

The Bible Standard

"Send out your light and truth! Let them lead me;..."

Psalm 43:3

"LIFT UP A STANDARD FOR THE PEOPLE"

Isaiah 62:10

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

BLESSED WITH STRENGTH AND PEACE

“The LORD will give strength unto his people: the LORD will bless his people with peace.”
Psalm 29:11

We are not to understand this text to signify that the Lord will give physical strength to His people in some remarkable way because they belong to Him; for if He did, His people would be the most powerful people in the world; and we know that this is not the case. The strength which the Lord gives is a strength of mind, a mental and moral courage which more than make up for any lack of physical strength. Some of the Lord's children have very little bodily strength; and yet they have a courage, a strength of heart, which is far superior to that of many who are much more vigorous physically.

The Apostle Paul exultingly exclaims, “When I am weak, then am I strong” (2 Cor. 12:10). So, by the exercise of proper faith and trust in the Lord we who belong to Him may be far stronger than we could be under any other circumstances and conditions. We may, however, feel sure that the Lord will give special physical strength to His people for whatever He wishes them to do, if they would be otherwise unable to accomplish the necessary work. We have seen this demonstrated. We have seen Christians not naturally strong who have been granted a very special strength at times when there was a particular and important work to be done for God. Perceiving their confidence and faith, the Lord is pleased to grant them special strength, so that they may endure what others physically stronger might not be able to bear. “The LORD will give strength to His people; The LORD will bless His people with peace” (Psa. 29:11). This is not true in an outward sense. It was not true thus of our Master; and His special associates, the Apostles, were buffeted and afflicted as all of the Lord's followers have been throughout the Gospel Age. The Adversary does everything in his power to make our lives unpleasant and unhappy. We must contend with fightings without

ALL GOD'S PROMISES WILL BE FULFILLED!

“Yes, and all the prophets, from Samuel and those who follow, as many as have spoken, have also foretold these days. “You are sons of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying to Abraham, ‘And in your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed’” (Acts 3:24, 25 NKJ).

“Now I am about to go the way of all the earth. You know with all your heart and soul that not one of all the good promises the LORD your God gave you has failed. Every promise has been fulfilled; not one has failed” (Joshua 23:14 NIV).

and fightings within. It is not all peace *without* and all calmness *within*.

We must battle with our flesh; for there is where we are to gain an important part of our victory. We are to “fight a good fight,” a *conquering* fight. We are to put forth earnest effort in fighting against the world, against our fallen nature, against the Adversary, and all the things that he would put into our

mind and heart. We are to get the better of these things. The Lord blesses His people with strength to overcome these adverse influences and difficulties and gives them peace of heart even in the midst of difficulties.

We are not to be at peace with the flesh, but always at warfare with it. But there is a peace in the Lord that is born of faith and of implicit trust in His Promises. He has promised us grace sufficient for every time of need. He has promised that we shall not be overcome in any trials or difficulties if we remain faithful to our covenant. We are assured that we shall have the victory, trusting in His strength. This gives us rest, peace, and confidence.

We are resting in the Lord's precious promises—the promises which He has given to none save His very own. We are resting in His strength and His ability to make good His promises. We know that He who has called us is able to perform all His good Word and will surely do it (Joshua 23:14). This peace and rest is the special blessing of the holy Spirit. Only in proportion as we receive the holy Spirit, the holy mind, the holy disposition of God, can we have His promises fulfilled in us. It is a matter of simple proportion. As we grow in grace and in the knowledge of the Lord, in the knowledge of His Truth, we shall have additional comfort and strength. We shall thus grow up into Christ from day to day and shall abide in His love

continually.

THE TRUTH ATTRACTS STRONG CHARACTERS

The Lord desires that our characters shall become both beautiful and strong. In nature, there are some substances which are beautiful in appearance, but which have neither firmness nor durability. The ruby is a precious stone of both beauty and hardness; and we have an article of food, a ruby-tinted gelatin, which much resembles the ruby in outward appearance, but which lacks hardness and firmness. Oh, there are some people like this. We are to remember that the brethren who find it so difficult to dwell together in unity have this difficulty in part because of their real intrinsic worth, or character. There are some people whose characters are like putty; there are others in whom you can make a momentary dent, as in a rubber ball; still, others are like diamonds. The class that are diamond-like have been blest with strength and attained a firmness of substance, of character. If we put a number of balls of putty, a number of rubber balls, and a number of diamonds into a pan and shake them well, the diamonds will chafe everything with which they come in contact, because they are so hard. The Lord is not looking for the rubber ball class now, nor for the putty class now. In due time the Lord will deal with all classes—the people who are of the putty kind and the people who are of the rubber kind. But we know that the Truth is appealing now only to the jewel class.

When learning that there is a danger of stumbling each other, wounding each other, the knowledge should give us wisdom. We should be appreciative of the fact that these brethren have real characters, and that they are not of the putty kind. Even their differences show character. We should try to appreciate the fact and so to exercise ourselves as not to irritate them. We are to counsel them and to remember that they are just as desirous of pleasing the Lord as we are. We must, therefore, have longsuffering with each other.

The Truth seems to take hold on the stronger characters rather than on the weaker ones. The former have in their flesh more of the firmness, grittiness and combativeness than have many others who are too pliable and “wishy-washy” to be acceptable to the

Lord. Thus, we see that the very quality which makes us acceptable to the Lord and which is one qualification of the overcoming position is a serious disadvantage in some respects when a number of these come together as a class of consecrated believers.

Let us keep in the forefront of our mind: even a diamond surrounded by mud would cut nothing, would scratch nothing; but place a dozen diamonds together, and the more you remove the mud element the more gritting, scouring, and cutting there is likely to be. So, it is with the Lord's jewels—the more they come together, the more they are awakened, the more opportunities there will be for friction, and the greater necessity there will be that all be thoroughly imbedded in and covered with the holy Spirit, which, like oil, is smooth and unctuous and tends to prevent friction.

Jehovah makes a definitive statement in Mal. 3:17, “in that day when I make up my jewels.” Yes, God states these jewels shall be mine! Oh, these gems must all be found by God, and He has appointed our Lord to be the master workman in the preparation of these jewels, “Gather my saints together unto me; those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice” (Psa. 50:5).

The first and greatest of these jewels was our Lord Jesus followed by twelve large stones—the Apostles. Throughout the Gospel age jewels, of different sizes were found and cut and mounted in the first resurrection—a work now completed! The search for jewels of value continues during the expanded work of the Gospel Harvest; and we are all aware of the necessity for cutting and polishing jewels so that their real qualities may be developed; so also, the necessity for our trials, perplexities, and persecutions. Jewels have a value of their own, an intrinsic quality that would be appreciated, even if plentiful, but is all the more appreciated because of their comparative scarcity.

The LORD refers to His one true Church as His jewels. Without a doubt, the most precious of all God's creation is His New Creation. Therefore, when out of Egypt He brought forth a people to be His peculiar treasure, it is not surprising that He named the most precious jewels to picture how precious to Him would be the antitypical people picked out for His name. These twelve precious stones, representing [the graces of] the 144,000, were

THE LORD REFERS TO HIS ONE TRUE CHURCH, AS HIS JEWELS
“in that day when I make up my jewels.”
Malachi 3:17

given a place in the High Priest's breastplate, near to his heart. These same stones were brought from Egypt, which represented the world of sin. Just as the jeweler displays his gems to the best advantage by placing them in front of a black background, so the LORD's jewels will shine out the brighter to His honor and glory, by reason of this dark background of sin.

Seven prime qualities suggest themselves to our mind when we speak of jewels:

(1) Jewels are *rare*. After all the search of ages, we now have about 100 great diamonds—a very small number when we think of the efforts put forth to discover them; so, the LORD has searched for centuries for His 144,000 jewels [now collected]. Many called, but few chosen. Few are willing to give up their handful of dirt.

(2) Jewels are *precious*. The LORD likens the Church to a pearl of great price. After the pearl, the ruby is by far the most valuable in proportion to its size. Job speaks of wisdom as more precious than rubies. Diamonds are so precious that the Cullinan Diamond has been valued at \$400 million, the Hope Diamond \$250 million, but the LORD's jewels are more precious to Him than words can express. "Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of His saints"—how much more the saints themselves.

(3) Jewels are *pure*. This, indeed, is the chief secret of their value; the degree of impurity in any stone is the measure of its depreciation. The initial act in their preparation is separation of the pure crystal. So also, with the LORD's jewels! "come out. . . and be ye separate," "take forth the precious from the vile," is the call of the LORD to His saints (2 Cor. 6:17; Jer. 15:19).

(4) Jewels are *brilliant*. The only difference between a piece of coal and a diamond is the way each disposes of light. The coal receives the light, sucks it up, and selfishly keeps it. It becomes black. The diamond, though of the same substance, receives the light but reflects it back from a hundred facets. To be one of the LORD's jewels, it is necessary to witness to the Truth, to be brilliant, some mentally, much spiritually. Those who are in no way sharing in the Harvest will in no wise share in the Kingdom as joint-heirs or special helpers to the good Levites. We should also be careful to emit no light of our own, but rather to reflect His light. You can stumble over a bushel of gems in the dark and not see them but take them into the sunlight and you will be

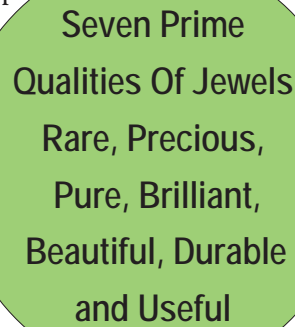
blinded by their brilliance. Again, be careful what light you reflect. The aquamarine, a stone of inferior value, when placed under a gaslight beside the costly sapphire, will far outshine its rival; but placed under the searching glare of the sun, the sapphire shines forth in its original splendor of blue, while the cheaper stone has faded into comparative insignificance. The LORD's jewels will reflect only the true doctrines, thoughts, words, and doings of the Master.

(5) *Beauty*, too, is inseparable from the jewel. As Solomon "garnished the house with precious stones for beauty" (2 Chron. 3:6), so the LORD delights in the beauty of His fair one. Psa. 45:10 declares that the King greatly desires the beauty of those who incline their ear, forgetting their father's house. V. 13 "The King's daughter *is* all glorious within" and if the beauty of God, that ornament of peace ruling in the heart, the holy Spirit, dwells in us, what need is there, beloved, for you to deck yourself with earth's trinkets, however beautiful? The sun need not adorn itself with stars to enhance its glory; neither need the LORD's jewels to tarnish the simplicity of their radiance with earthly gems. When adorning let it not be with gold, or pearls, or costly array, but (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works.

(6) Jewels are *durable*. Diamonds outlast dynasties; nothing can impair their luster. Why did not the LORD choose the sparkling dewdrop or the modest flower to picture His Bride? Ah, no! They would picture the goodness that passeth away. The LORD's true disciples must learn to endure. They shall endure forever. "The LORD preserveth all them that love him" (Psa. 145:20). Let us not grow weary in well-doing as the LORD's overcomers faint not.

(7) The seventh quality of perfection in jewels is *usefulness*. They are used in boring rocks, cutting glass, setting pivots, and pointing watches. The LORD proposes to use His jewels not only to serve each other in this life but to aid Him throughout all eternity. Blessed with strength and peace!

These seven qualities are possessed by the LORD's jewels. They are *rare* because when the majority is forsaking the LORD as shown in the previous verses, they feared the LORD, and proved *precious in His sight*. They "thought upon His name" and became *pure*. "They spake often one to another," *reflecting* His glory. They were *beautiful* to the



Seven Prime
Qualities Of Jewels
Rare, Precious,
Pure, Brilliant,
Beautiful, Durable
and Useful

LORD. Even their words were so attractive that God took notes on what they said in His “book of remembrance.” Oh, dear ones, is your conversation always so pleasing to the Heavenly Father? Are you really glad that He is taking note of all you say? If not, it is high time for you to improve your conversation. The text also shows that they are *durable*, for, “I will spare them,” and also useful, “As a man spareth his own son that serveth him” (see Mal. 3:16-17). Joy should be one of the essential qualities that the child of God feels after accomplishing these seven steps of polishing

These seven steps are all parts of the ultimate polishing work that Jehovah does to and for His Jewels and then comes the appraising work. The LORD will reckon with His stewards. What a variety of attainments there will be! No two characters will be exactly alike. Rigid uniformity is not required among the saints; they need not be like eggs in a basket—one shape, one size, one color. Jewels differ in size, purity, color, value, shape, and formation, agreeing only in one thing: they are all jewels. We should not expect every brother and sister to think as we do on all points. This very failing lies at the bottom of many class disturbances!

Eccl. 9:10 exhorts us to lay hold faithfully on these opportunities! “Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do *it* with thy might; for *there is* no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest.” Bro. Johnson thought it would be better rendered, let us do “everything that thy hand findeth to do, while in thy strength;” as consecrated children of God we are not to let them slip through our fingers unused; for surely not to use them would make them appear condemnatory witnesses against us; while faithfully to use them will honor God, bless others and ourselves. So used, they will prove of greater value than the most precious stones and the most costly jewels.

As jewels in God’s hands, developing the seven prime qualities will furnish us opportunities of demonstrating our faithfulness as few other things can; and faithfulness in their use, other things being equal, is sure to bring us the LORD’S approval in the “well done good and faithful servant. Thou hast been faithful in a few things; I will make thee a ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of thy Lord.” Let us therefore be faithful in oral testimony against that which is in error. Let us be faithful

in distribution of the pertinent literature as name and address gatherers and as volunteers. Let us be faithful in holding up the arms of our leaders, in giving of our means, and in using our privileges of prayer for the work and workers.

Let us see to it that we do this now. Opportunities seldom knock at our door twice. When we hear the knock, let us promptly arise and open the door; for delay may lead the opportunity to think that nobody is at home and move it to knock at some other door than ours. “Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me” (Rev. 3:20). A lost opportunity is a great waste to the loser and the one who furnishes the opportunity. Therefore, let us not put off to a more convenient time the service that calls for us to perform it now. Usually, on this point, it is now or never.

Today is ours; we know not whether we shall live tomorrow or be able tomorrow, if we live, to do what calls for us to act today. That procrastination is a thief of time is well known. That it is also a thief of opportunities, though less known, is also true. If we procrastinate, the LORD will pass us by with the opportunity and give it to someone more alert. Now, dear Brethren is the time to demonstrate our loyalty! Do not the scriptures say, “My grace is sufficient for thee.” What if friends forsake you, if you have My favor, My love, is that not sufficient?

GOD’S POWER ON OUR BEHALF

What sincere child of God has not realized, in times of greatest need and extreme weakness, the power of God on his behalf, supplementing his weakness with strength from above? And when the task was accomplished to which the Lord had called him and for which he felt so incompetent of himself, who has not realized in the outcome the wonderful power of God?

In view of such a gracious provision to supplement his weakness with the Divine strength, the faithful Apostle Paul meekly responded, “Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.” Having put forth all his own energies and having faithfully used his own ability to its fullest extent as a wise steward, it was his joy to recognize the hand of the Lord working with him — by miracles and signs and

The LORD
Continues
to Select His Jewels
For His Earthly Kingdom.
“Gather to me my
consecrated ones,
who made a covenant
with me by sacrifice.”
(Psa. 50:5 NIV).

with demonstrations of the spirit and of power (Heb. 2:4; Acts 19:11, 12; 1 Cor. 2:4). These demonstrations of Divine power, supplementing Paul's faithful use of his natural abilities, were the Lord's endorsement of all he did (BS 2004, p. 94).

Let us rejoice in the language of our Master's heart: "O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee; but I have known thee" (John 17:25). Jesus held close communion with the Father and He knew His love and goodness; He had seen the manifestations of His power; He had marked His lovingkindness. So, we who have come into a similar relationship with God have thus come to know and trust His love and faithfulness. Having heard this, God's consecrated children soon learn that God does not always bless His people of this Age with peace in an outward sense.



Jesus' special associates, the Apostles, were buffeted (1 Cor. 4:10-13), and all His true followers have also been persecuted. The Adversary does everything in his power to make their lives anything but peaceful and happy. This is true of all who walk in Jesus' footsteps. We have fightings without and fightings within. We have fightings with our own flesh, and it is a part of our victory that we "fight a good fight," a conquering fight. We are to put forth our best efforts in fighting against the world, the flesh, and the Adversary, against all the things that Satan would put into our minds and hearts, and we are to get the victory over these things. And the Heavenly Father blesses His people with strength to surmount these difficulties and gives them His peace (Psa. 29:11).

THE MINDS STAYED ON GOD

"Thou wilt keep *him* in perfect peace, *whose mind is stayed on thee*: because he trusteth in thee" (Isa. 26:3). Upon only one kind of people does God unconditionally promise to bestow His perfect peace, and these alone

will He guard and maintain in this peace (compare Psa. 119:165; Phil. 4:7). They are the truly dedicated, or consecrated ones, the only ones *whose minds are stayed on Him*. The text in Hebrew expresses the matter still more forcefully; the word *yetzer*, here translated *mind*, has the thought of *formation*, hence mentally, a *purpose*. Rotherham renders the first two parts of our text as follows: "A purpose sustained [*i.e.*, by God's principles] thou wilt guard [saying] Prosper! Prosper!" A better translation of the Hebrew word *shalom*, translated *peace* in our text (and repeated for emphasis—see margin), is *prosperity*, as is indicated by the word *prosper*, used by Rotherham. Thus, in the first two parts of our text God promises to keep (*i.e.*, guard, protect, maintain) in perfect peace (prosperity) those whose minds are stayed (*steadfast*—see ASV, margin) on Him (*i.e.*, those who have a fixed purpose and determination to do His will—the loyal consecrated ones). Yes, blessed with strength and (perfect) peace!

This is not a promise of freedom from sorrow; it is not a promise of success or prosperity in earthly matters; but it is a promise of that inward peace and prosperity, of that rest in God and His supervising and loving care, with which fiery trials become a tolerable burden, and without which outward prosperity itself is a questionable boon. Our Heavenly Father has promised us grace sufficient; He has promised that we shall not be overcome through having trials and difficulties that are too great to bear (1 Cor. 10:13). We are assured that we shall have the victory if we trust in His strength.

We are resting in God's promises—in His strength and ability to make good His promises; for we know that He who has called us is able to fulfil all His good Word. This peace, or rest, is the special blessing of the holy Spirit. Only in proportion as we receive the holy Spirit, the holy mind of God, His disposition in us, can we have this peace fulfilled in us. It is a matter of simple ratio. As we grow in grace and in the knowledge of God, in the knowledge of the Truth and its Spirit, we shall have this to comfort and strengthen us; and we shall thus have more of the peace of God every day and be able to prosper and abide in His love.

It has been written for our instruction and comfort that "this is the victory that overcometh the world, *even* our faith" (1 John 5:4). This faith is built upon the testimony of God's Word—a sure foundation. It is only through maintaining strong and unwavering faith that the peace of God will abide with His children. "No good *thing* will he withhold from them that walk uprightly"; "all things work

together for good to them that love God” (Psa. 84:11; Rom. 8:28). “The eyes of the Lord *are* over the righteous, and his ears *are open* unto their prayers” (1 Pet. 3:12). If we keep our minds stayed on God and meditate on His many precious promises to His consecrated people, if our fixed purpose is to do His will only, He will maintain us in the fulness of peace, prosperity, and give us the victory under all conditions.

Isa.26:3 concludes with calling to our attention the important reason for our having a fixed purpose and determination to do God’s will, namely, “*because he trusteth in thee*” Rotherham renders it, “*Because in thee hath he been led to trust.*” If we did not fully trust God, even where we cannot trace Him, we could not have this fixed purpose in doing His will; and, consequently, He would not bestow His blessing of perfect peace, prosperity, upon us. If we were to trust to our own will, our own reasoning, or the wills and reasoning of our fellow men, we would be in a very unsatisfactory condition. All would be uncertain; we would have no sure basis for faith and assurance, nothing sure on which to fix our purposes.

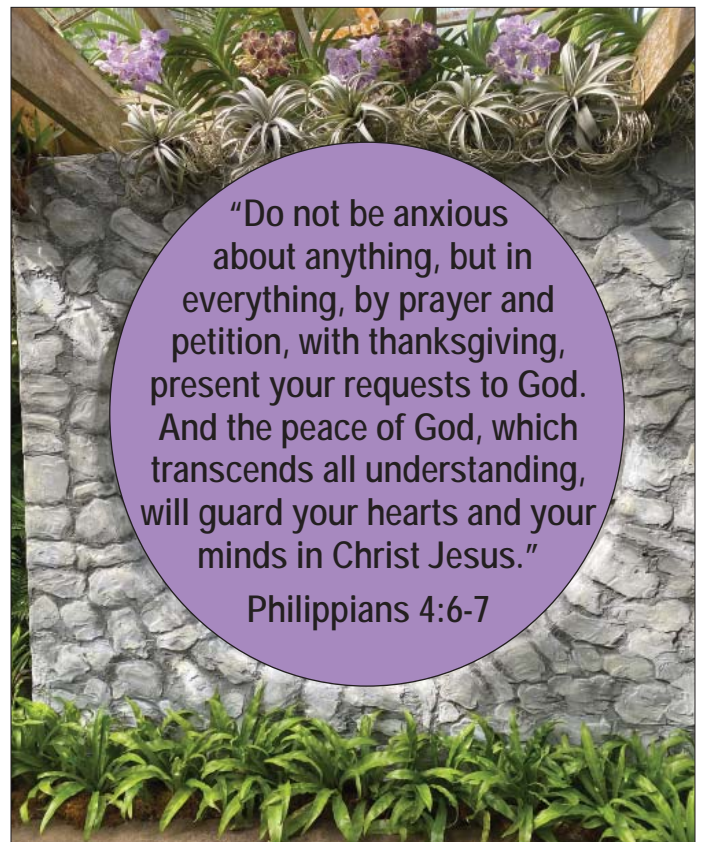
It is the privilege and duty of the consecrated child of God to continue to desire the possessing of the perfect peace of God. We have learned by experience and study of God’s word that peace is not dependent upon smooth sailing, the smile of fortune, physical health, or a host of friends. It is a peace which abides even when the way is rough, when health fails, or poverty comes in, or death steals from us the treasures of our hearts. It is a peace which none of the changes and vicissitudes of this life can take from us and which enemies are powerless to touch. What other gift so rich could our Father give to His children!

Blessed with strength and peace let us face the coming days with calmness and courage. “Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith?” Nothing can in any wise hurt us, or disturb our peace, if our hearts and minds are stayed on God, if we implicitly trust in Him. He will thus bring us safely into our desired blessed haven. Let us ever remember that He indeed is at the helm.

In order to enjoy this perfect peace and prosperity, we must have unswerving trust in our Father’s love, His care for us, and His abiding faithfulness. As we look into the starry heavens, we see a manifestation of God’s almighty power and majesty, but our hearts and minds would not be stayed and sustained by this; we might receive gifts from Him, but without knowledge of His abiding faithfulness

to us as His consecrated children. But if we have the proper foundation for faith, if we learn to know Him as our Father, through His Word, Spirit, and providences (the only way we can really learn to know Him), we come to have more and more confidence in and appreciation of Him. Our peace is proportionate to our constancy—our staying qualities. No one can retain this peace of God whose mind is not stayed, fixed on God, who does not fully trust in Him.

Ours is not the peace of recklessness, fatalism, indifference, sloth, worldliness, self-indulgence, *etc.*, but the peace begotten of God Himself, through His promises to us, which we have made our own. Our continued possession of God’s perfect peace, prosperity, is dependent upon our maintaining a fixed purpose in doing His will. This includes continued full obedience to Him and continued full trust in Him, even where we cannot trace Him. Isa. 26:4 exhorts along this line: “Trust ye in the LORD forever: for in the LORD JEHOVAH *is* everlasting strength” [*the rock of ages*—margin; Rotherham]. Thus, this peace in us and the faith which inspires it, cause us to look up, even through tears, with joyful expectancy for the glorious fruition of our hopes which God has promised to us in His Word and of which our present peace and joy are but a foretaste!



ANANIAS AND SAPPHIRA

“Love one another with a pure heart fervently”

1 Peter 1:22

God is love! And all, in proportion as they have fellowship with God, must have His character-likeness and be loving, generous, kind. The opposite: Satan is selfishness! And the great Adversary is the embodiment of that spirit since he allowed pride and ambition to mislead him. The world, under the influence of the prince of this world, Satan, and the influence of the fall, is a selfish world, and to that extent ungodly.

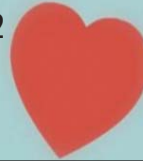
The work of the Millennial Age will be to give all mankind a full opportunity of recovery from the snare of the Devil—to Restitution, to recovery of all that was lost in Adam, and redeemed for Adam and his race by Jesus. That will be a glorious Millennium, helpful and uplifting to all the willing and obedient. The Church, with Jesus, on the spirit plane, invisible to men and armed with all the power of God. Her work will be like her Lord's; she will share with her Lord in His Kingdom rule, His Priesthood and His Judgeship—giving chastisements or rewards to mankind, and these shall be designed with a view to educating them, to uplifting them to the condition of perfection.

This Gospel Age, including its expanded harvest work, is the period in which God has been selecting the one true Church from amongst mankind. All of the select ones will be saints, regardless of denominational lines. God has destined that none shall be of that company except those who are copies of His Son (Romans 8:29). The Church has received special testing and education for the glorious mission marked out for her—the blessing of judging the world. The Church must not only have a sympathy for others but must cultivate this quality to the attainment of Christ's likeness in heart, and as much as possible must have that likeness in outward living and in thinking.

The record tells us that the number of believers was many thousand. The spirit of love began to burn in their hearts—thankfulness to God, appreciation of His favor,

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HAVE GENUINE AFFECTION
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DEEPLY AND EARNESTLY
WITH A PURE HEART

1 Peter 1:22



a desire to serve Him, and a sympathy and love for the brotherhood.

We perceive that some were poor; and controlled by the spirit of love, the well-to-do felt that they would like all the poorer brethren to have just as good as themselves. They first gave privately one to another, as they realized the needs. Then the matter went further as they organized a little community. Many of the wealthier sold their possessions and turned in the money to the Lord's treasury, desiring that a certain amount be supplied to themselves and all the other members of the community—share and share alike.

This manifested a very beautiful spirit, and under perfect conditions would have been the wise as well as the proper course. As it was, the community proved a failure. Nevertheless, the Lord apparently permitted that test and failure for a good purpose—to show us that no such community amongst His people is possible at the present time. The community principle will prosper wonderfully as soon as Messiah's Kingdom is established; but it is impracticable at the present time, as it was in the days of the Apostles.

BARNABAS NOT AN APOSTLE

This lesson introduces us to Barnabas, a godly man and wise, a mighty power in the Church. His name signifies consolation, and evidently it was an appropriate name. His proper name was Joses; and he must have been a very fine character when the Apostles gave him the new name Barnabas—implying that he had a beautiful spirit and was in his daily life a “son of consolation” to the brethren and all with whom he had contact.

Barnabas had a property or estate, and sold it, and brought the proceeds to the Apostles' feet. He was not an Apostle, for of them there were only twelve, and at this time only eleven, because of the loss of Judas. St. Paul, the twelfth Apostle, the Lord's chosen vessel, and “not one whit behind the very chiefest of the Apostles”

(2 Corinthians 11:5), had not yet had his eyes opened to the Truth of the Gospel.

Barnabas was quite willing to take his share with the others from the general dole; however, amongst those who accepted the terms of the proposition were Ananias and his wife Sapphira. These had property and sold it and kept back a portion of the price, bringing the remainder to the Apostles as though it were the entire sum. Indeed, in conspiring between themselves they had agreed to declare that the money they turned in to the treasury was all they received from the property. Our lesson tells of how St. Peter treated the matter. Under the guidance of the holy Spirit, he said, "Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the holy Spirit, and to keep back part of the price of the land?" He pointed out to Ananias that the property was his own, that he was not compelled or urged to donate it to this community, that it was only his own voluntary gift, and that he had thus lied to God, and not merely to the community. Ananias, hearing these words, fell down dead, smitten of the Lord; and his wife suffered similarly a little later. Acts 5:1-5, "But a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession, And kept back *part* of the price, his wife also being privy *to it*; and brought a certain part, and laid *it* at the apostles' feet. But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the holy Spirit, and to keep back *part* of the price of the land? Whiles it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? thou hast not lied to men, but unto God. And Ananias hearing these words fell down, and gave up the ghost ("died" NIV): and great fear came on all them that heard these things." Also read in Acts 5:6-11 of Sapphira. This is the only case in the Church on record where the penalty of willful violation of a covenant with God met with punishment done without delay.

REPENTANCE NOT PREACHED—WHY?

St. Peter doubtless remembered his own sad experience when he once denied the Lord. We query, why did he not sympathize with Ananias and Sapphira, pointing out to them wherein they had erred, and urge them to repentance, and join with them in prayer rather than pronounce upon them the death penalty?

The scriptural evidence is that these two culprits were not really God's children—that they had never received

the begetting of the holy Spirit; and that the Lord took this opportunity to give a great lesson to the Church—to remind them that they were dealing, not with flesh and blood, but with Jehovah God. From this viewpoint, it was worthwhile to sacrifice these two persons under Divine judgment with a view to teaching the Church, then and in future generations, how displeasing in the Lord's sight is hypocrisy—especially in respect to religious things.

If these two had been spirit-begotten, then their punishment would be the Second Death; and we would have no Scriptural ground for expecting them to have any resurrection or future consideration from the Lord. But if they were merely children of this world, not fully appreciative of spiritual things, their future interests are not destroyed. They still belong to the great world of mankind for whom Christ died and have not yet received in full the blessings of reconciliation with God through the Lord Jesus. Such glorious favor may be expected for the world in general, in the sweet by and by—during the Millennial Mediatorial Reign of Christ, when "all the families of the earth shall be blessed" and be brought to a knowledge of the Truth and to an opportunity of accepting the same unto salvation.

If our surmise be correct, Ananias and Sapphira were in a very different position from Judas, who had companied with our Lord for years, who had witnessed His miracles, had received of His holy Spirit and through that power had cast out demons, healed the sick, etc. Our charitable thought for Ananias and Sapphira is, that if they had not received the holy Spirit, they but imperfectly appreciated what they were doing. Although they did know that they were practicing a deception, they apparently did not get a proper focus upon the matter. Our expectation for them is that they have not sinned unto death; and that the life which they lost they will have back again in the resurrection time, with full opportunity to get matters straight and to determine finally their loyalty or disloyalty to God under the illumination which they will then have.

The designed effect was realized. Great fear and respect for God and everything appertaining to Him in religion fell upon the whole multitude. It was worthwhile to punish the one couple severely, in view of the preparation made for their blessing in future and in view of the lesson which their experience brought to the remainder of the Church.

"I, the LORD,
search
the heart, I test the
mind, even to give
every man according
to his ways, and
according to the
fruit of his doings.

Jeremiah 17:10

THE SAME SPIRIT OF DECEPTION NOW

We are not gifted, as was St. Peter, with authority to represent the Lord's interests in judging others. It would appear, however, from all that we are able to know, that there are many today living equally deceptive lives. We are not permitted to judge them, but they judge themselves by what they tell us. They profess to be consecrated to the Lord—Jehovah—sacrificed to the Divine cause. However, they keep back much through self-will, professing to be fully devoted followers of Jesus.

Some of these, doubtless, belong to the same class as Ananias. They have become associated with Christians but have never been begotten of the holy Spirit and have really neither part nor lot with Christ. Others may be real Christians and be keeping back part of their consecration. If so, the latter may be sure that they will be dealt with. So, the Apostle declares, "If we would judge ourselves, we should not [need to] be judged [of the Lord]. But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world"



(1 Cor. 11:31,32). Such Christians, building upon the Rock Christ Jesus, will apparently need to come through the fiery ordeal pointed out in the Bible, and "washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb," in great tribulation—for failing to live up to their covenant of complete sacrifice (Rev. 7:14).

It would indeed appear as though hypocrisy, which the Bible intimates is especially wicked in the sight of God, is practiced to a great length amongst the nominal followers of Jesus. Professions of creeds not believed and a form of godliness without its power seem on every hand to tell us that many must be living hypocritically and subject, therefore, to the Divine judgment. The lesson to us is take heed, "that no man take thy crown" (Rev. 3:11).

Our Golden Text here comes in appropriately. We are to love one another—first our Heavenly Father, then our heavenly Lord Jesus; and finally, we should love, and as we have opportunity serve, the brethren. Actively engaged in this manner, we shall be kept from hypocrisy and be ready for our share in the earthly Kingdom.

PROPER AND IMPROPER JUDGING

"If we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world" (1 Cor. 11:31, 32).

In this text the Apostle seems to be saying that if we as Christians would properly criticize, examine, and correct ourselves, it would not be necessary for the Lord to take us in hand and give us disciplinary judgments. But if we fail to do this judging of ourselves, then the Heavenly Father must do it; for He has taken us into His family, under His parental care. The object of this chastening would not be to injure us, however, but to prevent our being condemned with the world. We judge ourselves when we criticize our conduct, words, thoughts, and motives, and try them by the principles which are found in the Bible—justice, mercy, love, and truth—and then seek to correct ourselves where necessary. As our Lord has taught us, if we find that we have done wrong to another, we should leave our gift at the altar, and first go and make apologies to our brother (Matt. 5:23, 24).

God,
Will you highlight anyone in my life who I have not forgiven?
Convict me that I could respond and forgive, just as You have forgiven me!

Thus, we would be judging ourselves, obligating ourselves to do the right thing. When we have done wrong, it is not enough to say, "Yes, I am wrong; but then, no one is perfect." To do so would not be to act in harmony with the spirit of our text. That spirit is that if we find ourselves to be in the wrong, then we have a sacred duty to perform—we must make the matter right to the best of our ability. If the wrong has been along the lines of uncharitable thoughts toward anybody, it is not necessary that we go to that person and tell him about the matter. But we should remind ourselves of all the circumstances, and then judge ourselves, give ourselves a good rebuke. We are obligated to give ourselves a good lesson along this line. Thus, we would manifest that our heart's *intentions* are right, and that we are, therefore, right at heart.

On this line of thought the will of God concerning us is that we should judge ourselves. If we find we have injured another with our tongue or in any other way, we should go to that person and make proper apologies, thus setting matters right. Then we should put a penalty upon ourselves that we shall not easily forget. If the paying of that penalty requires considerable humility, so much the better. But if we neglect to punish ourselves, we would thus demonstrate that we are not in a proper heart condition; and in that case the best thing that could happen to us would be for the Lord to give us a severe chastisement. This, however, might not come on the same day or week or month as the wrongdoing.

But we may be sure that if we fail to do right in a matter, the Lord will take us in hand and give us a trying experience which will teach us the needed lesson. He may permit someone to do something to us or to say something about us that will show us wherein we have failed to do right. Or He may permit us to come into such a position as will bring upon us some kind of disciplinary suffering. The object of this arrangement—that if we do not judge or criticize ourselves, the Lord will do so—is that we shall not come into condemnation with the world.

During the next Age the world of mankind will be on trial, on judgment (Acts 17:31). If we were of the world, our judgment would come then instead of now. But we are Christ's disciples and not of the world; for the Lord has called us out of it (John 15:19). "Judgment must begin at the house of God" (1 Pet. 4:17).

In our case it may be the same now as it will be with the world in the future; that is, we might be making marks upon our character which must be removed. If this is true, the Lord will discipline us for their removal, unless we come to realize the situation and remove the marks ourselves. Otherwise, we would not be fit for the Kingdom. In other words, if we belong to the Lord, we must receive our judgments and punishments now, during the present Age. If we fail thus to chastise ourselves, then the Lord will do so for our growth in holiness.

"JUDGMENT" USED IN VARIOUS SENSES

We very frequently use the words *judgment* and *opinion* as synonyms, as expressing the same sentiment. A man's opinion of a matter is his judgment on the subject. Whether he expresses it to another or keeps it to himself, his judgment is his opinion. There may

be times when it would be proper for us to have an opinion, or judgment, that we would not think it wise to express. For instance, our Lord said to His disciples, "I have many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now" (John 16:12). There were certain reasons why He then withheld certain knowledge from them. So, it might be with us.



Also, in the Scriptures the word *judgment* is sometimes used in a special sense, namely, in the sense of condemnation. This judging, however, the Lord forbade His people to do, until the due time. We may say that certain lines of conduct and certain words or acts are, in our judgment, out of accord with the Lord's standards of righteousness. This is our privilege. When a matter is known to be a fact, we ought to have an opinion respecting it. Whoever has no opinion, no judgment, of his own is unstable in character. Every intelligent person should have an opinion upon every subject which comes up for criticism. How much of his opinion he might tell to others or might reserve to himself would be for him to determine, according to his own best judgment.

Another Scripture says, "Judge nothing before the time" (1 Cor. 4:5). This does not relate to the judging of ourselves, however, but to our judging of others. It is not for us to judge heart-intentions. We should not denounce people and declare them guilty of evil intentions unless the Scriptures state this of them (2 Tim. 3:1-8). While we might know that certain conduct is wrong or that certain teachings are wrong, yet it is not for us to say that the individual is willingly wrong; for we are not able to read the heart of anyone. God only knows to what extent people are willing sinners, willful wrongdoers. In some cases, it may be that they are under delusion, ignorance, superstition.

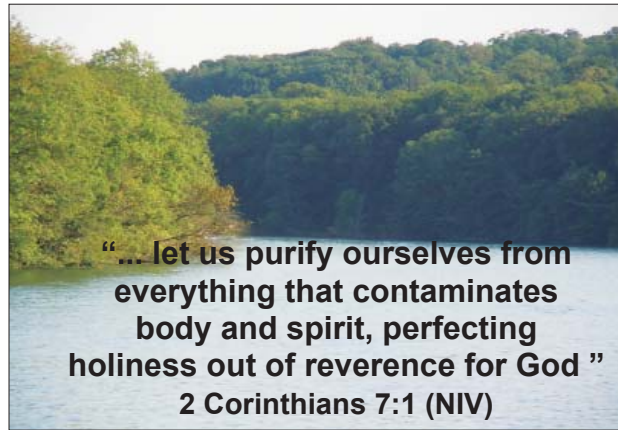
In other cases, it may be that their environment gives things a different color from that which we see. At the proper time and as may be convenient, we are to do all in our power to show such people the error of their course; but having done so, we are not to attempt to harm them or to punish them for those things which we esteem to be wrong (PT '21, p. 179).

Having said all this, we as consecrated children of God should judge as to whether or not we see good fruits or bad fruits in ourselves, or in others who profess to be followers of Jesus. Matt. 7:16-20 brings to our attention that we may and should know them by their fruits. Verse 17 speaks of “every good tree” instructing us to contrast a healthy fruit tree with a diseased or evil one, illustrating that those who are His disciples, sound and proper enough to begin with, might lose their spiritual strength and their carefulness. Verse 19 suggests that every branch that beareth not fruit be cut off! This thought is also in John 15:2, “Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away.” Luke 12:48, “Unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required.” We include Matt. 13:12 with Bro. Johnson’s comments in brackets, “For whosoever has [has used rightly], to him shall be given, and he shall have abundance; but whoever does hath not [have not used], from him shall be [special privileges] taken even that he hath. Verse 20 says “By their fruits” [lives, outward manifestations]; “Ye shall know them.” We know the Almighty by His fruits—His good, just, and loving workmanship. We also know those that have the spirit of anger, strife, and “gall of bitterness,” however outwardly respectable they may be.

But in judging even ourselves we should use a certain amount of leniency, as the Apostle suggests (1 Cor. 4:3, 4). His thought seems to be that when we come to recognize how high the Divine standard is, we might be too apt to judge ourselves with undue severity, and not to take into account the fact that all the Adamic race have been “shapen in iniquity” (Gen. 3:20; Psa. 51:5). Instead of condemning ourselves too harshly, we should rather think: “I feel greatly condemned for what I have done; and while I cannot make any good excuse for myself, I hope that God will

be able to make some allowance for me in this matter. Perhaps He will see some extenuating circumstances which I do not see.” Thus, as the Apostle suggests, we would not improperly judge even ourselves.

The faithful children of God expect, in God’s due time, to be given a share in the Kingdom, in which mankind will be judged. Moreover, God is now seeking to develop in our hearts and lives, in our characters, those principles of righteousness which He desires, and which will be preparatory to the future work of assisting The Christ in judging and blessing mankind. Therefore, unless we are just in our very hearts, unless we appreciate the principles of righteousness and rejoice to practice them, we shall not be fit for the Kingdom. We should not be unjust even to an animal. Every creature has its rights; and we should give to all their rights, leaving the results with God. Thus doing, we shall be preparing our own minds and hearts for the glorious conditions in reservation for those who love God supremely.



A position in the Kingdom will not be given to anyone on the basis of mercy or favor. God shows mercy in connection with the weaknesses and blemishes against which we are striving; but He will not permit anyone to enter the Kingdom whose character is not suitable for that high position. Those whom He approves for the Kingdom must represent the principles of righteousness and must know how to apply these principles now. Whoever is not disposed to justice to such an extent as to be willing to suffer loss rather than to be unjust will not have a share in the Messianic Kingdom.

Let us ever remember that if we are true, loyal children of God, all our unwilling blemishes are covered by the Robe of our Redeemer’s righteousness (Isa. 61:10). And that if we are doing our best in this great matter of judging, criticizing, ourselves with a view to improvement of character, and are dealing with all others along the line of the Golden Rule, we are thus demonstrating to the Heavenly Father that we appreciate highly the principle which is the foundation of His government. If, moreover, we build upon this sure foundation a superstructure of love, we shall thus be blessed and made ready for the Kingdom


of His dear Son, our Lord Jesus Christ.

Perhaps this would be a proper time to consider what is a “good conscience.” Conscience seems to be that moral quality of the mind which admonishes in regard to right and wrong. Some persons have a keen conscience and can quickly discern as to what is right and what is wrong. Others have a very dull conscience and find it difficult to determine between right and wrong, or else are measurably indifferent as to the moral quality of their course. While God created

man with a good conscience, ability to determine accurately what is right and what is wrong, sin has depraved this conscience. Hence it is the duty of every Christian to get his conscience made right, to educate his conscience to discern correctly. God lays down the principles of righteousness in His Word. It is through the Law of God that the Christian is able to discern these principles, to see what is right or wrong in principle.

The Golden Rule admonishes us: Do unto your neighbor as you would have him do unto you under similar circumstances. Consider what you would like to have your neighbor do unto you under certain circumstances and conditions, and thus help conscience to see what is the right thing to do. There are many things which are morally wrong, which are forbidden in the Law of God. These would be more readily discerned by the conscience, as there could be but one course of action possible in harmony with the expressed will of God on the matter. But there are other things which require a conscience trained to fine discernment. The Golden Rule is especially helpful here. As the principles of righteousness become firmly established in our characters, there is little difficulty in discerning the course of duty and of love.

A properly developed Christian has a properly educated conscience. Like the scale of justice, a truly good conscience is one which is well balanced. One may have a scale, for instance, that is perverted either one way or the other. A scale which is rightly adjusted will stand level. It is reliable. And so with a good conscience



**"I will greatly rejoice
in the LORD, my
soul shall be joyful in
my God; for He has
garments of salvation,
He has covered me
with the robe of
righteousness..."**

Isaiah 61:10

— it is one which can determine the slightest deviation from God's Law.

Very few have been awake to the importance of the Golden Rule. Very few have been careful to practice it in all the details of daily life. Let us remember that there is comparatively little time left for character-building, that even now the Great Judge is at the door, and that the final testings are very near. If we hope to be of the Kingdom class, we must make haste. This is a very solemn thought. Therefore, we should take the pains to learn and practice what God requires of those who are to be given a share in

the Messianic Kingdom, in order that we may make our calling and election sure.

The Apostle Paul refers to our proper judging or criticizing of ourselves, saying, "Having, therefore, these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God" (2 Cor. 7:1). "Let a man examine himself"—let him note the weaknesses and filthinesses of his fallen fleshly nature and seek to cleanse himself, "putting off" the deeds of the "old man" and being renewed more and more into the image of God's dear Son, our Exemplar as well as our Redeemer and Lord. In addition, the Apostle Paul urges that we cleanse not only our flesh as much as possible, but also our spirits, or minds, that the new mind, the holy resolution, or will, be given full control, and that every thought be brought into captivity to the will of God as expressed by and illustrated in Christ.

It is required of the consecrated children of God to examine themselves; "But let a man examine himself..."; "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?" (1 Cor. 11:28; 2 Cor. 13:5). Some may find themselves so surrounded with the cares of this life, and so entrapped by its pleasures and the deceitfulness of riches—either already acquired or being sought after (Matt. 13:22; Luke 8:14; 21:34-36) that they have little or no time for proper spiritual nourishment and exercise. They are spiritually weak and sickly (1 Cor. 11:30) and need to go to the Great Physician and to get and heed the wise counsel of His Word.

Bible Talks

Stories In Simple Language From The One Book That Never Grows Old

ISAAC AND REBEKAH.

Gen. 24:1—25:5, 7-11

AND Abraham was old, and well stricken in age; and the Lord had blessed Abraham in all things. And Abraham said unto his eldest servant of his house, that ruled over all that he had, Put, I pray thee, thy hand under my thigh; and I will make thee swear by the Lord, the God of Heaven, and the God of the earth, that thou shalt not take a wife unto my son of the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I dwell: but thou shalt go into my country, and to my kindred, and take a wife unto my son Isaac.

And the servant said unto him, Peradventure the woman will not be willing to follow me unto this land: must I needs bring thy son again unto the land from whence thou camest? And Abraham said unto him, Beware thou that thou bring not my son thither again. The Lord God of heaven, which took me from my father's house, and from the land of my kindred, and which spake unto me, and that swear unto me, saying, Unto thy seed will I give this land; he shall send his angel before thee, and thou shalt take a wife unto my son from thence. And if the woman will not be willing to follow thee, then thou shalt be clear from this my oath: only bring not my son thither again. And the servant put his hand under the thigh of Abraham his master, and sware to him concerning that matter.

And the servant took ten camels of the camels of his master, and departed; for all the goods of his master were in his hand: and he arose, and went to Mesopotamia, unto the city of Nahor. And he made his camels to kneel down without the city by a well of water at the time of the evening, even the time that women go out to draw water.

And he said, O Lord God of my master Abraham, I pray thee, send me good speed this day, and shew kindness unto my master Abraham. Behold, I stand here by the well of water; and the daughters of the men of the city come out to draw water: and let it come to pass, that the damsel to whom I shall say, Let down thy pitcher, I pray thee, that I may drink; and she shall say, Drink, and I will give thy camels drink also: let the same be she that thou

has appointed for thy servant Isaac; and thereby shall I know that thou hast shewed kindness unto my master.

Rebekah at the Well.

And it came to pass, before he had done speaking, that, behold, Rebekah came out, who was born to Bethuel, son of Milcah, the wife of Nahor, Abraham's brother, with her pitcher upon her shoulder. And the damsel was very fair to look upon, a virgin, neither had any man known her: and she went down to the well, and filled her pitcher, and came up. And the servant ran to meet her, and said, Let me, I pray thee, drink a little water of thy pitcher.

And she said, Drink, my lord: and she hastened, and let down her pitcher upon her hand, and gave him drink. And when she had done giving him drink, she said, I will draw water for thy camels also, until they have done drinking. And she hastened, and emptied her pitcher into the trough, and ran again unto the well to draw water, and drew for all his camels. And the man wondering at her held his peace, to wit whether the Lord had made his journey prosperous or not.

And it came to pass, as the camels had done drinking, that the man took a golden earring of half a shekel weight, and two bracelets for her hands of ten shekels weight of gold; and said, Whose daughter art thou? tell me, I pray thee: is there room in thy father's house for us to lodge in?

And she said unto him, I am the daughter of Bethuel the son of Milcah, which she bare unto Nahor. She said moreover unto him, We have both straw and provender enough, and room to lodge in. And the man bowed down his head, and worshipped the Lord.

And he said, Blessed be the Lord God of my master Abraham, who hath not left destitute my master of his mercy and his truth: I being in the way, the Lord led me to the house of my master's brethren. And the damsel ran, and told them of her mother's house these things. And Rebekah had a brother, and his name was Laban: and Laban ran out unto the man, unto the well. And it came to pass, when he saw the earring and bracelets upon his sister's hands, and when he heard the words of Rebekah,

his sister, saying, Thus spake the man unto me; that he came unto the man; and, behold, he stood by the camels at the well. And he said, Come in, thou blessed of the Lord; wherefore standest thou without? For I have prepared the house, and room for the camels.

And the man came into the house: and he ungirded his camels, and gave straw and provender for the camels, and water to wash his feet, and the men's feet that were with him. And there was set meat before him to eat: but he said, I will not eat, until I have told mine errand. And he said, Speak on.

And he said, I am Abraham's servant. And the Lord hath blessed my master greatly; and he is become great: and he hath given him flocks, and herds, and silver, and gold, and men-servants, and maid-servants, and camels, and asses. And Sarah, my master's wife, bare a son to my master when she was old; and unto him hath he given all that he hath. And my master made me swear, saying, Thou shalt not take a wife to my son of the daughters of the Canaanites, in whose land I dwell: but thou shalt go unto my father's house, and to my kindred, and take a wife unto my son. And I said unto my master, Peradventure the woman will not follow me.

She Let Down her Pitcher from her Shoulder.

And he said unto me, The Lord, before whom I walk, will send his angel with thee, and prosper thy way; and thou shalt take a wife for my son of my kindred, and of my father's house; then shalt thou be clear from this my oath, when thou comest to my kindred; and if they give not thee one, thou shalt be clear from my oath. And I came this day unto the well, and said, O Lord God of my master Abraham, if now thou do prosper my way which I go: behold, I stand by the well of water; and it shall come to pass, that when the virgin cometh forth to draw water, and I say to her, Give me, I pray thee, a little water of thy pitcher to drink; and she say to me, Both drink thou, and I will also draw for thy camels; let the same be the woman whom the Lord hath appointed out for my master's son.

And before I had done speaking in mine heart, behold, Rebekah came forth with her pitcher on her shoulder; and she went down unto the well, and drew water: and I said unto her, Let me drink, I pray thee. And she made haste, and let down her pitcher from her shoulder, and said, Drink, and I will give thy camels drink also: so I drank, and she made the camels drink also. And I asked her, and said, Whose daughter art thou? And she said, the daughter of Bethuel, Nahor's son, whom Milcah bare unto him: and I put the earring upon her face, and

the bracelets upon her hands. And I bowed down my head, and worshipped the Lord, and blessed the Lord God of my master Abraham, which had led me in the right way to take my master's brother's daughter unto his son. And now if ye will deal kindly and truly with my master, tell me: and if not, tell me; that I may turn to the right hand, or to the left.

Then Laban and Bethuel answered and said, The thing proceedeth from the Lord: we cannot speak unto thee bad or good. Behold, Rebekah is before thee, take her, and go, and let her be thy master's son's wife, as the Lord hath spoken.

Jewels of Gold and Silver.

And it came to pass, that, when Abraham's servant heard their words, he worshipped the Lord, bowing himself to the earth. And the servant brought forth jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment, and gave them to Rebekah: he gave also to her brother and to her mother precious things. And they did eat and drink, he and the men that were with him, and tarried all night; and they rose up in the morning, and he said, Send me away unto my master.

And her brother and her mother said, Let the damsel abide with us a few days, at the least ten; after that she shall go. And he said unto them, Hinder me not, seeing the Lord hath prospered my way; send me away that I may go to my master. And they said, We will call the damsel, and enquire at her mouth. And they called Rebekah, and said unto her, Wilt thou go with this man? And she said, I will go.

And they sent away Rebekah, their sister, and her nurse, and Abraham's servant, and his men. And they blessed Rebekah, and said unto her, Thou art our sister, be thou the mother of thousands of millions, and let thy seed possess the gate of those which hate them.

And Rebekah arose, and her damsels, and they rode upon the camels, and followed the man: and the servant took Rebekah, and went his way.

And Isaac came from the way of the well Lahai-roi; for he dwelt in the south country. And Isaac went out to meditate in the field at the eventide: and he lifted up his eyes, and saw, and, behold, the camels were coming.

And Rebekah lifted up her eyes, and when she saw Isaac, she lighted off the camel. For she had said unto the servant, What man is this that walketh in the field to meet us? And the servant had said, It is my master: therefore she took a vail, and covered herself.

(Continued on back page)



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And the servant told Isaac all things that he had done. And Isaac brought her into his mother, Sarah's tent, and took Rebekah, and she became his wife; and he loved her: and Isaac was comforted after his mother's death. Then again Abraham took a wife, and her name was Keturah. And she bare him children.

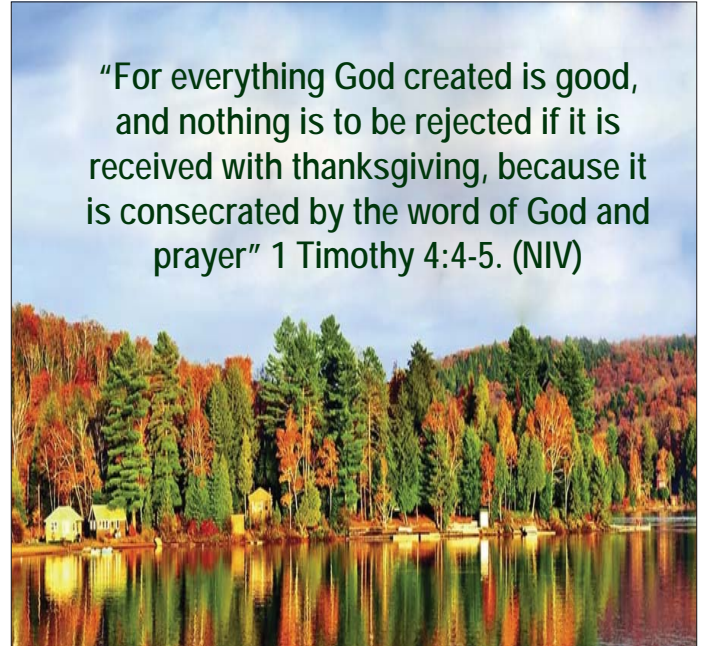
And Abraham gave all that he had unto Isaac. And these are the days of the years of Abraham's life which he lived, an hundred three-score and fifteen years. Then Abraham gave up the ghost, and died in a good old age, an old man, and full of years; and was gathered to his people.

And his sons Isaac and Ishmael buried him in the cave of Machpelah, in the field of Ephron, the son of Zohar, the Hittite, which is before Mamre; the field which Abraham purchased of the sons of Heth: there was Abraham buried, and Sarah, his wife. And it came to pass after the death of Abraham, that God blessed his son Isaac; and Isaac dwelt by the well Lahai-roi.



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1156 Saint Matthews Rd.
Chester Springs, PA 19425**



"For everything God created is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving, because it is consecrated by the word of God and prayer" 1 Timothy 4:4-5. (NIV)



**The Blessings Of Peace
The Beauty Of Hope,
The Spirit Of Love,
The Comfort Of Faith.
May These Be Your Gifts
This Holiday Season.**

**"GIVE THANKS TO THE LORD,
FOR HE IS GOOD; HIS LOVE
ENDURES FOREVER!"
PSALM 107:1 (NIV)**

As we come to the end of this year, May our good Lord keep you in perfect peace; and as you reflect back on His goodness and how much He has guided and protected you may you have a blessed Holiday Season and a Happy, Healthy, New Year as you continue to keep your trust in Him.