

# BIBLE LIGHT AND TRUTH

## Reflections on Scripture

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CHRISTADELPHIANS ONLINE

“SEEK FIRST THE KINGDOM OF GOD AND HIS

RIGHTEOUSNESS” MATT 6:23

### OUR CALLING: PHILIPPIANS 3: 13-14

Our calling in Christ Jesus is high for we have been called to be sons of God. In proportion to the extent we recognise and appreciate the value of the things to which we are called, we will strive to obtain the prize of our high calling. We see how the Apostle Paul valued this high calling, “Reaching forth unto these things which are before I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.” He counted those things loss which were once gain to him, and gladly suffered the loss of all temporal things that he might win Christ. Do we make great sacrifices in order to win Christ? Do we make small ones even? And do we make them gladly, even joyfully?

Yet the Apostle, though willing to give up all the things of this life, admitted that he had not yet arrived at the perfect standard in Jesus Christ. He still needed to press on, to make every effort to reach after the prize. He likened the struggle to a race, with the goal to be aimed for being “Perfection.” We must struggle to reach the same goal, “Be ye followers of me even as I am of Christ,” said Paul. The ideal standard is high, but it is impossible for the ideal in spiritual things to be too high. The goal is “perfection” – to be Christ-like.

It is the height of folly to ignore the fact that this is the standard by which we shall be judged. Not as to whether we are better or worse than others, but according to the amount of effort we make to

attain to being Christ-like. But we may very often say despondently, “It’s hopeless in my case I know. I can never approach anywhere near to such a standard,” and so we become discouraged because of our failings, thinking the race too difficult.

It is a difficult one, and it calls for the quality of endurance. But endurance is largely a quality which can be developed. As an athlete goes through many and varied forms of exercise to develop the body, planning his diet and habits with a view to retaining physical fitness, so it must be with things spiritual. Endurance in the race towards perfection of character can be cultivated with due attention to the nourishment provided and the exercise prescribed by God’s Word.

Physical fitness and endurance, is the secret to an athlete’s success. Let us apply the hint to ourselves and ensure that we are doing all that lies within our power to develop the quality of endurance in spiritual things. The Apostle gives us valuable advice in writing to the Romans. Paul appeals to the believers to present themselves as living sacrifices to God, and then adds, “Not slothful in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord. Rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation, continuing instant in prayer” Rom 12:11. Rejoicing, patience, constant prayer, what incentives to endurance!

**Rejoicing:** Yes, our hope calls for rejoicing, though,

perhaps, at times we may be in heaviness through manifold temptations. Yet faith and hope will shine brightly through the clouds and dispel them with thoughts of real comfort.

**Patience:** James writes that “the testing of your faith produces patience. But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing” James 1:3. Patience or endurance is a vital component of faith.

**Prayer:** What an aid to endurance is prayer. We all fail at times and shall probably be burdened with an overpowering sense of our own unworthiness. If approval depended upon our own righteousness we should be without hope indeed. But like Paul, we seek to be found in Christ, not having our own righteousness but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith.

If encouragement to persevere is ever needed just think upon our calling and the promises: “He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away.” Rev 21:3-4

Called to be sons of God, what more could we ever want!



### Commandments of Christ

*Set your affections upon Christ, and not upon the present world as all (Col. 3:1-4; 1 John 2:15).*

Daily life brings many temptations and all too often we ignore the voice of conscience. But if we are to use our talents wholeheartedly in Christ’s service then we have to demonstrate affection for Him in all aspects of everyday life.

Paul writes: “If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.” Col 3:1-2

A mind focused upon Christ and diligently seeking after His Kingdom, will always put Him first. Thus John writes: “Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.” 1John:15

Love for the world and love for Christ are mutually exclusive, we cannot love both! We can gain the temporary things of this world or we can have Christ, but we cannot have both!

A conscience trained by the Word will help us to set our affections upon the Lord Jesus Christ and our actions will demonstrate our love for Him in all aspects of daily life, both big and small.

Adapted

AP



Jesus said:

**"If you love me, you will obey what I command."**

### *Strange Lands*

We wander in strange lands,  
Strange gods around us rise,  
But yonder, o'er the seas,  
Our Tower of Refuge lies.

High altars rise around,  
And thousands boweth  
there:  
"Oh, give us wealth," they  
cry,  
"And pleasure for our share."

And Other Sheep unto  
Their Bethels take their way;  
But Truth shall never light  
their eyes  
Till cometh Zion's Day.

We wander in strange lands,  
Our country far away;  
Oh, soon our eyes shall see  
the land  
Of God's eternal Day.  
(J. Paton, 1923)

### **THE WORD**

Love the Word of God: Psalm 119: 140.

Search the Word of God: John 5: 39.

Understand the Word of God: Luke 24: 44-45.

Meditate on the Word of God: Psalm 1: 2.

Live up to the Word of God: Joshua 1: 8.

Why? "Your word is a lamp to my feet And a light to my path." Psalm 119:105

DANIEL and his three friends, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, had been taken by Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, to his city Babylon, into his palace. He wanted young men of ability to take on the Chaldean language and learning, so that after 3 years' training they might "stand before the king". To feed them suitably he appointed them a daily portion of the king's meat and wine.

But Daniel, being a Jewish prince, knew that other nations ate all kinds of meat which were "unclean" to the Jews; and also knew that the meat and wine would first have been offered to the Babylonian god Marduk (Merodach) or Nebo (son of Marduk). So he requested that they be given "pulse" to eat and water to drink.

## THE SEA OF GALILEE

The word "pulse" is explained as "seeds", "vegetables", and Bagster's Bible explains it as "leguminous plants, which are not reaped, but plucked"—and leguminous plants are those which have pods—so we can understand them as being of the pea and bean family—which includes quite a variety. In early times Jacob "sod pottage" which was made of red lentils — and one meal was enough to restore Esau's strength!

After 10 days on this diet (green beans may have been served with a little fresh olive oil, as in Crete, even today)—these four young men were seen to be "fairer and fatter" than those which ate the meat and drank the wine. The king's servant, Melzar, (who had been afraid of the king's hasty temper if the young men

looked poorly) agreed that their vegetable meals could continue.

And after 3 years' training, there were none to match these four young men for wisdom and understanding.

Leguminous plants are not only beneficial to man, but are also beneficial to the soil. Certain bacteria in the soil attach themselves to the roots of the plants and make nodules on the roots, where they "fix" the nitrogen in the soil. So if you grow peas and beans, at the end of the season the botanist's advice is—cut down the tops, but don't pull up the roots. Leave them in the soil to release the nitrogen for following green crops!

Sis D. Oakley

## BEING TRIED AND PURIFIED

THE wisdom of daily reading becomes more and more apparent. This lesson cannot be too strongly enforced, or too distinctly apprehended among those who have fled to lay hold of the refuge set before them in the Gospel. Their life depends upon it.

They are in danger of being blinded to it. Away from it, they are open to a hundred plausible deceptions which lay hold with a death-grip all the more fatal because soft and sweet. Spiritual decay potently prevails where the reading of the Word is neglected. A lamentable mistake is made by those who conclude they have not time to read.

What should we say of persons concluding they had no time to take their food? No more insane would this be than the other hallucination in its ultimate effect. Man lives

not by bread alone. He may live an animal life by bread alone; but animal life is a brief affair.

There comes a life afterwards that springs from the Word now stored into the heart; and deceived is the individual who excludes the Word of God from his daily consumption on the plea that he has "no time." What is he so busy about?

What should we say of a man in the cabin of a sinking ship, who should neglect the preparations for the life boat on the plea that affairs in the cabin left him no time?

This is a dying life — dying, dying, dying; and slaves of death are those who allow its transient concerns so to fill their heads and hearts as to shut out the "one thing needful."

A wise man will not be found perishing so. He will not be

cheated on any pretext, out of that bread which shall be unto him "life everlasting." If he is ever so poor or ever so close worked, he will find at least twenty minutes a day, to sit at the shrine of God, and be taught by the voice that speaks to him as from the mercy seat of the ancient tabernacle of the testimony.

(R. R.)

### **DUTY**

"Our duty today?" said Brother Roberts, "To live the life, maintain sound doctrine, avoid unprofitable questions, and preach the Word as workmen that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of Truth. This is the business of our lives. Let us not be turned away from it by 'Sanballats'." (Neh 6:2-5,14)

(R.R)