

## October 14

*To do justice and judgment is more acceptable to the Lord than sacrifice. Proverbs 21:3*

WE are to grow in love, and love is the principal thing; but before we can make much development in the cultivation of love, we must learn to be just, right, right-

R5430 *"To do justice and judgment is more acceptable to the Lord than sacrifice." "Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams."--Proverbs 21:3; 1 Samuel 15:22.*

THESE words were addressed to God's chosen people, the Jews... Some seemed inclined to feel that no matter how unjust they had been, they could offer a sacrifice and make it all right. But Jehovah pointed out that this would not do. His Law was a *requirement*, and must come before all else; whereas these special sacrifices of thanksgiving for victories, etc., were *privileges*, voluntary offerings. The Law demanded full allegiance to God.

The relationship of Israel to God as His people was based upon the *Law*. This Law comprised *justice* and *judgment*. The Israelites were to do according to its commands—first Godward, then manward. They were not to steal, not to kill, not to covet, etc. The essence and substance of the Golden Rule was there embodied.

To do justice is to do that which is just, right, equitable; to do judgment would be to render righteous decisions in the mind, to decide justly. One might be very just in his business dealings with his fellows. He might be very careful not to cheat any one out of a cent; and yet in his mind he might have unkind, uncharitable views of others, and perhaps say things about them that would be very unrighteous. This counsel of the Wise Man seemed to guard not only against the *doing* of injustice, but against having wrong *thoughts*. The decisions of our minds, as well as our actions, should be in harmony with the principles of righteousness.

### OUR INABILITY TO JUDGE OTHERS

We are not to judge, decide, in an unfavorable manner in the case of any with whom we have to do, without indubitable proof. If they claim to be trying to do right, we should give them credit for sincerity wherever possible. We are not to call them hypocrites, for we cannot judge their hearts. Our Lord called some hypocrites in His day; but He had a superior power of discerning the heart, and we have not that power. We are not to judge the motives of others. We are not to go beyond their declaration, for we are not competent to do so.

We may at times judge the outward action as wrong or improper, but we are not to attempt to judge the heart, where there is possibility of misjudgment. We have pledged ourselves to strive to observe the Golden Rule in our every action and word and thought, and we are to remember that God would be more pleased with us if we did not sacrifice and merely maintained our relationship to the Golden Rule, than that we should manifest ever so much zeal in *sacrifice* and yet violate the rule of *justice*. This rule requires love for our neighbor as for ourself...

The proper course for us as disciples of Christ is that we observe the Golden Rule in our conduct, watching over our thoughts and our lips; and also that we present continually all that we have and are in sacrifice

eous....It is a proper presentation of the matter that is given in the proverb, that a man should be just before he is generous. It behooves the Lord's people, therefore, the New Creation, that they study this subject of justice continually and daily put into practice the lessons inculcated in the divine Word.... Such as get this proper foundation

to the Lord. But *obedience*, justice, *must come first*, for this is demanded by the Law of God. Before we can make much development in the cultivation of sacrificial love, we must learn to have a love of justice, righteousness... It behooves the children of God, as members of the New Creation, to study with diligence this subject of strict justice toward all, and to put into practice day by day this quality of character which is absolutely essential if we would be acceptable to God; for it lies at the foundation of all Christian character.

We are not able while still in the fallen flesh, to keep perfectly this Law of strict justice in act, word and thought. But it should be our prayerful endeavor to do so as far as possible...

### OBEDIENCE A TEST OF LOYALTY...

Had King Saul obeyed God, and the results had seemed to prove disastrous, he would have had a clear conscience. He would have been *obedient*, and could have left the results with the Lord. God would have been responsible for the results...

### THE FRUITS OF DISOBEDIENCE...

Note the indignation of Samuel, and the Lord's positive declaration of His displeasure and of the punishment to be meted out to Saul, we see clearly that the king had not misunderstood his instructions, but with considerable deliberation had violated them. Consequently we must understand his words of explanation to Samuel to have been to a considerable extent hypocritical. He first saluted the Prophet with blessings and assurances that he had performed the command of the Lord. But Samuel replied: "What means, then, this bleating of sheep and lowing of oxen which I hear?" He understood at once that the destruction had not been complete, that Saul had only partially obeyed the Lord.

Saul, noting the displeasure of the Prophet of the Lord, began hypocritically to assure him that these fine sheep and oxen had been preserved that they might be sacrificed to the Lord. Alas, how fallen human nature ever seeks to justify itself in its course of perversity and disobedience to the commands of God! How much wiser and better would it be to obey under all circumstances! Saul reaped the result of his disobedience in being rejected as king of Israel. How bitter are the fruits of following our own course, of compromising our conscience, of seeking to evade the responsibility which rests upon us as professed children of God! It is sure to bring trouble and spiritual disaster to the Lord's people, and the hiding of our Father's face...

St. Paul says of these, "The righteousness of the Law is fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." (Romans 8:4.) If we are not thus walking after the Spirit, we are not hearkening to the Lord; and while we are in that condition, He does not take pleasure in what we do. Even though we sacrifice some of our time for the Colporteur work, the Pilgrim work, etc., we shall not be pleasing to God if we do not keep His requirements of justice...

of character before they begin to build love will find that they are making progress properly. All love that is founded upon injustice or wrong ideas of righteousness is delusive, is not the love which the Lord will require as the test of discipleship. Z. '04-56,57 R323:1

If when one decides to make a consecration of himself to God he realizes that he has been unjust to another, restitution must be made. No one has a right to be generous with the money of another—to take another man's money and offer it in service to God. This is a form of injustice which must be very offensive to the Father...

Coming down to the ordinary affairs of life, we see that justice should be the very foundation of everything—between husbands and wives, parents and children, brothers and sisters, teachers and pupils, employers and employees, etc. The lesson of our text is a very important one to us of the Church...

Injustice seems to crop out in many ways in the fallen human nature. Little injustices are daily practised in respect to trifles. These are thought not worth considering. But whoever cultivates injustice in even a small way is building up a character which will be unfit for the Kingdom...

### THE OBEDIENCE OF THE CHRIST

The lesson of obedience is one which should be deeply engraved upon the hearts of all the sanctified in Christ Jesus. It is necessary, too, that we have the *spirit* of obedience and not obey merely the letter. Whoever has the true spirit of obedience will not only obey the expressed commands of the Lord, given in His Word, but will seek to know the Divine will in everything. He will seek to note the providences of his life, that he may be guided in the way the Lord would have him go. It is such faithful, obedient children of God who exclaim in the language of the Prophet: "Thy words were found, and I did eat them, and Thy Word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of my heart!" (Jeremiah 15:16.) These can say with our dear Master: "Lo I come! I delight to do Thy will, O my God!" Let all, then, who would be wholly acceptable to our Father in Heaven be very diligent to build character in harmony with His Law, having justice in thought, in word and in deed at the foundation, justice in our relationship to God, to the brethren and to all, and then building thereupon all the various qualities of love, that thus we may grow up into Christ our living Head in all things, and be able to render up our account at last with joy and not with grief."

(Jas 2:13 KJV) "For he shall have judgment without mercy, that hath shewed no mercy; and mercy rejoiceth against judgment."

F417 "He who shows no mercy shall receive no mercy. James 2:13"

R2587 "Mercy rejoiceth against justice," the Apostle explains. (Jas. 2:13.) Divine Mercy satisfied divine Justice, and thus prepared the way for the rescue of our race from the sentence of Justice: and so those who have become partakers of the divine spirit, and in whom it has reached a reasonable development, will permit their mercy to triumph over their conceptions of justice (for they have no law of justice over their fellows which needs to be satisfied).

While justice may not be blind in the Lord's people, while they may discern the faults of others most clearly, and while they may seek to let justice rule in respect to all of their own words, and thoughts, and actions, nevertheless they are to let mercy triumph in their hearts over justice as respects those who trespass against them, and they are not to hold resentments against those who have done them injury, nor to seek to avenge themselves and to inflict justice upon their opponents. Rather, they are to say, It is for God to be just; it is for me, who am a transgressor also against perfect justice, through the weaknesses which I have inherited, to have compassion upon my fellow-creature, who has inherited similar yet different weaknesses; it is for me to exercise accordingly the divine com-

mand, the blessed characteristic of mercy, compassion, forgiveness. And those who do so not only get rid of the evil works and sentiments of the world, the flesh and the devil, but increasingly become filled more and more with the spirit of love and gentleness and patient submission to the divine will, and thus the merciful are blessed even in the present time...

The Apostle includes amongst the works of the flesh which require putting away, after we are fully the Lord's, the following--anger, malice, hatred, envy, strife. All of these qualities of selfishness are antagonized by mercy, and by it largely they are driven from their secret hidings and entrenched positions in our hearts... How can we have malice toward those who are our enemies, if we love them and have mer-

cy, compassion, upon them, and forgive them from our hearts? How can we have hatred toward them, if we have mercy upon them, and feel toward them only a forgiving spirit?"

R2896 "If we accept the results of any matter as being good, and if we realize that we were guided to those results by divine providence, we should think and feel most generously, most kindly, toward those who were the instruments used by providence, notwithstanding the fact that they might have been unwilling instructors, or, like Joseph's brethren, have verily intended opposite results. Those who are enabled to take such a view of affairs and forces operating in their daily lives are enabled "always to triumph through the Lord."

R3321 (From Harvest Truth Database V5.0)

## "BEHOLD THE GOODNESS AND SEVERITY OF GOD"

*"Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the Kingdom of God. Be not deceived."--1 Cor. 6:9,10*

GOD'S SEVERITY consists in his insistence upon absolute righteousness--his refusal to approve sin in any sense or degree. The very first statement of the divine law is that death, destruction, must be the wage or penalty for transgression against his righteous regulations. For six thousand years the Lord has maintained this original position --has refused to sanction sin or permit sinners to live. Such an unchangeable attitude at first seems severe, especially when we consider that we were born in sin and shapen in iniquity, infested by weaknesses and surrounded by evil influences. It seems severe on God's part to insist upon perfection, when all of our experiences teach us that it is impossible for fallen humanity to attain absolute righteousness in word and deed and thought. Indeed the Scriptures confirm our experiences, declaring, "There is none righteous, no, not one."--Rom. 3:10.

The goodness of God is not seen in the severity, but, wholly separated, it stands side by side with it. God's goodness, his generosity, his mercy, kindness, love, which are not manifested in the sentence and in the execution of its penalties, are manifested in the great gift of his love--the Lord Jesus and the Redeemer provided in him--a redemption coextensive with the fall and with the condemnation. The Apostle expresses the matter pointedly in the words, "In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him." (1 John 4:9.) God's love was not previously manifested; for over four thousand years only the severity, the justice of the divine character was manifested, though a hint was given to Abraham and subsequently through the prophets, that God had kind sentiments toward the fallen and tainted race, which in due time would bring blessings to all the families of the earth.

### THE GOSPEL AGE A PARENTHESIS

The period between the first advent of our Lord and his second advent is in some respects a parenthesis in the divine plan, during which the Church is specially dealt with, as we shall see later. The redemption of the world and its reconciliation with God, based upon divine goodness expressed in the death of the Redeemer, wait for its further expression to the world until the end of the Gospel age and the opening of the Millennial age--"the world to come." When the morning of that new day shall dawn, the goodness of God will be seen more distinctly than ever by mankind. Indeed it may be said that the world as yet has seen nothing of the goodness of God; it has merely seen his severity, his justice, executed against the entire human family for the last six thousand years. A comparatively small proportion of humanity has ever heard of the grace of God in Christ, the "only name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." And even those who have heard to some extent have been measurably deceived by the great Adversary in respect to the nature of the penalty for sin and the fullness and wideness of the mercy extended to men in the person of the Redeemer.

In that new dispensation the facts will all be made clear. The blessings then coming to the world --peace, righteous government, helpful influences, the restraint of evil, the knowledge of the Lord and understanding of his gracious arrangements and purposes -- these will all be most convincing proofs to mankind of God's sympathy and mercy in Christ. The Adversary who now deceives mankind will then be bound, that he should not deceive the nations any more until the thousand years be finished, and the Word of God, which is in general now a sealed book to the world, will then be opened, and

as a result the knowledge of the Lord shall fill the whole earth as the waters cover the great deep.

Nevertheless, we are not to understand that this triumph of God's mercy and goodness then displayed will in any wise imply a change of his character or of his attitude towards sin. God never changes; "He is the same yesterday, today and forever." (Heb. 13:8.) When we come to understand the matter thoroughly, this unchangeableness on God's part is a guarantee that the blessings to be bestowed under his arrangements will be everlasting, unending blessings.

The goodness and severity of God will be displayed side by side throughout the Millennial age to every creature. All must learn the lesson that God is kind, generous and full of blessing to all those who are in harmony with him and his principles of righteousness, but that he is and always will be like a consuming fire to all who are not in accord with righteousness.

### REDEMPTION ONLY THE FIRST STEP TOWARD SALVATION

The redemption of the world by the sacrifice of our Lord merely entitled humanity to a reawakening from the sleep of death, to be granted an opportunity of full reconciliation to the Father. Not a reconciliation in sin, however, but a reconciliation in righteousness. It is manifest that no change takes place in the character of any during the sleep of death: the awakening must be to the same conditions of heart and mind that went down into death. The awakened ones will, therefore, find themselves at first in the same attitude of rebellion against God and the principles of righteousness that they were in when they went into death. But there will be this difference-- that when awakened under the Kingdom conditions they will find their surroundings totally different from those of the present life: themselves the same, all things surrounding them will be changed. The powers of evil to tempt their fallen tendencies will be absent; temptations to selfishness, covetousness, etc., seen in the dominion of the prince of this world, shall find no part in the dominion of the prince of light, in the world to come--in the new dispensation. Indeed the awakened ones will find love and righteousness and kindness the laws in general force throughout the world.

And if their fallen tendencies shall still grasp after the selfish things as before, they will steadily learn the lesson that under the changed arrangements selfishness will not be advantageous to them but disadvantageous, bringing to them shame and contempt. Gradually they will learn the rules of the Kingdom, the laws of righteousness based upon justice and love. Gradually they may come into accord with these if they learn the lessons of experience during that golden age under the great Teacher, the Christ, Head and body, and under the immediate supervision of the earthly ones appointed to be their instructors and helpers in the good way and their correctors in respect to their fall. Instead of the rule which now prevails in the Church, namely, that "whosoever will live godly will suffer persecution," etc., they will find, instead, that whoever will live godly shall prosper and have increasing evidences of divine favor. In that day the ungodly shall suffer "stripes," "corrections in righteousness," "judgments," a prompt and just recompense of reward for every good and every evil deed.

### THE FATHER HATH COMMITTED ALL JUDGMENT TO THE SON

The world then will be entirely in the hands of Christ, in whom

the Father has centered all his mercy and all his provisions of grace. Only those who will then come into accord with the Son, the glorified Christ, and continue in accord with the laws of the Millennial Kingdom--and none others--will be prepared by the close of the Millennial age to be delivered over directly to the Heavenly Father and the operations of his absolute law of justice without mercy. This is the period spoken of by the Apostle in I Cor. 15:24-28, when Immanuel shall have put down all sin, all unrighteousness, all insubordination to God; when he shall have raised up as many of the redeemed human family as would hear his voice, as would obey him--raised them up, up, up, to the very top notch of human perfection--to all that was lost in Adam, with, additionally, the large stores of knowledge gained through the fall, the redemption and the uplifting processes.

Nor need we fear the fact that the world will then be turned over to the Father's judgment and law of justice without mercy, because having reached perfection they will need no mercy. God's laws are not impossible to the perfect, but only to the imperfect, and by that time all the imperfections of all the willing and obedient will have been removed--all the blights and marks of sin in mind and in body will have been "blotted out."--Acts 3:19.

The angels who kept their first estate in obedience and perfection needed not an exercise of clemency toward them, needed no mercy, because they were not transgressors of the divine law. The law of the Lord is just and perfect and good, and every way desirable to and for those who are perfect. The difficulty of mankind under that perfect law, and their need for a Mediator and for clemency, all rest on the fact that as an entire race we are sold under sin through disobedience, and that we are all imperfect and prone to sin because of imperfection.

Thus seen God's law and exhortation to mankind in due time will be, "He that doeth righteousness is righteous; he who committeth sin is of the devil," the Adversary, and opposed to the divine being by being opposed to the divine regulations and arrangements of righteousness. God's attitude toward all wilful sinners during the Millennial age and at its close will be in full accord with the same severity which has always marked his attitude toward sin--a destructive severity --not a torturing severity, delighting in the anguish of the victim, but a just severity which has decreed, and will never alter the decree, that only those who love righteousness and hate iniquity shall have everlasting life on any plane.

#### THE OPERATION OF GOD'S GOODNESS AND SEVERITY TOWARD THE CHURCH DURING THIS GOSPEL AGE

Having traced the operation of God's plan toward the world, as he instructs us it will be carried out during the Millennial age, we now return to the still more important matter respecting the operation of God's goodness and severity toward ourselves--toward the Church during the present time. Why the Lord should make a difference between his dealings with the Church in this Gospel age and the world during the Millennial age can only be appreciated by those who accept the Scriptural declaration that during the present time God is making special selection of a special class, possessed of special characteristics and for a special service both now and hereafter. It is because of all these special features that the Church has a different experience from that which the world will have by and by.

All will agree that the reasonable, fair test that could justly be applied to mankind is the one which will be applied during the Millennial age to all the human family--a test under fair conditions, as favorable to righteousness as to sin, and more so, a test as to loyalty to principles of righteousness. But in the present time God makes a test which might be considered a severer one than would be fair, and hence this testing is not a general or world-wide test, but is confined to a limited number, who are assured in the Scriptures that in being granted this extra severe testing God is showing them a great favor. The favor belongs mainly to the future, and hence, as the Lord and the apostles everywhere pointed out, the inspiring incentive presented to this favored and specially called class is a hope, a future hope of glory, honor and immortality, joint-heirship with our Lord in the Kingdom privileges and blessings of the Millennial age and subsequently to all eternity.

#### "THINK IT NOT STRANGE CONCERNING THE FIERY TRIALS WHICH SHALL TRY YOU"

To this class are given fiery trials, temptations, etc., more than justice, equity, would call for. It is required of this class in its call that they not only love righteousness and hate iniquity, but that they shall do so at the cost of the sacrifice not only of the pleasures of sin but also at the cost of many reasonable pleasures, comforts, joys, etc., which are not of themselves unrighteous. This class are called to be sacrificers, and are distinctly told that if they would come up to the requirements of their call they must be prepared not only to resist sin and weaknesses of their own flesh and temptations from

others, but additionally to suffer for their well-doing, to suffer for godliness, for righteousness--to be evil-spoken of falsely for the Lord's cause' sake. They are even informed that unless they suffer chastisements, trials, persecutions, oppositions of some kind in the present time, they lack the evidences of adoption into God's family as new creatures: "For what son is he whom the Father chasteneth not? If ye be without chastisement then are ye bastards and not sons"--not new creatures. Heb. 12:8.

It is with this class that our text especially deals; for while the whole world is blind to the precious things of the Word of God, nevertheless, when the new dispensation shall have been fully ushered in and the Sun of righteousness shall have shed forth his beams and scattered all the night of darkness, evidently the Lord's Word, which is now our lamp, will not be the only instructor and guide of the world--having been supplanted by the full light. That which is perfect having come, that which is in part will be esteemed only as a precious friend, whose testimony will be in full accord with all the gracious manifestations of divine love, wisdom and power then resulting.

The Apostle is addressing the Church when he speaks of the goodness and severity of God, and it is highly important that we apply his words correctly. The Church has perceived the severity of divine justice, and has also been granted the opening of the eyes of understanding to discern the Goodness of God in the provision of the Savior and the blessings which flow to us through him. The Church has tasted of the good Word of God and been made partaker of his holy Spirit, has come to some knowledge of the powers of the age to come and the blessings then to be actually conferred. Now she rejoices in all these things by faith--faith in God, faith in Christ, faith in the grand outcome as delineated in the Scriptures. The words of our text are specially applicable to this very class in this very time, as we have just seen. They will also be applicable to the world in its trial-time in the coming age.

Now, the Lord speaks to the New Creation, saying, "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the Kingdom of God? Be not deceived." At first we are inclined to stand amazed and say, God has made no provision for our attaining actual perfection, all the provisions for such restitution belonging to the next age! How then can he require righteousness of us, who still have the blemished bodies, imperfect judgments, etc., resulting from the fall? After telling us that there is none righteous, no, not one, how shall we understand the declaration that the unrighteous shall not inherit the Kingdom of God--not be joint-heirs with Christ in the Kingdom--not inherit the glorious things which we have hoped for by the Lord's grace? The answer is that God has made special provision for the Church of this Gospel age. Instead of making us perfect in the flesh, and then requiring absolute perfection in word, deed and thought, as will be required of the world at the close of the next age, the Lord deals with us in an *imputed* manner. To those who exercise the requisite faith he imputes righteousness, which offsets the unrighteousness or natural blemishes of their flesh. But only to those who exercise the faith is there such an imputation of Christ's righteousness; those who cannot exercise the faith are still in their sins, aliens from God until the coming of the new dispensation, when the blotting out of sins will begin in an actual way. But to those who do believe and to whom the righteousness of Christ is imputed because of faith, there is still a testing of the heart.

It would be useless for the Lord to offer the prize of joint-heirship in the Kingdom to anyone perfect in the flesh when there are none such--our Lord Jesus being the only one, and he because he was not of the Adamic stock. God's provision, therefore, is that the justified by faith shall be counted perfect, counted righteous so long as their hearts, their wills, their best endeavors, are for righteousness. How simple and yet how sublime this arrangement, how it adapts itself to all the circumstances and conditions of the Lord's people! It is respecting this justification *by faith*, this "righteousness of God by faith," that the Apostle, says, "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ"-- being justified freely from all things.--Rom. 5:1.

#### SEE THAT YE RECEIVE NOT THE GRACE OF GOD IN VAIN

There is danger, however, here: some are disposed to take advantage of God's grace and kindness and mercy, and while willingly, knowingly indulging in sin, to hope for justification *in sin* instead of *from sin*. The Apostle is bringing this matter to our attention, and implies that there is great need of care. He says, "Be not deceived." God knoweth the heart: we might deceive ourselves but we cannot deceive the Lord. It behooves us, therefore, to be on our guard respecting righteousness, justice, to see that the sentiments of our hearts are continually in opposition to unrighteousness, to sin, to all in-equity. The Apostle proceeds to point out that faith in Christ, and

the acceptance of the divine law as our regulation principle in life, mean more than faith in the Lord Jesus. They mean our very best endeavors to speak and act and think in accord with the divine will--namely, in accord with righteousness.

**THE "MARK" MUST BE ATTAINED, ELSE  
THE PRIZE WILL NOT BE OURS**

There is no standstill for the New Creature. He must go on and reach a certain standard of perfection, else he cannot be counted in as one of the Kingdom class. The Apostle does indeed speak of the New Creatures as at first being babes in Christ, but the Kingdom will not be made up of babes in Christ, but of overcomers, and the overcoming is not, as we know, a matter of age or physical stature, but a matter of spiritual development, of growth in grace and knowledge and love. <sup>(1)</sup>We are to grow in love, and love is the principle thing, but before we can make much development in the cultivation of love, we must learn to be just, right, righteous. It is a proper presentation of the matter that is given in the proverb, that a man should be just before he is generous.

It behooves the Lord's people, therefore, the New Creation, that they study this subject of justice continually, and daily put into practice the lessons inculcated in the divine Word. All of the saints must be the foes of sin. Wherever sin is they must wage a warfare against it, and see to it that in their hearts at least they are free from sin, that in their hearts they do not countenance sin but oppose it, that sin finds no harboring place or sympathizing weakness in their hearts. This will make them radical as respects the words of their mouths, the conduct of life and the meditations of their hearts, that all of these shall be in absolute accord with the divine Word and its spirit of righteousness, holiness, truth, etc. <sup>(1)</sup>Such as get this proper foundation of character before they begin to build love will find that they are making progress properly. All love that is founded upon injustice or wrong ideas of righteousness is delusive, is not the love which the Lord will require as the test of discipleship.

**"BE NOT DECEIVED"**

The Apostle's words in our text, "Be not deceived," imply just what we see all about us: that many profess to be the Lord's people, profess to love him, profess the golden rule as their guide in life, and yet are blind to justice (righteousness) in many of the affairs of life. They exercise too much mercy in dealing with their own shortcomings and too little when examining the faults and weaknesses of others.

The Apostle proceeds to specify some of the unrighteous, unjust things to which the Lord's people should find themselves opposed. As these are examined individually they are all found to contain a weakness in favor of self at the expense of others; they all imply an injustice to others for the pleasure or advantage of self. Some of these unrighteous things specified are very gross, and one might suppose would be recognized as unrighteous even by worldly people; yet the Apostle intimates that some who profess to be the Lord's people have such lax ideas of justice that they do not perceive how abominable these unrighteous matters are--fornication, adultery, thievery, drunkenness, etc. Those who find themselves in any degree of sympathy with these evil qualities, these unrighteous acts, are deceived if they think themselves to be the Lord's people. "God is not mocked: he that doeth righteousness is righteous."--Gal. 6:7.

In other words, it is in vain that we profess to be the Lord's people, profess to be the servants of righteousness and truth, and love these principles, if our conduct clearly demonstrates that we love unrighteousness. For such persons to profess to be the Lord's people is to mock God by assuming that he cannot read the heart, and that what may be hidden to some extent from earthly beings is equally hidden from the Almighty with whom we have to do. He that doeth righteousness is not necessarily he only who is perfect, but rather he that doeth righteousness to the extent of his best ability and who is trusting in the Redeemer's merit to compensate unintentional shortcomings--he is righteous in God's sight--he is approved.

**VARYING MANIFESTATIONS OF SELFISHNESS, SIN**

The Apostle proceeds to specify other unrighteous conduct, not so gross as the sins already enumerated, but nevertheless wholly inconsistent with membership in the Kingdom class. These are specified as covetousness, revilings, extortioners, etc. Those who have made any advancement in the Christian way, we may surely trust, are far from having sympathy with the gross evils; and they may therefore have special need to examine themselves carefully in regard to these other more subtle evil qualities, deleterious to their interests as prospective heirs with Christ in the Kingdom. What is covetousness but selfishness--the desire to have, possess, enjoy something at the expense of another? What is idolatry but selfishness, the idolizing of money or fame or influence or child or self or

some other creature, exalted to and receiving the honor due to the Almighty?

What is reviling but an exhibition of selfishness again, which takes this method of doing injury to the feelings or to the reputation of another?--evil speaking is classed by the Apostle in another place as one of the works of the flesh and of the devil. It is wholly out of harmony with justice and the golden rule,--for who would like to be reviled or evil spoken of?--it is therefore injustice, unrighteousness, and cannot be the disposition of those who are in any degree begotten of the Spirit and growing in grace. What is extortion but selfishness, injustice, unrighteous dealings with others?--accepting from them, either because of ignorance or stress of circumstances, such money or valuables as are not fully, justly, righteously due.

**SOWING AND REAPING--TO THE FLESH OR TO THE SPIRIT**

The Apostle in another epistle repeats these words, "Be not deceived," and adds, "Whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap; for he that soweth to the flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption, but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting." (Gal. 6:7,8.) He is not addressing the world; it is the New Creation that is either sowing to the flesh or sowing to the Spirit, and that either will reap of the flesh or reap of the Spirit. We sow to the flesh every time we allow the fleshly, selfish, unjust, unrighteous desires of the flesh to have sway in our hearts and lives, and each sowing makes easier the additional sowing and makes more sure the end of that way which is death--Second Death. On the contrary each sowing to the Spirit, each resistance to the desires of the flesh toward selfishness, etc., and each exercise of the new mind, of the new will, in spiritual directions toward the things that are pure, the things that are noble, the things that are good, the things that are true, is a sowing to the Spirit, which will bring forth additional fruits of the Spirit, graces of the Spirit, and which, persevered in, will ultimately bring us in accord with the Lord's gracious promises and arrangements-- everlasting life and the Kingdom.

**"LET NO MAN DECEIVE YOU"**

The Apostle John has a word to say also about the danger of being deceived after we have become New Creatures in Christ. His words are, "Let no man deceive you; he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous. He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil." (I John 3:7,8.) The Apostle is not speaking here of some one whose heart is loyal to the Lord and who is momentarily overtaken in a fault, for he declares respecting such that there is forgiveness for them because of the weakness or the ignorance which permitted them to be ensnared. He is, however, speaking most distinctly of a willingness of the heart to sin, to do unrighteousness. He indicates a great truth when he suggests that there are but two sides to the question,--that Satan is on the side of sin, and that all who love and with willingness practise sin are on his side. On the other side of the question are the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, who gave himself as the Redeemer of mankind, that he might destroy Satan and all who sympathize with Satan in their opposition to God and his righteous arrangements.

**"LET US EXAMINE OURSELVES"**

The Apostle continues, "Whosoever is born [begotten] of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin because he is born [begotten] of God." The thought is that those begotten of the good seed of Truth, begotten of the holy Spirit, cannot, so long as that seed of Truth and the Spirit of the Lord is alive in them, wilfully, deliberately turn to sin to practise it. If such should turn to sin wilfully and deliberately it would be conclusive evidence that the seed, the holy Spirit with which they had been begotten as children of God, had perished.

The Apostle adds, "In this the children of God are manifest from the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God--neither he who loveth not his brother." Here again the question is sharply drawn as between the children of God and the children of the devil. All who are on the side of righteousness are on God's side. These will love justice and oppose selfishness, and sin which is related to selfishness, in every sense and in every degree compatible with their opportunities and commission. But this is not enough: they must do more than love to do what is right; they must have such a love for the truth as would even lead them to sacrifice their rights on behalf of the Lord or any of his "brethren." If we have tasted that the Lord is gracious, is good, we have tasted also that he is just, and in that sense of the word, severe. Let us then, while rejoicing in divine favor, see to it that we walk circumspectly, and that our walk in life is not after the flesh, which leads more or less directly to death, but after the Spirit, after righteousness, after Truth, all of which lead, under the Lord's blessing and guidance, to everlasting life and the Kingdom honors and glories with our dear Redeemer.

<sup>(1)</sup> Oct 14 Manna, Prov. 21:3