

[R1943 : page 43]

## **GOLD TRIED IN THE FIRE.**

"I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich." – Rev. 3:18.

IN OUR study of the typical tabernacle, which was a shadow of good things to come, we have seen that everything inside the tabernacle was made of gold. The boards of which the tabernacle was constructed were overlaid with gold. The furniture also was of gold. There stood the golden candlestick, the golden table, the golden altar of incense, the golden ark of the testimony and the golden cherubim. Gold was also prominent in the typically glorious robes of the high priest. The fringe upon the upper robe was of golden bells and pomegranates; the texture of the ephod was interwoven with golden threads, and it [R1944 : page 43] was fastened on the shoulders with golden clasps; and upon his head was the golden crown, upon which was inscribed, "Holiness to the Lord."

All this was in striking contrast with the metals used elsewhere about the structure, its typical significance here being that all within "the Holy," which represented the present condition of truly consecrated believers, and within the "Most Holy," which represented the glorious condition of the Church triumphant, pertains to the divine nature, gold being a symbol of divinity. All who are privileged to enter the antitypical Holy and Most Holy are also to be, as Peter tells us, "partakers of the divine nature." (2 Pet. 1:4.) They are members of the body of the great Highpriest whose divine nature was symbolized in the gold of the typical highpriest's typically glorious garments.

It is in harmony with this same symbolic meaning of gold, that the Revelator says of the heavenly city, the New [R1944 : page 44] Jerusalem, "And the city was pure gold [a divine institution], ...and the street of the city was pure gold [all its highways are of divine

appointment]." (Rev. 21:18,21.) And the Psalmist, referring to the privileged class who, when glorified, shall constitute that heavenly city, government or kingdom of God, – the members of the body or bride of Christ, partakers of the divine nature, – says, "Upon thy right hand did stand the queen, in gold of Ophir. ...Her clothing is of wrought gold." – Psa. 45:9,13.

It is to the same apt symbolism that our Lord also refers in addressing his people in our text, – "I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire." These words, be it remembered, are not addressed to the world, but to the Lord's people, justified and consecrated. (Rev. 1:1; 3:14.) This call is an exhortation to them to faithfully fulfil their covenant, to submit themselves fully and unreservedly to the discipline of the Lord, which is necessary for their perfecting in holiness, and for making them ready to reign with him as his bride and joint-heir in the glory of the divine Kingdom.

Not until we lay hold by faith upon the *exceeding great and precious* promises – of joint-heirship with Christ in his coming Kingdom and glory – which promises lead us to fulfil their conditions of consecration and self-sacrifice even unto death, is there any of the "gold" of the "divine nature" in us. This treasure can be purchased only at the cost of entire consecration or sacrifice of all that we have, to Christ. Previous to our justification by faith in Christ we had nothing to sacrifice, all that we had being under condemnation; but, being justified, we may present our bodies living sacrifices, holy, acceptable to God, and our reasonable service. Thus the treasure of the new, divine nature, the gold, is given us. Thus we "buy" the gold.

But we have this treasure in the earthen vessels, and there is consequently much of alloy mixed with it. Hence the necessity that the gold be cast into the crucible for refining. And if we would purchase the "gold *tried in the fire,*" it must be at the cost of faithful and constant submission to the discipline of the Lord in the fiery trials which are necessary to consume our dross and refine our gold. Wherefore Peter

says, "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial that is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you." (1 Pet. 4:12.) And Paul reminds us of the counsel of wisdom (Prov. 3:11,12; Heb. 12:5-8), – "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."

Peter also reminds us that the trial of our faith is much more precious than that of gold that perisheth, and that the end sought through such trial is that we may be "found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ." (1 Pet. 1:7.) It would be idle for any of the Lord's consecrated people to hope to be made meet for the glorious inheritance of the saints without the refining processes of fiery trial; for Paul tells us that "the fire shall try *every man's work*, of what sort it is." "If ye receive not chastisement [discipline, fiery trial], whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons." (1 Cor. 3:13; Heb. 12:6-8.) And through the Prophet Isaiah the Lord tells his spiritual Israel, as well as his typical fleshly Israel, "I will turn my hand upon thee, and purely purge away thy dross, and take away all thy sin." (Isa. 1:25.) The Prophet Malachi, making special reference to the last days of this age, the days of the Lord's presence, and the great refining work to be accomplished then, says, "Who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap. And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver; and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver." – Mal. 3:2,3.

Fiery trials are therefore to be expected by all of the Lord's people, especially in this day of the Lord. As surely as we are sons of God we shall have them; and when they come we should promptly recognize their mission to us and see that we are exercised by them unto godliness, sobriety and deep and fervent piety. "Now no chastening [discipline] 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.

It is in the school of experience that we learn our most valuable lessons; and the ripest saints, in whom we find the deepest sympathy, the most patient forbearance, and the most tender helpfulness and consideration, are those who have been through the fire of affliction, and who have been rightly exercised thereby. It was when the cross grew heaviest and the clouds were darkest, and when the tempest was highest, that the Master's presence was most sensibly realized, and the blessed lessons of faith and trust and of the Lord's tender, personal love were sealed upon the hearts of the disciples. It is under such discipline that the soul is mellowed to a loving submission that calmly says, I can do all things, bear all things, through Christ who strengtheneth me. As gradually the dross of the old nature is consumed, and the gold becomes more and more manifest, these precious souls become ever dearer to their loving Lord. So dear are they to him that in every affliction he is near with his grace to sustain and his presence to cheer; and the deepest shades of sorrow become memory's most hallowed resting places, where the Day Star shines the brightest.

Whenever a new trial is presented to the Christian, if he will but call to mind this precept of the Lord, "I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire," it will stimulate courage, nerve to patient endurance, and quicken to self-sacrifice. "Gold tried in the fire!" How can it be tried without the crucible and the flame? How otherwise can the dross be eliminated? There is no other way. "Wherefore, think it not strange:" let the fire burn; let the dross be consumed; and see to it, beloved, that in the heat of the flame you remove not the "living sacrifice" **[R1944 : page 45]** from the altar. Remember that the eye of the great Refiner is upon you; and as the refiner of gold watches the metal in the crucible to see his image reflected in it, so the Lord, the great Refiner, has his eye upon you. He is watching to see how the precious metal of your character reflects his image. Or, in plain language, in every trial he watches to see what influences control our actions, whether they be influences of present advantage, or worldly policy, or personal friendship, or earthly loves – of husband, or wife, or children, or houses, or lands, or whether they be honor among men, or love of ease,

or love of peace at any cost; or whether, on the other hand, we are controlled by the naked principles of truth and righteousness; and whether we will defend these principles with zeal and energy at any cost of labor or suffering, or both, and so fight the good fight of faith to the bitter end – even unto death.

Those who do so, reflect the Master's image. Like him they are loyal to God, loyal to the principles of truth and righteousness, brave, obedient, faithful. These are the overcomers. They overcome by faith; for without a strong reliant faith they could not thus endure hardness as good soldiers, and pursue to the end a course which is continually against the current of the old human nature. Faith buckles on the armor of God and goes forth to the battle with firm and steady tread, quickened by the inspiring melody, –

"Awake my soul, stretch every nerve,  
And press with vigor on;  
A heavenly race demands thy zeal,  
And an immortal crown."

The Christian course of self-sacrifice cannot be one of ease and continuous smooth-sailing and peace. There may be a calm now and then, but storms and battles are the rule; and he who courts ease and peace at the expense of the principles of truth and righteousness, or who is so indifferent to the value of those principles as not to study to discern them in order to defend them, is not a faithful, overcoming soldier of the cross. "Ne'er think the victory won, nor once at ease sit down; Thine arduous work will not be done till thou hast gained thy crown."

Jesus said, "Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; and a man's foes shall be they of his own household. He that loveth father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more

than me, is not worthy of me. And he that taketh not his cross and followeth after me, is not worthy of me." "If any man come to me, and hate not [*i.e.*, and love me not more than\*] his father and mother [**R1945 : page 45**] and wife and children and brethren and sisters; yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple....Whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple....He that hath ears to hear, let him hear." – Matt. 10:34-38; Luke 14:26,33,35.

*\*See EMPHATIC DIAGLOTT – foot note.\**

Oh, how necessary is the hearing of faith to the victory of faith – to that victory which makes every other love subservient to the love of God, which makes every other interest bend to the interests of his great work, and which cheerfully sacrifices every other interest to the interests which center in Christ and in his coming Kingdom. The ear of faith must be attuned to the melodies of divine truth if the soul would catch its blessed inspiration; and the eye of faith must discern the symmetry of truth and the beauty of holiness, if the soul would be filled with a burning zeal for God – for his truth and his righteousness.

But let the soul be thus inspired with deep and abiding love for the melody of truth and the beauty of holiness, and filled with a holy zeal for God, then everything else takes a secondary place, and we have the victory by faith in every encounter with the enemy. The soul thus stayed upon God can always trustfully sing, – "If on a quiet sea toward home I calmly sail, With grateful heart, O God, to thee, I'll own the favoring gale. But should the surges rise, and rest delay to come, Blest be the tempest, kind the storm, which drives me nearer home."

-----