

July 1

Walk as children of light...proving what is acceptable unto the Lord. Ephesians 5:8,10

IF we be sanctified to God by the Truth--if our wills be dead, and the Lord's will be fully accepted as ours, in thought, word and

WALK AS CHILDREN OF LIGHT PROVING WHAT IS ACCEPTABLE UNTO THE LORD

E225 "It is absolutely useless for us to pray Lord, Lord, give us the Spirit, if we neglect the Word..."

(Eph 5:8-10 ASV) "For ye were once darkness, but are now light in the Lord: walk as children of light (9) (for the fruit of the light is in all goodness and righteousness and truth), (10) proving what is well-pleasing unto the Lord;

R5801 "Who shall be able to stand? None except those who are "building themselves up in the most holy faith" with the precious promises and vital doctrines of the Word of God."

R3116 "The true sheep will carefully listen for the faintest accents of the voice of the Shepherd--i.e., he will treasure up his words in his heart; he will study his providences; and he will cultivate that communion and personal fellowship with the Lord."

F136 "Heart-loyalty to the Lord will mean continual effort to bring all the conduct of our lives, yea, the very thoughts and intents of our hearts, into subjection to the divine will. (Heb 4:12)"

NS88 "How few in the highest, fullest, truest sense of the word are "children of the light," lovers of truth and righteousness and purity and goodness -- devoted to these and opposed to everything that is unrighteous, impure and sinful."

(2Cor 6:2 KJV) "For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now *is* the day of salvation."

NS212-214 "NOW IS THE ACCEPTED TIME... Let us carefully hearken to the Word of the Lord respecting this acceptable time and what class of people he will accept and upon what terms they will be accepted. This is an important question for all those who desire to be accepted of him, who desire to attain to the glorious things which God hath in reservation for them who love him. Hear the Apostle, "I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God (of which you have heard, namely, the provision of a ransom price for the whole world with the precious sacrifice of Christ), that ye present your bodies living sacrifices, holy, acceptable to God, your reasonable service." (Rom. 12:1) We see then that the Apostle uses this word acceptable to God in respect to the sacrifices which God's people are invited to make of themselves. It was when our Lord Jesus, at thirty years of age, presented himself a living sacrifice to do the Father's will, that he was accepted and anointed with the holy Spirit. It was his disciples, who had similarly consecrated their lives to be his followers and to lay down their lives in the service of the Truth... The same class of self-sacrificing

act, we have attained the will of God and will win the prize as "overcomers" --even if, opportunities being denied us, we never preached, never gave to the poor and never suffered as martyrs for the Truth's sake. Let us all note well this point,--"This is the will of God [concerning you] even *your*

followers of the Lord who during this Gospel age have been acceptable to God as members of the body of Christ and joint sacrificers with him. Their sacrifices are acceptable: that is to say, during this special period God is willing to accept such sacrifices.

This same thought is conveyed in the types, for our Lord Jesus is spoken of as being the great High Priest, and his self-sacrificing followers are called the under priesthood, the Royal Priesthood. The High Priest offered up himself an acceptable sacrifice to God, the under priests offering themselves up sacrifices to God, acceptable not because of morality or worthiness of their own but through the merit of him who loved them and bought them with his precious blood, and whose merit covers all their blemishes in the sight of the Father and constitutes their sacrifices acceptable to God...

"FAVOR UPON FAVOR IS OURS

...When we come to see the grand rewards that attach to this sacrifice, when we come to understand that the sacrificers are to become heirs of God and associates with Jesus Christ their Lord in the Kingdom, we see at once why an opportunity for sacrifice is spoken of as the acceptable time -- the time at which God is willing to accept sacrifices and to give rewards to the sacrificers...

The Scriptures assure us that in the close of this age and the inauguration of Christ's Millennial reign, the whole matter will be changed; Satan will be bound, evil doers will be restrained, well doing will no longer cost the sacrifice of earthly interests. On the contrary, the righteous will then be rewarded for right doing and the evil doers shall be punished--"Justice will be laid to the line and righteousness to the plummet." The great King in that day will institute a thorough reform along these lines. (Isa. 28:17; Zech. 14:9)

So then in a natural way sacrificing for righteousness' sake will promptly and abruptly come to an end... It is only when we understand the divine plan, and see that those now being elected or selected are intended to be God's special agents and servants for the instruction and uplifting and blessing of the world, that we can understand why now they are tested in all points respecting their loyalty to righteousness and to Truth...

Notice now Ephesians 5:10. Here the Apostle exhorts us that instead of being partakers with the world in their sins we should walk as children of the light with our Lord and Master, proving, finding out more and more, day by day, as we seek to walk righteously and as we find its cost in self sacrifice --"proving what is acceptable to God"-- coming more and more to an appreciation of just what God does desire in us and just what it means to walk in the footsteps of Jesus. Again we are exhorted to "serve God with reverence." (Heb. 12:28) Here our service is stated to be acceptable to God, our service of righteousness, our self-sacrifice, laying down our lives for the brethren. Again he speaks of our humble efforts as being a sacrifice to God of sweet odor. Phil. 4:18... He assures us that God has made us acceptable in Christ--made our sacrifices, which would

sanctification." Let nothing becloud or obscure this truth;--neither other truths nor errors. Let it dominate our course in life, and then, if God's will is really our will, we have a clearly marked pathway before us, which is very important. Z. 99-4 R2412:2

of themselves be unworthy of his notice, to be acceptable through the merit of our Redeemer's sacrifice. (Eph. 1:6) The Apostle Peter in the same strain says, "We are acceptable to God by Jesus Christ."... (1 Pet. 2:5) Explaining the matter, further, in verse 20, he says, "If when ye do well and suffer for it ye take it patiently, this is acceptable to God (this is your sacrifice which God accepts). For even hereunto were ye called, for Christ also suffered for us leaving us an example that we should follow in his steps."

(Isa 49:6-9 KJV) "I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth... {8} Thus saith the LORD. In an acceptable time have I heard thee, and in a day of salvation have I helped thee: and I will preserve thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, to establish the earth, to cause to inherit the desolate heritages; {9} That thou mayest say to the prisoners, Go forth; to them that are in darkness, Show yourselves. They shall feed in the ways, and their pastures shall be in all high places."

R4542 "I will preserve thee and give thee for a Covenant unto the people, to establish the earth," etc. Notice the fact that the people and their earthly inheritance are here differentiated from the great Mediator of the Covenant, through whom the people are to be blessed...

Note St. Paul's application of our text to the Church. He quotes the passage as applicable to the Body of Christ, saying, "We, then, workers together, beseech also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain. For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted [the antitypical Atonement Day], and in the day of salvation have I succored thee: behold, now is the accepted time [when we, like our Lord, may sacrifice earthly rights and restitution privileges and thereby attain the spiritual blessing of our 'high calling of God in Christ Jesus']; behold, now is the day of salvation"--the great salvation to the Divine nature.--2 Cor. 6:1,2.

Reading again the prophecy from which this quotation is made--our text--we perceive that there is no room to question that the entire Christ Head and Body was given as a Covenant for the people, the world, to institute general times of restitution of all things which God hath spoken by the mouth of all the holy prophets since the world began.--Acts 3:19-21.

We see, in this connection, also the appropriateness of our Lord's speaking of his "Cup" of suffering and death which he invited his faithful to share with him as being not only his own blood shed for us, but also "the blood of the New Covenant shed for many," in which we are privileged to participate... The blood of the New Covenant signifies the "better sacrifices" by which God has been pleased to arrange to bring the whole world anew into Covenant relations with himself." [Heb 9:15-23, Mat 26:27-28]

R5294 "THE CHURCH NOT UNDER THE NEW COVENANT... St. Paul states that

God has made us able ministers of the New Covenant, thus indicating that we have something to do with the *preparation for it*. (2 Corinthians 3:6) Unless there were Better Sacrifices, there would be *no basis* for that New Covenant. The sufferings which the Church undergo at this present time are a blessed privilege to us; for we are ministers of that New Covenant, in the sense that we are serving it by *training for future service*--after it shall have been inaugurated."

R5876 "HOW ARE WE SANCTIFIED?" "For this is the will of God, even your sanctification."--1 Thessalonians 4:3.

THE words of our text are addressed only to the saints of God, as are all the Apostolic Epistles. In respect to His people, this is God's will, His desire, His design--even their *sanctification*, their *full setting apart* from the world to Himself and His service. This is not God's will in the sense that He has determined that certain ones shall be sanctified; but it is His will that there shall be such a *class*; and it rests with each of the called whether or not he shall belong to this class.

God has a great work to be accomplished, and hence He has a very particular reason for the selection of such a class. If we would be of this number when completed, we must make our calling and election sure by full compliance with the terms and conditions of the call, and this even unto death. We should bear in mind that the Lord is now selecting, electing, a sanctified class for a very special position, a very special work--First, for a thousand years they are to be associated with the Lord Jesus Christ in the regeneration of the whole world, including all who have lived since the time of Adam--for their uplift from sin and death to the heights of human perfection, from which Adam fell; and then they are to reign with Christ their Head and be associated with Him in all His future work throughout eternity. This is why it is called a High Calling, a Heavenly Calling.

So the will of God referred to in this text is not the will of God concerning the world in the Ages to follow the present Age, nor is it His will concerning angels. It is His will for the Church, called to be the Bride of Christ, members of His Body. This great Call was never issued before this Age, nor will it ever be issued after its close. There can be but one Bride of Christ...

The Apostle in our text is practically saying, Here we are as Christians, the called of God. Now, what is the one thing God would have us do? Would He have us keep a seventh day? Would He have us abstain from eating meat? Would He have us adopt some certain forms or idiosyncrasies? No. The will of God is our *sanctification*. There is a certain difference between the words sanctification and consecration, though they are sometimes used almost interchangeably. The word *consecrate* has the thought of surrender. Consecration is a definite step, taken at a certain moment. It is the yielding up of the will and of *all* to God. Whoever has not thus definitely surrendered his will, himself, to the Lord, has never made a real consecration... The word sanctification not only has in it the thought of this definite and complete consecration at the beginning, but also takes in the entire process of transformation of character and preparation for the Kingdom. It progresses throughout the Christian course until the character is fully developed and ripened, and it must then be maintained until the end of the way.

HOW TO ENTER THE HEAVENLY RACE

Many professed Christians do not see the initial step of full consecration as essential to one who would be a follower of Christ. In our conversation with people many tell us that they have been trying for years to be children of God, that they have been for years seeking to do God's will and live a holy life. We try always to get these down to the particular point: Have you *begun* right? Have you been trying to run the Christian race on the *outside* or on the *inside*? Then they ask us what we mean. And we tell them that the matter is like a race-course, where there is a certain prize offered, with certain definite rules and regulations. The person who is to run in the race must be entered in the regular way. The contract must be made and signed. The man must agree to all the conditions. Then he will be entered as a contestant, and must run on the prescribed track and for the goal.

Now another, who had failed to make this contract and to enter the race in the prescribed manner, might run around and around on the outside of the track. He might run as fast and as well as those on the inside. He might boastingly say, "I can beat any one running on that track!" But would he gain the prize? Assuredly not. He would be only amusing himself or wasting his breath and his strength. The real race was run on that track. He had failed to meet the prescribed conditions, and all his running would be in vain so far as gaining the prize was concerned. And so it is with one who endeavors to live a Christian life without first having carefully learned and met the conditions and terms required in order to become a real disciple of Christ, and be recognized of the Father as His child.

We believe that this is the trouble with many who call themselves Christians. Many who talk with us express good desires and all that, but we pin them right down to the point: "Have you made a full consecration to God?" We had a case of this kind only recently--a gentleman who has now called upon us twice. In our conversation at his last visit we said, "Well, you remember what we spoke about when you were here before." He replied that he had been praying. We then told him that he had no right to pray, that he could not properly pray until he had an Advocate with the Father; for the Father does not hear sinners. We said, "You cannot pray until you have surrendered your will to God. And all access to the Father must be through the Advocate. 'No man cometh to the Father, but by Me.' There is a *definite* way. It is not that you can go in *your* way and I in *mine*. All the terms of discipleship are laid down by the Lord Himself. 'If *any* man will be My disciple,' said the Lord Jesus, 'let him *deny himself*, and take up his cross, and follow Me.' Unless we take this step of denying *ourselves*, yielding up ourselves to the Lord, we may do a variety of things -- go to Church, etc., etc., and yet not be Christians. We are not Christians until we have accepted Jesus as our Redeemer, and made a consecration to God through Christ."

TWO PARTS TO SANCTIFICATION

In one Scripture we read, "Sanctify yourselves, and I will sanctify you."... We have a part in this work and God has a part. If we make a full consecration, God will consecrate us; He will accept us and set us apart for Himself. He gives us the indication of this acceptance in the begetting of His Holy

Spirit. Such soon begin to realize that they have a new mind, a new disposition, a new heart...

The acceptance of us by the Father is only the beginning of the sanctifying work. And it is His will that this work should continue and progress in us, to its full completion. This sanctifying work should affect our minds, our hands, our eyes, our ears, our tongues--our all--that we may be fully used of the Lord. It is the will that is given up at first, and the will, of course, includes the service of our mortal body.

But this body has natural tendencies of its own. The giving up of the will means that the individual will seek to bring every thought, word and act into subjection to the will of God. It is one thing for the will to be made holy, and another thing to bring the mind and the body fully into line with this holiness of the will. The will is present with us, but how to perform is the problem. Not only are our wills to maintain this sanctified state, but we are to broaden our appreciation of the Lord's will for us, and thus have more and more of the spirit of sacrifice.

SANCTIFIED THROUGH THE TRUTH

Now what powers, what spiritual forces, are there that will aid us in this work of sanctification? Our Lord Jesus, in His last prayer to the Father before His death, prayed, "Sanctify them through *Thy Truth*; *Thy Word* is Truth." (John 17:17.) Here He gives us the key as to how this work of sanctification will proceed. The one who consecrates himself to God will not at first have a full knowledge of himself or of sin. He is only a babe at the beginning. But he is to be helped onward by the power of the revealed Word, by the Message of Truth. How will this Message sanctify? The Apostle Paul answers that thus God works in us both to will and to do His good pleasure. He gives us in His Word exceeding great and precious promises. He gives us counsel and admonition. And as these enter our heart and impress themselves upon us, through the illumination of the Holy Spirit, we are constrained to work out in ourselves the peaceable, precious fruits of righteousness and holiness...

THE METHOD OF SANCTIFICATION

There is another text which tells us how we are to be sanctified. It declares that by God's will "we are sanctified, through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all." (Hebrews 10:10.)... No amount of consecration could have made us the people of God unless, first of all, the foundation for this should be made in the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. His sacrifice opened the way. His merit cleansed us and made us acceptable to Jehovah...

We are told again that it is "the blood of the Covenant wherewith we are sanctified." (Hebrews 10:29.) How is this? God has made a great Covenant with the Church. It was first made with the Head of this Church, and then with those who are to constitute His Body. It is a Covenant of Sacrifice. Jehovah said, prophetically through the Psalmist, "Gather My saints [My holy ones, My sanctified ones] together unto Me; those who have made a Covenant with Me by sacrifice." (Psalm 50:5.) The way to come into this class thus called and gathered is to accept the terms laid down by Jehovah Himself. No one comes into this class except by the *blood of the Covenant*...

By partaking in the blood of the Covenant, the blood of the sacrificial Covenant, the blood which is to seal the New Covenant,

we are sanctified.... Let us prove to God our appreciation of this glorious calling, by faithfulness even unto death."

R4495 "The Scriptures repeatedly mention the fact that we are *justified* by faith in his blood--in the blood of Jesus. They also speak of the blood of the Covenant wherewith we were *sanctified*." (Heb. 10:29.) And again in Hebrews 13:20,21 we read, "Through the blood of the everlasting Covenant make you *perfect*." "How shall we understand this? Do these Scriptures all three refer to the same

thing? No, these Scriptures do not refer to the same thing. The first one relates to us as natural men... Justification lifted us from the plane of sin and death condemnation, to a standing with God of life and harmony... It was after we had been justified by faith in the blood of Jesus that we were *sanctified*, set apart, consecrated through or in connection with "the blood of the New Covenant"--by our consecration to be dead with Christ, to be buried with him by baptism into his sacrificial death--to drink of his cup of suffering, ignominy, shame, death--to partake of or

share his blood--set apart or devoted to the serving of the New Covenant for Israel and the world. It was on account of our entering into this great engagement that the Heavenly Father *sanctified* us or set us apart...

The text cited in the last question, "The blood of the everlasting Covenant make you perfect," refers not to a perfecting of the flesh--not to anything which refers to us as natural men. It refers to us as New Creatures who have been begotten of the holy Spirit... It is this sacrificing with him which will make us *perfect as New Creatures*..."

R2411 (From Harvest Truth Database V5.0)

GREETING AND EXHORTATION FOR THE NEW YEAR

--1899--

DEAR Friends of the WATCH TOWER family, accept, please, our editorial greetings and good wishes, as we cross the threshold of another year. We trust that each of us can truthfully sing with the poet,--

"Looking back, we praise the way,
God has led us, day by day."

And let us remember that the great Watchman of Spiritual Israel, the Lord, changes not; his exceeding great and precious promises are all yea and amen to those who obey him--to all who by faith abide in him, trusting in the merit of his atonement--who, possessing his spirit of love, are seeking to walk circumspectly in his footsteps. To all such, if they continue thus and abound, we guarantee that the year, 1899, will be a happy year, basing our guarantee upon the Lord's promises.

But how many, who *know* this full well, are disposed to be fearful, doubtful, unbelieving: and thereby are paving the way for troubles! How long it requires for some of the pupils in the school of Christ to find out *why* they are in this school and under the Teacher! Surely, the object should be to be taught--to learn of him whom God has appointed to be the Teacher of all his justified and consecrated sons, adopted into his family. We do not come to this Teacher to obtain his certificate that we need none of his instruction; but that from his Word in conjunction with the daily experiences in life (his "providences" to all his pupils) we may grow daily in his likeness;--in grace and in knowledge.

If at first we, as pupils, get confused and mistake self-will for God's-will, and our Teacher points this out to us by some failure of our projects, we are not (1) to be rebellious and resentful of the lesson; nor (2) to be discouraged and disheartened. On the contrary, we are to *profit* by every experience; seeking that the lessons of one day shall be put in practice and become our aids on following days.

The most important lesson of this school-term is Faith: the faith with which we became the Lord's and entered his school must grow. And our faith can only grow by knowledge (We do not refer to worldly knowledge, worldly learning.), knowledge of the Lord--of his methods, his plan, his character. Hence we must study well our Teacher's words and general conduct and as well his providences or private instructions to us individually--interpreting these always by his words. Much of what we accepted at first by *faith* (respecting the Lord's goodness and wisdom) will gradually become *knowledge*: giving basis for still greater lengths and breadths of faith as well as for greater love and appreciation of our Redeemer.

As in other schools, so in this, different degrees of learning are represented in the students;--some are in the primary stage of development; some in the intermediate, and some in the graduating class. The graduating degree of discipleship in the school of Christ is the one that all are to strive for: it is absolutely essential that we reach this degree, if we would pass examination --finish our course with joy and be granted the Master's "Well done!" and the prize of our high calling at the end.

We want to outline this course of "*study*" and to ask all the dear brethren and sisters of the WATCH TOWER family, who have not already started in this course, to take it up for the year 1899. Blessed are sure to be the results. You will find as you progress in it the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, ruling in your hearts: this will transmute the trials of faith and of patience into blessings, and the sorrows and disappointments of earthly hopes into channels of God's grace, and the perplexities of life into full assurances of faith. This graduating degree of faith, hope and love is attained by--

A FULL SUBMISSION OF OUR WILLS TO THE LORD'S WILL!

Do you answer,--Why, that is what I have been wanting to do ever since I consecrated myself to the Lord; but I have not attained it;--What more can I do? Ah yes! so it has been with all fully consecrated children of God; for a long time we all made the same mistake of *wanting* to fully submit our wills to God's will, instead of *doing so*.

A good *wish* is an excellent thing, very important indeed, but if the wish does not lead to performance it is valueless. ⁽¹⁾Some people never get beyond the wishing point in any of life's affairs: they wish to rise at a certain hour in the morning, or to attend to certain recognized duties, or render some service, or speak some word of kindness or encouragement in the name of the Lord,--but they never fulfil their good wishes in deeds. The good wish should be followed by a good and determined *will*, which is sure to be favored by a way in matters fully in accord with the divine will. Now, without dropping a single good *wish*, let us begin immediately to make this a successful year, by throwing the entire strength of our wills into *doing*.

But now take care--you are on treacherous ground: a strong will is as dangerous as it is valuable. If misdirected, you have started a force, an energy, which may lead you far astray. And conscientious people are in danger along this line especially: for when their wills get hold of a matter which their consciences approve they may make as much of a blunder as did Saul of Tarsus under similar circumstances.

There is but one safe course; and to prepare the Lord's people to know, to realize this, is the object of all the preliminary courses in the School of Christ, leading up to this graduating course. This final lesson to be learned is that the *wills* that are to be exercised in good deeds and good words are not our own wills, except as by adoption we have taken the Lord's will to be ours. When we became the Lord's pupils it was by and as a consequence of the surrender of our own wills; and our first lessons in this school were in keeping our wills *dead*. We can see as we look backward that by the Great Teacher's aid we won some victories over self-will, and have come to the place where our real desires are, as expressed by the poet,--

⁽²⁾"Lord, at length Thy love hath conquered,
None of self, and all of Thee."

But even after we have adopted the Lord's will (as instead of our own natural preferences) and made it ours; and after we have resolved to *do* the Lord's will;--still we are in danger and need to walk carefully, lest we misapprehend the Lord's will and adopt the will and plans of fellow men or of a church, instead of the Lord's will. Consequently, without despising human aid in the ascertainment of the Lord's will, while remembering that God still, as in times past, makes use of human agencies in instructing his people, it must not be forgotten that Satan also uses human agents to mislead and to deceive, and that God permits this, in order to teach us that he is the real Teacher. Hence he puts his Word, the Bible, as the test by which his people are to distinguish between true and false teachers, saying, "If they speak not according to this Word, it is because there is no light in them."--Isa. 8:20.

⁽³⁾Coming to the Scriptures to ascertain *God's will*, we find that the great *work* which God asks of us is not work for others, but work in ourselves; subduing, conquering, ruling self. "This is the *will of God [concerning you]*, even your sanctification!" (1 Thes. 4:3.) Everything else, therefore,--our service of the household of faith, and our doing good unto all men, by home and foreign missions, etc., etc., is subservient to this most important work within. For, as the Apostle by inspiration declares, Tho we should preach the gospel eloquently to

⁽¹⁾ Compare R5653:1:2, Pro. 6:6-11

⁽²⁾ Hymn 224

⁽³⁾ Feb. 5 Manna, 1Thess 4:3

others, and tho we should give all our goods to feed the poor, or become martyrs for a good cause, *without love*, the spirit of Christ and the Father, developed in us as the ruling principle of life, we would be *nothing*, from the divine standpoint.

^[4]On the contrary, if we be sanctified to God by the truth--if our wills be dead, and the Lord's will be fully accepted as ours, in thought, word and act, we have attained the will of God and will win the prize as "overcomers"--even if, opportunities being denied us, we never preached, never gave to the poor and never suffered as martyrs for the truth's sake. Let us all note well this point,--"This is the will of God [concerning you], even *your sanctification*." Let nothing becloud or obscure this truth;--neither other truths nor errors. Let it dominate our course in life, and then, if God's will is really our will, we have a clearly marked pathway before us, which is very important.

But without doubt, God will open before all such opportunities to serve the truth to others,--to let their light shine to the glory of the Father and the blessing of fellow creatures; for this is his command to us; and we may be sure he gives no commands impossible to be obeyed. If you have been seeking opportunities of service and finding none, there must be something wrong; you may have been seeking some *special* service of your own preference (your old will meddling with your newly adopted will--the Lord's). Possibly the great Teacher sees pride remaining--pride which you would have been prompt to crush, had you recognized it; but which hid itself from you under the cloak of "self-respect." Possibly the great Teacher by his providence and his Word is saying to you, "Do with thy might what thy hand *findeth to do*." Possibly he sees that *you* would be spoiled by giving you a more important service for others, before you have learned the lesson of humility--all important in the Lord's sight. Act quickly, therefore, the time is short,-- "Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God [to do whatever service his providence has made possible to you], that he may exalt you in due time."--1 Pet. 5:6

"THINK IT NOT STRANGE CONCERNING THE FIERY TRIALS"

Have you never suffered for righteousness' sake-- a martyr to principle? Strange, when the Master so plainly declared that "*Whosoever will live godly shall suffer persecution*." Can it be that the Lord erred? Is not the danger rather that you have not been living godly? You say that it is your highest *wish*, to live godly; but do not forget the distinction already drawn between wishing and doing. Resign your own will entirely, put it all away and begin to *do* the Lord's, item by item, just as you are able to find and prove it in his Word--using the best human help you can obtain, in this seeking and proving. Soon the persecutions will come: and from most unexpected quarters.

And when the persecutions come, be prepared for them--forearmed by God's Word; for they will be temptations to your flesh: through them the Adversary will seek to embitter your soul and to stir up in you the elements of the old nature reckoned dead--anger, malice, hatred, envy, strife. If this be the effect of persecutions in you, the Adversary is gaining the victory --you are not overcoming evil, but being overcome by it. The old nature will even call upon its best qualities to fight against persecution--it will call upon your natural sense of Justice to come, help and resist; it will call upon Conscientiousness to agree that the persecution is unmerited; it will call upon Benevolence and Spirituality, your love of family and friends, and every other good quality of your being--all will be appealed to either to fight the persecution or to abandon the course of godliness which led to it.

Then you will be in the thick of the fight, and unless previously armed with the panoply supplied in the divine Word, you are almost sure to lose faith, become terrified and flee. And whoever does this is sure to be wounded, if not captured by the enemy: for our armor is a front armor, not a back armor. It is invulnerable so long as we stand firm for the right, the truth, in our great Captain's name and strength--it is a hindrance to those who draw back.

But why should we flee terrified? Is not this the very *test* of our loyalty and devotion to the Lord and his Word, for which all of our previous experiences and instructions were but preparations? Is not this the very test the Lord declares indispensable to all who would be accounted victors and be made his joint-heirs in the Kingdom? Is not this the very opportunity for which we prayed, and are not the incidental persecutions exactly what our Lord forewarned us would be part of the cost of faithful discipleship? And are not these the very persecutions whose absence earlier in our Christian experiences made us wonder whether or not we were acceptable sons of God?--Heb. 12:8.

Surely, our answer to these questions must be, Yea, Lord! even tho because of weakness of the flesh the answer be not joyous as it

should be, but through unbidden tears. And with this answer on our part the Lord is pleased; and angels of his mercy--his promises exceeding great and precious--minister unto us and strengthen us.

That is the time to "fight the good fight"--and, triumphing over self-will completely, to accept the buffetings and slanders and misrepresentations of good intentions and good deeds with meekness and patience. That is the time when the Lord's spirit of love, dwelling in us richly, will manifest itself in the control not only of our words and actions, but of our inmost thoughts. ^[5]If even so much as a bitter feeling against our traducers and maligners arises, it is to be fought, and so complete a victory gained over it that every fiber of our beings will be in sweet accord with our Great Teacher's instructions, ^[6]"Love your enemies. Pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you. Bless and injure not."

Your earliest definition of "injure not" will probably have been that you should not kill or wound your enemies physically; but as you look to the Teacher and heed his word you will hear him say, "Learn of me," and you will note with the Apostle, that tho he did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth, yet, "When he was reviled he reviled not in return; when he suffered he threatened not; but committed his cause to him that judgeth righteously." (1 Pet. 2:22,23.) ^[7]If you are a faithful pupil it will not be long until you see that the perfect law of liberty, the law of Christ, is a discernor of the very thoughts and intents of the heart, and that while you must hate all sin, you cannot hate any sinner and yet have the love of God perfected in your heart. You see that this means that you not only must not retaliate and revile your foes, but must not even *wish* to do so. The evil wish must be conquered and the selfish conditions which gave it birth must be utterly destroyed and replaced with love--the spirit of Christ.--Compare 1 Cor. 4:12 with 1 Cor. 6:10.

Are you tempted to repine, to feel disappointed at your lot in life or your experiences by the way? That is the time to remember that all repining, discontent and disappointments indicate that self-will in you is not so dead as you had hoped. For ^[8]he who has buried his own will completely in the will of the Lord can know no disappointment; but in every affair of his life he sees by faith divine appointment or supervision, and hears the Word of the Lord in all of life's affairs assuring him: "All things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose." (Rom. 8:28.) It is one of the evidences of reaching the graduating condition of heart, when we are able to take the oppositions of the great Adversary and of the world and of our own flesh *patiently*, uncomplainingly, uncomplainingly, "joyfully"--as a part of the disciplinary experience meted out to us by our all-wise and all-loving Lord.

Such is the "good fight." The first battle is the severest, and each subsequent victory is easier; for with each victory the new will (the Lord's will in us) grows stronger, and Hope's sight of the things God has in reservation for the faithful grows keener, and Faith's strength and endurance greater. And with the very first victory come blessings, which are added to after every victory: blessings of rest, peace, joy in the holy spirit and full assurance of faith, as our Teacher promised,-- "*Blessed are ye when men shall revile you and persecute you and say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice and be exceeding glad!*"

From this standpoint, and from no other, is it possible to accept with fortitude and resignation whatever tests of patience, perseverance, faith, hope and love the Lord may see fit to permit to come upon you. In this condition all our experiences will result in blessings, however unpropitious they may appear on the surface.

It is from this standpoint (of victory over self-will --unto sanctification of spirit through obedience to the truth) that all the blessings and promises of the divine Word are ours in the fullest sense--"All things are yours,....whether things present, or things to come; ...[for] ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's." This is the graduating degree of the School of Christ, dearly beloved, in which we all seek to be approved during the year just begun. Let us unite our hearts and prayers, and above all our new wills, with each other's and with our Master's, to this end that we may be wholly sanctified and for the Master's use, present and prospective, made meet. "And the very God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly."--Rom. 16:20.

Let our prayers every morning ascend to God,-- "Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my Strength, and my Redeemer." (Psa. 19:14.) And every evening let us review the day, judging our hearts (wills) by the Lord's law of perfect love--praying his forgiveness of shortcomings, and thanking our Lord for the strength and grace which brought its victories.

[4] July 1 Manna, Eph. 5:8, 10

[5] ½ July 2 Manna

[6] Mat. 5:44; Lu. 6:27-28; Rom. 12:9-10

[7] ½ July 2 Manna, 1 Cor. 4:12

[8] July 3 Manna, Psa. 16:8