

Thoughts of Jesus

The Patience of Jesus

JESUS was the perfect example of patience in all its varied shades of meaning. He was self-possessed in the face of provocation. He suffered trial and affliction without complaining. He persevered in the course He had undertaken until His work was finished. He endured as a good soldier, holding on in faith and confidence when the way was dark and the outcome seemed uncertain.

We too should seek to possess this all-important virtue of saints. In Hebrews we are bidden, "Consider him who endured from sinners such hostility against himself, so that you may not grow weary or fainthearted." Hebrews 12:3, Revised Standard Version.

Consider Jesus as He meets His avowed enemy in the wilderness at a time when His own body is faint from fasting. He does not shrink from the battle but rises calmly to the challenge. At each thrust of the devil Jesus confidently replies with a text of Scripture.

He fires no blast of vituperation. He makes no accusations. He merely tells this angel of darkness to consider what God has said. Satan had no weapon against such self-possession and such persistent faith. So he left Him.

Again we see Jesus in the latter end of His life as He stands before His accusers in the court of Caiaphas and Pilate's judgment hall. His composure was astonishing. We are told that as the ignorant rabble and court guards mocked and derided Jesus, "His meekness, His innocence, His majestic patience, filled them with hatred born of Satan." *The Desire of Ages*, page 710.

Again as Pilate talked with Jesus, seeking information from Him, we are told that "Jesus gave him no answer." When the governor said, "Speak thou not unto me? Know thou not that I have power to crucify thee, and have power to release thee?" Jesus answered, "Thou couldst have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above: therefore he that delivered me unto thee hath the greater sin." John 19: 10, 11.

There was no blustering self-defense, only patient endurance of the ordeal through which He must pass. Jesus' patience in dealing with men is illustrated in His relation to Peter. This disciple was a most impetuous person. He had little control over his emotions. He seemed always to be the first to speak up, the first to proclaim his loyalty, and the first to change his mind.

How he must have troubled the Master and tried His patience. But Jesus knew the heart of the impulsive fisherman, and He was determined to make something of him for the glory of God.

Jesus warned Peter that he would forsake and deny his Lord. Peter vehemently protested that this could never be. But he was not long in finding out that Jesus was right. That very day found him denying Him in a most shameful manner.

If Jesus had revealed any impatience with Peter at that time, He would have lost a good convert. In one look Jesus revealed His love for and confidence in His wayward disciple. It was this that both broke the heart of Peter and also gave him hope for a new start.

Jesus' emphasis on patient continuance in well-doing and persistence in a right course of action is well illustrated in His life and parables. We note this in His dealings with the curious multitude, with His trying disciples, with the prying scribes and Pharisees, and in His parables of the importunate widow

(Luke 18:1-8), the barren fig tree (Luke 13:6-9), the friend at midnight (Luke 11:5-10), the hidden treasure (Matthew 13:44), the goodly pearl (verses 45, 46), and the lost sheep (Matthew 18:11-14).

In His teaching concerning His second coming Jesus drew attention to the need of patient endurance. Thus He said: "He that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved." Matthew 24:13. "Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things and to stand before the Son of man." Luke 21:36.

He warned against the feeling of weariness that would lead one to say, "My lord delays his coming," and give up hope. (Matthew 24:48.)

Jesus waited through a lifetime for a vindication of His mission to the world. Not until He conquered the tomb, ascended on high, and sent the promised Spirit at Pentecost did men begin to know the full import of His life and work.

We too may have to wait long for a fulfillment of our faith and hope. For years the imminence of Christ's coming has been preached. Many who had anticipated seeing the Lord's Advent have gone to their graves. Shall we lose heart because of this? No, like Jesus, we must have the virtue of patient endurance, and hold on to our hope and purpose so long as life shall last, or until our hopes be fulfilled.

Thus it is that the people who wait for the second coming of the Lord are characterized by God as those who have patience, meaning endurance and continuance. (Revelation 14:12.) Again and again the Scriptures call our attention to this valuable Christian asset. Paul wrote to the Romans: "If we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it." Romans 8:25. "Who will render to every man according to his deeds: to them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life." Romans 2:6, 7.

"Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord, we read in James 5:7. "Behold, the husbandman waits for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain."

In the Revelation we are admonished: "But that which ye have already hold fast till I come." Revelation 2:25. "Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown." Revelation 3:11.

Finally that oft-quoted text of Scripture comes to mind: "Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward. For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise. For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come and will not tarry." Hebrews 10:35-37.