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IN the Lord's presence, no matter where we are, is fullness of joy. Let us cultivate the Lord's acquaintance more, draw-

ing near to Him in prayer, in the study of His precious Word, in meditation upon all His goodness, His providential care, the marked manifestations of His grace in our own individual experiences, and His precious promises which are all yea and amen in Christ Jesus. Thus "draw nigh to God, and He will draw nigh to you" (James 4:8);

He will manifest Himself to you and take up His abode with you.

It is indeed the will of God that all His children should be happy in Him, that they should be always rejoicing; and if any one lack this blessing, he is living below his privileges. Z. '96-54 R1949:5

R1948 (From Harvest Truth Database V5.0 2008)

THE CHRISTIAN'S JOY

"Thou wilt show me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures forevermore."--Psa. 16:11

WHEN we consider how much is said in the Scriptures about joy and rejoicing among God's people, we are deeply impressed with the thought that our heavenly Father is very solicitous for the happiness of his children, even in the present life. The worldly minded cannot see this, they look upon the lot of God's children as a hard and joyless one, and upon God as a hard Master, without concern for the happiness of his children. This, however, is only because the natural man cannot receive the things of the spirit of God, because they are spiritually discerned. But the spiritual-minded have meat to eat that the world knows not of; and their hearts rejoice, and their joy no man taketh from them.

How strange it seems! says the world. Why, there was Paul, a man of great talent and opportunity who might have been somebody in the world: he wasted his talents, was a poor man all his days, homeless, friendless, knocked about and persecuted, a sort of religious fanatic. But Paul, viewing the matter from the standpoint of his spiritual discernment, said, "I am exceeding joyful in all our tribulation" (2 Cor. 7:4); for he was one of that anointed body who, like his Lord and Head, could say, "I foresaw the Lord always before my face; for he is on my right hand, that I should not be moved. Therefore did my heart rejoice, and my tongue was glad."--Acts 2:25,26.

So the Psalmist bids all the anointed body rejoice, saying, "Rejoice in the Lord, O ye righteous; for praise is comely for the upright." (Psa. 33:1.) And Isaiah, speaking for the same class, says, "I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with jewels."--Isa. 61:10.

This blessed joy, which so wonderfully lifts the soul above all the vicissitudes of the present life, is, as the prophet expresses it, joy in the Lord, not a joy in earthly possessions, or earthly hopes or ambitions. These earthly things are all so transitory and so changeable that a single blast of adversity may sweep them all from us; but not so is it with those whose hearts are centered in God and to whom he has shown the path of life. These have learned to estimate the things of this present life according to their true values; they see that all of its joys are both transient and unsatisfactory and that the only real value in it is in the opportunities it affords for experience and discipline and education in the things of God and for hearing the call of God and making our calling and election sure. In thus making the proper use of the present life--walking in the path of life which God shows us through his Word--we have the present joys of hope and faith in the things unseen, but sure and eternal; knowing also that by and by in the immediate presence of God we shall have fulness of joy, and pleasures for evermore at his right hand--the chief place of favor.

But while the fulness of joy in its widest sense is reserved for that blessed time when we shall be like the Lord and see him as he is (1 John 3:1,2) and be in his presence and at his right hand (in his chief favor), there is a fulness of joy in the presence and favor of God which is the privilege of every Christian now. Our capacity for joy now is not what it will be by and by, but it is possible now to have our little earthen vessels as full as they can hold of the joy of the Lord. And day by day it is our privilege to realize the presence and favor of God, if, by walking in the path of life, the path of obedience and loving service, we draw near to God. "If a man love me," said our Lord Jesus, "he will keep my words; and my Father will

love him, and we will come unto him and make our abode with him."--John 14:23.

In such company as this, can any Christian fail utterly to realize some measure of joy in the Lord? No, if his faith grasps the promise and holds it, the realization of joy in the Lord is sure to follow, and the more firmly his faith lays hold upon the promise the more will he realize its fulfillment, and the more fully will his joys abound; for in the presence of the Lord is fulness of joy, no matter what may be the conditions and circumstances.

In the blessed realization of this experience and the assurance of faith which it gave, in the midst of all his labors, Paul exclaimed, "Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect?...Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."--Rom. 8:33-39.

It was this strong persuasion, this confident faith, of the Apostle that gave him such joy in the midst of all his tribulations. His faith laid hold upon the promises of God with a strong and steady grasp, and love and gratitude impelled him to prompt obedience to the will of God and ardent zeal in his service; and evidently the Lord's promise was fulfilled to him in the abiding presence of Father and Son with him at all times and under all circumstances.

This blessed privilege is ours also, if by faith we enter fully into the Lord's will and favor. And with a blessed realization of the abiding presence of our heavenly Father, and our Lord Jesus at all times, and of their love and favor, and a faith that lays hold of all the exceeding great and precious promises of God, what soul may not rejoice and be glad, even in the midst of deep sorrow or great tribulation? ⁽¹⁾In the Lord's presence, no matter where we are, is fulness of joy. Let us cultivate the Lord's acquaintance more, drawing near to him in prayer, in the study of his precious Word, in meditation upon all his goodness, his providential care, the marked manifestations of his grace in our own individual experiences, and his precious promises which are all yea and amen in Christ Jesus. Thus "draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you" (James 4:8), he will manifest himself to you and take up his abode with you.

It is indeed the will of God that all his children should be happy in him, that they should be always rejoicing; and if any one lacks this blessing, he is living below his privileges. Beloved, let us not be contented to live beneath our privileges. Let us appreciate the favor of God to the extent of seeking for it more and more diligently, remembering the exhortation, "Seek and ye shall find, knock and it shall be opened unto you." All the riches of divine favor are ours if in faith and humility we claim them and place ourselves in position to receive them as directed through the Word of God. "Ask and receive, that your joy may be full." And your joy can no man take from you, so long as you abide in Him who is our life, our joy, our rest, our hope.

"Why should the children of the King
Go mourning all the day?"
"Children of the Heavenly King,
As we journey let us sing!"

R5938 "The Apostle John in writing this Epistle clearly states his object, saying, "These things write we unto you, that your joy may be full." It is a noteworthy fact that the vast majority of Christians never experience the fulness of joy, peace and blessing that they might possess. Too many are content with simply diluted first principles of the doctrine of Christ. Therefore, as the Apostle Paul declares, such are merely "babes in Christ." (1 Corinthians 3:1,2; Hebrews 5:12-14.) Of course, they have a blessing in any relationship to the Lord, but they have not the fulness of joy which would be theirs if they progressed in grace and in knowledge to the full stature of a man in Christ. The object of the Apostle's writing them was to stir up the pure minds of believers to an appreciation and enjoyment of their privileges, that thereby they might grow and develop...

To the extent that we walk in the light and in harmony and fellowship with God, we shall find ourselves in fellowship with all others who are like-minded. So then, if we do not "love the brethren whom we have seen," so as to be able to have fellowship and spiritual pleasure with them, it would be an indication that we are not wholly in harmony and fellowship with God.

But who are the "brethren"? Our Lord tells us that not all who profess His name are true brethren. He says, "Not every one that saith Lord, Lord, shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven [be recognized as His brethren and joint-heirs], but he that doeth the will of My Father which is in Heaven." We thus see that it is by our *deeds*, and not merely by our *professions*, that we are accepted of the Lord. Again He says, "Who are My brethren?... Verily, I say unto you, He that doeth the will of My Father, the same is My brother."--Matthew 7:21;12:48-50.

We are not, therefore, to anticipate "fellowship" with all who name the name of Christ as proof of fellowship with the Father, and that we are in the light. We are merely to anticipate this *true* fellowship with those who are earnestly seeking to do the Father's will, to serve His cause and exemplify the instructions of His Word, in their *deeds* as well as in their professions. Between all such there must be, whether hidden or open, a *bond of fellowship* and union."

R1502 "Peace has its fountain in the perennial springs of God's eternal truth; for, the Apostle says, he "hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue." But this knowledge of God is not only an intellectual knowledge of his great and loving plan: it includes also a personal acquaintance with God, a heart to heart communion and fellowship with him--an established sympathy of love and common interest and co-operation. Such a knowledge or acquaintance with God is gained through the study of his precious word with reverence and diligence, through the personal application of the principles of that word in every day life and through secret prayer and communion with God...

As we draw near to him in prayer and communion and the study of his precious Word, we are made to understand the wealth of the divine love and favor toward us who are in Christ Jesus, and who, through entire consecration of ourselves to God, have escaped the corruption that is in the world

through lust [the worldly desires and ambitions]. We learn that to us are given exceeding great and precious promises, that by these we might be made partakers of the divine nature; that we are called to be heirs of God and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ; that, if we are faithful to our covenant of entire consecration to God, we shall be made like him and see him as he is; that we may behold the King in his beauty; and that through us in the ages to come God will manifest the exceeding riches of his grace. Oh, what heights of glory are we called to share with our beloved Lord; and what fathomless love is manifested toward us in Christ Jesus!

In humble thankfulness let us ponder these precious promises more and more as in secret we bow at the throne of the heavenly grace; and here let the holy spirit of God apply the instruction to our hearts, and so may we be filled with the spirit, and grace and peace be multiplied unto us."

R5802 "DEPTHS OF SORROW LEAD TO HEIGHTS OF JOY"...

The soul that has never known the discipline of sorrow and trouble has never yet learned the joy and preciousness of the Lord's love and helpfulness. It is in seasons of overwhelming sorrow and grief, when we draw near to the Lord, that He draws especially near to us...

The saints have indeed in every sorrow and grief a blessed consolation of which the world is wholly in ignorance. None but the true child of God can know it. What is this consolation? Oh, you who have never enlisted under the banner of the Cross, who have never put yourselves wholly into the hands of the Lord to be molded and fashioned into His glorious likeness, who have never made an earnest effort to stem the tide of the tendencies of your own fallen nature, who have never contended earnestly for Truth and righteousness in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, what can you know of the sweets of this Divine consolation? It is the precious balm of Gilead for wounded spirits on the battle-field of life... It is the soothing caress of a loving hand upon the fevered brow of the noble contender for Truth and godliness. It is the gentle whisper of hope and love and courage when heart and flesh are almost failing. This is Divine consolation, the only consolation that has in it any virtue of healing or refreshment...

How loving and tender is our God, and how wise and strong! His promises have never failed those who have put their trust in Him. We may feel that our efforts to be good and to do good are very unproductive, that the opposition from without and within is very strong. But it is when we are weak, when we realize our own helplessness and incompetency, that we may be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. It is then that we may realize that His strength is made perfect in our weakness. The fact that we are weak and lame does not separate us from the love and power of our God, while we are striving to do His will; for "He knoweth our frame, He remembereth that we are dust." Then let us more and more lay hold of this strength of the Lord, that we may courageously pursue our course in the narrow way of difficulty and trial."

R2232 "What are our joys which no man taketh from us? and which persecution and affliction and trouble can only deepen and

widen and make more sweet? What joy is this? This joy is a foretaste of the blessings to come, an earnest of our inheritance. It is inspired by confidence in him on whom we have believed: confidence that he is both able and willing to perfect the work which he has begun and which we desire shall be perfected in his own best way: confidence that so long as we are firmly holding to his gracious promises with the arms of our faith, he will not permit us to be separated from him."

ABSOLUTE CONFIDENCE & RELIANCE IN GOD

R5941 "ST. PAUL'S SORROWS AND JOYS"... *"My grace is sufficient for thee; for My power is made perfect in weakness."* - 2 Corinthians 12:9...

The secret of the Apostle's endurance of so great privations -- scourgings, imprisonments, buffetings of various kinds--is presented to us in the words of our Golden Text. The Lord's grace was sufficient. The Lord's power was made perfect in his weakness. And is this not the secret of every successful Christian life? Was it not even so of our Master--that the Father's Spirit in Him, His reliance upon the Father, and His looking for the light of the Father's countenance, were indeed the power of God working in our Savior to will and to do the Father's good pleasure?

The same is true with every follower of the Lord since His day. The Master truly said to His followers, "Without Me ye can do nothing." (John 15:5.) It is the Divine Power which operates through our Lord Jesus, through the Word of Truth, through the followers of Jesus; and this Power can operate in the weakest members of the Body of Christ as well as in the strongest. The Lord's grace is sufficient for all and for every time of need. We are not to forget, however, that this great sufficiency is not poured out upon the Lord's people unconditionally, but in answer to their appreciation of their need and their prayerful request for grace Divine in every time of need."

A STILL MORE ADVANCED STEP DELIGHT IN THE LORD

R1840 "Delight in the Lord is a still more advanced step in the Christian life. It is a blessed thing to learn to trust in the Lord; but it is when continued trust and responsive providences have ripened into personal acquaintance and fellowship with God that we learn to delight in him."

(Psa 40:8 KJV) "I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart."

(Psa 119:71 KJV) "It is good for me that I have been afflicted; that I might learn thy statutes."

INTIMATE FELLOWSHIP

EYES OPEN TO UNSPEAKABLE JOY

R610 "JOY UNSPEAKABLE

A good story is told of a little blind child who once had a surgical operation performed that resulted in restoring her to sight. The oculist had skillfully pared off the integument which had prevented the light from passing through to the retina, and then

the eyes were bandaged for awhile, until the wounded parts should be somewhat healed. At length the hour arrived when the bandage, which had from time to time been partially and temporarily removed, was to be removed altogether. Ah! what a moment of supreme interest and anxiety to all her friends, but more especially to the little patient herself, who as yet had never seen. This child, when her eyes could bear the light, and she was permitted by her kind physician to open them, and for the first time to look out upon all the beauty there was around her, realizing indeed as no words could ever show "that the light is truly sweet, and that it is a pleasant thing for the eyes to behold the sun," cried out with delight, "O, mother, why did you not tell me it was so beautiful?" The mother, bursting into tears, replied: "I tried to tell you, my dear, but the words wouldn't make you understand." Precisely; and so, withal, is it with the Christian when he attempts to tell what is the joy unspeakable and full of glory, the peace of God that passeth understanding, the love of God shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost, and what is the excellency of the knowledge of that Christ for whom he would, if necessary, joyfully suffer the loss of all things.--*Sel.*"

R5803 "PRECIOUSNESS OF INTIMATE FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD"

It is when continued trust in the Lord and His many responsive providences in our lives have ripened into precious personal acquaintance and intimacy that we learn to delight in Him. Yes, it is when heart answers to heart, when pleading prayer brings recognized answers of peace, when the Divine love and care have been clearly seen in the guidance of our way, that we can recognize the abiding presence with us of the Father and the Son. Then, however dark

may be our way, however severe may be the storm that rages about us, the thought of Divine protection is ever with us, so that as the children of the Lord we are never in despair; though cast down, we are not destroyed; though persecuted, we are never forsaken. We know our Father's hand is ever at the helm, that His love and care are sure and unfailing.

Those who have come into real heart sympathy with God have learned to see Him as the Fountain of all goodness and Truth and blessing. To them He is the One altogether lovely. His Law is their delight. His friendship and love are their very life. When the heart has become thus centered in God, it is the most natural impulse to commit its way unto Him. These can truly sing with the poet:

{3} "So on I go, not knowing,
I would not if I might;
I'd rather walk in the dark with God
Than go alone in the light;
I'd rather walk by faith with Him
Than go alone by sight."

Surely these have the desires of their heart, and no good thing shall be withheld from them. Their fervent prayers avail much, and in the Lord's good time their righteousness, however much it may now be misunderstood, misrepresented and evil-spoken of, shall be brought forth as the light--clear, cloudless and widely manifest; and their judgment, the justice and righteousness of their course and of their hearts, shall be brought forth as the noonday. Even while we remain here as aliens and foreigners in the enemy's land, we shall be fed, nourished, temporally and spiritually, and

{3} Hymn 110

R5459 (From Harvest Truth Database V5.0 2008)

TRIALS ESSENTIAL TO CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT

"My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations."--James 1:2.

ALL those who have been called of the Lord during this Gospel Age are called with what the Apostle Paul styles the High Calling (Philippians 3:14), the Heavenly Calling (Hebrews 3:1), which is a call to share with Jesus in His glory, honor and immortality. But the call is not the *decision* in the matter; it is merely an *invitation* with certain definite conditions. We are called, not only to righteousness, but to walk in the Master's footsteps of suffering and self-sacrifice. These are the only terms on which any are received as disciples of Christ. We understand the Scriptures to teach that during the Millennial Age there will be other terms of acceptance with God, offered the world. But there are no conditions offered now other than those of becoming followers and disciples of Jesus, to walk as He walked.

The Apostle James intimates that temptations may overtake these followers of Christ, into which they will fall as into a snare. As for an army, traps are set by the enemy, so the great Adversary sets traps and snares for us. He endeavors to misguide our minds and to lead us away from proper conceptions of truth and righteousness. We should be very careful to avoid his snares. Nevertheless, in spite of diligence, we may fall into a trap.

The Apostle says we are to rejoice when we fall into various temptations--not that we are to rejoice if we fall into *sin* when tempted, but that we may rejoice if we find ourselves suddenly precipitated into temptation. Temptation is not sin. If we could but keep in mind the fact that every temptation, every trial, every persecution, every difficulty in life, permitted to come upon us who have made the covenant of sacrifice with the Lord, is intended to *prove us*, to test our love, to see whether or not our characters are *fixed*, rooted and grounded in righteousness and being built up in love, it would put all these trials, difficulties and temptations in a new light before us, and greatly assist us in fighting a good fight and overcoming. When we find ourselves suddenly in temptation, trial, we should

shall rejoice and be glad in the "house of our pilgrimage."

(Psa 119:54 KJV) "Thy statutes have been my songs in the house of my pilgrimage."

R2232 "Those who have tasted that the Lord is gracious, those who have received the joy which no man can take from them, those who have tasted of the grace of God in Christ, will not only rejoice and literally sing musical songs with their lips, but they will also rejoice to have their entire lives a song of praise and thanksgiving unto God."

R2232 "Remember Paul and Silas praising God in the prison of Philippi, while their backs were still lacerated and bleeding.

It should be the aim of the Lord's people to cultivate this joy and the conditions favorable to it, daily. The condition of our hearts has much to do with it; for this joy is not wholly dependent upon the heads--our knowledge of the divine Word and plan. Its possession and increase depends chiefly upon the heart--the center of our affections. If we set our affections, our hearts, on earthly things and seek for joy through the various gratifications of the flesh, the lust of the eye and the pride of life, etc., we will thereby quench to some extent the spirit of the new mind, and correspondingly decrease the joys of the new mind. On the contrary, the more we overcome the world, the flesh and the devil, the more we seek to do the will of our Father who is in heaven, the more we seek for the fellowship and communion of our dear Redeemer, the more we seek to do those things which are pleasing in his sight, so much the more will we have of the joy and peace which no man taketh from us and which trials, difficulties and persecutions can only make the more sweet and precious."

say, If by these temptations, or trials, the Lord is proving my love and devotion to Him, then, however trifling they may be or however important, I will diligently use them as favorable opportunities to demonstrate to my Lord the fulness of my love and devotion to Him and His cause. I must fight a good fight against this thing--the world, the flesh or the Adversary --whatever it might be that had brought the snare.

Thus viewed and thus met we can rejoice in every such experience; every trial and every difficulty will prove a blessing; for we shall, first of all, have an opportunity to show the Lord that we will endure, and not compromise His cause or our own position as His servants. We can rejoice also because we know that under such trials our characters will make advancement toward crystallization, if we overcome; and because we know that the Lord would not let us fall into any temptation which He would not cause to work out for us a blessing if we are wholly loyal. Let us dwell often upon the words of the Apostles: "Beloved, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations." "Greatly rejoice, though now for a season ye are in manifold temptation, that the trial of your faith, being more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried by fire, might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ." "Blessed is the man that endureth [faithfully under] temptation; for after his trials he will receive the crown of life which the Lord hath promised to them that love Him." "These light afflictions, which are but for a moment, *work out* for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory"--if rightly utilized; if we are rightly exercised by them.--1 Peter 1:7; James 1:2,12.

"HE THAT ENDURETH"

We are assured that those who love the Lord, and who because of this will receive the Kingdom, will be those whose love will have been tested by trials and temptations on the way. Those who do not love the Lord with *all* their hearts--in whom self or some other idol

has first place--will be seduced by the world, the flesh or the Adversary, into some form of rebellion against the Divine Word or Divine providences. They will have schemes and theories which they will prefer to the Lord's Plan. These when analyzed will usually be found to be based either upon selfishness or upon ambition or an evil spirit of envy, hatred, etc. The Lord's leading and the Lord's words lose their attraction to such, and they lose their interest correspondingly. Like those who turned away from the Lord at the First Advent, declaring, "This is a hard saying," they walk no more with Him.

As there are some substances which are short and brittle, so are there some which have fibre, strength, endurance. The Lord chooses for Himself such characters as have the strong, enduring qualities--fortitude, patience, long-suffering, etc. Some there are who walk close to the Lord, who will not be driven from Him by any of the arts and wiles of the Adversary. They are such as are at heart fully the Lord's--not their own; they follow wherever the Lord may lead, because they have no will except the will of God. These will follow the Lord in the narrow way of trial, discipline and testings during the present life, and by and by, as He has declared, "They shall walk with Me in white; for they are worthy."--Revelation 3:4.

He who escapes all trials and temptations and difficulties has every reason to doubt that he is really in relationship to God as a son. If he were a son, the Lord would surely find it necessary to give him trials and difficulties. If he does not have these he should go to the Father and make sure that there is no impediment on his part--make sure that he has put himself in the proper place where he can be prepared for the Kingdom. "Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth."--Hebrews 12:6.

FAILURES AS "STEPPING-STONES"

All will rejoice when the testings are over and we are accepted as overcomers, to share with the Lord in His Throne. But patience, trust and love must first do a refining work in our hearts, making us mellow, submissive and obedient to God. Let the good work go on! Let us rejoice if our trials have made us stronger in character, more humble and Christlike, more aware of our blemishes and imperfections, more watchful and earnest in our endeavors to correct them so far as possible.

Even the conflicts in which we have had only partial victory may have resulted in blessings to us. Even in those experiences where we have suffered absolute failure, there may be, through the humiliation and the pain of defeat, a strengthening of our character, a firm determination for greater watchfulness in that direction, and a more fervent prayer for the Lord's sustaining grace, the need of which has been more deeply impressed upon our hearts. Thus even failures may become "stepping-stones" by which we rise toward God and Heaven. Only through much tribulation shall we enter the Kingdom of Heaven at all. If, therefore, the Lord's people find themselves involved in temptations, tribulations, instead of feeling downcast they are to rejoice and say, These are evidences that the Lord is preparing me for a place in the Kingdom. This should give one courage to fight the good fight against the world, the flesh and the Adversary. The flesh is suffering; but the new mind, the new will, has this joy; and the New Creature can rejoice, knowing that these trials are not for his harm, but for his good.--1 Peter 4:13.

A WAY OF ESCAPE PROVIDED

The Heavenly Father will with every temptation provide a way of escape. Hence when we find ourselves in difficulty we are to say, The Heavenly Father is permitting this trial--the Lord Jesus will help me, and so I will rejoice in the fact that the Lord will not allow me to be overthrown; for He has promised that all things shall work out for my good.

As our text expressly says: We are to count it all joy when we fall into temptations--not when we walk into them. We are not to seek temptation. In our own fallen condition and that of those around us, with the Adversary alert to harm us, we know that there will be plenty of temptations without our walking into them. But if we fall into temptation we are to say, I have been striving against this thing, but the Lord has permitted it; and there must, therefore, come some blessing out of it for me. Even temptations that come through negligence are not to be disesteemed. Some of our greatest lessons in *carefulness* have resulted from the effect of our own *carelessness*.

Our joy is largely dependent upon our study of the Word and our knowledge of the precious promises contained therein for those who overcome. The Lord wants those who will endure a great fight of afflictions, who will endure patiently, though the temptations continue long and the tribulations become more and more severe. But if they should lose faith, all their previous good resolutions and standing for what is right would not make them overcomers.

These trials are intended to develop in us patience-- that this quality may be deeply ingrained. We are building character for all eternity; and patience could not be thus developed and maintained except by repeated difficulties, tests--by our resolving again and again to be stronger and firmer in building the character-likeness of our Heavenly Father and our Lord Jesus Christ.

A WORD OF WARNING

To those who are of this anointed company and who are striving to attain the glory promised to the faithful followers of Christ, the Apostle Peter issues a word of warning. In the first chapter of his second Epistle, he urges the Church to add quality after quality of character-preparation, that thus they may be fitted for the glorious things that God has promised to the faithful. He specifies *faith* as the primary qualification. To this he says that we are to add fortitude, knowledge, patience, self-control, godliness, brotherly kindness and a broad, generous love for all mankind. The reason why the Scriptures declare that our judgment will be according to our *faith* is that while in the flesh we shall never be able to perform *works* such as God could approve.

What God approves is the New Creature. By exercising faith and by demonstrating loyalty these New Creatures will be able to please Him, and to work out the proper character as enjoined in His Word, developing the fruits and graces of the Holy Spirit. "*If ye do these things,*" says the Apostle, "*ye shall never fall; for so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting Kingdom of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.*"

Faith is necessary *all along the line*. Without faith we could not have courage to go on. If we did not have faith what would be our source of encouragement? The fall mentioned in the text above quoted (2 Peter 1:10), is evidently a fall from the position to which we have been invited and to which invitation we respond. We were called to be joint-heirs with our Lord. If we are obedient to the Word of the Lord and are properly exercised by the experiences which are given us in the School of Christ, we shall gain His approval; for "Faithful is He that hath called us." If there is a fall in our case, it will be due to failure to do our part. If we fail to cultivate character, we shall fail to gain the Kingdom.

CAUSES INDUCING A FALL

Among those who fall some will fall more seriously than others. Those who fail to go on will receive certain tests which will determine whether they will turn back to the world or will continue in the narrow way. Some will fail in that they will not manifest sufficient zeal. These will come through great tribulations. If by these experiences they are brought to a full loyalty to the Lord, they will be granted everlasting life, but not on so high a plane as if they had not failed in their manifestation of zeal for the Lord, and of faith, energy and perseverance in doing the Lord's will.

Again, from lack of zeal in the Lord's service or from cultivating a spirit of bitterness, one may deteriorate until he becomes an enemy of the Lord, loving sin rather than righteousness. As an opponent of God such a one would suffer a complete fall. But those who have a temporary fall, but who afterwards overcome in the trials which the Lord will allow to come upon them, thus showing their loyalty to Him, will be fully recovered. Those who fall utterly can never be recovered. Such will lose *everything*. They had sacrificed their *human* hopes before they could be accepted at first; therefore their falling away from this condition of a New Creature will be a hopeless fall.

The fall of such will be far worse than the fall of Adam, whose fall resulted from having only limited knowledge and from lack of experience in the results of evil, for these have come to a clear knowledge of the Truth and have experienced a share in the redemption. The falling away of such would mean a fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation--of destruction as enemies of God. Adam had only a small knowledge of the grace of God, and therefore is to be redeemed and ultimately restored, if he shall come into harmony with God.

Dear brethren, let us take heed to our ways. Let us earnestly cultivate the fruits of the Spirit, that we may indeed be presented "*faultless*" before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy."

"From glory unto glory" that ever lies before,
Still wondering, adoring, rejoicing more and more;
Still following where He leadeth, from shining field to field,
Himself the goal of glory, Revealer and revealed!

"Then let our hearts be surely fixed where truest joys are found,
And let our burning, loving praise yet more and more abound;
And gazing on the 'things not seen' eternal in the skies,
'From glory unto glory,' O Savior, let us rise!"