

November 6

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. Romans 12:1

TO render all we have to the Lord's service is not only a reasonable thing, but an

ROMANS 12:1

R5423 "Every one who recognizes God's mercies and blessings finds it a "reasonable service" to sacrifice the earthly things for the precious privilege of serving Him. If it was a reasonable service for Jesus to leave the Heavenly glory, to become a man, and to sacrifice Himself unto death, then surely ours is most reasonable. We, being imperfect, have very little to give; and when there is an opportunity for showing our appreciation of the Heavenly Father, then we should make haste to use it."

R5332 "Let us be watchful, active, alert, and co-labor with God and with the Lord Jesus Christ. We are to consider the offer made to us--the great High calling--the most wonderful thing ever known in all creation! We shall never have another opportunity of showing God and our Lord Jesus our zeal for righteousness and our earnestness of spirit."

R5423 On Rom. 12:1: "The term *Brethren* may be viewed from two different standpoints. On the one hand, we may apply it to those who are in the state of prospective justification, in a justified attitude of mind, and whose justification is growing by every step they take toward God. On the other hand, it would refer to those who have become brethren in the fullest sense--who have taken the step of consecration, and whose consecration has been accepted by the Father through the Lord Jesus. With these there is a continual, a daily presentation. This morning we presented ourselves before the Lord and asked His blessing on the day. It is a presentation day by day and hour by hour. It is a constant surrender of self-will, in this way and in that way--a daily waving of our offering before the Lord. So it was with our Lord Jesus. He not only made the full consecration at the beginning, but day by day He laid down His life, until the sacrifice was completed on Calvary.

For one to make a consecration of his time and his talents, and then to withhold his offering, would insure his not gaining the great prize for which the Father invited him to run. The Great Company will be made up of those who have presented their bodies, but who neglected their opportunities for laying down their lives--their time, influence, money, all--in the Lord's service. This neglect will lose them their place in the Throne, their privilege of being a part of the Bride class. The Bride will be made up of those who not only have presented their bodies in the beginning, but have faithfully continued that presentation unto death."

R3844 "When we sacrifice ourselves wholly and unreservedly it includes not merely our hearts, our wills, our intentions, but all they can control--our mortal bodies, with whatever are their belongings, health or strength, time or talent, influence or money."

R5324 "The present call of the Church is for those who have the "same mind which was

offering far too small -- far less than what we would like to render to Him who has manifested such compassion and grace toward us. And we should feel thus, even if there were no rewards attached to such a consecration of ourselves. But inasmuch as God has attached great rewards and blessings, we should feel not only that a refusal

also in Christ Jesus." It is a call for sacrificers. As St. Paul declares, "I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service." (Romans 12:1.) This sacrificing is not to be done in a foolish or aimless way. We are not to sacrifice the things that are right and proper, simply that we may suffer. Right and proper things we may enjoy, except as God shall open our eyes to see privileges and opportunities for self-denial which would enable us to forward His cause, and to minister grace and truth to those for whom Christ died."

SACRIFICE

C207 "The opportunity to walk in this narrow way of self-sacrifice for the truth's sake is the grandest privilege that was ever offered to any creature."

R1046 "Only to the one class were any of us *called*, and all who have seen the prize, and accepted the invitation *can*, if they will, make their calling and election sure, by obedience to the conditions--full, complete self-sacrifice in the service of the Lord and under his direction. Those who shall compose the "great company" of palm bearers are those who have *not done what they could*--who after having consecrated all, even while they love righteousness and desire to see the truth prosper, are unwilling to sacrifice present comforts and interests by an open warfare on behalf of the truth and against error. These, while they love the Lord and the truth, do not love ardently enough to be acknowledged and crowned as overcoming soldiers of the cross. Surely our actions speak as loudly as our words, and it is in vain that any profess great love, if when the Master and the truth are assailed and misrepresented, they specially recognized agents and ambassadors shall keep quiet and fail to protest against the error for fear of some earthly disadvantage...

Press nobly on, then, dear fellow-laborers..."Hold fast that which thou hast, let no man take thy crown." Be strong in the Lord; be valiant; yea, be also of good courage."

R1493 "OUR LORD'S SERMON ON THE MOUNT. NO. I Matt. 5... The blessed meek ones of verse 5, who shall inherit the earth, are the same class who, according to verses 10,11, are bold and courageous enough to withstand evil and error and to champion righteousness and truth: they are meek in the true sense in submitting themselves fully to the Lord, & bold in defence of His Truth..."

R5440 "*Because Thy loving kindness is better than life, my lips shall praise Thee.*"--Psalms 63:3...

This loving favor of God, which is so appreciated by the true saints, is not a favor respecting future prospects and hopes merely, but it is the blessed possession also of the present life. Gradually these come to prize

to accept would be an indication of non-appreciation of divine mercy but an indication also of weakness of mind, of judgment, which is unable to balance the trifling and transitory pleasures of self-will for a few short years, with an eternity of joy and blessing and glory, in harmony with the Lord. Z. '00-170 R2642:5

the communion and fellowship of the Lord to such a degree that any interruption of this communion produces misery of soul. It brings an aching void that nothing else can fill. This sentiment is beautifully expressed in the hymn we often sing:

"Sun of my soul, my Father dear,
I know no night when Thou art near;
O, may no earth-born cloud arise

To hide Thee from Thy servant's eyes!"
The true child of God will walk so closely with Him that nothing, however sweet or precious to the natural man, will be permitted to shut from him his Father's face. This would be esteemed a calamity with which nothing else could compare. He would rather cut off anything as dear as a right hand, or pluck out of his life anything as precious as an eye, than that it should come between himself and his Heavenly Friend, whom He has come to love above all else beside. God is truly to these the Sun of their soul, without whom life would become the blackness of night...

Are we willing to bear the hatred, the scorn, the contumely, which loyalty to the Truth brings? Is our Father's loving favor more, far more, to us than the favor and smiles of the whole world--even more, far more to us than life itself?"

R5475 "*Because Thy loving kindness [favor] is better than life, my lips shall praise Thee.*"-- Psalm 63:3.

THERE are two ways in which this text may be viewed, both of which are very proper. One way is to consider it merely from the viewpoint of the Psalmist and what he meant. The other is to consider it from the standpoint of prophecy. We understand the Prophet David to mean that to have God's favor is more desirable than life; that is to say, he would rather die than to live without Divine favor. The other way, of viewing it prophetically, is to suppose that here, as in many other places, the Psalmist represented The Christ, Jesus the Head and the Church His members.

Our consecration is unto death. God has invited us to present our bodies living sacrifices, holy and acceptable unto Him, and He has given us exceeding great and precious promises for the life to come. Therefore, because of our love for Him and for the principles of righteousness for which He stands, we are not merely willing to lay down our lives, but glad to lay them down. We are glad to lay down our human lives in doing the things that are pleasing to God."

ROMANS 12:2

(Rom 12:2 KJV) "*And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.*"

R2480 "Consider what a blessed privilege has been granted us, not only of being transformed by the renewing of our minds, that we might come more and more to know and

to strive for the good, acceptable and perfect will of God, but in addition to all this God has set before us the grandest reward imaginable for the doing of that which is merely our duty and reasonable service—the doing of that which would bring us the largest measure of joy and peace, aside from a future reward.—2 Pet. 1:3,4.”

A198 On Rom. 12:2: “Though the acceptance of the heavenly call and our consecration in obedience to it be decided at one particular moment, the bringing of every thought into harmony with the mind of God is a gradual work; it is a gradual bending heavenward of that which naturally bends earthward. The Apostle terms this process a transforming work...”

It is commonly believed that when a man is converted or turned from sin to righteousness, and from unbelief and opposition to God to reliance upon him, that is the transforming which Paul meant. Truly that is a great change—a transformation, but not *the* transformation that Paul here refers to. That is a transformation of character; but Paul refers to a transformation of nature promised to believers during the Gospel age, on certain conditions, and he was urging *believers* to fulfil those conditions.”

A202-204 “The change or transformation of mind, from earthly to heavenly, which the consecrated experience here, is the beginning of that change of nature. It is not a change of brain, nor a miracle in its changed operation, but it is the will and the bent of mind that are changed. Our will and sentiments represent our individuality; hence we are transformed, and reckoned as actually belonging to the heavenly nature, when our wills and sentiments are thus changed. True, this is but a very small beginning; but a begetting, as this is termed, is always but a small beginning; yet it is the earnest or assurance of the finished work. Eph 1:13,14...”

Referring again to Paul's words, we notice that he does not say, Do not conform yourselves to this world, but transform yourselves into the divine likeness; but he says, “*Be* not conformed,...but *be* ye transformed.” This is well expressed; for we do not either conform or transform ourselves; but we do either submit ourselves to be conformed to the world by the worldly influences, the spirit of the world around us, or submit ourselves to the will of God, the holy will or Spirit, to be transformed by heavenly influences exercised through the Word of God. You that are consecrated, to which influences are you submitting? The transforming influences lead to present sacrifice and suffering, but the end is glorious. If you are developing under these transforming influences, you are proving daily what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

Let such as have laid their all upon the altar of sacrifice continually bear in mind that, while the Word of God contains both earthly and heavenly promises, only the latter belong to us. Our treasure is in heaven: let our hearts continually be there. Our calling is not only to the spiritual nature, but to the highest order of the spiritual, the divine nature --“so much better than the angels.” (2 Pet. 1:4; Heb. 1:4) This heavenly calling is confined to the Gospel age; it was never made before it, and it will cease with its close.”

Heb 5:4 KJV “And no man taketh this honor unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron.”

Joh 6:44-45 KJV “No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day. (45) It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me.”

(Joh 1:16 Wilson Diaglott) “Four out of his fulness we all received; even Favor upon Favor.”

R1263 “FAVOR UPON FAVOR

...The human mind staggers in its endeavor to comprehend such a height of glory; yet those whose hearts are deeply in love with the Lord can appreciate the exceeding favor of the invitation to be the beloved bride of Christ, to be made like him and to be in his glorious presence forever. Amazing grace! and the wonder grows when we reflect upon the high exaltation of Christ, even beyond the glory which he had with the Father before the world was—a glory of person which is “the express image of the Father's person” (Heb. 1:3), a glory of wealth which places the whole universe at his feet as “the Heir of all things” (Heb. 1:2), a glory of power, of “all power in heaven and on earth,” a glory of office, too, which is second only to that of Jehovah, the great Emperor of the Universe (1 Cor. 15:27,28), and a glory of character which shines with all the luster of unsullied purity...

To aspire to such a height of glory without invitation would indeed be the height of presumption and folly. But when invited to it, it is our privilege to accept the favor with thanksgiving and humble endeavor to fulfill the conditions of the call. This is the high privilege of the saints of the Gospel age; but strait is the gate and narrow is the way that leadeth unto it, and *few* there be that find it.—Matt. 7:14...

Amidst the noisy clamorings of our old (human) nature, insisting on its own will and way, to some extent, at least, it is often difficult to even discover the right course in view of our consecration. But persistently to silence the old nature, and studiously to search and determine the will of the Lord in all that we do, is the finding of the “narrow way” that leads to life—to that divine life to which the saints of this age are called. “And few there be that find it,” says the Lord. How few even of those who made the covenant seem thus to studiously search for the way and humbly to walk in it.

“Oh! 'tis a pathway rough to choose,

A struggle hard to share,

For human pride would still refuse

The nameless trials there.

“But though we know the gate is low

That leads to heavenly bliss,

What higher grace could God bestow

Than such a hope as this?”

There is only one way for any to do who would keep in this narrow way of sacrifice even unto death, and that is what Paul directs, “Forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, to press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus”—“lay aside every weight and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and run *with patience* the race that is set before

us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith,” and considering him, how he endured, lest we be wearied and faint in our minds. (Phil. 3:13; Heb. 12:1-3.)

If we keep looking at the things behind, we lose sight of the heavenly things and begin to over-estimate the earthly, and to correspondingly discount the heavenly. In other words, we begin to be conformed to this world. The Apostle says, “Be ye not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed;” let your minds be continually turned heavenward.

However difficult and thorny the path may be, forget not the privilege of walking in it.”

SACRIFICE

Q612:1 QUESTION (1916) – 1 -- Kindly explain what is meant by the term sacrifice, and what constitutes sacrifice...

ANSWER...After we, as old creatures, reach the point where we desire to become God's people, we devote our lives to the Lord and ask that He accept us. Thus we bring ourselves to the great High Priest whom God has appointed, and offer ourselves to Him.

The Bible makes a limitation as to what constitutes sacrifice, and shows that only a priest can offer sacrifices lawfully. Since we come as sinners, not priests, we can only offer ourselves to the great High Priest, Jesus. He accepts us, justifies us through His own merit, and thus makes us acceptable to the Father... This sacrifice of our human nature with all its rights and privileges is made once and forever. Thenceforth we are counted dead as human beings, but alive as New Creatures. This New Creature is to grow in grace, in knowledge, in love. It is not to be sacrificed.

What, then, is to be sacrificed after we become New Creatures? We reply: The old creature is counted dead, both by God and by ourselves; but although *reckoned* dead, it is *actually* alive. Therefore it is the New Creature's business to keep the old nature on the altar, upon which the great High Priest has put it. In other words, the New Creature must keep the old nature dead, hold it in subjection. When our flesh is brought into contact with the fires of experience for its consumption, it is the old creature that weeps, not the New Creature. Let the goat weep if it will. The New Creature will rejoice in the Lord and in His providential care, as daily it grows in grace and in knowledge...(1 Cor. 9:27)...

We recall with comfort and encouragement the case of St. Paul and Silas in prison at Philippi. While their flesh was lacerated with the whipping they had received, yet they rejoiced in spirit and were able to sing praises to God. (Acts 16:26.) Thus should it be with us as New Creatures. While the flesh suffers, the spirit should rejoice always, as saith the Word of God. (Philippians 4:4.) We rejoice because God's favor and blessing are with us as New Creatures.”

We should endeavor to forget earthly things...Do not talk too much about your painful experiences... Forget the things that are behind.” ...Let the old nature with all its interests, die daily...

Of course, there are times in the Testimony Meetings when it would be proper to tell how the Lord has brought us out of our difficulties, trials and sufferings... Speaking

about his own sufferings on one occasion, the Apostle Paul said, "I speak as a fool." (2Cor. 11:23.) ...The Apostle was narrating his experiences for our benefit, not as a matter of boasting... We might be excusable in raking up some past experience and relating it, if thereby we might do good to someone. Otherwise we had better bury it, let it remain hidden from sight forever. "Ye are dead, and your lives are hid with Christ in God."—Col. 3:3."

R3266 "Nothing can be acceptably sacrificed to the Lord that is not of itself right, just, proper... We can in the interests of peace sacrifice our preferences to the wishes of others if we see some good can be gained by such a course; as, for instance, the preservation of the peace of the home or the opportunity of winning our opponent to the Truth, or any good cause. Such sacrifices are pleasing to the Lord, who instructs us through the Apostle that, so far as in us lies, we should live peaceably with all men; and that we should rather suffer wrong and take injury from a brother in Christ than take the matter before the world of unbelievers and thus risk a general odium upon the Lord's cause.--Rom. 12:18; 1 Cor. 6:7.

We have known cases, however, where dear brethren in the interests of peace and harmony yielded their rights--and properly enough where no principle was involved--but who, nevertheless, held a kind of grudge against those to whom they had yielded, feeling that somehow or other they had been defrauded of their rights. This is wrong, and indicates that the sacrifice was not fully made. If the matter in dispute had been fully sacrificed, as unto the Lord, there would surely have been no room for feeling that it had been taken from them. Under such circumstances the Lord's dear followers would do well to make haste to cast out of their minds anything akin to resentment and the feeling that they had been deprived of their just rights, and, instead, to take into their hearts that they had fully, freely, absolutely given up the matter in the interests of peace and it was dead, buried forever, with no resentment toward any one, but, on the contrary, with the feeling of joy and rejoicing that this matter had been sacrificed to the Lord, to the interests of the home or the Church or what not, because they believed that it would be pleasing, acceptable to him, and, therefore, their reasonable service.

We are to remember that we have each but one sacrifice; that it is to be rendered to the Lord day by day in the improvement of every opportunity, as it comes to us, to serve him and his... When we gave our wills, our hearts, we gave our all; and any holding back in any of the little affairs of life -- any refusal to sacrifice that which we think would please the Lord--is a keeping

back of that much of what we have devoted to him.

The Lord is very patient toward us, and gives us repeated opportunities to accomplish the work of sacrifice; but it must be accomplished, our wills must be slain, must be submitted to the Lord's will, else we shall never attain to joint-heirship with him in the Kingdom--never become members of the overcoming Royal Priesthood. He graciously gives us line upon line, lesson upon lesson, respecting this subject; shows it to us in his Word from different standpoints, impressing upon us the necessity of being dead to self and alive toward God through Jesus Christ our Lord--the necessity of developing the various graces of the Spirit which are implied in this sacrificing work. Every one who will be a sacrificer must of necessity be meek, humble, teachable, else very shortly he will get out of the way. He must also learn to develop the grace of the Lord along the line of patience, because it certainly requires patience to deny ourselves and to submit at times to injustice where there is no proper means of avoiding it without doing injury to the Lord's cause or to some of his people. It also implies a cultivation of brotherly kindness and, in a word, the development of the whole will of God in our hearts and lives; namely, love, which must be attained in a large and overcoming measure ere we shall have completed our earthly work of sacrificing.

In our studies of the "Tabernacle Shadows of Better Sacrifices," we saw that every one who took part in the priesthood was required to wash his hands and feet at the laver. We saw that the laver represented the Word, or message of God, and that the water, therefore, represented the Truth; and thus it is the Truth which is to cleanse the Royal Priesthood from the defilements of the flesh. As a whole we are clean, being covered with the robe of Christ's righteousness; but in our contact with the world we are to seek to put away the defilements of earth which come to us in connection with our daily walk and service, represented by our feet and our hands... In the verses 1 to 3 {1Pet 2:1-3}, inclusive, he mentions that those who would be Royal Priests must lay aside "all malice and all guile and hypocrisies, and envies and all evil speakings." As the sacrificing requires all of the present life, so the washing requires all the present life; and only those who both wash and sacrifice will be accepted into the glorious Royal Priesthood of the future...

How "close girdling" are these sins that are mentioned--how many of the prospective members of the Royal Priesthood find that they have defilements along this line, malice, guile, hypocrisy, envy, evil speaking! It is safe to say that every one has some, if not all of these weaknesses in the flesh to contend with--especially at the be-

ginning of his entrance upon the priestly vocation. How carefully all should seek to put all these away! how each should scrutinize, not only every act of life and every word and every thought, but, additionally, every motive underlying his words, thoughts and actions, so that they may be more and more purified from the earth defilements and be more and more acceptable to the Lord!

With our very best endeavors we may never get entirely free from all of these "close girdling" sins while still in the flesh; but one thing is sure--the heart must be free from them, else we can never be accepted as members of the glorious priesthood. The heart must be so completely filled with the love of God that it will feel a repugnance to all of these evils, which are repulsive to the divine mind; and happy for us it is that God has promised to accept such a condition of our hearts, and that knowing the imperfections of the flesh with which we contend, he is not requiring that we shall attain to absolute flesh perfection...

What we have seen respecting the perfect love which must dominate our hearts in order to enable us to complete our sacrifice in the Lord, is not so different from the Lord's requirements respecting all his creatures. There could be no angel of heaven acceptable to the Father without this spirit of love, of devotion, which, if the conditions in heaven were similar to the conditions now in the earth, would prompt and inspire all of the Lord's faithful angels to do good to the needy ones even at the cost of self-sacrifice and inconvenience. We can see that the same law of love must ultimately be required of the world of mankind...

The peculiarity, then, of this present time and of the Church's position in it, is the fact that we are begotten to the new mind, the new will, the new spirit and law of love, while still sin and death prevail around us. Hence to us living under present conditions, in contact with the weaknesses and imperfections and trials of others, it becomes, necessarily, an evidence of the new mind that, seeing these conditions, we should be permitted to make sacrifices on behalf of the brethren and on behalf of all men as we have opportunity. These indeed are severe testings and trials... They are more severe testings also than are brought to bear upon the holy angels, who, although possessing this love, have not the weaknesses and imperfections of the flesh, the fallen nature, to contend with in its exercise, and who, therefore, can gain no such victory as the Church of Christ is called upon to fight for and by the grace of her Lord to win.

It is on this account that the Lord has attached to this "little flock," now being selected under these self-sacrificing conditions, so great a reward..."

R2642 (From Harvest Truth Database V5.0)
FULL ASSURANCE OF FAITH

"Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever." --Psalm 23:6

Saint Paul speaks of the full assurance of hope and of full assurance of faith, as being the proper conditions for the Lord's people. (Heb. 6:11; 10:22.) And this is the thought expressed by the Prophet, in our text--full confidence that he who has begun a good work in us is both able and willing to complete it. (Phil. 1:6.) But how few Christians, comparatively, have this full assurance of faith; how few can say, Surely, undoubtedly, goodness and mercy shall follow me henceforth through life, and by God's grace I ultimately shall gain the heavenly Kingdom and the glorious things which God has prom-

ised to them that love him! The few who can enter fully into sympathy with the Apostle and Prophet in these expressions have therein a great joy, a great blessing, a great rest of heart which others do not possess. Let us therefore inquire why it is that the number who thus enter into the rest of faith is so small. What are the hindrances to the others, and how can those hindrances be removed, that a larger number of the Lord's people may enjoy their patrimony?

The hindrances are of two kinds: (1) Many who are on the Lord's side, and who have been greatly blessed of him, and who

have made considerable progress in the knowledge of the truth, and who are trusting in the merit of the Lord Jesus' sacrifice as the only hope of a future life, and who are thus justified, have nevertheless failed to take the second step necessary to their full induction into sonship in God's family and into joint-heirship with Christ to all the exceeding great and precious promises which extend only to those who become his sons. This step, essential to becoming sons and joint-heirs, is the purpose of full consecration--the full surrender of our own wills, including all the aims and objects and purposes of life, and including also all that we have in the way of time, influence, means, reputation, etc. Not having taken this step, not having taken up the cross to follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth, this large class very properly feels that it is questionable to what extent the Lord's promises, either for the life that now is or for the life that is to come, belong to them. And in this they are right; for none of the promises, present or future, belong to them, nor to any, until they have come under the terms of a full self-surrender, consecration, presenting their bodies living sacrifices to God, holy, acceptable, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Our advice to these, then, is that realizing the situation they do not longer delay, but hasten at once to avail themselves of the greatest privilege that could possibly be offered, even by the Almighty. If they stand still they are, in the language of the Apostle, receiving the grace of God in vain--failing to use it. (2 Cor. 6:1) God's grace, as freely bestowed upon those who have come to a knowledge of the redemption which is in Christ Jesus, is the grace of the forgiveness of sins, of justification through faith; and the very object of this grace is to *permit* or *qualify* us to become living sacrifices, acceptable to God's altar through the great sacrifice of our Redeemer.

Whoever, therefore, shall advance thus far and know of his privilege, and yet refuse to present his little all, has failed to be constrained by the love of Christ, has failed to appreciate the divine favor bestowed upon him, and manifests this failure by his neglect to use his opportunities, by his neglect to sacrifice the imperfect fragment of this present life, that he might obtain in exchange the great prize of glory, honor and immortality, and joint-heirship with Jesus in the Kingdom: such receive God's grace in vain, profiting nothing by it over and above the world, which as yet lies in darkness and blindness.

What should such do? They should at once resolve that ⁽¹⁾to render all they have to the Lord's service is not only a reasonable thing, but an offering far too small--far less than what they would like to render to him who has manifested such compassion and grace toward us. And we should feel thus, even if there were no rewards attached to such a consecration of ourselves. But inasmuch as God has attached great rewards and blessings, we should feel not only that a refusal to accept would be an indication of non-appreciation of divine mercy, but an indication also of a weakness of mind, of judgment, which is unable to balance the trifling and transitory pleasures of self-will for a few short years, with an eternity of joy and blessing and glory, in harmony with the Lord.

And more than this, the consecrated are the only ones who really fully and truly enjoy this present life, for they indeed have a peace of heart which the world can neither give nor take away--a condition which all the world is coveting and seeking after, but finding not because they seek it not in the Lord's way of full self-surrender to him. We urge, then, upon the class now addressed that they promptly make their covenant with the Lord, and thus become heirs of his good promises pertaining to the life that now is, and also of that which is to come, and that thus they lay the *foundation* for entering into "full assurance of the faith" and full assurance of the hope that God's mercy and goodness shall follow them all the days of the present life, and that they shall dwell in the heavenly home forever.

(2) But amongst those who are real Christians, and who have made a full covenant of sacrifice unto the Lord, we find many who say, and more who think it without saying,--"O that I could feel sure that God's goodness and mercy would continue with me all the days of my life, and that I should attain unto his Kingdom! O that I might have a full assurance of faith, a full assurance that I am accepted of the Lord, and that by his grace I shall ultimately be an overcomer!" What is the difficulty with this class? Why is it that these do not possess this full assurance of faith? We answer, that their difficulty is a lack of faith in God, and such a lack of faith is not pleasing to God, for "without faith it is impossible to please God." Such a lack of faith, moreover, is a constant hindrance to their overcoming, as it is written, "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." The Christian who has not the shield of faith, and a large one,

is continually at disadvantage before the Adversary.--Heb. 11:6; 1 John 5:4.

⁽²⁾What must be done to overcome this lack of faith, and to have an increase of faith? We answer, that like the apostles of old he should pray, "Lord, increase our faith." And then, acting in harmony with this prayer, each should *cultivate* faith in his own heart: (a) By refreshing his memory continually with the divine promises, becoming very familiar with these in the Father's Word. (b) He should seek more and more to remember that having made his covenant with the Lord these promises are his, and in his heart and with his lips he should claim them as his before the Lord in prayer with thanksgiving. He should claim them as his in his own thoughts, and in his conferences on holy things with the brethren.

When trials or difficulties or perplexities arise, he should think of these promises, remembering that they *belong* to him--because God has promised them to such as love him--who have made a covenant by self-sacrifice. (Psa. 50:5; Mal. 3:17.) He should resolve henceforth to trust the word of the heavenly Father implicitly. Thus, if some seeming accident befall him, let him call to his mind the promise that "All things work together for good to them that love God, to them that are called according to his purpose," and assure himself that the seeming accident would not have occurred had God not seen a way to make it the channel of a needed lesson or blessing. Let him refresh his mind with the thought that he comes under the provisions of this promise because he loves the Lord, and so loved him as to make a full consecration of himself to him; thus he is assured that this promise was intended for him.

Let such also remember the language of the Apostle, that if God loved us while we were yet sinners, so that he provided for us the great salvation in Christ Jesus our Lord, much more does he love us now, since we have been justified through faith in the great atonement, and have made a full consecration of ourselves to him, and thus come under the terms of adoption into his family. ⁽³⁾Let him remember too, that he who has begun the good work changes never, and that if our hearts are still in harmony with him, if our faith is still clear and firm in the great atonement, if our consecration is still full and complete, so that we seek not our own wills but his will to be done in our affairs, then we may indeed have the full assurance of faith, because knowing that God is unchangeable, and knowing that we are still in line with his promises and arrangements, we know that all of his gracious providences are still being exercised on our behalf. This is full assurance of faith--full confidence in the Lord.

(3) It is possible, however, for the true Christian who has taken the step of justification and the step of consecration and adoption into God's family, and who has had the blessing of full assurance of faith--it is possible for such to lose this, if he become overcharged with the cares of this life, cold and indifferent as respects the Lord, his Kingdom, his brethren, his cause, etc. Such, of course, should not have a full assurance of faith; God does not intend it for them, but rather intends that if we leave the proper consecrated attitude we should also lose the joys and consolations which belong to it. And this is not merely as a retribution or punishment, but designed specially to awaken us to a realization of what we are losing, to the intent that such as have "lost their first love" may be revived, may renew their consecration vows, and thus return to the Lord, who will abundantly pardon, and restore unto them the joys of his salvation.

So then, reviewing our text, we say that this assurance of faith that God's goodness and mercy will follow us all the days of our lives, and that we shall ultimately by his grace attain to the Kingdom, is for the class mentioned in this Psalm, viz., the Lord's sheep--those who are following him, and who are having the experiences outlined in this Psalm. One of these experiences is that following the Shepherd they are not left to hunger and thirst, but are bountifully supplied in the green pastures and by the still waters of the truth. Moreover, it applies to those who experience the Shepherd's care, his rod and staff, correcting, reproving or guiding them. Such sheep as learn to love and have confidence in the Shepherd and in his guidance, and to take comfort and blessing out of all the afflictions and trials of life which may be permitted to come upon them, realizing that they are providential, and for their blessing--such continue to follow the Shepherd, continue to have the experiences of sheep, and may rejoice with full assurance of faith that he who began the good work of shepherding them and leading them out from the byways of sin and of selfishness into the full blessing of the heavenly Father, will continue this work and complete it, if they abide in him.--John 15:4-6.

⁽¹⁾ Nov. 6 Manna, Rom. 12:1

⁽²⁾ Feb. 8 Manna, Mat. 14:31

⁽³⁾ Nov. 5 Manna, Heb. 10:21-22