November 12

Be not faithless, but believing. John 20:27

IT is impossible for us to come near to the Lord except as we shall exercise faith and trust in Him, in His goodness, in His power, in His wisdom, in His love.... Faith is a matter of cultivation, of development. The same apostles who cried out in terror when the storm was upon the Sea of Galilee gradually grew stronger and stronger in faith until, as the records show, they could and did trust the Lord in His absence and where they could not trace Him. Similarly it should be a part of our daily lesson to cultivate trust in the Lord, and to think of the experiences in the past in our lives and all of these lessons in His Word, that thus our faith in Him may become rooted and grounded. *Z. '04-89 R3338:5*

THOMAS WANTED MORE EVIDENCE

R5624 *"Be not faithless, but believing."--John 20:27.*

THE words of our text are found in connection with our Lord's appearance to the eleven disciples in the upper room, St. Thomas being of the number. From the narrative we learn that just a week before this Jesus had appeared to His disciples, but St. Thomas was absent at the time… Unless he could see the print of the nails in our Lord's hands, and put his fingers into the print of the nails, and could be able to thrust his hand into the spear-wound in His side, he would not believe.

To some this might seem to be an example of extreme unbelief, an unwillingness to receive the testimony of the Ten as to the experiences through which they had passed. Yet to other minds it would not seem so strange. Some of us would find it difficult to believe from any lips that a person whom we had three days before seen dead and laid in the tomb had manifested by His presence to others that He was again alive; and especially hard would it be to believe that He had appeared when the doors were shut, and had disappeared, the doors still being shut. We rather fear that had we been in St. Thomas' place we would have been inclined to say, "Show us how that could be...

ST. THOMAS NOT REPROVED…

St. Thomas being present, Jesus said to him, "Reach hither thy finger, and behold My hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into My side; and be not faithless, but believing." (*John 20:27*.) These were the very things St. Thomas had demanded, the very proof he had required. The words of Jesus do not convey the thought of any special reproof to St. Thomas. It would seem that the fact that the Lord gave to him the desired evidence to convince him, was an indication that He did not disapprove of his demand for more convincing demonstration than the others had had before believing a statement so marvelous as that of the other ten disciples; for if it had been a thing of which He disapproved He would not have complied with St. Thomas' wish.

Our Lord did, however, say (though speaking of those of us who would live subsequently, and not of the disciples), "Blessed are they who do not see, and do yet believe." This is our position. The Lord indicates a special blessing upon those who, not seeing, would be able to believe. But we are to remember that we have testimonies and evidences that St. Thomas did not have… Here, however, was St. Thomas, a man like a great many of us, hard-headed and practical; but when the proof was given to him, when demonstration was made, he recognized that it was not a phantom, but that the Lord stood there before him in a body of flesh. This incident has proved a strengthener to the faith of many of us.

It is quite probable that St. Thomas was not permitted to be present at that first interview for the very purpose that there might be that demonstration, to the intent that it might be easier for some of us to believe. We can readily see that an established faith was all-important to the disciples. "Without faith it is impossible to please God." (Hebrews 11:6.) If the disciples had been in doubt about our Lord's resurrection, they would not have been able to give us clear testimony on the subject."

(Heb 11:1 Wilson Diaglott) "But Faith is a Basis of things hoped for, a Conviction of things unseen."

R5116 "The person who knows God *best* will trust Him *most.*"

R4697 "Our faith must have a foundation, must have a basis. We must have knowledge of a matter in order to have faith in it. We have knowledge of God, and this knowledge which is granted us as a grace or favor brings us to the place where we are enabled to exercise the faith. The faith in a great measure rests upon the knowledge. The knowledge shows us God's character; the Divine Revelation makes known to us certain facts respecting God's purposes, and we see the purposes thus outlined to be in harmony with the character of God, and this enables one to believe the promises; and believing them, we are enabled to act upon them; and this is faith."

THE FAITH

(2 Cor 13:5 KJV) "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?"

(Act 6:7 KJV) "And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith."

(Act 14:21-22 KJV) "And when they had preached the gospel to that city, and had taught many, they returned again to Lystra, and *to* Iconium, and Antioch, (22) Confirming the souls of the disciples, *and* exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God."

R1719 "Paul was…solicitous for the continuance of his converts in the faith. (See 1Thes. 3:2,5,6,7,10) He urged all to examine and prove themselves, whether they were in the faith, grounded and settled, and not moved away from the hope of the gospel, but rooted and built up in Christ and *established* in the faith; and to beware lest any man spoil them through philosophy and vain deceit, after the traditions of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ. (Col. 1:23; 2:7,8.) He was deeply solicitous, too, that the faith of

the Church should not stand in the wisdom (the vain philosophies) of men, but in the power of God. And, therefore, in his preaching, he did not launch out into foolish speculations or follow his own or any other men's reasonings, and so pander to the popular craving for something new; but he confined himself to the expounding of the sacred Scriptures and to exhortations, inspired, as they were, by the revelations made to himself--a prophet, as well as an apostle.--1Cor. 2:4,13; 2 Cor. 12:1-7; Gal. 1:11,12; 2:2; 2 Pet. 3:15,16.

Let us see, then, that we have the faith of Christ--the faith well founded in the Word of God, a faith examined and proved, deeply rooted in the heart as well as in the head, and therefore *established* as the motive power of life."

R5860 "One must have faith before he can manifest it. We have known Christians who, if they have a doubt about a certain feature of Truth or a weakness of faith, would discuss their doubts in the presence of those who were weak in the faith or who were of the world. This is a great mistake and productive of much harm. One never knows when a weak one may be present who might be greatly injured by words of doubt or distrust. Whoever is troubled by such doubts should go promptly to the Lord for help, that his faith may be firmly established."

R1475 "In the Scriptures there are many surface truths which all may see and appreciate, but the systematic ordering of the divine plan, much of which was purposely hidden and obscurely expressed, and the bringing out of its wonderful details, was left for an appointed time. And when the appointed time has come and the faithful watcher is led to *see* the systematic harmony of divine truth--not to guess at it, or to surmise about it, but to *see it,* so plainly that he can clearly, logically and Scripturally demonstrate it to others--then it becomes the privilege of such a one to make plain to others what the Lord has made plain to him. And such a one may consider his ability in this direction (together with a possible opportunity and a strong love for the saints, which longs to bless them with a fuller knowledge of God and to exhort and stimulate them to greater faithfulness) as the Lord's call to him to make it plain.

But such should remember that the commission is to *"make it plain,"* not to make it obscure. And if a man has no truth to make plain, but is only seeking for truth, he makes a great mistake in launching out his crude and inharmonious ideas for the confusion of other minds. Such a one should maintain the proper attitude of a disciple, a learner, until he does see clearly and is thus fitted to become a teacher of others. And if he is a faithful student, studying to show himself a workman approved unto God, ere long he may enjoy the privilege of declaring the truth to others through some medium, and be greatly blessed in so doing.

Let none of the consecrated be in haste to rush into print with crude, undefined ideas, and thus become stumbling-blocks in the way of many others. Be content to spread the truth you have received, and proved to your thorough satisfaction..."

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO RECEIVE THE WORD WITH ALL READINESS OF MIND

(Act 17:10-11 KJV) "And the brethren immediately sent away Paul and Silas by night unto Berea: who coming *thither* went into the synagogue of the Jews. (11) These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so."

R2183 "The next stop was at Berea… "They received the Word in all readiness of mind, examining the Scriptures daily, whether those things were so."… They seemed to be just ready for the truth, and yet received it, not in a spirit of credulity, simply because it was told to them, but properly they were ready and of a proper spirit to investigate, and to see whether the things spoken fitted to the prophetic statements respecting Messiah and his work, etc."

TESTS OF FAITH

R1822 "Both the head and the heart--the intellect and the affections--are necessary to that faith without which it is "impossible to please God" (Heb. 11:6); though many fancy they have faith when they have only one of its essential elements. With some it is all emotion; with others it is all intellectuality; but neither of these can stand the tests of fiery ordeal."

R1719 "Faith, to be a conquering power in us, must go deeper than the head: it must go into the heart, and thus permeate and energize the whole being, bringing not only the outward conduct but every thought into subjection to Christ. Then indeed will faith impel to action, to works which clearly manifest it… This is the conquering power that overcometh the world, even our faith."

(Col 2:6-8 KJV) "As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him: (7) Rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving. (8) Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ."

R5114 "St. Peter tells us that a faith which has stood the tests of fiery ordeal and has come off victorious is very precious in the sight of the Heavenly Father. Whenever we pass through a fiery trial and still retain, not only our faith in the doctrines, but also our *confidence in God,* our *reliance in His promises,* our integrity of heart and purpose, and our zeal for Truth and righteousness, then our characters have grown more Christ-like and hence more pleasing to God, who subjects us to discipline for this very purpose…

Our Lord laid down His life in *fulfilment* of the *types of the Law,* thus demonstrating His absolute trust, loyalty, and faith in God. The Church of Christ must be similarly tested and proved in respect to their obedience, trust, loyalty to the Father. They must be willing, not only to trust God when things are favorable, but to trust in His providences when they cannot see the outcome. To attain this degree of faith, they must pass through manifold trials and testings, that they may demonstrate their faith and loyalty…

God is subjecting our faith to a great heat in order to separate the dross. If we had not the faith, we might fear to take the steps which would bring us

into this crucial position. Fear would lead us to decline to take the course that God indicates to be His will. Without faith we would shrink from the fiery trials, the heated furnace. If we have not the faith to stand the trials, then we are not of the kind for whom God is at the present time looking…

Confidence in Him will lead us to weigh His words of precious promise. These promises will make clear to us the reason why these testings are upon us, and will enable us to appreciate our testings as marks of His love for us…

The greater the knowledge of God's character, the greater will be the heart-reliance upon Him."

PROMISES TO THOSE WHO HAVE THE FAITH OF ABRAHAM

R1905 "THY SHIELD AND THY REWARD *"After these things the word of the Lord came unto Abram in a vision, saying, Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield and thine exceeding great reward."--Gen. 15:1.*

THESE words were addressed to the "father of the faithful," and as a heritage they descend to his children--to all those who are of the faith of Abraham (Gal. 3:7; Rom. 4:16), whether of the fleshly or the spiritual seed. Abram had entered into covenant relationship with God. God had called him to separate himself from his native country and kindred and friends to follow the course of his providential leadings toward an unknown land. And Abram, in full reliance on the promise of God, had obediently severed the familiar social and business ties, and, with his wife and family and father and nephew who shared his faith and obedience to God, started on his pilgrimage to the unknown land. And having entered the land and received the promise--"All the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it and to thy seed forever," etc.--though he was not then permitted to own a foot of it, he wandered up and down in it as a pilgrim and stranger...

But that which taxed Abram's faith most was that, as the years rolled by, not only was the promise of the land delayed, but also the promised heirs who should inherit it; for not even one heir had yet come.

It was in one of these seasons of discouragement -- though not of despair, for Abram never relaxed his faith, but trusted and hoped still when in darkness and perplexity -- that God in a vision graciously encouraged his fainting heart with the above words of cheer and hope--"Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield and thine exceeding great reward." Then Abram was permitted to inquire into the mysterious ways of God and received the renewed assurance that the promise had not been forgotten, and that his hope would certainly be realized…

Thus God has always been watchful over his people, never suffering them to be tempted or tried beyond their power of endurance, yet permitting them often to be very severely tested. The consolation here offered to Abraham is that offered to all who are of the faith of Abraham, and its parallel in the New Testament is that precious statement of our Lord (John 14:21-23), "He that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him and will manifest myself to him,...and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him." So in the midst of all the temptations and trials that beset us in our earthly pilgrimage, while we walk by faith toward the blessed inheritance reserved for the overcoming saints, we also may recognize the voice of our God, saying, "Fear not: I am thy shield, and thine exceeding great reward."

"Fear not," beloved; "there is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear; because fear hath torment" (1 John 4:18); "If God be for us, who can be against us?" or "Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect?" Say in your heart as did Paul, "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."Rom.8:31-39

Do hosts of foes oppose themselves--place obstacles in your way, hinder your influence and seek to dishearten you by heaping upon you reproaches, and do circumstances seem to conspire against you to fill your heart with alarm and dread? say to your soul, "Fear not," "hope thou in God," and mark his loving providences as--

"Through waves and clouds and storms, He gently clears thy way,"--until a blessed acquaintance with God through such experiences develops in the heart that perfect love that casteth out fear. Then shall you enter more and more fully into the blessed rest of faith, and like the eagle that soars above the storm cloud, live at such an altitude of Christian experience as to enable you to rejoice in the Lord always and in everything to give thanks…

"I am [also] thy exceeding great reward." Notice, the promise is not put in the future tense, having reference to the promised glory of his people in the ages to come; but it is present, "I am," etc. Yes, the abiding presence of God, manifested to the hearts of his people now, even to-day, in the midst of its cares, its vexations, its labors, its trials of faith, patience and endurance, this is the blessed present privilege of all his saints. And not only the presence of God, but also of his dear Son, our Lord and Savior, is also vouchsafed to us so long as we faithfully maintain our covenant relations with him.

Should the child of God, the heir of glory, the inheritor of all the exceeding great and precious promises, and the present companion of Divinity itself which condescends to our low estate, ever feel desolate or forsaken or alone? or fear that his love will ever forsake or leave him to be tossed helplessly upon the billows of misfortune at the mercy of the prince of this world who now worketh in the hearts of the children of disobedience? Ah, no! Greater is he that is for us than all they that can be against us. We are not alone in the world; for we have the blessed promise, "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee." (Heb. 13:5.) Nor is the smallest interest of ours overlooked.-- Matt. 10:29-31.

How truly *"exceeding great"* is this present "reward" of the faithful saints who are daily and hourly walking with God--going about the Father's business, spreading abroad the honor of his name, meekly bearing the reproaches of Christ, enduring hardness as good soldiers in his service and taking up their cross daily and following in the Master's footprints. Truly we can say to the world, as did our Lord, "I have meat to eat that ye know not of." The world cannot comprehend our joy, nor know the sweets of this fellowship with God and with his dear Son; for "The secret of the Lord is [only] with them that fear him."--Psa. 25:14.

This joy in the Lord is, however, also compatible with much suffering; for

the saints are all to be made perfect through suffering… Like faithful Abraham, we must be content to walk with God by faith and not by sight, like him hoping to the end for the promise, not expecting here to realize aught but the earnest of our inheritance, which we have in the present reward of the divine presence and approval."

R3337 (From Harvest Truth Database V5.0)

"CHRIST BROUGHT LIFE AND IMMORTALITY TO LIGHT THROUGH THE GOSPEL"

--MARK 7:24-37--APRIL 3.--

Golden Text:--"Without faith it is impossible to please him."--Heb. 11:6

WITH this lesson we start a new quarter in studies of the earthly life of Christ. Since it falls on what is generally observed as Easter Sunday, those who have arranged the lessons suggest, without breaking the narrative of Christ's ministry, that this lesson be treated from the resurrection standpoint. The thought is a good one, especially for those whose eyes of understanding have been opened to some realization of the glorious things of the Millennial Kingdom, for which the whole creation is groaning and waiting. These and not others can properly get a connection between our Lord's miracles and the resurrection life of the Millennial age.

LIFE-RIGHTS FOR THE WORLD SECURED BY THE PRECIOUS BLOOD

From this standpoint we perceive that while our Lord Jesus came into the world to die on man's behalf, to redeem Adam and his race from the sentence of sin--namely, death--he did, additionally, two other important works. The redemptive work was the principal one, without which there could be no future life of any kind. The laying down of life daily until the sacrifice was finished at Calvary may, therefore, be designated the principal or foundation work accomplished by our Lord. Without that nothing else could have been of any avail, but on that foundation the other two works could proceed. The Apostle declares that the Lord brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel. This means that no clear and definite hope respecting eternal life had ever previously been given to any one--even to the Jews. While other nations were without God, having no hope, the Jews did have a sufficiency of divine revelation to inspire a hope in the resurrection; though the philosophy of it--how God could be just and yet release those whom he had justly sentenced to death--they could not see, because it was not time, and therefore was not yet revealed.

Christ brought LIFE to light by explaining to those who had ears to hear that he had come into the world to "give his life a ransom for many." (Mark 10:45.) He explained further that the time would come when all in their graves should hear his voice in kingly authority, and awaken from the sleep of death--come forth from the prison house of the tomb. The people even then might have wondered what advantage there would be in such a release from the tomb if they would still be subject to the pains and aches and demon oppositions of the present time. Our Lord fortified the testimonies of the prophets respecting the Millennial age, which they declared would be a period of universal blessing, with nothing to hurt or destroy in all the holy Kingdom. He showed how this could be by the various miracles which he performed; for he not only preached the Kingdom of God, taught his disciples to look forward to it and to pray for its coming and blessing and power, but in the various miracles which he performed he illustrated that its powers would prevail amongst men for their blessing.

He healed all manner of diseases and cast out demons, and thus gave evidence that in God's due time, as the great Physician, he will be armed with the abundant power which will completely restrain Satan and all the fallen angels from all work of evil in respect to the human family, and when he will lift up the poor, the lame, the deaf, the blind, the dumb, out of their present tribulation. And moreover, this temporary release which he brought to those who by faith accepted his favor, illustrated still higher blessings, labors and privileges--the opening of the eyes of the understanding, the curing of the leprosy of sin, the returning of the withered powers, as well as the awakening of the dead--that all might see and hear and know of the righteousness which God approves and of the life everlasting which will be its reward, and that all might be helped out of the present bondage to sin and imperfection, etc., into the full liberty of the sons of God. Thus the Lord brought life--everlasting life--to the view, to the knowledge, of those who hear his message of the Kingdom and the blessings to flow from it.

IMMORTALITY OR DIVINE NATURE ONLY FOR THE ELECT

He brought IMMORTALITY to light also. In addition to everlasting life for the world, he opened up a way by which a special class of footstep-followers might share with himself the glory, honor and immortality of the divine nature. The world in general was not expected to understand or appreciate this. On the contrary, the natural eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man the things which God hath in reservation for them who love him --for the New Creatures--for those who are begotten of the holy Spirit, and that make their calling and election sure to joint-heirship with him in the Kingdom.

Our Lord's ministry and teachings can only be rightly appreciated when viewed from these three standpoints:-- (1) His own sacrifice as the redemption price for Adam and his race--laying down his life day by day until he cried, "It is finished." (2) His general teachings --which in due time will be applicable to the whole world--respecting the outcome of the redemptive work, the reconciliation of the world to God, the complete forgiveness of the world's sins, the great trial or judgment or opportunity then to come to the world through the Kingdom which the Redeemer, as the Mediator between God and man, will establish for the deliverance of mankind from the adverse conditions within and without, and for the assistance of all who desire to return to harmony with the Creator. (3) The call to special discipleship, to walking in the narrow way, to be baptized with the baptism of death that he was baptized with--and thus by divine grace through this ar-

rangement to be fitted and prepared for a share in the heavenly Kingdom--to sit with Christ in his throne, and participate in the dispensing of all the wonderful blessings of the Millennium to all the families of the earth.

It is with this thought that we follow the lesson before us. Jesus and his disciples, after the feeding of the five thousand and the stormy night upon the sea of Galilee, spent some time in Capernaum. There the Lord gave the sermon which illustrated that his hearers should think less about the loaves and fishes which he had given them, and should appreciate more the higher things. They should recognize him as the Bread of Life that came down from heaven; they should feed upon his words and thus gain life everlasting. The time had not yet come, however, for the general dispensing of this life everlasting--that work belongs to the Millennial age. He therefore was seeking specially for such as were particularly hungering and thirsting after righteousness. Of this class were the apostles, whom he was now training for the future work which he would accomplish through them after the new dispensation, to begin at Pentecost.

GOD'S FAVORS FOR HIS CONSECRATED PEOPLE

With his disciples our Lord traveled north-westward to the borders of the country called Tyre and Sidon, so named because of the prominent cities by these names which were there situated. He did not announce himself publicly to the people there, but his presence soon became known, showing that the fame of his miracles and teachings had spread throughout the whole of Palestine. A Canaanitish woman living as a Greek was amongst the first to hear of his presence, and coming before him she cried or wailed for assistance for her daughter. Our Lord on this occasion acted very differently from his custom, and doubtless for the purpose of imparting a lesson. Although usually so prompt to hear and to sympathize and to heal, on this occasion he paid no attention to the woman, according to Matthew's account, who tells us that the disciples came to the Lord and urged him to send her away-- either grant her request and send her away or refuse her request and authorize her expulsion.

The poor woman's importunities were not for herself but for her daughter, who was possessed of a demon, an unclean spirit; and, so far as we have any knowledge, most of these fallen spirits, demons, are unclean, depraved, and their influence upon those possessed by them is an unclean, injurious one. Sometimes they do indeed simulate purity, and on numerous occasions we have heard of their attempts to personate holy ones--even the Lord; nevertheless the whole tendency of these evil spirits seems to be toward impurity of thought and conduct on the part of those possessed and through them upon others.

Finally, in answer to the woman's cries and to the expostulations of the disciples, our Lord did speak, but very differently from his usual message. He merely intimated to the woman that his miracles and services were not intended for the world in general but for God's covenanted people, the Jews. He followed the Jewish custom of the time, of speaking of the Gentiles as dogs, yet he modified the matter, for instead of using the word which would signify the detestable brutes which infest the Orient and are the scavengers of the streets, he used another word signifying the little or pet dogs of the family. The woman, strong in her faith in the Lord's power, was equal to turning the unfavorable answer to her own benefit, and to urge that as the little pet dogs got some of the surplus from the table of the children, so she as an outsider might be granted some of the Lord's favors without in any degree working disadvantage to the Jews, to whom our Lord's ministry was specially sent and given.

WITHOUT FAITH IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO PLEASE HIM

This shows the earnestness and faith of the woman. Such an exhibit would surely be pleasing to the Lord. Indeed we can see in our own experiences as Christians that many of the Lord's dealings with us are along the lines of developing and testing of our faith. He is good and gracious of heart, however we may have misunderstood him in the past, and however his character and plan may have been maligned and misrepresented by the Adversary. {1}It is impossible for us to come near to the Lord except as we shall exercise faith and trust in him, in his goodness, in his power, in his wisdom, in his love. All things are possible, only believe--is the lesson which the spiritual Israelite of today needs continually to learn, as the apostles of old prayed, "Lord, increase our faith." Along this line it were well that we should pray, and that we should seek continually to accept the lessons of life from this standpoint--as lessons or instructions in faith. We are not in this ignoring the necessity of obedience to the divine Word, but are holding that wherever faith exists the works will correspond to it and be proportionately large or small. Hence the stronger our faith, the more our works are sure to be under the divine arrangement. Our Golden Text well says that without faith it is impossible to be pleasing to the Lord.

{2}Faith is a matter of cultivation, of development. The same apostles who cried out in terror when the storm was upon the Sea of Galilee gradually grew stronger and stronger in faith until, as the records show, they could and did trust the Lord in his absence and where they could not trace him. Similarly it should be a part of our daily lesson to cultivate trust in the Lord, and to think of the experiences in the past in our lives and all of these lessons in his Word, that thus our faith in him may become rooted and grounded.

FAITH REWARDED AFTER BEING TESTED

The Lord said unto her, "O, woman, great is thy faith." (Matthew.) Her faith was strong in its love for her daughter, in its perseverance and persistency, in its humility, recognizing matters just as the Lord recognized them, and not according to the general sentiments of the Greeks and Gentiles--that the Jews were merely pretentious and not more in divine favor than other peoples. It was strong in overcoming great obstacles, --even our Lord's apparent repulsion. We would not consider this heathen woman's conduct to be in every sense of the word a pattern for the Lord's consecrated and enlightened people. The strength of faith is the only one that we should copy. As for us who have become the Lord's people, and are no longer strangers, foreigners, dogs, but children adopted into the Father's family and recognized by the Lord as "brethren," it would be no longer appropriate that we should cry or entreat or beseech in any wise for things which the Lord is not pleased to give us.

{1} ½ Nov. 12 Manna, John 20:27
{2} ½ Nov. 12 Manna

The Master himself represented the difference between the things which the Gentiles might do and the things which we as his disciples might do, saying that our petitions and seeking should not merely be for the bread that perisheth, for after such things do the Gentiles seek--merely the earthly things and with importunity; but seek ye first, chiefly, the Kingdom of God and the righteousness which is appropriate thereto, and all these things of an earthly kind will be added unto you--in such measure as will be for your best interests. {3}Our petitions, our requests, our cries to the Lord, therefore, should be for the holiness of heart, for the filling of his Spirit, for the spiritual food, refreshment, strength; and as for the natural things, he knoweth the way we take and what would be to our best interests as New Creatures. We are to leave this to him: he would not be pleased to see us importuning him for things which he did not give us, for to do so would not be an exemplification of faith in him, but the reverse--an exemplification of doubt, a manifestation of fear, that he was forgetting or neglecting his promise to give us the things needful.

Our Lord informed the woman that the faith manifested in her saying was sufficient, that her request was granted, that the demon was gone from her daughter. The woman's faith was further manifested by her immediate withdrawal. She took the Lord's word implicitly; if he were what he claimed and had the power that she believed, he would not lie to her. Many of the Lord's people today seem to lack faith along these lines--to have less than this poor heathen woman. Many of them hear the Lord's word assuring them that those who come to him have their sins forgiven, yet Little Faith bids them doubt and keep on bemoaning their sins and requesting forgiveness, which the Lord has assured them would be accomplished from the time of their acceptance of it. They fail to exercise the faith and they fail proportionately of the blessing and peace and joy.

So far as the record goes our Lord did nothing in that quarter except for this poor woman, and the spiritual lessons connected with it were evidently less for her than for the disciples, for we have no record that he taught her or taught anyone of that vicinity. Departing thence, our Lord took an easterly course along the northern borders of Palestine, and crossing the river Jordan began to come southward toward the Sea of Galilee. Matthew says that he made a stop in the mountain, and that a great multitude brought their sick to him; the lame, blind, dumb, maimed and many others they led to Jesus' feet and he healed them, and the multitude wondered and glorified the God of Israel.

Our lesson gives one particular instance from this multitude of healings. A man who was both deaf and dumb was brought to Jesus, and his treatment was peculiar; the Lord took him apart privately, perhaps to impress upon him the lesson. The man could not hear, and hence the Lord imparted the lesson through signs, touching his tongue and touching his ears, and then with a sigh he glanced heavenward, as indicating that the sympathy of heaven was moved for the man's assistance, and immediately the blessing came and he was healed. This may have been the first miracle in that region, and possibly the multitude coming, as Matthew records, were attracted by it. Our Lord's injunction that it should be kept quiet seems to have been understood, not as a command, but rather as a suggestion that he was not seeking publicity. Nevertheless, when the faith was manifested and the poor afflicted ones were before him the Lord never refused to give the blessing. Thus we are taught that when the due time shall come for the blessing of all the families of the earth, the Lord will not withhold a blessing from any; all who desire to be blessed may then have his favor.

BLESSED ARE OUR EYES AND EARS OF UNDERSTANDING

As New Creatures who have already in a figurative sense risen with Christ to walk in newness of life, to walk in his footsteps, we have our eyes opened and our ears unstopped and our tongues loosed, so that we may not only see and enjoy the grace of God ourselves, but we may speak of his goodness and love to others. In many respects those to whom the Lord grants the special knowledge of the Truth in this present time have a suggestion that it is not for everybody, that we are to be discriminating in our endeavors to dispense the Truth, and that some of these great blessings of the Lord which are to us like pearls are not meant for all; that we should not cast our pearls before swine, or before those who manifest no disposition to know of or receive the Lord's favors. But with us, as with the healed one in this lesson, the message is too good to keep; we love to tell the story, it did so much for us; we desire that all who are blind and deaf may come to the great Physician and be healed; we desire that all who are stammering in their endeavors to tell the good tidings may have their lips touched by the Master and henceforth speak plainly the glorious things of the Gospel of Christ. And as the Master would not reprove this one in the lesson, neither does he reprove us if in our zeal we go sometimes to the extreme of trying to tell the good tidings to those who have no ear to hear, or endeavor to make disciples of those who are swinish and not at all inclined to spiritual things, or of following the Lamb whithersoever he goeth.

The heart of this lesson is that we who are risen with Christ in the spirit of our minds should walk in newness of life while still in this mortal body and still amongst men; that we should look forward to the glorious change of the First Resurrection, when we shall be actually in the Lord's likeness and see him as he is, sharing his glory and participating with him in dispensing all these blessings of life and healing to whosoever will accept these favors in the glorious Kingdom time which we rejoice to know is near at hand.

{3} Nov. 13 Manna, Mat. 6:8
