

December 22

If a man therefore purge himself, he shall be a vessel unto honor, sanctified, and meet for the Master's use, and prepared unto every good work. 2 Timothy 2:21

IF any man desire honor from God, let

LARGER CONTEXT OF 2 TIMOTHY 2:21

(2Tim 2:14-18 KJV) "Of these things put them in remembrance, charging them before the Lord that they strive not about words to no profit, but to the subverting of the hearers. (15) Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. (16) But shun profane and vain babblings; for they will increase unto more ungodliness. (17) And their word will eat as doth a canker..."

HG750-HG753 "VESSELS OF GOLD AND OF SILVER *"In a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth, and some to honor, and some to dishonor. If a man, therefore, purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honor, sanctified and meet for the Master's use, and prepared unto every good work."* 2 Tim. 2:20, 21...

He here objects to the disposition of many to contend about matters of no moment, which he terms "words to no profit, but to the subverting of the hearers," and again "profane and vain babblings, which would increase unto more ungodliness and eat as cloth a canker." In a word, man-made differences should be ignored and only those doctrines which the Scriptures clearly and distinctly set forth are to be insisted upon and contended for...

God's great plan will stand and will finally triumph no matter who may babble against it and no matter how much the Adversary may seek to draw attention away from the fundamental facts to the theories and fancies of the egotistical and hypocritical. The Apostle's thought seems to be that some of the Lord's people, by following the course he has outlined, and becoming thoroughly furnished in the word of truth and able to rightly divide it to others, will be vessels of honor in the service of the Lord in the present time. On the contrary, some truly God's people, truly consecrated to him, yet neglecting these important principles--will be vessels of less honor and used of the Lord to accomplish less glorious results.

TO HONOR AND LESS HONOR

...Not all of those who make a full consecration and who strive for righteousness shall occupy the same station in the Divine service, either now or hereafter. The degree of honor in the Lord's service will depend upon their degree of honesty and zeal. While, therefore, we may well rejoice to be vessels in the Lord's house, to be used of him either in more honorable or less honorable capacity in his service, nevertheless he is pleased to have us aspire to such faithfulness in thought, in word, in deed, as would have his approval and win for us the higher stations in his esteem and service here and hereafter.

"IF A MAN PURGE HIMSELF"

The Apostle tells us how as Christians we may attain to the highest positions in Divine favor. He says, "If a man purge himself from these he shall be a vessel unto honor..." The Apostle's thought is that if

him not fail to seek it in God's appointed way--along the pathway of humility; for the Lord giveth His favors to the humble. If you would be a vessel fit for the Master's use and a vessel of honor, humble yourself under the mighty hand of God and He will

any man in the Church will purge himself, will purify himself, will seek to put away these elements of dross and unrighteousness, will seek to avoid profane and vain babblings, will cease to strive about words to no profit, and will seek more and more by the Lord's assistance to "rightly divide the word of truth"--such a man in Christ, whether his talents and opportunities be great or small, will be blessed of the Lord and reckoned of him as one of the more honorable vessels for his service here and hereafter.

Continuing further he declares that the man who thus purges himself and seeks to bring himself closely into alignment with the will of God, will not only be reckoned a vessel unto honor, but will be sanctified and set apart by the Lord for his service. He will give him opportunities, special opportunities, to do and to be assisted, which he would not have provided for him otherwise...

"God hath set in the Body the various members as it hath pleased him." It is for us not to be ambitious for a high station, but to humbly desire to be and to do those things acceptable to the Lord, leaving it for him to give us whatever experiences in life will be best for us--either larger opportunities for service or lesser opportunities, for the testing and proving of our loyalty. Selfish ambition in any of the Lord's people would be the surest road to Divine disapproval..." The Lord disdaineth the proud, but showeth favor to the humble." The Apostle, therefore, urges, "humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time"--in the present life or in the future life or both. It is for the Lord to choose our place and our work for us; it is for us to seek to be instruments willing and ready, "for the Master's use made meet."

"HOUSE OF MANY MANSIONS"

Looking beyond our present opportunities and privilege of usefulness in the Lord's service, and the degree of opportunities secured by us now through faithfulness, we perceive that the great work for which we are called, chosen, being schooled, is that of the future, of which the Apostle says, "That in the ages to come God will show forth the riches of his grace, in his loving kindness toward us in Christ Jesus." (Eph. 2:7)...

In the tabernacle and in the temple gold was used as a symbol of this divine nature, the highest of all natures, superior to the angelic. Our Lord described this immortal condition as signifying the possession of life in himself--life not derived from other sources. "As the Father hath life in himself (immortality), so hath he given unto the Son to have life in himself" (immortality). (John 5:26)... It is to this glorious quality of the divine nature, symbolized by the gold, and again in our text styled the vessels of gold, that Peter refers, saying "God hath given unto us exceeding great and precious promises, that by these we might become partakers of the divine nature." 2 Peter 1:4

"VESSELS OF SILVER"

All recognize silver as less precious than gold, but much more abundant. As one of the precious metals it is used in the Scriptures to represent a spiritual class, but a

exalt you in due time. Do not be in a hurry about it either; but whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might, beginning and ever continuing to cleanse your earthen vessel, that it may be fit for the Master's use. Z. '02-319 R3097:5

different class from that represented in the vessels of gold--a more numerous class. While all of the Lord's people of this Gospel Age were called, as the Apostle says, "In one hope of their calling," with at least the prospect or opportunity of becoming golden vessels, nevertheless the Lord foreknew that not all of his true followers would prove in the end to be "more than conquerors;" not all of those who love righteousness and hate iniquity would be so zealous for the service as to be esteemed worthy to be of that little flock...

This great company he designates as in the end honored and honorable victors, with palm branches--the crowns being reserved for the little flock, the vessels of gold. In the same picture he shows us that while the little flock of more than conquerors are to sit upon the throne with him, these others, worthy but less worthy, are to be before the throne... While the little flock will be the Bride class, the "great company" will be honored with an invitation to be present at the marriage supper of the Lamb in glory. (Rev. 19:9)...

"VESSELS OF WOOD AND OF EARTH"

To be in any part of God's great house--to be in his service in any capacity, either now or hereafter, is an honor, is no dishonor. Hence we prefer that translation of our text--vessels unto more honor and vessels unto less honor. The vessels of earth and of wood are specified as indicating those unto less honor, and to our understanding represent in the future those who will be servants of God on the earthly or human plane. Whoever through the portals of the Divine Word catches a glimpse of the coming glory of the earth during the Millennial Age--a glimpse of the "times of restitution of all things which God hath spoken by the mouth of all the holy prophets" can rejoice with any who will be found worthy to be a vessel of less honor in the Master's cause in the future on the earthly plane."

RIGHTLY DIVIDING THE WORD OF TRUTH

R4684 "Some do a lot of fishing, but do not get many fish. Bible study is very much the same. It is not the amount of time we spend in poring over a passage, but the amount of information we secure from the Bible..."

THE HARVEST THE DUE TIME FOR A CLEAR UNFOLDING OF THE TRUTH

...It is because we are living in this particular time, in the ending of this Age, that we are favored with such a clear unfolding of spiritual things... Present blessings of a temporal kind, such as the electric light, are due for similar reasons. We believe that any other explanation would confer too great honor upon the individual connected with the production. The very ablest minds in the world have examined these subjects, but now, by God's grace, we have come to the place where the veil is taken away and where we can see the real meaning of God's Word--not merely one person can see it, but hundreds, thousands, see it."

R4930 "SHOW THYSELF APPROVED"
"Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of Truth."-- 2 Tim. 2:15...

Every now and then we are brought to a realization that many of those who rejoice considerably in the Truth have but an imperfect knowledge of it--they are not rooted, grounded, established and built up in the Truth; they are not able to "rightly divide the Word of Truth"; they are not workmen who need never be ashamed in discussing the Truth with others.

Some of these, deficient in their knowledge of the Truth, are mere babes, beginners, who have not yet had a full opportunity for study. Some of them have read Vol. I and have skimmed over the other volumes. They perhaps learned of the classes for Bible study, and, attending them and discussing with the brethren and hearing some discourses, seemed to assume that they knew the teachings of the entire six

volumes as though they had read them, studied them.

This is a great mistake; more, it is a *serious* mistake, because we are in the time when each and all must expect to be specially tried and tested. And those who have only a partial understanding of the Divine Plan--those who have only a part of the provided armor, will find it difficult, if not impossible, to stand in this evil day the assaults of the world, the flesh and the Adversary. If they have proper zeal for the Lord and a proper love for the Plan, they should manifest that zeal by thorough and persevering study of the volumes. They cannot afford to do less.

We find also that some of the dear friends who read the SCRIPTURE STUDIES years ago, and not recently, imagine that they remember their contents, when in reality they are quite ignorant of many of their teachings. We all have leaky, earthen vessels and the precious treasure of Divine Truth soon exhausts unless we keep replen-

ishing... Such of our readers as have not read the STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES this year can scarcely appreciate how much they probably have lost of what they originally learned therein."

DO YOU KEEP THESE IMPORTANT KEYS FRESH IN MIND?

1) Reading/Studying 12 pages a day: The planned completion is 9 months if it is done consistently -- leaving 3 months for going into more depth in selected areas.

2) Reading/Studying 9 pages a day: The planned completion is still less than twelve months. There would be approximately 10 days to spare.

R4684 "We believe that it is not so much the time that is given to Bible study, but the amount of study done and the amount of information gained, that counts."

R3096 (From Harvest Truth Database V5.0)

"A VESSEL UNTO HONOR, SANCTIFIED"

"If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honor, sanctified and made meet for the Master's use, and prepared unto every good work."--2 Tim. 2:21.

IT IS IMPORTANT to notice that this instruction is given, not to the world, but to the Church--to those who are believers in Christ and who are consecrated to him and desirous of being used in his service. If the counsel were given to worldly people, no such incentive would be held out; for such have no ambition to be in the Lord's service. The world can better appreciate such maxims as, "Honesty is the best policy," etc.; for temporal good is all they seek. Yet it is indeed a good thing for worldly men to purge themselves of evil dispositions and practices. Moral reforms are always commendable as steps in the right direction, and we are always glad to see worldly men trying to break away from the bondage of bad habits--from the drink habit and from lying, profanity and other vices.

But such purging from the filth of the flesh can never render such vessels fit for the Master's use. With all their efforts at cleansing they are still unclean; and the Lord desires clean vessels for his use. It is only when, by faith, we are plunged in the cleansing blood of our Redeemer that we are clean and acceptable to God.

"There is a fountain filled with blood
Drawn from Immanuel's veins;
And sinners plunged beneath that flood,
Lose all their guilty stains."

But having been thus reckonedly cleansed from sin, and clothed in the pure robe of Christ's righteousness, it is all-important that we strive to make this reckoned righteousness an actual thing to the extent of our ability; for only so can we prove ourselves worthy of the imputed righteousness. It is purely of divine grace that we are *reckoned* of God as righteous, before we have actually become so. Seeing in us the desire to be righteous and the effort to be so in his appointed way, God, accepting the will for the deed, reckons us righteous now, and treats us as sons, since we have been redeemed from the curse and have accepted this gracious provision for reconciliation.

If, however, after being thus reconciled to God and reckoned righteous, our course of conduct proves that we no longer love righteousness; if we do not endeavor to make the reckoned righteousness an actual thing by a constant endeavor to purge out the old leaven of sin; if we are content to let it remain and to work in us, and if we neglect to strive against it, then we are proving by such a course that our love of righteousness is growing weaker, and we are proving our unworthiness of the Lord's gracious reckoning in our favor. But if, on the contrary, we are striving daily to purge out the old leaven of sin, if we are not merely working it down occasionally and allowing it again and again to ferment and disturb the whole spiritual being, endangering its complete souring and spoiling (but purging it out by constantly resisting it) cleansing our thoughts, words and deeds with the truth, and cultivating the blessed fruits of the spirit of love, joy and peace,--then, indeed, as the Apostle affirms, we shall be vessels meet for the Master's use.

And not only so, but the Lord can honor such vessels because they honor him; they fairly represent him and his cause. If they are meek and humble-minded, not inclined to think of themselves more highly than they ought to think, but to think soberly, the Lord can

exalt them to positions of trust and honor without injury either to themselves or to the cause; and thus they are more and more sanctified and prepared for every good work.

Let as many, therefore, as would be honored and used of the Master now and hereafter--as many as have this hope in them--seek to purify themselves, to purge out the old leaven of sin. In the language of another forceful illustration, let us endeavor to war a good warfare against the world, the flesh and the devil. And be assured that in these duties we have the work of a lifetime; and even at its close we will still find the necessity for the robe of Christ's righteousness to cover the remaining deformities of our character.

While the purging here spoken of refers to the general cleansing from all sin and uncleanness, the Apostle had special reference on that occasion to purging from a disposition to hearken to the false doctrines of those who would subvert the faith of the Church. His counsel is to avoid foolish questions and strife about words to no profit; to shun profane and vain babblings which increase only unto more ungodliness, which savor more of bombast and self-exaltation than of truth and godliness, and, on the contrary, to study to show ourselves approved unto God, workmen that need not be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of truth.--2 Tim. 2:15.

⁽¹⁾There is much significance in that word "*study*"; and only the studious find the narrow way to the divine approval and acceptance. *Study* to show thyself approved--study the doctrine; study your course of conduct, to keep it in harmony with the doctrine. Study how to promote the peace and prosperity of Zion, and how to shield yourself and others from the missiles of error and from the poison of an evil, worldly spirit. Study to perform the duties of a faithful soldier of the cross--the seemingly insignificant, as well as the bravest and noblest deeds. A soldier has many seemingly trivial duties to perform, and he is as really doing his duty as a soldier when he is polishing his armor, foraging, cooking his meal, cleaning camp, clearing the way or building bridges for the army to pass as when he is fighting the enemy. All such necessary incidental work is entirely compatible with his commission as a soldier, and is not to be considered "entanglements" or hindrances. And these things cannot be avoided or carelessly done without a measure of unfaithfulness.

So with the Christian soldier. The routine of life, house-work, daily toil, any and everything incidental to a proper and honest provision of "*things needful*" for ourselves and those dependent on us for support, as well as provision for the prosecution and care of the Lord's work,--all this is a proper part of our engagement as soldiers of the Lord. The Apostle Peter was as truly serving the Lord when catching the fish from whose mouth he got the coin wherewith to pay the Lord's taxes and his own, as when proclaiming, The Kingdom of God is come nigh unto you. The Apostle Paul was as truly a soldier of the cross and doing his proper work as such when making tents (rather than be chargeable to any) as when, at Mars hill, he preached Jesus and the resurrection. *Whatever* is done with a view to

⁽¹⁾ Dec. 20 Manna, 2Tim 2:15

the glory of our Lord, the Captain of our salvation, or for the benefit of any of our fellow-soldiers, or for our own preparation for this warfare, or in the discharge of obligations which our Captain has recognized and approved,--this is proper work for us as soldiers, and not *entanglement* in the affairs of this life.

But the Christian soldier must study to perform even the commonest duties in a manner creditable to his calling. Nor must he permit himself to become entangled with other things which do not relate to his duties as a soldier, and thus to be side-tracked. For instance, if a soldier knowing how to repair watches were to divert his attention from his regular duties, neglect his camp and battle duties, and the commands of his Captain and the proper work of a soldier to acquire some extra compensation by this means, he would be an unfaithful soldier. And so the Christian who turns aside to seek some *personal*, temporal advantage, to the detriment of his duties as a soldier, is likewise, to some extent, an unfaithful soldier and likely to be drawn out of the ranks entirely.

Study to show thyself approved. Study the Word. Study yourself that you may become well acquainted with yourself--that you may know your talents for service and in what directions they lie,

IF A MAN PURGE HIMSELF

(*Still further ways to purge ourselves*)

R5738 "OUR CLEANSING -- INWARD AND OUTWARD *"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 Corinthians 7:1...

Not only has God made faith a necessary element of acceptance in the present time, but additionally, love of righteousness is made a part of the test. It is not enough that we should have the eye of faith which would recognize Christ's death as the Redemption-price for the sins of the world, we must additionally have hearts that love righteousness in order to come under Divine favor. The heart that loves righteousness discerns the weakness of its own flesh, its downward tendencies. The moment that heart recognizes Jesus as the Redeemer it flees to Him, not only to be covered with His merit as respects the sins that are past, but also to have the imputed covering of His righteousness as respects the unwilling blemishes and imperfections of the present and the future -- imperfections that are contrary to the will and are the result of weaknesses inherited.

This class, not in harmony with the sin of the world nor with their own weaknesses, is referred to by our Lord in His message, "Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden [under the yoke of sin and appreciating its penalty, death], and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me." These learners -- disciples, pupils in the School of Christ -- are the class to whom the words of our text are addressed. It would be useless to exhort the world in general to cleanse themselves of all filthiness of the flesh and spirit. The world is in sympathy with this very filthiness and has no desire to cleanse itself, has no just appreciation of how filthy it is in the sight of God and those who have His Spirit of Holiness. The Lord describes the condition of the world as one in which anger, malice, envy and various lusts [desires] are the usual and normal conditions by turns. Lust, selfishness--which often amounts to brutality in its seeking of wealth, or pleasure or power -- seeks to fill the natural mind, so that if it were taken away, with nothing substituted, life would lose all of its charms...

The world does not like these chosen ones because, confessing their own weaknesses and striving against them, they call them by their proper names -- sins, mean-

and your weak points and how they may be guarded against; that you may know both your abilities and your shortcomings. Then study to avoid error and to shun all foolish questions and profane and vain babblings. Remember that only the foundation of God standeth sure, and that all other foundations are worthless and all other theories must come to naught. But "The foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity."--2 Tim. 2:19.

And ^[2]if any man desire honor from God, let him not fail to seek it in God's appointed way--along the pathway of humility; for the Lord giveth his favors to the humble. If you would be a vessel fit for the Master's use and a vessel of honor, humble yourself under the mighty hand of God and he will exalt you in due time. Do not be in a hurry about it either; but whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might, beginning and ever continuing to cleanse your earthen vessel, that it may be fit for the Master's use.

[2] Dec. 22 Manna, 2 Tim. 2:21

nesses, filthinesses of the flesh and spirit. Every effort made by these to cleanse themselves is a reproof to others who are not striving to cleanse themselves, and who hate to be reminded that the things in which they take their greatest pleasure are greed, selfishness, inordinate affections, strifes, pride, vainglory...

The law of the New Creation -- love for God with all our hearts and for our neighbor as ourselves -- is to the world unreasonable, unthinkable, undesirable every way, and every reminder of it, even by the presence of those who at heart are on the side of righteousness, causes displeasure and discomfort. To these the Lord and His footstep followers have always been unwelcome -- intruders. They prefer to be let alone, to have no suggestion offered to the effect that they are wrong. True, some of them have a pleasurable pride in generosity, a love of a good name, and a reputation for honesty and virtue. But they wish to be considered as standards and exemplars, and resent any intrusion, any measurements of their thoughts, words or deeds by the Divine standards. Therefore those who continually recognize and honor the Divine standards are disesteemed by them.

THE NECESSITY FOR CLEANSING

...Those who at heart are loyal to the Lord and His righteousness are distressed by their blemishes, their sins, the weaknesses of their flesh, even though they are aware that the Lord has graciously covered all these, and is not imputing their guilt because at heart they are opposed to them. The desire of this class is to build, to establish, character by faithfulness to principles of righteousness. They wish that their minds may become more and more established in faithfulness to the Lord and His Golden Rule of love; and that, so far as possible, the new mind shall control the fallen, imperfect flesh and bring it into subjection, into accord, with the Divine Law of Love.

Whoever, after having experienced the Lord's blessing in the forgiveness of sins, has no desire to war a warfare against them, and to bring into subjection to his new mind the powers and talents of his mortal body, has not the true spirit of sonship. He would thereby be giving evidence that he does not truly love righteousness, and that he does not truly hate iniquity. He would thus be testifying that he is not of the class whom the Lord desires as His sons on the spirit plane--as members of the Little Flock, the Bride, the Lamb's Wife...

By such a warfare against the weak-

nesses of the flesh and of the spirit, the Lord designs that they should establish a crystallized character. Thus as the Scriptures express it, they shall be "made meet for the inheritance of the saints in light" -- fit in heart for the Divine service. Such as are thus fit in heart for the service of the Millennial Kingdom will, we are assured, be granted new bodies, free from all blemishes, in the First Resurrection. Thus, having perfected their minds and established character in their hearts in the present life by controlling the flesh so far as possible, they demonstrate that at heart they have the character-likeness of their Lord and Redeemer. Only those who do thus develop into copies of God's dear Son will constitute the Very Elect, the Kingdom Class, the Seed of Abraham, through whom the world will shortly receive its blessing...

LET US CLEANSER OURSELVES

...As the eyes of our understanding opened more and more widely we got proper views of the Lord and His righteousness, our own conditions, the need of His covering Robe, etc. Day by day, as we have since striven to put away sin, selfishness--yea, every element of ungodliness and unloveliness--we have become more painfully conscious of how deep was the stain which we at first, perhaps, thought was merely superficial. Many of the Lord's people, after years of labor in seeking to cleanse themselves from the filth of the flesh and of the spirit, now, alas, see more of their own blemishes than they discerned at first, even though they have gotten rid of much of this natural filthiness, selfishness, etc. This would make the work of cleansing a very discouraging one if it were not for the assurance of the Lord's Word that He regards us, not according to the flesh, but according to our intentions, our desires, our endeavors. He reckons us as overcomers because of our good *warfare against the natural blemishes*, whatever may be the measure of our success...

Neighbors and friends may see a considerable change. This is *good*, but not *sufficient*. We must also cleanse our *spirits*, our *minds*. It is not sufficient that we avoid *outward* wrongdoing. Our *minds* must be cleansed. We must learn to hate sin, to repel its first advances. We must learn that our minds and our bodies are the temples of the Lord and that everything contrary to Him and His Law of Righteousness and Love must be barred.

Others are witnesses to some extent of our trials and triumphs of an outward kind. But the most important battles of the New

Creation are those which are known only to ourselves and to our Captain--the battle of the new *mind* or *will* against the influences of the old, natural disposition. The true soldier of the cross will find this battle-ground quite sufficient to engage all of his combativeness and destructiveness and to keep him fully occupied. Such as are on the alert to develop the new character have much less time than others to criticize their neighbors, friends and brethren. They find enough in themselves requiring vigilance and restraint. And as they progress in this direction, they become more sympathetic toward others who have the same or other weaknesses and inclinations contrary to the Divine standards. They sympathize especially with the brethren of the New Creation, who similarly have given their all to the Lord and are battling against the world, the flesh and the Adversary, in their bodies and in their spirits.

OUR GRADUAL TRANSFORMATION

...As we fill our minds with God's promises, the whole character, the whole life, becomes more transformed. The Apostle says, "Be ye transformed by the renewing of your minds." Our minds which were in accord with the earthly things, the earthly nature, are not only to be lifted from obedience to sin, but are to be turned in a new direction. Our minds are to be filled with holy thoughts--thoughts of the Lord and His service. When the mind is in a right attitude toward God, it is comparatively easy to serve the Law of God. The Apostle exhorts us to *perfect* holiness. We had the holiness started in us when we became the Lord's people. We gave ourselves *wholly to Him*--He never accepts a *part*. Our consecration is to do God's will *wholly*. We present our bodies a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is our reasonable service. We started out saints; and the Lord recognizes none others than saints. Therefore we are to seek to live up to the Divine standard in all the conduct of life--our words, deeds, thoughts.

OUR CLEANSING AND THE LORD'S CLEANSING

...There is another Scripture which speaks of the *Lord* as doing this cleansing work. "Cleanse *Thou* me from secret faults." (Psalm 19:12-14.) These words of the Prophet David are the sentiment of all the Lord's true people. By these words the Prophet showed his recognition of the fact that he was not capable of cleansing himself. He recognized that he might have secret faults that he did not appreciate himself--that he did not see himself. Perhaps he did not see some faults that others would see. He desired God to cleanse him from these. This indicated that he desired to get away from everything that was not in harmony with God.

This would be the proper sentiment for all Christians. We should pray to the Lord that He would show us whatever in our lives is not fully pleasing and acceptable to Him, that He would help us to see ourselves as others see us, and especially to see ourselves as He sees us. We believe that many

of the Lord's people have been shown their imperfections and weaknesses (in the Lord's providence) by a very severe jolt. We ask the Lord also, as did the Psalmist, to keep us back from presumptuous sins, to cleanse us wholly from these.

"THE PERFECTING OF HOLINESS"

Our text declares that such a purification of flesh and spirit, body and mind, constitutes a perfecting of holiness. The thought here is that holiness cannot be attained in a moment, but that it must be gradually effected, perfected. A right view of this matter will hinder us from falling into certain dangerous errors. Holiness is not a charm which we may put in our pockets; it is not a garment which may be worn occasionally. Holiness resembles more the tempering of a piece of metal; it enters into the entire fiber, changing its general characteristics; it is transforming in its influence. True, there is a holiness *reckoned* to the Lord's people in the Robe of Christ's righteousness, which is granted to us when first we turn from sin, accept the Redeemer, and consecrate ourselves to God. But this is not sufficient. We must work into our characters that which we have willed--or, as the Apostle expresses it, we must allow the Lord to work in us the holy will, and the holy conduct which must necessarily accompany the holy will, as opportunity and conditions will permit.

But how is this holiness perfected in us? How does God work in us to will and then to do His good pleasure? Our text answers this portion of the question, too, assuring us that it is God's part to give us the promises...

"GREAT AND PRECIOUS PROMISES"

Looking into the context to see to what promises the Apostle refers, we find in the preceding verses the declaration, "Come out from among them and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." (2 Corinthians 6:17,18.) What a promise! What a suggestion! -- that we, by nature defiled and imperfect, should not only have the notice of our sovereign Creator, but should be invited to become His children and be given the assurance of His parental affection for us --that "like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that reverence Him." How wonderful it seems! And then, as the Apostle elsewhere declares, this is not the end of the matter, but merely the beginning, for he says, "If children, then heirs, heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ, if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together."--Rom. 8:17.

Yes, it is this thought of what is implied in the term children of God, sons of God. The blessings and riches of the Father are to be extended through our Lord Jesus, especially to the Little Flock, which is now being selected from amongst men to be His Bride and associates in the Kingdom. These are not accepted into the Kingdom at once, but as it were on probation; as the Apostle says, "Now are we the sons of God; but it doth not yet appear what we shall be"--if we

are faithful. As sons of God in the present life we have the joy of knowing of our Father's character through His Word, which we are permitted to understand, but which the world does not understand. We are assured of Divine supervision; so that not the slightest thing can happen to these sons except as their Father sees would be to their advantage. But they must show their love, their devotion, their oneness of spirit with the Father and the Redeemer ere they can be counted in as His Bride in the full, absolute and complete sense, and be granted a share in His glories.

It is to demonstrate their possession of these graces that these consecrated ones are left for a time in the midst of evil and unfavorable surroundings--to prove their love of righteousness, their opposition to iniquity, their love to God and their faithfulness to Him, their love to all who are in sympathy with the Divine arrangement. If they stand these tests fully, it will mean that they will endure considerable opposition from the world, the flesh and the Adversary; and that they will be correspondingly strengthened by these experiences. It is this class to whom the Apostle refers saying, "If so be that we suffer [with Him], we shall also reign with Him." We are to suffer as He did for right doing, and because our neighbors and friends are blind as to what is the right, the proper course. We are to suffer gladly and joyfully whatever cup the Father may pour for us, knowing that He is too good to be unkind, too wise to err.

"Let us then, dearly beloved, cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of the Lord." As the Apostle Peter declares, "If we do these things, we shall never fall; for so an entrance shall be ministered unto us abundantly into the everlasting Kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ."--2 Peter 1:10,11."

(Heb 12:1 KJV) "Let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us"

R5319 "CONSTANT VIGILANCE NECESSARY"

Any one might run a few steps; but when some of these find all the affairs of human life hindering them, and realize that they must drop all unnecessary weights, they begin to think that there is no use to try--*the sacrifice is too great*. So the Apostle encourages us to have *patience*; for all these trials, difficulties, etc., *rightly borne*, are developing *character*. The Lord wants true, loyal characters, *established in righteousness*, and these cannot be developed and demonstrated except by just such experiences...

Ours is not a race merely to the strong, and a victory to the swift. It is a race in which each one, according to the earnestness of his effort, will be rewarded. If one runs *with all his soul and strength* he will surely gain the Prize."

Poems Of Dawn 114 JUST FOR TODAY

LORD, for tomorrow and its needs I do not pray;
Keep me from any stain of sin just for today.
Let me both diligently work and duly pray;
Let me be kind in word and deed just for today.

Let me be slow to do my will, prompt to obey;
Help me to sacrifice myself just for today.
Let me no wrong nor idle word unthinking say;
Set Thou Thy seal upon my lips just for today.
So for tomorrow and its needs I do not pray,
But keep me, guide me, hold me, Lord, just for today.