

THE ZEAL OF THINE HOUSE.

"The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up; and the reproaches of them that reproached thee are fallen upon me." – Psa. 69:9.

Zeal in the Lord's service is that eager arduous active interest in the Lord's plans and their development, which is begotten of sincerest love for the Lord and for all those dear to him. The soul that is really in love with the heavenly Bridegroom will most naturally express its devotedness in such activity. And while ardent love is in the heart and prompting to action, we cannot contentedly be otherwise than active. We will seek and we will find avenues for usefulness. Since the special work of the Gospel age is the selection and development of the church, our zeal and service, like that of the Lord and the Apostles, should be spent chiefly for the church – in searching them out and doing all in our power to develop, strengthen, and encourage them to persevere to the end in the narrow way of sacrifice. It is in this service of the house or church of God that the Psalmist declares that the zeal of the Lord's anointed is expended – "The zeal *of thine house* hath eaten me up" – hath consumed all my energies.

As we engage in that service, a growing interest will increase the desire to be more and more active until in the end like our Lord we can say, The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up, hath consumed me. If we are following closely in the Master's footprints, we will find this consuming process going on and increasing from day to day. We will find his work consuming our time, our energies, our money, our reputation, our former earthly hopes and ambitions, and every talent we possess however great or small; and realizing how little it all is, even when judiciously used, the language of our hearts will be

"O for a *thousand* tongues to sing
My great Redeemer's praise,

The glories of my God and King,
The triumphs of his grace."

And just as surely as the fire of zeal is brightly burning and consuming our sacrifice, we will realize also that the reproaches of the same class who reproached our Lord will fall upon us. The reproaches will come thick and fast particularly from the nominal church. The world will have little interest in either opposing or defending us, but will coolly regard us with indifference, perhaps think us fanatical extremists, and will not desire to associate with us lest a measure of the same reproach should attach to them. But the devotees of Babylon will not fail to point the finger of scorn, to shoot the arrows of calumny and to instigate open opposition against the little flock of the anointed cross-bearers. But blessed are those who shall endure unto the end, until the zeal of God's house has eaten them up, entirely consumed them. Those faithful *unto death* shall receive the crown of life.

We should not be troubled then if we find that we are being used up in the Lord's service. Through zeal for the spread of his truth and the honor of his name do you find that your time is so used up that you scarcely have enough left for your personal necessities? that whereas you were once in better circumstances when your earnings all or nearly all were expended on self, you now find that gradually as the necessities of the work seem to need it, the hard earned savings of the years past are diminishing and with increasing prospects of larger demands? Do you find that your reputation as a Christian and as a man of sound common sense is about gone? Do you find that your present course if continued will put an end to the ambitions you once deemed of so much importance? Do you find your friends fewer, (but thank God, these are generally truer) than formerly? Do you find yourself often weary, your energies largely spent, and that physical strength is actually wearing out in the service, in doing what your hand finds to do with your might? Then you can truly say, The zeal of thy house is eating me up. And when your sacrifice is ended in the complete exhaustion of all your powers, you will have fought the good fight of

faith, you will have finished your course; and as he who has called you is faithful, you shall receive the crown of life that fadeth not away.

The measure of our zeal in the service is the measure of our love for the heavenly Bridegroom who is now looking for his jewels, for such as he desires to make his bride. And only those who prove by the sacrifice of earthly things their supreme love for the Lord, will be counted worthy of such honor and exaltation. If our harmony and sympathy with him and his great work for others is so great as to prompt us to sacrifice all other ambitions and hopes, even unto death, then we are giving most satisfactory evidence of our love and interest, and will most assuredly be chosen; and even now such may reckon themselves his bride elect.

There is no *punishment* for those who do not manifest such zeal. Such service is not forced nor unduly urged upon any. The Lord does not want for his bride one who needs to be forced or even coaxed to engage with him in carrying out his plans. He wants such as from the heart, and not by constraint are in deepest love and sympathy with him. He will not take for his bride one whose heart is divided, or whose love is chilled, or who cannot enter heartily [R914 : page 5] into his plans, esteeming it a privilege to endure hardness in doing so.

Those who do not manifest such zeal are simply showing themselves unworthy of this great favor to which they are called, and shall not be numbered among his jewels. The marriage of the Lamb is based on supreme love and tenderest devotion, a matter of choice and by no means of compulsion or constraint, and their hearts are most truly united long before the consummation of their hope.

It is quite an erroneous idea that it is possible to be over zealous in the Lord's service. Yet such is the impression which many give who receive the truth, yet never allow it to spur them to more than ordinary activity. If we really appreciate the truth, it ought to arouse and utilize all the enthusiasm of our nature; not in noisy and unreasonable demonstration, neither in words only, but in unusual efforts by every

method which we can devise. And if we do so, we will very soon find the reproaches of the lukewarm and indifferent cast upon us.

Dearly beloved, let us examine ourselves by the tests which the Lord is applying to us, and he will soon show us how we personally stand in his estimation. And if we find that we are falling short of a full and complete sacrifice, let us strive yet more diligently to fully render that which we covenanted to give – our all. Yet let none be discouraged as they look at the steady steps and more rapid progress of Christians of maturer growth. The babe's *effort* to walk and the young child's unsteady steps are none the less appreciated by the Lord. With continued effort will naturally come the strength in due time. If you cannot command sufficient courage at first to do some parts of the work which cost much in the way of self-denial, let yourself come to it by degrees. Do something at first which you can do, and keep on gradually increasing your efforts and trying your strength, and while thus endeavoring to develop strength go to the Lord and ask for more. Ask him to give you a fuller realization of the privilege of engaging in the work and of suffering for the truth's sake. Tell him of your weaknesses and your desire and determination to overcome them by his help. Do you imagine for a moment that he will leave you to struggle alone with your infirmities, or allow you to be overcome by them when you thus lay hold upon his strength? Never! no never!

"That soul which on Jesus hath leaned for repose
He'll never, no never, desert to its foes.
That soul, if all powers should endeavor to shake,
He'll never, no never, no never forsake."

None are so matured and so sure footed as to be able to tread steadily onward in the narrow way without constantly invoking and laying hold upon divine strength. Even our Lord sought frequent opportunities for private communion with the Father. And if he, the perfect one, needed divine help to enable him to sacrifice himself, how much more do we need to lay hold upon that power to carry us through.

Watch then and pray that the fire of zeal may not go out until it has entirely consumed your sacrifice. And when the reproaches of them that reproached your Lord fall upon you rejoice in your privilege of showing your sympathy with his sufferings by sharing in the same to the extent of your opportunity. When for your sake he agonized in Gethsemane's Garden you were not there to speak a word of comfort. When he stood before the High Priest and false witnesses testified against him and the lawless authorities pronounced him guilty of death, you were not there to defend him. When they spat in his face and buffeted him and smote him with the palms of their hands and taunted and reviled him, you were not there to resent such treatment, or to give him even a look of sympathy. When they scourged him and derided him and planted the cruel crown of thorns upon his brow and nailed him to the cross you were not there to sympathize or pity or to appreciate the love that prompted to such suffering for you. But to fill up our measure of the sufferings now, manifests the same love which would then, had we fully comprehended the situation, have hastened to comfort and help so far as possible. It is our privilege to share some of the ignominy, some of the reproach, and the promptness and zeal with which we do it will manifest the strength of our devotion and love.

Mrs. C. T. Russell.

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