

February 12

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vine likeness; it is slow to wrath and plenteous in mercy; it is quick to perceive the paths of truth and righteousness, and prompt to walk in them; it is mindful of its own imperfections and sympathetic with the imperfections and shortcomings of others. Z. '93-295R3090:2

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"LET PATIENCE HAVE HER PERFECT WORK"

"Let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing." -- Jas. 1:4.

THE term "patience" carries with it the thought of meek, uncomplaining endurance of suffering with humble resignation and perseverance. It is a trait which indicates strength and self-discipline. It cannot be predicated of inexperienced persons, but only of characters which have been subjected to trials of affliction, pain or loss; and it always shines brightest when manifested under the glowing heat of severe affliction. This trait takes a very prominent place in the galaxy of Christian virtues; for without it the heart would grow faint, the head weary; and the steps would soon falter along the narrow way in which the Church is called to walk. "In your patience possess ye your souls," said the Master, implying the danger of losing our souls, our existence, if we fail to cultivate this grace which is so very necessary to our continuance in well doing.

The Apostle James does not overstate the matter when he intimates that the perfect work of patience will make its subjects perfect and entire, wanting nothing; for the Apostle Paul assures us that God, who has begun the good work of developing character in us, will continue to perform it until the crowning day--the day of Jesus Christ. (Phil. 1:6.) All his children will be subjected to just such discipline as they need for the correction of faults, the implanting and development of virtues, and for their training and establishment in righteousness, so that they cannot be moved. "If ye be without chastisement [discipline and correction], whereof all [true sons of God] are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons; for whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye [patiently] endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?"--Heb. 12:8,6,7.

This great work of developing and training character is necessarily a slow and tedious one, and not infrequently it is a painful process; and the patience that cheerfully submits to it is begotten of a high appreciation of the ends to be attained by it. It is begotten of a love of righteousness, truth and godliness, and is therefore most noble and praiseworthy.

But how can we let patience have her perfect work? Just by meekly doing the best we can each day, and doing it cheerfully and well; making the best of every thing and going forward daily with true Christian fortitude to act the noble part in every emergency of affliction, pain or loss. To-day's trial may be a light one, perhaps almost imperceptible; or to-day may be one of the sunny days in which God bids our hearts rejoice in his overflowing bounty. Tomorrow may bring its cares and its petty vexations that irritate and annoy. Another to-morrow may witness the clouds gather above our heads, and as the days follow each other the clouds may grow darker and darker until we are forcibly reminded of that strong figure of the Psalmist--"I walk through *the valley of the shadow of death.*" Yet never will the valley grow so dark that the patient, trusting one cannot triumphantly exclaim, "*Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for thou [my Lord] art with me: thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me.*" Yes, there is comfort in the "rod" (of chastisement), as well as in the "staff" (of providential care); for both are designed for our ultimate profiting.

The Apostle Paul tells us plainly that tribulation is necessary for the development of patience --"Tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope." (Rom. 5:3,4.) Consider how your own experience has verified this, you who have been for some time under the Lord's special care and leading. How much richer you are for all the lessons of experience, and for the patience that experience has developed in you! Although, like the Apostle,

you can say that "no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous; nevertheless, afterward, it yieldeth the peaceable fruits of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby." (Heb. 12:11.) In the exercise of patience the lessons of experience have made you stronger. They have increased your faith and drawn you into closer communion and fellowship with the Lord. They have made you feel better acquainted with and to realize more and more his personal interest in you and his care and love for you. And this in turn has awakened a deeper sense of gratitude and an increasing zeal to manifest that gratitude to him. This also deepens the sense of fellowship with God, and gives confidence to the hope of final and full acceptance with him as a son and heir, worthy through Christ.

"Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down and [strengthen] the feeble knees"-- "Let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing."

The Apostle James urges that we take the prophets who have spoken in the name of the Lord for an example of suffering affliction and of patience. Then he cites the example of Job and the manifest end or purpose of the Lord in permitting him to be so sorely tried: how the Lord was really very pitiful and of tender mercy, although the pity and mercy were not manifest except to the confiding faith that said, "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him" --until the long and painful discipline had yielded the peaceable fruits and the subsequent rewards of righteousness.

There is little virtue in the patience that endures merely from motives of worldly policy, though even that often has much advantage in it. Men in business dealings with fellow-men well know that an impetuous, turbulent disposition is greatly to their disadvantage, while patient consideration, temperance in judgment, and good self-control are of immense value, even from a worldly, business standpoint. But the patience that is begotten of deep-rooted Christian principle is the kind that will endure all trials and shine the brighter for every affliction through which it may pass.

Job, the servant of God, was accused of selfish policy-motives for his remarkable patience and faithfulness; and it was boldly affirmed that if he were tried by adversity his mean motives would be manifest--that he would curse God to his face. But God knew better; and it was in Job's defence that he permitted him to be tried to the utmost that the loyalty of his heart might be manifest. Some of his poor comforters viewed Job's afflictions only in the light of chastisements, failing utterly to comprehend the divine purpose, and this only added stings to his afflictions; but through them all the Lord brought his servant and most fully vindicated him in the eyes of all the people.

Thus will he ever do with all who patiently maintain their integrity and trust in God under affliction. If any man recognize affliction as a chastisement of the Lord for the correction of some evil way in him, let him be quick to learn the lesson and repent; or if it be refining discipline, let patience under the tedious process have its perfect work.

The Apostle Paul (Heb. 11) calls up a long list of patient, faithful ones who endured cruel mockings and scourgings, bonds and imprisonment, who were stoned, sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword, who wandered about in sheep-skins and goat-skins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented; of whom the world was not worthy; who wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth. All this they endured patiently for righteousness' sake, looking by faith to God for the reward of their patience and faithfulness in his own good time. Then again, says the Apostle

(Heb. 12:3), "Consider him [Christ] that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds." Yea, consider him, "who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously." He left us an example that we should follow his steps.

While we see the great necessity for pruning, cultivating and

discipline in the development of character, it is manifest that none will be able to endure it unto the desirable end of final establishment in righteousness who do not from the beginning diligently devote themselves to the exercise of patience. "He that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved." "In your patience possess ye your souls."

R4909 "YE HAVE NEED OF PATIENCE"
"Let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing."--Jas. 1:4...

This word has a much deeper and fuller significance than attaches to our English word patience. It signifies, rather, constancy, the thought being an endurance of evil in a cheerful, hopeful, willing, patient manner. It represents, therefore, an element of character, and not merely a temporary condition or restraint of feeling or action. It signifies that development of heart and character which manifests itself in an endurance of wrong or affliction with contentment, without rebellion of will, with full acquiescence in the Divine Wisdom and Love, which, while permitting present evils, has promised to overthrow them in God's due time.

This grace of patience smooths the way for every other Christian grace, because all must be acquired under the process of patient and continuous self-discipline. Not a step of progress can be gained without this grace of patience; and not one of the graces more beautifully adorns the Christian character, or wins the approval of the world's conscience, or glorifies the God of all grace whose Truth inspires it. It is *enduring meekness*, striving to stem the tide of human weakness, and endeavoring with painstaking care to attain to the Divine likeness. It is slow to wrath and plenteous in mercy; it is quick to perceive the paths of righteousness, and prompt to walk in them; it is mindful of its own imperfections and sympathetic with the imperfections and shortcomings of others.

The importance of endurance in the Christian's character is fully borne out by the Apostle Paul's use of the word; for on more than one occasion he places *patience* above and beyond *love*, which we have seen is the "mark" of character for which we are to run--the "*mark for the prize*." For instance, in writing to Titus (2:2), enumerating the characteristics of the advanced Christian, the Apostle uses the following order: "Vigilant, grave, temperate, sound in faith, in charity [love], in *patience*." Though we have all the other qualities, this final test of *patient, cheerful endurance* must be passed before we can be accepted of the Lord as members of the *very elect*.

Again, in writing to Timothy (2 Tim. 3:10) respecting himself, the Apostle puts this quality of *patient endurance* in the place beyond *love*, saying, "Thou hast fully known my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, long-suffering, love, *patient endurance*."

"THE LORD YOUR GOD DOTH
PROVE YOU"

One might ask, if "Love is the fulfilling of the Law" and "the mark for the prize of our high calling," how can patience rank higher than Love? The answer is that patient endurance does not come in merely at the close of our race, but it is a requisite all the way along the race-course. We need this

cheerful endurance of the *earliest trials* in the Christian way; and as we speed along in our race for the "mark," the spirit of *cheerful endurance* should be *growing stronger and stronger at every step of the journey*. Some might be faithful for a few days or a few months or a few years, yet be unworthy of the great Kingdom blessing of Christ.

In the Parable of the Sower, our Lord gave an illustration of this fact, saying that some seed fell on stony ground and sprang up; *it grew*; but finally, when the burning heat of persecution came, the tender plants withered away. In choosing the members of the Kingdom class the Lord is looking for a *depth of soil, a depth of character, a depth of heart* that will be *patient to endure*. Those who lack this *one* quality will not be fit for the Kingdom. *Patience* is necessary as an element of character on *any* plane of being; but with the *Christian* it is specially important to have it developed from the *beginning of the race*. We need it with us at the *first quarter mark*, and at the *second quarter mark*, and at the *third quarter mark*, and still with us at the *fourth quarter mark*, the *mark for the prize--perfect Love*.

And when we have reached this mark of the race where we love, not only our *friends*, but our *enemies*, it is required of us that we *stand up to the mark faithfully, cheerfully, patiently enduring the tests* which the Lord will even then see fit to have come upon us. God subjects His people to testing, *long testing*, sometimes for months and years. As it is said, "The Lord your God *proveth you*."--Deut. 13:3.

Hence it is that the Apostle Paul exhorts us, "Having done all, *stand*"--*endure*. Having reached the "mark," "Let *patient endurance* have her perfect work," or "*perfect her work*." Let *patient endurance* demonstrate, not only that you have the character, the qualifications of Love, demanded in the race for the prize, but also that you have love as an *element of character, deep-rooted, immutable*, so that you can *endure opposition cheerfully*.

St. Paul tells us that we have need of this *patient endurance* that, after having done the will of God [after having brought our own will into complete subjection to the Divine will], we might receive the promise. (Heb. 10:36.) The thought in the Apostle's mind seems to be that there is a certain work for us all *to do in ourselves* --"Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling." (Phil. 2:12,13.) It is God who is working in us *to will* and *to do*--to cooperate in this work. Let us make sure that rebellion of any kind in our heart be thoroughly killed, mortified; and that we bring the will into perfect submission to the Divine will, so that we may have *no other will than His*. Even then, after we have overcome to this extent, *we have need of patience*. The Lord will not accept us merely because we are consecrated. He requires that the consecration shall be *proven*. *To begin with*, He accepts the consecration;

then He *tests us* to demonstrate to what extent we really love Him.

PATIENCE NECESSARY TO
FRUIT-BEARING

Patient endurance is also mentioned in the Scriptures as being the Lord's Word, or teaching. Our Lord says, "Because thou hast kept the *Word of My patience* I will also *keep thee*." (Rev. 3:10.) Twice in the Gospels also we note that our Lord brought to the notice of the disciples the importance of the quality of patient endurance. Once was in the Parable of the Sower above referred to. (Luke 8:11-15.) He said, "That [sown] on the good ground are they which in an honest and good heart, having heard the Word, *keep it*, and bring forth fruit with patience [with cheerful endurance, constancy]." The thought here is that in order to be of the fruit-bearing class, which the Lord will approve and accept in His Kingdom, it is necessary to do more than receive the Word of His Testimony, even though we receive it with joy; for that class in the parable is represented by the stony ground, which at first gave evidence of great fruitfulness and vigor, but withered under the sun of persecution, because of lack of depth of soil. That stony, shallow ground represents, the Lord explained, a class of hearers who rejoice greatly in the Truth, but do not *endure*; they are such as cannot withstand persecution or opposition, but wither under it, become discouraged. Such cannot be of the Kingdom class, all of whom must be overcomers.

In this parable our Lord shows us that patient endurance, constancy, is the *final test*, following after the readiness of preparation to receive the seed; following after the seed has been received and has sprouted; following after love and hope and joy and faith have caused it to spring forth and to give promise of fruitage. Patient endurance, then, is necessary in order that the grain may be developed and thoroughly ripened and made fit for the garner. How important patient endurance, cheerful endurance, seems to be, in the light of the Lord's Word! for we cannot suppose that He who judges the thoughts and intents of the heart would be pleased with His children, even if He saw them enduring much for His sake, if they *endured in an impatient or unhappy frame of mind*. They would not in that event be copies of God's dear Son, whose sentiment is expressed in the words, "I *delight* to do Thy will, O God!"

Our Lord at another time was telling His disciples that as the result of being His followers they must expect opposition, trials, *tribulations*. Perhaps it may assist some to realize the strength of the meaning of the word *tribulation* when they know its origin. It is derived from the Latin word "*tribulum*," the name of a roller, or threshing-machine used in olden times for cleaning wheat, removing from it the outer husk, or chaff. How appropriate the term when applied to the Lord's consecrated people,

who in the Scriptures are symbolized by wheat! Our new natures are the kernel, the real grain; yet this treasure, or valuable part, is covered with the husk of earthly conditions. In order that the wheat may be made properly ready for the "garner" and for usefulness, it is necessary that each grain shall pass through the tribulation necessary to remove those qualities which, until separated, render us unfit for the future service to which we are called of the Lord.

In proportion as we are able to realize our own imperfections, and the perfect will of God concerning us, we shall be enabled to bear patiently, and even with a certain kind of rejoicing, all the tribulations which the Master may see best to let come upon us. Our Lord explained to His disciples that so long as they lived in this present Age, when sin abounds, and when Satan is the prince of this world, they must expect tribulation from various quarters; but He assured them that they would, nevertheless, be fully and completely under Divine care and protection, even though the persecutions would be permitted to reach and to affect them. Then follow the words, "In your patience [patient endurance, cheerful, hopeful constancy] possess ye your souls."--Luke 21:19.

"HE THAT OVERCOMETH SHALL INHERIT ALL THINGS"

One object of the test of patient endurance is that we may be "strong in the Lord,"

that we may have the character-likeness of the Lord Jesus--not merely the firmness, but also the gentleness. All this must be developed before we can receive the things promised, the things which God has in reservation for those that love Him. (I Cor. 2:9,10.) These things are spiritual and might be apprehended by our minds, but could not be comprehended. The promise that we are to be like our Lord includes not only the spiritual and heavenly conditions, to which we shall attain in the First Resurrection, but also the blessing of sharing in the uplifting of the world. "If ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's Seed, and heirs according to the promise." (Gal. 3:29.) But to "be Christ's" means, not only that we shall accept Him, join Him and His standards, but also that we shall be good soldiers...

"Every branch in Me that beareth not fruit He taketh away; and every branch that beareth fruit, He purgeth [cleanseth, pruneth] it, that it may bring forth more fruit." (John 15:2.) We are on trial; and the trial is to prove our loyalty. If this trial time, or probation, is satisfactory, the membership is made permanent. Those who fail to live up to the conditions, are not counted worthy to be members of the Body of Christ and joint-heirs in the Kingdom.

LET US ABIDE IN HIS LOVE

Who can consider the importance of becoming copies of our blessed Lord and Head without feeling that to attain to this

character-likeness will be a life-work! It cannot be accomplished in a day or in a year; but the whole life must be devoted to it; and day by day, if we are faithful, we should realize a measure of growth in grace and of development in Christian character. It is not enough that we know the Truth, or that we be content to hold it in unrighteousness. We must see to it that the Truth is having its legitimate and designed effect upon the character. And if the Truth is thus received into good and honest hearts, we shall have the assurance of the Apostle Peter that "We shall never fall," but that in due time we shall be received into the Kingdom.

Hence we see the necessity of ever keeping the instructions and precepts of the Lord fresh in our minds, and of drinking deep into their inspiring spirit, although we are already established in the faith. To be established in the faith is one thing; to be established in Christian character and in all the graces of the Spirit is *quite another*.

Beloved, "Let us run with patience [cheerful constancy, patient endurance] the race set before us" in the Gospel. (Heb. 12:1.) As already observed, the race must be run with this constancy if we would reach the "mark;" and after reaching the mark we can maintain our position only by the grace of constancy, patient endurance, that having *done all, we may STAND!*"

R3089 (From Harvest Truth Database V5.0) THOUGH YE BE ESTABLISHED

"I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though you know them, and be established in the present truth."--2 Peter 1:12.

WHAT things are here referred to? Assuredly the necessity of giving all diligence to add to our faith virtue [fortitude]; and to virtue, knowledge; and to knowledge, temperance [self-control]; and to temperance, patience; and to patience, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, charity [love]:... For if ye do these things ye shall never fall; for so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting Kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.--*Verses 5-11.*

To be established in the truth signifies that we have carefully studied and thoroughly proved it by "the law and the testimony" (Isa. 8:20), and that as a consequence we are convinced of its verity, so that our faith is steadfast and immovable: we know whom we have believed; we have tasted and seen that the Lord is good; we have partaken of the sweets of fellowship with him; we have partaken of his spirit of meekness, faith and godliness to such an extent as to be led into a joyful realization of the fulness of his grace as manifested in the wonderful divine plan of the ages; and we have been permitted to see, not only the various features of that plan, but also the necessity and reasonableness of all its various measures in order to the full accomplishment of its glorious outcome in the fulness of the appointed times. This is what it is to be "established in the present truth." It is indeed a most blessed condition, bringing with it such peace and joy as the world can neither give nor take away.

But though we be thus established in the present truth, we need to bear in mind that our election to the high position to which we are called is not yet *made sure*. The race for the prize of our high calling is still before us, and we are yet in the enemy's country, surrounded by many subtle and powerful foes, so that if we would be successful we must "fight the good fight of faith," remembering, too, that "the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but [God's Truth is] mighty to the pulling down of the strongholds" of error and superstition and of inbred sin; and remembering, also, that "we wrestle not with flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places."-- 2 Cor. 10:4; Eph. 6:12.

It is in view of these facts--of the warfare before us, of the subtlety of our temptations and of the weakness of the flesh--that the faithful Apostle Peter urges all diligence in the cultivation of the Christian graces and a continual calling to remembrance of the precious truths we have learned, that we may be strengthened thereby to make our calling and election sure. Faith is a good thing; but faith without virtuous works is dead; and to hold the truth in unrighteousness is worse than never to have received it. The truth is given to us for its sanctifying effect upon our hearts and lives. Therefore let it have free course and be glorified. Let its precious fruits appear more and more from day to day. Add to your faith virtue--true excellence of character, such excellence of character as will mark you as separate from the world and its spirit. In all such the world will see those moral qualities which they must approve, however they may oppose our faith. Add sterling honesty, truth and fair dealing in all business relations; moral integrity, in all social relations; manifestly clean hands and a pure heart, and a bridled tongue that works no ill to a neighbor. All of these the world has a right to expect from those who call themselves Christians; and all of these are indispensable features of that virtuous character which must be added to our faith. The clean hands will not dabble in anything that is not virtuous: they will have nothing to do with unrighteous schemes or projects in business. The pure heart will not devise evil things, or harbor evil thoughts, or plot mischief. And the bridled tongue will not be given to evil speaking, but will hold its peace when it cannot speak well and wisely. But the promptings of virtue go further than merely these negative features which refuse to do anything which would work ill to a neighbor; they incite not only to passive, but also to active, goodness--in benevolent charity which seeks to alleviate suffering, to sympathize with sorrow, to comfort those in distress and to elevate and bless others --to assist "all men as we have opportunity."

To such a virtuous character we are counseled to add knowledge--the knowledge of God's character, that we may the more thoroughly imitate it, and of his truth, that we may more fully

conform to its teachings: and to knowledge, temperance--moderation, self-restraint, in all things. "Let your moderation be known unto all men." We are not to be hasty and hot-tempered, or rash and thoughtless. But we should strive to be evenly balanced, thoughtful and considerate: our whole manner should be characterized by that carefulness which would indicate that we are ever mindful of the Lord's pleasure, of our responsibility to him as his representatives, and of our influence upon our fellow-men, to see that it always is for good, never for evil.

"And to temperance, patience." "Let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing." Yes, this grace smooths the way for every other, because all must be acquired under the process of patient and continuous self-discipline. ⁽¹⁾Not a step of progress can be gained without the exercise of this grace of patience; and not one of the graces more beautifully adorns the Christian character, or wins the approval of the world's conscience, or glorifies the God of all grace whose truth inspires it. It is long-suffering meekness earnestly striving to stem the tide of human imperfection and weakness, and endeavoring with pains-taking care to regain the divine likeness. It is slow to wrath and plenteous in mercy; it is quick to perceive the paths of truth and righteousness, and prompt to walk in them: it is mindful of its own imperfections and sympathetic with the imperfections and shortcomings of others.

"And to patience, godliness"--a careful study and imitation of the divine character as presented in the divine Word.

"And to godliness, brotherly kindness"--an exercise and manifestation of the principles of the divine character toward our fellow-men.

"And to brotherly kindness, charity"--love. Kindness may be manifested where but little love exists toward the subject of such kindness; but we cannot long persevere in such acts of kindness before a sympathetic interest is awakened; and by and by that interest, continually exercised, deepens into love. And even though the subject may be unlovely in character, the love of sympathy for the fallen and degraded grows, until it becomes tender and solicitous and akin to that of a parent for an erring son.

Peter indeed describes a most amiable character, but who can consider it without feeling that to attain it will be a life-work. It cannot be accomplished in a day, nor a year, but the whole life must be devoted to it; and day by day, if we are faithful, we should realize a measure of growth in grace and of development of Christian character. It is not proper that we know the truth, and are contented to hold it in unrighteousness. We must see to it that the truth is having its legitimate and designed effect upon the character. And if the truth is thus received into good and *honest* hearts, we have the assurance of the Apostle that we shall never fall, and that in due time we shall be received into the Kingdom of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Hence we see the necessity of ever keeping the instructions and precepts of the Lord fresh in our minds, and of drinking deep into its inspiring spirit, although we are already established in the faith. To be established in the faith is one thing, but to be established in Christian character and in all the graces of the spirit is quite another.

A PRACTICAL SUGGESTION

Feeling as we do the necessity of a deeper work of grace, both in our own hearts and in the hearts of all of the dear household of faith, the thought has occurred to us that more special effort in this particular direction on the part of us all would probably be of great benefit. We do not know through what discipline of faith and patience we may yet be called to pass in the approaching dark night of which we are forewarned, but "sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof," and also, thank God, sufficient unto the day is the grace thereof, if we earnestly lay hold of it and patiently continue in it. As each day brings its trials, so, if we have been rightly exercised by the trials, each day should bring its victories--thus leaving us strengthened and more firmly established in character, as well as in faith.

With the end in view of specially promoting the growth of Christian character, our suggestion, which has already been made and adopted by the congregation in Allegheny and many other places, is that wherever a few of the consecrated can arrange to meet together, it would be well to appoint a midweek meeting for this special purpose. Such a meeting should be devoted to worship, prayer and praise, and to brotherly exhortation, conference and counsel, but not to Bible study or controversy. All discussions of doctrinal matters should be eliminated from such a meeting, and such subjects as would elicit controversy avoided, leaving such matters for another meeting, at an appropriate hour on the Lord's day, when all meet together; the object being, not to ignore doctrine, nor to discourage Bible-study; but, while meeting this necessity at the one meeting (on the Lord's day), to devote the other (the mid-week meeting) to the other equal necessity, without distraction.

Our arrangement here in Allegheny and Pittsburgh is as follows: As our congregation is much scattered, we have them parceled into as many neighborhood gatherings as is necessary for the accommodation of all desiring to attend; and a leader is appointed for each meeting, discretion being observed as to capability. They should be brethren established in the faith--sound in doctrine, faithful and pious. These meetings are held on Wednesday evenings at the residence of some member of each little group. The meeting is opened with a hymn and prayer, the reading, by the leader, of Sunday afternoon's text; then each one is asked to give his or her personal experience as to progress in the narrow way--as to how he or she is growing in grace and striving to overcome the world, the flesh and the devil. Here they may humbly tell of their victories, or speak of their trials, or ask for Christian counsel and sympathy in hard places, speaking more freely in such little gatherings than would be possible or proper in larger assemblies. Here they can hear each other's petitions for each other, and Christian love and sympathy flow the more freely from heart to heart.

The object kept in mind at these meetings is a fresh, living, weekly and daily experience with the Lord and in his service, and not merely a stale experience of the remote past. A clear past experience is good, but a clear present experience is better;-- much more vitally important. Doctrine is ignored at these meetings except as the word doctrine applies to all Scripture teachings, including hope, trust, obedience, godliness, prayer, etc. Too many, we find, have been contenting themselves with *knowing* the truth, without making special efforts to live it, daily and hourly. As honesty of heart and faith in the Redeemer's finished work and consecration to his service are necessary to a full entrance into the "holy," where the deeper features of the divine plan can be discerned and fully appreciated, so these qualities must remain, must abide, or the light will become darkness--you will be cast out of the light into the outer darkness in which the world and the nominal church grope after the phosphorescent glimmerings of error--Spiritism, Christian Science, Theosophy and Universalism.

The leader of such a meeting should study to adapt his counsel, correction or encouragement to the special needs of each of the little group over which he is placed, and his reverent piety and personal interest in each should inspire the confidence of all. We believe that such mid-week meetings prove steppingstones to higher attainments in the divine life, and that thus all may be greatly blessed and profited; and the whole body will be able the more effectually to minister to one another in spiritual things. On the middle Wednesday evening of each month the prayer feature is given more attention and an opportunity granted for all to address the throne of grace two or three in immediate succession. At a quarterly Sunday evening general meeting of the same character, we hear of the spiritual progress of the various little groups both from the leaders and the various attendants, and quarterly the leaders are transferred to other groups.

May the blessing of the Lord go with the suggestion, and may the outcome be a strengthening of the bond of Christian love and mutual sympathy and fellowship everywhere.

⁽¹⁾ Feb. 12 Manna, Jam. 1:4