

“THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN”

(Discourse below by Brother J. F. Stephenson, Columbus, Ohio Convention, July 5, 1914, Kingdom Day, 10 A.M., begin on page 159.)

The Kingdom of Heaven is spoken of in the Scriptures from three different standpoints; from one standpoint referring merely to the Kingdom class. For instance, our Lord said concerning John the Baptist, “I say unto you that of them that are born of women there has not arisen a greater than John. Nevertheless, he that is least in the Kingdom of Heaven is greater than he.” We see here that the Lord did speak merely of the Kingdom class, of the rulers, of those who would be in authority. We recall also how He spoke to the Scribes and Pharisees, that they should see Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and all the holy prophets in the Kingdom, referring to the earthly class. Again, we recall how He said that the publicans and sinners would come into the Kingdom of Heaven before the Scribes and Pharisees, evidently referring to a certain class that would come into harmony with the Kingdom arrangement, come in as subjects of the great King; so that we can view the Kingdom of Heaven from the standpoint of the rulers, of those in authority, or from a still broader standpoint, taking in the rulers and the earthly representatives, and from the still broader standpoint taking in all of the subjects.

But we desire to discuss the subject this morning especially from the standpoint of those who will be in the Kingdom, of the Kingdom class, and the lesson will be based upon our Lord’s words in the 24th chapter of Matthew and the 13th verse. We will read the 11th and 12th verses also, in order that you may have better the context: “And many false prophets shall arise and shall deceive many, and because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold; but he that endureth to the end, the same shall be saved.”

It is the thought of endurance that we desire to specially consider. The word rendered “endure” in this passage is defined by Prof. Strong to mean to undergo, to bear, to persevere, to have fortitude. This suggests the thought of strength of character, of overcoming, and so reminds us of our Lord’s words in another place, “I say unto you, not every one that saith unto Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter the Kingdom of Heaven, but he that doeth the will of My Father which is in Heaven.” In the preceding verses of this chapter the Lord has been giving an outline of the Gospel Age. He has been giving some of the signs of the presence of the Son of Man at His return and He has told the disciples how that there should come a falling away, and finally comes down to the words of our text, suggesting the thought of endurance, the thought of steadfastness. The latter passage suggests the thought of trial, and I find that this is in full harmony with other passages of scripture. For instance, St. Paul tells us in 1 Cor. 3:13, that “the fire shall try every man’s work, of what sort it is.” Again, St. Peter tells us, “Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trials that shall try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you.” But we are to “rejoice, inasmuch as we are partakers of the sufferings of Christ,

that, when His glory shall be revealed, we also may be glad with exceeding joy.” The Scriptures indicate that while the Church is having the trial period all through the Gospel Age, the closing days are to be days of special trial. We find this set forth in the experiences of John the Baptist. We recall how, after delivering his message, he was cast into prison and then was beheaded; his career was brought to a sudden close. We also remember how Elijah was separated from Elisha with a whirlwind and in the chariot of fire caught up into Heaven. We recall also the experience of Noah, how the first world came to a sudden end with the flood and Noah and his family saved as a result of being in the ark. St. Peter suggests that this types how a certain class who are in Christ shall be passed over. So we find that all of these various scriptures suggest the thought that the Lord is selecting out a peculiar people, a tried people, a people for His purpose. We recall how St. Paul tells us that God has chosen a very foolish method of selecting them, that is, from the standpoint of the world, that, “it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believed.” It does not tell us that it pleased God by the preaching of foolishness, or by foolish preaching, we know that this is done; but it is the method that is so foolish in the eyes of the world. They cannot understand how it is that if God is, as the Bible represents Him, the God of all wisdom, the God of all power, why He should send forth the message in the nature of an invitation, “Be ye reconciled to God.” If He has all the power and all the authority, why doesn’t He rise up, why doesn’t He use it, why doesn’t He compel obedience at the present time? Because His due time has not yet come. When the due time arrives He will use the iron rod; but in the meantime He is selecting out a people who love righteousness, and for the purpose that He desires this class He has adopted the very wisest method possible, one that will attract only the class that He is seeking after.

We recall how some, after hearing this message for the first time, accept it with a certain amount of enthusiasm, and by and by they wax cool, drop off and lose their interest. Our Lord illustrates this in one of the parables of the Kingdom. He says, “The Kingdom of Heaven is like a sower, that went forth to sow, and he sowed, some of the seed fell by the wayside and some fell among the rocks and some fell among thorns and some fell on good ground.” We notice that in every case it was the same seed. It was the same message. The difference was not in the seed, but the difference was in the one who received the message. For instance, that which fell by the wayside represented those that heard the Word joyfully, but the old adversary, the birds of the air, snatched the seed away from them before it had time to bear fruit. That which fell among thorns represents those who hear it joyfully, but after a while the thorns, the cares, deceitfulness of this world, sprang up and choked it out, choked out its very life. Then there is this class that fell among rocks and that sprang up very quickly, and we possibly have seen some who received the truth in that way, into good hearts, apparently. We have seen how they just seemed to come in rejoicing, laying hold upon it, and we fairly marvel at the progress they were apparently making; then all of a sudden there is a change; they seem to begin to wither away, and we wonder why. Here’s the explanation, right in this parable of the

seed. That seed had fallen into a heart that, while it was glad to receive it, nevertheless when the burning sun of persecution arose it could not stand it; it withered away. Then that which fell into good ground represented those who received the seed into good and honest hearts and brought forth fruit with patience. The word rendered “patience” has the significance, in the text, of cheerful endurance, not grinning and bearing it merely because they had to do it. St. Paul tells us they gloried in tribulation, knowing that tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience. Why? Because they recognized, as St. Paul pointed out, that we must develop a certain kind of character, of patience; and as we realize that these experiences are working in us the character of patience, we realize that we are developing the kind of character the Lord said we all must have if we are to be heirs of the Kingdom. We find that patience, in other words, is necessary for the retaining of the crown. Coming from Clinton to Columbus, we passed through, of course, a large farming district, and it was very suggestive of the thought of the harvest of the Gospel Age. We saw the ripening grain, some of it standing, some of it had already been harvested, and we know that it had required time for that grain to mature and develop and be ready for the harvest, that the seed was planted or sown many days ago, that it was watered by the showers. We know how the sun shown upon it. And so if we are to develop the fruit of character that the Lord would have us have, it will be necessary for us to have patience, have cheerful endurance. Practically everything of value requires time in its development, requires time in bringing it to perfection, and this seems to be especially true of our own experience. St. James tells us in the first chapter and the 12th verse of his epistle, “Blessed is the man that endureth temptation.” Not blessed is the man who has the temptation, but blessed is the man who *endures* it, who bears up under the temptation. “For when he is tried,” not before; after he has endured; after he has borne up under it, “He shall receive the crown of life that fadeth not away.”

Endurance brightens and crystallizes every virtue. It would make very little difference which one we should select as an example. Take, for instance, that of brotherly love. Suppose it is love that is being tried. If we find that we are rightly exercised by the experiences, we bear up under them. Our quality, our love for the brethren, instead of being crushed out, will only be deepened. It will be stronger. It will be crystallized. This would be true also if we took the subject of faith; that the more it was tried, the more we were rightly exercised by the experiences, the stronger, the deeper and more crystallized it would become. All of these experiences, really, that we are having, are *tests of our loyalty, tests of our faith*. So St. Peter tells us, “The trial of your faith, being more precious than gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honor at the appearing of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.” We might question why it was that the Lord was specially trying our faith. The reason is that this is about the only thing we could pass an examination upon. Faith is closely connected with our hearts. It is not merely a quality of the brain, but it takes hold of our affections. Faith is the exercise of our minds in respect to God and His promise. Faith is not only an intellectual conviction, but it also means that the element of trust and confidence, the

element of hope in God, enters into it to such an extent that we begin to order our course of life according to our convictions. If the Lord were to try us along the lines of knowledge, I am sure we would all fail. If He were to try us along the line of strength, I know we would all fail. If He were to try us along the line of human perfection, not one of us could pass the examination; but He has now established the standard, the test, that every one, no matter how weak he is, will be able to meet the trial of his faith, being more precious than gold, though it be tried with fire.

If we would take up our Lord's temptations, we note that every one of them really was a test of His loyalty to God. Take, for instance, the temptation to turn the stone into bread. How would that test His loyalty to God? God had given Him a certain power. That power was to be used for a certain purpose, and that purpose was not to minister to His own necessities. It was to be used to demonstrate specially His Messiahship, used in the nature of a witness. So, when the adversary tempted Him to turn the stones into bread, it was a temptation to adopt other methods than the one God had given Him, that had been revealed to Him during the forty days of fasting in the wilderness. The question was now, Are you going to be loyal to the Father and follow His plan and His arrangement, or are you going to accept the adversary's method, the adversary's suggestion? We might take the next one, where the adversary said, "All these kingdoms will I give you if Thou wilt bow down and worship me." Here, we see, was the suggestion of accomplishing His mission by another plan, by another method than the one that the Father had made, another method than that of sacrifice. It was the suggestion that He might accomplish the mission of bringing the world into harmony with God by cooperating with the great adversary. The next one was that He should cast himself down from the pinnacle of the temple, and that as soon as the people would see that He would descend into the valley, that He would cast himself down, safely, down into the valley, and would arise unhurt, why immediately they would recognize His Messiahship. So at every place He replied, "It is written." "It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone," "It is written, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord, thy God." "It is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve." So, just as our Lord was tempted in every point that would test His loyalty to the Father, so all those who are called to follow in His steps are having temptations exactly along the same line, temptations which test their loyalty, their devotion, their faithfulness to God. The Lord in speaking to the woman of Samaria states that "the Father seeketh such to worship Him in spirit and in truth;" hence the special reason why we are having these various experiences, some of them being very peculiar indeed; but all of them test whether or not we really love the Father in sincerity and in truth. God seeketh such to worship Him as worship Him in spirit and in truth, not only those whose spirit, mind and disposition would go out and desire to worship the great Creator, but those also who recognize His character, the glorious height of His majesty and holiness, who recognize something of His plan and purposes and find that their own spirits are in harmony with Him. It is an intelligent worship, a worship that God may recognize, that He is worthy to be worshiped, that He is worthy of all praise.

But let us notice the thought of bringing forth fruit with patience, the thought of travail, of endurance. You know sometimes there may be a tendency just to think, Well, I guess I will just have to stand that, I will have to endure it. Well, now, that is not the spirit that the Lord is taking. It is not a question of bearing these things because we have to do it, but it is a question of rejoicing in all of the experiences which the Lord permits to come upon us. “Brought forth fruit with cheerful endurance.” And so the Lord tells us in the third chapter of Revelation, the 10th verse, “Because thou hast kept the word of My patience [My word which inculcates and helps you to develop this quality of cheerful endurance], I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation which is coming upon the whole world to try them.” I suppose we have all had experiences attending testimony meetings sometimes, and possibly the many texts we have been discussing or that we have had in mind and considering during the week have been somewhat along the line of trial. “That the trial of your faith,” for instance, and possibly when we came to the meeting every one gives a testimony, at least a good many do, and instead of having that spirit of a conqueror, the spirit of a victor, it may be it just seemed that the trials were just crushing the very life out of them; so at the close of the meeting we felt more as though we had attended a testimony meeting of the Great Company class than of the Little Flock. The thing that we should seek to do is to live above these experiences, to recognize that the Lord’s hand is in them, that He is giving and drawing, and that they are all working to our good. If we could realize that I am sure we would not have them any other way even if we could change it.

We are not to suppose that this thought of cheerful endurance merely means patience, merely means the exercise of restraint, just hold our tongue, when we feel as though we would like to give someone a piece of our mind, and dress them down, as the expression sometimes is used, but to seek to develop that quality that would not desire to render evil for evil, but rather good; to do good unto all as we have opportunity, even our enemies.

Sometimes experiences which we are having seem to be so small and insignificant that they are hardly worth mentioning and yet they seem to be very trying. I remember one brother expressing it this way some time ago: It would be a very simple matter to stand up for the Lord and have someone knock us in the head and kill us, but an entirely different thing to be simply nibbled to death; and so, as these little nibbling experiences come in, they are sometimes even more trying than the bigger ones. Along this line we remember the words of the poem in our Sixth Volume:

“If I could only surely know
That all these things that tire me so
Were noticed by my Lord—
The pang that cuts me like a knife,
The noise, the weariness, the strife,

And all the nameless ills of life,
What peace it would afford?

“I wonder if He really shares
In all these little human cares,
This mighty King of kings!
If He who guides through boundless space
Each radiant planet in its place,
Can have the condescending grace
To mind these petty things.

“It seems to me, if sure of this,
Blent with each ill would come such bliss
That I might covet pain,
And deem whatever brought to me
The blessed thought of Deity
And sense of Christ’s sweet sympathy,
Not loss, but riches gain.

“Dear Lord, my heart shall no more doubt
That Thou dost compass me about
With sympathy divine.
The love for me once crucified
Is not the love to leave my side,
But waiteth ever to divide
Each smallest care of mine.”

So, when we have these little perplexing experiences, these little annoying experiences, let us just remember that the Lord is watching over us, that He is guiding and directing in all of our affairs and that we have His love and sympathy; so that instead of being discouraged when we have them, let these experiences remind us of His love, of His watch-care, and we will soon learn how to rejoice in them, we will soon learn to be able to thank the Lord not merely because we feel like we ought to thank Him, but we will thank Him because we really realize that they are working out to our advantage, they are lifting us up, drawing us nearer to Him, enabling us to live on a higher plane of Christian experience. And so St. Paul tells us in the second chapter of Romans, the seventh verse, that “Those who by patient endurance in well doing [not those who merely start but those who continue patiently in well doing], seek for glory and honor and immortality [this is the class that are going to receive the reward; this is the class that will receive the great prize].” Then some might say, Well, I don’t know how about my own experiences; I don’t know whether I would ever be able to be strengthened to endure that way. Let us see what the Apostle says. We have abundance of encouragement in the Scriptures,

which were written for our learning, for our comfort, “that we through faith and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.” In Colossians the first chapter, we will read the 10th and 11th verses: “That ye might walk worthy unto the Lord, and be fruitful unto every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God; strengthened with all might, according to—” our growth in grace? No, that’s not what it says. “Strengthened with all might, according to—” our creed? No. “Strengthened with all might according to His glorious power.” There it is. It is God’s glorious power that is strengthening us. “Unto all patience and longsuffering.” How? Because we are dead? “Unto all patience and long-suffering, with joyfulness.”

We say, then, instead of our experiences of the present time having no joy in them; from start to finish they should be joyful experiences; and if we find that they are not joyful experiences, then we want to recognize right away that we are living below our privileges. We have the privilege of rejoicing in the Lord always, as St. Paul tells us: “And again I say, rejoice.”

We recall also the Apostle’s words, 1 Cor. 15:58: “Wherefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.” It might seem that we are not making progress, but we have the assurance that our labors are not in vain in the Lord, when though they seem to be so weak. We can take a good deal of comfort in the thought expressed in one of our hymns: “My sweetest thought henceforth shall be, that my imperfect work shall be acceptable, through Christ, to Thee;” because we are glad the Lord accepts our imperfect work we are able to rejoice.

The Scriptures suggest that this Kingdom class will have to attain to a certain mark of character. We recall how St. Paul tells in the 8th chapter of Romans that all of them must be conformed to the image of God’s dear Son. We might view this mark from two standpoints: first, of heart-likeness to the Lord, love of righteousness, perfection of intention; and second, when these qualities have become crystallized, fixed, steadfast and immovable. We can say then, that our perfection would not be at consecration, would not be at the time that we come to the Lord and give ourselves to Him. We could not say then that we were really down at the mark; but that after we had made consecration, then in these various experiences to test whether this seed has really fallen upon good ground or whether it fell by the wayside or whether it fell among thorns or whether it fell among rocks. All these experiences are to test whether our consecration was real, from the heart. We know how the Lord does not accept our word for anything. “The Lord your God doth prove you, to see whether you love the Lord thy God with all thy heart or no.” We remember how St. Paul in Philippians 3, beginning with the 7th verse, speaking of his own experiences, said: “But the things that were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, I count all things but loss and dross, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord.” Well, we came to the Lord in full consecration.

We said, Here, Lord, I give myself away, 'tis all that I can do. So we made the consecration. But St. Paul said he had gone still farther than that. Well, what had he done: “Yea, doubtless, I count all things but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things.” It is one thing to count it all loss, and it is another thing to go ahead and fulfill our consecration vows, and suffer the loss of all things.

In attaining the mark there are two things, we might say, that are necessary. One is our part, and the other is God's part. We could not attain to the mark independently. We could not attain to the mark without the Lord's assisting grace, and so, in order that we might do our part, it is necessary for us to abide in the secret place of the Most High, to abide in this condition of full consecration to Him, seeking His will and His will only. Well, what is the Lord going to do? What is our Heavenly Father going to do for us? Why He is going to give us time to make our calling and election sure. Remember how St. Paul tells us that he has confidence that God, who has commenced this good work in us, would finish it, would see that it is finished, unto the day of Jesus Christ—Phil. 1:6. *It is not for us to determine when we shall lay down our cross and take up the crown.* It is not for us to say, Well, I have done everything that I can, I just wish that you would cut my course short now and take me home. We remember how the Lord himself expressed it: “The cup which My Father has poured for Me, shall I not drink it?” And just as the Father poured the cup for the Lord and determined when His experiences should cease here, so we should realize that the Heavenly Father has poured the cup for each one of us; each one of us is to participate in the Lord's cup, and it will be for Him to say, “It is enough, come up higher.”

Our life should be a life of victory. We realize, of course, that there are some slips and failures, some mistakes, sometimes we are defeated; but all these should be occasions for coming to the Lord in prayer, seeking His forgiveness, seeking that we might be strengthened so that we would not be overcome the second time. St. John tells us that “that which is begotten of God overcometh the world, and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.” Possibly we have stopped and we have looked at that text sometimes and we wonder what St. John meant. Did he mean to say that every one of those who are begotten of God would overcome the world, that they would come out finally victorious? No, because we recognize that there are other statements of the Scripture which indicate that there were some who would count that precious blood a common and an unholy thing, that there would remain no more a sacrifice for them. St. John tells us in another place that there would be some who would commit the sin unto death and that we should not pray for them, and we wondered, and finally we began to appreciate that the time that we present ourselves in consecration to the Lord, there it was that we had no part in the world. We had never presented ourselves before because the allurements of the world had appealed to us stronger than the things that God was holding out for us; but because we have now counted the cost, we have decided that these worldly

things are not to be compared with the things that God has in reservation for them that love Him; and there it was that we gained our first victory. Our Lord's life was a life of victory. His first victory was at Jordan. Then we remember how He obtained the victory over the adversary in the various temptations, and day by day He was victorious, and so if we realize that even now we are weak, that we are like the babe that starts out to walk, for instance. We have all seen them, and possibly when they first start they fall flat on their faces and they just lie there until someone picks them up and starts them over again; until after a while they grow a little stronger, and if they stumble they pick themselves up, and after a while they learn to walk without stumbling; they learn how to go forward, and finally if they stumble at all it isn't so frequently. This is somewhat like our own experiences. We are first of all babes in Christ, small, and possibly we are very, very weak indeed; and sometimes there is stumbling, and the Lord picks us up and starts us over again, and then every time we get up and walk again the exercise of our muscles makes us a little stronger, and then day by day we should be more like Christ and learning how to lean more upon Him so that these stumblings will not occur so frequently.

In order that we might attain unto this crown and be faithful unto the end, the first thing that is necessary is submission to the Divine will. The next thing is patient endurance. Our Lord's life is to be our example, to be our rule, and we have a beautiful illustration in St. Paul's life also. We recall how he tells us to follow him as he followed Christ; and how did he follow Christ? Why, his whole life was a case of "This one thing I do." He was not doing a half dozen things. He wasn't dividing his attention, but, just as the Lord expressed it, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things (all the necessary things) shall be added unto you." It is necessary that we should also have the quality of humility, of determination, of loyalty. All of these might be really expressed in the one word faith, or faithfulness. After we have attained to the mark and we realize that we are having certain experiences to test us to see whether or not we will remain there, and we all remember how there were those who at one time we looked upon them as spiritual giants. Why, we never thought they would fall; but undoubtedly, the Lord saw that their heart was not in the right attitude to hold the Truth, so He took it away from them. It is not a question whether we are going to hold on to the Truth. It is a question whether the Lord is going to let us hold on to it or not. If we are in the right attitude, if we are continually seeking His will and His favor, why the Lord will be blessing us with the Truth. "The path of the just is as a shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day;" and so, if we remain in this condition, this attitude, we will find that the Lord's Truth will be growing brighter to us all the time. It will be growing more precious. But if at any time we come to a wrong attitude of heart, then it means that the Lord will take the Truth away from us, as illustrated in a certain parable, where the unfaithful servant was taken and cast into outer darkness. It was not that he volunteered to walk out there, but the Lord cast him into outer darkness, and so we realize that the Lord has illustrated this in the parable. The Father takes away all of the

branches that will not bear fruit, He takes them away, cuts them off from the vine, and men gather them that they might be burned. We recall how in David's Lament, as recorded in 2 Sam. 1:25, "Lord, how the mighty are fallen." This is from the song regretting the fall of Saul. We remember how Saul started out in the right attitude. He was very humble, but he did not remain in that humble condition, for after a while we find that he began to lean more and more upon his own wisdom and strength, and the Lord withdrew His grace from him. The lesson that we should draw from this is that because we may be in an attitude of humility and weakness at the present time, it is no proof that we will remain in this condition, but it should mean that we should be ever in an attitude of, using a very common expression of the day, of watchful waiting upon the Lord, lest at any time we should be overcome by the same temptations.

Another thing that will be of encouragement to us is that of looking forward to the recompense of the reward. Remember how in the eleventh chapter of Hebrews, Moses was commended because he had respect unto the recompense of the reward. I recall how St. Peter tells us, "Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises, that by these we might be partakers of the divine nature." The very object of God in putting out these promises unto us is that we might come off finally victorious, that we might be conquerors. They are held out to us in order to press us on, to urge us on, that, as St. Paul says, "if by any means we might attain unto the resurrection of the dead." He was looking forward to that time and longing for it. He desired it. He had respect unto the recompense of the reward. And recall also how it was concerning our Lord, "Who for the joy that was set before Him [He had respect unto the things that the Father was holding out for Him], who for the joy that was set before Him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down on the right hand of God."

Loving obedience brings peace and joy even at the present time. Recall how St. Paul tells us in Rom. 8:6: "To be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace," so, in proportion as we are able to set our minds on the things of the Kingdom, the things of God, in that proportion it brings us certain peace and joy into our hearts. Remember how the Lord, speaking to His disciples, said that they would have trials and tribulations and trouble, but He did not give them these words in order to discourage them, but, He says, "These things have I spoken unto you (Why?) that My joy might remain in you and that your joy might be full."

Well, in conclusion, we recall the words of the Lord: "To him that overcometh"—now God has made all the provision necessary. "No good thing will He withhold from them that walk uprightly." St. Peter states that He has given us all things that pertain unto life and holiness; not everything that we might think we want, that we might think we need, but He has given unto us everything that He sees that we need; hence these words should be of special force to us—"To him that overcometh." "To him that overcometh, to him will I grant to sit with Me in My throne, even as I have overcome and am set down with

My Father in His throne.” Now what a glorious throne it is! To think of the work that is committed into our hands! The promise that if we are faithful we shall be associated with our dear Redeemer in the glorious work of bringing the whole world back into harmony with the Father! We may well stop and wonder at such a stupendous thing. Would God commit to our hands this glorious work? Would we consider ourselves worthy of this glorious privilege? And we are reminded of the words of St. Paul, in about the third chapter of Hebrews, I believe it is, in speaking about how God had called Aaron to be a high priest to minister in the things of God concerning the people of Israel, and then he said, “Even Christ glorified not himself to become a high priest, but He was called of God, as was Aaron.” And if it were not for the fact that the invitation is made so clear that we are called to be associated with the dear Redeemer, we might well hesitate before ever undertaking to take such a step, ever venturing to take the first step of approaching God that we might be counted in as a member of this Royal Priesthood, this reigning house, this glorious Kingdom for the blessing of all the families of the earth; but we recall the words of St. Peter, “Brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure.”

So let this be our business, seeking first the Kingdom of Heaven and the righteousness connected with it; and we can rest assured that if we are doing this, then our Heavenly Father will see that all of the things that are necessary for us to have will be added unto us. Amen.