

Note: This same article is used for both the Mar. 11th and Mar. 18th Manna Texts. Only one mailing will be sent.

March 11

Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us. Hebrews 12:1

March 18

Gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. 1 Peter 1:13

HAVING... "girded up the loins of your mind" for a long, steady and determined

YOU that discern the prize of your high calling, and who are endeavoring to press along the line toward the mark, "gird up the loins of your mind";... strengthen and fortify your purposes and efforts; renew your determination; redouble your diligence; cast aside the weights of unnecessary

effort, "be sober"; do not allow yourself to become excited and, under the spur of excitement, to exhaust all your spiritual vitality in a very short time, and then to suffer a relapse into coldness or discouragement; but thoughtfully to consider and prepare for a long and patient endurance of all the disci-

worldly cares; increase your zeal; and, as the Apostle Paul also urges, run with patience the race set before you. Run, not like one who is merely beating the air, but like one who has a purpose in view, and who, in desperate earnest, is *determined* to make his calling and election sure. Z.03-54 R3149:3

pline and trial of faith and patience necessary to prove an overcomer and worthy of the blessed reward promised "to him that overcometh." The race before us is not one to be run by fits and starts, but by "*patient continuance* in well doing." Z.03-54 R3149:3

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THE RACE-COURSE OF THE AGE--ITS "CLOUD OF WITNESSES"

Wherefore, seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us.--Hebrews 12:1

THE opening words of this text direct our minds back to the preceding context, as though St. Paul were saying, In view of the great things, accomplished by these faithful characters of the past, who manifested such faith and confidence in God that they were willing to deny themselves all earthly rights and privileges--seeing that we are thus encompassed with so great a cloud of witnesses--martyrs--let the inspiration of their example spur us to the greatest faithfulness in running *our race*.

The Apostle speaks of the Ancient Worthies as a "cloud of witnesses." He does not use the word *witnesses* in the sense in which it is used often today--in the sense of *on-lookers*. Originally, the word *witness* was used in the sense of a *witness to the truth*, or a *martyr*. Therefore, the text would seem to mean: Seeing that you have many surrounding you of those whose lives testified to the truth--*martyrs*, who were cut off from home privileges and from life itself--it should have a strong influence upon you. These Ancient Worthies, through the achievements of their lives, are looking down upon you.

The fact that the Ancient Worthies were even then dead need not detract from the Apostle's figure of speech. This style of expression is commonly used by us all. As an illustration, we recall that on one occasion Napoleon addressed his army saying, "My men, thirty centuries look down upon you!" While, strictly speaking, centuries cannot *look down*, yet in one sense of the word they can; for we can look back into the past and realize matters that are thirty centuries old and more.

The Apostle wishes us to remember that this "*cloud of witnesses*" is surrounding us, and that therefore we should run this race faithfully. While those noble characters will not obtain the prize for which we are running, they are, nevertheless, to have a prize. As we recall how faithfully they endured and achieved what was set before them, how careful we should be in running the race set before us--a race for glory, honor and immortality!

This "cloud of witnesses" continually surrounds us. The experiences of the Ancient Worthies are our experiences. At every step of our journey we find encouragement, strength, from the contemplation of their course. The Apostle, in giving us the picture of our text, indicates that we are to consider ourselves as running a race. We are to view the affairs of the present life as from a race-course.

No doubt St. Paul had before his mind the popular Grecian games of his day, especially the races. So his suggestions to those in the race for glory, honor and immortality are based upon that mental picture. As the runners in those races would strip themselves of all that was not absolutely necessary, so the Christian should lay aside all possible weights and hindrances in his course, and run with patience the race set before *him*.

WHAT CONSTITUTES WEIGHTS?

The weights to be cast aside might differ in different persons. One person might have inherited titles, honor, position. St. Paul himself was one of these. He was born a Roman citizen--an honor of great distinction in his day. This prerogative he laid aside when he entered the Christian race-course. He did, however, refer to his Roman citizenship when the interests of the Truth made it advantageous for him to do so. But he never tried to follow a middle course--to benefit himself and please worldly acquaintances a part of the time and then fellowship with the Lord's people at other times. One thing alone he did, as he tells us in these words: "Brethren, I count

not myself to have *apprehended*; but this *one thing* I do, *forgetting* those things which are *behind*, and *reaching forth unto those things* which are *before*, I press toward the MARK for the Prize of the High Calling of God in Christ Jesus."--Phil. 3:13,14.

Another weight might be *wealth*. One possessing much money might be hindered in the race by fostering the thought that he must occupy a large house, keep many servants, and live as do others of his class, but that nevertheless he would attend the meetings of the Lord's people. Still another weight might be talent along some line. Another might be love of the approval of men, etc.

He who desires to win in the race for glory and honor eternal should lay aside all those weights and any others which he may recognize as such; otherwise he will be so handicapped that he will not run well. Some runners will be more than overcomers and will receive the prize. Others will barely be saved, because of handicaps, and will receive inferior positions.

St. Paul tells us how much he valued these earthly possessions--ambitions, honors, etc. He weighted them and compared them with the Prize of the High Calling of God in Christ. His judgment in regard to these earthly honors was that they are but *loss and dross*. Therefore he threw them all away.

Of those who retain their hold on earthly things the Lord declares, "How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the Kingdom of God?" These riches are not merely of gold, but may be of honor, position, power, approbation of men, etc. All these are likely to prove a hindrance in the race upon which we have been invited to enter for the Prize.

As we look back to the faithful witnesses of the past, we find that they carried very few weights along with them. They cast their weights aside, and ran with patience the course before them.

Not all weights and hindrances are to be cast aside, however. A man who enters the race with a wife and children must not throw these aside. If he has a child on each shoulder, then he must *run with them*. But if one who is *unmarried* is thinking of engaging in this race, he will do well to consider carefully *how many children he should have on each shoulder, or whether he should have a wife on his shoulders*. Some would be hindered with a wife, while others might be hindered without a wife. Each must decide for himself what is best. We are not trying to lay down rules.

INHERITED WEAKNESSES AND BESETTING SINS

Let us now consider that part of our text which deals with besetting sins. Another translation says *the close-girding sin*--the sin which wraps itself closely around us. Some sins are like a loose-flying garment, and others wrap themselves tightly about us. With these hindrances the runner is obliged to stop now and then to disengage himself, and so loses time.

We are to avoid sin in every sense of the word. *No one* has the right to sin. If we cannot rid ourselves entirely of our close-girding sin, we must put it off to such an extent that it will not interfere with our running. If this sin be an inherited weakness, a part of one's very nature, what then? Then he shall *run* in the race--not walk, not sit, but *RUN*, bending all his energy to win, straining every muscle, every power of his being. This is what the Apostle sets before us in our text.

The Lord has set this subject clearly before us in the Bible. The race is not an *imaginary* race, but a *real* one. It is a race that the

Lord has arranged, and He has *definitely stated the terms*, the assistance to be expected, and the Prize at the end of the course. We thank God for the explicit information given in the Scriptures and for all the helps and encouragements of the way, as well as for this great cloud of witnesses surrounding us. And by the Lord's grace we will run with patience; for without this grace of the Holy Spirit one would soon fall out by the way, would soon lose all.

CONSTANT VIGILANCE
NECESSARY

Any one might run a few steps; but when some of these find all the affairs of human life hindering them, and realize that they must drop all unnecessary weights, they begin to think that there is no use to try--*the sacrifice is too great*. So the Apostle encourages us to have *patience*; for all these trials, difficulties, etc., *rightly borne*, are developing *character*. The Lord wants true, loyal characters, *established in righteousness*, and these cannot be developed and demonstrated except by just such experiences as He gives His people.

The Apostle well knew the terms and conditions of the race in which he had engaged, and that it would be impossible for him to win unless he lived up to those conditions. He knew that the closest attention and most untiring vigilance would be necessary to reach the goal on time, and during the race there would be more or less uncertainty as to who would get the victory--the crown of life. In the Olympic and other Greek games it was always uncertain as to who would receive the much-coveted laurel crown.

The Christian is running a much greater race than any earthly course could ever exhibit. We know the goal toward which we run, and we have a sense of security-- that if we run faithfully we shall gain the Prize of our High Calling. Ours is not a race merely to the strong, and a victory to the swift. It is a race in which each one, according to the earnestness of his effort, will be rewarded. If one runs *with all his soul and strength* he will surely gain the Prize. And never before was there such a race! never one so remarkable! never one so glorious as this race set before us!

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TWO BANDS OF GOD'S HEROES

MARCH 12. -- HEBREWS 11:1-12:2.

FAITH HEROES OF THE JEWISH AGE--FAITH HEROES OF THE
GOSPEL AGE--THE HOUSE OF SERVANTS--THE HOUSE OF
SONS--EARTHLY PROMISES--HEAVENLY PROMISES--
RESURRECTION TO PERFECT HUMAN NATURE--RESURRECTION TO
DIVINE NATURE--THE CHRISTIAN RACE COURSE.

"Let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the Author and Perfector of our faith."--Hebrews 12:2

THE Bible puts faith before works, because no works can be acceptable to God unless inspired by faith. Thus it is written, "Without faith it is impossible to please God." The Bible brings to our attention two distinct classes of Faith Heroes, both pleasing to God and both to be highly rewarded by Him. One of these classes preceded Jesus' day; the other class follows His day. The first class of Faith Heroes are therefore known as the Ancient Worthies; the latter class, with Jesus as their Head, are styled the sons of God. This distinction or division of God's servants, although clearly marked in the Scriptures, has been overlooked by the Lord's people until recent years.

No matter how faithful or loyal Enoch, Abraham, David, Jeremiah and others were, they could not be recognized by God as members of the House of Sons, because they lived before Jesus' day--before Jesus tasted death for every man. The Bible points out that the first man Adam was recognized as a son of God. (Luke 3:38.) From the time that sin entered the world through Adam's disobedience, God recognized none of the human family as His sons--all were sinners--until Jesus came and died, the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us back to God and open to us the door of sonship. It is in harmony with this that St. Paul declares, "Moses verily was faithful as a servant over all his House [the House of Servants], but Christ as a Son over His own House [the House of Sons]."--Hebrews 3:5,6.

Thus the distinction is clearly marked between the noble brethren before the Cross, the last one of whom was John the Baptist, and the noble brethren since the Cross, the first of whom were the Apostles. That John the Baptist was the last of the Ancient Worthies is attested by the Master's words, "There hath not arisen a greater Prophet than John the Baptist; and yet I say unto you, that he that is least in the Kingdom of God is greater than he."--Luke 7:28.

St. Paul makes this distinction between the Ancient Worthies and the Christian Worthies in today's lesson. He first of all recites the names of the prominent ones of the past--Enoch, Abraham, David, Jeremiah, etc. He declares their faith, and says that they were pleasing to God, noble, praiseworthy. Then he calls attention to the fact that they never received the promises which God made to them.

It should be remembered that God did not promise Heavenly things prior to Jesus' day. The promises to the Ancient Worthies, which inspired their zeal and devotion, were all earthly promises; for instance, the one made to Abraham--"Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward; for all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed forever."--Genesis 13:14,15; 17:8.

St. Stephen calls our attention to the fact that this promise to Abraham is still secure and still unfulfilled. He declares that Abraham never received enough of that land to set his foot upon. On this promise he predicated the resurrection of Abraham, that in God's due time he may inherit the land, and that his faithful seed, or posterity, will inherit it after him.

On the other hand, the promises in the New Testament are only spiritual--Heavenly promises, "things above." The Christian Worthies are promised a share with Jesus in the Heavenly Kingdom which He is to establish at His Second Coming. They are to be His joint-heirs, "if so be that they suffer with Him that they may be also glorified together." (Romans 8:17.) The promise to these is that they shall be a Kingdom of Priests, or a Royal Priesthood; while the promise to the Ancient Worthies is that they shall be made "princes in all the earth."--1 Peter 2:9; Rev. 20:6; Psalm 45:16.

The Christian heroes are to have a change of nature from human to Divine, the beginning of this change being the begetting of the Holy Spirit in the present time, and the completing of the change being that of the resurrection-- "changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye"--"sown in weakness, raised in power; sown in dishonor, raised in glory; sown an animal body, raised a spiritual body." But the Ancient Worthies, not having the begetting of the Holy Spirit to a new nature, will have a different resurrection; namely, to human perfection.

Contrasting these two classes of Faith Heroes, the Apostle in *verses 39 and 40* declares that the Ancient Worthies, "having obtained a good report through faith, received not the Promise [the things promised to them]. God having promised some better thing for us [Christian heroes, followers in the footsteps of Jesus], that they without us should not be made perfect." In other words, God from the beginning arranged that Christ should be first--Jesus the Head, then the Church, His Body; and after the perfecting of these, styled the First Resurrection, the Divine promises will begin to fulfil to the Ancient Worthies, and extend ultimately to "all the families of the earth."--Genesis 12:3; Galatians 3:29.

THE CHRISTIAN RACE COURSE

God has great blessings in store for every member of the human family willing to accept the same on the Divine terms. But the chiefest of all the blessings brought to our attention in the Bible are those found to be provided for the Church class--the Little Flock, to whom it is the Father's good pleasure to give the Kingdom, and the glory and the honor of association with Jesus in the work of blessing the world during His Millennial Reign.

The Apostle addresses this class in the two closing verses of today's Study. He urges us, saying, "Wherefore, seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin that doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the Throne of God."

The Apostle is a forceful reasoner; for in these words he exhorts to look backwards at the list of Ancient Worthies and to consider what they endured and how faithful and loyal to God they were. Then he would have us consider them as though they were a cloud of witnesses watching us, to whom has been given this still

greater blessing and privilege of becoming sons of God on the Divine plane, of attaining "the Divine nature."--John 1:12; 2Peter 1:4

He pictures before our minds a great race-course, in which we are runners. He pictures Jesus as the Leader gone before, the One who has become the Author of our faith, the One through whom we are privileged to enter this race, and the One who has promised us grace sufficient for every time of need. He pictures to us how Jesus ran in this race and by faith looked forward to the joy that was set before Him by the Father. He pictures to us how loyal Jesus was, and what He endured--the cross and its shame. He pictures the Father's faithfulness in highly rewarding Jesus, seating Him at His own right hand of Divine Majesty. Then comes the exhortation, "Let us lay aside every weight," every hindrance, everything that would

prevent our running grandly and successfully the race for this great prize which Jesus has obtained, and to which we are invited through the merit of His sacrifice.

The Apostle reminds us also that one of the greatest hindrances to our running this race is sin; that we are beset by inherited sin in our members; and that we need to run in the race not only perseveringly, but also patiently; for whoever would obtain so great a prize will need patience, will need to be proven and tested in all points as respects his loyalty and devotion to the Heavenly Father, to the Truth, and to the brethren. Only such as attain the character-likeness of their Leader in this narrow way may hope to be with Him and like Him, and share His glory; for God has predestinated that these shall all be conformed to the image of His Son.--Romans 8:29.

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RUN TO DEATH

I was lately passing along the streets of a large city, when my attention was attracted to a fine large engraving hanging in one of the shop windows. (It was in Fleet street, London.) It represented a scene in one of the ancient Isthmian games. Two persons nearly divested of apparel, with distended muscles, occupied the course, stretching every nerve, while around, evidently excited with deep interest, was the "great crowd of witnesses."

They were *well along* in the course, but the attention of the one somewhat in advance of the other is *diverted* for a moment by a flower or some shining object that has been thrown into the arena by some one of the many witnesses, by which they are "compassed about."

An effort is made to grasp it; evidently the prize for which they are running is lost by this one, and no trace of sympathy is noticeable on the countenances of the spectators, but great *rejoicing* is apparent among the multitude, at the *persistency* with which the victor has reached the goal: Ignoring everything else, keeping the prize *only* in view he finally won it. I thought, that is a true picture of the Christian race which Paul has so faithfully and vividly painted in words, and which we see acted upon the stage of life. But how appropriately and timely the emphasizing of the thought just now. How faithfully that little shining object, whatever it may be, represents the besetments in the path of the one who is running for the prize of our *high calling*.

How insignificant compared with the *prize* and the *honor* at the end of the course. But unless watchful we shall hesitate; one *moment*

may cost *all*, and may make delay sufficient to reach the Judge's stand *too late*.

What's that in your path? A little worldly praise? Disdain to notice it, it is of *no* value whatever; you are worse off with it than without it. At another point do you see an avenue to wealth? Never mind; it would not be *abiding* if you had it. *Press on*.

Again; do you begin to think of some of the "weights" of value (?) left behind, fearing you will never see them again? Don't think of them, only to hope you will never be encumbered with them more. Do you say or think: "I fear this race will be the *ruination* of all my worldly prospects?" Of *course* it will so far as having any pleasure in them is concerned.

You will be a very foolish man to divide your energies now, or thoughts either. *Press on*.

But do you say: "Why there's my reputation right there in the *dust*." Poor fellow! how sorry I am you noticed it; but it's only the reputation you *once* had. Don't you *know* that *none* of those who are *noted racers* on this course have any *reputation*? The greatest racer who ever stepped on it "made himself of no *reputation*."

But do you say: "This awful run will be the *death* of me? Yes; of course it *will*; but you are a poor culprit under sentence of death *anyway*, and if you undertake to *save* your life you will lose it, but run yourself to death and you'll have a life that *is* life everlasting, and *more-immortal*. Don't be foolish *now*. *Press on*.

"A heavenly race demands thy zeal
And an immortal crown."

J. C. SUNDERLIN.

The Little Flock fit their life into
the Truth. The Great Company
fit the Truth into their life.

R3149 (From Harvest Truth Database V5.0)

THE APOSTLE PETER'S EXHORTATION

"Wherefore, gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ; as obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance; but as he who hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; because it is written, Be ye holy, for I am holy."--1 Pet. 1:13-16.

TO APPRECIATE the exhortations of the apostles, we need to become acquainted with their several characters; to note their circumstances; to mark their zeal and faithfulness; and to remember that every word of exhortation addressed to the Church has the substantial backing of their worthy examples. They endured hardness as good soldiers, and suffered much for the privilege of declaring the truth. In their writings are blended a high degree of the power of logic, eloquence and pathos, combined with an inspiring enthusiasm which must awaken in every student of their teachings a measure, at least, of the same sacred flame.

Though written so long ago, the above words of exhortation lose none of their force to us. They were penned for the instruction of the whole Church, down to the end of the age. The introductory, "Wherefore," refers us to the glorious hope of our high calling, and of the necessarily severe measures required to fit us for our exalted inheritance, as mentioned in the preceding verses. Peter would have us appreciate what it is to be called with such a high calling--to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for those who are kept by the power of God through faith. (Verse 4.) He would have us know that, if faithful, we are to be made even "partakers of the divine nature," and that we are to be joint-heirs with Jesus Christ, of all things.--2 Pet. 1:4.

As the spirit of God draws our hearts into closer fellowship and sympathy with the divine mind, the value of these "exceeding great and precious promises" is more and more fully realized, until there glows in our hearts the same holy enthusiasm that so filled the hearts of the apostles. And only when our hearts are thus warmed and our minds thus awakened, are we prepared to understand the Apostle's "Wherefore," upon the inspiring comprehension of which depends our ability to heed the earnest exhortation which follows.

If our hearts are not duly inspired with this hope --if we have begun to esteem it lightly, or to forget it, or to think of it as an idle tale--to heed the counsel of Peter, here given, will be impossible. ⁽¹⁾If, therefore, we realize that a spiritual lethargy has to any extent been creeping over us, imperceptibly benumbing our spiritual senses, so that the truth is losing its inspiring power upon us, our first duty is to betake ourselves to prayer and to communion with God and his Word, that its sanctifying power may be realized.

"Wherefore," then, ⁽²⁾you that discern the prize of your high calling, and who are endeavoring to press along the line toward the mark, "gird up the loins of your mind"--as in the illustration;

⁽¹⁾ Mar. 10 Manna, Heb. 3:13

⁽²⁾ Mar. 11 Manna, Heb 12:1

strengthen and fortify your purposes and efforts; renew your determination; redouble your diligence; cast aside the weights of unnecessary worldly cares; increase your zeal; and, as the Apostle Paul also urges, run with patience the race set before you. Run, not like one who is merely beating the air, but like one who has a purpose in view, and who, in desperate earnest, is *determined* to make his calling and election sure.-- Heb. 12:1; 1 Cor. 9:26.

⁽³⁾Having thus "girded up the loins of your mind" for a long, steady and determined effort, he further counsels,--"Be sober:" do not allow yourself to become excited and, under the spur of excitement, to exhaust all your spiritual vitality in a very short time, and then to suffer a relapse into coldness or discouragement; but thoughtfully to consider and prepare for a long and patient endurance of all the discipline and trial of faith and patience necessary to prove an overcomer and worthy of the blessed reward promised "to him that overcometh." The race before us is not one to be run by fits and starts, but by "*patient continuance* in well doing." Soberly, thoughtfully, we are to weigh and endeavor to realize the import of the exceeding great and precious promises and to gather from them their invigorating inspiration; earnestly we must apply our minds and hearts to the instruction of the inspired Word of God, availing ourselves also of such helps--of "pastors and teachers" and their literary productions--which prove harmonious with, and helpful to, the study of the Scriptures; diligently and patiently we must submit ourselves to all the transforming influences of divine grace and truth; and then, loyally and faithfully, we must devote our consecrated talents, however few or many, to the great work of preaching this gospel of the Kingdom to all who will hear.

Such a sober view of the situation fortifies the mind against discouragement, and enables us, as the Apostle suggests, to "hope to the end for the grace to be brought unto us at the revelation of Jesus Christ." Such a sober view keeps Reason on the throne of our minds. And Reason says, The divine call to joint-heirship with Christ clearly implies eligibility to the exalted office; the divine promise clearly insures divine grace to enable us to fulfil the conditions; the divine provision for my justification, by faith in the precious blood of Christ, releases me from the condemnation to death; and the righteousness of Christ, imputed to me by faith, fully supplements all my weaknesses, so that before God I stand approved in him. Sober Reason also says, The directions given in the Scriptures to those who would run the race are clear and explicit, and make plain every step of the way to those who are truly and fully consecrated to the Lord. The examples of the Lord and the Apostles shine on the pathway with a moral luster and glory that cannot lead us astray. If we walk in their footprints we will assuredly reach the same goal.

Therefore in this sober view of our high calling and its privileges, and the abundant resources of divine grace, let us not be discouraged or overcome in any way, but let us hope to the end for the grace (favor) that is to be brought unto us at the revelation of Jesus Christ--at his second advent. The Church has enjoyed much of the divine favor all through the age of her probation and trial; but the grace to be revealed at the revelation of Jesus Christ--when he comes to reign in power and great glory--is her exaltation with him to sit with him in his throne. This glorious consummation, the

Church all through the age must steadily keep in view: but how glorious is the privilege of those of its members living in this end of the age, when already, even before our change into his glorious likeness--in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye--we begin to enter the joys of our Lord.

Those who are still sober and faithful, and who have not cast away their confidence, have been led into the secret of the Master's presence; and they have been made to sit down to meat, and the Master himself has come forth and served them. Yes, our hearts have been made to burn within us while he has opened up the Scriptures and made us understand, from the testimony of the law and the prophets and the apostles, that the time is fulfilled--that the end of the age is now here, and that the Lord of the harvest is present to direct and supervise the great work of reaping the fruit of precious seed long ago sown in tears, and now to be gathered with joy and singing; while he has opened up to us the treasures of divine wisdom and grace displayed in the plan of the ages, which God purposed before the foundation of the world, which he has been gradually working out in the ages past, and which is now nearing its glorious consummation.

Oh, what feasting, what rejoicing there has been around the table of the Lord, as one after another the treasures of divine grace have been opened to us, revealing the glories of the new heavens and the new earth, and the blessedness of all the obedient subjects of him who sitteth on the throne to reign in righteousness; how all tears shall be wiped from off all faces, and how the reproach of God's people is to be taken away! Well indeed did Daniel prophesy, saying, "Oh, the blessedness of him that waiteth and cometh to the thousand, three hundred, thirty and five days!"--the days of the Lord's second presence, when all that is written to be accomplished by his glorious reign shall begin to come to pass.

Seeing, then, that such are our privileges and hopes, "what manner of persons ought we to be in all holy conversation and godlikeness?" (2 Pet. 3:11.) Being purified by this hope, ought we not, as the Apostle exhorts, to fashion ourselves, not according to the former lusts (desires and ambitions, which we had) in our ignorance, but as he who has called us is holy, should not we also be holy in all manner of conversation --in all our words and ways? Since it is written, "Be ye holy; for I [the Lord] am holy (1 Pet. 1:15,16), should not we who are called to be partakers of his own nature and glory be holy also?"

Some Christians have the erroneous idea that God does all the fashioning, and that his children are to be merely passive in his hand; but Peter does not so express it. He exhorts us to fashion ourselves according to the divine instructions. There is a work to be done in us and about us, and those who are not up and doing, but who passively sit and wait for the Lord to work miracles in their behalf, are greatly deceived and are giving the enemy great advantage over them which he will certainly use to bind them hand and foot and cast them into outer darkness, unless they bestir themselves to work out their salvation with fear and trembling, while God, cooperating with their earnest efforts, works in them, to will and to do his good pleasure. (Phil. 2:12,13.) "Watch and pray," beloved, lest any of these snares of the enemy entrap you and beguile you of your reward.

⁽³⁾ Mar. 18 Manna, 1Pet 1:13

(1 Pet 1:13 KJV) "Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober..."

SM179 "We should not rock ourselves to sleep... While the *world* is not yet on trial for eternal life, the *Church* is now being tested--for life or death eternal. The thought should sober us. As the Apostle suggests, "Be diligent, be sober," be faithful, following in the footsteps of Jesus."

GIRDING LOINS STRENGTHENS FOR WORK TO BE ACCOMPLISHED

(Psa 18:32, Isa 22:21)

R4667 "GIRD UP THE LOINS OF YOUR MIND"... The girdle was used for its effect upon the loins during active labor. For instance, when one was engaged in a strenuous occupation, such as lifting a heavy weight or carrying a heavy burden or running a race, the muscles of the abdomen would play an important part...

We who have devoted ourselves to be the Lord's people, to do his service, realize that our minds need to be strengthened. We need to be of good courage...

To gird up the loins of our minds it signifies that we have determined upon a course of activity... We are now engaging in an important work which we realize requires all the strength that we possess."

R3149 "Gird up the loins of your mind"... strengthen and fortify your purposes and efforts; renew your determination;"

(Isa 50:7 KJV)"The Lord GOD will help me ...therefore have I set my face like a flint"

R1088 "Those who most love the truth, love most to serve it: and the appreciation and the service and the refreshment from it, go hand in hand. "Wherefore," dear brother, "gird up the loins of your mind, be sober..."

THE TRUTH STRENGTHENS

R36 On Eph. 6:14 "The battle will weary you, and you will faint in the way if you have not the girdle of truth (a sustaining strength derived from an understanding of the Word) to brace and strengthen you."

(Eph 6:14 KJV) "Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness;"

PHYSICAL GIRDLES KEEP GARMENTS FROM BEING ENTANGLED AND SOILED BY THE EARTH

R5824 "Gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ." (1Peter 1:13) We urge them not to become entangled in worldly matters, but to keep themselves in the love of God and in the service of God, the Truth, the brethren."