

June 14

*God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble. 1 Peter 5:5*

ABOVE almost everything else, beloved, let us guard well our humility. It is only when we are little in our own eyes that God can use us with safety to ourselves.

And yet He does not shield us from every test of fidelity. If therefore the Lord give you a little exaltation today, a little encouragement of success in His service, receive it humbly, meekly, remembering your own unworthiness and insufficiency except as God is pleased to work through you; and be

just as ready to receive the humiliations of tomorrow as necessary for your discipline and the proper balancing of your character. If the success of yesterday make you fret under the humiliation of today, beware! You are not as roundly developed spiritually as you should be. Z. '96-19R1920:5

R1919 (From Harvest Truth Database V5.0 2006)

### BOAST IN THE LORD

*"Thus saith the Lord, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches: but let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the Lord which exerciseth loving kindness, judgment and righteousness in the earth; for in these things I delight, saith the Lord." "Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world?" "He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord."-- Jer. 9:23,24; 1 Cor. 1:20,31.*

THINGS highly esteemed among men are wisdom, power and riches. But it is not the wisdom that cometh down from above, nor the power of godliness, nor the true heavenly riches that moth cannot destroy nor rust corrupt that is sought after by the world. Men of the world have not learned the value of these, and therefore they "spend their strength for naught, and their labor for that which satisfieth not." "The reverence of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom;" the faith that lays hold upon the might of the Lord is the beginning of power; and the poverty that freely surrenders all things to the will and service of God is the beginning of true riches. Worldly wisdom, which has not its foundation in the reverence of the Lord, tends to self-exaltation and pride; power in the hands of the ungodly tends to haughtiness and overbearing selfishness; and riches, among those who have not learned from God the responsibilities of stewardship, tend only to dwarf the soul, rendering it impervious to the noble sentiments of love and brotherly kindness.

The man who, by dint of labor and strife, succeeds in a measure in gaining one or all of these earthly prizes generally considers himself a wise man; for he does not realize how transient are the treasures, how unsatisfactory they will prove in the end, what snares are in them, nor how great is the value of the heavenly treasure which he has missed while grasping after fleeting earthly things.

To the worldly who have never known the treasures of divine grace these earthly things are of paramount importance; but to the child of God, if possessed, they only increase the responsibilities of his stewardship; for they are not his, but the Lord's, all being included in his consecration. Whatever he has of human learning--education--must be held in subservience to the wisdom of God. No human theories or philosophies that conflict with the Word of God may be entertained. A "Thus saith the Lord" must be the end of all controversy when human reasonings come in conflict with divine wisdom; for the wisdom of this world that arrays itself in opposition to the heavenly wisdom is "foolishness with God," and will by and by be brought to most ignominious humiliation. So also the human might that lifts its puny arm in defiance of Jehovah's power shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy, and the hoarded riches shall be scattered to the winds.

What folly is it then--especially for any one who has been enlightened by the truth, and made a child and heir of God--to forget the importance and value of the unseen heavenly treasure and turn to minding earthly things. For any to glory in such a course is to glory in their shame and folly. But let it not be so with us: "He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord." "Let him glory in this," saith the Lord, "that he understandeth and knoweth me." "And this is life eternal," said Jesus, "that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent."--John 17:3.

This is the knowledge that does not puff up, the wisdom that cometh down from above. The beginning of this wisdom is indeed the reverence of the Lord. Nor can we grow in this wisdom except by continued growth in the reverence of the Lord. If to any degree we cease to reverence supremely the Lord's words, or if we cease to cultivate his acquaintance through our privilege of communion and fellowship with him in prayer, in the study of his Word, meditation upon his glorious character and teachings, and in obedience to his will, to the extent of our neglect we fail to realize the blessings of that wisdom that cometh down from above.

But if, in the use of these privileges, we open our hearts to receive all that divine grace has in store for us, then, indeed, we may glory in the Lord. Let such a one "glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me." To thus know the Lord is not merely to know of him, to know something of his works and ways, but it is to know him by that intimate fellowship and communion which, by a living faith, seals the testimonies of his Word upon our hearts

and makes us to realize that they are ours personally, that the Lord himself is our personal friend and helper and counselor and guide. We thus become acquainted with his spirit, his principles and methods of action,--we understand him,--we know how to interpret his providences, to mark his leadings, to observe his attitude toward us and thus daily to walk with him. Thus also we are led to a fuller appreciation of the Lord's righteousness and of his loving kindness, which will in due time establish justice in all the earth. Well, indeed, may we glory in the Lord and in the fact of his great condescension to us personally, when thus we come to understand and know him.

In this blessed sense of the divine love and care, we may say in the words of the Psalmist, "My soul shall *make her boast in the Lord*. I will bless the Lord at all times: his praise shall continually be in my mouth. O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt his name together. I sought the Lord and he heard me, and delivered me from all my fears. This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles. O taste and see that the Lord is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in him. O fear the Lord, ye his saints; for there is no want to them that fear him."--Psa. 34:1-9.

How precious is this experience of the child of God! but it can never be the experience of a proud heart; "for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace [his favor] to the humble. Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time." (1 Pet. 5:5,6.) It is hard for those who are rich in the wisdom or power or wealth of this world to do this. (Matt. 19:24-26.) It was hard for the scribes and Pharisees who were rich in titles and honors and praise of men; it was hard for the whole Jewish nation who were proud of being the seed of Abraham to whom pertained the promises of God; it was hard for the Greeks who were proud of their worldly wisdom and intellectual attainments; it was hard for the Romans who were proud of their power and prestige among the nations. And it is hard to-day for all those who have pride in any thing. It is hard for all religionists whose pride in the sectarian religious systems of Christendom blinds their eyes to the truth now due; it is hard also for those who boast in human philosophies and science, falsely so called; who are proud of being inventors of something new and strange, and who desire to be thought great and to lead men after them; it is hard for all those who reverence the opinions of men more than the words of the Lord. All those who either are rich or desire to be rich in the things of this present life, and specially those who are "rich" in a good opinion of themselves, or in self will, find it hard to humble themselves under the mighty hand of God. Indeed, the Apostle intimates that the greatest battle of each one coming to a knowledge of the truth is along this line; for it is after pointing to the severe humiliation of our Lord Jesus that he says, "Wherefore, my beloved, work out your own salvation [in like manner] with fear and trembling; for it is God that worketh in you [by this severe discipline, this humbling process] both to will and to do of his good pleasure."--Phil. 2:12,13.

Those who have endeavored in all sincerity to do so have always found the grace of God sufficient for them; but very few are ever disposed to make the attempt. To all the worldly-wise the preaching of the cross is foolishness, and they have no disposition to take up their cross daily and follow Christ.

It is for this reason that "not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called" to share with the Lord in the glory of his Kingdom. They are generally so engrossed with the things of the present life--its pursuits, its cares, its pleasures, etc.--that they have no ear for the Lord's call. They are not humble enough even to hear the call; much less are they humble enough to obey it and to walk the narrow way of self-sacrifice in which the Lord leads.

"But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world [those

who are not noted for worldly wisdom or influence or wealth] to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world [the humble poor], and things which are despised, hath God chosen; yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are." (1 Cor. 1:26-29.) How truly the wise are being confounded to-day by the power of the truth in the hands of the humblest of God's consecrated children! Systems of error which are the growth of centuries are put to confusion and are tottering before it, and the sages of all the sects are troubled by it; for it is becoming more and more apparent to all men that "the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent men shall be hid."--Isa. 29:14.

Why has God chosen these weak, inferior instruments for his great work? why does he not employ the eloquent tongues, the pens of ready writers, and the prestige of great names? Paul tells us why. It is in order "that *no flesh should glory in his presence.*" The great work of vanquishing sin and establishing righteousness in the earth is the Lord's work: no human power is adequate to the emergencies of the case. Yet God is pleased to allow his power to operate through any human instrument that is meet for his use; *i.e.*, that can be used without injury to itself. If God were to work his wonders through those whose hearts are inclined to pride, that pride would grow, and would arrogate to self the glory that belongs to God, instead of appreciating the honor of being a servant of God, an instrument in his mighty hand--"for the Master's use made meet."

The Lord's use of even the weakest instruments, of those having even a very small measure of talent for his service, sometimes proves an exaltation too great, and that which was a blessing becomes a curse through pride and vain-glory. Such is the perversity of human nature, and such the subtlety of the Adversary in gaining the advantage, that the very texts above cited sometimes become a stumbling-block to many who are not only poor financially, but who are deficient in intellect and education, and who even lack instruction in the divine Word. They forget that the Lord said, "Blessed are ye poor *i.e.*, those who were poor (or became so) as his disciples" (Luke 6:20); or, as Matthew (5:3) records it, "Blessed are the poor *in spirit.*" And they forget that the ignorant as well as the learned, the poor as well as the rich, can become "puffed up in their fleshly mind." It is sad to see "a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing" (Gal. 6:3), thus deceiving himself,--but specially so, when even the rudiments of education and Christlikeness are lacking. We believe that modesty and simplicity are traits to be cultivated by rich and poor alike, who are blessed with a knowledge of the truth, and that any "confounding of the mighty" should be done kindly and in meekness (Eph. 4:2; 2 Tim. 2:25), and not in a combative spirit or with a show of gratification over their defeat.

<sup>(1)</sup> Above almost every thing else, therefore, beloved, let us guard well our humility. It is only when we are little in our own eyes that God can use us with safety to ourselves. And yet he does not shield us from every test of fidelity. If therefore the Lord gives you a little exaltation to-day, a little encouragement of success in his service, receive it humbly, meekly remembering your own unworthi-

<sup>(1)</sup> Jun. 14 Manna, 1Pet. 5:5

(1Pe 5:5 KJV) "Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all *of you* be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble."

R2655 "How beautiful is his exhortation, "Be clothed with humility." The thought would seem to be that outside of every other adornment of character, and covering all others, should be this robe of humble-mindedness..."

R5955 "The sin of spiritual pride is probably one of the most dangerous of all. In proportion as it comes in, the Spirit of the Lord departs, and the spirituality of the individual ceases. This spiritual sickness, unless curbed, would surely lead on to the Second Death..."

(1 Co 4:7 KJV) "What hast thou that thou didst not receive? ..."

ness and insufficiency except as God is pleased to work through you; and be just as ready to receive the humiliations of tomorrow as necessary for your discipline and the proper balancing of your character. If the success of yesterday makes you fret under the humiliation of to-day, then beware: you are not as roundly developed spiritually as you should be. Whatever may be the triumphs of the truth through us, let us always remember that we are among "the things *that are not.*" Let us endeavor therefore to make the Apostle Paul's experience our own, who said,-- "I have learned in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: everywhere, and in all things, I am instructed, both to be full, and to be hungry, and to abound and to suffer need. I can do all [these] things through Christ which strengtheneth me."--Phil. 4:11-13.

In God's dealings with his people at all times we can see his care in guarding them against pride and self-sufficiency. If he would choose Israel to be his peculiar people, he permits them first to be enslaved for four hundred years, and then with a mighty hand and a stretched-out arm he gathers them to the promised land. Moses, too, the chosen deliverer, was of humble birth. He was slow of speech, and needed Aaron to supplement this weakness. And Paul had his "thorn in the flesh," from which the Lord was not pleased to deliver him, though thrice he besought the Lord to remove it; and the Lord said unto him, "My grace is sufficient for thee, for my strength is made perfect in weakness [*i.e.*, my strength, operating through this imperfect earthen vessel, will be more manifest to men than if the vessel were a perfect and polished one. In that case men might ascribe the greatness of the work to the talent of Paul, and by and by conclude that since Paul is only a man it is only presumption for him to assume to teach other men, etc. But if the power is seen to be of God, and merely working through Paul as a ready instrument--meek, willing and energetic--then the testimony of the grace of God will be weighty with them: and so it was]."

To this explanation and assurance from the Lord Paul meekly replied, "Most gladly therefore will I rather *glory in my infirmities*, that the power of Christ may rest upon me."--2 Cor. 12:8,9.

The Lord with unerring wisdom has always chosen the meek for every great work. Moses was the meekest man in all the earth. (Num. 12:3.) Meekness was a marked characteristic of all the prophets and ancient worthies. The Lord Jesus was meek and lowly of heart (Matt. 11:29), who, though he was rich, yet for our sakes became poor. He was of humble birth, born in a manger and reared in the despised town of Nazareth, that he might be called a Nazarene. The twelve apostles were all plain men, mostly fishermen; and so also the whole Gospel Church--not the church nominal, but the true ones written in heaven--have generally been the poor of this world, who were willing to be humbled yet more and more, that the power of Christ might be manifested through them.

Let every one therefore humble himself under the mighty hand of God. This is not the time for exaltation, but for humiliation and trial. The exaltation will come in due time to the faithful. Let our present glory be in that we understand and know the Lord, and in that he condescends to make use of these poor earthen vessels in his service, that it may be manifest to all men that the excellency of the power is of God, and not of men.--2 Cor. 4:7.

R5956 "We have nothing whereof to boast. If we gave all of our goods to feed the spiritually poor, all our time to circulating the Truth, and all of our energy to the honoring of the Lord's name, we should feel that, having done all, we had not really profited our Lord, but merely found an opportunity of showing Him a little of the devotion of our hearts in acknowledgment of the numberless blessings already received at His hand, and the still more wonderful favors which He has promised shall be ours, if faithful. Well did the poet write:

"I want the first approach to feel  
Of pride or fond desire!"

#### STILL FURTHER SYMPTOMS

Another form of this disease of spiritual pride manifests itself in a hypercritical attitude of mind. When one attends a testimony meeting, or a Berean class, and hears no real good testimony but his own, hears no proper answer except his own to any of the questions, never sees an Elder in the chair who

knows how to lead a meeting anyway -- these should be considered dangerous symptoms of spiritual pride."

R5956 "It is a special privilege, indeed, to tell out the Message of God's grace to all who have a hearing ear..."

Old as the Message is, it is so new and wonderful, if rightly presented, as to awaken astonishment in the honest-hearted who hear. They wonder, how did this ordinary man (or woman) ever come to understand and be able so beautifully to portray these wonderful things? Perhaps they give a hint of their surprise. Then comes a danger-moment for taking the disease of spiritual pride...

We should realize that the Plan is not ours; that we have merely heard of it ourselves; that it is really God's Plan; that we are honored as His servants to tell it out. But if we allow any impression to go out that it is by any wisdom on our part, or any skill, that the beauty is seen in the Message, then to that

extent we are taking glory to ourselves which belongs to the Lord, and doing injury to ourselves proportionately by failing to demonstrate our worthiness to be used by the Lord in the present and in the future."

R5185 "If a man who had seen a beautiful picture should then boast as though he had painted it, we would say, "Foolish man! You did not *make* that picture. You merely *looked at it*. You have nothing to boast of concerning it."

We did not make any part of God's Plan of the Ages. If we had attempted to do so, we would have made a failure of it. Our attitude of mind, then, should be, "Come, we will show you what God has arranged, what God has pictured." Thus we would glorify God and be helpful to others...

Instead of self-confidence, wisdom dictates a distrustfulness of self, remembering its weaknesses and imperfections, and correspondingly the greater reverence for God and reliance upon Him, which more than anything else will strengthen us and enable us to depart from the evil of our fallen estate."

(Jas 3:1 RV) "Be not many teachers, my brethren, knowing that we shall receive heavenly judgment."

R4503 "Unconsciously the Lord's dear people who make no pretensions themselves in the direction of teaching are often responsible to a considerable degree for the deflection of those whom they recognize as teachers, and whom unconsciously they lead into temptation. The besetments of teachers are, (1) pride, and (2) arrogance.

(1) Encouraged by the laudatory words of the brethren, the tendency is for them to

feel that they are somebodies, and to attribute the success of their efforts to natural ability, talent, etc., rather than to the wonderful power and beauty of the Truth..."

R5956 "SPECIAL TEST UPON ELDERS AND DEACONS... In all meekness and humility they should feel a timidity even about taking a position where there would be such a responsibility. The admonition on this is that although all of the Church should, according to their knowledge of the Truth, be qualified to be teachers, nevertheless the safer place is not to be a teacher, knowing that such shall have the severer trial. Only a sense of responsibility to the Lord and to the brethren should make one willing to serve in such capacity, much as all ought to love to be the Lord's representatives in the Church.

Everything in the nature of pride, fond desire to be Elders or to be great, is not only dangerous to the person himself, but dangerous to the entire Class with which he is associated. The spirit is catching, just as is every disease. Strife, vain-glory, ambition, all contrary to the spirit of the Lord, soon appear. Next come anger, malice, envy, hatred, evil-speaking, evil-surmising. These, St. Paul tells us, are "works of the flesh and of the Devil..."

If we had but the power of language to hold it up before the readers of THE WATCH TOWER, that they might see it in its true shape and terrible color, the effect would surely be to cause an alarm in Zion! Fain would we ring the alarm bell from the "Watch Tower," for be it noted that these dear ones who are becoming thus involved are often grand characters, truly spirit-begotten children of God. Of some of them we know that in the past they ran the race

splendidly. How sorry we feel to see signs that their characters are being transformed in a wrong direction! Let us heed Him who said, "By their fruits ye shall know them."--Matthew 7:16.

#### GUARDING AGAINST SPIRITUAL PRIDE

As already indicated, one of the serious things connected with this malady of spiritual pride is that those who have it are *rarely aware of it*. Another difficulty is that it is almost impossible to correct them and to cause them to know that they have the disease. If spoken to on the subject they seem to think at once that their benefactor is their enemy; that he is jealous of them; that he would like to get their position, etc. Hence the disease is nearly *incurable*, except as either the Class may assist or the Lord's providence may interpose.

If the Class notices the growth of such a disposition, it should quickly, and with love and good intention, merely fail to elect for any service to the Class the individual who seems to be getting top-heavy -- spiritually proud. If this were resented, it should be considered all the more a necessity to leave the self-conscious one to cool off quietly and get his bearing -- for his own good and that of the Class. Where the Class fails to help in this matter, apparently nothing remains except for the Lord to chasten the individual for his good, either with business reverses or losses or with physical disease, or in whatever way may seem best to Him. And we have confidence that the Lord will do this for everyone who is truly His child and who gets into such a condition as to need such correction in righteousness. Is it not written, "The Lord will judge [punish] His people"? -- Deuteronomy 32:36."

R2654 (From Harvest Truth Database V5.0 2006)

#### "LOVE AS BRETHREN; BE SYMPATHETIC; BE COURTEOUS"

*"Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility; for God resisteth the proud, and showeth favor to the humble. Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time."*

--1 PETER 3:8; 5:5,6.--

THE APOSTLE has been addressing the elders of the Church, exhorting them to give attention to the feeding of God's flock, and pointing out what should be the constraining influence to such a service. That they may feel his sympathy with them he points out that he also is an elder, and then warns them against a tendency, natural to all fallen humanity in any place of influence, to misconstrue their position, and to think of themselves as lords of God's heritage rather than as servants of the flock.

In our day, the natural tendency in this direction is greatly accentuated by the long established custom of all denominations of Christians to regard the ministers or servants of the Church as of a different class from the others of the flock,--a class vested with authority from God, and not amenable to the same regulations which govern all the members of the body. But how great a mistake this is! The Apostle distinctly points out that a servant is not a ruler, that a servant has no authority. Indeed, so far as the true Church is concerned, the only authority in it is the Lord, the Head of the Church, and his Word, and the words of those whom he specially chose to be his mouth-pieces, the apostles.

Where these speak, all of the body of Christ are to give attention to hear. Where these are silent, no one has authority to speak. And while an Elder should be chosen to the position of serving and feeding the flock because of special aptness to teach (to point out the instructions of our Lord and the apostles upon any subject), and while such an Elder should, therefore, in this way be specially helpful to the body of Christ in drawing the attention of all to the inspired authority of the Word, nevertheless any member of the body of Christ has the same privilege--not of exercising authority, but of calling the attention of his fellows to the Word of authority. The Apostle exhorts the Elders that so far from in any manner or degree exercising a lordly or authoritative position in the Church, they

should rather be "ensamples to the flock." They should be examples in the matter of meekness, in the matter of patience, in the matter of brotherly kindness, in the matter of courtesy, so that the more any of the brethren would copy these Elders the more would the spirit of the Lord prevail in the flock, and the fruits and graces of the spirit be manifested. On the contrary, we know that if the Elder or leader of a little company of the Lord's people be self-assertive, dogmatic, imperious in manner, tone or look, the effect upon the company under his influence is to produce bickerings, rivalries, ambitions, strifes as to who is greatest, etc.

Manifestly, whoever occupies the position of an Elder amongst the Lord's people, however small the group may be, occupies a position fraught with responsibilities to the Lord and to the flock, as well as with besetments to himself. Great care should therefore be exercised by every company of the Lord's people, to so far as possible select for the position of leaders or Elders in the Church such persons as would not be likely to be injured by the privilege of service--such as occupying this post would indeed be ensamples of the flock in humility and in all of the graces of the Lord's spirit. It would seem to be with reference to the special trial of such as occupy this position of service in the Church that the Apostle speaks, saying, "Be not many of you teachers, brethren, knowing that we [occupying such a position] shall receive the severer testing."--James 3:1.

It may not be amiss that here we notice the fact that altho the word "Elder" has the significance of "older," yet amongst the Lord's brethren it is not merely years of natural life that is to be taken into consideration; in the Lord's family we sometimes see "babes" with gray hairs. Nor can we even count eldership according to the number of years that have elapsed since the begetting of the spirit, for some grow rapidly and mature quickly; others who receive the truth permit the "thorns" of cares of this life and the deceitfulness of rich-

es to choke the word, and hence never get beyond the position of "babes,"--never bring forth the ripe fruits of the spirit.

Nor can we reckon this matter of relationship merely according to the degree of knowledge of the divine plan attained; for, as the Apostle assures us, it is possible for some to have much knowledge and yet be but "tinkling cymbals" according to the Lord's standpoint of estimation. While therefore an Elder, in order to be "apt to teach," must have attained to some considerable degree of knowledge of the divine plan, nevertheless the real evidence of his fitness for the service of an elder must not be determined by his knowledge *merely*, but additionally must be measured by his growth in grace. So then such of the brethren in any place as possess clear knowledge of the divine plan and are "apt to teach," and who additionally give unmistakable evidence that they have grown in grace and are bearing in daily life the fruits of the spirit of the Lord, in considerable measure of maturity, may be considered qualified to be elders;--and such may properly be chosen to the eldership by their brethren, regardless of their age according to the flesh.

According to the flesh Peter and several others of the apostles of our Lord were his elders, but according to the spirit our Lord is the Elder Brother of all accepted to the family of God. According to the flesh both Timothy and Titus were young men--young in years--so that the Apostle needed to write to one of them, "Let no man despise thy youth." (1 Tim. 4:12.) And yet these young men the Apostle recognized as Elders in the Church, who, because of their *spiritual development and knowledge* of the divine plan, and *aptness to teach*, were well qualified to feed the flock of God and to be overseers in it--but not lords, not rulers, not masters, and not vested with any *authority*--merely privileged to call to the attention of the flock the voice of the great Shepherd and his twelve chosen assistants, and to lead them to the green pastures and still waters of divine truth.

It was after specially enjoining modesty and humility upon the ones most advanced and most capable of the flock that the Apostle, in the language of our text, urges that each one of the Lord's sheep, so far from seeking to be a leader in the sense of a ruler or lord or master, should seek to be subject one to another --to hear gladly from the humblest of the flock, and to be willing to yield his own preference, so far as his judgment and conscience would permit. A Church operating under this spirit would not be likely to be rent with contention, for each would be so anxious for the interests of the cause and so willing to condescend to the wishes of others, that even the will of the majority would not be considered satisfactory, but rather all would seek, if possible, to reach such a modified conclusion as would meet with nearly or quite unanimous approval.

The Apostle most distinctly points out that the quality essential to such proper conduct on the part of Elders and on the part of all, is humility. How beautiful is his exhortation, "Be clothed with humility." The thought would seem to be that outside of every other adornment of character, and covering all others, should be this robe of humble-mindedness, the opposite disposition to pride.

By way of clinching his argument, the Apostle reminds us of the principle upon which our Lord deals with his flock and with all;--that he disapproves of pride, and that all who are actuated by pride may be sure that the Lord, so far from receiving them, fellowshiping them, leading them, blessing them, will resist them, push them from him. The natural inference is that thus resisted of the Lord, the tendency of such as come under the influence of a spirit of pride and ambition will be not toward the truth nor toward any of the fruits and graces of the spirit, but further and further from these. "The Lord resisteth the proud, but supplies his favor to the humble." Come then, dear brethren, says the Apostle, let us cultivate this humility which the Lord so loves and appreciates and promises to reward. Let us humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt us in due time.

The Lord's mighty hand has not yet been stretched out to take hold of mankind in general and its affairs, to bring order out of confusion; but it is stretched out over his Church, his flock. He has called us to be his "sheep," and we have responded and have put ourselves under his care, under his powerful hand for guidance, for direction, etc., that he may ultimately make us "meet for the inheritance of the saints in light," "joint-heirs with Jesus Christ our Lord, if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together."

Seeing that we are under this mighty hand of God, and that too by our own volition, how shall we act? Shall we yield ourselves to his will, and permit him to "work in us both to will and to do his good pleasure" and our ultimate exaltation, or shall we resist the Lord's power, resist his Word of instruction, resist the example set us in the meek and lowly Lamb of God, and seek to exalt ourselves

and to be somebodies, either in the world or in the Church? Nay, let us remember that it would be folly to attempt to work against the divine arrangement; we might indeed to some extent seemingly succeed, and bring upon ourselves, and perhaps upon others also, more or less of separation from God through such resisting, on account of a wrong spirit; but in the end we should utterly fail of God's favors, both as respects the fellowship of the spirit now and the fellowship of glory by and by, for these he assures us will be bestowed only upon the humble. Every proper incentive and inducement speaks to us, saying,--Humble yourself: become more like a little child, forgetful of self, devoid of selfish ambition: be actuated merely by a desire to serve the Lord, to serve his flock, and to serve his cause, the truth; forget self entirely.

Perhaps, as a result, the Lord may increase our opportunities and responsibilities in service in the present life, and perhaps he may not; but no matter for this. It is not for the present life that we are seeking and striving, but for the glory, honor and immortality which the Lord has promised to them that love him;--that love him so much that they hearken to his Word and seek to develop those elements of character which are pleasing in his sight, seeking to become more and more copies of God's dear Son.

The Apostle adds, "Casting all your care upon him." All true saints of God are care-full. They have an interest in the Lord's work; they have a care in respect to it. They cannot be indifferent to the interests of Zion. Altho their hearts and affections and cares have been lifted from a sectarian channel, it is only that they should be placed upon true people of spiritual Zion, whose names are written in heaven. Of course, therefore, every Elder in the Church must feel such a care, especially for the flock in connection with which he has been appointed to service, "to feed the flock of Christ:"--not to shear them, not to frighten them, not to club them, not to exercise authority and lordship over them, but to *feed* them.

This care, affecting the chosen Elders (and all the elders or advanced ones in the Church), altho it is a right sentiment in itself, might easily be so perverted as to be dangerous. The Elders, either individually or collectively, might become so nervously careful of the flock as to destroy their own peace and joy in the holy spirit; and it might also lead them to take various improper steps, as in their over-zealous judgment necessary for the welfare of the flock. Many in times past have been led, under the influence of such a care, to in various ways take away the liberties of the flock in this or that or another matter: fearful that these liberties would be injurious to the cause. We see such a spirit of carefulness and over-solicitude marked prominently in the past by the various creeds and regulations and restraints put upon the Lord's flock, contrary to the Scriptures and to the liberty wherewith Christ makes free his people. The motive undoubtedly was in some respects a good one; the difficulty was that some Elders, some advanced sheep, caring for the interests of the flock, forgot that they were only *its servants*, and that they were not authorized to make any laws or restraints whatsoever for the flock. They forgot that the Lord himself is the Good Shepherd of his flock still, that he has not given over his care of it, nor his authority to anyone, to permit such to exercise lordship or to make laws of any kind for it, he having made all the laws and regulations necessary, and desiring that his sheep shall be free, with the liberty wherewith he made them free, in the fullest sense of the word.

The remedy for all such unauthorized over-carefulness for the interests of Zion is pointed out by the Apostle, saying,--"Casting all your care upon him [the Shepherd of the flock], for he careth for you [all]." Each sheep is to remember that the Shepherd's mighty hand (mighty power) is still in the midst of his people, and that because of his care we do not need to *overburden* ourselves with care, nor to feel that we must make *changes in his plans* and arrangements to meet what we might fancy to be new exigencies in the case. All such over-carefulness leads to fear, and fear indicates a lack of faith, a lack of confidence in the Shepherd; and is generally used by the great Adversary as one of his most powerful levers to lead the Lord's people into a wrong course.

Let us all, then (all of the advanced or elder class), have a care for the flock; yea, a deep solicitude; but let us cast the weight of this care upon the Lord, and let our faith trust him that he who has been working out so grand and glorious a plan as his Word reveals to us now, "the plan of the ages," has made full provision for every feature, every circumstance, every condition; and let us thus be ready to cooperate with him in harmony with his Word, but not to run where we are not sent, nor in any manner to take our Lord's place, nor attempt to do his work. But only the humble-minded are likely to receive any lasting blessing, present or future, at the hands of our Lord; for he resisteth the proud and showeth favor to the humble.