

FERVENT IN SPIRIT – SERVING THE LORD

THE HEAVENLY FATHER, through His various agencies operating during the more than eighteen centuries of this Gospel Age, has been seeking for His Son a companion, a Bride of many members, although in comparison to the world a "little flock." Various good qualities are desired and all of these will make the Bride class in the character-likeness of their Redeemer, their betrothed Bridegroom. They are deficient in all of these qualities according to the flesh, but fortunately the flesh will not be the basis of the decision as to their worthiness or unworthiness of the glorious prize. All will depend upon the mind, the will, the heart. It must be not only good, but absolutely perfect. "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." They shall be the children of God. They shall be the joint-heirs of the Redeemer.

This purity of heart which the Lord approves and desires might be summed up in the expression, *loyalty of heart* – loyalty to principles of Truth and righteousness, the principles of the Divine Government – loyalty to God the Father and to our Lord Jesus Christ and to all the members of His Body. This perfect heart-loyalty includes, therefore, love for God and for the Redeemer and for the brethren, as well as sympathetic love for the world of mankind, in harmony with the Divine purpose and Revelation. The Apostle says, "If these things be in you and abound, they make you that ye shall be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord," and "so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting Kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." – 2 Pet. 1:8,11.

There is a particular force attaching to this word "abound." All of God's people, all begotten of the Holy Spirit, are inspired by the Spirit of the Father, the Spirit of love, the Spirit of justice and loyalty. But how about the *degree*, the *abounding*, the having of this love permeate all of life's affairs? If this Spirit of the Lord *abound* in us it will

influence our business, our pleasure, our homes, our workshops, our kitchens, our dining rooms, our bed chambers, our very thoughts.

May it be possible to have a measure of the Lord's Spirit with very little abounding, and hence have merely an enjoyment of some spiritual things, on special occasions, at church, etc.? It is the ***abounding*** love, the all-pervading influence of our Lord in the lives and in all of life's affairs of those who would have the abundant entrance into the Kingdom of Messiah as members of the Bride class, that is required. If they have this abounding loyalty and love they will be copies of God's dear Son, the Redeemer; otherwise, they will not. And God has predestinated that only such as are copies of His Son shall have a share in the Kingdom of Messiah. Others may reach, indeed, a secondary place, in the "great company" class, but will never reach the throne and never be members of the Bride class.

How important, then, that we discern clearly the necessity for this abounding love, this zeal for God and for righteousness which will amount to a hatred of iniquity, even while loving, succoring and helping the evil-doers into right paths.

THE HARVEST A SPECIAL TIME OF TRIAL

So surely as we recognize that we are in the "harvest" time, we must also assume that the Lord is now specially ripening the "wheat" and separating it from the "tares" and, shall we say, dividing the wheat into ***two classes***? It is this special testing of this harvest time which the Scriptures draw particularly to our attention, frequently warning us of the necessity of having on the whole armor of God and being not slothful in business, but fervent in spirit, serving the Lord.

From our vantage-point in THE WATCH TOWER we perceive that just such testings as we should expect are in progress throughout the Lord's ripe wheat field. Divine providence is permitting tests of love and loyalty, faith and obedience, brotherly kindness and patience. Sometimes the trials come to the classes through the Elders, **[R4930 :**

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Sometimes the trial is from the other side. Some members of the class may be very exacting, very ready to strain at a gnat and swallow a camel, very ready to find fault with everything that the Elder may do, however faithful he may be. Such experiences, whether coming from the one side or the other, are tests, and it behooves each of the Lord's people to see just how he receives these tests and just what effect they have upon his own heart and character. If the experiences embitter him, anger him, or wound deeply his pride, it proves that he needed just such disciplinary experiences to show him his own lack and to point him to the Throne of heavenly grace for mercy and help.

Again, some of the dear classes are assailed by the Adversary through false doctrines and have their own difficulties in endeavoring to defend the Truth, the Divine Plan of the Ages, and to maintain their stand in harmony therewith. Or, on the other hand, the difficulty may arise from some of the dear friends being hypercritical and trying to find differences where there are none – fomenting the spirit of strife rather than the spirit of harmony – discord rather than love.

We exhort, dear brothers and sisters, what we all can agree to, namely, that we are in the *testing time* and these various matters are our *test*. Only by the exercise of much fervency of spirit, much zeal for the Lord, for the Truth and for the brethren, can we hope to stand faithfully and to be of assistance to others to a faithful stand. Let us not be faint-hearted. If we faint not, we shall soon reap our reward and hear the Master's voice: "Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

We are in the time of general unrest, grumbling, etc. Let us not think for a moment that such grumbings and murmurings are contentions for the "faith once delivered to the saints." Let us rather

cultivate more and more the fruits and graces of the Holy Spirit. Let us specially exercise these in connection with our brethren of the "household of faith," of course not neglecting to "do good to all men as we have opportunity" and to be patient and forbearing to one another. But the special blessing of the Lord comes to those who specially seek to promote peace, happiness, welfare, prosperity and growth in grace in the Body of Christ, which is the "Church of the Living God."

