

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

EARTH'S PRESENT CONDITION TEMPORARY

"Cursed is the ground." (Gen. 3:17)

A creation of God that we know as earth refers to the work accomplished by Divine power in bringing the waste and lifeless earth into a condition for man's use and for this purpose God has never changed His Plan. At that time there were neither mountains nor valleys, trees nor shrubs, rivers nor oceans. The earth gives evidence that it is a body that has merely in its crust cooled off from a former molten condition. One of the strongest factual proofs for this is the molten matter that volcanoes from time to time discharge from the bowels of the earth, which proves that below the crust this molten matter exists and by pressure some of it is discharged through the craters of volcanoes.

The earth has four major layers: the *inner core*, *outer core*, *mantle* and *crust*. The crust and the top of the mantle make up a thin skin on the surface of our planet. But this skin is not all in one piece—it is made up of many pieces like a puzzle covering the surface of the earth, and not only that, these puzzle pieces keep slowly moving around, sliding past one another and bumping into each other. These puzzle pieces are called *tectonic plates*, and the edges of the plates are called the *plate boundaries*. The plate boundaries are made up of many faults, and most of the earthquakes around the world occur on these faults.

Tsunamis are most often caused by *undersea earthquakes*, which send tons of rock shooting upward with tremendous force. The energy of that force is transferred to the water. So, unlike normal waves that are caused by wind forces, the driving energy of a tsunami moves through the water, not on top of it. Therefore, as the tsunami travels through deep water—at up to 500 or 600 miles per hour—it's barely evident above water. A tsunami is typically no more than 3 feet (1 meter) high. Of course, all that changes as the tsunami nears the coastline. It is then that it attains frightening height and achieves its more recognizable and disastrous form. The world continues to have natural

disasters and the year 2017 caused a record 306 billion in damage in the U.S.A. alone.

This planet earth has completed six stages of preparation as a place of habitation for mankind. There is much evidence that we are now over 6000 years into the seventh and last stage of earth's preparation, with mankind as its inhabitant. We recall how God prepared a small part of earth, called the Garden of Eden, for man's habitation. However because of disobedience man was put out of this

prepared garden (Gen. 3:23). The planet earth, in God's due time, will be fully prepared and ready for man's habitation and mankind will continue to be perfected until the completion of the seventh creative day. The perfected earth will be the place of habitation for perfected mankind and they shall reign for ever and ever. This is in accord with Matt. 25:34 "Come ye [those who the Millennial age shall find worthy of life eternal] blessed of my father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world" [BS 1978, p 21].



That promised day will surely come as Jehovah has said "So shall my word 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" (Isa 55:11). These over 6,000 years of hardship under the sway of Satan, who was once a holy angel, but through pride and ambition became an opponent of God; also Satan is the prince of earth's religious systems, sometimes in symbol represented by the "heavens." This might account for the great floods, cyclones and tornadoes of recent years. This is illustrated by the great storm in which he tried to drown our Lord in the Sea of Galilee.

Except for the concreted children that serve God; the wicked world of mankind, children of disobedience, are under the control of selfishness and though unconsciously, the tools of Satan. All are more or less

controlled by the spirit of disobedience common to the whole world of mankind. This brings about a general atmosphere of rebellion and strife between generations, religious idealisms, governments and the people. Yes, the world is in turmoil causing many of mankind to turn to drugs and alcohol to get through each day. Alcohol changes chemicals in the brain creating a sense of pleasure, lowering inhibitions. Cocaine creates intense feelings of happiness by increasing the naturally occurring (dopamine) in the brain. Marijuana affects how the cells of the brain communicate. It slows things down, alters sensations and produces a feeling of euphoria. Many people use these substances to reach a social comfort level, however continued use leads to reliance, then addiction!

Substance use or chemical use disorder, is an illness that is characterized by a destructive pattern of using a substance that leads to significant problems or distress. Addiction is a chronic disease characterized by drug seeking despite harmful consequences. The initial decision to take drugs is voluntary for most people, but repeated drug use can lead to brain changes that challenge an addicted person's self-control and interfere with their ability to resist intense urges to take drugs. The effects of drug use disorders on society are substantial. The economic cost, including everything from lost wages to medical, legal, and mental-health implications is estimated to be about \$215 billion. Many people have an addiction to social reform and join in protest marches with the hope of changing the social climate.

As the consecrated children of God know there is a depth of meaning in the Creator's words, as He sent forth His fairly-tried and justly-condemned creatures to labor among the thorns and briars, to pain, sorrow, and disease, and to be subject to the casualties and calamities of nature's unfinished work. He said, "Cursed is the ground *for thy sake*" (Gen. 3: 17-19); *i.e.*, the earth in general is in its present imperfect condition for your profit and experience, even though you may not esteem it so. Adam would have liked to retain continual access to the garden's fruit, to avoid severe labor and to enable him fully to sustain his vital powers and live forever; but in loving consideration for man's ultimate good, no less than in justice, and in respect for His own sentence of death, God prevented this and guarded the way back to the Garden, in order that the death sentence should not fail of execution and in order that sinners should not live forever and perpetuate sin (Gen. 3: 22-24).

The children of the condemned pair inherited the effects of their fall, imperfections and weaknesses, and

the penalties of these; for "who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?" The whole race, therefore, as convict laborers, have been learning what sin and evil are, and their undesirable results. During this time, Jehovah allows natural disasters to prepare the earth and bring it as a whole to the full perfection He intended for it, and illustrated in the condition of Eden—ready for a further purpose of God, namely His Kingdom on this earth. This future glorious Kingdom to be established in the earth where "They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, saith the LORD" (Isa. 65:25). In Scriptural symbols "mountains" represent governments but in this case represents God's future holy government that will replace the governments of this present evil world.



Perhaps we will never know all of the reasons behind a particular natural disaster, but the Bible does offer some insight. First, natural disasters are "natural" in the sense that they are the result of the natural laws of our world. The God who created the heavens and the earth (Gen. 1:1) designed the laws of nature, and those laws periodically lead to earthquakes, hurricanes, or tsunamis.

If God set the laws of nature, why does He not control nature? There may be a variety of reasons. In some cases, God may use the forces of nature to focus our attention on Him and the greatness of His power (Mark 4:35-41). Still other natural disasters may occur because God plans to use the event to bring about a greater good (Rom. 8:28).

As we study this subject with a desire to know how the physical world works and that natural disasters are the result of weather patterns, geophysical events etc. The Bible says the rain falls on the just and unjust alike, and what God does is carry us through the hard times. When Jesus met a blind man, people asked him why he was blind, was it something he had done or his parents had done, to be cursed this way? Jesus said it was so God's glory would be shown in his life. God never curses anyone with disaster. If it happens, we trust Him to turn it to good.

May we consider this thought also, that God is represented in every act of kindness done, whether by His children or by the world; because their actions under such circumstances are the results, in some measure, of His character and disposition. And yet this answer is not full enough to be satisfactory. But, thank God, a fuller

investigation, in the light of His Word, reveals a boundless sympathy on God's part, providing also an abundant succor, which is shortly to be revealed.

But why does not God immediately give relief to His creatures from calamities? Or, to go still farther back, why does He who has all wisdom to know and all power to prevent, permit calamities, cyclones, earthquakes, tidal-waves, destructive floods, pestilences, etc.? And while we are about it, we may as well include all the evils which God could, if He would, prevent, all the forms of sickness and pain and death; every form of destruction—wars, murders, etc.; everything which causes pain or trouble to those willing to do and be in harmony with God? We need only look at the daily news to see acts of violence in nature and in mankind: robbery, random shootings, drug abuse, inappropriate sexual behavior etc. Daniel 12:1 speaks of a time of trouble such as never was; yes, continued disobedience to God's commandments is bringing about the downfall of mankind.

The answers to these questions are found in the Scriptures regarding the present evil world, wherein God has permitted sin and evil. These experiences of the human family are in preparation to His Glorious Kingdom. God will have finished the earth, so it will be paradise, like the

Garden of Eden and will have stamped out sin and evil.

Despite the many noble efforts by some people, man is unable, because of greed and depravity, to really solve his own problems and restore himself and his environment to utopian conditions (Psa. 82:1-5; 107:27; Luke 21:25-27). However, in God's due time, instead of depravity—physical, mental, artistic, moral and religious—being the order of the day God's Plan for human salvation will effect the needed changes.

DEAR GOD,
*I want to take a minute,
not to ask for anything from
you, but simply to say
THANK YOU
for all I have*

While permitting Satan and sin and depravity and death to take their course, God has not been idle. He has had and still has a great plan for human salvation, a plan for recovering man from sin and from death and from all of his fallen conditions, a plan of restitution to human perfection, a plan by which the seed of the woman shall yet, figuratively, crush the Serpent's head, or undo Satan's great original misdeed, recover man from his murdered condition and from his fallen estate to all that he had at first, plus the knowledge and experience of the present life and plus the experience incidental to his uplift, during the reign of Messiah, for which we pray, "Thy Kingdom come."

For more information see our booklet, "Why does a loving God permit calamities?"

TRIBULATION—CAN WE GLORY IN ?

"We glory in tribulations also; knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope: and hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the holy Spirit which is given unto us" (Rom. 5:3-5).

From the book of Acts 14:22 we are informed that "we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God." And our Lord Jesus tells us that "in the world ye shall have tribulation"; but in it all He sustains us with His precious peace (John 16:33; 14:27). "And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus" (Phil. 4:7).

The scriptures and life experience assure us of tribulation in our Christian walk. It is our duty and privilege to make sure that it does not arise from natural causes due to the fallen flesh. Possibly you are being paid back in your own investment (Gal. 6:7, 8), possibly you have earned the tribulation which you receive. If so, be sure to repent and reform. "For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open to his prayers; but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil" (1 Pet. 3:12).

God's word says "Let none of you suffer . . . as an evildoer . . . Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf" (1 Pet. 4:14-16; 3:12-17). Our Lord gives us a great encouragement in Matt. 5:11, 12 "Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you *falsely, for my sake*. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven." So then, if we suffer for the cause of Christ and His Word, we should thank God and take courage, remembering our Lord's words: "Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 10:32, 33).

All of us who are consecrated to God are to gladly accept

sufferings in the present time for the sake of Truth and righteousness as a part of our *wages*; for all of us who are consecrated and following in the steps of Jesus (1 Pet. 2:21) should look for these wages as a proof of our faithfulness. Do you experience but little or none of the sufferings for Christ's sake now? Do you begin to count the time of suffering over, and are you building your hopes on the fact that in times past you suffered for His sake? That would be a serious mistake; *it is one of the devices of the Adversary to put to sleep the servants of God*, saying peace, peace, while we are yet in the enemy's country. Our consecration was made unto and until death.

As Consecrated Epiphany Campers are we having the peace of God rule in our hearts? OH yes, the peace of God which rules in our hearts (Col. 3:15), is a living peace, which gives us tranquility of heart and mind, even in tribulation. It is not a comatose peace. "Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober" (1 Thes. 5:6). Some "endure but for a time: afterward, when affliction or persecution ariseth for the word's sake, immediately they are offended" (Mark 4:17; Gal. 5:7, 8). "Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ" (2 Tim. 2:3). "Because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold. But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved" (Matt. 24:12, 13).

So, dear brethren, if you do not suffer for Christ's sake you have good cause for concern that you are not living up to your covenant of consecration—that you are not confessing Him and His Word before men by word and act as you should. If this is the case you are not overcoming the world, the flesh and the devil, but are being overcome and silenced by them. If this be us Jesus said: "Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels" (Mark 8:38).

WALK IN THE LIGHT

Our Lord told us that "in the world ye shall have tribulation" (John 16:33); and we may expect it to come, as it has always come, mainly through the worldly church, worldly desires which are steeped in error and erroneous practices. Jesus and the early church and also

the consecrated children of God find it so even today, despite the greater enlightenment. Darkness hates the light. "The light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not"; "and this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil" (John 1:5; 3:19, 20). It was so in Jesus' day and it is still true today.

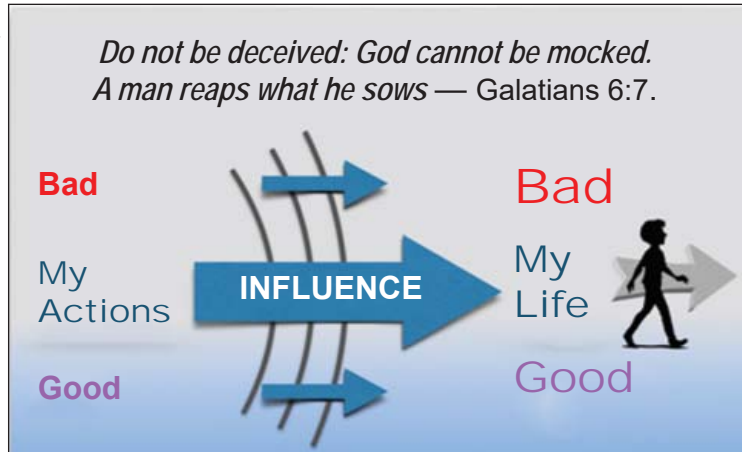
We do not mean to say that all but the saintly are wicked, unkind and intent on persecuting the true followers of Christ and opposing His teachings. We know that there are many well-intentioned people

in the world. The thought is that there would be much disharmony between those who faithfully hold to the Truth of God's Word and those of the world, especially those who in this day of enlightenment hold to the errors of the past, desire to live in a world of self-rule, and rebellion against any authority. Some of the world hate Truth, righteousness and holiness, while others are so out of sympathy with the light that they deny the Word of God and those that Minister the Pure Truth.

WHAT IS THE SOURCE OF OUR TRUTH

Jehovah's Word as given through His chosen vessels, the called, chosen and faithful of all ages including our day. This Movement has continued to bring Truth as due to the people, yes, precedence has been given to the Consecrated Epiphany Campers. We think it quite true that in our tribulation and in looking for the coming Kingdom and serving its interests we must expect our peace, not to come from the world, but from God. The non-begotten consecrated servants do have the holy Spirit because: *it is always the privilege of the consecrated to see the Truth due in their times* (PT '84 p. 23). *The Scriptures teach for all times that the due Truth is for ALL the consecrated* (E 15 p. 652).

We at this time reiterate that it was Bro. Russell's and Bro. Johnson's teaching that some present-day consecrated believers of Gentile lineage (*counted* by God as Israelites) would be given precedence over the fleshly Israelites in general in the Kingdom—therefore in railing against this teaching as reaffirmed and defended in our day in the PT and otherwise, the sifting errorist are really railing against Bro. Russell and Bro. Johnson. As we showed in PT '72, p. 15, if God makes an exception to the general principle



“to the Jew first” in the case of the Youthful Worthy class, who come in under the New Covenant but are mainly of Gentile lineage there is surely no reason why He cannot make an exception also in the case of another consecrated class—the Consecrated Epiphany Campers, who will come in under the New Covenant but are mainly of Gentile lineage—which class likewise is faithful to Him in consecration while sin is still in the ascendancy.

Let us understand that part of our tribulation in the world is because we are being more and more transformed by the renewing of our mind (Rom. 12:2); we do not find the satisfaction in the world that we otherwise would and that others find. Our chief business is to keep the body under and restrain its natural appetites, and then bring it into subjection to the new heart, mind and will, in order that it may be used as fully as possible in the blessed service of God, the only Master we should serve (1 Cor. 9:27; Luke 16:13; Rom. 6:16; Eph. 5:1, 2). The opposition within ourselves—the warring against the new heart, mind and will by our own sinful and selfish human nature (Rom. 7:14-25)—is very trialsome. This opposition, together with our sufferings from unfavorable conditions and the misunderstandings, oppositions and persecutions by others—all these constitute our tribulations in the world.

We are not to think that only the Little Flock, the 144,000, Christ’s Bride, who will sit with Him in His throne (Luke 12:32; Rev. 14:1; 19:7; 21:9), have had tribulation; there is also “a great multitude,” the tribulation saints, who fell short of being of Christ’s Bride, but are the Bridesmaids (Gen. 24:61), “the virgins her companions that follow her” (Psa. 45:14, 15). “These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God [not in it, where the Bride will be], and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them . . . and God shall wipe away all tears [of disappointment and sorrow] from their eyes” (Rev. 7:9-17).

But how about the consecrated servants of God, Consecrated Epiphany Campers, who will have their eternal inheritance in the new earth for in the resurrection there are glories celestial and also terrestrial (1 Cor. 15:40; 2 Pet. 3:13)? The Old Testament clearly held forth an earthly inheritance for the righteous (Psa. 37:9, 11, 22, 29, 34). It was necessary for the Ancient Worthies, from Abel to John the Baptist, to have tribulation in order to be proved faithful and to be rewarded as such (Heb. 11). They will be Christ’s representatives in the earthly phase

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of His Kingdom (Luke 13:28; Matt. 11:11).

Tribulation of necessity is for all of God’s consecrated people today, for developing and proving them worthy of a glorious share in Christ’s soon-coming Kingdom. “All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution” (2 Tim. 3:12). We are told that, “denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present [evil] world” (Titus 2:12; Gal. 1:4). God’s people grow strong as they faithfully endure tribulation.

So much as to why “we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God”—as to why this tribulation is necessary. Let us now consider *how* we should be exercised under it. The first thing our text tells us that we are to “glory in tribulations.” So, how do we glory in tribulations? In themselves tribulations, such as persecutions, misunderstandings, slanders, afflictions, illnesses, physical, mental and moral imperfections, *etc.*, are not to be gloried in. But if we keep in mind their purpose—the growth in grace, the development of Christlikeness in us, and the “far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory” they are working for us, “while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen” (2 Cor. 4:17, 18)—we can truly rejoice and glory in them.

TRIBULATION DEVELOPS PATIENCE



Our text says that we glory in tribulation, *knowing* of certain wonderful results that it will work out for us if we are rightly exercised. First, we glory in tribulation because it develops in us patience. The Greek word for *glory* here is translated “rejoice” in v. 2 and “joy” in v. 11, and means to *rejoice greatly* to *exult*, to *glory*. The Greek word for *patience* in v. 3 means *cheerful endurance*, or *perseverance*; it is translated “steadfastness” in the ASV, and “endurance” by Rotherham and others. Our endurance should not be an unwilling endurance, but a cheerful, joyful endurance.

Patience is a universal grace, it perseveres unto a

completion in developing and maintaining under all conditions the other graces. We are to “bring forth fruit with patience” (Luke 8:15); and we must “run with patience [cheerful endurance, perseverance, steadfastness] the race that is set before us [*the course marked out for us—Diaglott*],” if we would come off victorious; and Jesus has set *us* a wonderful example of cheerful endurance, which will help us greatly to go on to victory (Heb. 12:1, 2; Psa. 40:8; John 4:34). “For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God [reached the mark of perfect love], ye might receive the promise” (Heb. 10:36). And since patience is so necessary in developing, strengthening and crystallizing all the other graces and is itself produced by tribulation, we of course glory in tribulation. We can say with the Apostle Paul, “I am exceeding joyful [*overflowing with joy—Diaglott*; the same Greek word translated glory in our text] in all our tribulation” (2 Cor. 7:4).

So we glory in tribulation also, because tribulation is the essential basis on which patience (cheerful endurance) brings to us God’s approval. The Greek word for *approval* in Rom. 5:4 is rendered *experience* (KJV), *test* (Rotherham), *approvedness* (ASV), *proven character* (New ASV) and *approval* (Diaglott). The last three renderings come nearest to the correct thought. Thayer’s Greek-English Lexicon explains that this Greek word has the meanings of a *proving*, *trial*, *approvedness*, *tried character*, *a proof*, *a specimen of tried worth*. It is used in these various senses in the Scriptures therein cited.

PATIENCE WORKS APPROVAL AND HOPE

We surely all want God’s approval, His “well done” day by day and at the end of the way. This will come only as we prove faithful under testing by tribulations of various kinds. The good soldier of Christ cannot “endure hardness” (2 Tim. 2:3) unless there is some hardness to endure. Our Heavenly Father in His infinite wisdom and love pours the cup that is best for each of us to drink. We, of a certainty, must be tested and found faithful if we would have His approval.

When one consecrates, putting his hand to the plow, and afterward fully looks back, or draws back, he is not fit for the Kingdom (Luke 9:62; 17:31, 32; Heb. 10:38). We must endure faithfully unto the end if we are to have God’s approval, unto and until death. Temptations of discouragement and giving up in “the good fight of faith,” come from the Adversary, “whom resist steadfast in the



faith” (1 Pet. 5:9). We are cheerfully to endure afflictions for the development of Christlikeness, rejoicing in them as a means to an end, “that the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ” (1 Pet. 1:7). Yes, patience works approval.

When the consecrated Child of God begins to feel and understand just what God’s approval consists of, being based

on sound principle and constructive advancing Truth, they follow a course that God can approve. Gal. 6:7-9 makes the walk of the consecrated very clear “Be not deceived . . . he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of that Spirit reap life everlasting. Let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not [patiently endure].”

Surely God’s approval, which cheerfully endured tribulation brings, gives us a blessed hope “both sure and stedfast” (Heb. 6:19)—a glorious hope, which “maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the holy Spirit [the holy disposition of God and of Christ] which is given unto us.” Those who are inspired by the hope of life everlasting and a share in Christ’s glorious Kingdom will experience no sense of shame under the discipline, trials and tribulations they must endure, but glory in them and rejoice to be counted worthy to suffer for Him.

The Apostle James (1:2-4) exhorts us: “My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations [various trials, testings, which are evidences of God’s favor and opportunities for our development]; knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting [lacking] nothing.”

THE TRIUMPHS OF FAITH

Hebrews 11:1

Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

Every faithful child of God has experienced tribulation, amid which, through a faithful use of the Spirit and Word of God, he has been enabled to put aside faults and develop good traits of character. The Bible emphatically

teaches this thought. Jesus, the sinless One, was by suffering perfected in obedience (Heb. 5:8, 9), in mercy and faithfulness (Heb. 2:17, 18), and in every other point of character (Heb. 2:10; 4:15). Our text says that tribulation works (develops in God's people) patience, the final overcoming quality (Heb. 10:36). Our Lord commends especially those who keep the word of His patience—cheerful endurance (Rev. 3:10).

Let us learn more and more to glory, rejoice greatly, in tribulations and learn their Divinely intended lessons; for God promises that tribulations,

“For you have need of endurance, so that after you have done the will of God, you may receive the promise:”

Hebrews 10:36

as a part of the “all things,” will work together for good to those who love Him, which good He particularizes as Christlikeness (Rom. 8:28, 29). We glory in tribulations because they work in us patience; and such perseverance in well-doing is rewarded by God's approval, which, when realized, fills the heart with hope for ultimate victory. Nor is this hope vain, because God delights in giving this victory to those whose hearts are filled with Divine love, a love that is the choice fruit of the holy Spirit given us by God through Christ Jesus.

“WOE TO ARIEL”

“Woe to you, Ariel, Ariel, the city where David settled! Add year to year and let your cycle of festivals go on. Yet I will besiege Ariel; she will mourn and lament, she will be to me like an altar hearth. I will encamp against you all around; I will encircle you with towers and set up my siege works against you. Brought low, you will speak from the ground; your speech will mumble out of the dust. Your voice will come ghostlike from the earth; out of the dust your speech will whisper. But your many enemies will become like fine dust, the ruthless hordes like blown chaff. Suddenly, in an instant, the LORD Almighty will come with thunder and earthquake and great noise, with windstorm and tempest and flames of a devouring fire. Then the hordes of all the nations that fight against Ariel, that attack her and her fortress and besiege her, will be as it is with a dream, with a vision in the night—as when a hungry man dreams that he is eating, but he awakens, and his hunger remains; as when a thirsty man dreams that he is drinking, but he awakens faint, with his thirst unquenched. So will it be with the hordes of all the nations that fight against Mount Zion.” (Isa. 29:1-8)

If you note carefully, you will see that 1961 reads the same upside down. This is rather suggestive of world conditions during the recent years, for many have wondered whether these conditions have been right-side up or upside down. In fact, they are upside down in many respects, socially, politically, financially and religiously; and this is especially because this is still the time of God's wrath, “the day of the LORD'S vengeance” (Isa. 34:8), when “he maketh the earth [the present social organization] empty, and maketh it waste, and turneth it upside down.”

Study the context of Isa. 24:1 “Behold, the Lord maketh the earth empty, and maketh it waste, and turneth it upside down, and scatterth abroad the inhabitants thereof.” Not only is the Lord turning things upside down; the people in harmony with this present evil world, especially the rulers, are also doing the same—but in a different way. In Isa. 29, after speaking of Christendom under the name of Ariel and telling of the “marvellous work” (the Harvest work and all the attendant features of a change of dispensation, especially the overthrow of

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Satan's empire that He would accomplish in their midst, God declares (v. 15): “Woe unto them that seek deep to hide their counsel from the LORD [they may hide their sly schemes, conspiracies and wicked devices from and deceive others, but not God], and their works [of sin and selfishness] are in the dark, and they say, Who seeth us? and who knoweth us?” God, “who seeth in secret,” has “his eyes upon the ways of man, and he seeth all his goings. There is no darkness, nor shadow of death, where the workers of iniquity may hide themselves” (Matt. 6:4, 6, 18; Job 34:21, 22). “It is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret”; but “there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; neither hid, that shall not be known. Therefore whatsoever ye have spoken in darkness shall be heard in the light; and that which ye have spoken in the ear in closets shall be proclaimed upon the housetops” (Eph. 5:12; Luke 12:2, 3; 1 Cor. 4:5).

We quote from SITS 3, p. 21-22 “And I will visit on the world its evil, and on the wicked their iniquity; and I will cause the arrogancy of the proud to cease, and

the haughtiness of tyrants will I humble. I will make a man more precious than fine gold; even a man than the golden wedge of Ophir. Therefore I will shake the heavens, and the earth shall be removed out of her place, in the wrath of the Lord of hosts, in the day of his fierce anger” (Isa. 13:11-13. Compare Rev. 16:14; Heb. 12:26-29). “Judgment also will I lay to the line, and righteousness to the plummet; and the hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies, and the waters shall overflow the hiding place” (Isa. 28:17).

The various prophecies of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Daniel and the Apocalypse concerning Babylon are all in full accord, and manifestly refer to the same great city. And since these prophecies had but a very limited fulfilment upon the ancient, literal city, and those of the Apocalypse were written centuries after the literal Babylon was laid in ruins, it is clear that the *special* reference of all the prophets is to something of which the ancient literal Babylon was an illustration. It is clear also that, in so far as the prophecies of Isaiah and Jeremiah concerning its downfall were accomplished upon the literal city, it became in its downfall, as well as in its character, an illustration of the great city to which the Revelator points in the symbolic language of the Apocalypse (Rev. Chap. 17, 18), and to which chiefly the other prophets refer.

As already intimated, what today is known as Christendom is the antitype of ancient Babylon; and therefore the solemn warnings and predictions of the prophets against Babylon—Christendom—are matters of deepest concern to the present generation. Would that men were wise enough to consider them! Though various other symbolic names, such as Edom, Ephraim, Ariel, etc., are in the Scriptures applied to Christendom, this term, “Babylon,” is the one most frequently used, and its meaning, *confusion*, is remarkably appropriate. The Apostle Paul also points out a nominal, spiritual Israel in contradistinction to nominal fleshly Israel (1 Cor. 10:18; Gal. 6:16; Rom. 9:8); and likewise there is a nominal spiritual Zion, and a nominal fleshly Zion (Isa. 33:14; Amos 6:1).

We will now consider Isa. 29:1-8 giving thoughts on each verse. In this passage the coming distress upon the nominal church is illustrated, its necessity is shown, and also God’s compassion afterward. “Woe to Ariel, to

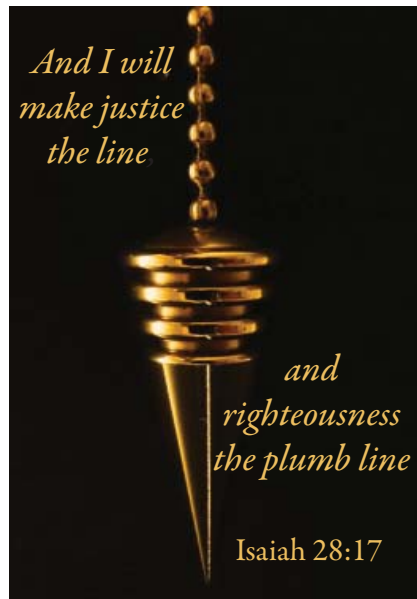
Ariel, the city where David dwelt! add ye year to year; let them kill sacrifices” (v. 1). Jerusalem was the city of David; and as Jerusalem is sometimes used to represent the nominal church, so Ariel here and Zion in v. 8 refer to the same thing. The Prophet here declares that woe, distress, trouble, is about to come on the nominal church. But though the nominal church, as a system, has become corrupt, God still permits her to prolong her existence a few years, that His truly consecrated children, Youthful Worthies, and Consecrated Epiphany Campers may fulfil their consecration vows. One important part of their full devotion to God is to separate themselves from the nominal systems—to come out of Babylon (2 Cor. 6:14-18; Rev. 18:4).

“Yet,” Jehovah declares, “I will distress Ariel, and there shall be heaviness and sorrow” (Isa. 29:2). Although He will distress Ariel, the nominal church, yet He will remember that many within her are His own dear children—some of them weak, erring and negligent; and the very object of this distress is to awaken them and to liberate them from their bondage and worldly conformity. The fact that

God will remember His own is clearly taught in various Scriptures, and is suggested in the latter clause of this verse—“and [although I will distress it] it shall be unto me as Ariel” (the true Jerusalem, or Zion). His own children now held in the bondage of the doomed systems are still dear to Him; and He will save them—though with the majority it will be “so as by fire”—through “great tribulation” (1 Cor. 3:13-15; Rev. 7:13, 14).

God here describes the overthrow that would be necessary to separate the true Ariel—Jerusalem, or Zion—from the multitude of the worldly and unregenerate which she has received as her children, and because of whose presence in her she is sometimes termed Babylon, or confusion. He says: “I will camp against thee round about [*O Babblers—Young*], and will lay siege against thee with a mount, and I will raise forts against thee. And thou shalt be brought down, and shalt speak out of the ground, and thy speech shall be low out of the dust, and thy voice shall be, as of one that hath a familiar spirit, out of the ground, and thy speech shall whisper out of the dust” (Isa. 29:3, 4).

The pride of the nominal church is now being humbled. Once she loudly and boldly proclaimed



her teachings of eternal torment, the damnation of non-elect infants, *etc.*, but now her voice is low, and she merely whispers these teachings in her writings, or cautiously from the pulpit. She has been puffed up by what she esteems her success—her wealth and members. Worldliness has filled her heart and the Spirit of Christ has been choked. Woe to Zion, for she shall find the Lord arrayed against her, and He shall bring down her pride to the earth, that she may be humbled and cry unto Him from the dust (PT '77, p. 73).

THE TIME OF TROUBLE PICTURED

“Moreover the multitude of thy strangers shall be like small dust, and the multitude of the terrible ones [*tyrants*, Leeser] shall be as chaff that passeth away”; “and this shall be at unawares, suddenly” (Isa. 29:5, Leeser). The principal cause of nominal Zion’s distress is her multitude of strange children—the children of the world, unregenerate, who compose the greater part of her numbers. These she has come to consider her strength, her power. Their wealth, their influence and their standing in the world, she is trusting in; and by these she has been puffed up.

“Thou shalt be visited of the LORD of hosts with thunder, and with earthquake, and great noise, with storm and tempest, and the flame of devouring fire” (Isa. 29:6). These are expressions, symbolic of the great storm of trouble, now breaking with force on nominal Zion. The *thunder* and *noise* indicate controversy, and we find infidelity in its most subtle form springing up in the midst of the nominal church. Its most marked feature is the denial of the *Ransom* given by Christ our Lord. This error, which strikes at the very foundation of God’s Truth, is boldly proclaimed by some of the most prominent of the nominal church, and many are following their leading. Under the general and widespread spirit of doubt and unbelief, it will soon be discovered that none are able to give a reason for their hope, and that much has been taught which is entirely without Scriptural support.

Doctrines or Tenets of the church previously unquestioned are brought to the test of reason, which, unguided by a proper understanding of the Scriptures, is surely leading to open infidelity, and the nominal church systems, with their clashing creeds, are becoming more and more lightly esteemed as men throw off the yoke

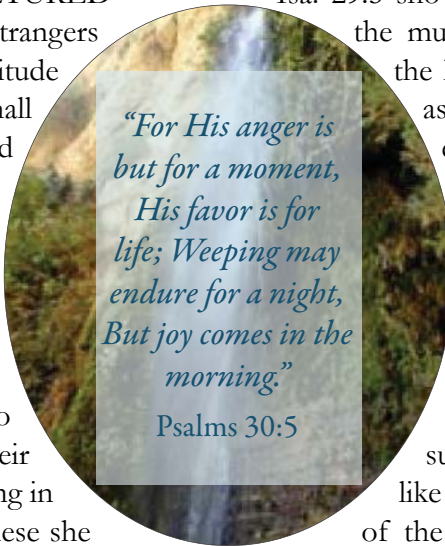
of superstition, and yet fail to consult the Word of God, and to recognize the Truth. A fearful storm and tempest is breaking, and the condition of the mass of the nominal church, when it fully breaks upon it, is here fitly symbolized by an “earthquake.” “The devouring fire” is an apt symbol of the certain destruction that in the end shall consume these false systems.

During this fearful storm the multitude of strangers—the worldly—who come into the nominal church for respectability, social and business interests, *etc.*, will, as Isa. 29:5 shows, be scattered like the fine dust. “And the multitude of the terrible ones [*tyrants*, *i.e.*, the leaders, priests, rulers, or clergy] shall be as chaff that passeth away.” Many have entered the ministry of the nominal church for popularity, ease, money and respectability; and these lord it over God’s heritage, strengthen the bondage of fear, fetter thought and retard growth in grace and knowledge, while they exact and devour the revenues. But when these systems cease to be popular and financially successful, these too will soon be scattered like chaff. But while many of the clergy are of the kind here described by the Prophet, we rejoice to know that among these, as well as among the laity, some true Disciples of Christ exist.

Those who are not of God’s true children shall be swept away in the violent storm, when the Lord’s sharp threshing instruments shall have separated them as chaff from the grain in this day of harvest and separation. The chaff and dust will be speedily removed from the chastened of the Lord, who shall be brought to the lowly and humble condition from which they should never have departed.

THE BIBLE A BULWARK, A STRONGHOLD

“And the multitude of all the nations that fight against Ariel, even all that fight against her and her munition [bulwark], and that distress her, shall as a dream of a night vision. It shall even be as when an hungry man dreameth, and, behold, he eateth; but he awaketh, and his soul is empty: or as when a thirsty man dreameth, and, behold, he drinketh; but he awaketh, and, behold, he is faint, and his soul hath appetite [thirst]: so shall the multitude of all the nations be, that fight against mount Zion” (Isa. 29:7, 8). In God’s controversy with nominal Zion the infidels and worldly ones of all nations are ready and willing instruments for her chastisement, and for the overthrow of her errors. But though like



Satan (another of Jehovah's unwitting instruments, whose wrath is made to praise Him), they shall for a time seem to succeed, yet it shall be only *seemingly*, for out of the nominal Zion arises the true Zion, stronger and better for her visitation and purification. And those who fought against her munition, or stronghold—the Bible—and who for a time will think that they have completely destroyed her stronghold, will find only the wood, hay and stubble of human tradition gone, and the original bulwark impregnable. Their victory will prove to be but the delusion of a dream, when they shall have accomplished a work in which they are used as God's instruments.

It is not surprising that in their blindness, the unfaithful children of God in nominal Zion mistake their most faithful friends for enemies. Through some of His chosen ones "the LORD hath a controversy with his people" (Mic. 6:2). And these must obey his command—"Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and show my people their transgression" (Isa. 58:1). These faithful reprovers are generally abused as enemies; and to oppose the false systems that fetter the true Zion, is generally looked upon as infidelity.

But the Prophet draws the line clearly and distinctly, showing who are the real enemies referred to. It is the multitude of the *nations* not even professing to

be the children of God, but who boldly, not only fight against Zion (God's children, however strong or weak), but also against her munition, her bulwark—the Bible. This is just what the hosts of infidelity are endeavoring to do; not only to overthrow the nominal church systems (in which work they are *unwittingly* the Lord's instruments), but they are also endeavoring to demolish the Bible—the blessed fortress of Truth, in which even the weakest child of God finds sure refuge. To these enemies of Zion and of God, it shall even be, as described in Isa. 29:7, 8.

The valiant for the Truth have ever been considered enemies by the nominal mass (the "nations"). So to Elijah it was said, "Art thou he that troubleth Israel?" (1 Kings 18:17). He was so considered because of his zeal for Jehovah and his opposition to the worship of the images of Baal. So Jesus was called by those termed "orthodox" of His day, a perverter of the people (Luke 23:2, 5, 14), and Paul was esteemed by the same class "a pestilent fellow, and a mover of sedition" (Acts 24:5). All who endeavor to withstand error in its popular forms must expect to bear the same reproach, and for a time be esteemed the troublemakers of Israel. Let us continue, dear brethren, to accept such experiences of reproach for righteousness' sake in the same way Elijah, our Lord Jesus and other faithful servants have done.



LOVE—MAKING A DIFFERENCE

"Keep yourselves in the love of God . . . and of some have compassion, making a difference; and others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire" —Jude 21-23.

We present this article based on the fact that there is a course of anger [righteous indignation] that is entirely proper. The Scriptures repeatedly mention God's anger, which is not based upon malice or injustice but is an expression of His displeasure and opposition to sin. Jesus displayed the same righteous indignation at the abuse of the sacred things of God when He overthrew the tables of the money changers in the Temple (Matt. 21:12, 13). The Apostles, too, sometimes gave expression to righteous anger, but love was the spur—love for Truth and for God, whose ambassadors they were, and love for those who might be deceived by evildoers.

With our minds all unbalanced through the fall, resulting from original sin it is not surprising that we

frequently find ourselves and other brethren in Christ in more or less confusion respecting the application of certain principles laid down in the Word of God. For instance, we are instructed that love is the fulfilling of the divine law and that love of the brethren is one of the evidences of our having passed from death unto life and that if we love not our brother, whom we have seen, it is a sure evidence that we do not truly love our Heavenly Father, whom we have not seen (Rom. 13:10; I John 3:14; 4:20). In their endeavor to measure up to these requirements of the divine standard, some are in danger of erring in an opposite direction, in danger of manifesting a brotherly love where it should be withheld. Let us note the different kinds or degrees of love which the Heavenly Father exercises and manifests.

First, we have the love for the world. "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son" to die for us (John 3:16). Second, in a much higher and special sense, "The Father himself loveth you"—you who have

accepted Jesus Christ as your Redeemer and who, in His name and strength and merit have consecrated yourselves to Him—you are seeking now to walk not after the flesh but after the spirit (John 16:27). But that this special love of God can be lost in part, or eventually wholly, is clearly set forth by the Apostle's statement, "Keep yourselves in the love of God" (Jude 21). If any, after having tasted of the good Word of God, having the holy spirit of understanding, etc., shall walk after the flesh and not after the spirit, we may be sure that such will proportionately lose the love of God and, if he persists in this course, as a result will ultimately be "none of his." For, instead of loving such, who through their knowledge and attainments and disobedient course have become wicked, the Lord declares that He is "angry with the wicked," and that "all the wicked will he destroy" (Psa. 7:11; 145:20; Heb. 6:4-6; 10:26-29).

**BE STRONG, BUT NOT RUDE;
BE KIND, BUT NOT WEAK;
BE BOLD, BUT NOT BULLY;
BE HUMBLE, BUT NOT TIMID;
BE PROUD, BUT NOT ARROGANT**

The Christ's iron rule (Psa. 2:9; Rev. 2:26, 27) means the force that They will exert for the destruction of every vestige of Satan's empire and all external evil conduct against His Restitution Reign during the thousand years. That iron rule is causing the Time of Trouble now. It will therefore, cease to operate in 2874, when for a while, everyone will be permitted to do just what he pleases, without any interference from the iron rule and when each one has in the trial done just as he pleased, The Christ will annihilate with mighty power, but not by a revival of the "iron rule," those who will be incorrigible, who will still be pleased to do evil (Rev. 20:7-9).

As fully consecrated, who are seeking to be like unto our Father in heaven, and like unto the copy which He has set before us in His dear Son, our Lord, we are to have for the world in general that broad sympathetic pity and mercy-love which would delight in doing any and everything possible to be done for their uplifting, in accord with the divine program, in the divine time and order. Like our Father and our Elder Brother, we are to love the brethren "with a pure heart, *fervently*"—with sincerity. This love for the brethren is nothing like the love for the world. It is not the pity-love, nor mere generosity. It is far more, it is brotherly love. These consecrated brethren have hopes, ambitions, interests and promises linked together in the Lord Jesus. They are partners, their interests are mutual and coordinating.

For the consecrated (new heart, mind and will): they have a special mutual sympathy of compassion, for while, as God's consecrated, they are rich in divine favor and promises, they all have serious weaknesses, according to the flesh—draw-backs; although the

Lord is not reckoning with them according to the flesh, but according to the spirit, the intention, the hearts desires; nevertheless, they each have besetments arising from these weaknesses and imperfections of the earthly tabernacle which cause them

to "groan," and to sympathize one with the other in their groanings. The children of God have a further mutual sympathy and love and care for each other, an interest in each other, helpfulness toward each other, which is entirely beyond and above and outside of any feelings which could possibly be appreciated by the world or exercised toward it, because the world has no such conflict between the old will and the new, no such covenant of sacrifice, no such acceptance in the Beloved, no such union of heart and purpose and aim and spirit. Oh, yes! the exhortation to love as brethren, fervently, is one which appeals to us specially.

Let us take up another point. Our love for the brethren cannot be exactly of the same measure and exactly of the same intensity or fervency toward all. There is something which gauges or regulates it. That something is: we love God and the glorious principles of righteousness, which are represented in His character and we love our Lord Jesus from the same standpoint, as being the very exemplifications of all that is good, noble, true, just, generous, loving and our love for the brethren must, of necessity, be in proportion as we find the brethren to be copies of our Lord. We do not mean copies in the flesh but viewed from the Lord's standpoint, copies in spirit, copies in heart, copies in motive, copies in intention, copies in loving zeal for righteousness, Truth, etc. As we grow in the love of God and in the love of Christ and in the love of the principles which they represent, we grow also in love toward all men and toward the brethren, but particularly toward those who are growing most in likeness to the Lord. This is not partiality, this is not doing to others different from what we should wish them to do to us. No, this is following the Lord Jesus' example, for we find that amongst His apostles, even, all of whom were chosen, there were three specially beloved and of those three one is specially noted as "that disciple whom Jesus loved." He was specially loved, because he was specially lovable and so with us and the brethren. We should love them all warmly, fervently, but of necessity with varying degrees of fervor, and the fervor should increase with each in proportion as we note his growth in heart-likeness to our Lord.

With this Truth being stated, what shall we say of those

who, after having come to a knowledge of the Truth, and after having tasted and appreciated its goodness, fall away into sin? What of those who cease to walk after the spirit, and begin to walk after the flesh? Can our love for them burn with the same fervency as before? By no means, it should

1/2 TRUTH + 1/2 TRUTH = LIE

ALMOST RIGHT
IS
ALWAYS WRONG



not do so. As the Apostle says in our text, we should make a *difference*. In doing so we are following the example of our Heavenly Father, for we have just noted that only by walking after the spirit can any of us keep ourselves in the love of God. Only by following the same course, therefore, should any be able to keep himself in the love of the brethren. Any deflection should bring corresponding loss of brotherly love and fellowship.

If we make no difference between those brethren who walk after the spirit and those who walk disorderly, or after the flesh, we are taking away the very premium and blessing which the Lord intended should go to those who walk after the spirit and we are giving a premium, which the Lord did not intend should be given, to those who walk contrary to His Word, after the flesh. It is as much our duty to withdraw fellowship from those who are unworthy of it as it is our duty to grant fellowship, and that with fervency, to those whom we see to be walking in the footsteps of Jesus. We are not to think that it is love that is prompting us to take the wrong course of encouraging wrong-doers, it is not love, but ignorance and the remedy for ignorance is to learn of the Lord, from His Word and from His example.

We are at present specially referring to the proper attitude to be observed toward unruly brethren, they are not to be treated as those who are esteemed very highly in love for their works, otherwise, they would be encouraged in being unruly. On the contrary, they are to be warned, cautioned in love and with patience, but not with marks of the same love and esteem as though they were walking orderly in the footsteps of Jesus and in harmony with the directions of His Word. The marks and evidences of our love and esteem must be sincere and must be in proportion as we see in the brethren evidences of the right desires of heart, to walk after the spirit of the Truth. The Apostle Paul intimates how our disapproval ought to be shown, in cases which seem, in our judgment, to be of sufficient importance to demand a manifestation of disapproval.

We understand the trivial matters would be entirely passed over, as merely of the weakness of the flesh, and not at all of intention of the heart. The matters to be considered worthy of manifestations of disapproval and warning are, rather, those which are so open and manifest on the surface as to leave no room to question the fact that they

are displeasing to the Lord, and injurious in their influence upon the brother or upon the household of faith. But evidently, the Apostle had no intention of cultivating a spirit of fault-finding and judging one another as respects the heart and private affairs. These belong to our individual stewardship and none should endeavor to interfere with the proper liberties of conscience and conduct which the Lord has granted to each. The Apostle is very stringent in his condemnation of judging the private affairs of one another, which so often leads to roots of bitterness.

We are in full harmony with the Apostle Paul when he says, that faithful brethren should be esteemed very highly in love for their works' sake, that other brethren who are unruly should be warned that those who are feeble in their mental comprehension of the Truth should be strengthened, that those who are weak should be helped, supported and that we should exercise patience toward all (I Thes. 5:12-14). We are given some very able instruction in 2 Thes. 3: 14, 15 "note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed." Nevertheless, knowing the tendency of the fallen mind to go from one extreme to another, either of too great leniency or of too great severity, the apostle continues, "Yet count him not an enemy, but admonish as a brother." This means to admonish in a spirit of love, gentleness, meekness, patience, and with a sincere desire to help the brother to see the fault which we are certain exists, and which we are sure is not evil surmising on our part.

The Apostle John shows us that this matter of distinguishing as between brethren that are to be esteemed and brethren that are to be warned, appertains not merely to conduct but also to doctrinal matters. Yet we may be sure that he does not mean that we are to disfellowship a brother merely because of some differences of view on non-essential questions. We may be sure that he does mean his words to apply strictly and only to the fundamentals of the doctrine of Christ, for instance, faith in God, faith in Jesus as our Redeemer, faith in the promises of the Divine Word. These will be marks of a "brother," if supported by Christian conduct, walking after the spirit of the Truth.

But for those whom we recognize as being doctrinally astray from the foundation principles of Christ, the Apostle intimates that very drastic measures are appropriate, not persecutions, nor railing, not bitter and acrimonious disputes, not hatred, either open or secret, but a proper showing of our disfellowship with the false doctrines held and taught by them, a proper protection, so that our influence shall not be in any manner or degree used to uphold his denial of the fundamentals of the

Gospel. This drastic course is outlined by the Apostle in these words: “If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine [confessing Christ to have come into the world, in the flesh, to redeem our race, etc.] receive him not into your house, neither bid him God-speed: for he that biddeth him God-speed is partaker of his evil deeds” (2 John 10, 11).

But, as our text intimates, we are to use discretion, judgment,—“and of some have compassion, making a difference.” Some we may recognize as being merely entrapped of the Adversary, either in sin or in false doctrine, as the case may be, and not willfully, intelligently, of their own volition. Toward such, still maintaining an attitude of firmness, we are nevertheless to express freely our trust that they are only temporarily wrong and to seek to restore them, either doctrinally or in respect to their perverse moral course, to the position of fellowship with the Lord and with all the brethren who are in fellowship with him. Others we are to “save with fear, pulling them out of the fire.” We may be obliged to speak very plainly to them, we may be obliged to tear open and expose before their eyes the sores of their own immoral course, showing them, as the case may be, the grossness of the sin or the grossness of the error in which they are involved, and doing so perhaps in strong language, if we realize that nothing short of this has availed to arouse them from their lethargy. In pulling them out of sin we are “pulling them out of the fire”—that could eventually lead to the Second Death—as the Apostle James says, speaking of wrong-doers: “Let him know that he which converteth a sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death”—a brother who is a sinner, a brother, he explains, who has “erred from the truth” (James 5:19, 20).

As to what would be a sufficiency of *evidence* of repentance and reformation, each will require great wisdom and grace to determine. The heart in which brotherly love dwells richly, the heart which loves righteousness and hates iniquity, the heart which realizes its own imperfections, and that it is acceptable only through the Beloved and the New Covenant, that heart will rejoice at the first evidence of contrition and repentance on the part of the disorderly brother. If very full of love, his heart may go out to him almost too quickly, he may need to restrain himself, especially if it be a second or a third offense of the kind, or the circumstances otherwise very grievous. It will be apparently his duty to look for works in harmony with the repentance, and to wait to see some demonstration, in the nature of restitution for wrong done, or such an open and radical change of conduct as will give evidence that the heart has returned to its loyalty to God, to the

Truth, and to righteousness.

The erring brother, truly repentant, will not be averse to giving such evidence, nor consider it unreasonable that his professed reformation shall be attested. Indeed, we may expect that such will feel so humbled in respect to his attitude, and the disgrace which he may have brought upon the cause, that he will feel disposed of himself, either to remain absent for a while from the company of the brethren, in penitence, or, if acceptable to their company, he will feel disposed to take a back seat—a very humble position amongst the brethren. And if the repentant offender had occupied the position of a leader in the company, humility on his part, no less than discretion on the part of the brethren, would seem to indicate that he should not be restored to any official or leading position in the congregation for a considerable time, until ample evidence had been given of the sincerity of his reformation.

But we close as we began, by urging that facts, evil deeds or evil doctrines, and not evil surmisings, knowledge, and not rumors, are the bases of Scriptural disfellowship. The necessity for the observance of the Lord’s rule (Matt. 18:15). While we are not to close our eyes to wrong in a brother, love will refuse to keep picking to find fault where none is openly apparent. And if fault is apparently discovered it is not to be “*discussed* among the brethren,” but as the Lord directs should be taken direct to the offender by the discoverer and not so much as mentioned to others unless the offender refuses to hear, refuses to correct the fault. Oh, how much trouble would be saved, how many mistakes and heart-aches avoided if this rule were strictly followed!

Finally, we remark that the dealing of the brethren with the disorderly is not to be in the nature of a *punishment*, for it is not our privilege to punish. “Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.” Our warnings or reproofs or withdrawals of fellowship, are to be merely in the nature of correctives, with a view, as the Apostle says, to the restoring of such an one. “Ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted” (Gal. 6:1), if not in the same manner, possibly in some other manner, in which you are weaker.



Loving and heavenly Father,
I will wait on you. Strengthen
my heart and fill me with
patience. Help me be a servant
to you. Prepare my heart so
that I’m ready at any moment
to step in where you call me.
I will obediently wait for your
wisdom and your guidance.
In Jesus’ name amen.



BEREAN BIBLE STUDENTS

The little gathering of believers at Berea is famous amongst God’s people by St. Paul’s declaration: “They of Berea were more noble than those of Thessalonica, in that they searched the Scriptures daily to see if these things [which St. Paul preached] were true.” (Acts 17:11.) They were but a little class, yet their faithfulness to God’s Word caused them to be known as Berean Bible Students. The early Church met not in costly temples, nor did their elders and deacons have rich robes of office, nor did the services consist of showy display. They simply gathered as children of God, begotten of the one Holy Spirit and inspired by the One Faith once delivered to the saints. They gathered as the brethren of Jesus, that they might be under His direction and care as the only Head of the Church—as He declared, “One is your Master even Christ, and all ye are brethren.” They met to study the Message of Jesus and the Apostles.

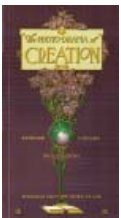
Bible students in our day have much advantage over these. We have convenient cheap Bibles, ability to read them, and good lights such as our forefathers never thought possible.

Bible students today are encouraged also when they consider that the Bible distinctly teaches that when men shall be running to and fro, and world-wide knowledge shall be increased, then the Wise Virgins, the Lord’s people, will understand certain features of the Divine Plan previously kept hidden by Divine intention. They perceive that we are in this day of running to and fro by every means of conveyance, and that free schools, compulsory education, etc., are bringing the foretold increase of knowledge. These things mark the time for the wise of God’s people to understand the Bible. How needful for this special light, when so many are falling away from all faith in the Bible, under the teachings of so-called Higher Criticism, which denies that the Bible is the Divinely inspired Message of God! (Daniel 12:1-10.) We should not only awake, but “put on the whole armor of God.”

LESSON 77

- 1* Why are the believers at Berea famous amongst God’s people? Par. 1
- 2* What did they do that those in Thessalonica did not do? Acts 17:11
- 3* Because of their faithfulness they are known as what?
- 4* Did the early Church have costly temples, rich robes and showy services?
- 5* How did they gather together?
- 6* Who’s direction and care were they under? What did Jesus declare? Matt. 23: 8
- 7* They met to study who’s message?
- 8* What advantages do Bible students have today over these brethren? Par. 2
- 9* How are Bible students encouraged today? Par. 3
- 10 Why were certain features of the Divine Plan kept hidden? Studies, Vol. 2, pages 17-24.
- 11* What does the Bible tell us about this day concerning travel and knowledge? Dan. 12: 4, See Expanded Biblical Comments.
- 12 What things marked the time for God’s people to understand the Bible?
- 13* Why did many fall away from faith in the Bible?
- 14 What teachings denied that the Bible is the Divinely inspired message of God?
- 15* As Christians we need to do what and put on what? Rom. 13: 11; Eph. 6: 11

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



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