

WATCH YE THEREFORE.

"Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong." 1 Cor. 16:13.

The careless, indifferent, and lukewarm may lightly heed the words of warning, and scarcely discern the necessity which prompted them; but the faithful saints earnestly aspiring to attain that whereunto they are called, realize the necessity and thankfully heed them.

We should bear in mind that our foes are unseen, wily, and deceptive, and that if there is a weak or unfortified place that is where the enemy will make the attack. We need therefore to study well our position, and to know every avenue by which the enemy may approach. First, last and all the time we need to watch that the spirit of Christ in us is not displaced by the spirit of the world which so continually surrounds and allures us from our chosen course. We need to watch that [R609 : page 2] we be not entangled with the cares of this life; we need to watch that no root of bitterness springing up may trouble us. We need to watch that the fruit of the spirit of God is manifest in all our actions. Have we got them, and are they being cultivated and developed in us daily? Let us read slowly and bring not our neighbors, but our own hearts to the test of God's word – "The fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance....And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.

What a glorious character yours must be if you have all these fruits in their perfection! But that I know you have not. The soil of your heart and mine is too poor to expect so much from it, but are we pulling up the weeds and doing the necessary pruning and

cultivating; and in consequence are these fruits developing toward perfection? Is our love broad enough to make us patient with those whose Christian graces have not developed so rapidly as ours may have done? O how we need to watch here, and to guard against the roots of bitterness which may spring up!

Has our love for God and our desire for that goodness which so shines in his character, drawn us often to his word? and has our faith so laid hold upon its precious promises as to fill our hearts with joy and peace. We know this is the case with many, but this joy and peace may grow yet more by constant feeding on the word of truth. Watch here that you do not neglect to feed upon the word, and watch that in coming to it you may come with meekness, a simple childlike desire to learn God's ways, and not to establish your own.

While thus exhorted to set a vigilant watch over our Christian character lest it be dwarfed, withered or utterly destroyed, we are also told to "stand fast in the faith"; and in order that we may so stand fast, to equip ourselves and be strong, as men arm and prepare themselves for the battle.

Many make a great mistake in supposing that it is not a very important matter to stand fast in the faith; but Paul esteemed it of utmost importance. It is possible for every student of the Scriptures to have a clear, definite, positive faith, symmetrical and harmonious; and to be able to give to every one that asketh, a reason for the hope that is in him. If our faith is not thus definite and clear, we are just in condition to be blown about by every wind of doctrine. O how we need to watch here. Only those strongly supported by the truth will be able to stand in this evil day.

Finally, not only must we keep a vigilant watch over our faith and character ourselves, but if we would be strong, we must watch unto prayer, and thus keep constant and open communication with

the heavenly grace and secure the necessary help in every time of need.

MRS. C. T. R.
