

[R1627 : page 70]

APPLYING TRUTH TO ONE'S SELF.

DEAR BROTHER RUSSELL: – I cannot tell you how highly I have appreciated the WATCH TOWER of 1893. I have derived much spiritual benefit from its study. Every number has been full of rich things – things which should be treasured up in the hearts of those who are running for the great prize and striving to make their calling and election *sure*.

Your aim has been to make the TOWER readers better men and women – more like our blessed Redeemer and Lord, and also to protect them from the snares of the adversary.

Your articles, *From Glory to Glory, Taking God's Name in Vain, Unequally Yoked*, and others of a similar character, must have had a transforming power over the truly consecrated – those who are anxious to have the Lord's will done in them – while your various articles on the *Ransom* and *Pulpit Infidelity* have been and will be a source of protection to those who are truly the Lord's (in this evil day). I have found out that the TOWERS have not to be read, merely, in order to be appreciated, but they have to be *studied*. While away from [R1627 : page 71] home I copied parts of various articles from the TOWER and sent them to Sister McPhail to copy and return to me. I changed all the pronouns to the first person singular. I consider this an excellent way to study the TOWER, and would recommend it highly to all its readers. It helps to impress it upon the memory, and it gives one the power to tell what he knows or what he has copied. I know that it has been of great benefit to me.

I enclose you parts of two articles which will explain what I mean. Remember me kindly to Sister Russell and all of your household, and may the Lord bless you in all your efforts to "send out the light and the truth."

Your brother, in Christ,

M. L. McPHAIL.

The articles referred to follow.

TO BE ESTABLISHED IN THE PRESENT TRUTH SIGNIFIES

That I have carefully studied and thoroughly proved it by the law and the testimony (Isa. 8:20), and

That as a consequence I am convinced of its verity, so

That my faith is steadfast and immovable. – 1 Peter 5:9; 1 Cor. 15:58.

That I know in whom I have believed. – 2 Tim. 1:12.

That I have tasted and seen that the Lord is good. – Psa. 34:8.

That I have partaken of the sweets of fellowship with him. – 1 John 1:3-7.

That I have partaken of his spirit of meekness, faith and godliness to such an extent as to be led into a joyful realization of the fulness of his grace as manifested in the wonderful, divine "plan of the ages." – John 14:26; 16:12-15; 1 Cor. 2:10-16.

That I have been permitted to see not only the various features of that plan, – *The Worlds and Ages, Permission of Evil, Ransom, Restitution, Kingdom of God with its Human and Divine Phases, Second Death, Great Time of Trouble, Times and Seasons, Chronology, Harvest and its Work, etc.*, but also the *necessity* and *reasonableness* of its various measures in order to the full accomplishment of its glorious outcome in the fulness of the appointed times.

This is what it is to be established in the *present* truth. It is indeed a most blessed condition, bringing with it such peace and joy as the world can neither give nor take away.

But though I be thus established in the present truth, there are quite a number of

THINGS WHICH I MUST REMEMBER.

That my election to the high position to which I am called is not yet *made sure* – the race for the prize of my high calling is still before me.

That I am yet in the enemy's country, surrounded by many subtle and powerful foes.

That if I would be successful I must fight the good fight of *FAITH*.

That the weapons of my warfare are not carnal, but (God's truth is) mighty to the pulling down of the strongholds of error, superstition and inbred sin. – 2 Cor. 10:4.

That I wrestle not with flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." – Eph. 6:12.

That it is in view of the warfare before me – the subtlety of my temptations, the weaknesses of the flesh – that the faithful Peter urges *all* diligence in the cultivation of the Christian graces, and a continual calling to remembrance of the precious truths I have learned – that I may be strengthened for the conflict, and thereby able to make my calling and election *sure*.

That faith is a good thing (without which I cannot please God, I cannot be justified, I cannot maintain my justification or have access into the additional favor, I cannot be an overcomer); yet faith without

virtuous works is dead; and to hold the truth in unrighteousness is worse than never to have received it.

That the truth is given to me for its sanctifying effect upon my heart and life – it should have free course and be glorified – its precious fruits should appear more and more from day to day.

That I must add to my faith, *VIRTUE* – true excellence of character that will mark me as separated from the world and its spirit.

That in me the world should see those moral qualities which they must approve – however they may oppose (the objects of) my faith.

That I must add sterling honesty, truth and fair dealing in all business relations; moral integrity in all social relations; manifestly clean hands and a pure heart, and a bridled tongue that works no ill to a neighbor.

That all of these the world has a right to expect from me and all others who call themselves Christians; and that all of these are indispensable features of that virtuous character which must be added to my faith.

That if my hands be clean, they will not dabble in anything that is not virtuous; – they will have nothing to do with unrighteous schemes or projects in business.

That if my heart be pure, it will not devise evil things, or harbor evil thoughts, or plot mischief. **[R1627 : page 72]**

That if my tongue be bridled, it will not be given to evil-speaking, but will hold its peace when it cannot speak well and wisely.

That the promptings of virtue go further than merely these negative features which refuse to do anything which would work ill to a neighbor; they incite not only to passive, but also to active goodness – in benevolent charity which seeks to alleviate suffering; to

sympathize with sorrow; to comfort those in distress, and to elevate and bless others; to assist "all men as" I "have opportunity."

That I must gain a ***KNOWLEDGE*** of God's character in order that I may the more thoroughly imitate it, and of his truth, that I may more fully conform to its teachings.

That I must exercise ***TEMPERANCE*** – or self-control – in ***all*** things, letting my moderation be known unto ***all*** men, and taking care [R1628 : page 72] not to be hasty, hot-tempered, rash or thoughtless; but endeavoring to be evenly balanced, thoughtful and considerate.

That my whole manner should be characterized by that carefulness which would indicate that I am ever mindful of the Lord's pleasure, of my responsibility to him as his representative, and of my influence upon my fellow-men to see that it ***always*** be for good, ***never*** for evil.

That I must let "***PATIENCE*** have her perfect work, that I may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing."

That this grace smooths the way for every other, because all must be acquired under the process of patient and continuous self-discipline; and that not a step of progress can be gained without the exercise of this grace.

That not one of the graces more beautifully adorns the Christian character, wins the approval of the world's conscience or glorifies the God of all grace, whose truth inspires it.

That it is long-suffering meekness earnestly striving to stem the tide of human imperfection and weakness, and endeavoring with painstaking care to regain the divine likeness.

That it is slow to wrath and plenteous in mercy; quick to perceive the paths of truth and righteousness and prompt to walk in them;

mindful of its own imperfections, and sympathetic with the imperfections and shortcomings of others.

That I must add to "patience **GODLINESS**" – I must carefully study and imitate the divine character as presented in the Word.

That I must exercise **BROTHERLY KINDNESS** towards my fellowman.

That I must add to brotherly kindness **LOVE**.

That kindness may be manifested where but little love exists toward the subject of such kindness; but I cannot long persevere in such acts of kindness before a sympathetic interest is awakened; and by and by that interest, continually exercised, deepens into love, and even though the subject may be unlovely in character the love of sympathy for the fallen and the degraded grows, until it becomes tender and solicitous and akin to that of a parent for an erring son.

That Peter describes a most admirable character – one which cannot be acquired in a day, nor a year, but the whole life must be devoted to it.

That day by day, if I am faithful, I will be able to realize a measure of growth in grace and development of Christian character.

That it is not enough that I know the truth – nor should I be contented to hold it in unrighteousness. I must see to it that the truth is having its legitimate and designed effect upon the character.

That if I receive the truth into a good and **honest** heart, I have the assurance of the Apostle that I shall never fall, and that in due time I shall be received into the Kingdom of my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

That I should see the necessity of ever keeping the instructions and precepts of the Lord fresh in my mind, and of drinking deep into their inspiring spirit – although I am already established in the faith.

That to be established in the faith is one thing, and to be established in Christian character and in all the graces of the spirit is quite another.

In claiming to be a divinely recognized child of God and a follower of his dear Son, I stand before the world as God's representative; and, presumably, all my words and actions are in harmony with his indwelling Spirit.

I stand as a guide-post in the midst of the world's dark and uncertain way; and, if I am not true to my profession, I am a deceitful sign-board, causing the inquirer to lose the right way and to stumble into many a snare. Therefore, to take the name of God, claiming to be his son, a Christian, a follower of Christ, without a fixed determination and careful effort to fairly represent him, is a sin against God of which I will not be held guiltless!

I realize that to undertake the Christian life is to engage in a great warfare against iniquity; for, though the grace of God abounds to me through Christ to such an extent that my imperfections and shortcomings are not imputed to me, but robed in Christ's imputed righteousness I am reckoned holy and acceptable to God, I am not, says the Apostle (Rom. 6:1,2), **[R1628 : page 73]** to continue in sin that grace may abound; for by my covenant with God I have declared myself dead to sin and that I have no longer any desire to live therein. But having made such a covenant with God and having taken upon myself his holy name, if I continue in sin, or cease to strive against sin, I am proving false to my profession. (Rom. 6:1,2,11,12.) This means a great deal. It means a constant warfare against the easily besetting sins of my old nature; and the struggle will be long and constant until the power of sin is broken; and then only constant vigilance will keep it down.

If I be true to my profession, I will daily strive to realize an increasing mastery over sin in myself, and will be able from time to time to distinguish some degree of advancement in this direction. I will grow more like Christ – more self-possessed, more meek and gentle, more disciplined and refined, more temperate in all things, and more fully possessed of the mind that was in Christ Jesus. My old temper and unlovely disposition will disappear, and my new mind will assert its presence and power. And thus the silent example of a holy life will reflect honor upon that holy name which it is my privilege to bear and to represent before the world, as a living epistle, known and read of all men with whom I come in contact. I realize that the formation of such a noble and pure character is the legitimate result of the reception of divine truth into a good and honest heart. Or, rather, such is the transforming power of divine truth upon the whole character, when it is heartily received and fully submitted to. "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth," was the Lord's petition on the Church's behalf; and may I not fall into the error of some, of presuming that the sanctifying work can go on better without the truth than with it? – 2 Peter 1:4; 1 John 3:3; John 15:3; 17:17; Eph. 5:26; Rom. 12:2; 2 Cor. 3:18; 7:1; Psa. 19:7-14; 1 Tim. 4:16.

I need the instruction and guidance and inspiration of the truth for holy living; and our Lord's words imply that all the truth that is necessary to this end is in the Word of God, and that, consequently, I am not to look for any further revelations through visions or dreams or imaginations of myself or others. The Word of God, says the Apostle (2 Tim. 3:16,17), is profitable for *doctrine*, for *reproof*, for *correction*, for *instruction in righteousness* (Heb. 4:12), that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works. It reveals to me the spirit, mind or disposition of God, and exhorts me to let the same mind dwell richly in me; and in conjunction with the study of the mind of God as revealed in his Word and communion with him in prayer, I receive the blessed influences of his spirit, which brings me more and more into conformity with his perfect will. I realize that to live a holy life is not to do some great and wonderful things: it is only to live from

day to day a life of quiet unostentatious conformity to the will of God – of secret communion with him in my closet, devotions and daily walk, and of ***jealous activity to the extent of my ability and opportunity in his service***. As I have named the name of Christ (2 Tim. 2:19), it is my determination – God helping me – to depart (more and more) from iniquity and apply my heart unto instruction, confident that I shall be led of God into green pastures and beside still waters: my table will be richly and bountifully spread, and my cup of blessing and joy and gladness will overflow; while the wrath of God will in due time be revealed against all who take his hallowed name in vain, however they may band themselves together, and however loudly they may proclaim themselves heaven's appointed messengers.
