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Foreordination, Predestination and Election

"We know all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose." For whom he did foreknow he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son; that he might be the first-born among many brethren."—Rom. 8:28, 29.

Coming to the land of that sturdy man of God, John Knox, I am reminded of his able contention for the doctrine of Election—its Scripturalness and its demonstration of the greatness, majesty and sovereignty of the Lord our God. We surmise, however, that the good man's heart must frequently have been sorely distressed with the logic of his own argument; that the eternal woe of nine-tenths of our race was as unalterably fixed in advance of their birth as was the eternal joy of the blessed handful predestinated to be saints and to share the heavenly glories. We may well thank God, dear friends, that in the clearer light now shining upon the Scriptures we may discern the errors handed down to us from the dark ages, without losing our appreciation of Divine foreknowledge and Divine sovereignty.

While it is true that it would be difficult to estimate the value of the doctrine of Divine foreknowledge taught by Brother Knox, not only in this nation, but also throughout the world, inculcating a reverence for the Almighty, it is also true that it would be difficult to estimate the amount of damage which has resulted to Christendom and throughout the world from his teachings respecting the Divine treatment of the non-elect. This serious error has alienated the hearts of thousands from God and from his Book. Let us look together at the doctrines of Election, Predestination and Foreordination, from the Scriptural standpoint, that we may note their beauties and be drawn the nearer to the Lord and to his Book in true reverence and worship.

Foreknown and Predestinated.

Our text declares that whom God did foreknow them he also did predestinate; but we notice that the predestination is stated only as respects the Church and not in respect to others. This fact does not escape the attention of others, but they have reasoned erroneously,—that if God foreknew an elect Church, for whom he predestinated special blessings and honors, this would imply that the remainder of mankind non-elect were to be tortured eternally. The logic of this position is unsound and it is quite unscriptural to say, that all of the non-elect will be consigned to an eternity of torture at the hands of fire-proof demons in fulfillment of a Divine predestination fixed before creation. There is no Scripture whatever to this effect, and Brother Knox and others were in error to the extent that they wove into their theories matters not Scripturally stated.

According to the Scriptures, as well as according to human judgment as expressed in the laws of civilization, the highest, the severest penalty to be enforced, is the death penalty, the taking away of the life not used in harmony with the Creator's reasonable, righteous requirements. This is the Scriptural declaration to which, for so long a time, we were blind: "The wages of sin is death;" "The soul that sinneth, it shall

die;" "All the wicked will he destroy;" "They shall perish as brute beasts;" "They shall be destroyed with an everlasting destruction" (the Second Death).—Romans vi, 23; Ezekiel xviii, 4; Psalm cxlv, 20; II Peter ii, 12; II Thessalonians i, 9.

Thus seen the very severest results possible to non-election would be extinction—the Second Death. But the Scriptures clearly show that God has gracious purposes, not for the "elect" only, but also for the non-elect, and that in his due time the non-elect shall be brought to a clearer knowledge of the Truth and to a full opportunity of harmony with their Creator and through Christ Jesus the re-attainment of all that was lost in Adam, all that was redeemed by the precious sacrifice of Christ. Thus, as the Scriptures declare, there is a "common salvation" (Jude 3) in which all of Adam's children shall be privileged to have a share. There is also a special salvation, a "high calling" of God in Christ, which is referred to as "so great salvation which began to be (preached) spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him." (Heb. ii, 3.) This special or great salvation is the one which our Lord has provided for the "Elect," while the "common salvation" is his provision for the non-elect.

Does it not seem strange that Brother Knox and others, his coadjutors, in getting away from much of the smoke of the "dark ages," failed to even think of a salvation of the non-elect as a part of God's providence? Their eyes, beholding the awful and blighting errors respecting eternal torment, totally blinded them to God's provisions for the non-elect; for they reasoned that if God had predestinated them to eternal torment and had in advance of their creation prepared a great place of torture and fire-proof devils and fuel enough for eternity, then surely he could have no plan of salvation for them. The entire premise was wrong. The death into which they went was not eternal torment but the tomb, as represented by the Hebrew word *Sheol* and the Greek word *Hades*. And they can have no release from the tomb, no return to consciousness or pain or pleasure until the Second Coming of the Redeemer in the morning of the Resurrection.

Thank God, then, for the rolling away of the mists of darkness and error which permits us to see in the Bible that the "common salvation," God's provision for the world, will be a Restitution, a restoration to human perfection in the rejuvenated earth, a world-wide Paradise! Thank God for the promises to the effect that then "the knowledge of the glory of God shall fill the whole earth as the waters cover the great deep" and that "the Sun of Righteousness shall arise with healing in his beams;" that "nothing shall hurt or destroy or injure in all God's holy Kingdom;" that "the way-faring man, though simple, need not err therein," and that a broad high-

way shall be there as a way of salvation—a much traveled way—and that all the redeemed of the Lord shall be privileged to go up thereon out of sin and death conditions to conditions of life everlasting. We thank God, too, that those who shall refuse to make proper progress and shall fall of that "common salvation" because of willful sin will not be permitted to live endlessly in sin, nor in torment, but will be utterly destroyed in the Second Death; because God is able to destroy both soul and body in Gehenna, the Second Death. We thank God also that the elect Church, under Christ, the Captain of their salvation, are promised a share in that glorious work of the Redeemer, in blessing all the families of the earth in bringing to them that common (general) salvation.

Your High Calling.

If once we dreaded to think of God's grace toward us in accepting us as members of his elect Church, because of the opposing thought of the damnation of the nonelect, we may now correspondingly rejoice the more in our privilege of election, seeing that it means our privilege of sharing in the world's uplift under the direction of Emmanuel, our Lord, during his Millennial reign. The Apostle speaks of the prospect of the elect as "our High Calling;" and again, "our heavenly calling." The thought is that we are called to a very high honor and wonderful distinction and that on a heavenly plane. The Gospel Church is invited to experience a change of nature from human to divine, from the highest of the earthly natures to the highest of the heavenly natures—far above angels and principalities and powers and every name that is named—"joint heirs with Christ," "partakers of the Divine nature," members of "the Bride, the Lamb's wife."

Truly do the Scriptures tell that not many would be able to hear, to appreciate, to understand, to accept this high calling. The Divine arrangement of the call is elective, selective. It appeals to some and does not appeal to others. It has an attraction for some and not for others.

If we had here a box of sawdust and scattered through it a paper of tacks until the latter were quite hidden from view, surrounded and covered in the sawdust, we know that we could take a magnet and, by passing it to and fro amongst the sawdust, the magnet would attract to itself every tack. It might indeed exercise a still further attraction upon some of the sawdust, but the hold would be so slight that we could blow it off, while the tacks would be firmly held by reason of their responsiveness to the magnetic influence. The box of sawdust represents the world of mankind. The tacks of humanity, zealous at heart for God and for righteousness. The magnet represents the Gospel invitation which is now passed up and down, hither and thither throughout the civilized world, and to some extent, into the heathen world.

It is not the design of the Lord to elect, select, choose, gather all mankind (the sawdust) by the magnet; merely he would now gather the true-hearted, represented by the specks of steel, the tacks. The illustration might be enlarged by supposing some other tacks of other metallic composition not so subject to the magnetic influence as the steel. The illustration of these would represent mixed characters such

as we see about us in the world everywhere. The illustration might be extended to include good tacks covered with dirt or other foreign substance which would hinder them from responding to the influence of the magnet and this would represent true characters encrusted with the cares of this life, the deceitfulness of riches, etc.

"Elect according to the foreknowledge of God through sanctification of the spirit and the belief of the Truth," writes the Apostle. God designed the election of this Age. He desired to separate to himself a peculiar people, to be the associates of Jesus, their Redeemer, in his subsequent work of uplifting the willing and obedient of the world of mankind. But God has not predestinated nor desired the election of any except a sanctified class, a class not sanctified through stripes, not through force or compulsion, but sanctified through a knowledge of the Truth. Such are drawn to God in devotion through a knowledge of his glorious purposes and heart sympathy therein, sufficient to induce them to sacrifice their all, so far as earthly matters and interests are concerned. These are the elect, whom the Lord has been searching for and testing with the magnet of his Truth, and the manner of their response to it throughout this Gospel Age determines whether "They shall be mine, saith the Lord, in that day when I come to make up my jewels."

"Whom He Did Foreknow."

It is not for us to quibble respecting the Divine power of foreknowledge—to question the ability of our Creator, to have foreknown, had he chosen to do so, and foretold every member of the elect class. The Divine is so far above the human that it is impossible for the human mind to measure the infinite or to comprehend his power. We must merely accept the Divine statement. However, nothing in the Word of God tells us that we were foreknown individually—personally. Rather the intimation is that God predestinated the election of a Church, predetermined the number of persons who would be accepted as members of that Church, the Body of Christ, predetermined what characters they must have and what tests of character would be necessary to demonstrate their loyalty and to prove the individual worthy a place in the fore-ordained class.

It is in full harmony with this that we read that many are called to the few who will be chosen, and that again we are exhorted to "make our calling and our election sure." We are assured that "Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it"—do all that he has promised—keep his part of the contract. This being so, all of the called ones have the determining of results in their own cases. God is faithful. If they are faithful at heart to the terms and conditions of their Covenant they will be of the elect—otherwise not.

"He Also Did Predestinate."

We come now to the particular clause of our text which has seemed to fortify the error. "Them he also did predestinate." Ah, say many, that fixes it! There is no option, nothing dependent upon it. God predestinate everything. Not so, we answer. In the past we have been prone to read our text disconnectedly and thus doing we have overlooked its clear teaching. We thought of it as though it read, "God predestinated the elect," but not

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"The Desire of All Nations"

Text:—"The earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord,
as the waters cover the sea."—Isa. 2:9

so. The declaration is that God predestinated that all that would be of the elect class must be copies of his Son. The predestination of this verse relates not to individuals, but to a certain character which all of the elect individuals must attain to—otherwise they will not be of the elect.

How beautifully simple and plain this makes it all! Nor would we ask the matter otherwise. "Just and true are thy ways, Lord God Almighty!" The great honor, the high distinction which God proposes to confer upon the "very elect" in the First Resurrection at the Second Coming of Christ is so grand that the very highest possible test of character is appropriate to those who would be granted such honors and immortality. Our Lord Jesus said to his disciples, Sit down first and count the cost of discipleship and if you determine that it is worth the price, come, "take up your cross and follow me." As a reward I promise you that "where I am there shall my disciple be." "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne."

Those who attain the character likeness of Christ Jesus will have the character likeness of the Father, of whom the Son is the express image and character likeness. Hence the appropriateness of our Lord's words, "Be ye like unto your Father which is in heaven."

All Things Work Good.

So direct an application as we are making of these words may appall some of the Lord's people who have been thinking carelessly that if they were once in grace they would always be in grace—if once elect they would never fail. I desire to awaken such to a realization of the heights of our calling and of the necessity of our obedience to the terms of the calling, if we would make our calling and our election sure—certain. However, it is well to remark here that the perfection to which the called ones are exhorted is not a perfection of the flesh, which would be an impossibility because of its natural blemishes, its hereditary taints and weaknesses. It is the heart, the will, that the Lord is inspecting, proving, and not the flesh. "Blessed are the pure in heart," said our Saviour. And we may be sure that the pure in heart, the pure in intention and endeavor, will make considerable progress in overcoming the weaknesses of the flesh. The Lord will expect them to prove their faith and their loyalty by such good works as are possible to them in their weakness and under their environments.

It is to this class that our text refers, assuring us that "all things work together for good to them that love God, to the called ones according to his purpose." So we should expect. These called and chosen, begotten of the holy Spirit, are "children of God, and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ their Lord" (Romans viii, 16, 17). Could we expect less than that their Heavenly Father would watch over their every interest, temporal and spiritual?

Thy Kingdom Come

Yes! a brighter morn is breaking,
Better days are coming on;
All the world will be awaking
In the new and Golden Dawn.
In the day of coming Glory,
Men will show fraternal hand;
Each will tell to each the Story,
Till it spreads to every land.
From the earth's remotest stations,
Men will come to hear the Word;
And, in all the world, the nations
Shall be nations of the Lord.

Assuredly our text has never yet had a fulfillment, but just as surely it shall be fulfilled, for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it; yea, more, hath declared that ultimately "every knee shall bow and every tongue confess" Messiah, to the glory of God the Father. Some time ago in our Sunday-School hymnals a very popular melody was entitled "SHOWERS OF BLESSINGS" and prayed, "Let some droppings fall upon me." This truly expresses the Christian's experience in the present time. The Lord permits his people to have sunshine, cloud and showers for their refreshment, for their development. Nevertheless the showers of refreshing never seem to come with sufficient frequency, and we continually rejoice in the hope that "still there's more to follow." What a contrast, therefore, is suggested by the words of our text—a downpour of truth and grace which will produce a flood of righteousness and knowledge of the Lord world-wide and ocean-deep!

When will this be, and how will it come to pass, are the incredulous inquiries. It seems too good to be true that, after a reign of sin and death lasting for six thousand years, so wonderful a change is to be brought about! It seems too great a miracle to be expected that, after the struggle of Truth with Error, of Righteousness with Sin for long centuries, the time should ever come when Righteousness and the knowledge of God should obtain so complete a victory, so thorough a mastery of the world! When we consider the united energies of Christendom during the last century to spread the knowledge of the Lord amongst the heathen and the results during the last century in spreading the knowledge of the Lord throughout heathendom, the Scriptural statement seems incredible. When we reflect that a century ago there were six hundred millions of heathen and that now there are twelve hundred millions, we ask ourselves by what miracle it could ever come to pass that the knowledge of the Lord should ever cover the whole earth as the waters cover the mighty deep.

"Thy Kingdom Come."

The Scriptures answer our query and explain the entire situation. They tell us that the world's conversion comes not by might nor by power of man, but "By my spirit, saith the Lord." The Bible tells us that during this Gospel Age God has poured out his holy Spirit upon his servants and upon his handmaids and upon these alone; but they tell us also that with the end of this Age and the dawning of the new dispensation the Lord will pour out his spirit upon all flesh. "After those days, saith the Lord, I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh."

But what will be the cause of this change in the Divine program, which the Almighty has foreknown from of old and foretold through the prophets?

Evidently it is not a change of the Divine purpose or intent, but merely a change in the Divine operation, for "Known unto the Lord are all his works, from the foundation of the world." A lesson we all need to learn is that as, in human operations, time and order are observed, so likewise these are elements in the Divine arrangement. In the construction a foundation is the first requisite, and the roof or capstone and the finishing touches mark the completion of the edifice. So in the Divine arrangement various ages mark various degrees of development in the Divine purpose and not until the finishing touches shall have been given will the glories of the architect and builder of creation's wonderful temple be manifested. We are at present in the formative pe-

riod. God has begun the great work of which he prophesied of old. Messiah has come, has died for the sins of men, has arisen from the dead and been highly exalted; the Church, spiritual Israel, gathered from natural Israel and from all the families of the earth, a "little flock," has been in process of selection for nearly nineteen centuries. Soon it will be completed—the predestinated number possessing the foreordained quality of character, "copies of God's dear Son," will have been found and tested and developed and polished and fitted and prepared for the glorious position to which they have been called as Messiah's Bride and joint-heir in his Kingdom. Then the King and Queen of the Millennial Kingdom, being in readiness for their work, a great change in the Divine program of earth will take place.

Satan Shall Be Bound.

The Scriptures most distinctly teach that we are under the reign of the "Prince of this world," Satan, and that our Lord at his Second Coming in power and great glory will bind or restrain this strong one and overthrow his empire, which is not of Divine authorization, but built upon human weaknesses, ignorance and superstition. We are distinctly told that Satan shall be bound for that thousand years (the Millennium) that he may deceive the people no more until the thousand years shall be finished.

The question naturally arises, Why did God with all power at his command so long permit Satan to deceive humanity and through their superstitions and ignorance rule them as their Prince? Why was he ever given liberty or power at all over humanity? In the light of the Scriptures we may see that as God at times has used the wrath of man to praise him, so during this period of Satan's liberty he has not been permitted to frustrate the Divine Plan or intention but, unconsciously, has co-operated with it and served it. Without his blinding influence the Jewish rulers would not have crucified our Lord, as St. Peter distinctly shows, "I wot that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers" (Acts iii, 17).

Likewise had it not been for the delusions of Satan the Church would not have been persecuted; the way to glory and honor and immortality and joint-heirship with Christ would not have been made the "Narrow way," the saints, the "jewels" whom the Lord is now selecting, would not have been polished and fitted and prepared for the glorious places to which the Lord has called them. Surely, then, the Lord has used the great Adversary to assist in the accomplishing of the Divine purposes. Satan may have supposed that he was frustrating God's plans, but just as surely he was mistaken. The Divine Word is sure which declares, "My Word that goeth forth out of my mouth shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in that whereunto I sent it."

"The Sun of Righteousness."

Attempting to give us glimpses of the glory that is to come the Scriptures use various figures of speech, telling us, for instance, that the present is a dark night as compared to the future, which will be a morning of joy. They declare, "Weeping may endure for the night, but joy cometh in the morning"—the Millennial morning.

Following the same figure we read, "The Sun of Righteousness shall arise with healing in his beams." From this standpoint the entire six thousand years of the reign of sin from the time of Adam's disobedience in the Garden of Eden to the time of the establishment of the reign of Christ has been a night time in which darkness has covered the earth and gross darkness the people" (Isaiah ix, 2). The night will

give place to the glorious day of his presence, the bright shining of the Sun of Righteousness.

The spirit of sleep and stupor came over the Church during the dark ages. The Lord permitted it to be so. We lost sight of the glorious things of the Restitution morning and the blessings then to come to the Church and to the world in general. These things were little preached and little believed, although most conspicuous in the Word of God. Instead we gave heed to the heathen theories and more or less mixed and combined them with the Scriptural teaching, much to our confusion. As a consequence now the Truth of God's Word when we come to it and read with better understanding is new to us, strange—verily, "Truth is stranger than fiction," because the fiction has been drilled into us from infancy and sung to us from nearly every hymn-book in the world. Thus we have had a hymn-book theology rather than a Bible theology, and this accounts for the fact that the Word of God and his character are so little understood, and that today leading minds are repudiating the Scriptures and taking to Higher Criticism. We need to turn back, to retrace our steps, to inquire for the old paths (Jeremiah vi, 16), for the doctrines older than Wesley and Calvin, older than Roman Catholicism—the doctrines of Jesus and the apostles and prophets. From this standpoint, thank God, we can see light in his light and glorify his name and appreciate his Word as containing the very essence of wisdom, justice, love and power.

The Quick and the Dead.

The proposition of the Scriptures, of a Millennial Age of blessing, coming through the establishing of God's Kingdom, for which we pray, "Thy will be done in earth as it is done in heaven," strikes people in three different ways:

First.—Some ungenerously will be disposed to resent the thought under the supposition that it would imply a more favorable opportunity for the world in general in the next Age to come into harmony with God than the Church of the present age enjoys. To these we answer that their argument is at fault because they fail to recognize the fact that the reward to be given to the overcomers of this Gospel Age, the Church class, will be a much higher one than will go to the obedient of the world in the next age. The reward of the Church will be a spirit nature and a share in the heavenly Kingdom with the Lord Jesus. The reward of the earthly class of faithful ones will be Restitution to the perfection of human nature lost by Adam and redeemed by our Lord Jesus. Surely those who appreciate the "high calling" to the Divine nature and joint-heirship with the Lord in his Kingdom will see that it is well worthy the additional sacrifices, self denials, etc., which it will cost.

Second.—Another class, generous and appreciative, offer the criticism that it seems unfair on God's part to give such a glorious Millennial opportunity to those who will be living at the time of the Second Advent and to deny it to the remainder of the race who lived previously. This also is a mistake, we answer. God's proposition is that all of the world of mankind who do not enter into the trial of this present time—the judgment or trial of the Church, the spirit-begotten ones—will have an opportunity of entering into the judgment or trial of the world for the prize of Restitution and human perfection on the earthly plane. This blessing, this privilege, will begin with the living nations at the time of the beginning of the establishment of the Lord's Kingdom, but it will not end with them. The Scriptures declare, "All nations which thou hast made shall come and worship before thee." And again, "In thy Seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed."

Some of those nations and families have perished from the earth, but the Divine provision of redemption and Restitution is meant for all eventually. The Scriptures assure us of an awak-

ening of all the sleeping millions of earth's population. "The hour is coming in the which all that are in their graves shall hear the voice of the Son of Man and come forth." The Apostle tells us that they will come forth, "Every man in his own order," or class; thus intimating that from the Divine standpoint there are numerous classes of the dead. Thus the Scriptures assure us that the first class, the blessed and holy ones, the saintly, will alone share in the First Resurrection, and that these shall be priests unto God and reign with Christ a thousand years (Revelation xx, 3, 4). The remainder of mankind will come from the tomb classified—not all at once.

They will not come forth to be damned or condemned. They were "condemned already" as children of Adam because of his sin. It is on that account that they were "born in sin and shapen in iniquity." It was from that sin and its sentence or condemnation that Christ died to set them free. They will come forth free from that condemnation in a judicial sense, but, nevertheless, with the weaknesses of the fall still upon them, and they will be required to co-operate with the Lord in their own uplifting during that thousand years. Note that the great King of Glory, with all power in heaven and earth, could not, if he chose, lift them at once from their degradation and all that was lost, because the gradual uplifting and their own co-operation in the Divine program, so arranged, will be the most helpful way—because the learning of righteousness by the process of climbing up out of conditions of imperfection will impress upon them its principles the more thoroughly.

Third.—A third class, and they are not a few, discern at once that "true and righteous" are the Lord's ways and arrangements—that those now on trial have more advantage every way in that to them was granted so high an honor and blessing and so great a stimulus to righteousness. They recognize also that the Lord's arrangements for the world, the living and the dead, will be glorious to all, to angels and to men, when all shall have been brought fully to an appreciation of the facts.

Knowledge of the Lord.

To some it may appear strange that it is the knowledge of the Lord that is to fill the whole earth ocean deep—not the knowledge of mankind, not the knowledge of sin, not human philosophy—none of these are to fill the earth and to bring blessings to the world of mankind, but "the knowledge of the Lord." Well did our dear Redeemer say, "This is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only living and true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent." Life eternal is not to be gained by a knowledge of astronomy or geology or mathematics or chemistry, etc., but by the knowledge of God. How is this? What is there so wonderful, so magnetic in the knowledge of God that it should be said that men might gain eternal life thereby? We answer that God himself is the very personification of those glorious elements of character which he demands we shall emulate, copy, pattern after. Thus our Lord Jesus said, "Be ye like unto your Father which is in heaven." Not that we can ever be exactly like him in these respects, while we have our present imperfect bodies, but his is the pattern after which we must copy as best we can now and of him be the exact copy by and by.

The thought is that as we copy our Heavenly Father's character each additional step of progress means a clearer knowledge of the Father, and only those who attain to the very perfection of love in their hearts will be able rightly, truly to know the Father or the Son. Hence to know him in the full, proper sense of the word would imply that we had attained his likeness in our hearts, and this would imply preparation for life eternal on the Divine terms. From this standpoint our text implies that all mankind will ultimately be in that condition of the knowledge of God which will imply

the perfection of their hearts, imply their acceptance to eternal life, imply that all unwilling to come to this glorious condition under the Divine opportunities will have been destroyed from amongst the

people in the Second Death (Acts iii, 23). How wonderful is the Divine arrangement! Blessed are our eyes, for they see and our ears that they hear and our hearts that they now respond!

"Peace, Be Still"

A STORM AT SEA

Text, "Master, carest thou not that we perish?"—Mark 4:38.

In our text we have the despairing cry of the apostles to the Lord, in the midst of what must have been a remarkably severe storm on the Sea of Galilee. Some of the disciples, at least, were experienced fishermen, accustomed to the sudden squalls for which that sea is noted. For such courageous men as Peter, James and John to appeal to Jesus for superhuman aid implies that the conditions were critical. It seems rather astonishing indeed that our Lord could have slept under such strenuous conditions, but he was extremely exhausted from speaking to large multitudes and the journey was made in considerable measure to get away from the people, in order that he might have necessary rest. But again, it is possible that our Lord feigned sleep for the very purpose of permitting his disciples to reach the point of extremity which led them to call for his aid; because man's extremity is God's opportunity. The Master arose and rebuked the wind, saying, "Peace, be still." And there was a great calm. And he said to the disciples, Why are ye so fearful? Have ye not yet faith?

This expression constitutes one of the great lessons of the Master to his pupils, his disciples, and it has come ringing down the centuries, making peace to his followers ever since. The message it brings is that he who is able to control the storms and the sea is likewise able to govern all the affairs of life in the interests of those who are his consecrated followers, his disciples. Whether we have had so remarkable an escape from a storm at sea or not, I am sure that some of us have had the Master's supervision and intervention for our protection from the storms of life. To some of our hearts he has spoken these same words, "Peace, be still. Have ye not yet faith?" And with the message came a great calm, a great serenity, a great rest in the Lord and his superabundant care. If for a time the Master seemed unconscious of our condition and asleep to the dangers about us, it was only seemingly so. His care and his power were equally with us, and none could really harm our interests as New Creatures. He whose eye never slumbers nor sleeps, keeps watch over the interests of those who are truly his; and he is pledged that all things shall work together for good to them; because they love him; because they have been called according to his purpose; because they are seeking to make that calling and election sure by loving, self sacrificing obedience.

The Province of Faith.

In our judgment the Lord was not specially condemning the apostles for fearing the storm and awakening him to quell it. Indeed, their action indicates that they had faith; that they believed that the Master had the power which could save them. The Lord would have them exercise a still broader faith than this. He would have them realize the Father's care as he had taught them, saying, "Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing, and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father? * * * Fear ye not, therefore; ye are of more value than many sparrows" (Matthew x, 29-31). The lesson sought to be inculcated was this: "The Father has called you to be my disciples and collaborators. You with myself, therefore, are specially under Divine guidance and su-

pervision. And he who has begun the good work in you, and who purposes to use you as his mouthpieces in the proclaiming of his message and grace, is able to care for all your interests, both temporal and spiritual. Do you suppose that, after calling you to the ministry of his grace, he would permit you to perish? To so fear, implies that you do not realize your calling to have been of God, or do not realize the Divine power, or that you doubt Divine wisdom and supervision—being of insufficient faith."

Shall we not similarly judge ourselves, scrutinize our own hearts, inquire within, if in the midst of the storms and tempests of life we become terrified? Would not this imply that we doubt the Divine providences in our own cases in the past and that we are uncertain as respects our calling of the Lord to be followers of the Lamb, sharers in the sufferings of Christ now and heirs of the glory that shall follow? Or would it mean that we lacked faith, lacked confidence in God? Perhaps no other lesson is more important for God's children to learn in the present time than this—to have absolute confidence in their Father's Justice, Wisdom, Love and Power.

We Walk by Faith.

The Apostle remarks of the Church of this age, "We walk by faith and not by sight." In this respect the Gospel Church is different from the Jewish Church of the preceding age and different from the Millennial Church of the oncoming age. The latter will walk by sight. The Sun of Righteousness will shine forth, we are assured, and scatter all the darkness of ignorance, superstition and prejudice, and flood the world with the "light of the knowledge of the glory of God." There will be no more walking by the light of the lamp, the Bible, so precious to us now, so necessary to us now as a lamp to our feet and as a light to our footsteps to assist us in walking in the "narrow way" by faith and not by sight.

The Jewish church of the preceding age was privileged to walk considerably by sight, not so clear and distinct a light as that which will illuminate the world in the Millennium, but, nevertheless, they walked by sight, because the Divine terms were that if they obeyed God's Word and walked in his statutes he would bless them in basket and store and flock and herd and in their families and in their hearts. And the assurance was that if there was any calamity it would be because of their departure from the Lord and would mark his disfavor.

But during this Gospel Age how different! Whoever would be God's child, a follower of Jesus, in the present time must walk by faith and not by sight. He must believe what he cannot see. He must learn that the cost of discipleship in this age, the cost of sonship in the Divine family in this present time means self-sacrifice, a narrow way, opposition and persecution. "Yea, whoever will live godly in this present world will suffer persecution." Instead of being blessed above other men in their temporal affairs the consecrated, the sanctified, have the Scriptural assurance that they must expect the reverse. Instead of being kept in perfect health many of the Lord's followers have had sad experiences on beds of sickness and pain. Instead of being wealthy it was foretold that there would be not many rich amongst them, not many great, not many wise according to the course of this world, but that the riches they

must esteem are the riches of God's grace associated with the exceeding great and precious promises of God's Word. Instead of being surrounded by conditions of affluence, wealth and ease their circumstances are generally the reverse of these. And why is this so? Because the Lord is now choosing or selecting from amongst mankind a little flock of "peculiar people" who he designs shall eventually be joint-heirs with his Son in the Heavenly Kingdom.

"A Peculiar People."

The Lord's people are peculiar in their dress—not as respects their outward clothing, but as respects their robe of Christ's Righteousness—theirs by imputation, because of faith in the blood of Christ, faith in his sacrifice for sins. They are peculiar also in that they have a "wedding garment" which they wear continually and which they seek to keep "unspotted from the world" and which they trust by and by will admit their entrance with their Lord to the great Marriage Supper when they, as members of the Bride-Elect, shall become the Queen of Glory, Joint-Heirs with the Bridegroom.

These are peculiar also in that they love Righteousness and hate iniquity, whereas the majority of people love iniquity and are ready to indulge in it to the extent that they would not be caught or seriously injured. These, on the contrary, love Righteousness because they have come to esteem it as the character of their Heavenly Father and his will respecting them, and they have come to hate iniquity because they have learned of its injuriousness and that the Heavenly Father is not pleased with iniquity, injustice, wrong in any form. These peculiar people are so desirous of pleasing the Heavenly Father that they are quite willing to be thought peculiar or strange to the world in general that they may hear by and by the words, "Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things" (Matthew xxv, 23).

"O Ye of Little Faith."

All the circumstances and affairs of life, its storms and its calms, its joys and its sorrows, its ups and its downs, its pleasures and its pains, are so ordered of the Father's providence as to give these "peculiar people" the lessons they most need, primarily to develop in them this quality of faith, and secondarily the various graces of the Lord's spirit, which can be built only upon this faith, this trust, this confidence. And as the members of this class learn to take the proper view of the Lord's dealings, learn to have faith in him, learn to note his providences and to trust his promises, proportionately it is their privilege to have peace and rest in every time of storm and distress. As the Master declares, "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid" (John xiv, 27). Whoever, therefore, would be most pleasing to the Lord; whoever would be most ready for the graduating exercises at the end of the age; whoever hopes to hear the Master's "Well done, good and faithful servant," must give diligence to the cultivation of this quality of faith, a "faith which firmly trusts him come what may."

On a Tempestuous Sea.

What we have applied individually to the Lord's people may also be applied to them as a whole. Looking back over the nearly nineteen centuries since the institution of this Church by our Lord at his First Advent, particularly since Pentecost, and marking the varied experiences of these centuries, we perceive that the Church has passed over a tempestuous route in her journey to the heavenly home. Storms and calms mark the entire course, and the evidences are thickening all about us that the severest and darkest hour, the most stormy period of her entire career, is just ahead of her—just upon her, we might say. The sea, the world, is all about her and seeking to enter into her, seeking to swamp her, seeking to swallow her up.

Many of the Lord's followers already are crying to him in terror, "Master, carest thou not that we perish? Seest thou not how agnosticism, under a new name of Higher Criticism, is seeking to capsize us, to overwhelm us, to break the cable of faith by which we are anchored to the sure promises of thy Word? Master, seest thou not that the very mention of thy precious blood as the Ransom Price for sinners, the purchase price of our release from sin and death, is reviled, is belittled, is esteemed a common thing, is repudiated by those who name Thy Name? Master, carest thou not that thy Word has been so misrepresented during the dark ages of the past that today the intellectuals of the world disdain it as the teaching of doctrines unworthy of a noble intellect? Master, carest thou not that these have no reverence for thy Book and for thine own Holy Name? Master, carest thou not that thy people, thy saintly ones, are perishing in infidelity, in agnosticism; that they are losing their faith in the precious blood, and in all the wonderful promises of the Word, because they see not, neither do they understand the height and length, the breadth and depth of the love of God which passeth all understanding?"

Peace, Be Still! Be Still!

To all such appeals the Master's reply is, "Have ye not yet faith?" Do ye not know that the Word that goeth from my mouth shall prosper in the thing whereto it was sent? Do you not realize that he who began the work of selecting the Church will accomplish it? Do you not know that naught could come to pass without your Father's knowledge and permission? Do you not remember the words of the Lord, "Thou couldst have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above," except it were permitted thee of my Father (John xix, 11). Our difficulty has been to some extent the same that our Lord mentioned to the Sadducees saying, "Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God" (Matthew xxii, 29).

But what say the Scriptures on the subject? We answer that they foretell the present condition of things and give us an outlook future. They call our attention to the fact that there is a nominal Church, as well as the real one, an outward class of considerable numbers which have a form of godliness, but without the power, and a "little flock" which has the Truth and

is in heart relationship with the Lord, begotten of the holy Spirit. They tell us that we have been mistaken in the past in supposing that it is a part of the Heavenly Father's plan to convert the world during this present Gospel Age; that that part of his plan belongs to the next age; that his present work is the gathering of the "elect," the "little flock," to be associated with the Redeemer as his Bride in the glorious Kingdom, for which we pray, "Thy Kingdom come; thy will be done on earth as it is done in heaven." They assure us that the storm of Higher Criticism, infidelity and Evolution and general godlessness and faithlessness which we see coming, which is already upon us, will indeed be a terrible storm, the like of which was permitted in the time of trouble which closed the Jewish Age, and again in the close of the eighteenth century in the French Revolution. The Scriptures show us that the Lord intends to make a separation between merely nominal Christians and the saints—the pure in heart, the full of faith, the full of zeal, the lovers of Righteousness, the haters of iniquity. And his testing and sifting of the true wheat and its separation from the tares will be a thorough and complete work.

But we say, if the Church goes down, if the storm shall wreck the Church of Christ, will not the entire social fabric be wrecked? Shall not we all perish? But the Lord answers, "Nay verily; a thousand shall fall at thy side, ten thousand at thy right hand, but it shall not come nigh thee" (to injure thee). The shaking of the social, political and financial fabric, which is closely interwoven with the religious, will be something awful, according to the Scriptural pictures, "A time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation, nor ever shall be afterward," said our Lord (Daniel xii, 1). For a time fierce anarchy will follow the destruction of faith in God and in his Word—quite contrary to the expectations of the Higher Critics. Then, in due time to save the world from itself, our Lord will stand forth in power, majesty and great glory and will say to the raging waves of human passion in that tempestuous storm, "Peace, be still!" And there will be a great calm, and that calm will extend throughout the Millennial period and give favorable opportunity for the living nations to see, to comprehend, and to accept the Lord's

righteous arrangements and, if they will, his gracious provisions. And it will give opportunity also for all mankind, including those who have gone down into the great prison house of death, to come under those gracious provisions.

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