

## They Soon Forgot His Works

*"I know thy works, labor and patience. Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee: thou hast left thy first love. Repent, or I will remove thy candlestick" — Rev. 2:2*

AT the time of our immersion into the Saving Name, we thought we could see the end. We knew that if we followed a certain prescribed course, by walking in obedience to the laws of God, our destiny was an eternal fellowship with the Father and Son. At that time we thought we could see the end of these things we now endure, quite clearly

Is the picture still bright? Do we feel that we are actually making progress Zionward? Or are we slipping back?

We all knew at the time of our baptism that it was up to us as individuals to "work out our own salvation." We counted the cost and proceeded to build. Are we going to have enough to finish the work? And if we are lacking, WHY?

Have we failed under stress of trial? "If we faint under adversity, our strength is small." Have we become dull and heartless in relation to the world to come? Has this vision dimmed? Has our earnest first love grown cold? Are the appointments of God a burden?

### Do we try to escape certain services of the Truth?

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IF any of these questions raise a doubt in our minds as to whether we are half-hearted or mechanical in our service in the Truth, we should examine our motives carefully to discern our true standing in the Faith.

**If we know in our hearts that we have not done that which is commanded but rather, by our slothfulness or indifference have grieved the Holy Spirit many times, we should take every means available to us, to alert ourselves to the highness, holiness and preciousness of our calling before it is too late, and we stand with empty hands and sorrowful hearts before our supreme Judge.**

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LET us look at certain periods of Israel's history. We see them brought out of Egypt with a powerful stretched-out arm, even as we ourselves were brought up out of Egyptian darkness through the power of the living Word.

Like ourselves, Israel stood trembling on the shores of the Red Sea, about to be baptized into their Mediator. We see them born a new nation, rising out of the waters to a new life, their relationship as slaves in Egypt being washed away by the waters of the Red Sea.

We have heard the triumphant song of deliverance under Moses, and have recognized it to be prophetic of the greater deliverance under the prophet like unto Moses. Then sadly, but realistically, we see the people—**just three days later**—murmur against their own divinely appointed leader when they found themselves without water.

And just a month later, when provisions failed, they murmur again and turn their hearts back to the land of bondage from which they had come out. Their miraculous deliverance was so soon forgotten!

"They soon forgot His works; they waited not for His counsel, but lusted exceedingly in the wilderness, and tempted God in the desert."

They soon arrived at Sinai and set up their camp before the Mount. Although they had been the subject of a great deliverance after a long period of oppression and bondage, yet they stood at the

foot of the Mount, a nation of unenlightened, faithless and rebellious people. They had so much learning, so much proving and so much needed chastisement yet to be experienced!

**And so much of all the heartache and disappointment could have been avoided, if they had only opened their eyes to their position, and set their hearts to obey and trust in the mighty Hand at work within them as He pleased.**

But because they failed pitifully to set their minds and hearts intelligently upon the things of God, their thoughts and affections reverted to the garlic and onions of Egypt—to the animal comforts enjoyed in the land of Egypt.

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"And Moses went up unto God, and the Lord called unto him out of the mountain" (Ex. 19:3)

How appropriate it was that Moses, the Mediator of the Old Covenant, who was "faithful in all His House," should intercede for them!

"Thus shalt thou say to the house of Jacob: Ye have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bear you on eagles' wings and brought you unto Myself."

As the eagle carries her young upon her wings, out of reach of all who would attempt their destruction, so the Lord rescued the Israelites from Egypt. He reminded them of His faithfulness in delivering them. Then He offered them full covenant privileges on certain conditions—

"Now therefore IF ye will obey My voice indeed, and keep My covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto Me above all people; for all the earth is Mine. And ye shall be a kingdom of priests, an holy nation."

Let us bear in mind the similarity of this and our covenant agreement under the New Covenant—

"Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of Him Who hath called you out of darkness into His marvellous light."

Jesus gave himself for us—

"That he might redeem us from all iniquity and purify unto himself a peculiar people."

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WHEN Moses reported God's words to the people, they at once professed all readiness to comply—

"All the people answered together and said, All that the Lord hath spoken will we do."

This is in effect what we promised at our baptism. Being then made free from bondage of sin, we became servants of righteousness and so, walking in newness of life, we strive that through the Spirit we do mortify the deeds of the body.

If we do not feel this process taking place within us, we should bend every effort to find out why. For—

"As many as are led by the spirit of God, THEY are the sons of God."

When Moses returned the words of the people unto the Lord, "All that the Lord hath spoken we will do"—a formal covenant was entered into between Israel and the Lord. Israel then confessed God as their King, and they became "the children of the kingdom." They became a kingdom of priests, an holy nation, consecrated to God. They alone of all the families of the earth were being schooled to serve Him and offer sacrifices unto Him. They were separated from the nations for His work in the earth.

But Israel soon forgot the divine purpose God had with them—the purpose of the Law that was to be a schoolmaster bringing them to Christ. They soon served the creature more than the Creator, forgetting that it was God Who did such wondrous things among them.

They counted it a light thing that God had chosen them from all the families of the earth.

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DO we allow separateness to become a dim idea? Do we allow our high calling to become bogged down in the cares of the present evil world? Are we sure that we are not serving ourselves more than God?

Israel was grateful and sincere when they sent Moses back with the words, "All that the Lord hath spoken we will do." They never **meant** to let the glorious things of the kingdom slip from their grasp. Indeed, they had every intention of carrying out their part of the Covenant.

Can we remember our first love of the things of the Truth? Can we remember how happy our service to God was in the beginning? What a privilege we thought every duty of the household to be!

Do we remember how eager we were to learn what God required of us, and how we searched the Scriptures into the night for hidden meanings that delighted the inner man? How eager we were to be of service to the brothers and sisters—WE NEVER **MEANT** TO LET THOSE GLORIOUS THINGS SLIP AWAY.

We might analyse Israel's sickness as "nearsightedness." Their vision gradually became filled up with themselves, what they should eat, what they should wear. Their esteem shifted from the God of all Glory to themselves.

"We be the people," they said. "We have Abraham to our father." They began to look around and to greedily covet the comforts of their alien neighbours whose portion was in this life. Little by little they forsook God, and more and more they became concerned with the luxuries, comforts and prosperity of the nations from whom God had called them out.

They wanted to be God's people, but they didn't see why that should restrict their pleasures of participation in the activities of the people around them. They could not see to the end of the glory in the face of their Mediator. CAN WE?

We see that Israel were entirely self-assured when they sent Moses back with the words, "All that the Lord hath spoken will we do."

On the morning of the third day, the top of the mountain was concealed by a dense cloud, as smoke from a furnace. Thunder pealed and lightning flashed, and the earth trembled under their feet. From the midst of this demonstration arose the sound of a loud trumpet—"so all the people that were in the camp trembled."

"And Moses brought forth the people out of the camp to meet with God."

And God called Moses up into the Mount, only to tell him to "go down and charge the people lest they break through."

"And let the priests also, which come near the Lord, sanctify themselves, lest the Lord break forth upon them."

It can be seen from this, that while some were filled with terror at the sight, others, moved by curiosity were about to break through the bounds already set. This same presumptiveness caused Nadab and Abihu to offer strange fire before the Lord. The Lord devoured them with fire, saying—

"I **will** be sanctified in them that come nigh me, and before the people I **will** be glorified."

It is with awe and trembling we must stand within the Holy Place. Never can we take our calling lightly, nor presume upon the holy office with mixed allegiance. We must be sure our service is with singleness of eye, and with our whole heart. Any thing less is mockery to God, and causes the Truth to be evil spoken of.

Our danger in this respect is very real. God is a jealous God, and will not share His throne in our heart with any other. He must be all.

Covetousness is definitely idolatry. It is a concern with SELF that sets up an idol in the heart. Whether they be houses, cars, lands, or comforts—all these things, when regarded too highly, constitute covetousness, and make true worship in the Holy Place impossible. The more the flesh, with its lusts and ambitions is catered to, the more sickly the spirit becomes. If persisted in, the light that we think we have will surely be extinguished.

All anxious strivings for material things show us to be terribly lacking in spiritual values. Just stewards will **empty themselves** for the service of the Truth without hesitation, knowing that if they lose their lives for its sake, THEY SHALL FIND IT.

Let us take earnest heed while there may be time. May God quicken us in His Holy Word, lest we become dull and heartless in relation to the world to come, and thus find at last that we have failed to grow up into Him.

Let us utterly abhor and avoid those things that would draw us back into the sleep of the world. May our vision be riveted to the end of this age, and to the glory to be revealed in Christ Jesus.

There were those who were self-satisfied and at ease in the churches of the first century—

"Woe unto them that are at ease in Zion!"

"I know thy works," said Jesus. He knows ours, too—and the lack of them. It is a very simple truth—

"Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."

As a people preparing to meet God, let us throw everything we have into the last final effort. Let us surrender our whole lives unto Him, living by every word that proceedeth out of His mouth, praying unceasingly that He finish His work within us and at last admit us into eternal fellowship with Himself and His Son.

It can only be done through—

*"Him that is able to keep us from falling, and present us faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy."*  
—C.W.B.