

September 14

Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation. For this is thankworthy, if a man for conscience

(1Pet 2:12 KJV) "Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by *your* good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation."

R4838 "Study to show thyself approved unto God...2Tim 2:15.... Only the *studious* find the way to Divine approval and acceptance. Let us study to see that our lives are an honor to the cause we have espoused; that we abstain from even the appearance of evil; that we are circumspect in all our conversation, in our conduct—watching our thoughts, our lips, our lives. Let us *study* to be diligent in every duty, performing it with a ready mind and with joy and gladness of heart."

R5404 "CARELESS LIVING A FORM OF PROFANITY "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain." — Ex. 20:7..."

As the Jews profaned the name of the Lord by careless living amongst the Gentiles, so there is great danger of Christians profaning His name by careless living. And this is indicated in the Scriptures as being a danger...

Although this commandment was not given to Spiritual Israel, we can readily see how the *spirit* of it applies to us. We have taken the name of Christ as our name. We profess to be members of the Body of Christ. And the holy name of the Head belongs to all the members of His Body. The honored name of the Bridegroom belongs to His Espoused. What carefulness the thought of this should give us, and how appropriate it is that we should see to it that we have not taken that blessed name in vain; that we appreciate the honor, the dignity, the responsibility, of our position as His representatives and ambassadors in the world! Let us, therefore, walk circumspectly, taking earnest heed that we bring no dishonor to that hallowed name; but on the contrary, that we honor it in our every thought and word and deed.

"What manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation [behavior] and godliness?" "As He which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation [behavior]; because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy."--2 Peter 3:11; 1 Peter 1:15,16."

R565 "A MUCH READ TRACT..."

What harm is done with inconsistencies in a Christian's life, by thoughtless conduct, foolish conversation, levity of manner! We know how the sun goes on shining, and the world goes hurrying on around it. Daily it exerts an influence for good, by its light and warmth, and few take any notice of it. But only let a spot appear upon the sun, at once every eye and finger is towards it, and people are writing to the newspapers to say there is a spot on the sun. It is just so with the Christian; the world is hurrying on about him, and as it passes, though few take any notice of him, he can

toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully. 1 Peter 2:12, 19

WE may be evil reported of and slandered, but all who know us, who have dealings with us, should find from experience our loyalty to principle, our endeavor that the words of our mouths as well as the med-

exert his influence for good. But only let him stumble--let him show any inconsistency of conduct, and then the world will point and scoff at him, and his influence for good is hindered.... R. HILL."

(1 Cor 10:31-32 KJV) "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God. (32) Give none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God:"

(1Pet 2:19 KJV) "For this is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully."

R5539 "THE CHRISTIAN'S TOWER OF STRENGTH "The Lord is my Helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me."--Hebrews 13:6..."

THE Christian's position in the world is a peculiar one. None others can afford to be so courageous and independent as he... He is exhorted in the Word of the Lord to be not boastful, but humble-minded, realizing his powerlessness of himself and his need of God... No power in the Universe is able to cope with our God; and He has declared that He is the Support and Shield of His children. He is the Strong Tower of those who put their trust in Him...

Let us, then, keep ourselves, that "that Wicked One touch us not." We are subject to various attacks by the deluded servants of the powers of darkness. There may be attacks upon our good name, our reputation, our bodies, or what not, with more or less legality. We are to a considerable extent subject to man, through "the powers that be." Yet our bitterest enemies are powerless to touch us, unless permitted by the Lord...

If the Lord permits seeming calamity to come, we may rest assured that it will work out our good, if we are properly exercised by the experience."

R1914 "To behold the beauty of the Lord" is to behold the beauty of holiness, to have this image of his glory ever before the mind's eye as our inspiration, our light, our guide, our pattern and our chief joy. Here indeed is the Christian's secret of a happy life--happy in the midst of whatever may come to him of affliction or pain or loss or perplexity or whatever experiences come through the checkered scenes of this present life."

R1937 "BY THY WORDS ACQUITTED; BY THY WORDS CONDEMNED

"Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things; and an evil man, out of the evil treasure, bringeth forth evil things. But I say unto you, that every idle [unprofitable or pernicious] word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof on a day of judgment. For by thy words thou wilt be acquitted, and by thy words thou wilt be condemned."--Matt. 12:34-37..."

itations of our hearts and the conduct of life should be pleasing to the Lord and an honor to His name and cause, that God may be glorified through Christ, to whom belongs the glory and the Kingdom forever. Z.'03-365 R3248:1

Job, in the midst of all his afflictions, was very careful not to sin with his lips. (Job 2:10; 31:30; 1:21,22.) He knew that his words would be taken by the Lord as an index of his heart, and he was careful to keep both the heart and the words right, saying, "What! shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil [calamities, troubles--for discipline or refining]?... The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord." There was no spirit of rebellion in a heart out of whose abundance came such words of loving submission, patience and faith under severe testings, and that, too, without a clear apprehension of the divine wisdom in permitting them.

The Psalmist puts into the mouth of God's consecrated and tried people these words of firm resolution:--"I said, I will take heed to my ways, that I sin not with my tongue. I will keep my mouth with a bridle, while the wicked [who tempts and tries the righteous] is before me."--Psa. 39:1.

How necessary to the stability of Christian character is such a resolution, and the self control which develops under a firm adherence to it. In an unfriendly world we can expect to receive only the reproaches of our Master; for the servant is not above his Lord. The world, the flesh and the devil oppose our way; there are fightings within and fears without, and many are the arrows and fiery darts aimed at the righteous. But what is the safe attitude of the soul under afflictions and severe testings? Is it not in silence before God, waiting and watching first to see his leading, his will, in every matter before presuming to touch things that often involve so much? So the Psalmist suggests, saying, "I was dumb with silence: I held my peace, even from good [even from doing or saying what seemed good in my own sight]; and my sorrow was stirred. My heart was hot within me, and in my self-communing there burnt a fire [description of a fiery trial]. Then spake I with my tongue"--not to the revilers, nor to others, but to the Lord.

Yes, it is always our blessed privilege to carry our sorrows and vexations to the Lord;

"For he knows

How to steal the bitter

from life's woes."

He does it, as the Psalmist suggests (vs. 4-6), by showing us, through experience, the vanity of all earthly things and their utter inability to satisfy the soul's cravings, or to comfort the wounded spirit. Then comes the thought that the present life, with its cares, vexations and sorrows is passing away, that our days are but as a handbreadth, and however vexing our experiences, they will soon be over; and if we permit them to do so they will only work out in us the peaceable fruits of righteousness, and develop in us strong and noble characters, disciplined to thorough self-control, thoughtful consideration, patient endurance of affliction and loving loyalty and faithfulness and trust in God."

R4805 "WE SHOULD DAILY RENDER OUR ACCOUNTS"

If, in the daily scrutiny of our ways, which is the duty of every Christian, we discover that our words have in any way been dishonoring to the Lord, we should remember that, "If any man sin, we have an

Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ, the righteous" (I John 2:1); and in the name of our Advocate we may approach the throne of grace. There we may explain to our Heavenly Father our realization of our error, our deep regret at our failure to honor his name and his cause by a holy walk and con-

versation, and humbly request that the sin be not laid to our charge...

Thus we should render up our account for every idle word; and by our words of repentance, supplemented by the merit of Christ applied by faith, shall we be acquitted."

R5740 (From Harvest Truth Database V5.0 2008)

FAITHFULNESS IN LITTLE THINGS

"He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much."—Luke 16:10

WE HAVE in our text the statement of a great principle, one which could almost universally be acknowledged. Life's experiences have taught us that whoever can be trusted in little things can be trusted also in great matters. A man who is cautious in respect to small affairs is cautious also in important undertakings. One who is gentle in the little acts of every day life will be gentle on great occasions.

Our Lord applies this principle to His followers in a general way; and we believe it to be one of the most important lessons which the Christian can learn. There are many who are exceedingly careful about handling a large sum of money, but who are very careless in handling a small amount. There are those who are scrupulously exact as to large sums committed to their care, but who think nothing about the trifling amounts. But whoever cultivates a habit of carelessness about small things will be likely to become careless about large matters. On the other hand, whoever is careful of every dollar, every dime, who is careful to pay promptly every small debt, will be still more careful in respect to large amounts, large debts.

So it would appear to be a general principle in life that those who are careless in small things and careful in large matters will in due time or under great stress prove unreliable and unfaithful in everything, if such faithfulness should conflict with their own selfish interests. In other words, the trifles of life have an important bearing upon our character-building. Whoever learns to be conscientious about everything is being properly exercised by the lessons of life. We see this in our own individual experiences. Some are quite careless in regard to the rights of others; for instance, they would take without permission an umbrella belonging to another saying, "I want it only for an hour or so, and I will bring it back." Such a person is not properly conscientious about small things. One who would take an umbrella for even an hour has not sufficient principle to be trusted in larger things. Others will borrow articles, and forget or neglect to return them promptly, thus putting the owner to great inconvenience and annoyance. At best the habit of borrowing is deplorable.

The Scriptures tell us that our Lord is selecting a company to be with Him as under priests, under judges, under kings, to have control of the affairs of earth during the thousand years of His Reign; and that whoever is chosen for this work must have special fitness, special character. Those who fully yield themselves to Him will be prepared for this important position; those who do not so yield themselves will not be prepared. Therefore our Lord gives us to understand that present opportunities are to be prized as opportunities for indicating what is our real attitude of heart. He makes it a condition that we cannot be His disciples unless we make a full surrender of ourselves to Him as our great Instructor, to be guided in all of our affairs in harmony with His will.

The Master tells us that no matter how small the affairs of life, we are to understand that the Father knows what are our needs; and that just as surely as He provides for the sparrows and the lilies of the field, so surely will He provide for those who are His children. Our Lord says to us, "Are ye not of more value than many sparrows?" Even while we were slaves of sin, the Father made provision for our return to His favor and to everlasting life, on condition that we obey Him and respond to His clearly specified terms. How much more will He care for us now that we have become His children!

HUMILITY ESSENTIAL TO SERVICE

Even in the smallest affairs of life we are to look for the Lord's will. The right attitude for us to maintain is this: I serve the Lord Christ; and whether it is a great work or a small one does not matter. "Therefore whether ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." (1 Corinthians 10:31.) The humblest kind of service is acceptable to the Lord if prompted by love. We recall the case of our Lord Jesus. When opportunity was afforded Him to talk with a poor Samaritan woman at Jacob's well, He did not say, "I

came to preach the Gospel; and since this woman is only a Samaritan, I will not bother with her." When the disciples returned, they could not understand why the Master should be speaking with this woman instead of to a crowd. But Jesus, having the opportunity to preach, even if it were only to a Samaritan woman, improved His opportunity. He knew that through her the Truth might go to others; that what she would learn she would tell to her neighbors, and that when the due time would come the Samaritans might hear and be all the more ready to benefit by the opportunity.

Wherever we find the opportunity to present the Truth, we should appreciate the privilege. Of course we are not to annoy any one with whom we come in contact; but if there seems to be an opportunity to serve, it is for us to be about our Father's business, and to improve the opportunity—whether it is to speak the Truth or merely to give a kind word, etc. "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; for He hath anointed me to preach Good Tidings to the meek." God is seeking those who are kind and sympathetic, desirous of helping others.

It is our privilege to give a cheerful word at all times. As a rule people have sad experiences. Often there is a worm at the core, the heart. It has been noted that those who have committed suicide have sometimes laughed and joked a little while before taking their lives. The world would be in a terrible condition if everybody told all his troubles and carried his heart on his sleeve. It is better that they hide their troubles and that we cover ours from sight. It is better to cultivate the spirit which sings:

"Content whatever lot I see,
Since 'tis my God that leadeth me."

LITTLE TESTS OF CHARACTER

We should esteem it a privilege to address wrappers for tracts, or whatever the opportunity of the hour may be in the Lord's service. Should some one say, "I would rather preach," we reply, If the Lord opens up the way and gives you an opportunity to preach, do so. And if you have several opportunities to preach in one day, whether to one person, or to ten persons, or to a thousand, make use of them. But if you do not have any opportunity to preach, you may have the privilege of addressing wrappers. In this way you are instrumental in helping to place reading matter in the hands of others, even if the postman is the one who takes it to the house where it will be read. Or if our work is in the kitchen or any other part of the home, it is service of the Lord if we do all as unto Him. But He kindly gives us opportunity to do something for the brethren.

So whatever we do, we are doing it for the Lord, we are doing it as unto Him, doing it as He would have it done. There is a way of looking at things that makes us feel happy. It is a good thing to ask ourselves occasionally, What am I seeking? What is my motive in doing this? For whom am I working?

As we thus work for the Lord and strive to please Him, and cultivate the spirit of thankfulness for service in the little things, we shall be proving our worthiness for the great things. Our desire to render faithful service to the Lord will manifest itself in economy in the home and in consideration for others around us. Whoever will strike too many matches, or who will strike matches on the walls of the house, is thus manifesting that he is not fully trustworthy. Whoever whistles around the house to disturb others, or who gets up at a very early hour and makes so much noise that others cannot rest, or who comes in late at night and goes noisily to his room, demonstrates that he has not learned to observe the Golden Rule, has not learned to respect the rights of others.

The very beginning of all our conduct as members of the Body of Christ should be the observance of the principles of justice. We should think as to what are the rights of others and as to whether we are impinging on those rights. If we find that we are so doing, we may know that we are violating the law of justice. In every circum-

stance of life, justice must come first, and afterwards we may be as kind and generous as possible.

"LORD, IS IT I?"

In respect to spiritual matters the principle is the same. Little rifts in the lute spoil the music. God is seeking a very special class for the Kingdom. He desires those who will be absolutely loyal to Him, loyal to His Word, faithful not only in some great thing, but also in the smallest affairs of life—faithful in thought, word and deed. Whoever is thus faithful, whoever exercises care in all these respects, will be fitting and preparing himself for the Kingdom. Whoever is careless and inattentive to little things is not fit for the great honor the Lord has in store for the wholly faithful. He is watching us closely, but with a kindly eye. He wishes us to succeed. He gives us the necessary instruction and guidance. When we practise carefulness in little things, we are thereby developing our characters along right lines. If we fail to do this, we shall never become fit to be entrusted with important matters. Let us each make this a personal question: What kind of character am I developing as the days go by?

But the Christian who makes a mistake, and who sees his mistake and makes what amends are possible, will find his experience beneficial to him—perhaps throughout the remainder of his life. Through the castigation which he imposes upon himself he will learn greater carefulness. Care and watchfulness are necessary, and we should see to it that they extend to every affair of life—to the use of our time, our talents, our money, etc. Whatever we have of these is from the Lord and belongs to Him. We should therefore carefully consider what we shall do with these opportunities and be very conscientious in the use of them—how much we shall use for ourselves and how we shall use the remainder. Our course in these

matters will show to the Lord whether or not we are fitted for a place in glory.

Our use or abuse of all the talents, great or small, entrusted to us by the Master will demonstrate how careful we are to note His will and to do that will in respect to this feature of our stewardship. By and by He purposes to give to the faithful those things which will be of far more value than dimes and dollars; affairs of great responsibility will be committed to them. If any have not been faithful—if any one has thought of the time, the dimes, the dollars, etc., as being his own, and has so used them, that one will not be of the class the Lord is seeking. He is viewing us according to the Covenant of Sacrifice which we have made with Him. (Psalm 50:5.) If we had a million dollars, it would be only a small thing in His sight. It is the manner in which we use the things of this life that manifests our loyalty to the Lord and that demonstrates how we would use the Divine power during the thousand years of Messiah's Kingdom, for the blessing of all the families of the earth.

Our grandest opportunities for service are comparatively insignificant. But we are to appreciate even the least service which we may be able to render. We are to esteem that our service here is not to be compared with the things which the Lord has in reservation for those who love Him. For a thousand years they are to reign with their Lord; and then will follow the ages to come during which He will show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward them through Christ Jesus their Lord. (Ephesians 2:7.) In view of this future inheritance of the saints in light, is it any wonder that our Lord wishes us to have kind, just, generous hearts? Our opportunity of being in the Little Flock will depend largely upon our appreciation of our opportunities for serving the Lord in the little things of the present life.

R3246 (From Harvest Truth Database V5.0 2006)

THE GOSPEL PREACHED TO THE DEAD

--1 PET. 4:1-11.--SEPTEMBER 20.--

"Be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess."--Eph. 5:18.

THE Apostle's argument is that dead people cannot sin; and that the Lord's consecrated ones, having devoted themselves even unto death, already reckon themselves "dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord." (Rom. 6:11.) We have become followers of him who, realizing the sinfulness of sin, and that the whole human family was hopelessly under its control, gave himself even unto death, that he might redeem us from sin and its wages--death. If we appreciate our Lord and his work, his love for righteousness, and his sacrifice on our behalf; and if we desire to be truly his disciples, followers in his footsteps, it will mean that we will "arm ourselves with the same mind" that he had--the same opposition to sin, the same determination to lay down our lives in opposition to it, and in endeavors to assist in delivering those who are under its control. Not that any sacrifice of ours could effect the cancellation of the divine sentence, but that our Lord's sacrifice, being quite sufficient to accomplish this, we are privileged to show our devotion to him and to the principles governing his conduct: the inducement being held out to us that those who suffer with him shall share also his glory, his Kingdom, his immortality.

Those who have made such a consecration unto death, in opposition to sin, will certainly not commit sin *wilfully*, for to do so would prove that their wills had changed--that they were no longer begotten of the new will, the new mind, the holy Spirit or disposition, but had become alive again as the servants of sin. Such a course would prove that such persons had ceased to be New Creatures, and the loss of this new life to them would mean the Second Death. But so long as they remain willingly faithful to their vows of fellowship with Christ in his sufferings, in his opposition to sin--so long as they remain thus reckoned dead to sin and reckoned alive as New Creatures, they have no sin. As the Apostle John expresses it, "Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not; whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him;...whosoever is born [begotten] of God doth not commit sin, for his seed remaineth in him; he cannot sin because he is born [begotten] of God."--1 John 3:6,9.

The thought here is not that any of the Lord's people become perfect in the flesh, so that they never err in thought, word or deed. The thought is that the new *will* is counted the New Creature, separate and distinct from the *flesh*, so that while the will, the heart, is fully loyal to the Lord, in opposition to sin, the flesh is reckoned dead to sin, and hence any of its weaknesses and imperfections which are unintentional, not assented to by the new will, the New

Creature, are not counted by the Lord, who knows us not after the flesh, but after the spirit. Thus, as the Apostle Paul declares, "The righteousness of the Law is *fulfilled* in us who walk not after the flesh [desiring to serve it], but after the spirit [endeavoring to do the Lord's will]."

The "time past of our lives," referred to in *vss. 3 and 4*, was the time when we were natural men, before we became New Creatures, begotten of the Lord's Spirit. That time past, and that past experience of life, sufficeth us--we want no more of it, we have found a better life. We would not return to the former condition of natural-mindedness and alienation from God under any consideration. The list of excesses mentioned by the Apostle--lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revelries, carousings and abominable idolatries--were not the same with all of us; and yet there is a certain amount of correspondency in every case. Some of the early Christians were lifted by the Lord's grace out of very deep degradation of mind and body, and some of the Lord's people of today have been similarly lifted from the depths of Satan and sin, while still others, never having been so deeply degraded, were not lifted from such great depths. However, all who have the new mind of full consecration to the Lord can realize a great change from the mind or disposition which was theirs naturally.

Even those born of Christian parents, who therefore were born on the plane of justification, realize that their natural hearts had more or less affinity for the things of sin, even including idolatries--idolizing themselves or others or money or fame or influence or whatnot. A change takes place in all, but the degree of change is necessarily marked by the degree of degradation preceding our consecration. How thankful some of us should be that in the Lord's providence we were born of Christian parents and under Christian influences! How careful all of the Lord's people should be that any children which they have brought into the world, or may yet bring, shall come under the most favorable influences to make them the more amenable to the "reasonable service" of a full consecration of their all to the Lord!

The idolatrous companions of those who once lived in sin doubtless spoke of the latter as hypocrites, when they turned from these things, becoming dead to them and alive toward the Lord and his service. Their disposition would be to attribute such a change to some ignoble motive. It would be beyond their comprehension that anyone should voluntarily make such a change, for truly they would say that the course was "unnatural"! Likewise, in our day, those who

step out of churchianity, with its forms of godliness without the power, with its social revelry, intoxication with the spirit of this world and of false doctrines (Rev. 17:2), and its idolatries of money, influence, etc., are considered peculiar people, and not infrequently their sanity is questioned. The natural man understandeth not why any should seek for more than that which would be outwardly respectable and honorable. The world knoweth us not, even as it knew not the Lord.--Rev. 18:3.

The *fifth verse* according to our Common Version seems to refer to those who speak evil, and to say that they will be obliged to give an account in the day of judgment--in the Millennial Day, when they will be on trial. This is undoubtedly true. As our Lord declared, every act and word done in injury of the Lord and his faithful will receive a just recompense of reward --justly proportionate to the amount of their wilfulness in the matter. But there is another way of viewing this verse, equally true, viz., by connecting it with the preceding verse, so as to have it read, "Speaking evil of *you who shall give an account* to him that is ready to judge the quick and the dead." This last thought seems more fully in accord with the entire testimony of the Word on the subject. It is we, the Church, who are expecting shortly to give such an account. It is we who are being specially tried and tested during the present time, because to us the light and knowledge and opportunity have come in advance of the world. This is our trial time, and the Lord's judgment or decision with reference to who shall constitute the very elect, and respecting who shall be accounted worthy of joint heirship with the Lord, is the very decision that is to be rendered.

The Apostle continues with this thought, saying that it is for this reason (because we who are dead to the world and alive toward God are being called out now, as the Lord's elect class, therefore) the Gospel is preached to *us who are* (thus) *dead*, so that while the world judges us as in the flesh, like all other men, the Lord may judge us as in the spirit, begotten to a newness of life. This is in exact accord with what we saw in the first two paragraphs of this lesson. The world discerns not that the New Creatures are any different from other men; hence it wonders at their devotion, calls it folly or hypocrisy, and discerning the imperfections of the flesh may not at all times be able to see so great a difference between the New Creatures and the world. But God, who knoweth the heart, and who has from the moment of our consecration counted the flesh as dead, and who charges nothing against us as New Creatures, begotten spirit beings, except that which is *wilfully* wrong, is the One with whom we have to do, and in whose favor and love and promises we rejoice. God is "for us"! None can prevail against us; all things must work together for good to us, because we are his, because he has called us according to his purpose, because we are seeking to walk in his way, not *after* the flesh, but *after* the spirit.

The end of all present things is near. Present institutions, under the supervision of "the prince of this world" (Satan), and controlled largely by his spirit, must soon, according to the divine promise, give place to the new conditions of God's Kingdom, when the great Redeemer shall take to himself his great power and reign--binding Satan and putting down all insubordination and everything contrary to the righteousness which is of God. We who so believe can look with great equanimity upon the changing conditions of this present time; and the evil-speaking of the world and its antagonism manifested toward us in various ways, because we are New Creatures, walking after the spirit to the extent of our ability, need not alarm us, for greater is he who is on our part than all that be against us. Hence it behooves us to be sober-minded --to take this reasonable and proper view, which does not overlook the future to see the present, but rather overlooks the present to see the future, held up before us in the Lord's Word. It behooves us also to watch unto prayer, to remember that we are not of ourselves sufficient for these things, that "our sufficiency is of God."

"Above all things," urges the Apostle, these who are dead to the world, and misunderstood by the world, but alive toward God and accepted through Christ as God's sons (despite all the blemishes of the flesh), these should be fervent in love amongst themselves. Such as realize the true situation, such as are standing for the principles of righteousness and truth and loyalty to the Lord, and enduring hardness as good soldiers, must have a deeply sympathetic love for all others who, like themselves, are battling for the Lord, and for the same principles of right. Whoever has not a fervent (burning) love for his fellows has reason to question to what extent he is one with the Lord and with the little flock whose experiences the Apostle is here delineating.

True, there are some of the Lord's accepted ones whom he counts dead as respects the flesh and alive as respects their spirit, their new natures, who are less lovely naturally (in mind and body) than some who are of the world, less fallen naturally: but wherever the true love of the Lord prevails it will indeed cover a multitude of sins, a multitude of blemishes, a multitude of imperfections, in those whom it will recognize as fellow-pilgrims in "the narrow way," "brethren" of the one family of God. This proper love, the love of God, will enable those who possess it to consider one another from the divine standpoint, not according to the flesh, but according to the spirit, the heart, the intention.

Amongst those who are dead to the world and alive as New Creatures, there should be a special exercise of hospitality, and that without grudging. It should be hearty, and not merely because the Lord commends and commands it. Hospitality, indeed, is, as the Apostle points out, an element of character which should be cultivated toward all men: We should "do good unto all men as we have opportunity, but especially to the household of faith." There are some who can recognize this principle of hospitality quite keenly, and who, if hospitality be denied them, will be inclined to berate the brethren for their lack of the proper spirit. Such and all should inquire of themselves to what extent they have ever exercised hospitality and generosity to others; and anyone who realizes that he has received more from the brethren than he has given them should feel ashamed, and should seek of the Lord wisdom, that he may know wherein is his weakness, that he has so far come short of the great privileges of the Lord's followers, all of whom are to be *givers* rather than *receivers*--except under special conditions of distress. But let none of us forget that "it is more blessed to give than to receive." Let each of us seek to enjoy the blessing which comes from a liberal interpretation of this word hospitality.

The Lord's grace and bounty are manifold; they come to us in numberless forms, in things both spiritual and temporal. Some of us may receive a larger number of these favors than others, but in that event the responsibility or stewardship is proportionately increased; and the Apostle urges (*vs. 10*) that we should seek to serve out to others whatever gifts we possess. He who waters others shall himself be watered. This principle applies to everything, both temporal and spiritual.

Still speaking of this Church class, dead to the world, and judged by the world as though they were men, but alive toward God, and judged by God as New Creatures, spirit beings merely sojourning in these fleshly bodies, as in a tent, and waiting in this wilderness condition to learn the lessons necessary before entering the land of promise, the heavenly Canaan, by sharing the First Resurrection, the Apostle proceeds to point out that these, when they *speak*, should be as "God's oracles," absolutely truthful, wholly reliable. If they *serve* they should do it with all the ability which they possess, recognizing that the ability is God-given as well as the talent. These exhortations to truth and faithfulness in utterance and service are applicable first of all to believers (the Church) amongst ourselves, but applicable also to all with whom they come in contact. ⁽¹⁾We may be evil reported of and slandered, but all who know us, who have dealings with us, should find from experience our loyalty to principle, our endeavor that the words of our mouths as well as the meditations of our hearts and the conduct of life should be pleasing to the Lord and an honor to his name and cause, that God may be glorified through Christ, to whom belongs the glory and the Kingdom forever. His Church alone, in the present time, recognizes fully and properly the right and dominion of the Lord as the King. We alone have the blessing that comes from this recognition and relationship, but we look forward with joy to the time when his Kingdom shall be established amongst men; when the time shall come for which we are praying, "Thy Kingdom come"; when the knowledge of the Lord shall be made to reach every creature, and when many shall come to know and to love and to obey him whom now we rejoice to honor as our Redeemer and King.

As is indicated by the Golden Text, this lesson was designed by those who selected it to be a Temperance Lesson. We have not dealt with it after the manner they intended, but according to the Apostle's meaning. It certainly is a total abstinence lesson in one sense of the word, viz., in the sense that the class who have become dead to sin and alive toward God will desire to abstain from "every appearance of evil," which certainly will include intemperance, concerning which the Lord's Word is very explicit, in declaring that "No drunkard shall enter into the Kingdom of heaven."-- 1 Cor. 6:10.

⁽¹⁾ Sept. 14 Manna, 1Pet. 2:12,19