

April 30

Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of Him who hath called you out of darkness into His marvelous light. 1 Peter 2:9

THE very object of our being called into this light is that we may let it shine. If we

SHOWING FORTH PRAISES OF HIM WHO CALLED US OUT OF DARKNESS

(Rom 10:10 KJV) "For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."

R3071 "The confession with the mouth is the first outward evidence given of a faith in the heart; and indeed it seems to be a part of the divine arrangement that all confession of the truth is necessary to a full appreciation of it... The confession is necessary to the expanding, enlarging and completing of faith in the heart. Who ever thinks that the light he has received in his heart can be maintained without a public confession of it is deceived, and hence it is declared, "With the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." The righteousness started by faith cannot go on and reach the completion which will mean eternal salvation, unless it be accompanied by acts of faith, most prominent of which is the confession of the lips.

We would like to impress this feature of the divine truth upon all of the Lord's dear people everywhere; realizing that many are weak, puny, sickly, in their spiritual health, because of their failure to follow the Lord's direction--to declare courageously--and as wisely and lovingly as possible-- what great things the Lord hath done for our souls. It is not sufficient that we confess the first blessing received, tho that is necessary before we can receive additional blessing. But each blessing as received should be promptly confessed, to the praise of him who has called us out of darkness into his marvelous light. This is the law of spiritual development."

R5489:2:3 "We are to tell forth this glorious Message. We are to tell it in our actions, in our words, by the printed page, by pictorial presentations to the eye, and in every way that the Lord shall give us the opportunity. If through fear of persecution, of losing prestige in the eyes of men, for love of ease, or for any reason whatever, we should fail to give forth the Message of God, it will be taken from us and given to one who is worthy. The Lord is seeking those who are valiant for Him, for righteousness, for truth. If we prove ourselves weak, we are not fit for the Kingdom.

ARE WE FULFILLING OUR COMMISSION?

Is this wonderful Message, this Message the like of which was never before granted to men or angels to tell, burning within us? And are we speaking it forth, that its inspiration may cause other hearts to take fire? Can we sing with the poet:

"I love to tell the Story,
It did so much for me!

And that is just the reason
I tell it now to thee?"

If we refrain from telling the Glad Tid-

do not let it shine we are unworthy of it, and the treasure will be taken away and we will be left in darkness. If indeed we have received the light and have consecrated ourselves fully to God, let us ask ourselves, What am I doing to show forth the praises of Him who hath called me out of darkness? Am I going forth with these tidings to my

ings, the result will be that the fire of God's Holy Spirit will become extinguished within us. And if the light that is within us become darkness, how great will be that darkness! The possession of the Truth--God's Message--brings with it great responsibility. Shall we prove faithful to it? Shall we show to our God our deep appreciation of His loving kindness in granting us the knowledge of His wonderful Message of Salvation, His glorious Plan, with its times and seasons?"

A342 "The troubles of this "Day of Jehovah" will give opportunity for preaching the good tidings of coming good, such as is seldom afforded, and blessed are they who will follow the footsteps of the Master, and be the good Samaritans binding up the wounds and pouring in the oil and wine of comfort and cheer. The assurance given such is that their labor is not in vain; for when the judgments of the Lord are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world *will learn* righteousness." Isa. 26:9"

R4992 "YE ARE THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD" "*Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.*"--Matt. 5:16...

Quench not the Spirit." (1 Thess. 5:19). It could be extinguished entirely. We are, therefore, to keep it as an evidence that we are children of God. And if this light be in us we should not keep it secret, not put it under a bushel. We should not say, "We know not the Man"--we know not Jesus. For if any one is ashamed of Him, He will withdraw the light from such a one...

We are to set our light upon a candlestick that all within the house--our own family, our own household, our neighbors--may see it burning; that they may all know that we have a light upon the character and Plan of God; that we see the difference between sin and righteousness, justice and injustice."

OUR LIVES SHOULD CONFORM TO OUR PROFESSION

Whoever holds up a light must of necessity confess the light he is holding. Of some our Lord said that they confess with their mouths, but deny in their lives. We are to let our light so shine that it will bring honor to the Father's name. This means that our whole lives are to be in conformity with the professions we are making, so that others will see and say, "Well, that man believes what he preaches. It is good that such a person lives in our neighborhood." They may not always prefer us for companions, for wherever the children of the light go, it has a reproving influence.

Let us not be surprised, then, if when our neighbors have a reception and entertainment they say, "We will omit their names, for we shall have some wine and some good times, and we do not want them in." We are not to expect the world to love

neighbors near and far?

Can I truly affirm that I am:--

"All for Jesus, all for Jesus--

All my being's ransomed powers;

All my thoughts, and words, and doings,

All my days and all my hours?"

Z. 03-165 R3199:6

us. We are not to marvel if it goes to the other extreme. Yet not all of the world will hate us. Some will criticize and find fault; others will notice a consistency and say, "It looks to me as though this is genuine."

We are living epistles, "known and read of all men." (2 Cor. 3:2.) The light is conspicuous because the darkness is general. We are not to consider this text as being in conflict with that which says we are not to let our left hand know what our right hand does, nor do our good deeds to be seen of men. There is a difference between doing our good deeds to be seen of our neighbors, and in doing them to be seen of our Father. The person who is doing his good deeds to be seen of men will be noticed by people in general, who will say, "Well, I do not believe that he means half he says. He is a hypocrite."

But the person who is living to glorify the Father will not do good to win applause for himself. Whatever he does in the way of charities, or in visiting the sick, etc., he will prefer to do it in an unostentatious manner, making as little show about his good deeds as possible. Consequently, the result will be beneficial to himself and to the person to whom he ministers, for he does these things for the glory of God.

HOW THE WORLD CAN GLORIFY GOD

The latter part of the text says, "and glorify your Father which is in heaven.".... The Lord hides these things from the world, and reveals these secret things respecting the great "high calling" to the meek, to the humble, to those to whom the knowledge would be most advantageous.

How do the world, then, glorify the Father which is in heaven? How would men glorify our Father? We answer that there is a difference between vicious, worldly people and well-meaning worldly people. We are inclined to believe that the majority of mankind, who are in alienation from God and who have no ear to hear the message of the "narrow way," have, nevertheless, an appreciation of righteousness. And if without too much cost they could be righteous, just, generous and all that would be noble, as represented in perfect humanity, they would like to be so. Many of the world have an appreciation of nobility in others. They would like to have it themselves. The difficulty is that the cost of righteousness is more than they are willing to pay...

ST. PAUL'S LIGHT SHONE BEFORE RULERS

The influence of light is christianizing, civilizing, uplifting and produces a regard for right, an appreciation of right and wrong, a respect for God...

Every one of the Body of Christ all down the Gospel Age has had light, has had influence to some extent and has had something to do with scattering the darkness and inculcating reverence for the Heavenly Father.

We see an illustration of this in the

Apostle Paul, who was suffering for righteousness' sake. He was before the Roman Governor; and as St. Paul reasoned of righteousness, temperance and the coming judgment, or retribution, Felix trembled. He apprehended; he was convinced. He said, "Here is a man who is living in harmony with these principles of righteousness. The life of this man Paul shows what right is, and that my life is wrong. And if the Lord is to reward right-doing and punish wrongdoing, this Paul will get good things from God. But what shall I get?" So he trembled.

There is a natural dread in mankind because they know that they deserve punishment. The Scriptures tell us that there will be a righteous recompense of reward. St. Paul's words were a great blessing to Felix, for that light which was shining out of Paul's life and words led Felix to see his wrong condition...

GOSPEL AGE THE CHURCH'S DAY OF VISITATION— THE MILLENNIUM THE WORLD'S

Another Scripture somewhat along the same line reads, "Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles that...they may glorify God in the day of visitation." (1 Pet. 2:12.) This shows us a distinction between the day of their visitation and the day of our visitation. This Gospel Age, the present life, has become the day of our visitation...

Those who do not share in this "day of visitation" will have an opportunity of coming into harmony with God later. If they cannot be reached by the gentle methods mentioned and the visitation by which God is calling out the special class now, they will have an opportunity in the next Age, when judgment will be laid to the line and righteousness to the plummet; when all the righteous recompense of reward will be brought to bear, to give each one according to his course."

A PECULIAR PEOPLE

R2128 "It is peculiar in its adherence to the Word of the Lord as its only law. It is peculiar in that it rejects worldly wisdom when it conflicts with the divine revelation. It is peculiar in that it is in the world, but not of the world. It is peculiar in that it has a decided faith and acts in harmony with its faith, and with zeal. It is peculiar in that it is self-sacrificing and knows no will but the will of its King. It is peculiar in that it knows the truth and is able to give a reason for the hope within, while others merely speculate and wonder and doubt.

R2726 "A people...possessed of a special love for that which is just, that which is pure, that which is noble, that which is good;"

R1567 "That which renders this people peculiar as compared with all other people in the world is a very radical change—a change of nature, from the human to the divine. (2 Pet. 1:4.) This change of nature has been brought about by the power of the Truth, which leads those who are rightly exercised by it to a full consecration of heart and life to the will and service of God, even unto death. This change of nature is, however, only begun in the present life and consists as yet only of a change of mind and a consequent change of character and action in harmony with the new hopes, aims and aspirations generated by the "exceeding

great and precious promises." No wonder is it that a people actuated by such hopes and aims should be a peculiar people—a people separate from the world—in the world and yet not of it."

A PEOPLE FOR A PURPOSE

(1 Pet 2:9 Diaglott) "But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for a purpose..." [R5825 refs. this]

R5057 "The Apostle Peter says that the Church is a people for a purpose; that is, God has a special object or purpose in selecting the Church. They are to "show forth the praises of Him who hath called them out of *darkness* into His *marvelous light*," "that men may see their good works and glorify their Father which is in heaven."--1 Pet. 2:9; Matt. 5:16.

We ask respecting the object of this shining of the light, and the Scriptures answer that it will have an effect upon the world, reproving mankind and setting before them an example of better living, better thinking. We ask whether this is the ultimate object of the call. The Scriptures answer that it is not; that the Church is called out to be a privileged people and to become joint-heirs with her Lord in His Kingdom... Those who faithfully follow the Lamb through good report and evil report, who take up their cross and follow Jesus, will be accounted worthy to be His associates in the Kingdom...

Satan will be bound for a thousand years, that he shall deceive the nations no more till the thousand years shall have been fulfilled. During those years the Savior's mission will be to bless mankind as the "Sun of Righteousness," with "healing" in His beams; and the Church is to have a share with Him in the blessing of the world. We ask whether this is some *new proposition* God has made; and the answer comes, No; this was God's Plan and purpose from *before the foundation of the world*. This is the Gospel, or good tidings, first declared to Abraham: "In thy Seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed."-- Gen. 12:3, etc.

God intended to bless all the members of the human race, all nations and kindreds and tongues, and purposed that the blessing should come to them through the Seed of Abraham. The Jewish nation were merely the *typical seed*; the *antitypical Seed* is The Christ (Jesus the Head and the Church His Body), who will "bless all the families of the earth."

ZEALOUS OF GOOD WORKS

R5460 "In Titus 2:14, St. Paul sets forth a similar thought: "A peculiar people, zealous of good works." The people here referred to by him are the saints of God, those who are waiting for the fulfilment of God's promises...

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PECULIAR PEOPLE

While others seek the emoluments and distinctions of the present time, these count all the things of this world as loss and dross, in view of the wonderful things that God has set before their minds. They have seen the "pearl of great price," and have given their all to purchase it. They see that the Kingdom of God is the most valuable thing that is obtainable now or ever will be attain-

able. They have recognized the terms upon which this Kingdom-Pearl may be obtained and are seeking to make good the purchase. The terms are self-sacrifice, faithfulness to God at any cost, and patient endurance under adverse conditions, even unto the end.

These peculiar people are seeking to accomplish this work in themselves, because they see that these are the most gracious characteristics and qualities that can be imagined. Hence they are doubly solicitous; they are *zealous of good works*. They love to see others good and happy, and they love to spread the knowledge of God. They love the things that God delights in, because they have the Spirit of Christ. They are interested in reforms -- social reform, temperance reform, every kind of reform; but this does not mean that they will engage in these reforms. The same man cannot be a great preacher, a successful farmer, a successful lawyer, etc. If he be a great farmer, he must give up the other things to a large extent. Or if he be a great preacher, he will have to give up, for the most part, other things. Yet he may have *pleasure* in them *all*.

And so with these peculiar people: they have one particular work given them of the Father. They recognize that this work is most important to be done, hence they cannot give their attention to political reform, social reform, or other reform, outside of their own work...

WHAT CONSTITUTE GOOD WORKS

This class of people are wise enough to know that all the Truth even should not be mentioned at once. The Master said to those who had been His close followers for three and a half years, "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now." (John 16:12.) The Lord's people are eager to do good, but in the way that will be the most effective, and in the way that will not stumble others. The good works, then, that this peculiar people are zealous of are the works of God. As Jesus said, "I must work the works of Him that sent Me."--John 9:4...

Since God has called us to good works, we are to show great zeal, even though it bring upon us the envy and hatred and opposition of others. We are to rejoice, even if we are called to suffer persecution for His sake. And though the world does not appreciate these good works now, they will see and understand by and by, in their day of visitation. (1 Peter 2:12.) They will see that God's Plan was the best plan. The Church glorified will be the channel for blessing the world in general."

R5116 "Confidence in Him will lead us to weigh His words of precious promise. These promises will make clear to us the reason why these testings are upon us, and will enable us to appreciate our testings as marks of His love for us. The Lord would have us be "a peculiar people," tried and tested, "zealous of good works," a people for a purpose; and so He develops us through suffering."

R2128 "This is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully...For even *hereunto were ye called*: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps; who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth; who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered,

he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously."-1Pet.2:13-23.

Thus the King of this "holy nation" set for every member of it an example that they should walk in his footsteps. He declared that his Kingdom was not of this world; consequently neither does the Kingdom power of this "holy nation" belong to this present age. It awaits the return of the King himself, who said, "If I go away, I will come again, and receive you unto myself." He has promised, moreover, that when he comes again it will not be in a body of humiliation for sacrifice on behalf of the sins of the world--for this sacrifice he has already accomplished to the full: He comes to reign, and has promised that his "holy nation" shall be associated with him in the reign of righteousness, wherewith he will

"bless all the families of the earth."...

Then shall be brought to pass the saying which is written, He that sat upon the throne said, "Behold, I make all things new; and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away."--Rev. 21:4,5.

Is it any wonder that the Apostle declares that each and all of these "peculiar people" should make it the first, the chief, practically the only business of life, "to show forth the praises [the virtues of character and plan] of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light?" And the showing or the telling of these is the preaching of the gospel, whether it be done in public or in private, by word of mouth or

by printed page. And this, the chief business of the peculiar people, begun now, will continue to be their business throughout the future, tho under more favorable circumstances, in the majesty of the Kingdom, with power to enforce the wise and just and wholesome laws, and with love and mercy to help and to succor the weak and the erring, and gradually to restore them, if they will, to *all that was lost* in Adam.

What a wonderful gospel! What a wonderful privilege to be permitted to engage in its proclamation in any manner! Truly, all of the peculiar people can appreciate the testimony of the great Apostle Paul, "Woe is me if I preach not the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ."

R3199 (From Harvest Truth Database V5.0 2006)

THE ROYAL PRIESTHOOD

"Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.... Ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious, to whom coming as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God and precious, ye also as living stones are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ."--1 Pet. 2:9,3-5.*

AT no time in the Church's history has our great Adversary been so active in multiplying false doctrines and in diverting attention from the truth by introducing unprofitable and irrelevant questions as at present. Just when the exaltation and glory of the Church are soon to be accomplished, and when the faithful are about to be received into the joy of their Lord, every device is resorted to to beguile them of their reward and to frustrate this feature of the divine plan. To really frustrate any part of the divine plan is impossible: God has purposed to take out from among men a "little flock," "a people for his name," a royal priesthood; and such a company is assuredly being gathered; but whether all those now in the race for the prize will surely be of that company, is still an open question. Take heed, beloved, that no man take thy crown. (Rev. 3:11.) If any come short of their privileges and prove unworthy of the rich inheritance, there are others who will quickly fill their places.

We beseech you, brethren, as you value the glorious hope set before you in the gospel, that you give no heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils, as the Apostle terms them (1 Tim. 4:1); but that, with fixedness of purpose, you apply yourselves to the one thing you are called and are privileged to do as prospective members of that Royal Priesthood. Let us never forget that we are a "peculiar people," separate from the great body of nominal Christians, as well as from the world, having higher hopes, aims and ambitions and favored with a clearer insight into the deep things of God, having been called out of our former darkness into his marvelous light. And if thus separate from the world and from Christians who partake largely of the worldly spirit, what wonder if we find them all out of harmony with us, and either ignoring or opposing us.

⁽¹⁾Such opposition is to be expected and will, doubtless, continue until we finish our course in death. To submit patiently to this opposition is to sacrifice our own *natural* preferences for the friendship and the pleasures of the present life, and to endure hardness as good soldiers for the truth's sake, in whatever shape that hardness may come, in our effort to do the Lord's will and work of advancing the interests of his Kingdom.

This is what is meant by the presenting of our bodies living sacrifices in the divine service. ⁽²⁾To be really in this service involves: first, the careful and continual study of God's plan; second, the imbibing of its spirit; leading, thirdly, to an enthusiastic zeal for its accomplishment, and to activity to the extent of ability in its service, at whatever cost or sacrifice it may require.

If we are faithful in this service we have no time, nor have we the disposition, to give heed either to false doctrines or to other themes which have no bearing on the *one thing* to which we have solemnly dedicated our lives. Our time is not our own if we have

consecrated all to God; and consequently, we have none to spare for the investigation of fanciful false theories, built upon other foundations than that laid down in the Scriptures; nor have we time to devote to the ideas and pursuits which engross the world's attention, many of which are harmless in themselves, but would be harmful to us if we were to allow them to occupy consecrated time and to divert our attention from the *one thing* we ought to be doing. The Apostle warns us "to shun profane babblings, for they will increase unto more ungodliness;" but adds, "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of truth." "Teach no other doctrine: neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which minister questions rather than godly edifying which is in faith."--2 Tim. 2:15,16; 1 Tim. 1:3,4.

Each consecrated believer should ask himself, How carefully have I studied that which I have clearly recognized as divine truth? and how fully capable am I, therefore, of handling the sword of the spirit? Few indeed are those who can say they have fully digested and assimilated all they have received; that they have let none of these things slip from memory; that they have so treasured it up in their hearts that it is their meditation by day and by night; that they have a ready answer--a "Thus saith the Lord"--for every man that asks them a reason for the hope that is in them, concerning any point of doctrine; that they can clearly and intelligently portray the divine plan, quote the divine authority for each successive step of it, and, if need be, point out its place in the divine system of types. To gain such proficiency in the Word is indeed the work of a lifetime; but every day should see a closer approximation to that proficiency, and will, indeed, if we are faithful students and faithful servants of the truth.

If all the consecrated were thus busily engaged putting on the armor of God, and in proving it by actual use in zealous endeavors to herald the truth and to help others to stand, there would indeed be no time left for disputings on the Anglo-Israel question, or whether the earth is a plane instead of a globe, or whether the principles of socialism would be advisable among Christians in the management of their temporal affairs. Nor would there be time for politics, nor even for the good temperance-reform work, nor the work among fallen women, nor among the slums of the great cities, nor even for preaching the doctrine of divine healing. All this is work which can and will be effectually accomplished in "the Times of Restitution," now in the near future; and, besides, there are others interested in these works (and we are glad of it and bid them Godspeed), while we recognize and seek to accomplish the work set before us in the divine plan. And if, indeed, we have no consecrated time for these things which are only side issues and not harmful in themselves, except as they divert attention and consume valuable time which has been consecrated to another and higher use, surely there is none whatever for giving heed to false doctrines such as so-called Christian Science and the various no-ransom or Evolution theories, all of which are attempts to show men how to climb up to everlasting life by some other way than that which the Scriptures point out; viz., by

* Sinaitic MS. omits *spiritual* before sacrifices.

⁽¹⁾ ½ May 2 Manna, 2 Tim. 3:12

⁽²⁾ ½ May 2 Manna

faith in the precious blood of Christ shed on Calvary for our redemption. He that climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber (John 10:1); and we are commanded to have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather to reprove them.--Eph. 5:11.

How narrow this way! say some, contemptuously, of those who, like Paul, devote their energies to the *one thing*--the service of the truth. Yes, that will be the verdict against you, of all except the few who, like yourself, have carefully sought out this "narrow way," and who are determined to walk in it, regardless of the reproach it brings. The way to the mark for the prize of our high calling is not wide enough to admit all the vain philosophies and foolish questions and babblings and speculations of science, falsely so called. It is only wide enough to admit the Lord's plan and those who are willing to discard all other plans and projects and questionings and to devote themselves fully and entirely to its service, and who are quite willing to bear any reproach it may bring.

Consider your calling, brethren, for ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood to offer sacrifices acceptable to God; a holy nation, a peculiar people, that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. ⁽³⁾The very object of our being called into this light is that we may let it shine. If we do not let it shine we are unworthy of it, and the treasure will be taken away and we will be left in darkness. If indeed we have received the light and have consecrated ourselves fully to God, let us ask ourselves. What am I doing to show forth the praises of him who hath called me out of darkness? Am I going forth with these tidings to my neighbors near and far? Am I busy from day to day in seeking to vindicate the divine character, and to make known God's righteous ways? Am I economizing time and means, and so arranging my temporal affairs as to give as much time as possible to the work? And, then, am I diligently studying to make myself thoroughly familiar with the truth, so that I may indeed be a living epistle known and read of all men within the circle of my influence? --a workman indeed that need not be ashamed? Can I truly affirm that I am

"All for Jesus, all for Jesus--
All my being's ransomed powers;
All my thoughts, and words, and doings,
All my days and all my hours?"

If so, then we are just narrow-minded enough to say, This one thing I do; and I make everything else bend to this one thing of showing forth God's praises and helping others into his marvelous light. And to this end I cultivate and use what talents I possess as a wise steward of my heavenly Master.

Dearly beloved, we impose no vows or bondage upon each other, but the call has its own limitations: the Master has directed us, saying, "Go ye and teach all nations [for the gospel is no longer confined to the Jewish nation], baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the holy spirit, teaching them to observe all things"--concerning our (questionable) Anglo-Israelitish origin? No.--All things concerning the shape of the earth? No.--All the vain philosophies of men who have erred from the truth, and all the subtle sophistries by which they make void the word of God? No.--"*Observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.*"--Matt. 28:19,20.

This is just what the apostles did. There were plenty of errors and side issues in their day; but, ignoring them, they resolutely devoted themselves to the promulgation of the truth. Paul paid no attention to his fleshly genealogy, because he recognized himself as a new creature in Christ Jesus. It was easier for him to prove his fleshly origin as an Israelite than for any of us to do it; but he cared nothing for that. He did not care whether he was of the ten tribes or of the two tribes; for he had on none of the tribal righteousness of the Law. His only ambition was to be found "in Christ, not having on his own righteousness, which is of the Law, but that which is through the faith of Christ--the righteousness which is of God by faith." (Phil. 3:9.) He says (*verses 3-7*), "We [new creatures in Christ] are the [real] circumcision, which worship God in spirit and rejoice in Christ Jesus and have no confidence in the flesh [or the fleshly relationships], though indeed I have had confidence also in the flesh. If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I had more: Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the Law, a Pharisee; concerning zeal, persecuting the

Church; touching the righteousness which is of the Law, *blameless*. But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ."

Hear him again in his zeal for this *one thing* to which he had devoted his life: "And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the mystery of God; for I determined not to know anything among you save Jesus Christ and him crucified. [I *riveted* your attention on this *one thing*! I kept this *one thing* continually before you.] And my speech and my preaching were not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the spirit and power [of the truth], that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God."-- 1 Cor. 2:1-5.

Paul was a plain uncompromising teacher. When he knew he had the truth, he spoke it with confidence, and boldly declared that everything contrary to it was false doctrine; and he taught his disciples that it was not only their privilege, but their duty also, to be *established* in the faith and to know, on the evidence of God's Word, why they believed, and to be able to give to every man that inquired for it a reason for the hope that was in them.

There is among Christians today a great lack of established faith on any point of doctrine. They say, "I think," "I hope," or "Perhaps it may be so, but this is only my opinion, and it may be right or it may be wrong. I have charity, however, for your opposing opinion, and for every man's opinion; for who knows which is right? I'm sure I cannot say; but, nevertheless, I have *great faith* and charity (?). I shake hands with every body and call him brother if he claims to be a Christian, no matter what he believes and teaches, whether he is pointing to Christ as the door to the sheepfold, or whether he is trying to teach men how to climb up some other way. In Christian love I bid them all Godspeed and pray for the success of all their teachings, no matter how antagonistic they may be to each other or to the Scriptures as I read them."

All this passes among Christians generally for large-hearted benevolence and personal humility, while in fact it is an ignoble, compromising spirit that is unwilling to forego the friendship of those who oppose the Lord by opposing the truth; and which would rather see the truth suffer, and those weak in the faith stumbled, than that they should bear the reproach of Christ. ⁽⁴⁾Those who have real and sincere faith in God are willing to take him at his word; and with these the first principles of the doctrine should long ago have been established; much of the superstructure of gold and silver and precious stones should already be erected, and the work be steadily progressing. Such are able, if they are loyal and true to God, to discern between truth and error. The Apostle John, recognizing this ability, says, "If there come any unto you and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him Godspeed; for he that biddeth him Godspeed is partaker of his evil deeds." (2 John 10.) We ought to *know* what we believe and why we believe it, and then should be bold and uncompromising in declaring it; for "if the trumpet give an uncertain sound who shall prepare himself to the battle?"

Again says the Apostle (1 Cor. 2:6-10), "However, we speak wisdom among them that are perfect [developed; we are not to cast our pearls before swine]; yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes [the popular leaders and teachers] of this world, that come to naught. But we speak the wisdom of God, which was hidden in a mystery, which God ordained before the world unto our glory; which none of the princes of this world knew....Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his spirit; for the spirit [or mind of God in us, is so anxious to know his truth, that it] searcheth all things; yea, the deep things of God."

The princes of this world do know something of astronomy and geology, and have their ideas of the shape of the earth, etc., but they have not known this hidden wisdom of the divine plan, which maps out a destiny so glorious to the faithful saints who will constitute the royalty of the age to come. Let the world speculate as it may about its own themes of interest, but let us devote ourselves to the one thing in hand, avoiding foolish questions and genealogies and contentions, ...for they are unprofitable and vain. (Titus 3:9.) Let us be faithful to our commission to preach this gospel to the meek who are ready to hear it. (Isa. 61:1.) Let the bride of Christ be diligent in making herself ready (Rev. 19:7), for the marriage of the Lamb is the event of the very near future.

⁽³⁾ Apr. 30 Manna, 1Pet. 2:9

⁽⁴⁾ May 3 Manna, Heb 5:14