



GOD'S BLESSING UPON HIS PEOPLE

Conditions Positive for Having and for Abiding Under This Benediction.

WHAT THIS MEANS TO SPIRITUAL ISRAEL—NOT EARTHLY PROSPERITY AND LUXURIES, BUT FAVOR, REST, PROTECTION, JOY—THOSE THUS BLESSED MUST BE SYMPATHETIC AND HELPFUL—THE ONLY TRUE GOSPEL—THE NEW COMMANDMENT—THE CHRISTIAN'S PROPER LOYALTY TO HIS KING AND TO HIS COMRADES—CULTIVATION OF THANKFULNESS ESSENTIAL.

DAYTON, OHIO, May 14.—Pastor Russell spoke here today from the text, "The Lord bless thee and keep thee; the Lord make His face shine upon thee and be gracious unto thee; the Lord lift up His countenance upon thee and give thee peace." (Numbers 6:24-26.) He said:

While many blessings were pronounced in olden times upon the natural Israelites, we are not to forget that natural Israel was a picture of spiritual Israel. All of God's blessings to the natural seed of Abraham are still abundantly applicable to the Church of Christ, which is the spiritual seed of Abraham. If the Lord shall bless us, will it mean that we shall have temporal prosperity? This is by no means certain; for temporal prosperity is not the promise to spiritual Israel. To this class the blessing of the Lord is of a far higher kind than this.—1 Corinthians 10:11; Galatians 3:29; John 16:33.

The Lord's blessing was very richly with our Lord Jesus Christ and with His Apostles. Yet they did not have fine houses or chariots or great luxury of any kind. Therefore in wishing you the blessing of the Lord we are not wishing you earthly prosperity, but rather whatever the Lord may see best to give you as His children. The Bible treats the Church of Christ from the standpoint of a New Creation. Not according to the flesh, but according to the spirit, does our God deal with us. The Bible keeps before our minds continually the thought that those who have consecrated their hearts and their lives to the Lord are dead, so far as the flesh is concerned. (Romans 8:10; Ephesians 2:15; Colossians 3:3.) They are to be dead to fleshly hopes, ambitions and pursuits, but alive toward God, alive to the Heavenly promises and ambitions, alive to the glory, honor and immortality promised to the faithful overcomers, alive to the things which God has set before us in His Word. To this class our text is applicable.

The thought of having the light of God's countenance upon us is a beautiful one. It means that He will look graciously toward us, will give us His favor, His protection, His blessings; that there shall be rest and peace in our hearts. It is inspiring to think that the Almighty One who inhabiteth Eternity is our Father; and that He is prepared to do for us everything that could be expected from an almighty, gracious, loving Father—provided that we are His children, that we have accepted His terms in Christ.

It does matter to us, therefore, whether men shall bless us or whether they shall curse us. They cursed both our Lord Jesus and His Apostles. Moreover, it was largely the chief religionists who did this. Our Lord said, "If the world hate you, ye know that it hated Me before it hated you." This hate came particularly from the religious world. "If ye were of the world," the Master continued, "the world would love its own; but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you."—John 15:18-25; 1 John 3:11-13.

GOD SPEAKS STRONG CHARACTERS.
Our Lord proceeds to tell us that it is only a natural thing that darkness should be opposed to light. It has always been so, both physically and morally. Physical darkness cannot be in the same place with light; for the light swallows up the darkness, so to speak. Spiritual light works in the

same way. If not quenched, it will scatter the darkness. In proportion, therefore, as your life emanates the light, in the home, at your work, or in any other place, there will be opposition from those who are under the dominion of the Prince of Darkness. (John 3:19-11; 1 John 2:8-11.) This class do not wish to have the light reveal and thus rebuke their darkness, do not wish to have the Lord's way; for they have plans and projects of their own that would be thwarted by the way of the Lord.

But it is not for us to succumb to opposition. On the contrary, we are to overcome, to be faithful to the light, and to let it shine before men. Only to the overcomer is the proposition made that he shall sit down with Christ in His Throne. (Revelation 3:21.) The Lord is not looking for a company of weaklings, without moral and spiritual backbone. Those who will sit with Him on the Throne must receive the new spirit, the new disposition, the new mind, the mind of Christ, and must maintain it.

While these overcomers will not be contentious in the objectionable sense of the word, they will nevertheless "contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints," as the Apostle enjoins. (Jude 3.) This they will not do with fleshly bitterness, however, for at the same time they will be developing the fruits of the Holy Spirit—patience, meekness, gentleness, long-suffering, brotherly kindness, love. (Galatians 5:22, 23.) These are the fruits that must appear in those who have received the Spirit of God.

Our main overcoming is in ourselves. We are to rule our spirit, to exercise self-control, to "be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might." We are to overcome our own natural preferences, our weaknesses, the spirit of the world in ourselves. This is our first victory. Then there are things that we are to overcome in the way of opposition from the Adversary and his servants. (Romans 6:16.) We may never "give place to the Devil," never yield to that which would be in opposition to the Lord and His Cause. But we are to be ready to lay down our lives in support of "the Truth as it is in Christ Jesus." We are not to contend about little matters that are purely personal, and that would not affect the Truth. We should be ready to waive any personal preferences where no principle of righteousness is involved. But where principle is at stake, we must stand fast. We may not compromise principle.

RESPONSIBILITY UPON CHRISTIANS.
When we look back to the time when the bishops of the Church began to call themselves "apostolic bishops," we can see what injury the compromising spirit has wrought in the world. Then it was that the Divine arrangement was set aside, and the creeds of men were substituted for God's Word. The Apostle Paul says, "The Word of God is sufficient, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto every good work." (2 Timothy 3:16, 17.) No matter who may seek to teach us, we must not receive the teaching except as it is proved to be in full accord with the Word of God. Men have been in error in the past, and often are in error now.

We are to look for a "thus saith the Lord" to be back of all teachers and teachings. If any one comes to us with any doctrine that cannot be proved by the words of our Lord Jesus or of the Apostles or of the Prophets, we should not accept it. St. Paul warns, "Though an angel from Heaven preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed." (Galatians 1:6-9.) Even the angels are not authorized to be the teachers of the Church, as shown in the Word of God.

As we seek to be overcomers, seek to be wholly faithful to the Lord, and as we trust His promises, we abide in His love. As our Lord Jesus said, "If ye keep My commandments, ye shall abide in My love." (John 15:10.) He did not force these commandments upon us. He merely pointed out to us the opportunity and the privilege of becoming His disciples. Then we voluntarily said, "Dear Lord, we desire to be Thy disciples. We desire to give up all earthly interests in order that we may share with Thee in Thy sacrifice. Enroll us amongst Thy followers—this is our prayer." After we have been accepted of the Lord, He says to us, "Now, in harmony with your request, I give you these commandments. They are your instructions as to how to walk in My ways. If you wish to

be faithful disciples and to continue in My love, keep these injunctions." While our Lord endorsed the Ten Commandments given to Natural Israel, He made it plain that the essence of them all was contained in the one broad command, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy mind, with all thy soul, and with all thy strength; and thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.—Matthew 22:37-40; Luke 10:27.

THE "NEW COMMANDMENT."
To His disciples the Master said, "A new commandment I give unto you." (John 13:34, 35.) This was an additional commandment, which went beyond the Law; for it means sacrificial love. "Greater love hath no man this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." (John 15:13.) This is the love which our Lord Jesus had for us. If we have the same love for the brethren that He manifested, then we have the self-sacrificing love. The Apostle John says, "Hereby perceive we the love of God, because He (Christ) laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. (1 John 3:16.) Our Master laid down His life for us. This is the measure of His love; and we are to love as He loved."

If we are true disciples, true followers of the Master, we shall be willing to lay down our lives for the brethren. We are to love and to desire to help all who love the Lord. We are to be forbearing and long-suffering with their frailties. Otherwise we cannot remain under the benediction of our text.

The Apostle Paul says that if we bite and devour one another we are in danger of being consumed one of another. (Galatians 5:15.) There would be a continual clash and warfare; and we would die as New Creatures. In order to glide along together without much friction we need much of the lubricating oil of the Holy Spirit. More and more we should learn to appreciate the good qualities of the Lord's people, to learn the lesson that if God shows favor to any one we have sufficient reason for loving that one.

Whether or not we can see anything to admire in another of the Lord's people is another question. No matter how uncounted one may be according to the flesh, we must love him and be patient with him until he learns to do better; for we must recognize that the Lord must have seen honesty of heart there or He would not have received that one as His child. This does not mean that we are to ignore serious faults in the brethren, and to make no kindly effort to assist them to overcome their weaknesses and blemishes; but as long as they give evidence of trying to do the Lord's will we should be patient, sympathetic and brotherly with them.

THOUGHTS OF CHRIST'S SOLDIERS.
There are many lessons which the children of God may learn from the armies of the warring European nations. What heroism those soldiers are manifesting as they fight for their various countries! Because of patriotism or some other motive, those men over there endure most terrible conditions. If men will thus endure for love of country, what should the Lord's people be willing to endure for the Heavenly country? If these soldiers do such things for earthly kings, princes, and captains, what shall we do for the great Ruler of the Universe, who is our Captain and King? How shall we fulfil our obligation as soldiers of the Cross of Christ?

As we consider how these soldiers of the warring armies labor under such unfavorable circumstances and conditions as are reported from time to time, in contrast with the favorable conditions which we enjoy, we should feel an increase of courage. We should be ashamed of anything like cowardice, of anything of disloyalty, when we see these earthly soldiers, without any such hope as inspires the soldiers of the Cross, without the backing of the Holy Spirit, yet displaying such courage and loyalty to their rulers. If they so endure, "what manner of person ought we to be?"—2 Peter 3:11.

No matter what may have been their station in life, when these soldiers get into the ranks they are fighting for one general cause. If they had difficulties with one another before, this is all left behind in their desire to serve the common cause. In their fight against the common foe they must stand together; for they are enlisted under the direction of one commander, and they are fighting for the one ruler.

Likewise the followers of our Lord Jesus are all soldiers under one great Captain—our Lord. We are all enlisted under the banner of the Heavenly King, not for a few years, but until death. We have a common foe; and we are all children of one Father. We have not entered upon this warfare to escape hardship and trial. It is a battle all the way down to the close of our earthly life.

What should be our course, then? In our dealings with the brethren, should we not deal in holiness, helpfulness, in sympathy, in love? Do we not all have trials of our own? Do not the brethren have trials and difficulties also? Then let us be loyal to them and to our King. "Let us show forth the praises of Him who hath called us out of darkness into His marvelous light," by being true soldiers in the army of Christ.

CLOSING WORDS OF BENEDICTION.
May the blessing of our text be our portion. May "the Lord bless thee and keep thee." May each one of us enjoy the blessing of the Lord day by day! But should any one desire to leave Him at any time, He will hold such a one back; for it was by giving

up our own will that we were accepted by the Lord at all. Our remaining with Him is altogether a voluntary matter.

"The Lord make His face to shine upon thee and be gracious unto thee. The Lord lift up His countenance upon thee and give thee peace." As the Scriptures show, the peace of God is not that peace which comes from having no enemies to overcome, no difficulties to surmount. We have enemies within and without; and we shall have them down to the end of our sojourning in the flesh. The Master said, "Peace I leave with you; My peace I give unto you; not as the world giveth, give I unto you." (John 14:27.) He then declared that His peace would be of a kind that we might have in the midst of affliction and tribulations.

"Let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one Body; and be ye thankful," urges the Apostle Paul. (Colossians 3:15.) We have great reason to cultivate thankfulness. The more we study the matter, the more we shall see how much we have to thank God for. If our hearts are filled with gratitude, all murmuring and repining will be crowded out; for there will be so much discerned for which to praise the Lord that there will be no room for ingratitude. As we go onward in the narrow way, we should note all of our blessings, both great and small. If we have trials, difficulties and perplexities, we should realize that these are all working out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. Thus will the Lord bless us and cause His face to shine upon us. Thus will He lift up His countenance upon us and give us peace.

We trust that more and more we are coming to appreciate this peace of God, which passes all human understanding. May the Lord grant each of us more and more the wisdom, grace, strength and peace needful to enable us to press on in the narrow way to the end of our course! "Faithful is He who hath called you, who also will do it." He will do "exceeding abundantly above all that we can ask or think, according to the riches of His grace" and His loving-kindness in Christ Jesus our Lord. Blessed are they that put their trust in Him!

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NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN, That all remonstrances against the issuance of Licenses to said Applicants must be filed with the undersigned WITHIN TWENTY DAYS after the filing of the Applications.
LLOYD L. SHAFFER, Clerk.
FILED FRIDAY, MAY 5, 1916.
CARL A. KAEFFER—Place of business, 99 East Union St., Frostburg, Md. Residence, Frostburg. Owner of premises, George H. Wittig.