we appreciate more and more the heavenly Father's patience with us it helps us to apply the same principle toward others. (2) As we come to realize the great disaster that is upon our race as a whole--our fallen condition and how the

(1) 1/2 Aug. 15 Manna, 1Thess. 5:14

(2) 1/2 Aug 15 Manna

fall has affected some more in one manner and others more in another--some chiefly mentally, some chiefly physically, and some chiefly morally, it enlarges our sympathy toward our fellow-creatures, and thus increases our *patience* in dealing with them. This is particularly true in respect to the household of faith, in which we recognize amongst those whom God has graciously called, some more blemished, perhaps, than ourselves in some particulars--though we may be more imperfect in others. The thought that our heavenly Father has favored and called anyone should make us extremely careful how we would co-operate with the Lord in respect to the call, and be as helpful as possible to all those who are seeking to walk with us in the footsteps of our Lord in the narrow way. We certainly should have special patience, therefore, with the brethren. -Rom. 14:15; 1 Cor. 8:11.

"See that none render evil for evil unto any." This exhortation has a special force when we remember how much evil treatment was heaped upon the followers of our Lord at that time; and that the writer himself, as well as those specially addressed, had suffered much on account of their faithfulness in dispensing the Word of the Lord, the Word of life, the good tidings. The exhortation means that the Lord's followers are not to attempt to retaliate upon their enemies by doing them evil in return, or in any manner to "get even with them." The Lord's exhortation is that we seek to render good in return for the evil we receive, and includes our language as well as our conduct, we are not to give word for word, railing for railing, accusation for accusation, slander for slander any more than blow for blow. It includes also our very thoughts, for we are not even to render anger for anger, malice for malice, envy for envy. Two evils can never make a good--two wrongs will never make a right. Our sympathy for our blinded enemies is to cultivate our patience and forbearance toward them in thought, word and deed.--1 Pet. 2:21-23.

The Lord's people, so far from ever turning aside to render railing for railing or evil for evil, are uniformly to "*pursue that which is good*"--that which is right, that which the Lord approves. This will mean that each member of the Royal Priesthood will pursue righteousness to the extent of his ability--pursue every good and noble sentiment, and seek to live as nearly as possible up to the high standard of righteousness, perfection, exemplified absolutely in our Lord. This pursuit of goodness is to be maintained not only amongst the brethren, where all are professing the same pursuit, but also toward others--in our dealings with the world. Some of the world can learn more of the gospel through witnessing our avoidance of evil and our constant pursuit of righteousness, than by anything we can say to them;--and possibly as they discern the new life in us they may gradually come to have "an ear to hear" the message of good tidings which has wrought this change in us.

The worldly spirit does not approve this part of the Apostle's counsel, but urges, rather, that we should treat others as they treat us--that we should "give as good as we get,"--meaning that we should give as bad as we get. By way of saying as good a word as they can in their own favor along these lines they sometimes accuse the Lord's followers of cowardice. Courage is one of the noble qualities of humanity, and it is quite a trial to some to be considered timid or lacking in courage; and to such this enjoined restraint of word and act is a particular trial. It is not true, however, that the Lord's counsel tends to effeminacy or lack of courage. This matter is well stated in the language of another, as follows:--

"One feature which stands out clear in the society founded by Christ and his apostles is the extraordinary heroism which was shown in the face of death and tortures, not only by men, but by feeble women and tender children. It amazed the heathen magistrates who were striving after *fortitude* by the aid of philosophy. It amazed the wild savages, who mistook gentleness for cowardice, when they found it was harder to terrify the missionary who came with the Gospel than the invader who came in battle array. Quiet endurance may be *more heroic* than violent resistance, and the Christian law of bearing personal insults and injuries meekly tends to the development of the highest courage and truest manliness. There is nothing more courageous, more heroic, in all history than living up to this precept."

"Rejoice evermore" is the same exhortation that in our last lesson we saw the Apostle sending to the Philippians. The Christian's rejoicing is not hysterical, but founded on established principles, upon promises and comforting assurances of the divine Word which stands firm amid all the storms and trials and shocks of life.

"Pray without ceasing. In everything give thanks." Only somewhat advanced pupils in the School of Christ are prepared clearly to comprehend this exhortation. Having surrendered their wills and all of the interests of the present life to the Lord, exchanging earthly interests for heavenly interests, the Lord's people are less disposed than others to pray unceasingly for *earthly good things*. Having set

their affections on things above, their prayers are in respect to those things,--the heavenly robe, the heavenly food, the heavenly favor. Their prayers are specially for such leadings of divine providence and such assistance of divine grace as will enable them to rejoice always in such experiences as their gracious Lord may deem best for their spiritual development. More and more they find their prayers to consist of thanksgiving for blessings already received, as well as for those yet to come, which they grasp by the hand of faith.

Their prayers are without ceasing, in that, <sup>(3)</sup>having the condition of heart which is in fellowship with the Lord and fully devoted to the doing of his will, they not only implore his blessing at the beginning of each day, and present their thanks at the close of each day, but in all of life's affairs they seek to remember that they have consecrated their all to the Lord, and by faith look up to him in all of the affairs of life;--and in proportion to the importance of their undertakings they, by faith, realize the association of God's providence with all the interests of life and give thanks accordingly. This is the will of God concerning us;-- he wills that we live in such an attitude of constant regard for his will and for his blessing;--and he wills it in respect to us because it will be the condition most favorable to our progress in the narrow way, and which will best assist us in making our calling and election sure.

Having stated succinctly the Church's proper attitude toward the Lord to be one of continued rejoicing, prayer and thanksgiving and acceptance of his divine providences, the Apostle next briefly admonishes them respecting their attitude toward each other in the Church, in their feasting together on the Word of the Lord;--saying,

"Quench not the Spirit.

"Despise not prophesyings.

"Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.

"Abstain from every form of evil."

By following these admonitions, their fellowship in the Lord would be the more profitable--they would, as a congregation of the Lord's followers, be helped onward the more toward the grand standard to which we are called. The spirit of the Lord amongst his people is compared to "a flame of sacred love" for the Lord and all connected with his cause: this flame is enkindled through the divine message in each one individually, when begotten of the holy spirit, and appertains, therefore, to the Church collectively, under the guidance of that spirit. In proportion as the church grows in knowledge and in love and in fellowship with the Lord this "flame of sacred love" will make it a light in the world,--as a city set on a hill, which cannot be hid. This is a different figure from the use of fire as a symbol of destruction.

True, the flame of sacred love does not consume and destroy sin, but sympathy with sin; sin is not a part of the new creature, which opposes it and desires to have it consumed,--that the light of righteousness and truth may shine the more brightly. This "flame of sacred love" may, indeed, consume our mortal bodies, as living sacrifices in the service of the truth; but with such a consumption the new mind is fully in accord, and rejoices, realizing that it has in heaven an enduring habitation, and counting it all joy to be reckoned worthy to suffer for the Lord's cause. The more this "flame of sacred love" burns, individually and collectively in the Church, the greater will be the progress in all good things. Hence we are to be specially on guard, that our words and conduct and the general management of the interests of Zion in our midst shall permit this spirit of love to have free course in all our hearts and lives--that it be not quenched either with false doctrines or forms and ceremonies, or too rigid rules or by worldly spirit or by cares of this life or by any other thing, circumstance or condition under our control.

The Church is not to despise prophesyings: the Apostle does not mean that we are not to despise the prophecies of the holy men of old who spoke as they were moved by the holy spirit--it would be unnecessary to caution the Church on that subject. The exhortation is, not to despise prophesyings that may be done in our midst. As we have previously seen, the gift of prophecy in the sense of foretelling coming events was to some extent in the Church in the Apostle's day, as one of the gifts of the spirit, to mark out the Lord's people and to assist in establishing them at a time when the inspired messages of the Lord were unavailable. We find, however, that the Apostle frequently used this word "prophecy" in respect to *public utterance*, declamation, preaching. The early churches were accustomed to having general gatherings for their mutual assistance and upbuilding, and may have been in danger of thinking more of the gifts of miracles and tongues than of connected and logical discourse respecting the truth. The Apostle points out that without discarding the other blessings, this one should not be despised--our Lord was a preacher; the apostles were preachers, and the Lord has

(3) Aug. 16 Manna, 1Thess. 5:18

since raised up instructors amongst his people. Hence, such service should not be despised or ignored.

We live in a time when the very reverse of this is true; when the danger is rather that too much time and too much attention may be given to preaching, and not sufficient to the other methods of inculcating truth and encouraging the Lord's flock, "edifying and building up yourselves in the most holy faith"--when too much reliance is apt to be placed upon a leader and a connected discourse.

<sup>(4)</sup>"Prove all things, hold fast that which is good." However much they should ever come to respect prophesyings, or public preaching, the Lord's people should learn proportionately not to receive what they might hear without proper examination and criticism: they should prove all things that they hear, should exercise discrimination of mind, as to what is logically and scripturally supported, and what is mere conjecture and possibly sophistry. They should prove what they hear, with a view to holding fast everything that stands the test of the divine Word, and shows itself to be in accordance with the holy spirit; and they should as promptly and thoroughly reject whatever will not stand these tests. Alas! the Lord's people today greatly need to give attention to this exhortation; for much is being presented in the name of the Lord and as the teaching of his Word that is neither logical nor scriptural--that is supported neither by the letter nor the spirit of the Word;--much that is not good, and should be rejected. With such a discrimination prevailing amongst the Lord's consecrated ones, how much of the chaff of nominal "orthodoxy" would be rejected, and what a hungering and thirsting and searching there soon would be for the good Word of God, that would stand these tests! Let us diligently heed the Apostle's exhortation on this point.

"Abstain from every *form* of evil" (Rev. Ver.) gives the Apostle's thought. There are various evils which present themselves; some in their true hideousness, and some under a cloak of hypocrisy--some openly and boldly admitting their evil character and endeavoring to decoy the Lord's people into sin; others, garbing themselves as angels of light, would seek to mislead and to deceive.

<sup>(5)</sup>The exhortation is that everything that is evil, whether it have a good form or a bad form, is to be resisted and opposed. We may not say with some, "Let us do evil that good may follow." The Lord's people must be loyal to the *principles* of righteousness, under any and all circumstances. To do otherwise would be surely to undermine the character which they are seeking to build up.

<sup>(6)</sup>To abstain from every *appearance* of evil is another thought--a different one from what the Apostle's words in the original would warrant; nevertheless, they represent a sound principle. We surely should abstain not only from evil things, whatever their form or garb, but we should abstain so far as possible from doing things that we know to be good, which our friends or neighbors might misunderstand and consider to be evil things. The spirit of a sound mind dictates that not only evil in its every form, but everything that has an evil appearance, even, should be avoided--that our influence for the Lord and the truth may be the greater.

In closing, the Apostle pronounces his benediction. It is an invocation--the expression of his heart's desire on their behalf--that the God of *peace* would sanctify them wholly. He thus emphasizes the fact that God is not a God of confusion, anarchy, turmoil and disturbance, but a God of peace; and that in proportion as we are taught of him in the School of Christ we will become lovers of peace, and the peace of God will dwell in us and will abound in us more and more, and cause us to be not unfruitful in regard to holy character, and will make us advocates and promoters of peace in our words and deeds. As it is written, "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God." Peace in the heart, manifesting itself in the look and word and conduct, is, as the Apostle intimates, an evidence of whole or complete setting apart, and that God's spirit has come into such a sanctified heart and is filling it with his peace, the peace of God which passeth all understanding.

"And may your spirit, soul and body be preserved entire, without blame, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." (R.V.) The Apostle could mean this only in respect to the Church, as a whole, and not concerning the individual members; because he surely did not expect the Christians at Thessalonica without exception to live until the presence of the Lord, even as he did not himself expect to live until that time, and so declared. (2 Tim. 4:7,8; 2 Pet. 1:12-15.) The Apostle is not, therefore, to be understood as speaking of the spirit and soul and body of each individual Christian at Thessaloni-

ca, but respecting the spirit of the Church, the soul of the Church, and the body of the Church. In other words, his desire was that the Church at Thessalonica might continue to the full end of the Gospel age as a noble and faithful congregation of the Lord's body, full of his spirit and courageous in his work. As a matter of fact, we know that the Apostle's good wishes, or prayer did not come true; for this congregation, like the others he planted, died out: not heeding with sufficient care his injunctions and exhortations, not proving all things, not holding fast the good, not abstaining from evil, not being sanctified wholly, the spirit of the Lord in their midst was quenched, and as a congregation it died, or ceased to be--the light having blessed and confirmed some, passed on to other quarters, seeking those "meet for the inheritance of the saints in light."

"Faithful is he that called you, who will also do it." The fact that the Thessalonica Church has not been kept in accordance with the Apostle's prayer, is not to be charged to unfaithfulness on God's part, but to neglect and unfaithfulness on the part of those whom the Apostle addressed, or their successors in that congregation. So it is with every one of us who has been called of the Lord. It is for us to hear and to heed the Lord's message through his servants, if we would make our calling and our election sure. If not disposed to hear his message in the way he has sent it, the fault lies at our own door. Faithful is he who called us, who would rejoice to do for us abundantly better things than we could ask or think, if we accept his provisions in faith and follow the directions of his Word.

"Brethren, pray for us." There was nothing of the pope or lord about the Apostle--no feeling of such a superiority to the others of the Lord's flock that he could pray for them to their advantage, but needed not their prayers. Similar is the spirit of all who are in the proper relationship with the Lord--a spirit of humility and appreciation of all the household of faith, and of their petitions at the throne of grace--a realization that the humblest of the Lord's people has access to the throne of heavenly grace, and may there obtain mercy and find strength to help in every time of need.

"Greet all the brethren with a holy kiss." This was the ancient style of greeting, corresponding to our present style of saluting with the hand or with the hat or by shaking hands. The custom of men kissing each other is still followed in eastern countries. The Apostle's thought is that there should be thorough cordiality amongst all who claim membership in the body of Christ, and that this fellowship should be manifested by the accustomed form of greeting,--whatever reasonable form that might be. Possibly he meant--"I greet," etc., implying that he would love to be with them and greet them personally, and now did so by letter.

Before invoking the Lord's blessing upon the Church, the Apostle charged most strongly that this epistle should not be considered as a private message or letter to those in whose care it was sent, but that it should be considered as his address to the entire company of the Lord's faithful, and should be read to them all. The Apostle seemed to fear that there might be a spirit of censorship amongst the leading brethren which might lead them to preserve his letter to themselves, and to dole it out second-hand to the Church, either as a whole or such parts of it as in their judgment would be *prudent*. Such a spirit on the part of the elders in any Church would be reprehensible. God's Word is for God's people, and whoever would hinder its flow would surely offend the Master himself. That the elders at Thessalonica were faithful is apparent from the fact that the epistle was delivered to the Church. Some today need caution along this same line: many preachers and teachers have discerned in *The Plan of the Ages* the light of the Millennial dawn, but, instead of heralding it to others, have sought to hide it from the Lord's people that they might use it as a personal illuminant to cause themselves to shine before their flocks. They consider this cunning,--"wise and prudent,"--forgetting that the Lord declares that he *hides* his deep things from the wise and prudent and reveals them unto babes. (Luke 10:21.) True to our Lord's words, this class rarely makes much progress;--the truth passes on and ere long they are in comparative darkness;--because they received not the truth in the love of it, but in the love of self. (2 Thess. 2:10.) Loyalty to the Lord and to his flock and to his Truth, through whatever channel it comes, demands that it shall be heralded by each of us to the extent of our ability and in its purity and as speedily as possible,--consistent with the condition and interests of those for whom the Lord intended it--his flock. Shepherds who feed themselves and not the flock are warned by the Lord of his displeasure, and could not be expected to thrive spiritually, or otherwise to enjoy the light of the Lord's face.--Eze.34:2,7-10

<sup>(4)</sup> Aug. 18 Manna, 1Thess. 5:21

<sup>(5)</sup> ½ Aug. 19 Manna, 1Thess. 5:22

<sup>(6)</sup> ½ Aug. 19 Manna

\* What is the Soul, What is the Spirit, and What is the Body of Man? is treated in MILLENNIAL DAWN, Vol. V., chaps. 8 and 12.