

## CAST NOT AWAY YOUR CONFIDENCE.

"But call to remembrance the former days, in which, after ye were illuminated, ye endured a great fight of afflictions; partly, whilst ye were made a gazingstock, both by reproaches and afflictions; and partly whilst ye became companions of them that were so used. For ye had compassion of me in my bonds, and took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing in yourselves that ye have in heaven a better and an enduring substance. Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward; for ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise. For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry. Now the just shall live by faith; but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. But we are not of them who draw back unto destruction, but of them that believe to the saving of the soul." – Heb. 10:32-39.

WITH very many of God's people, as well as with the world's people, the ideal Christian life is one of constant peace and tranquility. They have never learned that "the peace of God which passeth all [worldly] understanding," promised to the Christian, is to rule in and keep his *heart* (Phil. 4:7; Col. 3:15), and does not apply to his outward life. They forget, or perhaps never learned, that our Master's words were, "In the world *ye shall have tribulation,*" but in me ye shall have peace (in your hearts). "If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you." "If they have called the Master of the house Beelzebub, how much more them of his household?" "Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus, [in this present evil world or dispensation], shall suffer persecution." It is of a wicked class, and of the saints, that the Prophet declared, "They are not in trouble as other men." – John 16:33; 15:18; Matt. 10:25; 2 Tim. 3:12; Psa. 73:5.

Only to those who have some knowledge of God's great plan is this, his dealing with his people, understandable and readable. The world marvels that those whom God receives into his family, as sons by redemption and adoption, should be required or even permitted to suffer afflictions. But to the well-instructed saint the Apostle says, "Think it not strange concerning the fiery trial that shall try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you." And this one may now clearly discern the object and utility of present trials, afflictions and persecutions. He sees that these are in fullest accord with his high calling, his heavenly calling, – to be an heir of God and a joint-heir with Jesus Christ our Lord, "*if so be that we* suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together." – Rom. 8:17. [R1653 : page 147]

But why should a share in the coming glory be made dependent and contingent upon present sufferings? We answer, for two reasons.

(1) Because severe trials and testings of our love for God and his truth, and of our faith in him and his promises, are only a wise provision on God's part, in view of the very high honor and responsibility of the great office to which he has called us. If it was proper that our Lord and Redeemer should be tested in all points as to faith and obedience prior to his exaltation to the excellent glory and power of his divine, immortal nature, much more so it is fitting that *we*, who were once aliens and strangers, far from God, and children of wrath even as others, should be thoroughly tested; [R1653 : page 148] not tested as to the perfection of our earthen vessels, for God and we well know that in our fallen flesh dwelleth no perfection, but tested as to our new minds, our *consecrated wills*, whether or not these are *fully* consecrated to the Lord, firmly established in the love of truth, purity and righteousness in general. And also to see whether we would *compromise* any of the principles of righteousness for worldly favor, selfish ambition, or for any of "the pleasures of sin for a season." Those who *love* righteousness and *hate* iniquity, who develop *positive characters*, these are the "overcomers" who shall, as members of Christ, inherit all things. The undecided, the luke-warm – neither cold

nor hot – are far from having the spirit of the Kingdom class, and will surely be rejected – "spewed out." – Rev. 3:16.

(2) A share in the coming glory is dependent upon present sufferings, for the reason that the coming glories are to be bestowed only upon those who have the spirit of Christ, the spirit (disposition) of holiness. And whoever has received this holy spirit or disposition and been transformed by the renewing of his mind or will, so that no longer *selfishness* but *love* shall rule over his thoughts and words and deeds, that person, if in the world at all, could not avoid present suffering. His love for God, his zeal for God's service and people, his faith in God's Word and his uncompromising attitude respecting everything relating to these would be so greatly in contrast with the prevalent spirit of doubt, selfishness and compromise that he would be thought peculiar, called an extremist and fanatic, if not a hypocrite. Evil surmisings, out of hearts not fully consecrated, will attribute every good deed to some selfish or evil motive, and therefore, "Ye shall be hated of all men for my [Christ's] name's sake;" for "the world knoweth [understandeth] us not, because it knew him not." (Luke 21:17; 1 John 3:1.) The reason for all this is evident: it is because "the god of this world hath blinded the eyes" of the vast majority of men; because the faithful, who appreciate the truth, who have new hearts (wills) and the right spirit on these subjects, are but a "little flock."

And these conditions will not be changed until the testing of the "little flock" is finished. God will permit evil to be in the ascendancy until that testing, sifting, refining and polishing of the Bride of Christ is fully accomplished. Then Satan shall be bound for a thousand years, and not be permitted to further blind and deceive the nations during that Millennial age of blessing; but, on the contrary, the little flock of overcomers, with Christ, their Lord and Head, will bless all the families of the earth with a full knowledge of the truth.

Therefore, dear brethren and sisters, let us give heed to the Apostle's words, and not cast away our confidence. Confidence in

God, and in the outworking of his great plan, and confidence in all who trust in the precious blood and are bringing forth the fruits of the spirit in their daily lives – meekness, patience, brotherly-kindness, love.

The Apostle here clearly shows that there are two ways of enduring the afflictions of Christ: (1) to be made a gazingstock both by afflictions and reproaches, and (2) by avowing our sympathy for the reproached ones and thus sharing their reproaches and afflictions. For if one member suffer, *all the members* of the body of Christ suffer with it.

"Call to remembrance the former days," and note that your afflictions and trials came principally after you had been illuminated with the light of the knowledge of God, shining in the face of Jesus Christ our Lord; and that they have increased as the light of present truth has increased with you. It is not difficult to discern the reason for this. The great Adversary is not interested in disturbing those who are "asleep in Zion;" but he is ever on the alert to mislead and entangle those that are awake. And the more active we become in the service of the Lord and the truth, and consequently the more actively opposed to Satan and error, the more he will fight against us. And the more faithfully and vigorously we fight the good fight of faith, as good soldiers of the Lord Jesus Christ, the more we will have of the Master's approval now, and the greater will be our reward in the Kingdom. **[R1653 : page 149]**

No doubt there are many and more severe trials just before us. From God's standpoint, having been blest with great light, we should be able to endure greater trials and afflictions. From Satan's standpoint, we, as a Gideon's band, armed with the truth, are more injurious to his cause than all others combined. The only wonder to us is that he has not assailed us still more fiercely in the past. Perhaps he was hindered; perhaps he will be granted yet more liberty to buffet us,

as the night draws on. Such is our expectation, based upon the direct statements and the types of Scripture.

But such reflections should bring us no sadness, no fear; for he that is on our part is more than all that be against us. (1 John 4:4; Rom. 8:31.) The Lord of hosts is with us. His promises, as well as his providences, are walls of salvation and protection on every hand. What shall separate us from the love of God in Christ? Shall tribulation? No! it shall but cause us to draw closer to him; and under his protecting care we shall rest. His grace is sufficient for us. His strength is made manifest in our weakness. When we feel weak in ourselves, then we are strong in him. He will never leave us nor forsake us.

"Watchman, what of the night?"  
"The morning cometh, and a night also."

See *Poems and Hymns of Dawn*, pages 62 and 286.

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