

# The Bible Standard

*“Send out your light and truth! Let them lead me;...”*

*Psalm 43:3*

## **“LIFT UP A STANDARD FOR THE PEOPLE”**

**Isaiah 62:10**

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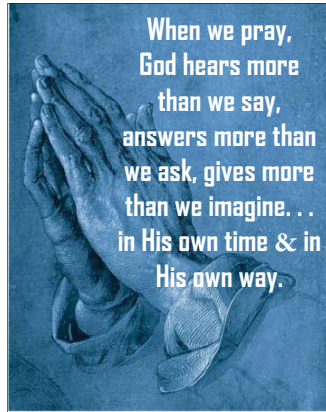
**ANNOUNCEMENTS  
WHAT.... ME WORRY?**



# THANKSGIVING IN ALL THINGS

*The LORD Delivers Men from Manifold Troubles. O give thanks unto the LORD, for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever.—Psalms 107:1*

Thanksgiving Day appeals to all of us, and we are glad that the Pilgrim Fathers many years ago started the custom in the United States. They placed it at the end of the harvest to celebrate successful crops, and probably the Indians' generosity. National thankfulness is expressed in the United States in the form of Thanksgiving Day, the fourth Thursday of each November. The harvest period is traditionally a time of giving thanks in other countries as well. The keeping of such a day appeals to all civilized mankind to a considerable degree. The man or woman, rich or poor, educated or ignorant, bond or free, who does not have this quality of veneration [the ability to regard with reverential respect] developed in considerable measure cannot be appreciative and respectful toward his Creator and would not fully appreciate Thanksgiving Day.



When we pray,  
God hears more  
than we say,  
answers more than  
we ask, gives more  
than we imagine. . .  
in His own time & in  
His own way.

The spirit of today seems generally to ignore God and not to give Him the praise properly due Him. Mankind is so extremely busy with the affairs of life that God is often not mentioned, and there is comparatively little of thanksgiving and praise rendered to Him who's overruling providence and power brought this nation, USA, into being and has given it such freedom and blessings. Our Pastor has brought to our attention that the U. S. Constitution is very close to and in harmony with God's law. Let us take heed to the reverential words Benjamin Franklin stated in the course of the drafting of the U. S. Constitution: "I have lived, sirs, a long time, and the longer I live, the more convincing proofs I see of this truth—that God governs in the affairs of men. If a sparrow cannot fall to the ground without His notice, is it probable that a nation can rise without His aid? We have been assured, sirs, in the sacred writings, that 'except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it.' I firmly believe this. And I also believe that, without His concurring aid, we shall succeed in our efforts here no better than the builders of Babel." Mr. Franklin concluded by saying that, "If men who govern cannot do so under the guidance of God, obeying His directives, mankind may hereafter despair of establishing

governments by human wisdom and leave it to chance, war and conquest." We are living in the great Time of Trouble which includes the boastful acclamations by politicians.

For those who have and continue to live in a country that was founded on Christian principles; many recognize the value of having a personal relationship with Jehovah and even though we have had several encounters with disordered nature, yet we can thank God otherwise for peace and plenty, for bountiful harvests, abundant rains and smiling skies, and for general national health and security. If, however, we yet see ourselves as worse off than others through no fault of our own, we might be led to ask, what have we to be thankful for? And how deep should the spirit of thankfulness penetrate our hearts? Let us use the words in Daniel, "And at the end of the

days I, Nebuchadnezzar, lifted up mine eyes unto heaven, and mine understanding returned unto me, and I blessed the most High, and I praised and honored him that liveth forever, whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom is from generation to generation" (Daniel 4:34).

As consecrated children of God, acquainted with the Truth and its understanding, we are specially favored; first, in that we have been delivered from the power of darkness; secondly, in that we are being made fit to be partakers in the joys of Christ's Kingdom. While as aliens and foreigners, as pilgrims and strangers sojourning in the most enlightened and civilized lands of the earth, we are blessed with a large measure of temporal prosperity.

Let us not forget to thank God that the lines of His providence have fallen to us in such pleasant places, that civilized ideas have scattered the dense darkness of the ages past, that we are permitted to live amid liberty, education and general enlightenment. What a blessing it is to be relieved from the superstitions which retard the progress of so many of our fellow human beings from advancement toward liberty, truth, morals, peace and prosperity; and how great are the temporal advantages arising from progressive ideas, general education and personal liberty; advantages

of peaceful home and family life, of comfortable dwellings and neat and convenient furnishings, of medical skill, of commercial enterprise, of religious freedom, of a free press and an open Bible. What inestimable privileges are these! And yet we who enjoy them are only a minority of our present world population. The Christian lives each day to the fullest in honor of God's outpouring of love.

The Christian recognizes the privilege of working out his salvation with joy and rejoicing each day of his life with the hope of being granted life everlasting in God's Kingdom. To increase this privilege the Christian is privileged to pray to a *Living Christ!*



The object of prayer is to bring the heart and mind of the true disciple—whether in joy or sorrow—into contact with the heart of God, that the disciple may be enabled to realize more fully the Fatherhood of God, His love and care and His deep interest in every

item of our welfare. In our deep affliction we may unburden our hearts to God and have forcefully brought to our attention His love, care and wisdom for our encouragement and strengthening and for our joy.

It is not necessary for us to instruct Jehovah how to arrange matters for the best, but it is our place to bring our hearts to realize that He is the center of wisdom and power and that, having unburdened our hearts, we are to be prepared to listen for His answer and advice through His Word. Those whose knowledge of prayer is confined to the meager information they have imparted *to* God with “much speaking,” and who have never learned to *listen* for the answer to their prayers at the Word of God, have as yet measurably failed to appreciate the object of prayer (Matt. 6:7).

The province of prayer is *to ask for only those things that God has already declared Himself well pleased to grant*. We may speak freely to Him as a Father, and tell Him that we accept and understand His Word and of the confidence and trust we have in its ultimate fulfillment; yet we must not tell Him of our will and our plan, and what we would prefer. We should put far from us any such spirit, and instead bring ourselves into full accord with His will and His Plan. This attitude would cut short some of the “long prayers,” “much speaking,” and “vain repetitions” by which some endeavor to instruct the Lord in their wishes regarding every matter under heaven.

While assuring us that the Father cares for us, and is well-pleased to have us come to Him with sincere hearts, the Master informs us of the conditions upon which we may expect an answer. He says (John 15:7), “If ye [1] abide in me, and [2] my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.” What is it to abide in Christ? It implies first that our *will* has been wholly swallowed up in the will of God and Christ. More than this, that our will is in this condition *at the time of prayer*, that is, *abiding in Christ*. If our will is controlled entirely by the will of Christ, we will consult the Word of God and look to it for guidance as to what God's will is *before* framing our petition. This being the case, we will be prepared to ask any and everything we may (rightly) will to ask.

Our requests would probably be as simple as was the Master's petition when He prayed, “Not my will, but thine be done” (Luke 22:42). In such a condition prayers are always answered, but in such a condition the prayers would be very modest. Our prayers under such circumstances will be more of thanksgiving for our blessings, an expression of confidence and trust and the committing of our way unto the Lord, confidently realizing the promise that is to us under such conditions, all things work together for good (Rom. 8:28). Whatever comes, therefore, we may realize that the prayer was answered. We can rejoice, because we will be prepared to rejoice in tribulation as well as in prosperity, in the path of service. We will not oppose whatever God permits, knowing that it will work out for our good.

We list some examples of things that are *not* proper to pray for:

1. We should not pray for the immediate conversion of the world, for though we firmly believe that God “will have all men to be saved and to come unto the knowledge of the truth” (1 Tim. 2:1-6) we recognize that this present Age is not in God's Plan devoted to this work. God's salvation work has been directed to the selection of those who will be His instruments for blessing all the families of the earth in His arranged time (Acts 3:19-21).

2. We should not single out an ungodly friend and request God to work a miracle on him or her and bring that one into the Christian fold. We may, however, pray for wisdom to present the Word aright, that, if possible, the light of the understanding of the glory of God might shine into the understanding of our friend. This would be in harmony with the Word of God. Jesus exhorts us to be “wise as serpents, and harmless as doves” and instructs us that “if any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that

giveth to all men liberally and upbraideth not” (Matt. 10:16; James 1:5).

3. We may not ask for riches and honor, nor for fine food and fine clothing. To pray for these is contrary to the spirit of the Master. But we may ask, “Give us this day our daily bread,” assured that the Father knows what is best and what things are needful to us. His concern for us embraces our interests temporal as well as spiritual, future as well as present.

4. We ought not to pray or labor for the perpetuation of the political parties and governments of this world, for the Word of Christ abides in us, and we are therefore not in darkness. We know that “the times of the Gentiles,” the lease of power granted to national governments by God, expired nominally in 1914 (Luke 21:24). God’s Kingdom will in due time supplant these.

We list some examples of things that are proper to pray for:

1. Those who abide in Christ and in whom His Word abides can pray for their enemies and those who spitefully use and persecute them (Matt. 5:44), though they cannot pray for God to open their blinded eyes at once, or in their preferred way. Realizing from the indwelling Word of God’s promise that the blinded eyes will all be opened to the Truth, they can wait on Him, and going to God in prayer, they may express their forgiveness of the persecutors, their interest in them, and their patient waiting for the day when the knowledge of the Lord shall fill the earth (Jer. 31:33, 34).

2. Though a *time* for praying is not specified in Scripture, who among God’s children has not experienced the blessedness of communion with the Lord in the morning of each day, asking His guidance of its affairs, and realizing and expressing to Him our confidence in and reliance upon His promises? This starting prayer reminds us of God’s promises and strengthens and prepares us for the events of the day. And at the end of the day, how impossible it is for a consecrated one to retire without thankfulness of heart! How appropriate to bow the knee, and the heart, to render homage as well as thanks for the day!

Though not enjoined specifically, how appropriate that husband and wife should blend their hearts and bow their knees in Divine worship, and in submission to the Divine will! This tends to unify their hearts and lives. How blessed such an example is to the children! It is entirely appropriate that our children be trained to look to their Creator in the days of their youth, not necessarily with formal or lengthy prayers, but in a simple, earnest, and trustful manner. They will learn from praying parents the lesson of obedience and

submission both to their parents and to God.

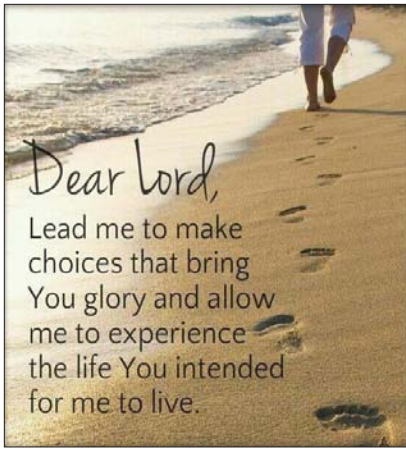
As soon as children come to a reasoning age, their attention to the daily family prayer, whether it be morning or evening, should be placed on the same plane that God places it before the consecrated parents: not of constraint, but of a willing mind, out of a thankful and loving heart. Parental example in such things will make home and parents and sacred things dear to children in later life.

3. What is true of the natural family is not less true of God’s family, of which we are members. To bind us together in love, God has arranged to make the various members more or less dependent on each other for the blessings He is willing and ready to bestow. He would unify them in His method of providing spiritual food. This being true, we must not neglect the assembling of ourselves with those of like precious faith when we can. How sweet and refreshing such assemblies can be! How appropriate, then, to ask our Father’s blessing upon each meeting, that the spirit of love may pervade the members of Christ’s family there gathered, that the Truth might be discerned by sincere and Truth-hungry souls, so that all might be more and more filled with the self-sacrificing spirit and be built up in the most holy faith and love, and made fit for the Master’s service.



Prayer is not a *duty*, but it is a *necessity*. The Father desires such to worship Him as worship Him “in spirit and in truth” (John 4:23), and it would be contrary to this principle to define prayer as an obligation and to stipulate a set time, place, or formal manner. The earnestness of the request and the peculiarity of the circumstances will regulate the frequency and the entire matter. May we all continue to rejoice with thanksgiving in the marvelous privilege of prayer (Eph. 6:18; Phil. 4:6, 7; Col. 4:2)!

Let us examine another reason for thanksgiving brought to our attention in 2 Cor. 12:9 “My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness.” Our Lord Jesus’ words of encouragement here given apply not only to the Apostle Paul, but also, we may be sure, to all of us who likewise have accepted Christ as our Savior,



have consecrated our lives to God and are energized by His holy Spirit. Doubtless the Apostle's experiences in connection with his "thorn in the flesh," likely his weak eyesight, were given to him and recorded in the Scriptures for the benefit of all

others of God's people, who, from his day until now, have been suffering from time to time under peculiar trials, of which the necessity and value have not always been clearly discerned.

When Paul, blinded by the great light emanating from Jesus' spirit body at the time of his conversion, finally received God's forgiveness and the restoration of his sight in considerable measure, he no doubt bore patiently with the continued weakness of his eyes, considering it a proper chastisement for his wrong course as an opponent of the Anointed One and an injurious person in respect to the Body of Christ, His Church.

The Apostle explains to us that he did request healing—the removal of this grievous affliction or "thorn." He tells us that he did this three times (2 Cor. 12:8). There is a point in connection with the matter which apparently up to that time he had not discerned clearly, namely, that the healing of his eyes would be a part of the restitution blessings. But he, like the others of God's consecrated people, had laid his all, his justified humanity, on the altar, and had been called by God, not to restitution, but to sacrifice, to self-denial in the interests of the Lord, the Truth and the brethren. He himself explained the matter to others, saying, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service" (Rom. 12:1).

But knowing that the blessings of God, including physical healing, were passing through him to others, the Apostle probably wondered whether some of such healing might not have been for himself. He had yet to learn that the gift of healing conferred upon him was as a witness to the people of the world rather than for the saints, who had consecrated their humanity unto death. He had yet to learn that if permitted by God to take back his consecration to sacrifice, even in a measure, it would mean his letting go proportionately of the spiritual blessings and favors which God bestows upon us when we, for Christ's sake, deny

ourselves of earthly things that would probably conflict with our full devotion to Him and His cause (Matt. 16:24).

God tells His consecrated people to "set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth" (Col. 3:2). This was the lesson He wished to impress on the Apostle. Like Jesus he was in all things to be an example to the flock (1 Pet. 2:11, 12; 5:3; 1 Cor. 4:16; 11:1; Phil. 3:17; 4:9), and therefore it was appropriate not to grant his petition. However, what God did *not* do, furnished a lesson to Paul, and also gives a valuable and blessed lesson to all of God's people, especially to those who are His servants in any special capacity.

What a comfort it has been to many to have the Lord's assurance that what afflictions, trials and difficulties He does not remove from us, He permits for wise and loving purposes! These, He assures us, will all work together for our good (Rom. 8:28). On behalf of the consecrated, He declares, "My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in [supplements] weakness" (2 Cor. 12:9).

Like the Apostle Paul, all of God's consecrated people, including the Consecrated Epiphany Campers, should in humility recognize their own weaknesses and infirmities, and trust not in the arm of flesh, but in the Lord's strength, which is all-sufficient and never fails. By giving our all, in consecration, we can be overcomers and go on to assured victory. Yes, we can say with Paul (2 Cor. 12:10), "Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak [insufficient in my own strength], then am I strong [in the Lord's never-failing strength]," and "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me" (Phil. 4:13). How can we not be filled with the joy of thanksgiving!

Many of the world, of those who have not through Christ dedicated their lives to God and so have not become His true people, give thanks to Him as their Creator and Provider for blessings received, expressing to Him their gratitude, which is proper for them to do. "The LORD is good to all: and his tender mercies are over all his works" (Psa. 145:9); "He maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust" (Matt. 5:45). All, therefore, have much cause to thank their great Creator for His bounties so generously bestowed, including the gift of life itself.

If others have cause for thanksgiving, how much more cause have those into whose hearts has shined the light of the knowledge of God, radiating from Jesus Christ our Savior and Lord (2 Cor. 4:6)! Those favored can and should rejoice and give thanks under all circumstances and conditions—in sickness, pain, sorrow, affliction and death, whether they

are abased or whether they abound (Phil. 4:12). Surely thankfulness is an ingredient necessary to Christian living! It must be in our thoughts and words, and mixed with our songs of praise and our prayers; it must fill our hearts to enable us to render faithful and efficient service to God and Christ. It was this gratitude, thankfulness, that enabled Paul and Silas to serve our Master so faithfully that they could sing praise and offer thanks for the privilege of suffering for Christ in the jail at Philippi, while their backs were smarting from the cruel lashes received as the cost of their discipleship (Acts 16:23, 25, 33).

Moreover, thankfulness, gratitude, duty love, toward God and Jesus, in response for the great love They have manifested toward us, must ever be the attitude of the consecrated child of God; its loss even for a moment should be deplored as an evidence of spiritual sickness, and those so afflicted should go at once for healing to the Great Physician. Prayer and meditation on God's Word, especially on those portions that treat of all that He has done, is doing and will do for us, will bring refreshment and renewal of duty love and zeal toward God and Jesus because of all Their blessings for us given at such great cost. "Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift" (2 Cor. 9:15). "Let the peace of God rule in your hearts . . . and be ye thankful. And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father by him" (Col. 3:15, 17). "For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit [mind], which are God's" (1 Cor. 6:20; 7:23; 10:31).

It is with hearts filled with thanksgiving that the child of God desires to make a consecration to the ever loving

Jehovah. This requires separation from the common and ordinary and a dedication to the Lord. In the New Testament we have illustrations of consecration in Peter yielding himself over to the Lord; in Paul doing the same thing; in James, the Apostle, doing the same thing; and in John doing this likewise. Consecration consists of a number of things. It is the surrender of one's human all to God's will, first, in self-denial and world-denial, secondly, in meditation on the Lord's Word, thirdly, in watchfulness, fourthly, in prayer, fifthly, in the spread of the Word, sixthly, in the practice of the Word, and seventhly, in suffering for loyalty to the Lord's Word.

One cannot consecrate in their own strength, for we have not the strength to overcome ourselves, inasmuch as one is not more powerful than himself. Nevertheless we can do it; it is possible by the strength that the Lord gives us, for He puts at our disposal His Spirit, Word and providences, which give us the strength that we need to do this very important thing.

God's enlightened people may use such and other holidays, with cessation of regular secular work, as times of special rejoicing in Him, His Word, and His blessings, of fellowship, of witnessing, *etc.*



**THE ARMOR OF GOD**  
Ephesians 6:10-18  
**PUTTING ON THE STRENGTH OF OUR LORD**

## The Christian's Armor

*"Take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand"*—Eph. 6:13. (NKJV)

God's Word points us to the great Time of Trouble with which this Gospel Age ends and with which the New Era of the Millennial Kingdom is introduced. It is indicated as a time of very severe trial, not only to the world, but also to the Lord's people. This "evil day" is now upon us; "For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand" (Rev. 6:17; Mal. 3:1, 2)? The urgent message to the Lord's people for this "evil day" is, put on the whole armor of God, prepare yourself for the great testing of this day, that you may be able to stand! Get ready! Each piece of the armor, each grace of the holy Spirit, is a part of the necessary preparation for this "evil day," when "every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it

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shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is" (1 Cor. 3:13; 4:5; Eph. 6:13-18; 2 Pet. 1:4-11).

We begin this study with some thoughts from our Pastor C. T. Russell. To be numbered among the people of God is a very great privilege; but it means much more than many seem to understand—much more both on their part, and on God's part. On the peoples' part, it signifies, not merely a name to live in some great organization which bears the Christian name, but that they have become believers, children of God through Christ, that they have fully consecrated themselves to God to follow in the footsteps of His dear Son, that they have renounced the vain pomp

and glory of the world and have solemnly covenanted to live apart from its spirit, ambitions, hopes and aims; and not only so, but that, in pursuance of that covenant, they are striving daily to be faithful, and meekly to take up their cross and follow their leader and head, Christ Jesus.

On God's part it signifies the fulfilment of all His gracious promises to such through Christ, both for the life that now is, and for that which is to come. It signifies that in the present life we have His Fatherly love, care, discipline, counsel, teaching, protection and encouragement to the end, and that afterwards we shall receive everlasting rest and joy and peace. Oh, how blessed to be the people of God! Even in the present life the reward of His favor is beyond

computation. Through all the age God has permitted His people to be scattered as sheep in the midst of wolves, but now the harvest of the age is come, and the gathering of the faithful unto Him is due. They have been growing in the midst of that great organization, the nominal Christian Church, which God calls Babylon (confusion), but which men call Christendom (Christ's Kingdom). Upon this great system which has appropriated the name of Christ while misrepresenting His teaching and His spirit (although in possession of His Word of Truth and of many advantages of precept and example from His saints so long permitted to dwell in her midst), God is about to pour His indignation, which will involve the whole world with it; but before doing so, He forewarns His people to come out of her (Babylon), "that they be not partakers of her sins, and that they receive not of her plagues" (Rev. 18:4).

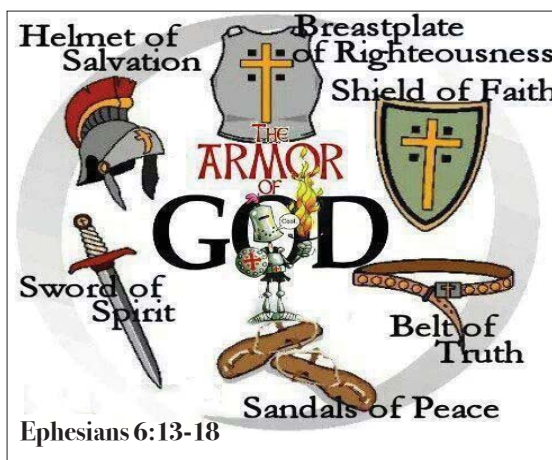
But while calling them to come out of Babylon, He calls them also to come into another place or condition—"Come, my people, enter your chambers, and shut your doors behind you; Hide yourself, as it were, for a little moment, until the indignation be past" (Isa. 26:20 NKJV).

The place of hiding is the secret place of the Most High, under the shadow of the Almighty (Psa. 91:1-9). This secret place of the Most High, Beloved, is the place of intimate communion and fellowship with God, through the blessed privilege of prayer and through faith in His precious Word and His promised providential care. Oh, how precious is this hiding place! What rest and refreshment we find in the midst of the commotion [agitation] that is even now upon the whole world, especially the nations of Christendom. Christendom's vain attempt to bring forward the clear

principles of truth and righteousness from the present confusion of human traditions is recognized as a failure.

Psa. 31:20 speaks to the fully consecrated called out ones "Thou shalt hide them in the secret of thy presence from the pride of man: thou shalt keep them secretly in a pavilion

from the strife of tongues [confusion of human traditions]." Here the consecrated can find rest, peace and joy, which the world can neither give nor take away. Few indeed are those who can understand our motives in withdrawing from the world and from the various organizations of the nominal Christian church to walk alone with God; and many are the reproaches which such must endure for His name's sake. But fear not; shut thy doors [of faith] about thee and



"Above all, take [for the conflict before you] the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked" (Eph. 6:16).

It is well, especially in this time of greatest need, that the Lord's people should consider the value of this portion of the Christian's armor, and that the doors of their faith should thoroughly shut them in to the secret place [of consecration, communion and fellowship—provided in these perilous times for those with a clear understanding of the Divine Plan] of the Most High [sanctified, wholly set apart to God].

By seeking to know God's will in order to do it, the Lord's people are preparing themselves for the glorious inheritance of the faithful; heavenly [now complete] and earthly. We rightly ask, will some fail in the trial that the Lord may permit to come upon them? Yes, the Apostle Paul, in his Epistle to the Church at Ephesus, speaks of some who will be able to stand in "the evil day," and implies that a great many at that time will not be able to stand. He declares that those who hope to stand will need to put on "the whole armor of God." The various pieces of the Christian's armor will then be indispensable, and he intimates that only those fully armored would be ready for the onslaughts of that Day.

The Lord did not reveal to the Apostles when "the evil day" would come. They knew that it was then future, but how far into the future they did not know. They did not expect it before their death; for some of them said that they expected to put off the present body, to die, and to awake in the First Resurrection, and that they believed the Second Coming of Christ to be some time in the future. Evidently it

was a part of God's Plan to keep His people uninformed concerning the exact time of the Day of the Lord, until due; but He provided for them that they would be able to stand when "the evil day" arrived, if they would diligently put on the armor.

And now we have come to this "evil day"; and the urgent message to us is: "Put on the whole armor of God!"—prepare yourselves for the great testing that will come, that you may be able to stand! Get ready! Each piece of the armor, each fruit of the Spirit, is a part of the necessary preparation for this "evil day," this "hour of temptation," now present. So these should all be added with great care.

In Eph. 6:14-17 "Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; and your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God." We read in Isa. 59:17 "For he put on righteousness as a breastplate, and an helmet of salvation upon his head; and he put on the garments of vengeance for clothing, and was clad with zeal as a cloke." *Righteousness* represents duty love to God and the neighbor, one part of love which is likened to the soldier's breastplate. The Apostle here seems to supplement his Eph. 6 description of the Christian's armor by including disinterested love. Let us all seek to put on and keep on "the armour of light" which represents righteousness and Truth that will protect you, not as the robe of righteousness but as an armor over the robe. This armor protects from the darts of the Adversary and includes the helmet of salvation. The light of the word can be the Christian's shield as he searches in the world's darkness for the way to travel in his consecrated walk (1 Cor. 4:5; Rom. 13:12).

We believe it is proper to instruct the consecrated children of God or the Lord's people to be properly prepared for the great Time of Trouble with which the Gospel Age ends and with which the New Era of the Millennial Kingdom is introduced. It is indicated as a time of very severe trial, not only to the world, but also to the Lord's people. This "evil day" is now upon us; for the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand (Mal. 3:1, 2)? The urgent message to the Lord's people for this "evil day" is "Put on the whole armor of God"—prepare yourself for the great testing of this day, that you may be able to stand! Get ready! Each piece of the armor, each grace of the holy Spirit,

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**HE HAS DONE.**

is a part of the necessary preparation for this "evil day," when "every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is" (1 Cor. 3:13).

The Apostle Paul has forewarned the One True Church that in "the latter times," "the last days," "perilous times" would come, when many would "depart from the faith" (1 Tim. 4:1, 2; 2 Tim. 3:1-7). The times in which we live are peculiarly perilous to Christian faith, because of the many subtle and delusive forms of error now springing up to intercept the progress of the Truth. But God's provision for His people is equal to the emergency of these "perilous times." Never before this "evil day" was the *whole* armor of God so much needed. The Lord hands us this armor, piece by piece, and tells us to put it on and to wear it, that we might become accustomed to it and feel at ease and at home in it, for no one can stand without it in this, "the evil day." Oh, we are waiting for that perfect day spoken of in Prov. 4:18.

The Word of God brings to our attention "many called, few chosen" so we can safely say some have been heeding the counsel. Carefully they have buckled on every part of the armor as fast as they have received it; and in consequence they today stand completely clothed with the Truth. Their loins are girt about with it; their feet are shod with it; and it covers their head (their intellectual faculties) as a helmet of salvation (salvation from the snares and delusions of error). Also they have on the breastplate of righteousness—Christ's righteousness and a righteous character, which the Truth has developed in them; and in their hands they bear the Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God, and which they are now able to handle with ease and vigor in defense of the Doctrines of Christ; while their ample shield of faith is an able defense against all the fiery darts of the enemy, so that the flying arrows do not even jar the armor or stun "the inner man" (Eph. 3:16).

**It is not just talking of  
LOVE, but living in LOVE  
that is everything.**

How easy it is to praise God for such an armor! Have you put it on? Do not rest satisfied with the idea that you can get along as well as your fathers did, with the armor as they had it. The time has come when you must have it as needed today, or you will surely fall. The armor as presented to the saints of the past was sufficient for their day and trial; but a greater prevalence of error and trial of



faith in this “evil day” necessitates a more complete defense in this expanded Gospel Age Harvest. We live in a time when thousands of pulpits in Christendom are preaching infidelity and anything except the Truth of God’s Word.



Instead of putting on the whole armor of God and standing, ready and properly equipped to defend themselves and others against the attacks of the world, the flesh and the Devil, many have laid aside much of the armor, piece by piece, and have gone to sleep. Many are taken unawares. “How long wilt thou sleep, O sluggard? When wilt thou arise out of thy sleep? Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep: so shall thy poverty come as a robber, and thy want as an armed man” (Prov. 6:9-11; 24:30-34 A.R.V.).

In this study of *The Christian’s Armor* we must keep in mind that we are not speaking of the armor of Goliath of Gath in his battle with young David, rather as 1 Sam. 17:45 states, “Then said David to the Philistine, Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield: but I come to thee in the name of the LORD of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied.” Oh, what excellent armor God has provided for His dedicated people, with which we are to protect ourselves, and to resist and repel Satan and his agents. This Christian armor, properly used, will prove invulnerable to *all* attacks. “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 [remain a victor]” (Eph. 6:13; 1 Thes. 5:8). The assurance here is that *he who has this armor on, keeps it on and learns to use it properly, will be able to stand*. While the Apostle used as an illustration a human warrior, clothed in the proper and complete accouterments of war, yet he did not mean that the Christian needs literal armor. Spiritual armor is for the Christian, because his warfare is not carnal warfare, but spiritual warfare (2 Cor. 10:4, 5; Matt. 26:52).

Let us first recognize this statement from Eph. 6:14 in detail: no one is safe unless he is a consecrated servant of the Truth. Jehovah has always required a covenant relationship with the consecrated people He is working with! Of necessity the covenant relationships differ: In the Patriarchal Age God dealt on covenant basis with certain patriarchs individually—Abraham, Isaac and Jacob—and through them with their families, but with no one else; during the Jewish Age God dealt, on covenant basis, with the Israelites *as a fleshly nation*, and with no one else; during the Gospel or Christian Age He dealt, on a covenant basis, with the Christian Church—spiritual Israel—as *a spiritual nation* and with no one else.

As these three classes have differed from one another, so the predominant covenant has been a different one in each of these Ages. During the Patriarchal Age God dealt with the Patriarchs and their families on the basis of an *earthly elective feature* of the *Abrahamic*

Covenant; during the Jewish Age, while permitting faithful individuals to enjoy the same provisions of that covenant in a less open way after the Sinaitic law was given, God openly dealt with fleshly Israel as a nation on the basis of the *Mosaic* Covenant; while during the Gospel Age God has been dealing with spiritual Israel on the basis of *certain spiritual elective features* of the *Abrahamic* Covenant.

Generally speaking, the Patriarchal Age began at the end of the flood, partly because at that time God made a special covenant with Noah and his descendants never again to destroy the—symbolic—earth with a flood (Gen. 9:8-17); but specifically speaking, the Patriarchal Age began with the covenant made with Abraham (Gen. 12:1-5). Because of the retroactive operation of the blessings of the Abrahamic Covenant, they were anticipatorily applied to Noah, and even to Enoch and Abel (Heb. 11:4-7, 39, 40). It is because of the retroactive effect of this covenant on Noah, that we are also partly warranted in beginning the Patriarchal Age with the end of the flood. The word *patriarchs* means *first fathers*; and it is because Noah, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were the first fathers of Israel in this period that we call this period the Patriarchal Age. Apart from the covenant never again to destroy the earth with a flood, during this period God did not deal on a covenant basis with every human being, *i.e.*, did not extend anticipatorily or otherwise the blessings of the Abrahamic Covenant to everybody living in that time. The Scriptures teach that the LORD let them go their own chosen sinful way, winking at their ignorance (Acts 17:23, 30; Rom. 1:21-25, 28). On the contrary, during that period He dealt on the Abrahamic Covenant basis with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

God’s dealings were of an elective character during the Patriarchal Age. And He allowed all the rest of mankind to go their own way, lost under the curse, without doing anything during that time directly for their salvation. Jehovah continues to deal with His called out ones on a covenant basis to this very day. So it is a selective, choosing work; it is a selecting out of those who will be used by God to bless all the families of the earth in the incoming Millennial Mediatorial Reign, according to the great Oathbound Covenant to Abraham (Gen. 22:16-18), in which God said, “In thy seed shall *all* the nations [*families*; Gen. 12:3] of the earth be blessed.” And He said this seed would be “as the

stars of heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore.” The star-seed consists of the spiritual, heavenly classes, and the sand-seed, the earthly classes (BS 1984, p. 82; BSQB, p. 242; PTQB, p. 670).

**Oh, that men would give thanks to the LORD for His goodness, And for His wonderful works to the children of men! Let them sacrifice the sacrifices of thanksgiving, And declare His works with rejoicing.**

Psalms 107:21-22

We are all accustomed to speak about addressing the Little Flock members of the One True Church. However, there are other consecrated “brethren” who partake of the blessings received through God’s holy Spirit, to whom the exhortation of our text would also apply—*viz.*, the Great Company (all of whom as individuals were originally inducted into the Body of Christ), the Youthful Worthies and the Consecrated Epiphany Campers. The Consecrated Epiphany Campers, who consecrate during the part of the Epiphany, or Apocalypse, period after the Fall of 1954 are very closely associated and in sympathy with the Youthful Worthies and because of these Campers’ experiences in consecration in this life, while sin is still in the ascendancy, they more than any others will be fitted to be among the chief helpers of the Ancient and Youthful Worthies in their Millennial service in the Kingdom. “Oh that men would praise the LORD for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men! And let them sacrifice the sacrifices of thanksgiving, and declare his works with rejoicing” (Psa. 107:21, 22).

*Eph. 6:14* “Having your loins girt about with truth,” The girdle of the soldier’s armor is a symbol of service, and suggests that no one is safe unless he is a consecrated servant of the Truth, always ready to serve it according to his ability and opportunity. Those engaged in evil surmising, faultfinding, backbiting slander, libel, the spread of error and/or other works of darkness are not serving the Truth. Let each one of us see to it that he guards himself against and does not use such wiles of the Adversary, that he possesses the zeal peculiar to the house of the Lord (John 2:17), and that he earnestly and carefully follows in the Master’s footsteps by serving Him and His cause at all times. Let each examine his girdle of Truth, to see that he has a proper one, and that he is well-girded with it, *i.e.*, that he is a servant of the Truth and has the spirit of service, a readiness to serve according to his ability and opportunity.

V. 14 (continued) “And having on the breastplate of

*righteousness* [justification].” The breastplate was used to cover vital organs of the body, particularly the heart. A proper condition of heart is vital to the Christian. He must adhere to God’s standard of justice, and His arrangement of justification through faith in the merit of the precious blood of His Son. A righteous heart indicates purity, righteous motives and righteousness of character. “Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life” (Prov. 4:23). “For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward him” (2 Chron. 16:9).

*Eph. 6:15* “And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace.” The soldier who engages in warfare must keep well his feet. If they are not properly shod they become sore, and his attention is directed more to the soreness than to his duties. The soldier of the cross who takes part in the warfare without the peace of God to assist him over the rough places, will accomplish less, and with greater difficulty, than the one who seeks to follow peace with all men—to live peaceably with all so far as possible, *without compromising the Truth*. Those who go improperly shod or unshod go hunting trouble and are sure to find little else. If we follow the example of the Captain of our Salvation, we will have our figurative feet well shod with the preparation provided only by the good tidings of peace. Only as we “let the peace of God rule in our hearts” can we successfully “preach the gospel of peace, and bring [to others] glad tidings of good things” (Col. 3:15; Rom. 10:15). We must put away anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication—“the old man with his deeds” (Col. 3:8, 9)—and “if it be possible . . . live peaceably with all men” (Rom. 12:18). We must exercise diligence to keep ourselves in the peace and love of God (Isa. 26:3; Jude 21). Only then will we be able to stand in this “evil day.”

V. 16 “Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.” The enemy is constantly shooting fiery darts—bitter words, false accusations, misrepresentations, vituperations, slanders, higher criticism, evolution, demonology, *etc.*—at the soldiers of the cross. These darts are liable to stir up in your mind doubts, fears, vengefulness, hatred, skepticism, discouragement, *etc.* “The shield of *the* [so the Greek] faith” is your protection. The faith that fortifies you must come from the Word of God. You must have the mental appreciation of and the hearts reliance upon it (Heb. 11:1)—your faith must be thoroughly established on it (1 Cor. 2:5; 2 Pet. 1:12). “Without faith it is impossible to please God.” “This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith” (Heb. 11:6; 1 John 5:4).

V. 17 *“And take the helmet of salvation.”* The helmet is fitted on the head, and represents the intellectual understanding and appreciation of God’s plan of salvation. It is provided in such a size and shape that even the humblest soldier of the cross can put it on. The knowledge and understanding of God’s Word is indispensable, especially here in the expanded Gospel Age Harvest, when the Adversary and his minions are furiously attacking the Truth and turning everything scientific and educational into weapons of destruction. We must have this knowledge and understanding if we would properly resist and refute the many errors that are hurled at us from all directions. We are well-equipped with a knowledge of God’s purposes, and His plans and arrangements for their accomplishment, also we have a knowledge of the Adversary and his demons, their deceptions and their methods of operation, “All scripture, divinely inspired, is indeed profitable for Teaching, for Conviction [refutation of error], for Correction [of wrong qualities and conduct], for that Discipline which is in Righteousness; so that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly fitted for every good work” (2 Tim. 3:16, 17 Diaglott).

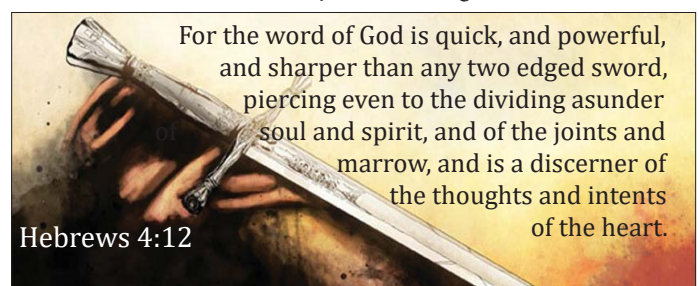
V. 17 (continued) *“And the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God”* This is both an offensive and a defensive weapon. *We must have it and know how to use it.* Jesus wielded it successfully in parrying off each attack that Satan made upon Him, and in counterattacking as necessary. He said, “It is written,” and such must be our battle cry. We are not to use carnal weapons, nor such weapons as Satan uses. We are to use the Truth and let it do the cutting. “For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart” (Heb. 4:12).

The Christian soldier, however, must not think that it is his commission in this Age to convert the world, or to reform it. But he is to bear witness to the Truth (John 18:37), and to let his light “so shine before men, that they may see his good works, and glorify his Father which is in heaven” (Matt. 5:16); he is to “have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them” (Eph. 5:11). God’s holy Spirit, [disposition], is to be so well-developed and indwelling in him that in his sanctified life by word and by conduct he “will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness [showing to the worldly, by means of the sanctified life, what sin is, and what righteousness is], and of judgment [righteous judgment, in which evil deeds of the present life will have a just retribution and righteousness will be rewarded]” (John 16:8).

If our commission is not to save the world, then why

the urgent need to put on the armor of God? Well, the Christian soldier must not forget that his warfare is chiefly within himself. His new mind, the mind of Christ in him, will have constant battles with the desires of his fallen flesh; when he would do good, evil is still present with him. “Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?” (2 Cor. 13:5). As individuals we must look at our present condition and compare it with our past; we look for the “witness” of chiselings, polishings, prunings, disciplines, chastisements. Oh, trials of faith can come when subtle errors are presented as advanced Truth! And then the consecrated child of God will have to fight to “keep his body under [denying any of its desires that conflict with full devotion to God and bring it into subjection] to the new mind, which must fully control its ambitions, appetites and desires (1 Cor. 9:27). He must “abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul” (1 Pet. 2:11). He must “fight the good fight of faith” and “lay hold on eternal life”—if he would have it (1 Tim. 6:12). He must “work out his own salvation [which has been given to him probationarily through Christ Jesus] with fear and trembling” (Phil. 2:12). And “let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall” (1 Cor. 10:12).

But, we who are faithful soldiers of the cross are properly armored, wide-awake and on the alert at all times. “We are the children of light, and the children of the day [seeking and finding daily and hourly fresh supplies of Divine grace; for every day and every hour is a time of need, if we are but awake to realize it] we are not of the night, nor of darkness, therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober . . . Let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation” (1 Thes. 5:5-8). “Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; and your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked; and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God” (Eph. 6:14-17). Only, as our text declares, will we be “able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.”



For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

Hebrews 4:12

# FALLING AWAY FROM STEADFASTNESS

*“Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness” (2 Pet. 3:17).*

In our text above (2 Peter 3:17) the exhortation applies well to the Lord’s consecrated people living during this time of the expanded Gospel Age Harvest. The proof of this is found in the context: the Apostle has just been portraying some of the events connected



**Therefore, I intend to keep on reminding you about these things, even though you already know them and are firmly established in the truth that you now have. 2 Peter 1:12 (NRS)**

with the day of the Lord in which we are living—the “Day of Vengeance.” In 2 Peter 3:7, 10 and 12 he has pointed out that the Gospel Age will end with the dissolution of the symbolic “heavens” and the symbolic “earth,” which signifies the utter disruption of the present ecclesiastical and social order. In v. 13 he points out that we are looking for a new order of things, and not hoping either to patch up the old order ourselves, or that others will succeed in patching what the Lord has declared in v. 10, “shall pass away.” In v. 11 he points out that those who have such expectations should be separate and distinct from all other people in the world, saying, “What manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness?” And then in vs. 16 and 17 he points out that at this particular time Satan will get advantage of certain ones, will beguile them, get them to twist the Scriptures, and deceive themselves to their own destruction;—to their loss of present light at least (Psa. 56:5). Seeing, then, that the admonition of our text applies particularly to the present time, let us indeed give earnest heed to it, for we well know that we live in the great time of trouble, when the vital question is, “Who shall be able to stand?” (Rev. 6:17; Joel 2:11; Nahum 1:6; Heb. 12:26, 27; Eph. 6:13).

We notice further that the Apostle is not addressing the worldly, nor even the average nominal Christian, but he specifies that his warning is to the “beloved,” [brethren] who already had attained to steadfastness. This implies that they had become rooted and grounded and built up, both in the knowledge and in the love of God; for only such ever become steadfast. Does it surprise us that the Apostle should address such a developed class of Christians and warn them of their own personal danger of “being led away with the error of the wicked?” It does strike us as peculiar, and we are inclined to think that there must be some hidden meaning in the expression, “error of the wicked.” Of course, the class just described would *not* be in great danger of being led away with such errors of the wicked as blasphemy, or murder, or arson, or theft. The English word *wicked* is too strong to be used here. The Greek word is *athesmos*. It signifies *unsettled*,

or *lawless*. Now, with this understanding the passage seems more reasonable.

There is danger, we can readily see, that those once established in the Truth might be so led away as to become *unsettled*, and to twist the Scriptures, “handle the word of God deceitfully,” even attempting to add to or take away from God’s Word, and become lawless in the sense that they would set aside the Word or Law of God, and take instead thereof a twisted interpretation which would the better suit some theory of their own. Such a wrong course, the Apostle points out, would surely *unsettle* them, and eventually mean the destruction of their spiritual interests, and that they would go into “outer darkness” in respect to “present truth.” “Beware, lest ye also, being led away with the error of the *unsettled*, fall from your own steadfastness.” The Apostle’s language not only points to the present time, but seems to imply that there would be previous siftings caused by the “error of the wicked”—literally, “the deceit of the *unsettled* [or lawless].” The implication seems to be, that those not settled would first be shaken out, and that subsequently there would come a still more insidious trial which would test even the steadfast. We inquire therefore, have there been, during this “harvest” time (while we are waiting for the dissolution of the present order of things and for the establishment of the new order of things)—have there been such siftings or fallings away by delusions which have affected those not settled, those not “established in the present truth” (2 Pet. 1:12)?

We answer: Yes, there have been several: we might recount some of these. First of all came a shaking directly upon the subject of the ransom: Certain lawless ones, “heady,” rejected the testimony of the Lord’s Word, denying that the Lord “bought us” with His own precious blood. They accepted Christ as an example only, and claimed to be able to follow that example, and that they needed no sin-offering to compensate for their imperfections, inherited or personal. This, the Adversary’s first move, was remarkably bold, yet it found some who were not rooted and grounded upon the testimony of the Lord’s Word. Then came another delusion, in effect teaching the old doctrine of Universalism,—that God would finally force eternal salvation upon all men and even upon Satan himself. This theory of course also denied the ransom; because to have admitted that the condemnation to death pronounced in Eden could not be set aside without a ransom, a *corresponding price*, would

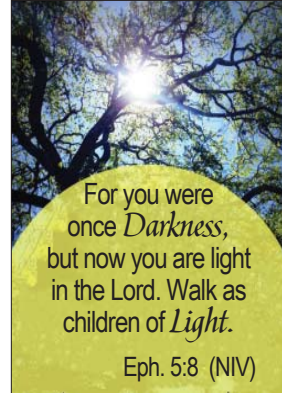
logically have implied that disobedience under the second trial, secured by the ransom, would similarly bring an everlasting punishment—everlasting death—from which there could be no resurrection. This theory boldly denied the ransom, wrested or twisted by twisting the Scriptures which speak of the Second Death as “everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord,” and handled this and other Scriptures so deceitfully as to declare that the Second Death would be a great blessing to all upon whom it would come, since it would merely burn out their evils. Of course none but *unstable souls* could be beguiled, deceived, by such open and arrogant perversions of the Word of God.

Another sifting came for the “unlearned” and unsettled, not thoroughly furnished with the whole armor of God, through the teaching that God is the author and instigator of all the sin, crime and wickedness there is in the world. Of all the theories that the Adversary has brought out, this is one of the most blasphemous. So-called “orthodoxy” is certainly quite blasphemous enough, in claiming that God, after permitting His creatures to be “born in sin and shapen in iniquity” (which He had nothing to do with bringing upon them), claims that, as a punishment for sins which they could not avoid, the vast majority of the human family will be imprisoned in a flaming hell of unspeakable torture, and Divinely provided with everlasting life, so that they shall never be able to escape those sufferings by death, and that the devil will be similarly supplied with eternal life (but free from pain) for the purpose of torturing them. We say that this is extremely blasphemous of the Divine character, yet the teaching which claims that God is the instigator, the first cause, of all the sin and crime and wickedness in the world, is even more blasphemous.

This blasphemous theory is supported by a misinterpretation of the word “*evil*” in two texts, particularly Isa. 45:7 “I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the LORD do all these *things*” and Amos 3:6 “shall there be evil in a city, and the LORD hath not done *it*.” Sin is always an evil, but an evil is not always a sin. An earthquake, a conflagration, a flood or a pestilence would be a calamity, an *evil*; but none of these would be sins. The word *evil* in the texts cited signifies *calamities*. The same Hebrew word is translated *affliction* in Psa. 34:19; 107:39; Jer. 48:16; Zech. 1:15. It is translated *trouble* in Psa. 27:5; 41:1; 88:3; 107:26; Jer. 51:2; Lam. 1:21. It is translated *calamities, adversity* and *distress* in 1 Sam. 10:19; Psa. 10:6; 94:13; 141:5; Eccl. 7:14; Neh. 2:17.

The same word is in very many places rendered *harm, mischief, sore, hurt, misery, grief* and *sorrow*. For example, when the LORD would remind Israel of His covenant with them as a nation—that if they would obey His laws He would

bless them and protect them from the calamities common to the world in general; but that if they would forsake Him He would bring calamities (evils) upon them as chastisements (See Deut. 28:1-14; Lev. 26:14-16; Josh. 23:6-11). When calamities came upon them, however, they were inclined to consider them as accidents and not as chastisements. So God sent them word through the prophets, reminding



them of their covenant and telling them that their calamities were from Him and by His will for their correction. It is absurd to use these texts to prove God the author of sin. Of course, only those who had never become thoroughly rooted and grounded in the Truth could ever be “led away” by such blasphemous delusions as this.

God, during the present evil world, not only permits Satan to be its prince, but also permits the earthly governments of his appointing. The powers that be today are styled Christendom, but are really “kingdoms of this world.” The most civilized of the kingdoms are no more than what the Scriptures term “kingdoms of this world,” more or less under the power or dominion of the prince of this world, Satan. This transfer of kingdoms will be accomplished by a great time of trouble. Over the many years schisms such as: No-Ransomism, Infidelism, Combinationism, Reformism, Contradictionism, and Revolutionism, have led some away from the Truth into more or less darkness and confusion. Some others were not well rooted and grounded in the knowledge of the fact that all present institutions will go down, and that the new order of things to be introduced will not be of human institution, but the work of God through the glorified Christ. “The KINGDOM of the WORLD has become of our LORD’S and his CHRIST’S and he shall reign for the AGES of the AGES” (Rev. 11:15; Diaglott). “One like the Son of man came in the clouds of heaven . . . and there was given him dominion, and glory and a kingdom” (Dan. 7:13, 14).

Murmursome theories contradicting the Biblical teachings on the Hidden Mystery, the Sin offerings, the Mediator and the Covenants likewise led away not a few from the Truth and brought them to a fall from their steadfastness, and since 1917 all sorts of revolutionisms against the Lord’s teachings and arrangements for doing His work have been leading the consecrated children of God into various errors, isms and schisms in which they are one after another being manifested—epiphanized—as having fallen away from their steadfastness. This work of cleansing through siftings

continues to this day and will continue until every consecrated child of God is cleansed and ready for the Kingdom blessings.

### SIFTINGS TEST ALL

While the “siftings” specially affect those who have been brought by the Lord into the light of present Truth, yet in a more general way and along different lines slightly different siftings are in progress with the nominal church as a whole. Each denomination is being shaken, and the theories of Evolution, Spiritism, Christian Science, Theosophy and Moralism continue to make great inroads upon all who have named the name of Christ, even if they have not come into the light of the “harvest” Truth.

Unsettled, lacking the knowledge of the Divine Word and Plan, *necessary in this evil day*, the whole nominal church is gradually losing its faith in the Bible, under the leading of its most able ministers, who, blinded to present Truth, and unable to rightly divide the Word of Truth, are generally coming to hold the opinion, that their own ideas respecting God’s Word are superior to the Scripture presentations.

The Apostle in our text (2 Pet. 3:17) cautions that we beware against being “*led away*.” The word here rendered “*led away*” occurs in only one other place in the Scriptures (Gal. 2:13), where the Apostle Paul says, “Barnabas also was *carried away* with their dissimulation.” The words “*carried away*” give the same thought as “*led away*,” but a little more strongly: they imply that the danger to the steadfast will be along some line which would *sweep away* or *carry away* their judgments from the fixed statements of the Divine Word, through personal preference, or sympathy, or through the influence of someone held in respect or esteem.

Let us all therefore be on guard, that whoever may, consciously or unconsciously, become the instrument of the Adversary, and seek to lead us away from the sure testimonies of the Lord’s Word (whether congenial to our natural tastes or uncongenial), we may *not be “carried away,”* but may be more determined than ever that— To our Lord we will be true.

While we see that the danger to the majority of God’s people will be through being “*carried away*” by sympathy, influence, *etc.*, we must remember that this implies that there will be certain *leaders of thought* whose conduct will tend to carry away the others. We may rather assume that in a majority of instances these leaders will be themselves deceived; as the Apostle expresses it “deceiving and being [themselves] deceived” (2 Tim. 3:13).

All who seek to teach the Divine Plan to others are exposed

**Be self controlled and alert**

your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.

**Resist him standing firm in the faith.**

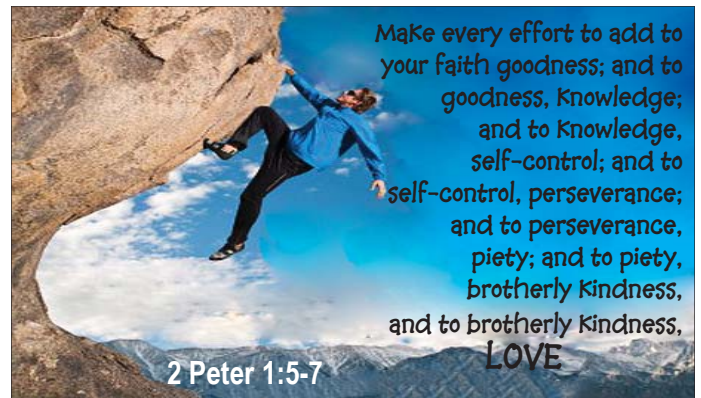
1 Peter 5:8-9 NIV



to peculiar temptations, so that the honor of serving the Lord and His people demands a correspondingly larger measure of the graces of the holy Spirit, as well as of knowledge. The tendency of knowledge, as the Apostle points out, is merely to puff up, make vain and conceited, and to become a temptation of the Adversary, to draw away followers after them (Acts 20:30).

Whoever therefore would be an instructor of others, a mouth-piece of the Lord, should cultivate all the various graces of the holy Spirit, including meekness; that these combined with knowledge, may build up himself as well as build up those to whom he ministers. “Knowledge [alone] puffeth up, but Love buildeth up” (1 Cor. 8:1).

Let us not forget that there is a way, and one way only, whereby we may insure ourselves against falling into any of these traps of the Adversary. This insurance is not secured wholly by knowledge, although knowledge is a very important element in it: it is secured chiefly by obedience to the principles laid down in the Lord’s Word, and illustrated in the life and character of our Lord and His Apostles.



**Make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, Knowledge; and to Knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, piety; and to piety, brotherly Kindness, and to brotherly Kindness, LOVE**

2 Peter 1:5-7

The same Apostle who addresses us, this caution against falling from our own steadfastness, tells us in 2 Pet. 1:10-11, “If ye do these things, ye shall never fall: for so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting Kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.” What things? Does he give us the particulars of this work of grace that will insure us against falling? Yes. He tells us that it is by continually adding to our stock of the heavenly graces,—Add to your faith fortitude, and to fortitude knowledge, and to knowledge self-control, and to self-control patience, and to patience piety, and to piety brotherly-kindness, and to brotherly-kindness love; for these things being in you and abounding, they will not permit you to be inactive nor unfruitful in the knowledge [personal intimacy, acquaintance] of our Lord Jesus Christ . . . Therefore, brethren, more earnestly endeavor to make your calling and election sure.



## The Cost of the Kingdom

The Bible surely tells us that the way to the Kingdom is difficult and narrow, that the cost of being disciples of Jesus is self-denial and cross-bearing. Many wonder that the promises are thus restricted and not to all who strive to do right, without faith or self-sacrifice.

The parable of a camel creeping through a Needle’s-eye illustrated how the rich must unload their wealth if they would prepare to share the Kingdom. The little gate in the larger one was called a “Needle’s-eye.”

Bible students now explain that difficulties are attached to the gaining of the Kingdom because God desires a very choice little company for that glorious position. He has made the trials so severe that only the saintly will avail themselves of the opportunity to gain the Kingdom.

The young ruler asked Jesus: “What shall I do to inherit eternal life?” Jesus referred him to the Law, which promised eternal life to any Jew who would keep it. The young man replied that he had done his best, but still was dying. Jesus loved him for his good endeavors, and pointed him to a new way to life everlasting, by self-sacrifice as His disciple. Additionally he might become a joint-heir with Jesus in glory, honor and immortality.—Mark 10:17-25; Romans 2:7;8:17.

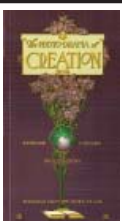
Two dear disciples asked to sit next Jesus on the Throne of His Kingdom. The Master replied, Are you able [willing] to drink of My cup of self-denial, self-sacrifice, ignominy and shame? Are you able to be baptized into My death—to self-will, to cutting off from every earthly privilege, if such be God’s providence for you?—Matthew 20:22; Mark 10:35-38.

Those loving disciples answered that they were ready for anything, with the Master’s help. He assured them and us that He will furnish trials and assistances, and that if faithful to the end, we shall have a crown of life. But the honors and glories of the Kingdom will not be determined by grace, but by Justice.—Matthew 20:23; Revelation 3:21; 2:10.

## Lesson 66

- 1\* What does the Bible tell us regarding the way of the Kingdom? Par. 1
- 2\* What is the cost of being Jesus’ disciples?
- 3\* Do many wonder that the promises are restrictive and do not apply to all?
- 4\* What does the parable of a camel creeping through a Needle’s-eye illustrate? Matt. 19:24, Par. 2
- 5\* What is a “Needle’s-eye”? See Bible Dictionary
- 6 Who explained that difficulties were attached to gaining the Kingdom? Par. 3
- 7\* What did God desire regarding the size of the company for the glorious position?
- 8\* What did the ruler ask Jesus? Mark 10:17. Par. 4
- 9\* What did Jesus refer him to? Did the Law promise eternal life to any Jew that kept it?
- 10\* Why did Jesus love him? What did He point him to?
- 11\* If he had followed Jesus’ advice, what could he have become?
- 12\* Who were the two disciples that asked to sit next to Jesus on His throne? Mark 10:35-37, Par. 5
- 13\* How did the Master reply? Mark 10:38; Matt. 20:22
- 14\* What did these loving disciples answer? Par. 6
- 15\* The Master assured them that if they were faithful they would receive what?
- 16 How were the honors and glories of the Kingdom determined?

\*The questions marked with an asterisk are especially for children.



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TO:

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### VISITING MINISTERS 2017

**John Wojnar**, Chester Springs, PA, December 31,  
January 1, 2018

**Michael Hanning**,  
Indianapolis, IN, November 19

**Richard Piquene**,  
Phoenix, AZ, November 4, 5

**Lawrence Williams**,  
Athens/Nelsonville, OH, November 26

**Brandon Penney**,  
Marietta, GA, December 16, 17

### EVANGELISTIC SERVICES

**David Hanning**  
Cincinnati, OH, November 12

**Michael Dukette**  
Pittsfield, MA, December 10

**Jessie Julian**  
Springfield, MA, December 3

**Roger Mullen**  
Carlstadt, NJ, December 17

**Krzysztof Witko**  
New Haven, CT, December 17

### WHAT... ME WORRY?

People often say or, at least, think to themselves: I'm worried about \_\_\_\_\_ (fill in the blank with the word: you, this, that, or whatever).

Worry is the most useless of all human emotions because much of what is worried about **never happens** and the rest **happens anyway!**

Worry dishonors God and is also evidence of a measurable lack of faith in Him, as Christians, His people, are directed to "be not faithless, but believing" (John 20:27) and to "have faith in God." (Mark 11:22)!

Christians are further directed to "be careful for [i.e., worry about] nothing" (Philippians 4:6), but "always to pray, and not faint." (Luke 18:1)!

"Pray without ceasing" (1 Thessalonians 5:17) is a strong encouragement to all Christians, praying always in a manner consistent with Jesus' instructions to his Disciples, that "Thy will [i.e., the will of God] be

done in earth [especially in the lives of His people, Christians], as it [already] is in heaven" (Matthew 6:10), recognizing that it should never be, according to [their] mind (Job 34:35)!

Hebrews 11:6 declares that "without faith it is impossible to please Him: for he that cometh to God [in prayer and supplication] must believe that He is [i.e., exists], and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him."!

1 Corinthians 10:13 assures Christians that, "there hath no temptation [or trial] taken you but such is common to man: but God is faithful, Who will not suffer you to be tempted [and tried] above that ye are able; but will with the temptation [or test] also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it," while Romans 8:28 offers the consolation "that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose."!

God, Himself, by Whom all things exist and proceed, stated: "So shall My word [i.e., My plan and My will] be that goeth forth out of My mouth: it shall not return unto Me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it."!

The Prophet Samuel offered the following wise advice: "It is the LORD: let Him do what seemeth Him good" (1 Samuel 3:18), in full recognition and acceptance of the fact that [Our] times are in [His] hand (Psalm 31:15)!

Other than the worry implied by the words of Philippians 2:12—"Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling," all who are truly God's people should resist worry about all other issues as being tools of the devil (James 4:7)!

Even the legitimate worry associated with "working our own salvation" should be minimal, if we diligently and persistently show our faith by our works, to the best of our abilities, as the Apostle James encouraged (James 2:18)!

2 Peter 1:10 assures Christians that "If ye do these things, ye shall never fall."!