

October 17

He shall cover thee with His feathers, and under His wings shalt thou trust. Psalm 91:4

SO close to His heart does Jehovah gather His loyal and faithful children that they feel the warmth of His love, and the

Psa 91:4,9 KJV "He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust: his truth *shall be thy* shield and buckler... (9) Because thou hast made the LORD, *which is my* refuge, *even* the most High, thy habitation;"

R5438 "We have seen alarm on the part of a mother-hen at the approach of danger, and

responsive language of their hearts is, "I will abide in Thy tabernacle"--under Thy protection-- "forever:" "I will trust in the covert of Thy wings; for Thou hast been a shelter for me and a strong tower from the enemy; for Thou hast heard my vows"-- my consecration--"Thou hast given me the her-

heard her cluck to her little ones. Then they would run to her, nestle under her wings, and seem perfectly satisfied and free from fear in their place of safety. Presently you would see the little heads or eyes peeping out; but the chicks felt perfectly secure.

And so with us. Our Heavenly Father's love and care and protection are His wings and His feathers, shielding us from all harm,

R3331 (From Harvest Truth Database V8.0 2013)

"UNDER HIS WINGS!"

"He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou find shelter."--Psa. 91:4.--Leeser.

IN the midst of the "perilous times" of this "evil day," and of the warning voices of prophets and apostles pointing out snares and pestilences and subtle dangers on every hand--and in the midst, too, of a realizing sense of the actual existence of such evil besetments and perils--how precious to the saints are the assurances of divine protection and care and personal love!

We call to mind the gracious promises of our Lord --"The Father himself loveth you;" "Fear not, little flock; it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the Kingdom;" and "He that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him and will manifest myself to him;...and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him and make our abode with him.... Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." --John 16:27; 14:21,23,27; Luke 12:32.

But warning voices and wholesome counsel are also necessary; and he is not wise who turns a deaf ear to them, and takes cognizance alone of the comforting assurances which are designed only for those who faithfully "watch and pray lest they enter into temptation." Every soldier of the cross needs to heed the Apostle's warnings--"Take unto you the whole armor of God, *that ye may be able to withstand* in the evil day, and having done all, to stand;" and again, "Let us *fear* lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it;" and fear also "lest, as the serpent [Satan] *beguiled* Eve, through his subtlety, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ;" "for *grievous wolves* shall enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things to draw away disciples after them." "Behold," said our Lord, "I send you forth as sheep *in the midst of wolves*: be ye therefore wise as serpents and harmless as doves."--Eph. 6:13; Heb. 4:1; 2 Cor. 11:3; Acts 20:29,30; Matt. 10:16.

It is necessary for the discipline, trial and final proving of the Church of God that they should be subjected to these adverse influences; for to him that *overcometh* them is the promise of the great reward. If we would reign with Christ, we must prove our worthiness to reign by the same tests of loyalty to God, of faith in his Word, of zeal for the Truth, of patient endurance of reproach and persecution, even unto death, and of unwavering trust in the power and purpose of God to deliver and exalt his Church in due time. To such faithful ones are the blessed consolations of Psa. 91. Harken--

Verse 1. "He who abideth in the secret place of the Most High [typified by the Most Holy or Sanctuary] shall rest under the shadow of the Almighty." We thus place ourselves under the divine protection when, having come to a knowledge of God's willingness to accept us as his children, we gratefully accept the invitation and approach in his appointed way, through Christ our Redeemer, and consecrate ourselves fully to his service. Such may sweetly rest in the precious promises of God, all of which are "yea and amen in Christ Jesus." (2 Cor. 1:20.) The world does not see the overshadowing wings of divine protection, but the faithful have a blessed secret realization of it. Praise the Lord!

Verse 2. "I [Christ Jesus, whom David here, as elsewhere, personifies, and who thus addresses his body, his Church] will say of Jehovah, who is my refuge and my stronghold, my God in whom I ever trust" (John 20:17)--

Verse 3. "That he will surely deliver thee from the snare of the fowler, [from the deceptions of Satan, in which all those not protected shall stumble; for our Lord said that so subtle and deceptive will they be that, if it were possible, they would deceive the very elect.

itage of those that fear Thy name."Psalm 61:4,3,5 --Z. '04-75 R3331:6

"I will sing of Thy power: yea, I will sing aloud of Thy mercy in the morning: for Thou hast been my defense and refuge in the day of my trouble."-- Psalm 59:16

keeping us warm and safe. He is able to make every experience in life work out for our good... We are not wise enough to know what is for our own best interests as New Creatures... We are, therefore, to flee to the Lord and accept whatever experiences may come, as those which will be best for us; and we are to seek to get the designed lessons of faith and obedience from them."

But this is not possible, for those who are making their calling and election sure abide under the protection of the Almighty] and from the pestilence of destruction." [Not from the destructive pestilences of physical disease, but from the moral and spiritual pestilences of destruction--from the sinful propensities of the old nature, which, in unguarded moments, are liable to assert their mastery and overwhelm the souls of those who are not *abiding* under the secret protection of the Most High; and from the spiritual pestilences of false doctrine which, with subtle sophistry, destroy the faith of the unwatchful. Such pestilences are already abroad in the shape of so-called Christian Science, Spiritualism and the various no-ransom theories which take the name of The Larger Hope, and which bid fair, both from present prospects and from the prophetic outlook, ere long to become epidemic. From all these pestilences the Lord's elect shall be protected, resting sweetly under the shadow of the Almighty.]

Verse 4. "He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou find shelter. [⁽¹⁾So close to his heart does Jehovah gather his loyal and faithful children that they feel the warmth of his love, and the responsive language of their hearts is, "I will abide in thy tabernacle"--under thy protection --"forever: I will trust in the covert of thy wings; for thou hast been a shelter for me and a strong tower from the enemy; for thou hast heard my vows"--my consecration--"thou hast given me the heritage of those that fear thy name."--Psa. 61:4,3,5] His truth shall be thy shield and buckler"--thy protection. Yes, his Truth--that grand system of truth comprised in the divine Plan of the Ages--is an ample shield and buckler to all who in simplicity of heart receive it and prove faithful to it. It is the armor of God which the Apostle urges all the faithful to put on--to appropriate, to meditate upon and to store up the Truth in mind and heart--that they may be able, by its use, to withstand error and evil in every form presented to them in this evil day.

Verse 5. "Thou shalt not be afraid of the terror of the night [the dark night of which the Prophet Isaiah and also the Lord spoke, saying, "The morning"--the Millennial morning--"cometh, and also the night"--the great time of trouble which shall immediately precede it, the night "wherein no man can labor" for the dissemination of divine truth: so great will be "the terror," the tumult and trouble and persecution of that night.--Isa. 21:12; John 9:4]; nor for the arrow ["even bitter words" of the opponents of the Truth--Psa. 64:3] that flieth by day" [at the present time, which, in comparison with the dark night that is coming, is called day].

Verse 6. "Nor for the pestilence [moral and spiritual] that walketh in darkness [that spreads and makes its victims among those who are ignorant of the Truth, or who are unfaithful to it and hence unworthy of it, and who therefore lack the divine protection and are subject to the "strong delusions" of error--2 Thes. 2:11]; nor for the destruction [caused by these pestilences] that wasteth at noon-day" [that subverts the faith and hope of many, just when the light of divine Truth is shining clearest upon the faithful, as it is shining upon us today.]

Verse 7. "A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand [so great will be the falling away from the Truth, even among those who, like ourselves, received it once with joy and who did for a time run well]; but it shall not come nigh thee." --Because of thy loyalty and uncompromising faithfulness and because of the ample armor of truth and righteousness, thou shalt stand and not fall.

(1) Oct. 17 Manna, Psa. 91:4

Verse 8. "Only with thine eyes shalt thou behold and see the recompense of the wrongdoers"-- who reject the Truth or who prove unfaithful to it.

Verses 9,10. "Because thou hast said, 'The Lord is my protection;' because the Most High thou hast made thy refuge, no evil shall befall thee" [no evils of the kind above referred to; and any other seeming evils shall, under divine providence, work together for your good--Rom. 8:28].

Verse 11. ⁽²⁾"For he shall give his angels [messengers] a charge concerning thee, to guard thee in all thy ways. [That is, God will raise up some faithful pastors and teachers who will "watch for your souls as they that must give an account." True, there shall arise false teachers, perverting the Word of the Lord and seeking by cunning sophistries to subvert your souls; but if in simplicity of heart God's children require a "Thus saith the Lord" for every element of their faith, and carefully prove all things by the Word, they will be able to distinguish readily the true from the false. And having done so, the Apostle Paul (Heb. 13:17) counsels us to have confidence. The Lord, our Shepherd, will care for the true sheep.]

Verse 12. "They shall bear thee [all the members of the body of Christ, individually and collectively] up in their hands [using their strength], lest thou dash thy foot against a stone"--any stumbling stone of false doctrine, and especially that great fundamental rock-doctrine of the redemption through the precious blood of Christ;--that "rock of offense and stone of stumbling" to both the houses of nominal Israel (fleshly and spiritual). (Isa. 8:14.) The "feet" of the

body are its last members; the saints now living are members of the "feet of him" (Christ), the ones who are now in danger of being stumbled, as the feet of the Jewish house of servants were in danger in the end or harvest of the Jewish age.

How do such messengers of the Lord bear up the feet of Christ? By helping them to a clear understanding of the Truth, and teaching and encouraging them by word and example how to be faithful to the Truth, and how to run so as to attain to the mark for the prize of our high calling.

Verse 13. "Thou shalt tread upon the lion and adder; the young lion and the dragon shalt thou trample under feet."--Thus borne up in the hands of the Lord's faithful messengers and guarded by their vigilant watchfulness, and under the constant protection of the Most High, God's trusting, faithful children shall triumph over every device of Satan either to overpower or beguile them--whether he boisterously goes about as a roaring lion, or whether, serpent-like, he stealthily lurks about to insert his venomous poison.

Verse 14. "Because he hath set his love upon me [saith Jehovah], therefore will I deliver him [from the pestilence, etc.]: I will set him on high [exalt him to joint-heirship with Christ, make him a member of the "Royal Priesthood," and a "partaker of the divine nature"], because he hath known [appreciated] my name."

Verses 15,16. "He shall call upon me and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him and honor him. With long life [eternal life--John 10:28,29; Rom. 2:1] will I satisfy him, and show him my salvation"--make him understand my plan.

Praise the Lord for such assurances of his loving care! "Bless the Lord, O my soul; and all that is within me, bless his holy name!"

⁽²⁾ Nov. 17 Manna, Psa. 91:11

R4925 (From Harvest Truth Database V8.0 2013)

"THE FEET OF HIM"

IT IS NECESSARY for the discipline, trial and final proving of the Church of God that they should be subjected to adverse influence; for "to him that *overcometh*" is the promise of the great reward. If we would *reign* with Christ, we must prove our worthiness to reign, by the *same tests of loyalty to God, of faith in His Word, of zeal for the Truth, of patient endurance, of reproach and persecution, even unto death, and in the unwavering trust in the power and purpose of God to deliver and exalt His Church in due time.* To such faithful ones are the blessed consolations of Psalm 91, which we believe is a picture of the Church in the end of this Gospel Age--a picture of The Christ. Hearken: "*He who dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High* [typified by the Holy of the Tabernacle] *shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.*" We thus place ourselves under the Divine protection when, having come to a knowledge of God's willingness to accept us as His children, we gratefully accept the invitation and approach in His appointed way, through Christ our Redeemer, and consecrate ourselves fully to His service. Such may sweetly rest in the precious promises of God, all of which are yea and amen in Christ Jesus. (2 Cor. 1:20.) The world does not see the overshadowing wings of Divine protection, but the faithful have a blessed secret realization of it. Praise the Lord!

"I [Christ Jesus, whom David here, as elsewhere, personifies, and who thus addresses His Body, His Church] *will say of Jehovah, He is My refuge and My fortress, My God; in Him will I trust, that He will surely deliver thee from the snare of the Fowler and from the noisome pestilence*"--from the deceptions of Satan, into which all those not protected shall stumble; for our Lord said that so subtle and deceptive will they be that, if it were possible, they would deceive "the very elect." But this is not possible; for those who are making their calling and election sure abide under the protection of the Almighty. Such shall be delivered, not from the destructive pestilence of physical disease, but from the moral and spiritual pestilences of destruction--from the sinful propensities of the old nature, which in unguarded moments are liable to assert their mastery and overwhelm the souls of those who are not abiding under the secret protection of the Most High; and from the spiritual pestilences of false doctrine which, with subtle sophistry, destroy the faith of the unwatchful.

Such pestilences are already abroad in the world in the shape of so-called Christian Science, Spiritism and the various no-ransom theories which take the name of "The Larger Hope," and which bid fair, both from present prospects and from the prophetic outlook, ere long to become epidemic. From all these pestilences the Lord's elect shall be protected, resting safely and sweetly under the shadow of the Almighty. "*He shall cover thee with His feathers, and under His wings shalt thou trust; His Truth shall be thy shield and buckler.*" So close to His heart does Jehovah gather His loyal and faithful children that they feel the warmth of His love; and the responsive language of their hearts is, "I will abide in Thy tabernacle forever; I

will trust in the covert of Thy wings; for Thou hast been a shelter for me and a strong Tower from the enemy; for Thou hast heard my vows; Thou hast given me the heritage of those that fear Thy name." (Psa. 61:4,3,5.) Yes, His Truth--that grand system of Truth comprised in the Divine Plan of the Ages--is an ample shield and buckler to all who in simplicity of heart receive it and prove faithful to it. It is *the armor of God*, which the Apostle urges all the faithful to put on--to appropriate, to meditate upon and to store up Truth in mind and heart--that they may be able by its use to withstand error and evil in every form presented to them in this evil day.

JEHOVAH SHALL KEEP THE FEET OF HIS SAINTS

"*Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night; nor for the arrow that flieth by day; nor for the pestilence that walketh in darkness; nor for the destruction that waste that noonday.*" This is the "night," the dark night of which the Prophet Isaiah spoke and to which our Lord also referred, "The morning cometh, and also the night"; "The night cometh when no man can work." (Isa. 21:12; John 9:4.) The Millennial morning comes, and just as surely the great time of trouble will immediately precede it--the night wherein no man can labor for the dissemination of Divine Truth; so great will be the "terror," the tumult and trouble and persecution of that night; the arrows-- "even bitter words" of the opponents of the Truth--will fly by day--at the present time, which in comparison with the dark night that is coming, is called day. The various besetments and difficulties from infidelity, Higher Criticism and other false doctrines are pictorially represented as the shooting out of arrows, as pestilences, as stumbling stones. None of these are to injure the "elect," of which Christ is the Head and the Church His Members, as specially indicated in this Psalm. The Church shall be immune, and nothing shall in any way hurt them. As the Lord said, the difficulties of this day would, if possible, deceive the very elect; but this will not be possible, for "the feet" class shall be *kept*. No; the Church need have no fear of the moral and spiritual pestilences that walk in darkness, spreading and making their victims amongst those who are ignorant of the Truth, or who are unfaithful to it and are, hence, unworthy of it, and who, therefore, lack the Divine protection and are subject to the "strong delusions" of error that subvert the faith and hope of many, just when the light of Divine Truth is shining clearest upon the faithful, as it is shining upon us today. "*A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand; but it shall not come nigh thee.*" Great will be the falling away from the Truth, even amongst those who, like ourselves, received it once with joy and who did for a time run well; but the Church, because of their loyalty and uncompromising faithfulness and because of the ample armor of Truth and righteousness, shall stand and not fall.

We are not to think of those who will be injured and who will fall ("A thousand at thy side and ten thousand at thy right hand") as of the world, but rather as being *friends of the Church; closely associated with the Church.* The world could not fall from Divine favor,

for it has not been in Divine favor. The whole "world lieth in the Wicked One," and, therefore, could not be overthrown. This verse seems to apply to those who were actually begotten of the Holy Spirit or who have assumed a position such as those begotten of the Holy Spirit; as, for instance, the tares which affect to be wheat. They never were wheat, and will not be garnered with the wheat class. Time will show that they are not of this class. So in this picture we see the fall of these in general and of the consecrated in particular. There is a distinction between the *thousand* falling at the *side* and the *ten thousand* at the *right hand*. We might infer that the one thousand may fall into total unbelief, and the ten thousand, the "great company," into the great time of trouble to wash their robes white and to purify themselves. They will be partakers with Babylon in her sins and have part in her great fall.--Rev. 14:18; 18:10.

None too extravagant is the prophetic declaration, "A thousand shall fall at thy side." Only the sanctified in Christ Jesus, copies of God's dear Son, will be able to stand complete in Him. These will be the very elect, and it will not be possible for them to be deceived and ensnared; for God will give His messengers a charge [message] for them ["present Truth"] and thus these "feet" of the Body of Christ shall be upheld that they stumble not. "*Only with thine eyes shalt thou behold and see the reward of the wicked,*" who reject the Truth or prove unfaithful to it. We know that we are already passing through the beginning of these troubles (the troubles upon the nominal church incident to its testing), and that we are escaping, while many on every hand are falling into error and infidelity. We escape, not by being taken away from the scene of trouble, but by being supported, strengthened and kept in the very midst of it all by the Word of the Lord, our shield and buckler.

"NO EVIL SHALL BEFALL THEE"

"Because thou hast made the Lord, which is my refuge, even the Most High, thy habitation; there shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling" --no evil of the kind referred to; and any other *seeming* evils shall, under Divine providence, work together for your good.--Rom. 8:28.

God has so arranged that only the truly consecrated will be kept from stumbling into error in this evil day. Every day we learn to appreciate more and more the Divine favor which has anointed the eyes of our understanding, and permitted us to see the internal strength and beauty of the Divine Word and Plan. If, then, we are thus, by Divine favor, made strong in the Lord, and enabled to "stand fast" while thousands are falling from their faith and steadfastness, let us "rejoice with fear" (reverence). Let him who feels strong and well supported "be not high-minded," but "take heed lest he fall." Humility and zeal for the Lord are the terms upon which we received the great blessing, and are also the terms upon which we may retain it to the end--until our "change" comes and establishes in glory what grace began in our weakness. "*For He shall give His angels charge concerning thee, to keep thee in all thy ways.*" That is, God will raise up some faithful pastors and teachers who will "watch for your souls as they that must give account." True, there shall arise false teachers, perverting the Word of the Lord, and seeking by cunning sophistries to subvert your souls; but if in simplicity of heart the Lord's children require a "Thus saith the Lord" for every element of their faith, and carefully prove all things by the Word, they will be able readily to distinguish the true from the false. And having done so, the Apostle Paul (Heb. 10:35) counsels us to have confidence. The Lord, our Shepherd, will care for the true sheep.

The Apostle Paul assures us that the angels of God are ministering spirits sent forth to minister unto and serve those who shall be heirs of salvation, the saved ones of this Gospel Age--not only the overcomers of the "little flock," but also the overcomers of the "great multitude." Our Lord Jesus sets forth practically the same thought in His declaration, "Their angels do always behold [have access to] the face of My Father." (Matt. 18:10.) The Master's words seem to imply, at least, that one or more angels have charge over the consecrated ones, the "very elect." Nothing can by any means, therefore, harm these, except as the Heavenly Father sees that the earthly injury or disadvantage would prove profitable either to the individual New Creature or to the Lord's general cause. This is in full accord with His general assurance that all things shall work together for good to those that love Him. --Rom. 8:28.

Such a use of the heavenly messengers by no means invalidates the thought that the Lord's earthly children are frequently used of Him as ministers, servants, the one to the other. Indeed, we may be assured that the invisible messengers or servants, generally, if not always, are required to act through human instrumentalities--preferably through "the very elect." Of this kind of service done by the brethren, one for the other, we have illustrations in the Harvest work, for instance--supervised by our present Lord and His heavenly hosts, yet in the main carried on by the members of His Body still in

the flesh.

THE HARVEST MESSAGE GOD'S KEEPING POWER

"They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone"--"thee"--all the members of the Body of Christ, individually and collectively, using all their strength to protect against any stumbling-stone of false doctrine, and especially that great fundamental Rock-Doctrine of the redemption through the precious blood of Christ; that "Rock of offense and stone of stumbling" to both the houses of nominal Israel. (Isa. 8:14.) "The feet" of the Body are its last members; the saints now living are members of "the feet of Him" (Christ), the ones who are now in danger of being stumbled, as the feet of the Jewish house of servants were in danger in the end, or harvest, of the Jewish Age.

How do such messengers *bear up the feet of Christ*? By helping them to a clear understanding of the Truth, and teaching and encouraging them by word and example how to be faithful to the Truth, and how to run so as to obtain the prize of our high-calling.

While doubtless the heavenly messengers are connected with this work, yet it is surely done through the Church in the flesh, as already intimated. The Lord in this present Harvest time has given His messengers, the leaders of His consecrated people, a "charge," a message, a word of warning, counsel, advice--an opening of the Word of Truth, an enlightening of their understanding-- that they should bear up all the members of "the feet" class, all of "the very elect" in this time of serious trial, testing and stumbling, lest at any time any of this class should stumble through the peculiar trials of the present time. How manifestly this is fulfilled! The Harvest message in its various features, bearing on every phase of Truth now due, and every phase of error now brought forward, is God's keeping power by which, according to His guarantee, we know that nothing shall by any means hurt "the feet" members of the Body of Christ.

It is for us to rejoice in these blessings and favors of the Lord and to increase our faith; and we remember that even before the "House of Sons" was organized the Lord had power and exercised it in the "House of Servants" in a way that illustrates to us the abundance of that power.

Satan would like to have us walk by sight, not by faith; he would like to have us continually tempting God, and demanding some ocular demonstration of His favor and protection, instead of accepting the testimony of His Word, and relying thereupon implicitly, in faith. In the light of the unfolding of the Scriptures we see that Satan, probably unwittingly, quoted this passage of Scripture wholly out of its proper meaning and interpretation, a passage which referred, not to the literal feet of Jesus and to literal stones and to literal angels, but to the symbolic feet-members of the Body of Christ today, and to the stones of stumbling, doctrinal and otherwise, which are now permitted in the path of the faithful, and to the angels, or ministers, of Divine Truth, who in the present Harvest time would be commissioned to bear up "the feet" members with such counsels, admonitions and expositions of Scripture as would be necessary for them. "*Thou shalt tread upon the lion and adder; the young lion and the dragon thou shalt trample under feet.*" Thus borne up in the hands of the Lord's faithful messengers and guarded by their vigilant watchfulness, and under the constant protection of the Most High, God's trusting, faithful children shall triumph over every device of Satan either to overpower or to beguile them--whether he goes about like a roaring lion, or whether, serpent-like, he stealthily lurks about to insert his venomous poison. "*Because he hath set his love upon Me, therefore will I deliver him; I will set him on high, because he hath known [appreciated] My name.*" On account of the love and loyalty of each individual composing "the feet" class, the heavenly Father will deliver him from the pestilences, etc., and will exalt him to joint-heirship with Christ, make him a member of the "Royal Priesthood" and a partaker of the divine nature. "*He shall call upon Me and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him and honor him. With long life will I satisfy him, and show him My salvation*" --He will make him understand His Plan. As individuals they are known unto the Lord, who judges not merely by the sight of the eye and the hearing of the ear, but who discerns and judges the thoughts and intents of the heart. And, however widely they may be scattered, whether standing alone as "wheat" in the midst of tares, or in company with others, God's eye is always upon them. Dwelling in the secret place of the Most High (sanctified, wholly set apart unto God), they shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty, while the judgments of the Lord are experienced by the great religious systems that bear His name in unfaithfulness. They have no share in the judgment of Great Babylon, but are previously enlightened and called out of her.

Praise the Lord for such assurances of His loving care! "*Bless the Lord, O my soul; and all that is within me, praise His holy name!*"

FURTHER SCRIPTURES SHOWING
THE NEED OF THE TRUTH NOW
"OUR SHIELD & BUCKLER" PSA 91:4

R4728 "PERILOUS TIMES AT HAND...
"This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come."--2 Tim. 3:1...

Brethren who have erred from the Truth and become teachers of false doctrine, will come the Church's greatest peril in these last times. (2 Tim. 2:16-18; 3:5.) And in order that we might recognize and beware of them, he very minutely described them, though the clear significance of the warning is somewhat beclouded by a faulty translation...

"For men shall be lovers of their own selves (selfish), covetous, boasters, proud, evil-speakers, not of the same mind as were their forefathers (i.e., devisers of new doctrines), unthankful, unkind, irreconcilable, false accusers, without self-control, not mild, not friendly to those that are good--traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God (i.e., preferring their own will or pleasure to the will or pleasure of God); having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof; ever learning, and never able to come to a knowledge of the truth."

"MEN OF YOUR OWN SELVES
SHALL ARISE SPEAKING
PERVERSE THINGS"

It should be observed also that the word *men*, in *verse 2*, is emphatic in the Greek text, as shown in the *Emphatic Diaglott*, thus indicating that a particular class of men is here referred to, which, according to the description, can be none other than those mentioned in Acts 20:29,30, viz., men "of your own selves (men of your own company, men whom you have hitherto regarded as members of the Body of Christ, and who still claim to be such), who shall arise speaking perverse things (perverting the Truth.

But why, you ask, should any one who had once received the Truth desire to pervert it? The Apostle answers that their object is to draw away disciples after them." And for this purpose, of leading away disciples after them, they keep up the form of godliness, although they deny its power--the only power by means of which any of the fallen race can be reckoned godly or righteous in God's sight, viz., the power of the precious blood of Christ, which cleanseth us from all sin, as long as we appreciate and accept this salvation through faith in his blood.

Well may we inquire, as we realize that we are living in the last days here referred to, Is there such a class of enemies to the Truth and to the Church actually in existence today? Truly, the voice of prophecy has never set up a false alarm, or foretold an uncertain event. The perilous times have come and the foretold perils are all about us. Side by side in the same communities with the humble, faithful, consecrated saints--in the same little assemblings together of those who have escaped from the bondage of Babylon, in the same households, and often at the same table of the Lord, there has also been developing a class who are "lovers of their own selves (selfish), covetous (of honors and distinction and the praise of men--ambitious), boasters (as though the credit of the Truth now due and received were in some way due to them, and as though they

had a right therefore to alter and amend it at their pleasure), proud" (of that knowledge which should be received with only humility and thankfulness, and which can be retained only under these conditions).

Because the light of the newly unfolding Truth has dawned upon their pathway, they, in common with the faithful saints, no longer are of the same mind as were their parents; but the goodness of God thus manifested to them, instead of cultivating in them a spirit of thankfulness and co-operation, which is its design, seems to arouse a spirit of pride and ambition, which does not long hesitate to make merchandise of the Truth for ambitious ends, however trivial and foolish those ends may be. And in pursuance of the ambitious policy, by degrees they become "evil-speakers (against the doctrine of Christ and those who believe and teach it), unkind, unfriendly to those that are good (who hold fast the Truth in righteousness), and false accusers" (of such). As they proceed in this way they seem to lose all former strength of Christian character. They become irreconcilable to the Truth, so that neither Scripture, nor reason, nor the example of the faithful, has power to restore them. Loving their own wills more than the will of God, they grow more and more proud and boastful of their attainments-- high-minded and heady. Not submitting themselves to the Head of the Body, Christ Jesus, they are ambitious to head new factions themselves, and thus they turn traitors to the Truth.

They claim, too, to be very earnest students of the Word of God; and so they are, but they never come to a knowledge of the Truth. They are after something new, some new and peculiar "find" in the mine of God that will attract the wondering gaze of many curious disciples. But, alas for their purposes! There are no such real curiosities in the blessed Word of God; but the zeal of these ambitious ones is equal to the emergency, and one after another the actual truths are beclouded, distorted and perverted to this ignoble end and presented as newly-found truths. And the unwary receive them as such, not recognizing at first that they are subversive of the entire system of Divine Truth. Thus their faith in the truths already learned is unwittingly undermined; they are caught in the snare of the Enemy; and as they continue to give ear to these seductive influences they become more and more entangled, until, having lost their anchorage, they find themselves adrift on a vast sea of unbelief, floating they know not whither. Like their leaders, they may retain the form of godliness, but have lost its power.

THEIR POLICIES SHALL BE
VERY SEDUCTIVE

But there is another feature of the description of these false teachers, whose ambitions place so many perils in the pathway of the saints, which should not be overlooked. *Verses 6 and 8* describe, or rather illustrate, the *manner* in which the influence of such teachers will be brought to bear upon the Church. Their opposition is not expressed in bold, defiant terms, and emphasized and enforced with vehemency. As here intimated, their policy is crafty, deceitful, sly, under pretensions of godliness, love of truth and zeal for the truth. Their influence will be exerted somewhat after the *manner* of a vile class mentioned in *verse 6*, who "creep into houses and lead captive

silly women, laden with sin, and led away by various inordinate desires." Not that such will be the actual immoral character of these teachers, but that their policy will be similarly seductive.

Their actual course is more particularly described in *verse 8* thus: "Now as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the Truth--men of corrupt minds (corrupted or turned aside from the Truth), reprobate concerning the faith." Thus we are shown that the opposition to the Truth will be manifested in a subtle, deceptive course similar to that of those opposers of Moses. They opposed Moses by doing something similar to what he did, thus confusing the people. God had given Moses power to do certain miracles in order to prove to Israel that Moses was his Divinely empowered agent. And Satan forthwith empowered his agents to duplicate those miracles, which they did to some extent, not perfectly, thus endeavoring to confuse the minds of the people and to unsettle their confidence in Moses and his leading and teaching.

Just so it is today. The studied effort of false teachers--false brethren developing in the very midst of the Church--is to offset the Truth by plausible forms of error, to unsettle confidence both in the Truth and in all teachers of the Truth, thus to lead away disciples after them and their theories. And in consequence of the allurements of these false teachers, and of the unfaithfulness of many to the love and service of the Truth which they have received, a class in the midst of the Church will give much encouragement to the ambitions of these false brethren; "for," says the Apostle (2 Tim. 4:3,4), "the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but after their own desires (desires for something new) shall they gather to themselves teachers, having itching ears (for new and strange things); and they shall turn away their ears from the Truth, and shall be turned unto fables."

...Such "evil men," says Paul (V. 13), "shall wax worse and worse (more and more bold and aggressive, as they receive encouragement from that rapidly increasing class who will no longer endure sound doctrine), deceiving (others) and being deceived" (themselves--becoming more firmly entrenched in the snares of their own weaving, so as to make it impossible to extricate them). But, nevertheless, the time is coming when they shall proceed no further; for their folly shall be manifested unto all men, as was the folly of Jannes and Jambres, who could not forever withstand the teachings of Moses, the servant of God.--V. 9...

But, beloved, our advice to you in these perilous times, when error is taking on its most baneful and deceitful forms, and when it is finding its most active agents amongst false brethren and sisters in your very midst, and when fidelity to truth, therefore, occasions the severing of some of the tenderest social ties you have ever known, even among those with whom you once held sweet converse as you walked together to the house of God--yes, in these times let us again urge the counsel of Paul--"Continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them;" for it is written (John 6:45), "They shall be all taught of God."