

KNOWLEDGE NECESSARY TO GROWTH IN GRACE

"Ye have put off the old man with his deeds and have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of Him who created him." – Col. 3:9,10.

IN OUR TEXT the expression "put off" suggests the additional thought of putting out. As an illustration, let us consider Congress. When by a vote the party in power is put out of power, we do not understand that they are put out of Congress. One party which has been in control is to be superseded by the other party. Such a transfer would, in some respects, mean a new line of policy altogether.

So it is in the change of becoming New Creatures in Christ, members of the Body of Messiah. In many things a radical change takes place. The new will must regulate what we shall eat, what we shall wear; in fact, it must be the ruling power over everything after we have become New Creatures, begotten of the Holy Spirit; for we have elected a new Head. The change of headship is an instantaneous work. There was a time when we were on the other side of the question. Finally we decided to come on the Lord's side, and accepted Him as our Head. At the moment we accepted the change the will of the flesh was put out of control and the new will installed in power. Then we became New Creatures. But we were undeveloped in character.

As when a new party comes into power in Congress that party cannot regulate things all at once, but by degrees effects the changes desired, so with the new mind. It gradually makes change after change, and thus the renewing work, the transforming work, goes on, the new mind gaining more control and bringing the thoughts, words and deeds under the supervision and direction of the Lord. As we come to know God better, we come to see His will better. More and more we come

to see things from the Divine viewpoint and to regulate every word and every act of our life therefrom.

Through knowledge, as well as in knowledge, the New Creature is renewed or refreshed, built up, made strong. The wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. What the old mind had was the wisdom of this world. What the New Creature receives is the wisdom of God. The development of the different powers of the New Mind is a gradual work, dependent upon knowledge. With the new will the knowledge becomes the energizing and strengthening power, and finds opportunities by which the New Creature can accomplish its purpose. This knowledge is that which cometh from above. It is not merely the knowing how many chapters there are in the Bible, nor how many verses there are in the Bible and being able to quote them; but by the various providences [R4895 : page 381] of God in life, it is to come to such a knowledge of God that it is sufficient for His will to be made clear to us, to insure obedience. Our knowledge is increased in proportion as we give heed to the things which God has spoken; in proportion as we set our affections on things above and not on things on the earth.

THE TERMS UPON WHICH WE ARE CALLED

All Christians should *know* the terms and conditions upon which "God hath called" them, namely, (1) *To suffer with Christ* in the present time, and (2) To be glorified and reign with Him in the coming Age to bless the world. These should know both the reason for their suffering and the character which God would develop in them, without which they could not be "fit for the Kingdom." It is concerning these characteristics, "putting on the new man," necessary to those who would [R4895 : page 382] make their "calling and election sure," that our present lesson treats. Let us consider some of them.

"Let love be without dissimulation." St. Paul had already explained the necessity for love, but now he puts us on guard against a merely feigned love, which would only outwardly appear kind and

polite. The true spirit of love, the holy spirit, will not be a dissimulating one, a hypocritical one; the love will be genuine, heart-felt, as well as mouth-expressed. This love is to be toward God and toward all, in proportion as they are God-like, or striving to be so. It is to be a love of that which is good, right, pure, true.

"Abhor that which is evil." We are not merely to *avoid doing* that which is evil, not merely to have no love or affinity for evil, but more than these, we are to *hate*, to *abhor* evil. As the love for God and for all things true and pure and making for righteousness is to be cultivated, so the abhorrence of sin and impurity of every kind is to be cultivated. Thus, the stronger we become in Christian character the more intense will become our love for the good, the pure and the true; and the more intense will be our opposition to the untrue, the impure, the sinful. The more we learn of the beautiful harmonies of this heavenly grace of love, and the more they become the melodies of our own hearts, the more distressing and repugnant and abhorrent will sin and selfishness, "the spirit of the world," be to us; just as discords in music grate upon our ears in proportion to our knowledge and appreciation of musical harmonies.

As holiness and sin are opposites, so our feeling toward these must be represented by the sentiments of love and hatred. To grow cool in love for righteousness is to lose some of the abhorrence for sin. Let us, therefore, cultivate in ourselves hatred for sin, selfishness, impurity and every evil way, that we may find it the easier to cultivate in our hearts the beautiful graces of the Spirit.

Only in our *minds* have the old things passed away and all things become new. Actually, this change will be accomplished when we become spirit beings. Meantime, if we shall be counted worthy of a place in the First Resurrection, it is required of us that we shall demonstrate our willingness of mind, our earnest desire, to be all that the Lord would have us be. In no way can this be better demonstrated

to the Lord or prove more helpful to ourselves than in keeping a strict surveillance of our hearts and of our thoughts.

