

February 15

Whoso keepeth His Word, in him verily is the love of God perfected. 1 John 2:5

THE test is *obedience*. In proportion as we keep the Lord's Word, in like proportion the love of God is perfected in us; for if we have received the mind of Christ, the Holy

(Joh 14:23-24 KJV) "Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words; and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him. (24) He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings: and the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's which sent me."

R2456 "Our Lord pointedly declares that he who does not seek to please him by conforming to his instructions, thereby manifests that he does not love him. (Vss. 23,24.) Surely there can be no better test of love than devotion, and no better test of devotion than obedience. Our enlightened consciences render hearty assent to the Master's words, and with the Apostle we exclaim, "The love of Christ constraineth us, for we thus judge that, if one died for all, then all were dead, and that he died for all, that they who live [justified and begotten to newness of life] should henceforth not live unto themselves, but unto him who died for us, and rose again." --2 Cor. 5:14,15.

The Master pointed out to us distinctly that in keeping his sayings we are not merely pleasing and obeying him, but that he is in all this matter the mouthpiece of Jehovah, the Father, and consequently that in pleasing and obeying him we are pleasing and obeying the Father."

R5276 "God's Word is the great Standard by which all of His people should regulate their lives. We might have some thought respecting the Divine Plan, or others might make suggestions to us respecting God's will. But any suggestions, whether from ourselves or others, are all to be subject to investigation in the light of God's Word... But having found the Word of God, we should keep it, in the sense of reverencing it and obeying it. We should strive to regulate our lives and all of our doings by that Word. Whoso keepeth God's Word will as a result find that God's Love is perfected in Him.—1 John 2:5."

R2648 "Apostle John declares, "This is [proof of our possession of] the love of God, that we keep his commandments, and *do not find them grievous*." (1 John 5:3.) He who keeps the Lord's commandments, but who finds them grievous, has thus an evidence that he is not in heart-harmony with them, that he has not made a full consecration of himself to the Lord--the obedience of such an one would be no proof whatever of the possession of "the love of God." But whoever of the Lord's people is so in harmony with him that they delight to do his will, have in this an evidence that the love of God is dwelling in them richly and abounding. This is the same thought which the Apostle again expresses, saying, "Who-soever keepeth his word [loves the word of God, and takes pleasure not in turning, twisting and endeavoring to avoid the force of that Word, but who keepeth or cherisheth it, loveth it, and seeketh to conform thereto]

Spirit, the Spirit of God, the effect will be to cause us to both will and do His good pleasure--to the extent of our ability. And this ability should be continually on the increase year by year. And altho we may not hope to be perfected until we shall be "changed" and be granted our new resurrec-

in him verily is the love of God perfected."--1 John 2:5."

R4897 "1 John 2:5: "Whoso keepeth His Word, in him verily is the love of God perfected." Here we have a test by which to determine our development as a New Creature. Only those who have *received* the Word of God can *keep* it, can retain it and comply with its requirements. The text suggests that it is a difficult matter to keep the Word of God. On all sides we hear various reasons why we should retain, hold fast the world, the flesh, rather than that which the Lord's Word holds out to us. There are many allurements to entice us from the "narrow way." Hence these who hold fast to the Word of God are "overcomers."

The Scriptures intimate that to live righteously and godly in this present time will cost us our very lives. "Whosoever will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." (2 Tim. 3:12.) Under present conditions faithfulness means *faithfulness even unto death*. The intimation is that unless we have the love of God we will not undertake to be obedient to His Word; that otherwise we can neither retain the Word of God nor be in accord with it, serving it even unto death.

Our Lord Jesus illustrated the perfection of obedience to the Word of God when He said, "I come to do Thy will, O God!" Everything written in the Book; everything that was God's will, He was glad to do at any cost. Our Lord Jesus could not have reached this degree of submission to the Divine will unless He had had love for the Father. And so with us. Unless we have love for God and the principles of righteousness we cannot continue in this way...

In proportion as we keep the Lord's Word, in like proportion the love of God is perfected in us; for if we have received the mind of Christ, the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of God, the effect will be to cause us both to will and to do His good pleasure to the extent of our ability. And this ability should be continually on the increase... We may keep so closely in touch with the Lord in the spirit of our minds that we may have continual fellowship with Him; and by confessing our faults daily and seeking his forgiveness we may continue to the end of our journey clean from sin, even though we must still acknowledge the infirmities of the flesh, that in our flesh dwelleth no perfection."

R5276 "Whoso keepeth God's Word will as a result find that God's Love is perfected in Him.—1 John 2:5.

The question then arises, What is God's Love? and in what sense can it be perfected in us? The Apostle John evidently refers to that love which is most perfectly represented in God--that love which is pure, free from all selfishness, from all stain--God's Love, because it is the right principle, the very underlying principle of His character. And all those who are keeping God's Word

tion bodies, nevertheless all the while we may keep so closely in touch with the Lord in the spirit of our minds that we may have continual fellowship with Him. Z.'97-312 R2236:5

must have the same kind of love that He has.

At first we had a duty love. We knew that God had done great things for us, for which we should be very thankful. There was a debt of obligation on us in that respect. Then, too, we loved God because He has indicated that He will give His favor to those who love Him. Therefore a measure of selfishness would be in our love for a time. But we believe it is possible for us to have this perfect love of God. If it were perfect works of the flesh that were required, we might doubt our ability to have perfection. But since it is a matter of the *heart*, it is possible for us to attain it; for we can be pure in heart. So as our hearts become more and more free from selfishness and sin, more and more will this proper, high standard of Love be appreciated by us and perfected in us. Our minds will be influenced by this Love; and all of our conduct, our thoughts, will come under the same regulation.

To have, then, this Love of God perfected in us, would seem to indicate that we would have the very highest ideal -- that we love as God loves. We love our neighbors--we realize that he has certain rights which we are glad to respect. We would rather help our neighbors forward than to do anything which might hinder their progress in any way. God is not an envious, jealous, hateful God, but the God of Love. God is the *true* God, and not the one who is set up in our creeds.

As we appreciate the Word of God, it gives us the necessary instruction and guidance. All sin is selfishness, and all selfishness is sin. As the child of God comes to see the character of God more clearly, as he is desirous of being taught of God, he will come under the influence of God's Spirit. And he will study the Word and get clearer insight into it. Thus we grow in the knowledge of God. It is a progressive matter. God wishes all of His intelligent creatures to be animated by the spirit of His Word--Love.

LOVE BASED ON FAITH

We see that the love above described would not be a love based on ignorance. On the contrary, it is a love based on a clear knowledge of God, on an undissembled faith, a faith fully appreciating what He has said...

We all see that in our experiences God gives us instruction respecting Himself. As we come to know Him, and to love Him *because* we know Him, we are proportionately getting this faith in Him of the undissembled kind. It is a faith based on a knowledge of God's character and Plan... "The Father seeketh such to worship Him as worship Him in spirit and in truth."...

God's arrangement is that we first make use of what truth we have, and thus have more appreciation; then more knowledge, and then more appreciation. A *well rounded out* knowledge is not yet possessed by any except the Church, and we do not have *full*

knowledge. But it is God's will that we shall all come to an *appreciation* of the Truth. It is not to be merely a *knowledge*, but a full *entering into* it that we may the more appreciate it. "This is life eternal, that they might *know* Thee," that we should become personally and intimately acquainted with the Lord. In order to this, it is necessary that we apply our hearts to this Wisdom, that we grow in grace, grow in knowledge, that we may know His Love...

THE END OF THE LAW IS LOVE

It is not merely *faith* that is necessary--not even the well rounded out faith--there must be a *pure heart* also. We could not get the well rounded faith unless we had a pure heart. A pure heart would be a *fully consecrated* heart--the whole mind given up to the Lord's will. Such a condition is necessary before we can enter into and make progress in the Lord's way. God would not

accept us at all unless we had love and purity of heart. And even more than this is necessary. We must maintain it with a good conscience. Our consciences must be able to say, "I have not only a good *wish* respecting the right, but I have good *endeavors*." We should not only be able to say, "I did right," but our consciences should be able to say, "I did the very best I was able to do." Anything short of this would not be pleasing to God.

So, then, the end, or intention, of the Divine Law is to develop in us this love--a love fully consecrated to the Lord, a love like His, a love that will be in accord with a good conscience and an undissembled faith--a faith that is well founded on the teachings of God's Word, a faith that is anxious to know God's will, and that searches the Scriptures and delights in God's Law, and that can say as the Psalmist has expressed it

prophetically, "I delight to do Thy will, O my God!"

A man may discern the principle of *justice* and say, "There is the standard one must go by." Another sees *love*, and says, "There is the best standard! Is not that grand? I wish to conform to that fully!" A third recognizes that *perfection* is the standard of the Divine Law, and having consecrated himself unreservedly to do the will of God, says, "Thy Law, O God, is my delight." This one delights in God's Justice, he delights in God's Love. He sees more than merely, Thou shalt, and Thou shalt not. He sees things from God's standpoint. He sees the principles of God's character which govern the universe. So all who will ever come to an appreciation of everlasting life must learn to view matters from the standpoint of Love."

IMPORTANT NEW COVENANT CLARIFICATIONS

When considering R2235, keep these clarifications & the 6th Vol. foreword in mind:

CHURCH NOT UNDER THE NEW COVENANT

Fii "Inadvertently, the name New Covenant, which belongs to God's dealings with the world during the Millennium, has been used in respect to the Covenant which is now in operation during this Gospel Age with the Church. Our Covenant, of course, is a new

covenant in the sense that it is different from the Jewish Covenant of Mt. Sinai, but it is not THE New Covenant. The Church's Covenant is referred to in the Bible as a "Covenant by Sacrifice."

NEW COVENANT WILL BE WITH ISRAEL (Jer. 31:31-32)

R4321 "As the old Law Covenant was with Israel only, so the New (Law) Covenant will be with Israel only. Other nations will share it by becoming Israelites, "Proselytes of the gate," not under the old but under the New

Covenant. (Ezek. 16:60,61.) "He that hath an ear to hear, let him hear."

CHURCH HAS AN ADVOCATE NOT A MEDIATOR (1Jn. 2:1)

SM720 "Our Lord Jesus is not the Church's Mediator before the Father, but the Church's Advocate. There is a sharp distinction to be drawn between the two thoughts. A mediator implies a hostility between two principals, requiring the intervention of a third party; and this is not the case with the Church."

R2235 (From Harvest Truth Database V5.0 2006) CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

--DEC. 19.--1 JOHN 1:5-2:6.--

"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."--1 John 1:9

THE Apostle's address is not to unbelievers, unjustified persons, "sinners" in the ordinary sense of the word; on the contrary, he is addressing the justified and sanctified in Christ Jesus, and he classes himself with these, using the plural pronoun "we." The frequent mistake of applying this and similar passages to sinners in general has been injurious in two particulars:

(1) It has been injurious to the unregenerate, in that it has given some the impression that there is no difference between the Church and the world; and that all alike have access to God in prayer and for the forgiveness of daily trespasses. It has thus hindered some from realizing the necessity of faith in the atonement, and from definitely entering into covenant relationship with the Lord under the terms of the ⁽¹⁾New Covenant. On the contrary all should be clearly informed of the fact that repentance and a particular, positive acceptance of Christ as their personal Savior are absolutely necessary, before they can "be accepted in the Beloved," and be treated as "sons of God," and enjoy the privileges of this relationship.--prayer, fellowship with God, divine care or providential oversight of their affairs and interests, and the favor of forgiveness of daily trespasses through the merit of the great High Priest.

(2) This oversight has had an injurious effect upon some Christians who have gone to the extreme of claiming that they can never commit sin, after their past sins have been graciously forgiven by the Lord, and after they have entered into the ⁽¹⁾New Covenant relationship. Hence, we have the very wrong views and teachings of so-called "perfectionists" who claim, not merely that they are *reckoned* perfect now, but that they are *actually* perfect in all their thoughts, words and deeds,--deceiving themselves and laying themselves liable to many grievous errors, as the Apostle declares in this connection.--Verses 8,10.

The object of the Apostle John in writing this epistle he clearly states, saying, "These things write we unto you, that your joy may be full." It is a noteworthy fact that the vast majority of Christians never experience the *fulness* of joy and peace and blessing that they might possess. Too many are content with simply diluted first prin-

ciples of the doctrine of Christ; and, as the Apostle Paul declares, such are merely "babes in Christ." They have a blessing of course in any relationship to the Lord, but they have not the fullness of joy which would be theirs if they progressed in grace and in knowledge "to the full stature of a man in Christ." The object of the Apostle's writing them was to stir up the pure minds of believers to an appreciation and enjoyment of their privileges, that thereby they might grow and develop.

The Apostle follows the example of our Lord Jesus in symbolizing truth and righteousness as Light, and sin and every evil way as so much of opposing Darkness. God himself thus considered would be the very perfection of light,--"in him is no darkness," no sin, no imperfection. With this thought before the mind, the Apostle points out that any growth of fellowship with God which we may aspire to, must be along the lines of truth, goodness, purity; and he points out that it would be sin for us to say to others or to imagine in our own hearts that we are walking with God and having fellowship with him, if our course of life is a dark, a sinful one. Such are merely deceiving themselves and others: they are not deceiving God, and they are not getting the blessings of those who do "walk in the light."

Moreover, to the extent that we walk in the light and in harmony and fellowship with God, we will find ourselves in fellowship with all others who are like-minded. So then, if we do not "love the brethren, whom we have seen," so as to be able to have fellowship and spiritual pleasure with them, that would be an indication that we are not wholly in harmony and fellowship with God. But who are the "brethren?" Our Lord tells us that not all who profess his name are true brethren; he says, "Not everyone that saith Lord, Lord, shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven [be recognized as his brethren and joint-heirs], but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven." We thus see that it is by our deeds and not merely by our professions that we are accepted of the Lord who again says, "Who are my brethren?...Verily, I say unto you he that doeth the will of my Father the same is my brother."--Matt. 7:21; 12:50.

So then, we are not to anticipate "fellowship" with all who name the name of Christ as a proof of fellowship with the Father, and that we are in the light: we are merely to anticipate this *true*

⁽¹⁾ Important: See previous section for clarification on New Covenant

fellowship with those who are earnestly seeking to do the Father's will, to serve his cause and exemplify the instructions of his Word, in their deeds as well as in their professions. Between all such there must be, whether hidden or open, a *bond of fellowship* and union--that bond is the one faith and one baptism into the one Lord.

But while this fellowship between us and the Lord and all who have his spirit is based upon our walking in the light, our following in his footsteps to the extent of our ability, nevertheless it does not imply absolute freedom from the imperfection of sin; altho under the ⁽²⁾New Covenant arrangement nothing is charged up to us as sin except in proportion as it has been *wilfully* done. Nevertheless, because of the manifold temptations, and the weakness of our flesh, the result of inherited predisposition toward sin, it is impossible for us to avoid "short-comings" and faults. These may be properly termed sins as in this lesson, because "sin is a transgression of the law," however unintentional. But the divine arrangement under the ⁽²⁾New Covenant, on behalf of the Lord's people, is that these *unintentional* faults and short-comings need not be charged up against us as sins; but instead may be cleansed away upon our application to the Great High Priest, through the merit of the precious blood. Thus it is that the blood of Jesus Christ our Lord cleanseth us from all sin--keeps us clean from sin, if realizing our imperfections we continually make application for forgiveness.

The Apostle uses the word "sin" in a different sense than the above, further on in this epistle, saying (3:6-9), "Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen him nor [even] known him....He that committeth sin is of the devil.... Whosoever is begotten of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin because he is begotten of God." Again he says (5:18), "We know that whosoever is begotten of God sinneth not; but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and the wicked one toucheth him not."

In these passages the Apostle uses the word "sin" in its full or absolute sense, meaning wilful sin, deliberate sin, intentional sin; sins that are not merely short-comings and faults, due largely or wholly to the imperfections of the flesh, inherited from our ancestors. No one, the Apostle assures us, who has been begotten of the spirit of the Lord, the spirit of holiness and truth, could have any sympathy with sin so as to wilfully, knowingly and intentionally engage therein. All who so love sin and wilfully do it and approve it after they have a knowledge of the truth, are children of darkness who love darkness and who thus show that they have the spirit or disposition of Satan.

But let us return to the consideration of the other use of the word "sin" as found in this lesson, applying the term to the faults and imperfections which God's people are zealously striving against, and seeking to stamp out of their mortal bodies, and against which they are continually fighting a good fight and coming off conquerors, and more than conquerors, through him who loved us and bought us with his precious blood. The Apostle intimates that there is danger that some will go to the extreme of denying that they have any faults, and thus deceive themselves and get into a snare of the adversary. It may be asked, What difference can it make if they are seeking to live godly, whether they claim to live perfectly, or admit that they are imperfect and apply continually for cleansing through the precious blood. We reply that it makes a great difference: only as we confess our sins can they be forgiven, consequently those who deny that they have any sins, faults, imperfections, have a great load of them uncanceled, unforgiven, charged up against them; and because of this they would be accounted unworthy to be taken further along in the path of light, under the lead of the holy spirit, into the heights and depths and lengths and breadths of the love and wisdom of God, as revealed in his Word as meat in due season for the household of faith. Thus we see that there is but the one proper course of faith and conduct, in which we may have a complete fellowship with the Lord: those who take any other course are making God a liar, and he would not fellowship with them, but he will leave them to the darkness of their own way. Can we wonder then that so many are in darkness and lack evidences of fellowship with God, when we see how few confess their faults and seek to overcome them and to be cleansed in the only way of divine appointment?

These things are written not to cultivate in us the thought that we may sin with impunity, and be overtaken with faults through carelessness and inattention to the divine Word, and then go to the Lord for forgiveness. Quite to the contrary, these assurances of divine favor and willingness to forgive are designed to have upon our hearts a mellowing influence which will make us all the more careful to avoid sin, and to maintain fellowship with him who is the perfection of light and holiness. "These things are written that we sin not;" that we become not boastful of self, self-righteous, self-

justified, and thus abominable in the Lord's sight: but that, fleeing from our weaknesses and imperfections, we lay hold upon the grace of God in Christ for their forgiveness, and for grace and strength increasingly to fight a good fight against sin.

"If any man [in Christ] sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." Here again, "*any man*" does not refer to those who are out of Christ, but to those who are under the terms and conditions of the ⁽²⁾New Covenant. Such alone are addressed in this Epistle. The world has no Advocate with the Father, because it has not accepted Christ, and he is the Advocate only for those who have accepted him and who are striving to overcome sin.

Our Advocate is more than an advocate, more than a representative at the bar of divine justice, interested in our welfare and forgiveness; he is in addition the one who gave himself for us, who at Calvary finished the work of making a propitiation (*satisfaction*) for our sins. This is the reason why we may come "with boldness to the throne of grace," not only realizing that God is for us, and that our Lord Jesus sympathizes with and is our Advocate, but also and specially realizing the merit of the sacrifice which he has already paid to Justice, and which he has made fully applicable on behalf of all who love and obey him, on application.

But, says the Apostle, he is the propitiation not merely for our sins (the Church's sins), but "*also for the sins of the whole world.*" What does this mean? Is he the Advocate for the whole world? No; not yet. The world has not yet been called and drawn to holiness and truth. During the present age "no man can come unto Christ except the Father *draw him.*" And this drawing influence of the truth is at present extended only to "*him that hath an ear to hear.*" A great mass of mankind have never heard in any sense of the word of the grace of God, and of the propitiation and forgiveness, provided for all in Christ. Indeed, it is a remarkably small number who "have tasted that the Lord is gracious."

Yet so surely as the propitiation was made "*for the sins of the whole world,*" just so surely shall every member of mankind be brought to a knowledge of the fact, and to an opportunity to avail himself of the provided blessing. It is to this end that the great Millennial age has been promised and is being prepared for: and it is concerning that age of blessing to "all the families of the earth" that the Lord declares through the prophet "In that day the blind eyes shall be opened and the deaf ears shall be unstopped." It is of that time that our Lord Jesus also declared, "And I, if I be lifted up, will *draw all men* unto me." It is by virtue of his having been lifted up as the propitiation, the sin-offering, "*for the sins of the whole world,*" that our glorified Lord will eventually be privileged to be the Judge of the world and to grant forgiveness and reconciliation and restitution to all who will heartily obey him; while "whosoever will not obey that Prophet will be cut off from amongst the people,"--in the second death.--Acts 3:23.

As the drawing now, by the Father, is not a compulsion, but merely a constraining by the truth, through a knowledge of it, so the drawing of the Millennial age upon the world of mankind will not be a compulsion, but merely the influence of righteousness and truth constraining toward love for righteousness and thus to the reward of righteousness-- eternal life.

The Apostle seems to intimate in our lesson that quite a good number may claim an intimate knowledge of God falsely, and hence with great plainness of speech he informs us that, "He that saith I know him, and keepeth not his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him." It is thus very evident that the Apostle does not mean merely a knowledge *about* God but an intimate knowledge of God; implying fellowship and communion with him: he then gives us a test by which we may judge accordingly whether or not we are new creatures in the Lord and have the love of God developed in us to any extent. ⁽³⁾The test is *obedience*. In proportion as we keep the Lord's Word, in like proportion the love of God is perfected in us; for if we have received the mind of Christ, the holy spirit, the spirit of God, the effect will be to cause us to both will and do his good pleasure--to the extent of our ability. And this ability should be continually on the increase year by year. And altho we may not hope to be perfected until we shall be "changed" and be granted our new resurrection bodies, nevertheless all the while we may keep so closely in touch with the Lord in the spirit of our minds that we may have continual fellowship with him: and by confessing our faults and seeking his forgiveness we may continue to the end of our journey clean from sin, even tho we must still acknowledge the imperfections of the flesh,--that in our flesh dwelleth no perfection.

⁽²⁾ See previous section for important clarification on New Covenant

⁽³⁾ Feb. 15 Manna, 1John 2:5

R5481 "FASHIONING OURSELVES AS OBEDIENT CHILDREN"

"As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance; but as He which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation."--1 Peter 1:14,15...

On the basis of this stand that we took --of enlisting under the banner of Jesus, to fight against sin and self and Satan--God purposes to prove how thoroughly in earnest we were when we espoused His cause. He wishes us to attain to that development of character which will fit us to be associates with Jesus in His great Kingdom, which is to bless the world.

If we are obedient children, everything will work well. We shall get the proper tests, the proper chiseling and polishing, everything that will make us "meet for the inheritance of the saints in light." But if we do not prove obedient, this will hinder us from ever getting into the Elect company, although we may have a place in that company of children who have had to be chastised and finally brought to proper obedience.

By this we are not implying that any of God's children are exempt from discipline; for we are told that every son receiveth chastisement. (Heb. 12:6-11.) Those chastisements that came to our Lord Jesus were not deserved, but were experiences by which He proved His thorough loyalty and worthiness of exaltation. And so the chastisements that come to His followers are to fit them for future service and to demonstrate their worthiness of being counted in as members of His Body.

The chastisements which are in the nature of punishments for sin should bring about a thoroughly loyal condition of heart in reasonable time, or the one chastised will lose his place in the Body. If he prove ultimately disobedient, he will be counted unworthy of any of God's favors, and will die the Second Death. The exhortation of our text, therefore, is to the highest attainment and the utmost loyalty to the Father.

HOW TO FASHION OUR MINDS

There is a fashioning of our *minds* in progress. It is *not* the fashioning of our *will*. The will is *given up to begin* with. But the will has to do with *regulating the mind* as well as the *body*--the will has to do with this fashioning. We *will* that our minds shall be educated along the lines of obedience, that we may be properly exercised by all the trials which God has purposed for us.

We as New Creatures should learn to think as God would have us think, to develop habits of thought which upbuild the New Creature. We should eat and drink according to His will, and our clothing should be regulated according to His will. We are to seek His guidance in our life in all things--because of the weaknesses of the flesh, the promptings of the Adversary, and our environment. The Lord has made provision, and has given us definite instructions in the Scriptures, by which we may regulate our lives in harmony with His Word; and we should seek more and more to know the will of God and to profit by His providences in our lives, and to apply the knowledge gained, so that whether we eat, or drink, or sleep, or labor, we shall do all to the glory of God.

Our organism of flesh we receive by

heredity. These bodies of ours have various weaknesses and inconsistencies --some in one direction, and some in another. But they are all, more or less, perversions of the true ideal which God originally gave. Centuries of sin have left their mark upon us, upon our minds and bodies; and this mark is seen in the theories which have come into our minds. These errors in the past had control of us.

Before we saw the Lord's way, we thought it was right to follow after earthly pleasures and pursuits and to put *self first*. We naturally said, This is the proper course for us to take. We see that the prominent and the great are following this course, seeking first the affairs of this present life--praise of men, how finely they can be clothed and housed, how fine a carriage or automobile they can have. They seek--and are in large measure able to secure--the gratification of the taste for earthly things, whether it be for the satisfaction of the mind, as various kinds of literature, or for the body, as for certain kinds of foods or drinks, etc.

But when we become children of God, we ask, What is God's will in respect to what we shall eat or drink or wear, as to the use of tobacco, as to the cut of our clothes, etc.? It is not for us to decide *now* whether we shall go to the theater or play cards or dance. All these matters should have been decided before we consecrated ourselves. Now, in harmony with the Covenant we have entered into with Christ, we are to know strictly the *Father's will*. As we learn to see things from God's standpoint, we change our ideas as to what we shall eat, and what we shall drink, etc. And this change going on in our minds is the "fashioning."

THE FASHIONING A GRADUAL PROCESS

Although we discover some things very quickly, we do not learn all things at once. Some things are less conspicuous before our minds than are others, and represent the finer shadings of what would be proper for a New Creature. We gradually come to note these things more and more; and we ask, Which things shall we continue to choose? The knowledge of God's will is a matter of *education*. We come to see that *this is right* and *that is wrong*. (The world sets such a style for evening dress, such a style for morning dress.) When we become Christians we have new standards, and it takes some time to get everything harmoniously adjusted therewith.

In line with this thought, the Apostle says, "Be ye *transformed*, by the renewing of your *minds*"--not by the renewing of the new *will*. We already *possess* the new *will*. But we see that the *body* is regulated by the *mind*. Therefore the new will says, I must begin with the *mind* I must get my mind to *see* things correctly, according to God's will. I will use the Bible and all the providential indications that will give me a knowledge of God's mind, and I will begin to conform my mind thereto. Thus our minds become gradually fashioned--transformed into the mind of the Lord. As we come to *see* more and more what is the will of God, our minds decide to *do* His will. Our reason plays an important part.

God wishes to appeal to our reason, because we are thus better developed than

in any other way. We are all in the School of Christ--under the tutelage of our Lord. In this School we are learning to do His will. We have the teachings of our Lord Jesus and the writings of the Apostles; and our Lord declared that whatsoever the Apostles should bind on earth would be considered bound in Heaven; and whatsoever they should loose on earth would be so considered in Heaven. Our education progresses, until, at the end of this life, those who have thoroughly learned the lessons of this School will be those who have been *obedient children*. These will have been transformed by the renewing of their minds, that they might prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God."--Romans 12:2.

OUR STANDARD--JEHOVAH'S RIGHTEOUSNESS

The new *will* is, in substance, a will to be like our Father in Heaven. The Apostle Peter exhorts, "As He who hath called you is holy, so be ye holy." Holiness is the standard of perfection. Our *will* must be holy when we first make our Covenant with God. Nothing less than a holy will is acceptable to Him. If we had had an unholy will, a will not submissive to God, we would not have been accepted. So if our *will* be holy, we shall, as far as we are able, *do* His will.

As He who has called us is holy, so we, as far as our will is concerned, will be holy. And we will so direct our mind, as to be holy in life so far as is possible. We will apply the principles of God's holiness to every affair of life. We will observe the Golden Rule, that we should do to others as we would that others should do to us. Whoever neglects to apply these principles of holiness to his own life is not growing in the new life, not being transformed. We should seek to have our minds fully in accord with God's mind, and our conduct as far as possible also in alignment.

If our mind is not running in the proper groove, we must see to it that we turn it into the proper groove. We want to render obedience to our highest conception of what is the Lord's will, as far as we are able. Our will will be determined by God as loyal in proportion as it has been on the *alert to watch the mind and the body*, the tongue and everything pertaining to our conduct.

The Apostle enjoins upon us that we shall be "holy in all manner of conversation." (1 Pet. 1:15.) The word *conversation* here has its broad meaning. It relates to our intercourse with others--all of our conduct with respect to others--our manner of life. We are to be holy in *everything* that pertains to our lives--in our thoughts, words and deeds. This is a very high standard; and no wonder that the Lord has set a high standard! It is for us to learn what this standard is, and to help others to know what it is.

This is why we spend a few years this side of the veil after we have given our hearts to Jesus. We *say* that we have taken up our cross to follow Jesus, and the Lord wishes to *demonstrate* whether this is true. He is watching our course, and the foreordained number will be found for the Bride class. Others will be given another position not so good; and those who manifest that they have not the true spirit of obedience will die the Second Death."