

"MY SOUL, BE ON THY GUARD."

WHILE, as the Apostle predicted, "perilous times" are upon us, in which some in the Church will "stumble" and some "fall," and when "the love of many shall wax cold," let us not forget that it is "he that endureth [faithfully] to the end [of his trial], the same shall be saved." Remember the Apostle's advice, to take trials and oppositions and misrepresentations cheerfully, joyously, patiently, *knowing* that, so endured, they will "work out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." But, as the Apostle adds, to secure such blessed results from trials, persecutions and oppositions, we must remember to "look not at the things that are *seen* [earthly things and prospects], but at things that are *unseen* [the heavenly and eternal things]." We are to endure "as seeing him who is invisible." Greater is he that is with us than all that be against us. (Heb. 11:27; 1 John 4:4-8.) "Who is he that will harm you [really], if ye be followers of that which is good?" (Read 1 Pet. 3:13-16; Rom. 8:31-39.) The opposition of evil can work only good to "the elect," those who are called according to God's purpose. To all who are of the true Zion the promise is, "No weapon that is formed against you shall prosper."

When that noble servant of God, John Wesley, was zealous in opposing Satan, and preaching a full consecration to God, he provoked Satan's enmity, and the latter found mouthpieces amongst ambitious and jealous "false brethren" who spread abroad vile rumors from time to time, not only assailing his teachings, but even his moral character. His plan was to make no defence. He argued that if he should engage in personal disputes it would be just what Satan would want – a hindrance to his work. Finally, however, when a most malicious rumor, reflecting on his moral character, was started by some prominent persons, and the entire work seemed likely to be greatly injured by it, his brother Charles and some others came to him, and said, John, you must answer this charge or your reputation is gone.

John replied in substance thus, – No; I will keep right along with my work. When I consecrated myself to the Lord, I gave him my *reputation* as well as all else that I possess. The Lord is at the helm! Our Lord Jesus, by his faithfulness, "made himself of no reputation," and was crucified as a blasphemer and between outlaws, yet he opened not his mouth! No, I will make no defense. A certain class, evil at heart, would believe the evil reports regardless of my denials; and those thus alienated will no doubt, as in the early Church, go "out from us because they were not of us." "The Lord knoweth them that are his," and will keep his own; and none shall pluck them out of his hand. Besides, the Lord may see that some are thinking of me, rather than of him and his message which I seek to declare.

The results we all know. The message of holiness with faith swept over the world, and its influence is not yet lost. And John Wesley is still loved for his work's sake in every civilized part of the world; but his traducers are forgotten. There is a lesson in this for all, as an illustration of the Lord's words – "In quietness and in confidence shall be your strength."

Wherefore, dearly beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which shall try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: but rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings, that when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy. – 1 Pet. 4:12,13.

Remembering that the Passover season is always one of Satanic activity and of special *trial* to God's people, we are praying for the dear flock, and for ourselves, as did our Master for Peter, – that faith fail not, and that whatever trials may come may only draw the sheep nearer to each other and to the great Chief Shepherd. But we should distinguish between the weak ones, and the wilfully wicked, like Judas. The former should be prayed for and helped, the latter should be left entirely to the Lord's judgment.
