**A Challenge to Saints**

(by Joshua Gurtler)

Another year has come and gone. In fact, another century has come to pass and what has man done to the glory of his Lord? Before the foundation of the world, our Creator desired that His creation would accomplish great things thus glorifying His majestic name. ***“For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them”*** (**Ephesians 2:10**).

In this new year what are our intentions for achievement? In Romans we read of man exchanging the glory of our Father for that of corruptible man (**Romans 1:25**). Without thought, Christians behave the same with their carefree absorption into the pagan environment around them.

The United States is a country which has excelled like no other known civilization in the history of man’s existence. Americans are masters at work, productivity, and efficiency in the secular realm. Oh, if the myriads of Christians in this great land would but transfer these invaluable talents, immeasurably blessed to us, into the service of the King (**Matthew 25**). Dear friends, this coming year we will be visited by two great forces. To which will we pledge our allegiance, our diligence and our talents?

**The Visitation of Satan** – Through Christ, Peter received this warning, though it was left unheeded: ***“Simon, Simon, behold, Satan has demanded permission to sift you like wheat; but I have prayed for you, that your faith may not fail; and you, when once you have turned again, strengthen your brothers”*** (**Luke 22:31-32**). The man who doubts the presence and power of the tempter is truly a naïve and disillusioned individual (**1 Peter 5:8**; **Ephesians 6:11-12**; **2 Timothy 4:17**; **Ephesians 4:14**). Though the power of the evil one may be great, the man of God is not defeated but is reminded of the Greater Power from above (**1 Corinthians 10:13**; **2 Peter 2:9**; **James 4:7**; **1 Peter 5:9**). Be prepared for the visitation of Satan, for his eminent presence is just as sure as the inevitable consequences of his captors.

**The Visitation of the Lord** – Our Father with greater fervor and an assured love also desires our submission. This is manifest by innumerable opportunities for repentance and continual longsuffering on His behalf. Paul said, ***“Or do you think lightly of the riches of His kindness and forbearance and patience, not knowing that the kindness of God leads you to repentance?”*** (**Romans 2:4**). While one might argue that the way of the cross is a difficult road to find, there are undeniable proofs and truths God has laid before us. When presented with the love of God, we can but accept or reject the Lord’s directives. Stephen, in **Acts 7**, told the Jews they were turning a blind eye to such. ***“You men who are stiff necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears are always resisting the Holy Spirit; you are doing just as your fathers did.”*** Moreover, Saul of tarsus resisted the Lord unknowingly until confronted with the truth. ***“And when we had all fallen to the ground, I heard a voice saying to me in the Hebrew dialect, ‘Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me? It is hard for you to kick against the goads’”*** (**Acts 26:14**).

The course is set before us. Will we kick against the righteous chastening hand of the Lord? In this new year God desires to make you what you can and will be for Him if you will but comply. **Jeremiah 18:1-6** describes the potter making and remaking the clay. We then read, ***“Can I not, O house of Israel, deal with you as this potter does? Declares the Lord. Behold, like the clay in the potter’s hand, so are you in My hand, O house of Israel.”*** This is our challenge. Not just for the new year, but until the Savior’s return.

From this beautiful text, Mr. and Mrs. Clyde Williams penned the corresponding hymn:

**“O Lord, You know my strength indeed is small,**

**Lest Thou should lead I’m prone to slip and fall;**

**Guide and direct, o’er evil help me stand,**

**Make me as clay in the potter’s hand.**

**Thou art the Potter, I am the clay,**

**Make of my life as pleases Thee each day;**

**Weave into beauty as You have it planned,**

**Make me as clay in the potter’s hand.**

**Father, we pray for power to be strong,**

**Let not our lives be marred by sin, and wrong;**

**Lead to Thy throne, by love take full command,**

**Make us as clay in the potter’s hand.**

**Mold me, make me, as You’d have me be,**

**Take me, use me, that the lost may see;**

**Guard me, guide me, thru this pilgrim land,**

**Make me as clay, in the potter’s hand.”**