

(Rom. 8: 17; 2 Tim. 2: 11, 12). The history of civilized nations is but the history of this kingdom in its extension. "Whatever Christ's kingdom shall be," all true believers "shall be a part; they shall partake of his joys, his triumphs, his glory, his reign" (Pel.)

II. WARNING AGAINST SELF-CONFIDENCE.

31. **Satan hath desired to have you**—"Asked to have you" (R. V.) This is a mysterious saying, dimly revealing something of what is evidently taking place in the unseen world. "Probably satan had accused the disciples to God, as mercenary in following Christ, and aiming at nothing else therein, but enriching and advancing themselves in this world, as he had accused Job." (Henry). "Not content with Judas" (Bengel), he desired to have them all. **May sift you as wheat**—All the powers of darkness conspire against the Christian. "The possibilities of evil and ruin are manifold." (Pulpit Com.) As the sieve separates the chaff from the grain, so the siftings and winnowings, the temptations and persecutions of life distinguish the true from counterfeit Christians. 32. **I have prayed for thee**—"The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much" (Jas. 5: 16). **Thy faith fail not**—There can be no total or final failure of real faith. **Art converted**—not regenerated, for that he had been, but

"hast turned again" (R. V.) to God, brought to repentance after having wandered and grievously sinned. **Strengthen**—"Encourage"—"stablish thy brethren" (R. V.) to hope that they too may obtain mercy. 33. **I am ready to go with thee**—The impulsive, over-confident Peter. Those that talk the bravest are often the first to run when danger comes. 34. **I tell thee, Peter**—Jesus knew Peter, and assured him that he would deny him thrice that very night (Mark 14: 30, 31). Peter most vehemently entered his protest, declaring such a thing to be impossible, as did also all the disciples. Yet it all came true in a few hours. They all forsook him and fled, and Peter denied him with oaths and cursing.

III. WARNING AGAINST COMING DANGER. 35. **Lacked ye anything?**—Hitherto they lacked nothing. Jesus had been with them and they had fared well. 36. **But now**—A great change was very soon to take place. They must be prepared to meet different treatment for the future. Henceforth opposition and persecutions, hardships and privations would be their lot. 37. **Must yet be accomplished in me**—R. V. "fulfilled." "The prophetic description of the suffering servant (Is. 53) of the Lord will soon be found to have been terribly accurate." (Pulpit Com.)

## PRACTICAL LESSONS.

1. *The danger of a self-seeking spirit.* It was very strange that any such question as that which disturbed the minds of the apostles should have been allowed to arise at such a solemn time. That which gave rise to the contention is not stated, but the same question had been discussed before, as recorded by Mark (4: 33-35). This self-seeking spirit which desires to be first is exactly the opposite of the spirit which should be found in members of Christ's kingdom—which is a spirit of love, of self-sacrifice, of self-denial, of humility, of usefulness to others. This self seeking spirit begets evils without number and produces many heart-burnings and sorrows to those who are ruled by it. It must be distinguished from a strong, earnest desire to improve, to grow in grace, in holiness and in love, and to be of greater usefulness in the world, which is a very commendable spirit.

2. *True greatness measured by service.* No man lives to himself. To wish to rule, or lead others, simply for the sake of personal advancement is a very low ideal of life. Our Lord laid down the rule by which we could attain to true greatness: "Whosoever will be great among you shall be your minister, and whosoever of you will be chiefest shall be servant of all" (Mark 10: 43, 44). When we think of the opportunities of ministering to the wants of others we see the grand possibility of attaining to true greatness. Selfishness must be overcome, love of Christ must fill our hearts, and then we will be able to see and realize

the needs of others and possess the spirit to help. The more we have of this spirit of Christ the nobler will be our service. It is the service which comes from the presence of the spirit of Christ which ensures true greatness in this world, and the commendation of the Master at last, "Well done."

3. *Testing times are before us.* Just as certainly as there is an antagonist to all that is good in the world, so surely will he be active. We must not imagine that we will be exempt from his influence or the effects of his power. He will test our faith, try our trust, and prove our confidence by his temptations, which he will present at the most unexpected time and in the most insidious and fascinating way. While our Lord does not pray that Peter may be saved from the trial, yet he prays that he may be saved in the testing time. Peter was a better, truer, nobler man after the trial than before. Gold comes from the furnace purer, more precious and approved, ready for service. So if we improve the trial we will be better fitted for the service of the Lord.

4. *Warning against self-confidence.* Peter was naturally bold, courageous and prompt in all his actions. It does not seem possible to him that he could fail in a time of trial. But Peter, so like a great many more disciples, did not know his own deceitful, weak heart until it was tried. Peter is singled out as a type of a class. He was noble in spirit though changeable. In his enthusiasm and impressiveness he was apt to lose his balance. The Lord