

### March 14

*He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city. Proverbs 16:32*

WHILE anger, in the nature of hatred,

### Proverbs 16:32

R3629 "THE WORK FOR A CONVERTED WILL. *"The hoary head is a crown of glory, if it be found in the way of righteousness. He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty, and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city."*—Prov. 16:31,32...

To rule one's own spirit is by no means an easy task; and, as in the illustration, it cannot be done single-handed and alone... "We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers, against the rulers of the powers of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." These powers of the world, the flesh, and the devil are all closely allied; and, therefore, he who plans for conquest and an established reign thereafter must seek alliance with another and a stronger power; which power is tendered to all who earnestly undertake the great work. This power is none other than the almighty arm of our God, who says to all who accept his strength, "Greater is he that is for you than all they that be against you;" gird yourselves like men, fear not, be strong.

(Heb 4:16 KJV) "Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need."

malice, strife, envy, should be put away by all who are seeking to be copies of God's dear Son, anger in the sense of righteous indignation against wrongdoing, sin in its various forms, is proper; and although it

R3629 "The ruling of this symbolic city—one's own spirit—never will be done until first the commanding general, the Will, has decided to change his allegiance from Sin to God, and to rout the rebels who resist the change. But, in the words of a trite saying, "Where there is a will there's a way"—for good or for evil. God will assist, through various agencies, toward good; Satan, with various agencies, toward evil. If the Will says, It *must* be done, it calls in the needed and available help, and forthwith it sets all the other faculties of the mind at work, first to subjugate and then to rule and regulate the entire being."

F552 "God wants all Christians to practice self-denial in respect to sins and in respect to everything which would hinder his cause in any degree...Pro. 16:32."

R2017 "Nathan brought the lesson home to his conscience, saying, *"Thou art the man..."*

David in his contrition meekly accepted both the reproof and the penalties pronounced against him; and realizing that his sin was very grievous, and that his example before the nation was very detrimental to the moral and religious interests of the people, he resolved, and carried out his resolve, to make the example of his deep contrition

should be used with great moderation, backed by love, there are circumstances in which it would be wrong not to have righteous anger and use it. Z. '96-279R2068:5

and repentance as far-reaching in its effects for good, as his sin had been for evil.

This was a noble resolution, and in nothing does the nobility of the man shine out more clearly than in his humble and public confession of his sin, his efforts to undo, as far as possible, the wrong he had done, and his meek submission to the penalties which God in his wisdom and mercy saw fit to inflict upon him, that thus his wrath against sin might be manifest to all, and that king and people might so be warned against it. "Better is he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city." (Prov. 16:32.) So in overcoming the pride and selfishness that had taken deep root in his heart, David proved himself a greater hero than even in his youthful conflict with the giant of Gath, or in any subsequent encounter."

R4904 "The difficulty with many is that they are looking for some great battles instead of *averting the great battles* and keeping their minds cleansed from secret faults. The little battles, which are much more numerous, are principally the ones in which we gain the victories, with their ultimate rewards. "Greater is he that ruleth his own spirit [mind, will] than he that taketh a city."—Prov. 16:32."

R2068 (From Harvest Truth Database V5.0 2008)

### SOLOMON'S SIN

--DECEMBER 6.--1 KINGS 11:4-13.--

*"Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall."*—1 Cor. 10:12.

AS Solomon was the wisest man, so also he was the most foolish man; for the greater the opportunity the greater the loss, and the greater the knowledge possessed the greater the sin in its misuse.

McLaren has truthfully said of Solomon:--

"There are many instances in history of lives of genius and enthusiasm, of high promise and partial accomplishment, marred and flung away, but none which presents the great tragedy of wasted gifts and blossoms never fruited in a sharper, more striking form than the life of the wise King of Israel, who, 'in his later days, was a fool.' The goodliest vessel may be shipwrecked in sight of port.

"The sun went down in a thick bank of clouds, which rose from undrained marshes in his soul; and, stretched far up in the western horizon. His career in its glory and its shame preaches the great lesson which the Book of Ecclesiastes puts into his mouth as 'the conclusion of the whole matter:' 'Fear God, and keep his commandments; for this is the whole duty of man.'"

(4-6) "When Solomon was old." We last saw him at forty entertaining the Queen of Sheba with his wisdom, and noted that at about that time the Lord appeared to him a second time to indicate that he had reached a crisis where he must choose the right or the wrong path of life--wisdom or folly. Solomon chose the wrong path. He gave himself up to self-gratification, to "every desire of his heart [mind]." The result was a premature old age, for he died about fifty-nine years old. We may suppose (*verse 4*) that Solomon was to be reckoned an old man from his fiftieth year onward; whereas really that should have been but the prime of his life had he walked in the ways of wisdom.

Contrary to the divine law (Deut. 17:17), Solomon multiplied wives till he had seven hundred. (*Vs. 3.*) Some of these "queens" were ladies of rank and refinement from the various royal families of surrounding nations, one being Pharaoh's daughter. Solomon in his wisdom was esteemed by them, and they in turn were esteemed by him, not only for their personality, but because of the court alliance and influence with other kingdoms which it cemented. Having slipped from the path of obedience to God and integrity of heart, Solomon fell readily under the influence of his young wives into the

support of idolatry. We are not to suppose that he ceased to believe in the only true God and believed in the heathen gods and idols and nonsense; but that he came gradually to feel that he wished to please his various wives. This thought is borne out by *verse six*, which declares not that Solomon left the Lord, but that he went not fully after the Lord, and that he did that which was evil in the Lord's sight in sanctioning in any degree the idolatrous desires of his wives.

(7-8) Like all sins this one had its beginning-- when Solomon built the high place or altar of Chemosh to satisfy his Moabitish wives; and what might be expected is told us in *verse eight*: that when one system of idolatry had been introduced, the other foreign wives claimed similar rights, privileges, altars, etc., for the divinities of their lands. In yielding to these Solomon no doubt had in mind the foreign maids and servants of these wives and yet more the visiting delegations of court representatives from those various lands which, finding altars and temples to their divinities, would praise Solomon for breadth of character. But very different was such praise from that of the Lord and from that of the Queen of Sheba, who recognized in her day Solomon's true wisdom in his fidelity to Jehovah God.

(9,10) The Lord's anger with Solomon was not a burst of fury nor a malicious anger. It was a righteous indignation against sin; and an anger of this sort is the only kind compatible with God's character. It is the only kind, therefore, that the children of God should cultivate or exercise. <sup>(1)</sup>While anger in the nature of hatred, malice, strife, envy should be put away by all who are seeking to be copies of God's dear Son, anger in the sense of righteous indignation against wrong-doing, sin in its various forms, is proper; and although it should be used with great moderation, backed by love, there are circumstances and conditions in which it would be wrong not to have righteous anger and use it.

(11,12) The rending of the bulk of the kingdom from the hand of Solomon's son, Rehoboam, was a part of the penalty for Solo-

<sup>(1)</sup> Mar. 14 Manna, Pro. 16:32

mon's sin; yet it came in a natural way, and as the result of natural causes. The evil course which started in self-gratification and was manifested in the multiplication of wives and the gratifying of their desires for false religions did not stop there, but extended in other directions throughout Solomon's affairs and kingdom. He patterned his conduct more and more after other rulers of his day, selfishly augmented his own fortune, and ministered to his own desires and the desires of his numerous household, regardless of the interests of the Lord's people in whose interest and for whose happiness and welfare he should have sought to use the gifts of wisdom, influence and wealth bestowed upon him by the Lord. On the contrary, as we have seen (1 Kings 12:4,11), he bound heavy burdens upon the people.

The Jews as a people have always zealously guarded their liberties; and the spirit of liberty, as we have already seen, was the result of the measure of divine truth which had been granted them, which showed that the King upon the throne was as accountable as the peasant in the field to God the Judge of all. Hence the Israelites were prevented from believing, as did the heathen nations round about, that their kings were a kind of demi-god whose every wish was law; and hence, although we find no protest of the people against Solomon's departure from the Lord, nor against his erection of the altars for worship of false gods, we do find that they were disposed to resent Solomon's intrusion upon their personal rights and liberties. He divided the whole country into twelve districts, each of which was compelled to furnish contributions to the luxury of the royal palaces and court. He also established a system of forced labor in connection with the building of roads, palaces, fortifications, immense gardens, reservoirs, etc. And while these public improvements were in many respects proper enough, the method of securing the labor was particularly distasteful to the Israelites, who were thereby reminded of the Egyptian slavery. Thirty thousand men were set to work to fell trees on Mount Lebanon and to work in quarries under Jerusalem, each division of ten thousand serving for one-third of a year; seventy thousand were made carriers and general laborers, while eighty thousand others were engaged as stone masons and carpenters; and it appears that in all there were thirty-two hundred overseers of this labor-army. The heavy work now done by machinery was in those days all done by physical strength. In all this Solomon only copied the methods of his day which treated the masses of mankind virtually as the slaves of the rulers. Besides the forces above mentioned, other levies were made for the royal army and general service. In the end the Israelites were learning under their wisest and greatest King what God, through Samuel, the prophet, had forewarned them they must expect.--See 1 Samuel 8:18.

(13) This verse was fulfilled through Jeroboam, who had been an officer in Solomon's industrial army. Partly from sympathy and largely through ambition, he sought to steal the hearts of the people away from Solomon and attempted a rebellion in Solomon's day, but contrary to the Lord's plan. (1 Kings 11:31.) It was after Solomon's death that Jeroboam, allying himself with the ten tribes of Israel, aroused a certain amount of animosity by pointing out that King Solomon, being of the tribe of Judah, had favored that tribe chiefly. He then joined with the chief men of the ten tribes in demanding of Rehoboam how he would conduct the kingdom, telling him that

unless he promised reform from his father's methods and oppression they would revolt. Rehoboam refused to reform and they did revolt, and constituted a separate kingdom down to the time of the taking away into captivity by the King of Babylon, who took first the ten tribes and afterward the two tribes called Judah. Since the return from that captivity the distinction between Judah and Israel has not been maintained, and we find both the Lord and the apostles speaking of them, and applying prophecies to them, as "the twelve tribes," "the house of Israel," "the twelve tribes [a part of whom were] scattered abroad" --not ten tribes scattered abroad and two tribes at home in their own land, but a part of the twelve tribes in Canaan (chiefly Judah), and the remainder of the *twelve tribes scattered abroad* and living in the various cities of the Gentiles; as for instance, those at Ephesus, Philippi, Corinth, Thessalonica, etc., to whom the apostles first preached the gospel when they went with it amongst the Gentiles.--Acts 16:13; 17:2,10; 18:8,19.

The statement here is that one tribe would be given to Solomon's son; and this is entirely consistent with the facts, for although sometimes called two tribes, yet really the remnant of the tribe of Benjamin (after it was almost destroyed) was absorbed into the tribe called Judah.

We may learn from this sad lesson of Solomon's fall, that it is not only important to begin life wisely in harmony with God, but equally necessary to continue it, and to end it so. We may learn also that the temptations and trials of life are not upon the young only, but rather that the strongest temptations are apt to come as we advance in life; and that for these we need the preparation of character well begun and cultivated, developed, strengthened by experience and endurance.

Another lesson respects the importance of marriage, and fully corroborates the Apostle Paul's statement, that while marriage is honorable, it should be only "in the Lord." Whoever has neglected this advice has either rued his neglect or by it has been led so far astray as to be unable to appreciate his own decline from godliness. Each Christian has in his own fallen members quite a sufficient downward tendency to fight against, without putting himself directly in the way of outside temptation, although he has the Lord's promise of grace sufficient for every time of need. If, neglecting the Lord's instruction, he surround himself with additional downward tendencies, by taking a husband or a wife not in the Lord--not seeking chiefly the Kingdom of God and setting his affections upon the things above, but upon the things beneath--he will surely find it greatly to his disadvantage, as did Solomon in the taking of foreign wives--aliens to the divine promises and blessings, the commonwealth of Israel.

Another lesson is that wisdom and wealth, education and influence and great opportunities are sure to become snares and injurious, unless we are continually guided in their use by the wisdom which cometh from above. And the more of these talents we possess by nature or by acquisition, the more need we have for the divine grace provided in our Lord Jesus only, the more need to study and ponder and practise the exhortations to humility and godliness contained in his Word, and the more need to make full use of every other agency which he has provided for our blessing and help--"building one another up in the most holy faith."

R5603 (From Harvest Truth Database V5.0 2008)

## RIGHTEOUS AND UNRIGHTEOUS ANGER

*"Love is not easily provoked."—1 Corinthians 13:5.*

IN THE chapter from which our text is taken, St. Paul sets forth the prime necessity for the cultivation and development of Love, without which, whatever else we may attain, we shall be nothing in the sight of God. The Apostle tells us in the words of our text, that love is not easily provoked. Evidently he uses the word *provoke* here in a very different sense from its meaning where he says that we should "consider one another, to provoke unto love and good works." (Hebrews 10:24.) The thought in the latter text is to incite to good works, to call forth love in others, to exert an influence favorable to righteousness. The thought in our present text, however, is that of being excited, or roused, to anger. St. Paul declares that love is not easily thus aroused, but is long-suffering.

We might say, strictly speaking, that it is not the quality of Love itself that would ever be moved to anger. Yet righteous anger--a just indignation aroused by our love for the principles of righteousness--is not incompatible with love. "God is Love," and the Scriptures assure us that He "is angry with the wicked every day." His anger is righteous indignation against sin.

### GOD'S RIGHTEOUS ANGER

Looking to God as our great Example, we see that His Love was manifested on behalf of His human creatures in the beginning. It was love for humanity that provided the Garden of Eden with all its blessings and its perfect life, just as His love for the angels had provided all their blessings. But when Sin came in, Love stepped back; or in other words, Justice was the special attribute of God then manifested. It was better for mankind that there should be this punishment for sin; for from the foundation of the world God, foreknowing man's fall, had purchased his redemption. So even in the sentence of death His love for man persisted. But God is the opponent of sin, and when His Law was violated, Love, or He who is the embodiment of Love, was provoked to righteous anger.

God's indignation was likewise kindled against His chosen people, the Jews, when He said to the Prophet (Jeremiah 8:19), "Why have they provoked Me to anger?" Many Scriptures speak of God's anger. That anger has ever burned against sin. It has been resting upon the world for six thousand years. But the Love of God

has in no way been violated by this attitude against the condemned world. Therefore, Love can be justly provoked to anger. He who declares that Justice is the foundation of His Throne never indulges in sentiments which are not in the fullest harmony with that Justice. But He has arranged for the recovery of this condemned race. The Love of God has made this provision for His fallen creatures.

#### GOD'S LOVE HELD IN ABEYANCE

But Love is not easily provoked, not unjustly provoked. It required an act of *intentional disobedience* on the part of Father Adam to provoke God to anger. It was not because Mother Eve was deceived that the sentence came upon the world. The anger of God came upon mankind and the sentence of death was pronounced because of Father Adam's sin, which was committed with full knowledge. And during all these six thousand years of sin God's Love has been held in abeyance, so to speak, provoked to the point of withdrawal.

But all the while God's character has not changed. He did not cause the diabolical conditions which have existed since the fall of man. Neither Love nor Justice, as embodied in Jehovah, would sanction sin; "The wages of Sin is death." (Romans 6:23.) And everything that goes with death as its natural result is a part of that penalty. But God has permitted these conditions, knowing that by His Power they would all be overruled for the ultimate good of mankind. The great Adversary of God is responsible for the disaster which Sin has wrought upon the earth. But the Almighty will yet cause the wrath of Satan to work out good for the children of men, ultimately crushing, annihilating, the great Enemy of righteousness.--Hebrews 2:14.

The Love of God, thus held in abeyance, has bided its time, to be revealed to astonished man when the due time shall have come. Nearly two thousand years ago Love manifested itself on behalf of the world, when God sent forth His Only-Begotten Son to be man's Redeemer. He came to earth and gave His life--a willing sacrifice for human sin. Then the call went forth to gather the Church, the class who were in God's Purpose to be the Bride of His Son, to be associated with Him in the great future work for the race of Adam. During this Gospel Age, this Church is being gathered, and in due time will be exalted in Kingdom glory. Then God's love will manifest itself to our race. The Kingdom of God will lift up mankind from sin and degradation and death, into the light and glory of the Lord--all who are willing to accept life on God's terms.

#### SPECIAL CRISES IN CHRISTIAN LIFE

How earnestly we as children of God should watch and pray that we may indeed be fitted for our great future work--now so near! There is a danger that love will not be sufficiently strong in us; for by reason of the fall, sin and selfishness have come to be preponderating influences in the world. These, operating for six thousand years, have made man very deficient in love, sympathy, brotherly-kindness and long-suffering. Now there is a greater tendency toward anger, malice, hatred, strife, than toward love. Consequently, when God accepts us into His family, He tells us that one of the first requirements is *love*. Love must grow in our hearts and minds, and permeate all our thoughts, words and actions.

Our fallen flesh, helped on by the unseen "powers of the air," will seek to prevent our attaining this necessary condition; and after we have *attained* it, strong pressure will at times be brought to bear upon us as New Creatures to induce us to withdraw from this position. From time to time the child of God has experiences with others of the brethren that seem to threaten his spiritual health, or even his spiritual life. The powers of darkness assail him, endeavoring to encourage the feelings and sentiments which he is strongly tempted to adopt. He has come to a crisis in his Christian experience. He must go forward or backward. He cannot stand still. The struggle is on. Will this severe trial prove a stepping-stone to lift him nearer God, or will it be a stone of stumbling, to overthrow him?

At such crucial times, the only refuge is prayer. The Lord permits these very trials to test our mettle as children of God. The Adversary will endeavor to place the matter before our agitated minds in the most unfavorable light as regards the brother or sister. He will seek to pervert the judgment, and to deceive the mind as to the real facts in the case; and our flesh responds to this view of the matter. The only safe course is to refuse to entertain in the slightest degree the thoughts of bitterness trying to find a lodgment in our mind and heart, and to cry at once to the Lord for strength and help in our time of need, seeking counsel of His Word bearing upon our proper attitude in such an emergency. Let us remember the words of the hymn we have often sung:

"Yield not to temptation,  
For yielding is sin;

Each victory will help you  
Some other to win.  
Fight manfully onward,  
Dark passions subdue;  
Look ever to Jesus,  
He'll carry you through."

#### "FORGIVE, AND YE SHALL BE FORGIVEN"

Let us, then, be kind and forbearing one with another, brethren, seeking to put the kindest construction upon the words, the actions and the natural tendencies of one another, remembering our own peculiarities and foibles. Let us remember that each of us is blemished by the fall, and that those of the brethren who try us most may have had hereditary tendencies and environments in earlier life of which we are not aware, and which would make us very pitiful if we knew. Let us remember also that *we* may be altogether unaware of some of our own weaknesses and mannerisms, which may grate upon others. We should be much more careful to note our own mistakes and faults than those of other brethren of the Lord.

"Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger [fleshly anger], and clamor, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice; and be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you"--and still forgives you. (Ephesians 4:31,32.) "Put on, therefore, as the Elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering, forbearing one another and forgiving one another, if any man have occasion of complaint against any; even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. And above all these things, put on *love*, which is the *bond of perfectness*. And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which ye are also called in one Body; and be ye thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom."--Colossians 3:12-16.

After the child of the Lord has gained the victory in a struggle like this, and has through prayer and determined effort brought the Arm of God to his deliverance, he is a stronger Christian than before the trial came. He has taken a stride forward in the narrow way; he has taken a firmer hold on God, and will be the better enabled to conquer in the next testing. But every failure to thus overcome leaves the child of God weaker and less able to resist the onslaught of his flesh and of the Adversary and his evil host, and the less sure of being a final overcomer.

In speaking of love as respects the Church of Christ, the Apostle assures us that if we would be pleasing to the Lord we must develop richly this grace. Those who possess this quality in goodly measure will not be easily provoked to anger, will not readily take offense, will not be too watchful lest their rights and their dignity be infringed upon. Those who have little love will be easily angered and offended. Let us keep self down, and diligently continue the work of its crucifixion, looking ever to Him from whom cometh our help. The love which our Lord appreciates is longsuffering. This does not mean that there would never be occasions for just indignation, righteous anger. There should be a feeling of righteous anger when we see great injustice. Why? Because injustice is wrong. God is angry with injustice, when it is committed knowingly, or willingly. And so God's people should have no sympathy with injustice.

#### LOVE SUPERADDED TO JUSTICE

If the children of God do not carefully cultivate the quality of justice, they will get themselves into that attitude where they will not appreciate justice at all. But while appreciating what is right and what is wrong, we are to go further, and see that we cultivate diligently the quality of love, sympathy, charity. None can say that his own estimate of what constitutes justice and love is entirely right, and that the other man's estimate is entirely wrong, especially when this other is a brother or sister in Christ, seeking to develop the same Christlike qualities as ourself. Our viewpoints cannot be always the same; therefore let us not be too sure that our own viewpoint is the correct one, and the other view wrong, where there is any possibility of our being mistaken.

No follower of Christ is so well developed that he can say, I do not need any further instruction along the lines of justice and love, but my brother needs it. And in our experiences with the brethren, where the other one seems to be at fault, let us say to ourselves, Here is a brother who perhaps has had more disadvantages than I have had. He is a brother of mine according to the Spirit. He seems to me to be doing wrong, but I sympathize with him because he probably does not know that his action is wrong. Or I may be wrong myself. If he saw the matter from my viewpoint, he would do differently. I will not judge him, but leave that for the Almighty, who is infallible in judgment and to whom judgment belongs.--1 Corinthians 4:5.

## SYMPATHY FOR ALL MEN

God has no sympathy with *sin*; but He has so much sympathy for sinners that He has provided His well-beloved Son to redeem and uplift the sinner. He has set apart a thousand years for this work of human uplift. We note injustice; we ought to note it. But it is not our province to flay, to inflict punishment. We are to "judge nothing before the time." We see acts committed that shock our moral sense. We are to say to ourselves, I believe that act to be criminal; but it is not for me to settle with that wrong-doer. God knows to what extent the individual is responsible; I do not. It is my duty as far as possible to view him from the standpoint of sympathy. It is my duty to assist him if it is in my power, if I have a proper opportunity--to help him

R5973 (From Harvest Truth Database V5.0 2008)

## "SUFFER THE WORD OF EXHORTATION"

*"Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice, and be ye kind one to another."--Ephesians 4:31,32.*

THE same Apostle who uses these words of our text has elsewhere classified these evil fruits here enumerated as works of the flesh and of the Devil. He tells us that they that do these things shall not inherit the Kingdom of God. He indicates that these traits have come with our fallen nature. But we who have left the world, who have renounced its spirit, are under the most solemn obligations as New Creatures in Christ to bring our fallen nature with its tendencies to evil into full subjection to the new nature, to bring the old creature under control of the mind of God, the Holy Spirit, the holy will, crucifying the flesh and bringing every thought into captivity of obedience to Christ. More and more the Lord is impressing this thought upon us day by day.

St. Paul contrasts these fruits of the Adversary and of the fallen flesh with the precious fruits of the Spirit of God. The one Spirit is Heavenly, Godlike, while the other is "earthly, sensual, devilish." Faith, goodness, meekness, gentleness, patience, peace, self-control, love-- these are the Heavenly fruits. They are the very opposite of the spirit of the Adversary. As we endeavor to do the will of God, to cultivate the sweet qualities of the Holy Spirit, we find continual warfare with the inherited weaknesses of our fallen flesh. Some may succeed in a comparatively short time in gaining to a large degree the victory over these works of the flesh and of the Wicked One, while others may have a great war to wage. But the victory over this evil disposition *must be won*; else we shall never be granted an entrance into the Kingdom. The Lord is watching to see the zeal and earnestness with which we strive to put off these works of the fallen flesh, these evil traits of character. Knowing our own natural weaknesses, each of us is so to watch and guard himself, so to cry unto the Lord for help, so to fill his heart and mind with the Word of the Lord, that he may be kept pure and free from the alloy of sin.

Coming to analyze the Apostle's exhortation of our text, it would seem as if he were mentioning one of the worst traits first--"all bitterness." Bitterness is an acrid condition, the very opposite of sweetness. It represents a rancor in the heart, and is very closely allied to the last trait mentioned--"malice." Maliciousness in the heart, leads one to malevolence, to seek to do injury to another. The spirit of bitterness and malice, granted an entrance into the heart, is very likely to extend to all the affairs of life and to make complete shipwreck of the New Creature. Its effect is most baneful. While it is possible for one to become angry, and to feel vengeful momentarily, without the feeling amounting to bitterness which would be lasting, without a development of malice, nevertheless, fleshly anger and wrath are sinful, dangerous and certain, if not conquered, to lead to bitterness and malice.

### "AS YE WOULD THAT MEN SHOULD DO UNTO YOU"

The Lord's Word admonishes us, "Let not the sun go down upon your wrath." No matter what provocation one may have had, he should see to it that the matter is settled as quickly as possible. Anger or wrath must not be harbored and cherished; for it is sure to lead to permanent bitterness and hatred. The word *anger* seems not to be so strong a word as *wrath*. Wrath in an imperfect, fallen being, seems to be deep, determined and lasting anger, something that is resentful, retaliatory. *Evil speaking* is a more refined, a more subtle matter, more deceitful, more malicious. Many people become so weak in character, so unbalanced, that they do not realize the proper application of the Golden Rule in their daily lives. They say things of others that they would not wish others to say of them. They treat others in a way that they would not wish to be treated. All such conduct should be put far away from the Lord's children, from those who have taken God's holy Covenant upon themselves and who profess to be God's ambassadors.

out of his wrong views into right views. But even in this I am to be "wise as a serpent, and harmless as a dove." The conduct is wrong, but I cannot know how wrong the individual may be.

So Love looks out and sees that the whole world is in much difficulty through the fall. And Love says, Be gentle toward all; be meek; be forbearing. We are ever to remember that we are in a world of sin, pain, sickness, death. From this viewpoint, Love will not be easily provoked, but will think kindly and sympathetically of others. Thus, beloved, shall we grow up into Christ, our glorious Head, in all things, until, made perfect and complete through His grace, we shall be presented to the Father "without spot or wrinkle or any such thing."--Ephesians 5:27.

We are not saying that there is no such thing as *righteous* anger, righteous wrath. "God is angry with the wicked every day." Even now His righteous wrath is kindled against the nations of the earth, and He is smiting them to their final overthrow. If all anger is wrong, then God Himself would be guilty of sin. But God's wrath, His anger, is always of a proper kind. It is not fleshly anger or bitterness. God is angry with wickedness, and this anger signifies that He will punish it. The Scriptures, however, never refer to the Lord as being bitter or malicious. God is Love; He is patient and good, even to the wicked. He does everything in justice and love.

Now if it is right for God to have certain anger, certain wrath, would it be right on our part to exercise anger or wrath on any occasion? There may, as we have intimated, be times when one may properly be angry. For instance, we should properly feel a certain degree of anger against ourselves. If we found that we had not properly improved our opportunities, if we have been careless or negligent in watching our "thoughts, and words and doings," we might well be provoked, even angry with ourselves. But if the heart is right, we should be neither too indignant nor discouraged on account of our failures in this direction, but strive more and more carefully, with the Lord's assistance, to overcome, endeavoring to learn a lesson from every mistake we make.

### NEED FOR EARNEST HEART-SEARCHING

Not having the right or the ability to judge the heart of another, we should be very slow to anger, and very careful how we express ourselves. We are to remember that only the Lord has the right to punish. The Lord's people should strive against all of these weaknesses, these blemishes, of the flesh, which are stimulated by the Adversary and his hosts--anger, wrath, strife, malice, hatred. We should fear these things as we would a plague.

What carefulness, what scrutiny of ourselves, what earnest prayer for help, this thought should bring! How we should guard our tongues against evil-speaking, back-biting, slander, for this is the fruit of lovelessness and malice. And in guarding our tongues, we must remember that it is from the *heart* that these evil words proceed. Therefore our heart must be made and kept so loyal to Christ, so in tune with God's Holy Spirit, that it will not send forth any such bitter waters.

The Psalmist says, "Let not an evil speaker be established in the earth." See also St. Paul's counsel to Titus, 3:2-8, and to Timothy. (1Tim. 3:11.) Oh, that the spirit of love and kindness and consideration one for another might so richly dwell in every member of the Church of Christ that each one would not only refrain from speaking evil of a brother or sister, but that it would give pain to hear a defamatory tale about any one, and particularly about a fellow-pilgrim in the "narrow way"! If this were the attainment of each member of all the different Ecclesias, how much more closely would they be bound together in the bonds of Christian love!

As we have said before, we believe that the majority of the dear friends are developing more and more of this spirit of love and consideration; but there is still room for improvement in the cases of some, at least. The mischief that can be done with the tongue is almost unlimited. How watchful and prayerful, then, we should be of our influence! We urge a careful rereading of Vol. 6, pp. 583-588, of *STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES*. It is good that our pure minds be stirred up by way of remembrance. We believe that our time is short in which to complete our work of character structure. This should be impressed upon us more and more as we see one after another of the Body members of Christ passing beyond the veil. Let us seek by prayer and by daily, yea, hourly effort, that we may in all things become copies of God's dear Son, and hear, when our time shall come, the Master's sweet "Well done!"