

October 7

Every one that heareth these sayings of Mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand. Matthew 7:26

THE hopes built upon the Lord's promises and unaccompanied by works are hopes built upon the sand. It is only a question of

time until the great testing time shall come and such hopes will be shown to be worse than useless. They will be shown to have deceived their possessor, who thought himself safe in his assurances of a share in the Kingdom....On the contrary, those who build with obedience, their hearts as well as their tongues confessing and honoring the

Lord, their deeds corroborating their faith, and their fruits bearing testimony of their vital relationship with the Lord--these shall pass through all the storms of life and shall never be moved, never be shaken, because they are on the foundation. Z.04-46R3318:5

R3317 (From Harvest Truth Database V5.0)

WHO ARE REAL CHRISTIANS?

--MATT. 7:21-29.--FEBRUARY 28--

Golden Text:--"Be ye doers of the Word, and not hearers only."--James 1:22.

FOLLOWING our Lord's course, we reach in this lesson a more particular stage in his work. After the example of Peter, Andrew, James and John, others became disciples or followers of the Lord, until we may presume that his company was of considerable numbers. It was about this time that, after prayer in solitude in the mountain, our Lord made choice of the twelve who should be his special representatives or apostles; and whether it was before or after this selection from amongst the other disciples or followers that he gave the Sermon on the Mount, we may not be too positive, but evidently the two events occurred about the same time.

Our lesson is really a portion of the Sermon on the Mount--a conclusion to it. Supplementing Matthew's statement with that of Luke 6:43-49, we find that our Lord gave several illustrations of true discipleship at this time: (1) The straight gate and narrow way by which any might become his disciples; (2) the fruit-bearing test of being his disciples; (3) the difference between words and deeds in the Lord's estimation; (4) the vital results as illustrated by the two buildings, the one on the sand and the other on the rock.

THESE TESTS IGNORED BY CHURCHIANITY

In our day, when the public teachings of the ministry of nearly all denominations is so different from the teaching of the Scriptures, we believe that the degeneracy of faith and practice would be much more rapid than it is were it not that very many feel it a duty to read a portion of the Scriptures daily, even though they think little about their meaning. In such readings lessons like the one we are now considering occasionally present themselves; and the lines of true discipleship are here so distinctly drawn, that the mere nominal professor is made to shudder while the true Christian is profited in proportion as he determines by the grace of God he will seek to so conform his life that he may become more and more a copy of God's dear Son.

The general thought of today in the pulpits and in private conversation and at funerals seems to be that in civilized lands everybody is a Christian and sure to go to heaven eventually, except such persons as are moral reprobates --such as are to be found in penitentiaries and prisons --and even for them hope is entertained that ere they die they may express some regret for their misdeeds. Such regrets are seized upon by their friends as evidence that they have become Christians, and gone to heaven too.

FALSE DOCTRINE IS CHARGEABLE FOR THIS

While condemning the foregoing as wholly wrong, we nevertheless sympathize with those whose confusion of thought is thus manifested. Their unscriptural views of what constitutes a Christian is the result of two things: (1) Teachings of the dark ages handed down through the creeds of Christendom from the "mother of harlots" to her "daughters"--creeds inspired by the teachings of those who, in centuries gone by, persecuted one another to the death for differences of opinions on doctrinal subjects-- tortured one another with rack and sword and fagot. (2) To this bad foundation of error there has come within recent years a larger spirit of enlightenment and generosity in which we rejoice. But the two qualities--the errors of the past and the generosity of the present--produce a very bad combination of doctrine for modern Churchianity--a doctrine which seeks to be reasonable with itself, and which, in so doing, runs counter to a great many teachings of Scripture. The present lesson is an illustration of this.

From the standpoint of orthodox Churchianity and its teaching of eternal torture for all except those who become Christian, our Lord's words in this lesson seem very unreasonable, very unsatisfactory, very heart-rending. From their standpoint a strict application of this lesson would mean not only that the heathen world is without hope in the future, but also the civilized world and the vast majority of those called Christians have nothing to expect in the future except tribulation--eternal torment, because rejected of the Lord and not recognized as Christians, not recognized as members of his Kingdom, his Body, of his Church.

THE TRUTH ALONE IS CONSISTENT

It is only when we get rid of the smoke and darkness and confusion of Babylon and the dark ages and their creeds, and get back to the pure, unadulterated words of the Lord and apostles and prophets, and by the grace of God are granted some opening of the eyes of our understanding, only then can we see these matters in their true light. Our Lord's discourses continually reiterated that he was seeking for some who should be counted worthy to constitute his Kingdom, to sit with him in his throne, to be his joint-heirs, to rule and to judge Israel and all the nations of the world. Not until we learn to differentiate between the Church, his Bride, the members of his Body, the Kingdom class, and the world that is to be judged or ruled by this Kingdom class in due time, can we get a clear conception of the divine purposes progressing throughout this Gospel age.

From this standpoint we can see most clearly why none can be of the Kingdom class unless they shall develop faith and character above and beyond that of the world in general. We can see why these should be called upon to bear the good fruits; we can see why they must walk the narrow way of self-denial, self-sacrifice and character development in order to be fitted and prepared for the great work the Lord has for them to do for the world in the coming age--in the Millennium. It seems to be peculiarly difficult for the majority of people long blinded by false doctrines to see that the heavenly Father has

SPECIAL TIMES AND SEASONS FOR THE VARIOUS DEVELOPMENTS OF HIS WORK

The world is getting a certain kind of experiences in the present time which will be valuable to it in the future --when God's due time shall come for blessing all the families of the earth to be on trial for life or death everlasting. Meantime, with those present experiences come the disciplines of the laws of nature--under which poverty, sickness and mental and moral derangements follow excesses of evil doing as pain follows contact with fire. And it is not an unreasonable hope that with the lessons of the present time before them, the world during the Millennial age will act more wisely than at present; that under the favorable conditions prevailing then many will not only rejoice in the great plan of salvation, but will avail themselves of it--many who are now careless in such matters, partly because they cannot see or walk by faith.

It is when we realize that the present time is one for schooling, discipline, chastening, proving the characters of those who hear and accept the divine invitation, that we see the reasonableness of all the restrictions and requirements attaching to such special discipleship. No longer do we wonder that our dear Redeemer said, "Strait is the gate and narrow is the way that leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it"; no longer do we wonder that it is recorded that he spake in parables and dark sayings to the intent that the majority should not understand his message --to the intent that only Israelites indeed might appreciate and accept his call. No longer do we wonder that he declared that only those who would forsake all could become his disciples; no longer do we wonder that discipleship means self-sacrifice even unto death. Now we see that our heavenly Father could make no easier terms than these in connection with the peculiar high calling to joint heirship with his Son in the Kingdom to which he is now calling a little flock.

"NOT EVERY ONE THAT SAITH UNTO ME, LORD, LORD, SHALL ENTER INTO THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN"

The point of this lesson is specially for those who have named the name of Christ, and who are professing to be his disciples. It is not enough that we profess discipleship; unless the matter goes deeper than this we will be rejected. Our professions of discipleship must be sincere, and the Lord knoweth the heart and will. Although he will judge us leniently so far as unwilling and unintentional weaknesses and imperfections are concerned, he will judge us most strictly in respect to our purposes, the intentions of our hearts. Our Lord is not here referring to the Church in her present condition as

the embryo Kingdom: he refers to the glorified, actual Kingdom to be established at his Second Advent. His faithful will enter into that Kingdom by the resurrection change--by participation in the First Resurrection, which is to include only the blessed and holy.--Rev. 20:5,6.

⁽¹⁾While the Lord's people of the present age are not to be judged by their works but by their faith, as the Apostle Paul distinctly points out, saying, "By the deeds of the Law shall no flesh be justified in God's sight," but we are justified by faith, nevertheless, works will be required. By our works we must demonstrate our faith, and, thank God, imperfect works can demonstrate to him the loyalty of our intentions, our wills. Hence the Apostle James says, "I will show thee my faith by my works," and to this all the Scriptures agree. If our works demonstrate to the Lord the sincerity of our faith, that faith will be acceptable to him and we will be counted perfect and be granted a share in the Kingdom, great and precious things which the Lord has in reservation for those who love him--not merely in word but also in deeds--for those who strive by the deeds of life to show forth, to demonstrate, their love.

The Lord carries this illustration to a considerable length, showing that he does not merely refer to people who are nominally called Christians *en masse*. From the Lord's standpoint the great majority of these would be merely classed as Gentiles; because they have never entered into any covenant relationship with God. The reference in this passage is evidently to those who have outwardly made a consecration of themselves to the Lord--to those who have outwardly professed a change of heart and vital relationship to the Lord. More than this, he includes not only a few, but "many," who in their outward course of life have in some measure acknowledged the Lord publicly and as here expressed.

"IN THY NAME HAVE CAST OUT DEVILS, DONE MANY AND WONDERFUL WORKS"

This represents a class claiming relationship to the Lord and public ministry in his name--far above the ordinary masses of Churchianity. Our Lord declares that unless our consecration shall lead us to more than miracle-working and calling ourselves Christian, and preaching to others in the Lord's name, it shall profit us nothing. In order to have his approval "in that day" it will be necessary that we shall develop characters in conformity with the Father's will--in conformity to the Lord's Word. Nothing but character will stand the final tests.

All about us in so-called Christian lands we see and hear many in public prayer and hymns of praise call repeatedly Lord, Lord, yet whose conduct, so far as we can see, bears no good fruit, but rather evil fruitage. Many of them are like the thorns and briars to which the Lord likened them. They reach out with helping hands to lift man up, to bless and to ennoble, but the thorns and briars tear and do injury. We live in a day when little of this injury is done physically, because the laws of civilization would take cognizance of such evil deeds and punish the evil doers. Nevertheless, the thorny and briary people find abundant opportunity for injuring others with their lips, with their tongues. Slandering, backbiting, malice, hatred, envy, strife, proceed from them because this is their nature. These bramble and thorn bushes may indeed tie on clusters of grapes and figs to deceive, but the thorny and brambly character will be sure to manifest itself to those who come near them in the contact of daily life.

No wonder that our Lord determines that such are unfit for a share with him in his Kingdom and its great work of judging and blessing the world of mankind. How could busybodies and backbiters and slanderers be fit for the Kingdom of God's dear Son? Saying, Lord, Lord, or performing some miracle in his name, does not warrant them in expecting the great blessings which the Lord has in reservation for those who love him and who in turn are controlled by the spirit of love toward him and toward all the household of faith.

OUR FAITH STRUCTURE MUST HAVE PROPER FOUNDATIONS

We are aware that in our day the confused and confusing doctrines handed down from the dark ages have become so obnoxious to reasoning people that they are inclined to say, Away with doctrines! it matters not what a man believes; it matters everything what he does. We sympathize with those who hold this sentiment, alt-

hough we cannot at all agree with it. We hold to the contrary that doctrine is all important both to faith and works. If it were not so the Lord would not have given his doctrines so important a place in his teachings and in his parables as in the one now under consideration. No man can build a proper life unless he have some foundation, some doctrine, some faith. A man with no faith, no hope, is sure to be correspondingly lacking in character. We believe that the important thing is that we should have a proper foundation, a proper faith, a proper doctrine upon which to build character and good works.

Our Lord's illustration shows the possibility of building upon two kinds of foundation--a worthy and unworthy sort. But let us notice before we go further that this parable does not represent the heathen in any sense of the word, nor does it represent any who, living in civilized lands, have the eyes of their understanding so beclouded by ignorance and superstition, and their ears so dulled by the god of this world, that they do not hear distinctly the Lord's message. The parable is addressed to him "that heareth these sayings of mine"--who understands my teaching. The heathen have no place under this designation, neither have the great majority of those who profess Churchianity.

The parable then most clearly finds its two classes in those who have heard the good tidings and who have received them who outwardly have made consecration to the Lord, and who outwardly are building their hopes upon his promises. ⁽²⁾The hopes built upon the Lord's promises and unaccompanied by works are hopes built upon the sand. It is only a question of time until the great testing time shall come and such hopes will be shown to be worse than useless. They will be shown to have deceived their possessor, who thought himself safe in his assurances of a share in the Kingdom. Such hopes, such faith, as fail to obediently strive to do the Lord's will, such faith and hopes as consider that obedience is not essential to a place in the Kingdom, are falsely founded; their overthrow will come with great disaster.

⁽³⁾On the contrary, those who build with obedience, their hearts as well as their tongues confessing and honoring the Lord, their deeds corroborating their faith, and their fruits bearing testimony of their vital relationship with the Lord--these shall pass through all the storms of life and shall never be moved, never be shaken, because they are on the foundation. No wonder that his hearers thought that our Lord's teachings were different from those of the scribes and Pharisees. There was a positiveness in his teaching not to be found elsewhere. And so it is today: the Word of the Lord is reasonable, logical and satisfying in a manner and to a degree that nothing else is.

"SAVED SO AS BY FIRE"

The Apostle Paul (I Cor. 3:10-15) uses this same illustration in a slightly different manner. His illustration shows only those who are built upon the rock, Christ Jesus, but shows that two classes are building upon the rock and that while all such builders will be eventually saved, gain everlasting life, there will be nevertheless two classes of them--some saved abundantly in the Kingdom and others "saved so as by fire"--by passing through great tribulation. The Apostle's explanation is equally possible, whether we apply the gold, silver, and precious stones of the proper building to true doctrines, in contrast with the wood, hay and stubble to false doctrines, or whether we apply these symbols of gold, silver and precious stones as signifying character development, the results of sound doctrine, and the wood, hay and stubble the deficiency of character development.

The general tenor of all these lessons is that all those who think worth while to be on the Lord's side at all in this present age will do wisely if, after counting the cost, they completely lay aside not only their besetting sins but their ambition and their hope and every desire of an earthly kind--that their entire interests may be devoted to the Lord, to knowing his will, to serving him. These are they who really love the Lord more than they love houses or lands or father or mother or children or self; these are the Lord's Jewels, who shall be joint-heirs with him in the Kingdom and in the great work of blessing all the families of the earth in due time. "They shall be mine, saith the Lord, in that day when I make up my jewels."

⁽²⁾ ½ Oct. 7 Manna, Mat. 2:26

⁽³⁾ ½ Oct 7 Manna

⁽¹⁾ Oct. 13 Manna, Jam. 2:18

R3746 "TAKE HEED HOW YE HEAR" -- Matthew 7:15-29... "Be ye doers of the Word and not hearers only."--Jas. 1:22...

While vigilant to detect and resist the wolves in sheep's clothing, as well as out of it, we should remember our Lord's teachings

on the other side of the question--that those who are not against us are on our part, and that we should neither reprove as wolves nor do down as brethren those whose hearts, whose characters, give evidence that they belong to the Lord, even though they follow

not with us in respect to his service, the promulgation of his message, etc...

"KNOW THEM BY THEIR FRUITS"

...The thought is that the Lord's true people are of such a kind that the fruit of their lives is nourishing and refreshing toward all who

have fellowship with them. On the other hand there are persons who, thistle-like, are always scattering seeds that will cause trouble--false doctrines, evil surmisings and errors; and there are some who, like thorn-bushes, instead of bearing refreshing fruit, are continually reaching out to impede, to irritate, to annoy, to vex, to poison, to injure, those with whom they come in contact. The intimation clearly is that the Lord's people ought to have little difficulty in distinguishing between the false teachers who would mislead them and the under-shepherds who gladly lay down their lives in the service of the flock. The one class are continually mischief makers, underminers, destroyers. The other class are helpers, builders, strengtheners, peacemakers.

Not content with giving us a word-picture distinguishing between wolves and sheep, between injurious plants and fruitful ones, our Lord next institutes another illustration still more searching--contrasting a healthy fruit-tree with a diseased or evil one, contrasting a healthy Christian with a perverted and misguided one. He declares that a sound tree brings forth good fruit, but a corrupt or diseased tree brings forth undesirable, evil fruit. How we have all witnessed this in nature--the sound apples come from good apple trees that are in healthy condition. The knotty, wormy, unsatisfactory fruit comes from trees that are diseased, under-nourished, uncared for, unpruned, attacked by worms, etc.

In this illustration our Lord seems to refer to the fact that those who are his disciples, sound and proper enough to begin with, might become evil, might lose their spiritual strength and fruitfulness--their carefulness. Lack of nourishment in the soil would expose a tree to disease, blight. So the Christian who would add to his attainment in knowledge is liable to decline in spirituality unless he have spiritual nourishment of the right kind. As without pruning the tree would develop suckers, which would corrupt it and ultimately destroy its fruitfulness, so the Christian needs the disciplines, the prunings, that he may develop in character and the graces of the Spirit. Our heavenly Father is the great husbandman and has promised us the proper care, yet it is not exactly with us as with the trees; for because of our higher endowment, our god-like quality of individuality, will, we are dealt with differently.

To a considerable degree it is for us to determine what nourishment we will have. The Lord supplies the good soil of Truth, the refreshing showers of grace, and the nourishment of precious promises, but it is for each of his people to use these and thereby to grow in grace, knowledge and love. We cannot, then, blame the Husbandman if we come short, and be unfruitful from lack of nourishment. None of his good promises can fail; whatever failing there may be must be in ourselves. Likewise with the pruning--the Lord will send the chastisements, trials, difficulties; but with our independent will it is possible for us to pass these by and, failing to use them, fail to correct the weaknesses, shortcomings and wrong developments of our nature. It is possible with us, notwithstanding all the development or pruning we may receive, to set our affections on houses, lands, or earthly aims, objects or individuals, which, like the suckers in the illustration, would draw

away our vitality and hinder our bearing of acceptable fruit.

The sound tree cannot bear poor fruit, nor the corrupted or decayed tree bring forth good fruit. While each of the Lord's people is to examine himself before the mirror of God's Word, to ascertain his own character, disposition, likeness or unlikeness to divine standards, nevertheless, in this matter of deciding about fruit, whether it be good or bad, each of the Lord's people is called upon to exercise judgment in regard to others as well as to himself--what are the results, the fruitage, the token of my own life, and what is the fruitage, results, token of my brother, my neighbor. Our Lord's intimation is that these tests are specially applicable to those who would be leaders of his flock. They should all be examples, bearers of good fruit, and these good fruits should be looked for as a test of good, sound character--a character fully in harmony with the Lord...

"I NEVER KNEW YOU"

Continuing his discourse, our Lord implies eventually a great number of nominal followers devoid of his Spirit, not bringing forth the fruitage that he desires, not members of his called and chosen and faithful class, though outwardly, nominally, all of these. Of this class he says there shall be many. He points down to our day, saying, "in that day"--in the closing of this age, in the testing time, in the time when he shall come to make up his jewels and to glorify them as his Bride, his members, his associates in the Kingdom. Many at that time--in our day--will profess that they know the Lord, that they are prophets or teachers, that they are casting out devils, opposing sin and multitudinous forms of evil, and that they are carrying on mighty works, benevolent institutions, colleges, seminaries, etc., in his name. The Revised Version gives, "by thy name," intimating that the name of Christ is used rather as a charm, to conjure by.

How true is this picture to the conditions of our day! How many take the Lord's name in vain, associating it with their enterprises, which are often in direct conflict with the Master's Word and Spirit. Why do they use his name? Simply as a talisman to conjure by, to increase their influence, to satisfy their own minds, to make themselves believe that in doing their own wills they are working the will of God. How true this is in respect to nearly all religious institutions of our day!...

But the testing time is near--the Lord will inquire respecting the fruit of these systems... It will be shown that many of the prophets of Babylon are false prophets, whose teachings have misguided the people and, instead of blessing, have done injury, instead of enlightening have blinded. It will be manifested that many of them are ravening wolves in sheep's clothing, hungry with ambition for fame and prominence and honor of men, and willing to barter the interests of the flock for their personal aggrandizement. It will be shown that much of this conjuring in the name of Jesus has been merely a cloak under which, deceiving and being deceived, sectarian fruitage, and not the love, joy, peace and holy Spirit, have been cultivated. The day will declare it, will show it, will manifest it. The whole world shall be witness eventually that God's name was proven a dishonor, and his Word misrepresented, because false teachers were

looking every one to gain from his own quarter--his own denomination.--Isa. 56:11.

The Lord never knew the sects--he never recognized them, he never authorized them; they are of men, and for men, not of the Lord nor for the Lord's glory... The gathering out of the Bride class and the leaving of the remainder will be saying in effect, "I never knew you, never recognized you, never authorized you;" and these unauthorized sects will go down in the great time of trouble. We are glad, however, that the thousands and millions who have been deceived by these false systems will have a glorious opportunity during the Millennial age to come to a knowledge of the Truth and a right understanding of the character of God as revealed in the fulfilment of his gracious plan...

ON THE ROCK OR ON THE SAND

This picture or parable of one house built upon the rock and the other house built upon the sand refers not to the Church and the world, but to two parties in the Church. None are in the parable except "those who hear these sayings of mine." The world hears not our Lord's message at all. As the Apostle declares, the world is both deaf and blind to spiritual things. Those who hearken to and appreciate the Lord's sayings represent at least a nominal Church, and amongst those of the nominal Church are some who are obedient to the Lord's Word while others are disobedient. The obedient are built upon the rock, the disobedient upon the sand.

Those who build upon the rock our Lord explains to be such as not only hear his message but are obedient thereto to the extent of their ability. Let us remember the words to which he refers--they are the words or message of the Sermon on the Mount, which show the things which are blessed of God in contradistinction to the things which would not have his approval. Those who do, who strive for, who to the best of their ability obey these divine teachings, the message from heaven, are laying the foundations which will be permanent, which will guarantee them against all the storms, difficulties and trials of the present life.

Those who hear the Master's words and say, "Yea, Lord," but who do not put the Master's teachings into practice, are not built properly upon the rock of Truth, upon Christ. They are building their hope, their faith, their trust upon a foundation which will not stand. When the adversities of life come upon such their hopes will be undermined, their faith will collapse. Thus does the Lord teach us that it is not merely to know his will, to be doctrinally informed, but that he is looking for such character development in us as will bring us into full harmony with his teachings, into heart harmony, and, to the extent that we are able, to obedience in all the affairs of life. The other, whose faith is built upon knowledge without obedience, without growth in grace, will not be accepted to the Kingdom, will not be members of the Bride class, will not be joint-heirs with God's dear Son.

"THE FIRE OF THAT DAY"

In this lesson our Lord describes not only the trials and tests which come upon all Christians throughout this Gospel age, but especially the great test in the close of this age--in the "harvest" time. Here his figure is that of rain, floods, and winds beating upon

the faith structure of his professed followers, overthrowing the faith of those not properly constructed in accordance with his teachings, but unable to harm those founded on the rock of Truth. A mighty downpour of Truth throughout Christendom is in progress. The great storm is already raging. The various denominations are trembling under the shock. Their foundations on human tradition, creeds, theories, ignorance, superstition of the "dark ages," are realized to be unsatisfactory. Ere long the storms of Truth will move the quicksand foundation upon which nominal Christendom is built, and her wreck will follow. Only the true people of God will be able to stand the great storm of "that day"--already beginning.

This is the same storm and flood mentioned by the Lord through the prophet Isaiah--"The hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies, and the waters shall overflow the hiding places...when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, then shall ye be overthrown by it. From the time that it goeth forth it shall take you; for morning by morning shall it pass through, by day and by night: and it shall be a vexation only to understand the report [the message, the Truth]."--Isa. 28:17-19.

The same day of trial is pictured under another figure by the Apostle Paul when he says, "The fire of that day shall try every man's work of what sort it is." He pictures true believers built upon the rock, the true foundation, but points out to us the necessity of having a proper house, or faith, as well as a proper foundation. He pictures one faith structure built of wood, hay, stubble, combustible materials, which will shortly be destroyed in this day when the fire of divine judgment shall test every doctrine and destroy every error. He pictures also the proper building constructed of gold, silver and precious stones, the divine promises, and how these will stand every test.

The lesson as a whole is, first, that we must be on the rock foundation to have either part or lot in the matter--to be able to stand any test; second, that of those upon the rock, trusting in Christ, loyal to him and his atonement work, there will be two classes--the "little flock," faithful to the Word and upheld by it and protected, and the "great company," not sufficiently diligent and careful respecting the divine promises, and who will have a faith structure largely composed of error, which will be consumed. Respecting this latter class the Apostle declares, "the same shall be saved, yet so as by fire." This fitly describes the deliverance of the great company, who will "come up through great tribulation and wash their robes and make them white in the blood of the Lamb."--1 Cor. 3:12,15; Rev. 7:14.

"DOERS OF THE WORD"

Our golden text is well chosen--"Be ye doers of the Word and not hearers only." To be honored with a knowledge of the divine will and plan is a great boon, a great blessing; but it brings a great responsibility... To attain the glorious things to which we have been invited we must not merely have this honor but must make use of the privilege and show our appreciation by obedience to the terms of the Covenant..."

R1719 THE POWER OF FAITH *"This is the victory [the conquering power] that*

overcometh the world, even our faith." --1 John 5:4...

Let us see, then, that we have the faith of Christ--the faith well founded in the Word of God, a faith examined and proved, deeply rooted in the heart as well as in the head, and therefore *established* as the motive power of life...

Faith, to be a conquering power in us, must go deeper than the head: it must go into the heart, and thus permeate and energize the whole being, bringing not only the outward conduct but every thought into subjection to Christ."

R4042 "HAVING DONE ALL, STAND"

"Wherefore take unto you the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand."--Eph. 6:13...

We recognize that we are already in the "evil day." Nevertheless we fear that many fail to make a personal application of the Apostle's words to themselves. It is right enough to apply them to all in Christendom who make a sincere profession of faith in God and devotion to his cause. It is right enough to rejoice that we have by the Lord's grace come to a considerable knowledge of his great Plan of the Ages... This implies that we have to some extent heeded the Apostle's words, that we have to some extent taken to us the armor which God has provided in preparation for the present and approaching tests in this harvest time. But there is a danger: we fear that some in whom the good work of grace has begun are too well satisfied with their attainments...

But even if we knew a great deal, if we knew twice as much as we now know, we should understand our acquisition of knowledge merely to correspond to the *finding* of the armor mentioned by the Apostle in our text. We should notice that he does not merely say that we should find the armor, but, much more to the point--he declares that we should put it on. The Lord's object in providing us with the knowledge was that thereby we might grow in grace. Knowledge, then, is merely a means to an end desired. Well does the Apostle say, "Knowledge puffeth up, but love buildeth up." (1 Cor. 8:1.) If we could get love alone without getting knowledge it would be very much to be preferred above getting knowledge alone without getting love, but God has otherwise arranged, namely, that we must have knowledge as the basis for love, and that we must have love as the outgrowth of the knowledge if we would be acceptable to him as members of the Elect Church. Hence, we are to grow in grace, and to this end incidentally we must grow in knowledge, because how could we love God if we knew him not, and how could we develop his character-likeness except as we would be sanctified through the truth?

Were we to analyze the armor we would find it not merely an armor of knowledge but very largely indeed an armor of faith, an armor containing love as one of its chief elements, and surely in every part riveted together with love. What would our breastplate be worth without this love element? Ah, we see that our dear Redeemer's death constitutes our breastplate, that his love provided the redemption which covers us and protects us, and that it is our appro-

priation of his love and our reciprocating love for him and for the Father and for the divine law that led us to a full consecration of ourselves to his service. It is behind this breastplate of righteousness--of which the love of God and our love for God and for the Lord Jesus are the chief elements--that we are secure, justified through faith in the precious blood, counted righteous through the love and mercy of God.

And our helmet, does it signify an intellectual knowledge of the Lord? Yes! and yet it is a knowledge based not upon the things that are seen but upon the things that are unseen. Our helmet is a faith-knowledge, and the basis of this faith is an appreciation of the love of God which passeth all understanding, which has begun the good work, not only in our redemption, but in the sanctification of our hearts. The love of God for us and our love for him are most intimately related to this helmet, and whoever would put it on, whoever would be protected by it, must surely recognize the divine law and be responsive in love himself.

And what of our shield of faith? Is not the love of God, the mercy of God and of our Lord Jesus, the basis of our faith? We are not trusting either to our works or our knowledge for salvation, for both of these prove to us that we are unworthy of divine favor. We are trusting in God's love and in the loving sacrifice of our Redeemer, and this shield can be appreciated and will be thoroughly used only by those who have received of the love of God as well as of a measure of knowledge.

The sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God, is a part of this armament. But do we not see that many who have the Word of God are holding it by the blade and not by the hilt? Do we not see that a failure to appreciate the love of God has been their difficulty, so that the study of the Word and the knowledge gained respecting the Word have been comparatively valueless to them, misleading--injurious--because they received not the Truth in the love of it...Pride and self-love have hindered many from taking the sword of the Spirit in the proper manner; pride and denominational love have hindered others; and we are safe to say that all who handle the sword of the Spirit, the Word of God, are in great danger of doing injury to themselves thereby, except as they speak the Truth in love--"in the love of it"--in appreciation of it as God's great revelation of himself and of his purposes. If selfishness to any extent combines with this love, to that extent the sword is dangerous to the one who wields it. Love out of a pure heart is the only proper, the only safe condition.

The sandals of preparation for contact with the world and the ruggedness of the way are very necessary. Pride and ambition may enable us to pass over a considerable stretch of rough roadway without discouragement, but we may be sure that the Lord has so arranged the narrow way that selfish ambitions will never carry us to the end. On the contrary, the divine order is that only love for the Lord and for his flock and for his Truth will so protect us that we can go onward and upward in the narrow way clear to the end of the journey without discouragement that would turn us aside."