

the coral islands to emerge from the ocean and to "lift their fronded palms in air," but when finished, what a thing of beauty and what a joy forever! So God builds slowly but surely and to eternal satisfaction. "Wait on the Lord: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the Lord."

*Be faithful in impatience.* There is a patience which is noble and a patience which is ignoble. We should be impatient with public evil. We should not rest contentedly under the burden of any public wrong. It was a great quality in the mind and heart of Paul which made him so provoked within him as he saw the city of Athens wholly given over to idolatry. May God give us all that divine discontent, that social sensibility which will feel a stain like a wound!

*Be faithful now.* The fidelity of former days cannot be called upon to round out the shortcoming of the present. Each day must answer for itself and the Lord will expect us to be found in the right use of each present moment. Now is the accepted time and now is always the time for fidelity. Some lull their souls unto a false content by thinking of the services which they once rendered the poor and others by thinking of the services which they intend to render in the future. Let us cease from all such thinking, which is a disease, and act in the living present.

*Be faithful unto persecution.* The church at Ephesus labored and did not faint though the times were difficult. There is no formal persecution in these times, although socially it is sometimes made hard for a man to be a

Christian. A young soldier in the army was often disturbed by his tent mates while at prayer. For a time he omitted his usual habit, but his ardent soul could not endure this neutrality and so he resumed his former practice with the result that after a time his ten or twelve tent companions knelt in prayer with him. In reporting the experience to his chaplain, he said: "Isn't it better to keep the old colors flying?"

*Be faithful unto death.* If a man or a church has not something worth living for, life has become sordid and stolid and stunned. The Christian life is the life of the cross. It implies the possibility of death. Its supreme instance is the martyr. "Blaspheme Christ," said the Roman proconsul to the aged Polycarp, the bishop of Ephesus and pupil of the apostle John. "Eighty and six years," said Polycarp, "have I served him; nor hath he ever done me wrong. How then can I blaspheme my God and Saviour?" For this refusal he died the death of a martyr.

*All the faithful shall be crowned at last.* Virtue is not only its own reward but the high God takes note of it and gives a crown. In this world there have been and will be the stings and scorns of outrageous fortune, but in the world to come, there shall be joy and pleasures for evermore. The faithless and unbelieving are every hour digging the source of future tears, but the faithful shall receive a crown of life. All is well that ends well. The destitute, despised, forsaken can endure if all the while they see the heavens opened and Jesus Christ standing at the right hand of God.

### THE LESSON GRADED

This section embraces teaching material for the various grades in the School.

#### For Teachers of Bible Classes

The opening section of this Book contains the admonitions directed to seven churches. Show the class the position of these churches, indicate the importance of the cities in which they were established and point out the temptations to which they were particularly exposed.

1. *The loveless church*, vs. 1-7. Note carefully the good things which can be said in

respect to this church. Who are the Nicolaitanes? The church lacked one thing,—brotherly love. But love is a *first* thing, Matt. 24:12; 2 John 5, 6; 3 John 6. For "God is love;" "he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?" The lack of love threatens the loss of the light of the candlestick (compare Phil. 2:14-16). No church which is torn by factions and parties and sets, can long be a light in spite of the collective interest of its numbers in all good works.