

## TAKE HEED TO YOURSELVES

ST. PAUL'S words, "Take heed to yourselves and to all the flock over which the holy Spirit hath made you overseers, to shepherd the Church of God, which he hath purchased with the blood of his own Son" (Acts 20:28), were never more worthy of our attention than now. From our vantage point on Zion's watch tower we see clearly that, while the Truth is progressing grandly in all directions, the "Evil Day" is upon us, the time of testing those already blest and enlightened. It is not, therefore, merely a question of who shall be blest with the ear to hear the message of Present Truth, but additionally, "Who shall be able to withstand in that evil day, and having done all to stand" the final tests (Eph. 6:13), and be acclaimed – "More than conqueror through him who loved us" and bought us with his precious blood.

We perceive the attack of the Adversary, referred to in our caption, in every direction; – the grievous [R3943 : page 54] wolves of error and ambition among "your own selves." We must sound the alarm and tell you that "the hour of temptation" is come – the one for which we have been preparing for the past thirty years. With the knowledge granted us let us not slumber at the critical moment; but soberly and prayerfully and faithfully meet the situation.

Let us remember that our *knowledge* means an added responsibility, and that it will avail us *nothing* except as it is combined and active with *Love*, which is the bond of perfectness, the fulfilling of the divine law or requirement. How many blessings the Lord has granted us, and opportunities to put on the whole armor of God that we might be able to withstand the very trial now upon us!

Wisely did the Apostle first say, "***Take heed to yourselves.***" That is our first responsibility. We should each first examine our own hearts to see whether we are to any degree moved by jealousies, or ambitions, or any selfish motive. To do this effectively we must not measure ourselves with others, nor yet by our own imperfect standards, but by the Lord's standard – Perfect Love. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with ***all*** thy heart, with all thy mind, with all thy being, with all thy strength; and thou shalt love thy neighbor [and especially thy brother in the Lord] as thyself." Oh! what brotherly-kindness, what tenderness of word and act, what sympathy of thought for each other's weaknesses, what appreciation of each other's better traits, what long-suffering kindness and patient forbearance in love, what care for each other's welfare, rights and liberties, as for our own, this would imply and produce!

"Examine yourselves whether ye be in the faith!" writes the same Apostle. Doctrinal soundness is very important, but not enough; we must also be "in the faith" in the sense of ***exercising faith in the Lord*** – in all of life's affairs, and especially in all the affairs of his Church. If ever we allow ***expediency*** to swerve us from the Scriptural program in the affairs of the Church it manifests that we are ***not "in the faith"*** as God designed. For confidence in God and his overruling wisdom and power would never permit expediency to say, "Let us do evil that good may follow" – Let us take an unscriptural course for the best interests of the Lord's cause. The faith dictates that to ***obey God*** is better than sacrifice, and that he is able to make all things work for good to all who love and serve him.

Dearly Beloved, let us, then, remember that this is our test and now our testing time; and let ***love*** for the Lord and his brethren and his Word be constantly in command of our lips, of our conduct and, above all, of our hearts. "If ye do these things ye shall never

fail, but so an entrance shall be granted us into the everlasting Kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ."

What is thus true of all, is specially true of those honored with a special stewardship in the Church – the Elders – in this the hour of trial that is upon the whole world and peculiarly upon "the very elect." – Rev. 3:10.

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