

January 28

He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before My Father, and before His angels. Revelation 3:5

THE faithful overcomers watch and keep their garments unspotted from the

(Rev 3:1-5) "And unto the angel of the church in Sardis write... [5] He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels."

R5993 "Sardis is said to mean that which remains, as if it signified a useless remnant, something out of which life or virtue had gone. The nominal Church during this period had the appearance of being what it was not, having a form of godliness without its power. Sardis was the remains of the true Church, which had been driven into the wilderness; but when the persecution began to subside, her zeal also abated."

R4870 "KEEPING OUR GARMENTS WHITE... There are many reasons for concluding that, while the various messages in the *second and third chapters of Revelation* were given to the seven churches specified and were applicable to them, they should properly have a wider application to the whole Church of Christ, the number *seven* representing completeness, and the *order* representing different epochs in the history of the Church. Thus the Church at Ephesus would represent the condition of the Church in the Apostle's day, at the time of the writing of the messages, while the Laodicean Church would represent the Church in our day, in the end of this Gospel Age. The other churches would correspondingly represent different epochs intermediate, between the beginning and now.

To think otherwise would be to attach more importance to those seven comparatively small churches of Asia Minor than would seem to have been appropriate, and would imply an ignoring of other churches larger and more influential than they, as, for instance, the churches at Jerusalem, Antioch, Corinth, Colosse, Philippi...etc...

The *first three chapters of Revelation* contain particular specifications and general admonitions, not only for the local churches therein mentioned, but for all "overcomers." They apply not only to the different epochs in the history of the Church as a whole, but to different classes in any one epoch in the history of the Church.

IMPORTANCE OF KEEPING OUR GARMENTS UNDEFILED

The words in our text, addressed to the Church at Sardis, or to that epoch of the general Church symbolized by Sardis, are explained by the context. In this Church there was a wrong condition of things, a defilement. Trespasses committed had not been repented of and forgiveness sought from the Lord.

In the context it is stated that the majority of the Sardis Church had not kept their garments undefiled. But "thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments." By these words our Lord seems to emphasize the thought that no one will gain the prize of the "high call-

world...."They have not defiled their garments," they have "kept their garments unspotted from the world." They have not been willing to permit sin to contaminate them and to separate them from the Lord, but have quickly applied for and obtained the precious blood to remove every stain. They are so heartily opposed to sin and so

ing" if he does not keep his garments undefiled from the flesh. Whoever fails to do so will not be of the overcoming class to whom will be given this choice blessing, is the argument. He that would be an "overcomer" must be clothed in *white raiment*. Any who do not persevere in keeping their garments clean will have their names blotted out. In this connection we remember the words of this same Apostle John, that the blood of Christ washes us, not only from the sins that are past, but also from all stains upon the robe. He says, "The blood of Jesus Christ...cleanseth us from all sin." (1 John 1:7.) It cleanses us from all unintentional blemishes, spots upon our garments. Whoever does not thus keep himself cleansed will not be an "overcomer." It is only such as observe this cleansing whose names will not be blotted out.

As to our ability to discern whether or not we are keeping our garments clean, only the individual himself can know to what extent he has watched his conduct and kept up his communication with the Lord and daily scrutinized life's affairs, the incidents of the day, and asked forgiveness for shortcomings and trespasses. Others might surmise, but they could not know. We all have sense enough to know what things are right and what are wrong. If the wrong thing seems *not very wrong*, it would indicate that we are growing careless in regard to our robe. As a result we would have less interest in the Truth, less interest in keeping our robes clean, less interest in prayer meetings, etc. Between such and the Lord there would be a cloud, and a condition of leanness would be sure to follow.

The faithful "overcomers" watch and keep their garments clean. "They have not defiled their garments," they have kept them "unspotted from the world." They have not been willing to have sin contaminate them and to separate them from the Lord, but have quickly applied for and obtained the precious blood to remove every stain. They are so heartily opposed to sin and so earnest about keeping their garments unspotted that the Adversary gets no hold upon them--"that Wicked One toucheth them not." All this indicates a full submission of their wills to the will of Christ. They are "dead with Him" and hence could not willingly practise sin.

THE PRECIOUS BLOOD ALONE CAN CLEANSE

Evidently, the majority of the people of Sardis were of the Great Company class and needed to "be zealous and repent"; for they were not in a condition to receive the greatest blessing possible for them. The principle is applicable, evidently, not only to the Church in Sardis, but to the Church in general. The things to be overcome are the difficulties in the "narrow way." These difficulties make the way narrow--all the opposition of our flesh to the things of God, the oppositions of the world in general, and the snares which the Adversary may place for us. The love of self, of popularity, of world-

earnest about the keeping of this garment unspotted that the Adversary gets no hold upon them--"the wicked one catcheth them not." All this indicates a full submission of their wills to the will of Christ-- they are "dead with Him," and hence could not willingly practice sin. *Z. 97-161 R2161:1*

ly prosperity, must be overcome, as well as love for man-made creeds and theories.

How gracious is the provision of our God in thus presenting us with the Robe which covers all the repented-of blemishes of the past as well as the unintentional and unwitting imperfections of the present! Under this arrangement it is possible for the Lord's people to walk so carefully, so circumspectly (*looking all around* at every step), as to keep their garments unspotted from the world. But, alas, how few, if any, there be who have always lived up, in all the past of their Christian lives, to this high standard which alone will insure the keeping of their garments white!

Seeing that any deflection from absolute purity of heart would constitute a stain, a spot upon the robe, we might inquire with great concern, Is there any possibility of having such spots or stains removed and of getting my robe white again? Thank God, yes; there is a way by which the spots and wrinkles may be removed from our robes and leave them once more as white and clean as at first. The stain-remover is the *precious blood*. As the Apostle says, "If we confess our sins He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to *cleanse* us from all unrighteousness."

LET US JUDGE OURSELVES

While all our efforts could not remove a single stain, which the "precious blood" alone can remove, yet it is well for us that while realizing our Lord's forgiveness and the cleansing of our robe, we should promptly seek to discipline ourselves in repentance, otherwise we may expect that while our Lord cleanses our robes in answer to our earnest prayers, He will, nevertheless, put upon us certain *chastisements* for our correction in righteousness and for the strengthening of our characters along the points of weakness. The Apostle teaches this when he says, "If we would judge [correct, chastise] ourselves, then we should not be judged [corrected, chastised] of the Lord; but when we are judged of the Lord we are chastened that we might not be condemned with the world."— 1 Cor. 11:31,32.

God's grace cannot admit to heavenly perfection those who have not robes of spotless righteousness; hence, we are shown that those who have not cared for their garments and kept them white must be put through severe experiences before they can in any sense of the word be sharers of heavenly favors. These severe experiences are shown in the symbol as *washing their robes* in a *great tribulation*...

They will be granted "palms" as emblems of their victory through Christ... They will be highly privileged to serve "*before* the Throne. Grand and glorious privileges will be theirs; but they will lose the great "prize," having sold it for the mess of pottage of present seeming advantage, which proves unsatisfying... What exhortation to holiness, to complete consecration to His will could be stronger!"

"RAIMENT WHITE AND CLEAN"

"They shall walk with me in white [robes]; because they are worthy. The overcomer shall thus be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name in the presence of my Father, and in the presence of his angels." -- Rev. 3:4, 5

UNDER the symbol of white raiment the Lord throughout his Word represents the righteousness of those whom he accepts as his people. Their righteousness in the future state will be a personal righteousness or holiness; and the guarantee of this is the promise that all who are accounted worthy, as "overcomers" of the world to be joint-heirs with Christ in the heavenly Kingdom, will in the resurrection be granted new, perfect, spiritual bodies, free from sin and impurity of every kind, and fully in harmony with their new wills or characters developed during the trial-time of this present life. That will be a time of which the Apostle speaks, saying,--"When that which is perfect is come, that which is in part shall be done away." Those who attain to that glorious condition are symbolically represented as being clothed in white linen, representing their personal purity, completeness and perfection at that time: as it is written, "to her [the bride, the victorious Church] was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white; for the fine linen is the *righteousness of saints*."--Rev. 19:8.

Thus, seen, the Church in glory will stand arrayed in its own righteousness--the "righteousness of the saints;" but at the present time the saints have no righteousness of their own in which to present themselves at the throne of grace. As expressed by the prophet, "all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags." The very best of humanity, it must be confessed, are so imperfect in thoughts, words, and deeds as to be wholly unfit for a share in God's Kingdom or for any notice or favors at his hands. However, human necessities only made manifest the riches of divine grace and wisdom. It was for this very reason, because we were all defiled through sin, and unfit to approach into the divine presence, that God graciously provided, through the sacrifice of his Son, our Lord, a spotless robe of imputed righteousness, for all those who accept of him and the covenant of divine grace sealed with his precious blood. When by repentance and faith we desire to forsake sin and approach God, we are, by reason of obedient faith in the sacrifice, reckoned as covered before the divine eyes with the merit of him who "bought us with his own precious blood," which merit is symbolically represented as a linen garment, *Christ's righteousness*, instead of the filthy rags of our own righteousness. While covered by this robe, we may by faith exercise all the privileges and opportunities, which could be ours if the robe were actually our own --instead of merely a loaned or imputed robe, the property of our Redeemer. So long as by faith we are trusting in the great sacrifice for sin, and seeking to walk worthy of the Lord, this robe is ours, to have and to enjoy; but to lose this faith would be to lose all the advantages which come with the robe, and which continue only to the wearers.

The object of the granting of these robes at the present time (not to the whole world, but only to the true believers) is that they may constitute, for those who accept them, "wedding garments," giving the wearers a right to a place at the "marriage of the King's Son." This "wedding garment" (justification) is a prerequisite to an invitation to the marriage, or rather the receipt of it is itself the invitation to enter in and become participators in the present "sufferings of Christ" and in the future "joys of our Lord." And as no one can enter in to the marriage without first having received the robe, so any one who subsequently rejects this robe of Christ's righteousness and attempts to stand before his fellows or before the King without it, will be "cast out" of all the privileges and blessings which it secures. See parable of the wedding garment. --Matt. 22:11-13.

This "wedding garment" when presented to us is clean and white, representing the absolute purity and spotlessness of our Lord's holiness; and the instruction to each one who receives the robe is "to keep his garments unspotted from the world." This command is equivalent to our Lord's injunction, "Be ye perfect, as your Father in heaven is perfect"--a standard to which we are seeking to attain, but whose absolute attainment in an imperfect body, and surrounded by the world, the flesh and the devil, is admitted in the Scriptures and proved by experience to be impossible. But, as the robe covers all the repented-of blemishes of the past, so it likewise covers the unintentional and unwitting imperfections of the present; so that only those things to which we give more or less of mental consent are reckoned as ours--either good or evil. Thus seen, under this arrangement it is possible for the Lord's people to walk so care-

fully, so circumspectly (*looking all around*) at every step, as to keep his garments unspotted from the world. But alas, how few there are, if any, who have ever lived up, in all the past of their lives, to this high standard,--so that at no time in all the past, since they accepted the robe of Christ's righteousness, could it be said of them, that in no sense of the word had they ever, either outwardly or mentally, given any degree of mental consent to anything that was sinful.

Seeing that the vast majority, if not all, have at some time or other given at least a partial mental assent to sin (however regretful and repentant of the thing they may afterward have been), and seeing that any such deflection from purity of heart would constitute a stain or spot upon our robe, we inquire with great concern, Is there any possibility of having such stains or spots removed and getting the robe white again? Thank God, yes; there is a way by which the spots and wrinkles may be removed from our robe and leave it once more as white and clean as at first. The stain remover is the "precious blood." As the Apostle says, "If we confess our sins he is just to forgive us our sins and to *cleanse* us from all unrighteousness."

While all of our efforts (groaning of spirit, tears, fasting, etc.) could not remove a single stain, which the precious blood alone can remove; yet, nevertheless, it is expedient for ourselves that while realizing our Lord's forgiveness and the cleansing of the robe, we should promptly seek to discipline ourselves in repentance, fasting and tears: otherwise we may expect that while our Lord will hear our earnest prayers and cleanse our robe, he nevertheless would put upon us certain *chastisements* for our correction in righteousness and for the strengthening of our characters in respect to the points of weakness. The Apostle teaches thus, when he says, "If we would judge [correct, chastise] ourselves, then we should not be judged [corrected, chastised] of the Lord; but when we are judged of the Lord we are chastened, that we might not be condemned with the world."

While our robe covers all our unwilling personal blemishes and uncleanness in our Lord's sight, and in the sight of brethren who see each other from the Lord's standpoint, yet the Lord desires and requires that we shall come into such close sympathy with absolute purity and righteousness in thought, word and deed that we will "cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, *perfecting* holiness in the reverence of God." (2 Cor. 7:1) And to this end he grants his sanctified (consecrated) and white robed ones the cleansing power of his truth, that thus his elect bride might be cleansed by "the washing of water, by the Word, that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing."-- Eph. 5:26,27.

But oh, how few of the consecrated have so great a love for purity, so great a desire to keep the garment unspotted from the world, that they are thus careful to have every wrinkle quickly removed, and thereafter to guard the robe more zealously than ever. Yet, these, and these alone, walk with the Lord in white and are overcomers, who in due time shall be glorified with him and sit with him in his throne--and it is their names that shall not be blotted out of the Lamb's book of life.

We are to understand from the Master's words that all who do not thus walk with him in white raiment are unworthy, shall not be joint-heirs in his Kingdom, will not be confessed as his bride and joint-heir in the presence of the Father and the holy angels, but on the contrary, will have their names blotted out of the Lamb's book of life--erased from amongst the names of the "elect" Church.

THE "LITTLE FLOCK" AND THE "GREAT COMPANY"

While the number of those who wear the robe of Christ's righteousness is, as compared with the numbers of the world, small indeed, yet how large a proportion of these are not walking in white, but have their robes greatly spotted by contact with the world, the flesh and the devil--by unfaithfulness or by carelessness, worldliness. We do not refer to those who deny the Lord and repudiate the ransom, thus taking off the wedding garment and standing with the world (or really in a worse condition than the world, in that they have rejected the grace of God): we refer to the true believers, who have made a full consecration of themselves to the Lord, and who for the sake of worldly advantages or earthly hopes or friendships or

for the favors of nominal churches, are failing to live according to their covenant and privileges, and are thus, like Esau of old, selling their *birthright* (as new creatures in Christ) for a mess of pottage. Is there no hope for these, who fail to be overcomers, who fail to walk in white, who fail to gain the crown and the immortality to be bestowed only upon the "elect," "worthy," "overcomers?"

Yes, thank God! We rejoice that there is hope for these, *because* they have not cast off their wedding garments, even though they have gotten them sadly spotted and soiled by contact with the world. The class referred to are neither open nor wilful sinners, but those who unwisely are seeking to please and serve the Lord and to please and serve themselves and the world --"foolish virgins." They make a failure in every direction so far as pleasing is concerned: they do not please the Lord, they do not please themselves and they are not half satisfactory to the worldly. The only ground upon which divine favor can continue with them at all and could go after them to reclaim them is the merit of the robe of Christ's righteousness, which they still love and wear, although they have not loved it sufficiently to keep it unspotted. But, he who began the good work in them will continue it and perfect it for all who really love and trust him--even though it be completed in the great tribulation at the inauguration of the Millennium or "the day of Jesus Christ." (Phil. 1:6.) Since Christ became the surety for all who at heart still trust him, although not overcoming by complete self-sacrifice in full obedience to his instructions, it does not surprise us that he points out in his last communication to his Church how he will deal with this numerous class of his followers and how it will result to them,--altho he made no such proposition in their "call."

After telling of the sealing of the elect class, the spiritual Israel, the peculiar people zealous of good works, the little flock, the bride, the overcomers, a definite, predetermined number, "a hundred and forty and four thousand," gathered out of Babylon before the winds of the great tribulation are let loose upon the world, all of them bearing the seal or mark of God's favor in their foreheads--a noticeable *intellectual* evidence of divine favor, the impress of the spirit of the truth as well as the word of truth, our Lord shows us the "great multitude" of his followers, "whose number no man is able to tell" (that is, it is not a foreordained or fixed number,--none were called to be of this company), who will eventually stand before the Lord "clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands," crying, "salvation to our God which sitteth on the throne and unto the Lamb." Who are these who are not of the bride, the elect class, the overcomers, is the question? The answer is "These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have *washed* their robes, and *made them white* in the blood of the Lamb. *Therefore* are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple."-- Rev. 7:9,10,13-15.

The marks of distinction between this "great company" and the "little flock" are very pronounced, both as respects their present course and their future blessing. ⁽¹⁾The faithful overcomers watch and keep their garments unspotted from the world. And this is given as one of the special conditions of acceptance as "overcomers" to joint-heirship with the Lord--"they have not defiled their garments." (Rev. 3:4.) They have kept "their garments unspotted from the world." They have not been willing to permit sin to contaminate them and to separate them from the Lord, but have quickly applied for and obtained the precious blood to remove every stain. They are so heartily opposed to sin and so earnest about the keeping of this garment unspotted that the adversary gets no hold upon them-- "the wicked one catcheth them not." (1 John 5:18.) All of this indicates a full submission of their wills to the will of Christ--they are "dead with him," and hence could not willingly practice sin. Their reward is the crown of life, immortality, to be seated in the throne, and to constitute the temple of which our Lord is the cap-stone, the chief corner-stone. Now contrast with these the "great company:" lacking the intense love and zeal of the overcomers, they do not keep their garments with sufficient care, and as a result they lose all the rewards promised the overcomers; and, having failed in the race, they would get nothing, if it were not for our Lord's grace.

But God's grace cannot admit to heavenly perfection those who have not robes of spotless righteousness; and hence we are shown that these who have not cared for their garments and kept them white must be put through a severe experience before they can in any sense of the word be sharers of heavenly favors. These severe experiences are shown in the symbol as *washing their robes* in a great *tribulation*. But to show that not the penances or sufferings would cleanse the robes, tho these might be necessary as proper

punishments and disciplines, it is particularly stated that the efficacy for the cleansing is the "*blood of the Lamb*." Many will thus be purged, purified, and their garment, now sullied by contact with the world, often in the garb of nominal Churchianity, will be cleansed of every guilty stain, when they, realizing the folly of their course, shall repentantly appeal to the Lord and use his help.

But sad disappointments attach to the experiences of this company: it is because they *fear* the reproaches of Christ that they shirk present privileges and opportunities for walking with him in white in the "sufferings of this present time:" behold, they not only miss the present joy and rejoicing of those who are faithful, but eventually they must come through *still greater* sufferings, if they would attain even to a lower place. Although loving the Lord and his people they are somewhat ashamed of them and hide, as it were, their faces from them, in the presence of the worldly: and behold the Master at his coming for his "bride" cannot confess their names in the presence of the Father and the holy angels. The little flock is informed of the Bridegroom's care, and obediently watching she shall be "accounted worthy to escape all those things coming upon the world" (including the great tribulation), but the "great company," although the Lord's people, in that they have not rejected him, must be treated like the hypocrites and pass through the great tribulation in order to their purification. These, be it observed, are not a class who in any sense repudiate the Lord, they are not of those who "draw back" from the Lord, for in such he declares he has "no pleasure" (Heb. 10:38); and the Apostle declares that such "draw back unto *perdition*"--Second death. On the contrary, these are still "virgins," but foolish in that they are vainly trying to please and serve both God and mammon. They are wasting precious opportunities trying to find an easier way of following their Lord than "being made conformable unto *his death*."

We rejoice that ultimately these will sing praises to the Lord, and be glad in his wondrous grace. But we notice that even after their robes will be washed white in the time of trouble by the blood of the Lamb and in much tribulation, they wear no crowns as overcomers; but, having finally overcome, they are granted palms as emblems of their victory through Christ; and although they can never be the living temple of which Christ is the Head, we are told they shall be *servants* in that temple; and although they shall never sit in the throne, they are highly privileged to serve "before the throne." Grand and glorious privileges will be theirs, but Oh, they will lose the great prize, having sold it for the mess of pottage of present seeming advantage, which proves unsatisfying and brings bitter results. What exhortation to holiness, to complete consecration to his will, could be stronger than this supplied by our Lord's statement of the results of more and of less faithfulness?

Probably the majority of this "great company" of tribulation saints are living to-day; for at no time in the past was there the same degree of knowledge of God and his Word, except in the early Church of apostolic times: never did so many profess to be the Lord's by consecration; and never were there so many subtle seductions from the "narrow way" of self-sacrifice. In centuries past the cleavage between the Lord's people and the world's people was much more distinct than to-day: persecution was more open and recognized, and while fewer named the name of Christ, they counted and appreciated the cost, as the larger number of to-day do not. (We of course ignore the professions and "great swelling words" of antichrist.) However, there was a great time of trouble in the end of the Jewish age in which many unclean may have been permitted to wash their robes white in the blood of the Lamb. And since then our Lord has not been without the power to bring as many as he chose through great tribulations for purification. Since the "overcomers" suffer *with* Christ *voluntarily* and the "great company" suffer *because* of Christ *involuntarily*, it might be difficult, if not impossible, for any except the Lord and the sufferers to know whether they suffered as self-sacrificers or as unwilling "tribulation" saints: but in the end of this age it will be different; for the overcomers will be taken to glory before the closing tribulation is fully poured out upon "Babylon."

THE QUEEN AND HER VIRGIN COMPANIONS

It is appropriate that we should remind ourselves afresh of the beautiful suggestion laid before us through the prophet David respecting the wedding garment of the bride. (Psa. 45:9-14.) Here the Lord, through the prophet, tells us that the bride as the Queen shall be presented before the King in "raiment of fine needle work" as well as in "clothing of wrought gold." The gold clothing, as we have heretofore seen, represents the immortality (an element of the divine nature) with which the Church shall be invested in her resurrection glory. The raiment of fine needle work can be none other than the fine linen garment, clean and white, mentioned in Revelation. But

⁽¹⁾ Jan. 28 Manna, Rev. 3:5

here we have the additional suggestion given, that this garment will be finely embroidered.

The robe that was merely loaned to us at first, and which constituted our invitation to the marriage, to joint-heirship with the King's Son, was not at first our own, it was merely loaned or imputed to us. But it became a permanent gift from the Bridegroom to as many as accepted the invitation to union with him; and examining it carefully, they found upon it in delicate outline a stamping in graceful lines, corresponding to the richly embroidered robe worn by the King's Son. The suggestion of copying his robe was not only thus hinted at, but it was plainly declared that all who would be accounted worthy to be his "elect" companions, should in all respects be copies of the Bridegroom. --Rom. 8:29.

The careful setting of the stitches in the embroidering of this wedding garment has been the chief duty and constant occupation of the espoused virgin while waiting for the nuptial feast, at the return of the Bridegroom. True, much of the embroidering now done by us is very imperfect, because of first, our unskillfulness, secondly, our imperfections, and thirdly the disturbing influences about us (the

R5737 "OUR CLEANSING -- INWARD AND OUTWARD" *"Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God."*—2 Corinthians 7:1...

Why should the Apostle suggest that the Church should do a cleansing work in their hearts and in their flesh when we find that God has wholly covered these blemishes from His sight? If the blemishes are covered, why trouble about them further? Ah, there are the best of reasons! Those who at heart are loyal to the Lord and His righteousness are distressed by their blemishes, their sins, the weaknesses of their flesh, even though they are aware that the Lord has graciously covered all these, and is not imputing their guilt because at heart they are opposed to them. The desire of this class is to build, to establish, character by faithfulness to principles of righteousness. They wish that their minds may become more and more established in faithfulness to the Lord and His Golden Rule of love; and that, so far as possible, the new mind shall control the fallen, imperfect flesh and bring it into subjection, into accord, with the Divine Law of Love...

By such a warfare against the weaknesses of the flesh and of the spirit, the Lord designs that they should establish a crystalized character. Thus as the Scriptures express it, they shall be "made meet for the inheritance of the saints in light"—fit in heart for the Divine service. Such as are thus fit in heart for the service of the Millennial Kingdom will, we are assured, be granted new bodies, free from all blemishes, in the First Resurrection. Thus, having perfected their minds and established character in their hearts in the present life by controlling the flesh so far as possible, they demonstrate that at heart they have the character-likeness of their Lord and Redeemer. Only those who do thus develop into copies of God's dear Son will constitute the Very Elect, the Kingdom Class, the Seed of Abraham, through whom the world will shortly receive its blessing.

"LET US CLEANSER OURSELVES"

The words, "Let us cleanse ourselves," do not have reference to our getting rid of Adamic condemnation. Such cleansing from original sin is impossible on our part, as the Apostle elsewhere explains. We cannot have it unless we receive it as a free gift from God. In what sense, then, do we cleanse ourselves?... We are now invited to

world, the flesh and the devil). Nevertheless, we can well understand that it is the blessing of experience that is designed, and that every painstaking effort is strengthening character, and bringing us into fuller sympathy with our Lord; and that he, when he inspects his Church, will take pleasure in even our imperfect results, if they give evidence that we have bestowed *effort*, because desirous of bringing all into conformity with his will; and he will accept of our imperfect work as tho it were perfect, and in the resurrection he will grant us ideal bodies with ideal powers and the ideal character embroidered perfectly upon the new robe, which will be *ours* through his grace.

And even here, the great company, the foolish virgins, not worthy to be the bride, and hence rejected from that place of the "elect," are nevertheless pictured, in *verses 14 and 15*--"The virgins her [the Queen's] companions that follow her shall be brought to thee, with gladness and rejoicing shall they be brought [even tho it be through great tribulation they shall ultimately shout Hosanna!]; they shall enter into the King's palace."

Please read here the poem of page 120, POEMS AND HYMNS OF DAWN.

PERFECT HOLINESS

IN REVERENCE

(2 Cor 7:1 KJV) "Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear [reverence] of God."

R3987 "PERFECTING OUR HOLINESS

While we are reckoned of the Lord as perfect, as holy from the moment we are accepted as members of his family, covered by the precious robe of Christ's righteousness, he expects of us, as we have seen before, a manifestation of energy in the vanquishing of the motions of sin in the flesh, and in the perfecting of holiness in our lives. God has but one standard, and that standard is perfection of holiness... It was proper that our Lord should give the perfect standard or pattern just as the school-book sets before the child a copper-plate engraving showing the perfect, the desirable standard of writing, not with the expectation that the child will ever succeed in exactly copying the engraving, but with the desire that the child shall improve itself by attempts at copying...

Our text declares that this perfecting of holiness is to be attained through a reverence for the Lord—an appreciation of his greatness, his perfection. The Christian who according to the flesh is deficient in veneration will have greater difficulty along this line of perfecting holiness than one who has naturally large veneration. A great deal of reverence for God and holy things is surely a great aid in our appreciation of the Lord's wonderful greatness and wisdom, power, justice, love; and the greater our appreciation of him, the higher our esteem of the pattern set before us, the better undoubtedly will be our success in the copying of it. A person who has naturally little of reverence for God and holy things, and who is naturally coarser and more self-centered and self-satisfied, has correspondingly a harder work before him if he would make his calling and election sure. He will the more need to remember his deficiency, and to cultivate reverence for the Lord and to humble himself...Matt. 23:12

In view of these things we urge upon all of the Lord's consecrated people a fresh determination to follow the counsel of the Apostle, and to allow the divine promises and prospects to work in our hearts to the cleansing of our minds and our flesh from all filthiness, to the perfecting of our new natures in holiness, in the reverence of God.

show our zeal for righteousness and to cooperate with Him in the work. While all the condemnation is reckoned as having passed from us, we still have the opportunity of showing the Lord what our spirit, our intention, would be, by striving against sin in our minds and in our flesh... At first we did not discern how deeply defiled we were, how nearly all the suggestions of the mind were selfish. We did not even recognize selfishness as being sin.

As the eyes of our understanding opened more and more widely we got proper views of the Lord and His righteousness, our own conditions, the need of His covering Robe, etc. Day by day, as we have since striven to put away sin, selfishness—yea, every element of ungodliness and unloveliness—we have become more painfully conscious of how deep was the stain which we at first, perhaps, thought was merely superficial. Many of the Lord's people, after years of labor in seeking to cleanse themselves from the filth of the flesh and of the spirit, now, alas, see more of their own blemishes than they discerned at first, even though they have gotten rid of much of this natural filthiness, selfishness, etc. This would make the work of cleansing a very discouraging one if it were not for the assurance of the Lord's Word that He regards us, not according to the flesh, but according to our intentions, our desires, our endeavors. He reckons us as overcomers because of our good *warfare against the natural blemishes*, whatever may be the measure of our success.

The distinction which the Apostle draws between the filthiness of the flesh and that of the spirit should be noticed... We must also cleanse our *spirits*, our *minds*. It is not sufficient that we avoid *outward* wrongdoing. Our *minds* must be cleansed. We must learn to hate sin, to repel its first advances. We must learn that our minds and our bodies are the temples of the Lord and that everything contrary to Him and His Law of Righteousness and Love must be barred...

We are to cast out everything in us that is sympathetic with sin... We are to set our affection on things above.-- Col 3:2...

As we fill our minds with God's promises, the whole character, the whole life, becomes more transformed...

Pray to the Lord that He would show us whatever in our lives is not fully pleasing and acceptable to Him."