

## THE VALUE OF MODERATION

**"Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand." – Philippians 4:5.**

**QUESTION.** – The Apostle Paul says, "Let your moderation be known unto all men." What is the particular thought here in the word "moderation," and what is the connection between these words and the sentence, "The Lord is at hand," which follows?

**Answer.** – The Spirit of the Lord is said to be a spirit of wisdom, a spirit of justice, a spirit of love, a spirit of a sound mind. Whoever, therefore, receives the Spirit of the Lord, in proportion as he receives it, has these qualities of mind and heart. At the beginning of a Christian's experience, the measure of this moderation, or reasonableness, or gentleness, is of course, comparatively small. But he gradually gets a greater appreciation of the value of this quality. His ideas become more reasonable as he becomes sanctified by the Spirit. He will have more and more of the spirit of a sound mind, of gentleness, meekness, and will become more and more prepared for the Kingdom soon to be established.

This attitude of mind comes in large measure as a result of knowledge. As he comes to know more about God and His plans, more about the origin of sin in the world, how it came about and how its penalty has passed upon all men by a process of heredity, the true disciple of Christ feels more of the spirit of moderation and acts with more consideration and charity toward others than if men were perfect. As we realize that these imperfections vary in number and in degree in different persons, so in our dealings we must be moderate toward all, wise in our dealings with all, patient toward all, having the spirit of justice, of reasonableness, of mercy.

This injunction of the Apostle does not refer to the exercise of this quality toward the Church only, but toward all men. Properly, of course, this moderation would begin at home, and would be more particularly manifest in good works in the Church, as in opposition to the evil sentiment – anger, malice, evil-surmising, hatred, strife – works of the flesh and of the Devil. But the spirit of moderation should not be confined to the home, but should be manifested toward all with whom we have intercourse or dealings. It was said of the Apostles that people "took knowledge of them that they had been with Jesus and learned of Him." We should **[R5840 : page 30]** so live before all, both the brethren and the world, that they would thus take knowledge of *us*. We should see to it that *our* conduct is a credit to the great and noble Cause with which we are identified.

The connection between letting our moderation be known and the statement, "The Lord is at hand," seems to be that the Lord's people are to have in mind their expectation based upon the promises of God's Word, that Messiah's Kingdom is shortly to be established, and that this should help them in living an exemplary life. Whether the passage should be considered from the viewpoint that the Church of the Apostles' time were living in the latter part of the great seven-thousand-year week, and that the great Sabbath was at hand, when the Lord was about to come and set up His Kingdom and set things straight in the world, and that hence they could well be patient and considerate, or whether it should be from the viewpoint of time – that the Lord's children should exercise the grace of moderation because they had little time left in which to manifest it – we do not know. At any rate, knowing that the opposition of sin will not last very much longer, we may have the greater patience and exercise this patience with the greater ease when we have **[R5841 : page 30]** this thought before our minds.

The Apostle gives a similar thought when he says that the tribulations which the Lord's people undergo are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in them. This should

make us very moderate, very forbearing, under circumstances which would make others very rude, very angry, very immoderate. We can be very gentle, not only because of our knowledge of the nearness of the Kingdom, but also because of our knowledge of the weaknesses of others, which cause them to impinge upon our rights.

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