

[R27 : page 3]

TRIALS.

The Christian's life is one of continual trials, of such a nature that the superficial Christian, who does not fully comprehend their use, and is not fully convinced that all things work together for good, to them who love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose, can not endure them.

The afflictions of the gospel can not be endured without the consolations of the gospel. Paul says: "For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ. And whether we be afflicted, it is for your consolation and salvation, which is effectual in the enduring of the same sufferings which we also suffer; or whether we be comforted, it is for your consolation and salvation." 2 Cor. 1:5,6. **page 3**

And the consolation is only given to those who can see beyond the present, or can understand the nature of the effect to be produced. **[R27 : page 3]**

"For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which [R28 : page 3] are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal." 2 Cor. 4:16,17.

Again, we read in Rom. 8:18: "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us."

Then, while "filling up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ," Col. 1:24, though at times they may be grievous; (for no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous),

nevertheless, "Afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby." Heb. 12:11.

"Though we be troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed; always bearing about in the body, the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body." 2 Cor. 4:8-10.

"Understanding that these things are designed to work out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, we can rejoice in hope of the glory of God. And not only so, but we can glory in tribulation also, knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and experience, hope; and hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us." Rom. 5:2,5.

We can now understand how all things work together for good to them who love God; when they are rightly exercised by the trial of their faith; and can see the force of Peter's exhortation:

"Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing had happened unto you, but rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad with exceeding joy." 1 Pet. 4:12,13.

Though the suffering of Christ were not simply the trials which he endured, yet the trials were included in the sufferings; and if they were necessary for him, they certainly are more so for us.

"It became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings." Heb. 2:10.

"He was tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." Heb. 4:15,16.

For consider him that endureth such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds." Heb. 12:3.

"Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin; and ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children; my son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of Him, for whom the Lord loveth, He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards and not sons." Heb. 12:4-8. Think of the worthies of the past, who, through faith, subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens; women received their dead raised to life again, and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection; and others had trials of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover, of bonds and imprisonments. They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword; they wandered about in sheep-skins and goat-skins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented; of whom the world was not worthy. They wandered in deserts and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth. And these all, having a good report through faith, received not the promise; God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect." Heb. 11:33-40.

We certainly are not called upon to endure greater trials than those worthies of the past. There hath no temptation or trial taken you but such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not suffer

you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will, with the temptation, also make a way of escape, that ye may be able to bear it." 1 Cor. 10:13.

"Wherefore, it behooved Him – Christ – to be made like unto his brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that He himself hath suffered, being tempted, He is able to succor – deliver – them that are tempted." Heb. 2:17,18.

All good is estimated in comparison or contrast with evil. Where sin abounded grace did much more abound.

So the glory of the future will be exceedingly intensified in consequence of an experience with the trials of this life. But the glory will hardly be realized by those who seek it from selfish motives, simply for the good of the individual. They who "serve God to escape future punishment and gain heaven," will fail to reach the goal they seek. Such do not experience the peculiar trials referred to in the Scriptures, consequently will not be partakers in the glory. Jesus Christ gave himself for the good of the world, and became heir of the world; and those who give themselves, or suffer with him, will be glorified together with him.

That He might become a faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, and know how to succor the tempted, it was necessary that he should be made perfect through suffering. If we would share with Him in the Royal Priesthood, we must also be perfected by trials that we may know how to sympathize with humanity. So the body of Christ, coming through the varied experience of six thousand years, will, as the Royal Priesthood, be qualified to meet the necessities of humanity of all ages and nations.

It is often asked why God did not make man so that he could not sin, and consequently suffer and die, and pass through such a terribly dark experience? The answer is found in what is said of the church.

The blessing which will come to the world through the instrumentality of the kingdom of God will be more fully appreciated, because of the long experience with the kingdom of Satan.

Understanding something of the position we are to occupy, and the use of the trials, can we not, by the help of the Spirit, endure as long as an allwise Father, who makes all things work together for good to those who love Him and are the called according to his purpose, sees to be necessary? Jesus, our head, lived as an example for us, that we should walk in his steps. He was persecuted and reviled, and endured such contradiction of sinners against himself; was a man of sorrow and acquainted with grief, and had not where to lay his head. Are we called upon to endure more? When He was reviled, he reviled not again; when He suffered he threatened not, but committed his cause to Him who judges righteously. 1 Pet. 2:23.

Blessed are ye when men shall revile you and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you falsely for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in heaven; for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you. Matt. 5:11,12. If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye, for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you; on their part He is evil spoken of, but on your He is glorified. But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evil doer, or as a busy-body in other men's matters. Yet, if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God on this behalf. For the time has come that judgment – trial – must begin at the house of God; and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God? Wherefore, let them that suffer according to the will of God, commit the keeping of their souls – lives – to Him in well doing as unto a faithful creator. 1 Pet. 4:14-19.

Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another; love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous; not rendering evil for evil, or

railing for railing, but contrariwise, blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing. For it is better, if the will of God be so, that ye suffer for well doing than for evil doing. 1 Pet. 3:8-17.

But the end of all things is at hand; be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer, and, above all things, have fervent charity among yourselves. Use hospitality – liberality – one to another without grudging. As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. 1 Pet. 4:7-10. That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold, which perishes, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ; whom, having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory, receiving the end of your faith, even your salvation. 1 Pet. 1:7,9. B. W. K.
