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"YE HAVE NEED OF PATIENCE"

"Let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing." – Jas. 1:4.

THERE ARE two quite distinct words in the Greek which, in our English Scriptures, are translated "patience." One of these is a word that in a general way corresponds to the common thought of patience as we speak of it in connection with the everyday affairs of life, meaning merely forbearance, or long-suffering. Indeed the Greek word is generally translated long-suffering. It is the other word with which we are more particularly interested in the treatment of our text, and which is the one most frequently translated patience by the New Testament writers.

This word has a much deeper and fuller significance than attaches to our English word patience. It signifies, rather, constancy, the thought being an endurance of evil in [R4910 : page 408] a cheerful, hopeful, willing, patient manner. It represents, therefore, an element of character, and not merely a temporary condition or restraint of feeling or action. It signifies that development of heart and character which manifests itself in an endurance of wrong or affliction with contentment, without rebellion of will, with full acquiescence in the Divine Wisdom and Love, which, while permitting present evils, has promised to overthrow them in God's due time.

This grace of patience smooths the way for every other Christian grace, because all must be acquired under the process of patient and continuous self-discipline. Not a step of progress can be gained without this grace of patience; and not one of the graces more beautifully adorns the Christian character, or wins the approval of the world's conscience, or glorifies the God of all grace whose Truth inspires it. It is *enduring meekness*, striving to stem the tide of human weakness, and endeavoring with painstaking care to attain to the

Divine likeness. It is slow to wrath and plenteous in mercy; it is quick to perceive the paths of righteousness, and prompt to walk in them; it is mindful of its own imperfections and sympathetic with the imperfections and shortcomings of others.

The importance of endurance in the Christian's character is fully borne out by the Apostle Paul's use of the word; for on more than one occasion he places *patience* above and beyond *love*, which we have seen is the "mark" of character for which we are to run – the "*mark for the prize*." For instance, in writing to Titus (2:2), enumerating the characteristics of the advanced Christian, the Apostle uses the following order: "Vigilant, grave, temperate, sound in faith, in charity [love], in *patience*." Though we have all the other qualities, this final test of *patient, cheerful endurance* must be passed before we can be accepted of the Lord as members of the *very elect*.

Again, in writing to Timothy (2 Tim. 3:10) respecting himself, the Apostle puts this quality of *patient endurance* in the place beyond *love*, saying, "Thou hast fully known my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, long-suffering, love, *patient endurance*."

"THE LORD YOUR GOD DOTH PROVE YOU"

One might ask, if "Love is the fulfilling of the Law" and "the mark for the prize of our high calling," how can patience rank higher than Love? The answer is that patient endurance does not come in merely at the close of our race, but it is a requisite all the way along the race-course. We need this *cheerful endurance* of the *earliest trials* in the Christian way; and as we speed along in our race for the "mark," the spirit of *cheerful endurance* should be *growing stronger and stronger at every step of the journey*. Some might be faithful for a few days or a few months or a few years, yet be unworthy of the great Kingdom blessing of Christ.

In the Parable of the Sower, our Lord gave an illustration of this fact, saying that some seed fell on stony ground and sprang up; *it*

grew; but finally, when the burning heat of persecution came, the tender plants withered away. In choosing the members of the Kingdom class the Lord is looking for a *depth of soil*, a *depth of character*, a *depth of heart* that will be *patient to endure*. Those who lack this *one* quality will not be fit for the Kingdom. *Patience* is necessary as an element of character on *any* plane of being; but with the *Christian* it is specially important to have it developed *from the beginning of the race*. We need it with us at the *first quarter mark*, and at the *second quarter mark*, and at the *third quarter mark*, and still with us at the *fourth quarter mark*, the *mark for the prize – perfect Love*.

And when we have reached this mark of the race where we love, not only our *friends*, but our *enemies*, it is required of us that we *stand up to the mark faithfully, cheerfully, patiently enduring the tests* which the Lord will even then see fit to have come upon us. God subjects [R4910 : page 409] His people to testing, *long testing*, sometimes for months and years. As it is said, "The Lord your God *proveth you*." – Deut. 13:3.

Hence it is that the Apostle Paul exhorts us, "Having done all, *stand*" – *endure*. Having reached the "mark," "Let *patient endurance* have her perfect work," or "*perfect her work*." Let *patient endurance* demonstrate, not only that you have the character, the qualifications of Love, demanded in the race for the prize, but also that you have love as an *element of character, deep-rooted, immutable*, so that you can *endure opposition cheerfully*.

St. Paul tells us that we have need of this *patient endurance* that, after having done the will of God [after having brought our own will into complete subjection to the Divine will], we might receive the promise. (Heb. 10:36.) The thought in the Apostle's mind seems to be that there is a certain work for us all *to do in ourselves* – "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling." (Phil. 2:12,13.) It is God who is working in us to *will* and to *do* – to co-operate in this work. Let

us make sure that rebellion of any kind in our heart be thoroughly killed, mortified; and that we bring the will into perfect submission to the Divine will, so that we may have *no other will than His*. Even then, after we have overcome to this extent, *we have need of patience*. The Lord will not accept us merely because we are consecrated. He requires that the consecration shall be *proven*. *To begin with*, He accepts the consecration; then He *tests us* to demonstrate to what extent we really love Him.

PATIENCE NECESSARY TO FRUIT-BEARING

Patient endurance is also mentioned in the Scriptures as being the Lord's Word, or teaching. Our Lord says, "Because thou hast kept the *Word of My patience* I will also *keep thee*." (Rev. 3:10.) Twice in the Gospels also we note that our Lord brought to the notice of the disciples the importance of the quality of patient endurance. Once was in the Parable of the Sower above referred to. (Luke 8:11-15.) He said, "That [sown] on the good ground are they which in an honest and good heart, having heard the Word, *keep it*, and bring forth fruit with patience [with cheerful endurance, constancy]." The thought here is that in order to be of the fruit-bearing class, which the Lord will approve and accept in His Kingdom, it is necessary to do more than receive the Word of His Testimony, even though we receive it with joy; for that class in the parable is represented by the stony ground, which at first gave evidence of great fruitfulness and vigor, but withered under the sun of persecution, because of lack of depth of soil. That stony, shallow ground represents, the Lord explained, a class of hearers who rejoice greatly in the Truth, but do not *endure*; they are such as cannot withstand persecution or opposition, but wither under it, become discouraged. Such cannot be of the Kingdom class, all of whom must be overcomers.

In this parable our Lord shows us that patient endurance, constancy, is the *final test*, following after the readiness of preparation to receive the seed; following after the seed has been received and has

sprouted; following after love and hope and joy and faith have caused it to spring forth and to give promise of fruitage. Patient endurance, then, is necessary in order that the grain may be developed and thoroughly ripened and made fit for the garner. How important patient endurance, cheerful endurance, seems to be, in the light of the Lord's Word! for we cannot suppose that He who judges the thoughts and intents of the heart would be pleased with His children, even if He saw them enduring much for His sake, if they *endured in an impatient or unhappy frame of mind*. They would not in that event be copies of God's dear Son, whose sentiment is expressed in the words, "I *delight* to do Thy will, O God!"

Our Lord at another time was telling His disciples that as the result of being His followers they must expect opposition, trials, *tribulations*. Perhaps it may assist some to realize the strength of the meaning of the word *tribulation* when they know its origin. It is derived from the Latin word "*tribulum*," the name of a roller, or threshing-machine used in olden times for cleaning wheat, removing from it the outer husk, or chaff. How appropriate the term when applied to the Lord's consecrated people, who in the Scriptures are symbolized by wheat! Our new natures are the kernel, the real grain; yet this treasure, or valuable part, is covered with the husk of earthly conditions. In order that the wheat may be made properly ready for the "garner" and for usefulness, it is necessary that each grain shall pass through the tribulation necessary to remove those qualities which, until separated, render us unfit for the future service to which we are called of the Lord.

In proportion as we are able to realize our own imperfections, and the perfect will of God concerning us, we shall be enabled to bear patiently, and even with a certain kind of rejoicing, all the tribulations which the Master may see best to let come upon us. Our Lord explained to His disciples that so long as they lived in this present Age, when sin abounds, and when Satan is the prince of this world, they must expect tribulation from various quarters; but He assured them

that they would, nevertheless, be fully and completely under Divine care and protection, even though the persecutions would be permitted to reach and to affect them. Then follow the words, "In your patience [patient endurance, cheerful, hopeful constancy] possess ye your souls." – Luke 21:19.

"HE THAT OVERCOMETH SHALL INHERIT ALL THINGS"

One object of the test of patient endurance is that we may be "strong in the Lord," that we may have the character-likeness of the Lord Jesus – not merely the firmness, but also the gentleness. All this must be developed before we can receive the things promised, the things which God has in reservation for those that love Him. (I Cor. 2:9,10.) These things are spiritual and might **[R4911 : page 409]** be apprehended by our minds, but could not be comprehended. The promise that we are to be like our Lord includes not only the spiritual and heavenly conditions, to which we shall attain in the First Resurrection, but also the blessing of sharing in the uplifting of the world. "If ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's Seed, and heirs according to the promise." (Gal. 3:29.) But to "be Christ's" means, not only that we shall accept Him, join Him and His standards, but also that we shall be good soldiers. Those who would not be good soldiers would not be worthy of being members of the Body of Christ, for such could not be conquerors and "more than conquerors" through Jesus Christ our Lord. – Rom. 8:37.

We already have the "promise," but it has not yet been received in the sense of being fulfilled. The promise is a conditional one. "He that doeth these things shall live by them." (Lev. 18:5; Rom. 10:5.) So in our Lord's arrangement, the condition of the promise is that we shall abide in His love, His favor. Whoever accepts of Christ's death and trusts in Him and seeks to follow the Divine commandments, walking not after the flesh, but after the Spirit, will receive the promise, for the promise is made to "**overcomers**." **All** the promises of the Gospel Age are made to the "overcomers." Such shall sit upon the **[R4911 : page**

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By faith the Church now begins to enjoy this conditional promise, which depends upon their faithfulness to the end – their *patient endurance*. Such loyal ones have the earnest of the promise and shall be joint-heirs in the Kingdom. All others will be cut off from that membership. "Every branch in Me that beareth not fruit He taketh away; and every branch that beareth fruit, He purgeth [cleanseth, pruneth] it, that it may bring forth more fruit." (John 15:2.) We are on trial; and the trial is to prove our loyalty. If this trial time, or probation, is satisfactory, the membership is made permanent. Those who fail to live up to the conditions, are not counted worthy to be members of the Body of Christ and joint-heirs in the Kingdom.

LET US ABIDE IN HIS LOVE

Who can consider the importance of becoming copies of our blessed Lord and Head without feeling that to attain to this character-likeness will be a life-work! It cannot be accomplished in a day or in a year; but the whole life must be devoted to it; and day by day, if we are faithful, we should realize a measure of growth in grace and of development in Christian character. It is not enough that we know the Truth, or that we be content to hold it in unrighteousness. We must see to it that the Truth is having its legitimate and designed effect upon the character. And if the Truth is thus received into good and honest hearts, we shall have the assurance of the Apostle Peter that "We shall never fall," but that in due time we shall be received into the Kingdom.

Hence we see the necessity of ever keeping the instructions and precepts of the Lord fresh in our minds, and of drinking deep into their inspiring spirit, although we are already established in the faith. To be established in the faith is one thing; to be established in Christian character and in all the graces of the Spirit is *quite another*.

Beloved, "Let us run with patience [cheerful constancy, patient endurance] the race set before us" in the Gospel. (Heb. 12:1.) As already observed, the race must be run with this constancy if we would reach the "mark;" and after reaching the mark we can maintain our position only by the grace of constancy, patient endurance, that having *done all, we may* STAND!

