

December 19

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1 Kings 20:11

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jected. It is the test which gauges and registers the strength of every other virtue and grace, and no soldier of the cross will be crowned with the laurels of victory who has not stood this test....In the battle of this day, as in all other battles, the effort of the enemy is to surprise and suddenly attack and

overwhelm the Lord's people; and the only preparation, therefore, that can be made for such emergencies is constant vigilance and prayer and the putting on of the whole armor of God—the Truth and the spirit of the Truth. Z. '94-155 R1656:1

R1656 (From Harvest Truth Database V8.0 2013)

THE TEST OF ENDURANCE

"Let not him that girdeth on his harness boast himself as he that putteth it off."—1 Kings 20:11.

⁽¹⁾THE test of endurance is certainly one of the severest tests of faithfulness to which the elect Church, the body of Christ, is subjected. It is the test which gauges and registers the strength of every other virtue and grace, and no soldier of the cross will be crowned with the laurels of victory who has not stood this test. The Christian life is a warfare, and the above words of one of the kings of Israel to a boastful enemy of the Lord's people are applicable, not only to every new recruit in the Lord's army, but similarly to all who have not yet finished the good fight of faith.

The first gush of enthusiasm in the Lord's service, much as we may and do appreciate it, may be the hasty production of the shallow soil of a heart which immediately receives the truth with gladness, but having no root in itself, endures but for a time; and afterward, when affliction and persecution ariseth, immediately they are offended. (Mark 4:16,17.) Such characters cannot stand the fiery tests of this evil day, whereof it is written—"The fire [of that day] shall try every man's work, of what sort it is."—1 Cor. 3:13.

Therefore, says the Apostle Peter, "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you as though some strange thing happened unto you." All of the elect Church must be so tried; and blessed is he that shall endure unto the end. The sure word of prophecy points to severe conflicts and great trials in the closing scenes of the Church's history. Elijah, a type of the body of Christ, finished his earthly career and went up by a whirlwind in a chariot of fire—strong symbols of storms and great afflictions. John, another type of the Church, was cast into prison and then beheaded. And we are forewarned of the great necessity of the whole armor of God, if we would stand in this evil day.—M. DAWN, VOL. II., Chap. 8.

It therefore behooves every one who aspires to the prize of our high calling to brace himself for the severer conflicts and trials of faith and patience that may suddenly and without a moments warning be sprung upon him. ⁽²⁾In the battle of this day, as in all other battles, the effort of the enemy is to surprise and suddenly attack and overwhelm the Lord's people; and the only preparation, therefore, that can be made for such emergencies is constant vigilance and prayer and the putting on of the whole armor of God—the truth and the spirit of the truth.

"In your patience possess ye your souls." No other grace will be

more needed than this in the fiery ordeals of this evil day; for without great patience no man can endure to the end. All along the Christian's pathway, ever and anon, he comes to a new crisis: perhaps they are often seemingly of trivial importance, yet he realizes that they may be turning points in his Christian course. Who has not realized them? There comes a temptation to weariness in well-doing, together with the suggestion of an easier way; or there springs up a little root of pride or ambition, with suggestions of ways and means for feeding and gratifying it. Then there comes, by and by, the decisive moment when you *must* choose this course or that; and lo, you have reached a crisis!

Which way will you turn? Most likely you will turn in the direction to which the sentiments you have cultivated have been tending, whether that be the right way or the wrong way. If it be the wrong way, most likely you will be unable to discern it clearly; for your long cultivated sentiments will sway your judgment. "There is a way that seemeth right unto a man; but the end thereof is the way of death." (Prov. 14:12.) How necessary, therefore, is prayer, that in every crisis we may pass the test successfully. Nor can we safely delay to watch and pray until the crisis is upon us; but such should be our constant attitude.

The life of a soldier ever on the alert and on duty is by no means an easy life; nor do the Scriptures warrant any such expectation. On the contrary, they say, "Endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ;" "Fight the good fight of faith," etc. And yet many Christian people seem to have the very opposite idea. Their ideal Christian life is one without a breeze or a storm: it must be one continuous calm. Such a life was indeed more possible in former days than now, though the world, the flesh and the devil always have opposed themselves, and always had to be resisted by every loyal soldier of the cross. But now the opposition is daily becoming more and more intense; for Satan realizes that his time is short, and he is determined by any and every means to exert his power against the consummation of the Lord's plan for the exaltation of the Church.

Consequently we have had within this harvest period many and severe storms of opposition, and still there are doubtless more severe trials to follow. But those who, with overcoming faith, outride them all—who patiently endure, who cultivate the spirit of Christ with its fruits and graces, and who valiantly fight the good fight of faith, rather than withdraw from the field, such will be the overcomers to whom the laurels of victory will be given when the crowning day has come.

⁽¹⁾ ½ Dec 19 Manna, 1Ki 20:11

⁽²⁾ ½ Dec 19 Manna

MANY FALL, THE FAITHFUL STAND

R1297 "God will send [permit to come upon] them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie, that they all might be condemned."

Who are these whom God thus desires to be snared and condemned? Paul answers, They are those who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness. They are not those who never heard the truth, but those who, having once heard and understood it, turned from it, rejected it and had pleasure in unrighteousness --not necessarily in gross unrighteousness, such as crime, but in some measure of unrighteousness; often a desire for a little more liberty of self-will instead of close conformity to the divine will, and consequently a preference for the error which would grant such liberty and silence the promptings of conscience and the voice of truth. Such prefer the error to the truth. Those who receive not the truth in the love of it are not worthy of it... To these error comes in its most deceitful forms, and

they quickly fall a prey to the delusion.

"With the Psalmist, therefore, we may well inquire, "Who," then, "shall be able to stand?—who shall ascend into the hill [kingdom] of the Lord? or who shall stand in his holy place?" Now mark the answer: "He that hath clean hands and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully. He shall receive the blessing from the Lord, and righteousness from the God of his salvation." (Psa. 24:3-5.) Here is the class among whom the delusions of error can make no headway. These have a standpoint of observation from which every error appears in its true colors, and every truth in its proper light.

Mark the particular features of this class: They have "*clean hands*:" Their work for the Lord may be very imperfect; they may tell the story of his love and grace in a very halting, awkward manner; they may minister to the temporal or the spiritual necessities of the saints, or others, from a very frugal and plain store of their own; but their work will be *clean*; their story will be

free from self-emulation and human glorying, and their works will be free from both ostentation and parade. What they do will be done with simplicity and meekness, as unto the Lord, and not for the praise of men.

They have "*pure hearts*:" Under divine inspection, their motives are seen to be pure. Their whole purpose and endeavor is to glorify God and to bless their fellow-men, especially the household of faith. They "*have not lifted up their soul unto vanity*:" They have no vain worldly ambitions...to be great, or good, or wise in the eyes of men, nor to grasp the fleeting earthly treasures once consecrated to God...

Those who have such a spirit come reverently to the Word of God to learn God's will and way, and with a desire to walk accordingly; and here they receive the divinely-provided armor of God, which will protect all who carefully put it on from all the fiery darts of the enemy. Without this complete armor, no child of God is safe in this evil day. "Wherefore," says the Apostle, "take unto you the whole armor of God, that

ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand."-- Eph. 6:13

The evil day here referred to is this Day of the Lord, in which we are now living, wherein every man's work shall be tried, so as by fire. These are the "perilous

times" of which the Apostle forewarned the church--times peculiarly perilous to Christian faith, because of the many subtle and delusive forms of error now springing up to intercept the progress of the truth. But God's provision for his saints is equal to the emer-

gency of the perilous hour. Never before this "evil day" was it possible for the saints to put on the whole armor of God; and never before was it needed... The time was shortly coming when it would be impossible to stand without it."

R5499 (From Harvest Truth Database V8.0 2013)

THE PURPOSE OF OUR TRIALS

"Blessed is the man that endureth temptation; for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love Him."—James 1:12.

THE WORD *blessed* in this text may be understood to signify the condition of one in the favor of God. The state of such will be a happy one, a desirable one. The word *blessed* does not, of course, always suggest a happy condition as relates to the feelings, or emotions, but rather as relates to the outcome. It is used here in connection with the results of trial to the Christian. The child of God who wins the crown of life will be very highly favored or blessed of God; then whatever conduces to this end is a very great blessing, even though it cause much pain to the flesh.

Who will gain this crown of life? Of what character will he be? The Scriptures declare that it will be that man or that woman who endures temptation, trial. What is signified by *enduring* temptation? Evidently the thought is not the enduring of one temptation for one time or for many times. Even the world must endure trials. The reference is to the retaining permanently of the attitude of *patient* endurance and faithfulness when tempted, of remaining true to God under temptation and stress. Temptations come from a variety of sources. They may come from friends, who may tempt us to live a life of more or less self-indulgence, to relax in a measure our fidelity to the Lord. The enticements of wealth or worldly society, a natural love of ease and disinclination of the flesh to endure hardness—any or all of these may prove strong and subtle temptations to the Christian.

But if we love the Lord supremely, that love will become the chief impulse of our lives. Our one aim will be that we may glorify God in our spirit and in our body. We know that there are things which are displeasing to God, and if we love Him we will seek to keep His commandments. The child of God might fail once, or he might fail repeatedly along the same line, until in deep humiliation and anguish of soul because of his continued manifestation of the same weakness, he would be led to cry out with strong crying and tears to the Lord; and his pain and distress of heart might so impress upon him his need of greater watchfulness along that line that he would become strengthened for further attacks of the same nature, and thus be enabled to gain the victory over his besetment, his special weakness.

THE CROWN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

While we shall never reach the point of perfection in the flesh, nevertheless this power to endure temptation should become more marked day by day, as the New Creature remains loyal, still resisting and striving still harder to resist and be true to the Lord in thought and word and deed. Blessed is the man who shall endure—time after time, day after day—thus proving his faithfulness and obedience to God. For when that man is tried, when the trial time is over, when God has seen that he has demonstrated fully his loyalty, then, when God's "due time" has come, that tried and proven one shall receive the crown of life.

The expression, "the crown of life," is another way of saying the *reward* of life; and this life is on the highest plane. The Apostle Paul speaks of this same crown as the "crown of righteousness." The Apostle Peter calls it the "crown of glory." It is the crown of *righteousness* because it is the reward that comes as the result of righteousness, of obedience to God and the principles of His Government, of faithfulness to our covenant. It is the crown of *glory* because it is the reward which brings glory, honor, immortality.

In the Grecian games certain rewards were given to those who endured successfully the trial of their skill, of their prowess and of their physical endurance. The reward given was usually a crown or wreath of laurel. That crown was valuable, not so much in itself, but especially as an outward token of appreciation of superior merit. The fact that it was evergreen would suggest to the Christian that our reward as "overcomers" will be a lasting reward, an eternal reward.

The Lord is to give us life in fullest measure. The penalty that came upon our race because of sin was death; but now there is an opportunity to regain life—life in perfection, untainted, unend-

ing. This life is in the Son of God. At the present time life can be gained only by being begotten to the spirit nature. The crown of life, to be given to the "more than conquerors," is a very special kind of life—immortality, the highest form of life possible, the crown, or pinnacle, of all life. This is to be the reward of the class called in Scripture the Bride of Christ, when they shall have demonstrated their faithfulness, when they shall have been proven worthy to be members of that exalted class.

There will be a crown of life in the *next* Age—perfect human life—as the result of obedience to the tests and trials of that time. These tests will differ in many respects from the trials and difficulties of the Church at the present time. They will be much less crucial; for then temptations to sin from without will be removed, and bodily and mental uplifting and assistance granted, which will make their trial a more favorable one. Righteousness, too, will immediately be rewarded in that Day, and sin and disobedience of every kind will be promptly punished. But now righteousness often brings suffering, reproach, pain and loss, from the human standpoint; while sin often brings present advantage, popularity and pleasure to the flesh.

THE PROPER VIEW OF OUR TRIALS

There is a special love required by God of the Gospel Church—this peculiar class now called of Him. They are to have a love that is so unselfish that it will be willing, yea, glad, to lay down the earthly life in the service of God, that they may bring blessings to others. To these God has promised the *special* crown of life—immortality, His own nature. These are to be the blessers of their brethren, those of the nature formerly their own. As Isaac was the blesser of Ishmael and of the sons of Keturah, and as the first-born of Israel were the blessers of their brethren, so these will bless all the peoples of the earth, from among whom they were chosen. How thankful we should be for an honor so great!

If these favored children of the Heavenly King could always keep in mind the fact that every trial and testing, every persecution and difficulty, permitted to come upon those who have made the Covenant of Sacrifice with the Lord, is designed to develop them, to prove and test their love, to demonstrate whether or not their characters are fixed, rooted and grounded in righteousness, it would set all their painful experiences and temptations in a new light, and would be a great assistance to them in fighting the good fight of faith successfully. For if by these trials and tribulations the Lord is proving our love and devotion to Him, then whatever they may be, whether great or small, we should diligently use them as opportunities to demonstrate to our God the fulness of our love for Him and His cause, and as means by which we may rise day by day to greater heights of spiritual attainment, being changed into the likeness of our Master.

Thus viewed and thus met, every trial and affliction would prove a blessing, a Heavenly messenger, bearing us on wings of faith "Nearer, our God, to Thee, nearer to Thee." Then, beloved, "count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations [trials, testings], knowing this, that the trial of your faith worketh patience [patient endurance]. But let patience perfect her work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing." Herein we "greatly rejoice—though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations [testings, provings], that the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold, which perisheth, might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ, whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see Him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory, receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls!"—James 1:2-4; 1 Peter 1:6-8.

Truly, "these light afflictions, which are but for a moment, work out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things that are seen [the things of the

present order] are temporal, but the things which are not seen [the glories to come] are eternal."—2 Corinthians 4:17,18.

"WILL YE ALSO GO AWAY?"

Thus we are assured in the infallible Word of God that those who love the Lord, and who are to receive the Kingdom, will have their love tested by trials and temptations on the way to that Kingdom. Those who do not love the Lord with *all* their hearts, in whom self or some other idol has first place, will be seduced by the world, the flesh or the Devil into some form of rebellion against the Divine Word or the Divine providences. They will have schemes and theories which they will prefer to the Lord's Plan and the Lord's way; and their schemes when analyzed will usually be found to be based either upon selfishness or ambition or upon an evil spirit of envy, hatred, jealousy, etc.

The Lord's leading and the Lord's words lose their attraction to such, and they lose their interest correspondingly; and like those who turned away from the Master at His First Advent, and said, "This is a hard saying," so these also go away and "walk no more with Him." But some will continue to walk with the Lord; some will not be driven away nor decoyed from Him by the arts and wiles of the Evil One and his hosts. These are such as are at heart fully the Lord's, not their own; they will follow the Lamb of God, whithersoever He may lead, because they have no will except His will. They will follow Him through all the Narrow Way of discipline and trial in this life; and by and by, as He has assured them, "They shall walk with Me in white; for they are worthy."—Revelation 3:4.

OUR UNFAILING SHELTER

Nor will this choice company lack in number by reason of the falling away of some. It will be of the predestinated number which God arranged to constitute the Bride, the Lamb's Wife. The Father's foreknowledge made full allowance for all who would turn back, and He knew that the requisite number would follow on, to make their calling and election sure. These have learned that the call of the world, the promptings of the flesh, and the arts of the Adversary, are all snares and traps and pitfalls to drag them down to death. They have learned the sound of the true Shepherd's voice, and cannot be enticed by the voice of strangers.

Precious children of the Lord, blessed are ye! Sheltered in the "secret place of the Most High" no evil shall befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling. "He shall give His angels charge concerning thee; they shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone." How safe and secure are these! Though a thousand fall at their side, and ten thousand at their right hand, yet the plague shall not come nigh them. They have "made the Most High their Habitation," and He will keep them from all harm.

"Under His Wings I am safely abiding,
Though the night deepens and tempests are wild;
Still I can trust Him, I know He will keep me;
He has redeemed me, and I am His child.

"Under His Wings! What a refuge in sorrow!

How the heart yearningly turns to His rest!
Often when earth has no balm for my healing,
Here I find comfort, and here I am blest.

"Under His Wings! Oh, what precious enfolding!
Here will I hide till life's trials are o'er;
Sheltered, protected, no evil can harm me,
Resting in Jesus, I'm safe evermore!"

As the faithful disciples of the Master in the first Harvest realized a meaning in His teachings which others of the professed children of God could not appreciate, so now, at the Second Advent of the Lord, His words have a precious significance to those who are in heart-harmony with Him which none others can realize. And we see now, as at the First Advent, that some are stumbling and going back, while others are being drawn more closely to the Lord than ever, by means of the knowledge of His Plan which He is supplying.

FEASTING IN THE BANQUET HALL

As we draw nearer to the close of the Harvest, we shall not be surprised if the way become still narrower, still more difficult, and if the temptations to stumble and to fall become still more frequent. Let us then, dear brethren, be more and more on our guard against the wiles of the great Enemy of our souls, and against the deceptions of our own fallen nature. Let the perfect love of God rule in your hearts, driving out self-love and world-love, with their pride, ambition and folly. Let entire devotion to God bring into your hearts the promised fulness of joy and rest and peace. Be fruitful branches in the Vine, abiding ever in Him, responding to all the prunings of the great Husbandman with more abundant fruitage.

If beguilements come to us, let us say with the Apostles of old: "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life." There is life nowhere else, and we wish to go nowhere else. We are feasting in the banquet hall of our Father's House, "and His banner over us is love!" We have an abundant supply: our table is richly laden. So we eat and go on our way rejoicing. We are nearing Home. We shall soon reach the last mile-stone in our journey! Then, with a song on our lips, let us press on!

"Tempted and tried, whatever betide,
In His secret pavilion His children shall hide.
'Neath the shadowing wing of eternity's King,
His children may trust, yea, His children may sing.

"Tempted and tried, yet the Lord will abide
Thy faithful Redeemer and Keeper and Guide,
Thy shield and thy sword, thine exceeding reward;
Then enough for the servant to be as his Lord.

"Tempted and tried, the Savior who died
Hath called thee to suffer—then reign by His side.
If His cross thou wilt bear, His crown thou shalt wear,
And forever and ever His glory shalt share."

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ENDURING HARDNESS AS GOOD SOLDIERS

"Thou, therefore, endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ."—2 Tim. 2:3.

THERE are many illustrations used in the Bible, and all of them very forceful. The one which represents the Christian as a soldier, has a great deal of meaning. We are not to suppose that the angels in Heaven are soldiers, nor that that term would be applicable to them. There is no war going on in Heaven, but there is a war going on here on earth.

Six thousand years ago our first parents became entrapped, and the whole race was sold under Sin—became the servants of Sin and Satan. More and more this influence has prevailed—not that all willingly surrender to Satan, but that he puts darkness for light and light for darkness, and thus deceives mankind and leads them captive at his will.

All who desire to be in harmony with God would be out of harmony with Satan and Sin. And they might at times have resisted these, and have tried to do God's will. But there was no organized undertaking for the overthrow of Sin until Jesus came. His mission was to overcome Satan, overcome Sin, and to bring everything into full harmony with God's arrangement. Earth, this province of God's great Empire, being in a rebellious state, needed to be conquered and restored, and Jesus undertook the work, with Divine backing.

The first step was laying down His own life as a Ransom-price for the sin of the whole world, and thus making good for the original

transgression. But before taking His power and exercising it in the overthrow of Satan and Sin, Jesus, according to the Father's will, began the selection of a Church class, variously styled members of His Body, His Bride, His companions and brethren in the Kingdom, His Royal Priesthood, under Himself as the great Royal High Priest. All those who have heard the Message, and whose hearts have been responsive, who have recognized the wrong conditions here prevailing, and who have felt sympathy for the race that is here sold as slaves of Sin and Death—all these have been invited to become members of this select class.

TERMS OF WARFARE STATED AT BEGINNING

These were informed at the very beginning that it would be necessary for them to fight a good fight. They were invited to enlist in the army to battle against Satan, and instructed that they should have full confidence that ultimately faith would have its victory. They were also told that they must suffer, laying down their lives as their Head and Forerunner laid down His life—not living for the world, but contrariwise, accepting His arrangement and living altogether for the purpose of carrying out their consecration with Him.

The final honor to which God has invited them is to a share in His great Kingdom, with His Son. This implies a change of nature to all who have become soldiers of the Cross, followers of the Lamb;

for "flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God." These are called to forego the rights and privileges of the present time, and by their lives to leave their mark, for a testimony to the world, for the benefit of mankind, and especially for the glory of God and for the calling out of others who might desire similarly to walk in the narrow way.

The warfare that these are called upon to wage is a warfare against sin and the powers of darkness. (Eph. 6:11.) They are pledged to the Lord for right, for truth, for goodness. They are thus to fight the good fight. These soldiers will find, too, that some of their greatest difficulties are right in their own person. They have tendencies toward sin, because of being members of the human family, children of wrath, of sin, even as others. Their relationship to the Lord is as New Creatures.

SELF OUR SPECIAL FOE

The New Creature is obliged to fight against and to control the flesh. This is a great battle which each fights for himself. Each soldier may more or less assist and set an example to the other soldiers, but the chief battle is with *himself*. It is a *hand-to-hand* conflict. Although he is expected at all times to be on the alert against the wiles of Satan and the world, yet his special fight is with the enemies in his own flesh. St. Paul himself had taken the shield of faith—wherewith to quench the fiery darts of the wicked—and the helmet of salvation, and the Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God. Timothy was a young soldier, and the Apostle was encouraging him with advice. He had already come into the Lord's company, under the Lord's standard.

THE QUALITIES OF A GOOD SOLDIER

St. Paul intimates that any one of us may be a good soldier, or contrariwise, a bad soldier, a poor soldier. We can imagine some soldiers who would be very disregarding of orders, not prompt to

obey the command of the Leader. We can see that a good soldier is (1) one who is very much in sympathy with the Captain of his Salvation. He is an intelligent soldier, and sees that he has on the proper armor, that he wears it properly and that he gets the very best possible use out of this armor. He sees that in his walk he has a soldierly bearing, as a proper representative of the King, and of the great Kingdom so near at hand.

(2) He is not ashamed of his flag, nor of the garment of Christ's righteousness. He is to lift up the standard of righteousness everywhere. He enlists in this warfare, knowing that it means his death—the death of the flesh, of the human nature. He is to be a good soldier—not merely outwardly loyal, merely wearing the uniform, but having the full spirit of the Cause. This means that whatever experiences come to him he is to receive these thankfully, and be glad to have the privilege of enduring something for His Captain and in the interests of the Kingdom to which he has sworn allegiance.

The thought which the Apostle is impressing is that all good soldiers should endure hardness—hard, distressing conditions, circumstances that are quite unpleasant, difficult. Earthly soldiers are obliged to tramp through water and mud, enduring long, wearisome marches. Sometimes they are short of rations, sometimes obliged to sleep on the ground. Sometimes their battles are waged in the face of great opposition.

So the soldier of Christ is to endure whatever experiences may come to him, under the guidance of his Captain, not only willingly, but gladly, rejoicing that he has been permitted to enter this army of the Lord, knowing that these experiences are working out for him "a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." These various hard experiences of the Christian are designed to work out for his good, that he may "lay hold on eternal life," and gain a share in the Kingdom with his Redeemer.

WHEN SUDDENLY IN TEMPTATION

April 21 Manna "We have not an High Priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need. Hebrews 4:15,16

IN the moment of temptation the heart should lift itself to the great Master, in full assurance of faith, recognizing His love, His wisdom and His ability to help us, and His willingness to make all things work together for good to those who love Him. Asking for assistance in such a time of need would surely draw to us the Lord's counsel and help and strength for righteousness, truth, purity and love; and thus we should be hourly victorious, daily victorious, and finally victorious. Z.'98-23R2249:5"

September 28 Manna "Your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: whom resist steadfast in the faith. 1 Peter 5:8,9

THIS thought of Satan's opposition to us, and that we are contending not merely with flesh and blood but with principalities and powers and wicked spirits in high positions of power, would be appalling to us did we not on the other hand realize that by positiveness of decision we acquire great helps and assistances by other unseen powers. From the moment of our positive resistance of temptation and positive standing up for the Lord and His cause, we become stronger in the Lord and in the power of His might, and greater is He that is for us than all that be against us. Z.'04-11R3300:4

Hesitancy after the wrong is seen increases the power of the temptation. Z.'03-32R2568:5"

R5459 "When we find ourselves suddenly in temptation, trial, we should say, If by these temptations, or trials, the Lord is prov-

ing my love and devotion to Him, then, however trifling they may be or however important, I will diligently use them as favorable opportunities to demonstrate to my Lord the fullness of my love and devotion to Him and His cause. I must fight a good fight against this thing--the world, the flesh or the Adversary --whatever it might be that had brought the snare.

Thus viewed and thus met we can rejoice in every such experience; every trial and every difficulty will prove a blessing; for we shall, first of all, have an opportunity to show the Lord that we will endure, and not compromise His cause or our own position as His servants. We can rejoice also because we know that under such trials our characters will make advancement toward crystallization, if we overcome...

Even in those experiences where we have suffered absolute failure, there may be, through the humiliation and the pain of defeat, a strengthening of our character, a firm determination for greater watchfulness in that direction, and a more fervent prayer for the Lord's sustaining grace, the need of which has been more deeply impressed upon our hearts. Thus even failures may become "stepping-stones" by which we rise toward God and Heaven. Only through much tribulation shall we enter the Kingdom of Heaven at all. If, therefore, the Lord's people find themselves involved in temptations, tribulations, instead of feeling downcast they are to rejoice and say, These are evidences that the Lord is preparing me for a place in the Kingdom."

R2412 "When the persecutions come, be prepared for them--forearmed by God's Word; for they will be temptations to your flesh: through them the Adversary will seek to embitter your soul and to stir up in you the elements of the old nature reckoned dead--anger, malice, hatred, envy, strife. If this be the effect of persecutions in you, the Adversary is gaining the victory --you are not overcoming evil, but being overcome by

it. The old nature will even call upon its best qualities to fight against persecution--it will call upon your natural sense of Justice to come, help and resist; it will call upon Conscientiousness to agree that the persecution is unmerited; it will call upon Benevolence and Spirituality, your love of family and friends, and every other good quality of your being--all will be appealed to either to fight the persecution or to abandon the course of godliness which led to it.

Our armor is a front armor, not a back armor. It is invulnerable so long as we stand firm for the right, the truth, in our great Captain's name and strength--it is a hindrance to those who draw back...

That is the time to "fight the good fight"--and, triumphing over self--will completely, to accept the buffetings and slanders and misrepresentations of good intentions and good deeds with meekness and patience. That is the time when the Lord's spirit of love, dwelling in us richly, will manifest itself in the control not only of our words and actions, but of our inmost thoughts. If even so much as a bitter feeling against our traducers and maligners arises, it is to be fought, and so complete a victory gained over it that every fiber of our beings will be in sweet accord with our Great Teacher's instructions, "Love your enemies. Pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you. Bless and injure not."

R2878 "Fighting the good fight of faith, and of loyalty to the Lord, is needful in the conquering of self--"bringing every thought [and so far as possible, every word and act] into captivity to the obedience of Christ".... Forthwith all the remaining energies that can be spared from self-control will find ample opportunity for usefulness in battling for the Lord, battling for the brethren, battling for the truth.... Those who had the largest amount of combativeness naturally, when it was turned into the proper channels, became thereby the strongest and most valiant for the truth."