

August 12

Cleanse Thou me from secret faults. Keep back Thy servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me....Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in Thy sight, O Lord, my strength and my Redeemer. Psalm 19:12-14

PSALMS 19

(Psa 19:1-4 KJV) "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth his handiwork. {2} Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge. {3} There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard. {4} Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world..."

EBC-(Psa 19:1) "We stand awestruck at the immensity of space and at the law and order which everywhere reign."

R5210 "We heartily assent to the words of the Prophet David, "Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge. There is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard." (Psalm 19:2,3.) The person who can look upon this wonderful display of superhuman power and believe that these worlds created themselves, shows to the majority of us that, if he has brains, they are sadly disordered, unbalanced. Whoever, after mature thought, concludes that there is no God, that everything came to be what it is by chance or by the operation of some blind force—that person is described in the Scriptures in the following words, "The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God."—Psalm 14:1.

As scientific instruments demonstrate to us the immensity of the Universe, we perceive that the Prophet used very moderate language indeed in his description of the majestic power and greatness of the Creator, when he represents Jehovah as weighing the mountains in His balance and holding the seas in the hollow of His Hand. (Isaiah 40:12.) From His standpoint, a thousand years are but as a watch in the night. (Psalm 90:4.) How insignificantly small we all feel in the presence of our God!"

R1390 "Verses 1-6 refer to the silent yet eloquent testimony of nature to the power and skill and wisdom and goodness and glory of its divine Author. Its testimony may be read by the thoughtful of every land and of every language, by day and by night, in all the earth."

(Psa 19:7-11 KJV) "The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple. {8} The statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes. {9} The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether. {10} More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb. {11} Moreover by them is thy servant warned: and in keeping of them there is great reward."

R1391 "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul." Other influences may lead

IT would appear that every intelligent Christian would continually pray this inspired prayer, for cleansing from secret faults, that he might thus be restrained from presumptuous sins; and thus praying heartily, he would also watch against these beginnings of sin and keep his heart in a cleansed and pure condition, by going continually to

to temporary and partial changes of course and action, but nothing else equals God's revealed Truth in producing a change--change of being, character, soul... Only God's truth can produce soul conversion, as also our Lord indicates in his prayer, "Sanctify them through thy truth-- thy word is truth."

"The testimony of the Lord is sure [not doubtful, but clear and positive], making wise [not the heady and willful who have plans and theories of their own and who do not submit themselves to the will and plan of God, but] the simple" [the single hearted who have no will or plan of their own which they wish the Lord to adopt, but who seek the Lord's will only]...

"Moreover, by them [by the judgments or decrees of the Lord as to the course of righteousness and unrighteousness and their rewards and penalties] is thy servant [the thoughtful servant, who meditates on these things] warned; and in keeping them [in remembering and harmonizing with them] there is great reward.

Thus the Book of Nature and the Book of Revelation, when rightly read, harmoniously declare the glory of God; and blessed is the man whose character is ennobled and purified and blessed by constant meditation on these glorious themes. How it refreshes and strengthens every noble and generous aspiration, checks every tendency to evil and sin, purifies the heart, kindles hope, awakens zeal... The great Emperor of this wonderful universe upon which we daily and nightly cast our wondering gaze has called even us to be the bride of and joint-heir with his only begotten Son... In these glorious revelations of himself is supplied the inspiration and instruction necessary to enable us to run with patience the race set before us, if we make them the centre of our meditations."

(Psa 19:12-14 KJV) "Who can understand his errors? cleanse thou me from secret faults. {13} Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me: then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression. {14} Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O LORD, my strength, and my redeemer."

R5739 "By these words the Prophet showed his recognition of the fact that he was not capable of cleansing himself. He recognized that he might have secret faults that he did not appreciate himself--that he did not see himself. Perhaps he did not see some faults that others would see. He desired God to cleanse him from these. This indicated that he desired to get away from everything that was not in harmony with God..."

Those who at heart are loyal to the Lord and His righteousness are distressed by their blemishes, their sins, the weaknesses of their flesh, even though they are aware

the fountain of grace for help in every time of need. He who seeks to live a life of holiness and nearness to the Lord by merely guarding against *outward* or presumptuous sins, and who neglects the beginnings of sin in the secrets of his own mind, is attempting a right thing in a very foolish and unreasonable way. Z. '98-22 R2249:1

that the Lord has graciously covered all these, and is not imputing their guilt because at heart they are opposed to them. The desire of this class is to build, to establish, character by faithfulness to principles of righteousness. They wish that their minds may become more and more established in faithfulness to the Lord and His Golden Rule of love."

R4524 "Many who speak evil of others say, "The Lord be glorified": sometimes they even profess love for those whom they defame, and manifest that they know not what spirit they are of. The Scriptures declare, "Love worketh no ill to the neighbor." If we injure our neighbor in either word or act or thought there must have been a motive or cause behind and it must have been a bad motive or cause, unless we did it ignorantly..."

Hatred is classified as a part of the spirit of the Adversary of God, and properly enough every child of God should flee from anything akin to it and should feel horrified at the bare suggestion that he possessed anything of this un-Christlike character. However, it behooves all to remember the Scriptural declaration that the human mind is deceitful -- not necessarily hypocritical, but, as the Apostle suggests, it often deceives itself. All who are seeking to put off all the works of the flesh and the devil should pray the Lord in the language of the Psalmist, "Cleanse thou me from secret faults. Keep back thy servant also from sins of presumption." (Psa. 19:12,13.) Each one of the Lord's footstep followers should daily, yea, hourly, keep watch over his thoughts and words and deeds and the *underlying motives connected therewith*. This the Apostle terms judging ourselves. He assures us that those who so scrutinize, criticize, themselves should seek to bring the very thoughts of their minds into captivity to the will of God in Christ... Only as we put off anger, malice, envy, strife, etc., may we put on meekness, gentleness, patience, long-suffering, brotherly kindness, love.

Some fail to get the proper thought on the subject of evil-speaking and appear to get the impression that any kind of criticism and any kind of objection to the belief of another is evil-speaking. This is not the right thought. According to this thought our Lord and the apostles did evil-speaking. Whoever has this conception should re-adjust his ideas so that they may conform to the Scriptural lines.

To tell that a certain brother now disbelieves what he formerly believed is not evil-speaking, if it be true. St. Paul spoke quite freely of false doctrines and mentioned particularly the names of some of those whose perverse teachings had been injurious to the Cause, "overthrowing the faith of some." Our Lord Jesus criticized the misconduct of some in his day. He called attention to some as being hypocritical in that they did not practice their own teaching. But

neither the Lord nor the Apostles made personal attacks, slandering others. To tell fairly what another believes and to show that it is wrong is far from evil-speaking...

On the other hand, let us say that we could have no sympathy with any harsh or unkind expression, either towards brethren or the world. If some who once rejoiced in the light have become more or less blinded to it, that is a cause why we should have sympathy for them -- not a sympathy which would lead us to give them encouragement in their wrong course, but a sympathy which would incline us to pity them and to be ready in any possible manner to assist them back to the right way. Even when they misrepresent us we should, so far as possible, attribute this to their blindness and pray for them, rather than smite them in return. "Let no man render evil for evil to any man, but contrariwise -- do good to those who evilly entreat you."...

If the Adversary could stir us up to anger, malice, hatred and strife, even in a good cause -- even against Satan or those whom he is using to some extent as his servants (Rom. 6:16) -- he would thus be poisoning our hearts and separating us proportionately from the Lord and his Spirit. We cannot be too careful along these lines!"

R1391 "Verse 12 -- "Who [in his own strength or by his own wisdom and foresight] can guard against errors?"... Who, indeed, is strong enough in himself to guard against errors of doctrine and practice strongly entrenched in a misguided and depraved public opinion, fortified by the tendencies of his own impaired conditions of mind and heart and skilfully glossed over by the great deceiver who, with untiring effort, seeks to accomplish our deception and overthrow? Who, indeed, is sufficient for these things? The inquiry of the Psalmist implies the answer -- Not one. In our own strength we cannot presume to stand, and therefore how appropriate the prayer:

Verses 12-13. "From secret faults do thou cleanse me. Also from presumptuous sins do thou restrain thy servant; let them

not have dominion over me: then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression."

Sins of presumption are such as result from undue *self*-confidence, ambition or pride. Many are guilty of them without seemingly being aware of the fact: They *presume* in prayer to direct the Lord... Others presume to decide what God intends to do aside from what his Word authorizes... Presumptuous sins pervert the judgment, make void the Scriptures and lead to "the great transgression" of "counting the blood of the covenant wherewith we were sanctified a common thing." (Heb. 10:29.) In view of such temptations and tendencies, let the consecrated ever bear in mind that their only safety is in meekness and humility, clinging close to the word of the Lord; and in meditating on its precepts and pondering over all their solemn and momentous import. -- "Then shall" they "be upright, and they shall be innocent from the great transgression."

R5315 Which uses the golden text: "Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in Thy sight, O Lord, my strength, and my Redeemer."--Psalm 19:14...

SMITING THE ROCK A SIN

The Lord particularly directed that Moses should speak to the rock, and that in response to the word waters would rush forth. On a previous occasion, about thirty-eight years before, in a similar experience near Mt. Sinai, Moses had been instructed to smite the rock; but in this case the rock was not to be smitten. Here Moses and Aaron sinned. "The meekest man in all the earth" forgot himself, and allowed a spirit somewhat akin to pride, self-sufficiency and anger to control him for the moment. Smiting the rock, he cried aloud to the people, "Ye rebels, must I bring you water out of the rock?"

The water indeed came forth, as the Lord had promised. The people indeed got the blessing needed, but one of the most illustrious men and servants of God there

fell under Divine disapprobation...

The fact that both Moses and Aaron participated in the type, and that neither entered the land of Canaan, signifies that the very highest dignitaries and most enlightened members of the Royal Priesthood might be in danger of committing the sin typified, or pictured, in the second and unauthorized smiting of the rock. On the contrary, those who smote the antitypical Rock the first time--those who crucified Christ--the Scriptures assure us did so ignorantly and merely fulfilled the Divine intention. "I wot, brethren, that in ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers"; "for if they had known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory."--Acts 3:17; I Corinthians 2:8.

LESSONS FOR SPIRITUAL LEADERS

If "the meekest man in all the earth," after long years of training and experience, made such a failure, even typically, the lesson to all spiritual leaders should be an impressive one. It says to us in inspired words, "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall."...

Better would it have been for Moses to have hidden himself--humbled himself--and to have asked water from the rock in Jehovah's name.

Class leaders, Elders, ministers in the Church of Christ, will do well to remember that the blessings which God has arranged shall flow to His people from the smitten Jesus and will come for the asking; and that they are not authorized either to smite the "rock" or to pose dramatically before the people of God as necessary to the supply of the streams of grace and Truth.

On the other hand, the Lord's people, Spiritual Israel, thirsting for grace and Truth now due, are to feel a great deal of sympathy for those who occupy teaching positions. There never was a time surely when the honesty and the faithfulness of the Lord's servants were more severely tested than now. What all need is meekness, patience, longsuffering, brotherly-kindness, love--loyalty to God--faithfulness to their Covenant."

R2248 (From Harvest Truth Database V5.0)

SECRET FAULTS AND PRESUMPTUOUS SINS

"Cleanse thou me from secret faults. Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me: then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression. Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength and my Redeemer."--Psa. 19:12-14.

THIS prophetic prayer represents well the heart attitude of the fully consecrated and earnest Christian. While realizing a forgiveness of the "sins that are past through the forbearance of God," through the grace of God which was in Christ Jesus, which imputed our sins to him and his righteousness to us who believe in him, nevertheless the well-instructed soul realizes its faults, its shortcomings. These secret faults may be of two kinds: (1) They may be faults which were secret to ourselves at the time committed--slips, unintentional errors. Of course the earnest heart, desiring full fellowship with the Lord, will regret even his unintentional shortcomings and will strive and pray for divine grace to get the victory over these: but besides these there are other secret faults, which are secret in the sense of being unknown to any one but ourselves and the Lord: imperfections or faults of the mind before they take the outward form of actual and presumptuous sins.

All Christians of experience in the good way and in the battle against sin and self have learned that there can be no outward or presumptuous sins that have not first had their beginning in secret faults of the mind. The sinful thought may be one of pride suggesting self-exaltation; it may be one of avarice suggesting unlawful acquisition of wealth; or it may be some other fleshly desire: the

mere suggestion of the thought before our minds is not sin; it is merely the operation of our faculties, and of the influences which surround us, inquiring of our wills whether or not we will consent to such thoughts. Many consent to thoughts of evil who at the time would utterly repudiate any suggestion to commit evil deeds; but if the thought be *entertained* it is a secret fault, and the growing tendency would surely be toward the more outward and presumptuous sinful conduct, the tendency of which is always from bad to worse. For instance, to illustrate, suppose the suggestion should come to our minds of a method by which we could advance our own interests of fame or honor or reputation by the undermining of the influence and reputation of another, how quickly the evil, selfish thought, if entertained, would lead to envy and possibly hatred and strife. Almost surely it would lead to back-biting and slander and other works of the flesh and the devil. The beginnings are always small, and correspondingly much easier to deal with than in their developed form. Hence, the prophetic prayer, "Cleanse thou me from *secret faults*" and thus restrain or keep me back from presumptuous sins.

In the Epistle of James (1:14,15) we read, "Every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own desire and enticed. Then when desire hath conceived it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is

finished, bringeth forth death." Here we have the same thought differently expressed. The temptation consists at first in the presentation to the mind of *suggestions* which are impure or unkind or unfaithful to obligations; but there is no sin, no fault, as yet. The fault begins, when we harbor the evil suggestions, begin to turn them over in our minds and to consider the attractions which they may have to offer. This is where *desire* (taking hold of the evil thing instead of resisting it) causes a beginning of the secret fault; and it is only a process of development which in many instances under favorable circumstances may be very rapid, that sin, the presumptuous or outward acts of sin, results;--for instance, bearing false witness against a neighbor, or slander, or other evil deeds. And the evil course having begun in the fostering of the evil suggestion, and having progressed to presumptuous sin, there is a great danger that their entire course of life will be ultimately affected thereby and bring the transgressor into that condition where he will commit the *great transgression* --willful, deliberate, intentional sin--the wages of which is death, second death.

⁽¹⁾It would appear then that every intelligent Christian would continually pray this inspired prayer, for cleansing from secret faults that he might thus be restrained from presumptuous sins; and thus praying heartily, he would also watch against these beginnings of sin and keep his heart in a cleansed and pure condition, by going continually to the fountain of grace for help in every time of need. He who seeks to live a life of holiness and nearness to the Lord by merely guarding and striving against *outward* or presumptuous sins, and who neglects the beginning of sin in the secrets of his own mind, is attempting a right thing in a very foolish and unreasonable way. As well might we seek to avert the smallpox by outward cleanliness, while permitting the germs of the disease to enter our systems. The bacteria or germs of presumptuous sins enter through the mind, and their antiseptics and bactericides of the truth and its spirit must meet them there and promptly kill the bacteria of sin before it germinates and leads us to such a condition of evil as will manifest itself in our outward conduct.

For instance, whenever the bacteria of *pride* and self-importance present themselves, let the antidote be promptly administered from the Lord's great medical laboratory for the healing of the soul: the proper dose to offset this species of bacteria is found in the words, "He that exalteth himself shall be abased, and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted;" and "Pride goeth before destruction, a haughty spirit before a fall."

If the thought presented to our minds be the bacteria of *envy*, then let us promptly apply the antidote which declares that envy is one of the works of the flesh and of the devil, and contrary to the spirit of Christ, which by our covenant we have adopted as ours. And let us remember that envy is closely related to and apt to be followed by *malice*, *hatred* and *strife*, which under some circumstances mean murder, according to the ⁽³⁾New Covenant and our Lord's interpretation.--1 John 3:15; Matt. 5:21,22.

If the bacteria which presents itself to our minds is *avarice*, with the suggestion of unjust methods for its gratification, let us promptly apply to it the medicine furnished in the Lord's Word, namely, "What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" "For the love of money is a root of all evil,

⁽¹⁾ Aug. 12 Manna, Psa. 19:12-14

⁽³⁾ See clarification on the New Covenant in the Volume 6 Forward of "Studies In The Scriptures"

which some, coveting after, have erred from the truth and pierced themselves through with many sorrows."

The more attention we give to this subject, the more we will be convinced, from our own personal experiences, of the truth of the Scriptural declarations respecting the beginnings of sin as *secret faults in the mind*; and the more we will appreciate the statement of the Word, "Keep thy heart [mind, affections] with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life."-- Prov. 4:23.

But we are not to wonder that God has so constituted us as to permit temptations to come to our minds, nor are we to pray that we may have no temptations; for if there were no such presentations, no such temptations, then there could be no victories on our part, no overcoming of sin and of the wicked One. But we know that for this very reason we are now in the school of Christ; not that we shall there be shielded from all temptation, but that we may learn of the great Teacher how to meet the Tempter, and by our Master's grace and help to come off conquerors, victors in the strife against sin. The degree of our success in this conflict will depend largely upon the keenness of our faith and trust in the great Teacher. If we feel confident in his wisdom, we will follow closely his instructions and keep our hearts [minds] with all diligence. Faith in the Lord's wisdom and in his help in every time of need is necessary to us in order that we may be thoroughly obedient to him; and hence it is written, "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even your *faith*;" *i.e.*, it will be by the exercise of faith and the obedience which flows therefrom that we will be enabled to "come off conquerors and more than conquerors through him that loved us and gave himself for us."

Nor are we to seek divine aid far in advance, as, for instance, to be kept throughout the year to come, or month to come, or week to come: rather we are to know that if we have made a covenant with the Lord and are his, that he is near us at all times in every trial, in every temptation; and that his assistance is ready to our use, if we will but accept it and act accordingly. Hence, our prayers should be for help *in the time of need*, as well as general prayers for the Lord's blessing and care for each day. ⁽²⁾In the moment of temptation the heart should lift itself to the great Master, in full assurance of faith, recognizing his love, his wisdom and his ability to help us, and his willingness to make all things work together for good to those who love him. Asking for assistance in such a time of need would surely draw to us the Lord's counsel and help and strength for righteousness, truth, purity and love; and thus we should be hourly victorious, daily victorious, and finally victorious.

The difficulty with many is that they are looking for some great battles, instead of averting the great battles by availing themselves of the Lord's provision, and keeping their minds cleansed from secret faults. The little battles, and much more numerous, are 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."

Finally, the grand results of obedience to this counsel of the Lord, the grand attainment of those who have faithfully kept their hearts with diligence, is expressed in our text, and may well be the repeated earnest prayer of all the sanctified in Christ Jesus,--"Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in Thy sight, O Lord, my strength and my Redeemer."

A year from now we hope to hear from very many of great blessings received through this counsel of the Lord's Word, as suggested in our last issue.

⁽²⁾ Apr. 21 Manna, Heb 4:15-16

R4834 (From Harvest Truth Database V5.0)

ACCEPTABLE TO GOD

"Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in Thy sight, O Lord, my strength and my Redeemer."--Psa. 19:14

HOW BEAUTIFUL in the sight of right thinking men is a well-balanced, self-possessed and disciplined character! And in contrast with such, how unlovely are the undisciplined and ungoverned--the selfish, the unjust, the unkind and the violent-tempered! Naturally, the one awakens in us emotions of pleasure and admiration, and the other, of pain. And if such is the appreciation of virtue and the abhorrence of the lack of it among men who have lost much of the

original image of God, with what a keen appreciation must they be observed by a pure and holy God!

Men of the world who have no personal acquaintance with God have no special thought as to how they appear in His sight; but with what carefulness should those who love Him and who value His approval study to conform their conduct to His pure and holy mind! True, all who are "begotten again," notwithstanding their imperfec-

tions and shortcomings through inherited weaknesses, are acceptable to God through Christ, whose robe of righteousness amply covers them; but the measure of their acceptableness to God, even through Christ, is only to the extent that, while availing ourselves of His imputed righteousness, they are earnestly striving to attain actually to the standard of perfection. By so doing they manifest their real appreciation of the Divine favor.

With what confusion and chagrin would one be covered who, in the midst of a fit of violent temper or an unjust or mean transaction, unworthy of his dignity or his profession, should be suddenly surprised by the appearance of a beloved friend of high and noble character! And yet, the eye of such a One is ever upon us. And only to the extent that we dismiss this thought from our minds, or else that we undervalue the Lord's opinion and approval, can we allow the evil propensities of the fallen nature to run riot.

"WHEREWITHAL SHALL A YOUNG MAN
CLEANSE HIS WAY"

Realizing the downward tendency of the old nature, how constantly should the above prayer of the Psalmist be in the minds of God's consecrated children! But how, one inquires, may the difficult task of subduing the inherent depravity be accomplished? It is hard for one, particularly under exasperating circumstances, to control a hasty or violent temper, for another to bridle a gossiping tongue; and especially if the trials of life to some extent put their colored glasses on the eyes. And then what a host of inherent weaknesses there are, which every one of God's true children realizes and knows that he must strive against, if he would be acceptable with God! The thoughts of our hearts are not manifest to fellow-men until we express them in words or actions; but even the very thoughts and intents of the heart are all open and manifest to God. What a comfort to the honest-hearted!

The Psalmist repeats this inquiry, saying, "Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way?" and then replies, "By taking heed thereto, according to Thy Word." Then he frames for us this resolution: "I will meditate on Thy precepts and have respect unto Thy ways; I will delight myself in Thy statutes; I will not forget Thy Word." (Psa. 119:9,15,16.) Here is the secret of a pure and noble life, acceptable to God. It is to be attained, not merely by prayers and righteous resolutions, but, in addition to these, by careful painstaking *heed*, by systematic and diligent effort at self-cultivation, by care and perseverance in weeding out evil thoughts, and by diligent and constant cultivation of pure, benevolent and noble thoughts, and by nipping in the bud the weeds of perversity before they bring forth their hasty harvest of sinful words and deeds.

But observe, further, that this heed or care is to be taken, not according to the imperfect standard of our own judgment, but according to God's Word. The *standard* by which we test our lives makes a vast difference in our conclusions.

The Psalmist further commends this standard to us, saying: "The Law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul. [That is, if we take heed to our ways according to God's Law, it will turn us completely from the path of sin to the path of righteousness.] The testimony [the instruction] of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple [the meek, teachable ones--clearly pointing out to them the ways of righteousness]. The statutes [the decrees, ordinances and precepts] of the Lord are right [the infallible rules of righteousness], rejoicing the heart [of the obedient]. The commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes. The fear of the Lord is clean [not a mental, servile fear, but a noble fear, begotten of love--a fear of falling short of His righteous approval], enduring forever. More to be desired are they [the Law and the testimony of the Lord] than gold; yea, than much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb.

"KEEP BACK THY SERVANT FROM PRESUMPTUOUS SINS"

"Moreover, by them is thy servant warned [concerning the dangers of the way and the snares of the Adversary, and concerning everything which is calculated to discourage, or to hinder his growth in grace], and in keeping of them there is *great reward*. Who [in the use merely of his own fallible judgment and without the standard of God's Law] can understand his errors [can rightly judge himself]?"

But when, as we measure ourselves by this standard, we detect and deplore our shortcomings, let us remember the Psalmist's prayer: "Cleanse thou me from secret faults"--thus supplementing our efforts by our prayers. --Psa. 19:7-12.

But there is still another part of this prayer which the Lord thus puts into our mouths. It reads: "Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me; then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression." Let us consider what kind of sins would be presumptuous sins. To presume signifies to take for granted without authority or proof. A presumptuous sin would, therefore, be taking for granted and asserting as truth something which God has not revealed, or the perversion of what He has revealed. To claim and hold tenaciously as a part of God's Plan any doctrine, merely on the ground of fallible human reason and without Divine authority, would therefore be a presumptuous sin.

Of this nature is the sin of those who malign the Divine character by boldly teaching the blasphemous doctrine of eternal torment without warrant from the Scriptures, and in direct contradiction of them. And there are many other sins of greater and less degree which partake of the same character. But the words here seem to refer directly to some particular error into which there is danger of drifting--"Then shall I be innocent from the *great transgression*"--evidently, *the sin unto death* referred to by the Apostles also. (I John 5:16; Heb. 6:4-6; 10:26-31.) Such a sin would be that of presuming upon the love of God to bring us salvation, even though we should wilfully refuse it through the channel which He has appointed--the precious blood of Christ, shed for our redemption.

"BLESSED IS THE MAN WHOSE DELIGHT
IS IN THE LAW OF THE LORD"

Well, indeed, may we pray and strive to be kept back from presumptuous sins--sins of pride or of arrogant self-will which does not meekly submit to the will of God! Let us, beloved, beware of the slightest tendency toward pride and self-will, or the disposition to be wise above what is written, or to take for granted what God does not clearly promise. "Then," indeed, if we watch and strive against the very beginning of that proud and haughty spirit which surely presages a fall, we shall be "innocent from the *great transgression*."

"Blessed is the man whose *delight* is in the Law of the Lord, and who doth meditate therein day and night. He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither, and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper." (Psa. 1:1-3.) If we make the Word of God the theme of our constant meditation, its principles will soon be assimilated and become part of our mental makeup, making our characters more beautiful and commendable both to God and to our fellowmen; and in harmony with this habit of the mind the acts of life will speak.

The purified fountain will send forth sweeter waters than formerly, bearing refreshment and good cheer to all who come in contact with it. It will make happier homes --better husbands, better wives and better children. It will sweeten the temper, soften the voice, dignify the language, cultivate the manners, ennoble the sentiments and lend its charming grace to every simple duty. It will bring in the principle of love and cast out the discordant elements of selfishness. Thus it will make the home the very garden-spot of earth, where every virtue and every grace will have ample room to expand and grow.

It will not only thus favorably affect the individual and the home-life, but it will go out into the avenues of trade, and truth and fair-dealing will characterize all the business relations; and thus will God be honored by those who bear His name and wear the impress of His blessed Spirit.

While the heights of perfection cannot be reached so long as we still have these imperfect bodies, there should be in every child of God very perceptible and continuous growth in grace, and each step gained should be considered but the stepping-stone to higher attainments. If there is no perceptible growth into the likeness of God, or if there is a backward tendency, or a listless standstill, there is cause for alarm.

Let us constantly keep before our eyes the model which the Lord Jesus set for our example--that model of the complete fulfillment of the will of God, in which the whole Law was kept blamelessly. Let us follow His steps of righteousness and self-sacrifice as nearly as a full measure of loving zeal and faithfulness and loyalty to God will enable us to do, and we shall have a blessed sense of the Divine approval now, and the glorious reward of Divine favor in due time.