

OVERCOMING

(Symposium from 1909 Convention report, page 33 on subject of overcoming.)

By Brother A. E. Towne

It gives me great pleasure to be with you. Surely in the words of the song, "The fellowship of kindred minds is like to that above." The text allotted to me is Rev. 2:26: "And he that overcometh and keeps my works unto the end to him will I give power over the nations." Inasmuch as the others preceding have spoken on the subject of overcoming, I will pass by that feature and devote my time to "He that keepeth my works to the end."

"My works" are the works of Christ. We read that He came not to do His own will but the will of Him that sent Him. At the time of His begetting of the Holy Spirit He said, "I come to do Thy will, O God." The Father's will was that his should be a work of sacrifice, the highest type of love; sacrificial love. But some will say, did not the opening of the blind eyes, unstopping of deaf ears, healing the lame, etc., constitute the works of Christ? How can we do those works? Has not our dear Brother Russell shown us that the healing of the spiritual sight and hearing, and those that are spiritually lame and out of the way are still our privilege even as our Lord said, Greater works than these shall ye do.

But the main thought is sacrificial love which pervaded His every motive. Does it not cost sacrifice of time and money and influence and all those things which the flesh holds dear? Every tract, every meeting, every book sold by the dear colporteurs, every sacrifice made on our behalf by our dear Brother Russell, are they not all prompted by sacrificial love?

Let us not forget then that both the Apostles Peter and Paul said that love, sacrificial love, is the *principal thing*. We cannot lay too great stress on faith, but yet the Apostle tells us that though he may have ALL FAITH and give his body to be burnt, and his goods to the poor, and had not love it would avail nothing. We would ask why God requires such love? The Scriptures show us that Satan was a powerful spirit being on the angelic plane, but did not have inherent life. We see by his example what a powerful enemy God would have if these to whom He promised immortality, a condition, as I understand it, which God Himself could not destroy, of having life within one's self. He therefore requires us to have even love for our enemies, that when the great time of restitution comes we will love and assist even our enemies upon the highway of holiness.

I have in mind one prominent Brother who disagreed regarding the Vow and Covenants with our Dear Bro. Russell, whose faith so far transcends my own, that it pales into insignificance, and yet he was tested on the line of love, the "principal thing."

Let us not overlook our development of the quality of love. Sacrificial love! the love of sacrifice. "He that endureth to the end." I will briefly refer to. I fully believe that the testings of the Church will shortly enter into are to be the severest the Church has ever known, when it will take the whole armor to stand.

And it will be fully manifest, both to angels and men, that the Church is worthy of the blessings and honor they will receive on account of the great test. The time may not be far distant when the door will be closed, the Watch Tower office closed by the authorities and our Dear Brother Russell removed, and we will have to stand individually in a sense in which we never realized before, when the tests are so great we will only be able to stand. And perhaps the same feeling of utter abandonment in which we may also cry out in the depth of our testing, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken me."