

September 10

Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers. Ephesians 4:29

THE depraved taste hedges itself behind conscience, and declares that it is always right to speak the truth, and hence God

(Eph 4:29-30 KJV) "Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers. (30) And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption."

R4770 "Eph. 4:29 "Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth..."

If our tongues come into the matter, not only are our own minds defiled, but there is contagion, there is rancor; for the tongue spreads the matter all around. And whether the matter be true or false, the influence is corrupting, degrading....If, by any mischance, any corrupting information has come to our attention, we should see to it that it goes no further."

R1937 "Let your speech be always with grace [with manifest love and kindness], seasoned with salt [a purifying and preservative influence]. (Col. 4:6.)"

R4583 "All so begotten of the holy Spirit must have the Spirit of Christ. If it be lost the result would not only mean loss of the illumination and going into outer darkness, but also a total loss--the extinguishing of the Spirit of begetting--the Second Death. Let us not forget that the Spirit of God is the Spirit of love -- meekness, gentleness, patience, long-suffering, brotherly kindness, love....Your great Adversary's endeavor, therefore, is to poison our minds, to introduce therein impurity, anger, malice, envy, hatred and other works of the flesh and of the Adversary. To the extent that he succeeds in poisoning our hearts he alienates us from the Lord... He succeeds best through human instrumentalities. We all know that if one dog becomes affected by hydrophobia every other animal is more or less in danger of becoming mad through even slight association--and infection."

R4381 "While each should be on guard against communications and sparks that would be injurious, each one should also be on guard against allowing sparks to fall upon himself and to ignite in his heart."

R2588 "When will Christians learn the length and breadth and depth of the injunctions "Speak evil of no man," and "Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good, to the use of edifying?" (Titus 3:2; Eph. 4:29.) How long will it take some of God's true children to learn that in uttering an evil thing (even if they were positive of its truth), they may be doing a world of evil? How long will it take them to learn that it is not always necessary to speak the truth, nor ever proper to do so except when it would be for the edifying of others? How many lessons, line upon line, must they have to convince them that they are not only to avoid gossip about other people's business, and fault-finding, and

cannot have meant that speaking the truth would be slander; but that in condemning evil speaking and slander, as works of the flesh and the devil, He must have meant the speaking of that which is false, untrue. This is a great mistake: a slander is equally a slander, whether it be true or whether it be false, and is so regarded, not only in the law

cynicism, but that all these are evidences of their deficiency in love--of their deficiency in the likeness of Christ...

Oh, that all would learn by heart, and continually seek to exemplify in life, the words of the Apostle, "Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things." Those who are thinking on the true and lovely and good and beautiful things will speak to each other of the same...Phil. 4:8; Luke 6:45.

Such have a very precious promise, well worthy of their efforts--"They shall be called the children of God"--they have God's spirit, the likeness of his dear Son has been traced in their hearts; they have been sanctified with the truth; they shall ultimately be "meet for the inheritance of the saints in light." Only such at heart will the Lord ever recognize as his sons and joint-heirs with his great Son, our Lord, in the Kingdom."

R4770 "A heart filled with the spirit of love, the spirit of God, the spirit of the Truth, and overflowing with the same will be sure to bestow it upon others;"

R1937 "Concern, then, should be for the heart...that every principle of truth and righteousness may be enthroned there; that justice, mercy, benevolence, brotherly kindness, love, faith, meekness, temperance, supreme reverence for God and Christ, and a fervent love for all the beauties of holiness, may be firmly fixed as the governing principles of life. If these principles be fixed, established, in the heart, then out of the good treasure of the heart the mouth will speak forth words of truth, soberness, wisdom and grace."

R2590 "When disposed to find a fault, or pick a flaw, when disposed to condemn another or to criticize another's faults, or to hold him up to odium, we can generally know of the propriety or impropriety of so doing or thinking by asking ourselves the question: Would I wish the brother to do, to say or to think thus respecting me, if I were he and he were I?..."

Let us be very careful, dear brethren, how we handle the Lord's rule--that we do not handle the Word of God deceitfully -- that we do not blind and deceive ourselves respecting its true importance--that we do not thus vitiate and impair our consciences--that we do not thus thwart our prayers for the holy spirit. For the holy spirit can flow into our hearts only as the channel is open; and the channel can be kept open only by keeping this Golden Rule continually at work at its full gauge."

R4803 "If any Brother or Sister brings to you an evil report of others, stop him at

of God, but also in the laws of civilized men. A slander is anything which is uttered with the intention of injury to another, whether true or false, and the laws of men agree with the law of God, that such injury to another is wrong. Z. '99-70 R2444:3

once, kindly but *firmly*. "Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them." (Eph. 5:11.) Refuse to have any share in this violation of the Master's commands, which does great mischief in the Church...

If to any extent you listen to such conversation, or express "sympathy" with it or with the gossip or slanderer, *you are a partner in the sin and in all its consequences*; and if a "root of bitterness" is thus developed, you are more than likely to be one of those "defiled" by it.--Heb. 12:15.

Be pure: maintain a conscience void of offense toward God and men. Begin with the heart; harbor no thoughts that in any sense of the word would be evil."

(Mat 18:15 KJV) "Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone..."

F291 "Unquestionably, the majority of the Church troubles (and society and family troubles as well) spring not from a desire to wrong, nor even from a wrong unintentionally committed, but from misunderstandings and, at least, partial misinterpretations of intentions or motives. The tongue is the general mischief-maker; and it is part of the spirit of a sound mind, therefore, to set a guard upon the lips as well as upon the heart, from which proceed the ungenerous sentiments which, the lips expressing, set fire to evil passions and often injure many. The New Creation--the Church-- has strict instructions from their Lord and Head on this important subject. His spirit of love is to fill them as they go *alone*, privately, to the injuring person without previous conference or talking with anyone. They go not to make him (or her) *ashamed of his conduct*, nor to berate him or otherwise punish, but to secure a cessation of the wrong and, if possible, some recompense for injury already received. Telling others of the wrong, first or afterward, is unkind, unloving -- contrary to the Word and Spirit of our Head. Not even to ask *advice* should the matter be told: we have the Lord's *advice* and should follow it."

R5409 "*Question*--If a person in deep distress of mind should appeal to us for counsel, should we refuse to listen lest we thereby be hearing evil or evil speaking of another?"

Answer--We should not refuse to hear one who is in deep distress of mind and who comes to us for counsel. But we should suggest to the one in trouble, Now perhaps there is something about this matter which might be a reflection upon another. Perhaps you can state the trouble in such a way as not to tell me the name, and without even describing the person, so that I would be able to recognize him from the description. Thus, too, I might be able to give unbiased advice. If we found that another was involved, we would inquire, Have you ful-

filled the requirements of Matt. 18:15? Have you spoken to the person?

If he answers in the affirmative, we should ask, And it makes no impression? And is he [or she] still continuing the wrong-doing? If he says that the party is not now continuing the wrong, but that he has made no apologies, then we would say, But we cannot require one to apologize. We can merely require him to cease from doing injury. You may be very thankful to the Lord that you have been relieved from the pressure of the trial.

Or the person might tell us that he had taken the Scriptural step, and that the party still continues to do injury. Then we would say, Have you taken the next step -- to take two witnesses..."

R4984 "There are *no exceptions* to the rule laid down in Matt. 18:15-17; but there might be, under some circumstances, an *interpretation* of the rule. For instance, if the matter were in a family, there might be circumstances in which it would be proper to go to the head of the family. If it were in an institution, where the individual might be merely a representative of the Society, it would be proper to go to the head of the Society. Such a course would result from following Matt. 18:15, in its logical trend." [For further examples along this line consider R5528]

R5471 "The Apostle Paul says, "Speak evil of no man"; he does not say, Speak evil of no creed. Some of the creeds should be very evilly spoken of! It would do the people good who are bound by them. He does not say that we are not to speak evil of an evil principle....Jesus said that the Pharisees were hypocrites and whited sepulchres. He did not thus address an individual, but He spoke evil of the system, and of a class."

R4524 "Our cue or guide on the subject must be measured by the Scriptural injunctions and examples. Some fail to get the proper thought on the subject of evil-speaking....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. It is speaking the Truth, which should always be spoken in

love. In many instances it is a duty so to speak...

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."...

We are now going deeper and deeper into the testing time, "The hour of temptation that shall try all them that dwell upon the face of the whole earth," and if we see many falling from their steadfastness, let us not rail at them, nor even feel unkindly, but contrariwise, let us think of ourselves and take heed to our own steps, that they shall be in the footprints of Jesus. Let us remember that the Adversary is trying some in one direction and others in another. Let us remember that we ourselves must be tested by the "fire that shall try every man's work of what sort it is."--1Cor. 3:13.

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!"

R2445 "The only exception to this rule, "Speak evil of no man," would come in where we might know of an absolute necessity for making known an evil--where the relating of the evil would be contrary to our heart's wishes, and only mentioned because of necessity--because of love for others who, if not informed, might be injured... Before anything should be said on the subject we should most positively satisfy our own consciences that our motive in speaking is a good one, and not an evil one, that we are about to use our tongue to bless, and not to injure. And even then, prompted by the spirit of love and kindness toward the weak brother, as well as toward the others, we should avoid mentioning one solitary item that would not be necessary to the object in view... If you have the spirit of Christ, love, dwelling in you richly, you will prefer to tell no one the facts, even if you have the chain of evidence complete: you will loathe the matter the more in proportion as the known facts are unfavorable."

R2442 (From Harvest Truth Database V5.0)

BLESSING GOD AND CURSING MEN

"But the tongue can no man tame: it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison. Therewith bless we God, even the Father, and therewith curse we men which are made after the similitude of God. Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing.

My brethren, these things ought not so to be."--James 3:8-10

THESE words of the inspired Apostle are addressed to the "brethren"--not to the world. Indeed, the entire Epistle is addressed to the Church: the fact that in opening it James addresses "the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad," is not to the contrary of this. We are to remember that to the twelve tribes of Israel, the natural seed of Abraham, pertained originally the great promise of God made to Abraham. By natural heredity, then, God's offer or proposition to bless the world belonged to fleshly Israel, as the divine instruments, if they would comply with the divine conditions. But one of the

divine conditions was that they should have *the faith of Abraham*, and should not be considered the promised seed of Abraham without that faith, since Abraham was to be the Father of the Faithful. Our Lord and the apostles, in the New Testament, set forth clearly how and why natural Israel, as a nation, was broken off from inheritance under that covenant: the Apostle representing the promise as an olive root, describes all Israelites as branches, growing up out of that root, and tells us that many of the natural branches were broken off, the vast majority, and that only a remnant at the first advent were

R4978 "When He was reviled He reviled not again [in return]; when He suffered, He threatened not; but committed His cause to Him that judgeth righteously."--1Pet. 2:22,23

If we are faithful pupils it will not be long until we see that the perfect law of liberty, the law of Christ, is a discernor of the very thoughts and intents of the heart; and that while we must hate all sin, we cannot hate any sinner and yet have the love of God perfected in our hearts. We see that this means, not only that we must not retaliate and revile our foes, but that we must not even wish to do so."

R4154 "How many of the fires of the "Holy Inquisition" were lighted by the torch of "duty!" Let us each be on guard. Ourselves or others we might deceive, but not God, who says, "Be not deceived, God is not mocked; he that doeth righteousness is righteous"--not merely he who professes. He whose acts and words are loving, gentle, kind, considerate under trying conditions gives evidence of being begotten of the God of love and of having developed much Christ-likeness! Consider our Lord's love for his enemies and his forbearance for them when nailed at, "Come down from the cross!" Consider how, when reviled and slandered, he reviled and slandered not in return! Consider how gentle was his reproof of the perfidious Judas and how he merely hinted a reproof to Peter, who denied him with cursings!... Let us not be easily offended nor of implacable spirit... To feel even a coolness of sentiment in connection with the prosperity of a brother or a lack of interest in his welfare is a sign of serious danger--that we have slipped from the mark. This should alarm us and lead to fresh energy."

(Eph 4:29 KJV) "*Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers.*"

R4770 "Let us, as the Apostle enjoins, drop evil communications; shun them, and hold fast only to that which is edifying--the word "edifying" having in it the thought of an edifice, a building, the up-building of each other... There is surely broad scope for conversation among Christian people on the subject of the riches of God's grace in Christ Jesus our Lord, expressed in the exceeding great and precious promises of the Divine Word. In these things we have indeed that which not only ministers grace to the hearer, but that which adds also to the grace of the speaker. It showers blessing on every hand so far as the New Creature is concerned, and assists in deadening the old nature with its evil desires, tastes and appetites."

found possessed of the faith of Abraham, and accepted by our Lord as members of the new house of sons.-- John 1:12.

The Apostle further explains that the rejection of the unbelieving of natural Israel left the way open to engraft in the place of the broken-off branches some from amongst the Gentiles, possessed of the faith of Abraham. And this, we see, has been the work of this Gospel age,--grafting into the original root of promise believers from amongst the Gentiles, who were once without God and having no hope in the world, strangers from the commonwealth of Israel, but are now brought nigh, united with Christ, and through him united with the Abrahamic root of promise, and inheritors of all its richness and fatness.--Eph. 2:12,13; Rom. 11.

Thus we see that these spiritual Israelites become the Israelites indeed, from the divine standpoint, the actual inheritors of the Abrahamic promise: altho we see also yet to be fulfilled certain gracious earthly promises to the natural seed of Abraham, they nevertheless have missed, have lost, as a nation, as a people, the great prize: as the Apostle declares, "Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for: but the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded." --Rom. 11:7.

So then the "twelve tribes" of Israel had promises made to them which apply not merely to themselves, but also and specially to Spiritual Israel, whom they typified; while the original election or predestination of God, respecting the Abrahamic seed, that it should be 144,000, or 12,000 from each tribe, still stands; and consequently that each one accepted from amongst the Gentiles, and engrafted into this root of Abrahamic promise, is counted as taking the place of one of these broken-off branches of the various tribes. By the time the Gospel age shall have finished its work, a Spiritual Israel will have been found--"a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people,"--showing forth the praises of him who called them out of darkness into his marvelous light--neither one more nor one less than the original, elect, predetermined number,--a natural Israelite having been "broken off" for each one from the Gentiles "grafted in." The Church is thus referred to in Revelation 7:3-8: and the sealing of the Church is spoken of as being so many from each of the tribes, with the intimation that all of these will have been "sealed in their foreheads" before the great time of trouble shall come upon the world.

So, then, the Epistle of James is to be understood as addressed to these true Israelites, engrafted into the root of promise, and taking the place of the natural Israelites. And to this agree the words of the Apostle Paul, "They are not all Israel which are of Israel." (Rom. 9:6,7.) And again, "He is not a Jew which is a Jew outwardly, neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh: but he is a Jew which is one inwardly, and circumcision is that of the heart." (Rom. 2:28,29.) And again, the words of our Lord in addressing his Church: "I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are of the synagogue of Satan."--Rev. 2:9; 3:9.

Our Lord recognized this same distinction between natural and true Israelites: when receiving Nathaniel he declared, "Behold, an Israelite indeed." These *two* Israels, of the flesh and of the spirit, were typified in Isaac and Ishmael, and again, as the Apostle declares, in Jacob and Esau. (Rom. 9:8-13,22-33.) In each case the inheritor of the promise was the younger brother; as illustrating that Spiritual Israel would be developed *after* natural Israel, and take its place as heir of the chief blessings mentioned in the Abrahamic Covenant. However, we are to remember that a blessing was granted also in each case to the elder brother, in the types; and so it is in the antitypes,--while God has appointed Christ to be the heir of all things, and has called the Church as his Bride, to be his joint-heir in all things, he has nevertheless provided that blessing shall flow from these to the earthly seed, and in turn through the latter to all the families of the earth.--Rom. 11:26-33.

Having thus definitely determined that the holy spirit, through the Apostle, is addressing the Church, let us consider the astounding statement of our text, and seek to ascertain in what sense it should be understood; resolving that, should we find that in any sense or degree it applies to us individually, we will assuredly quickly respond to the spirit's teaching, and correct so evil a condition.

BLESSING GOD WITH THE TONGUE

We may readily see how the Apostle means that God's people bless or praise his name with their tongues. They do so in prayer; they do so in their hymns of praise; they do so in declaring his truth, and in witnessing to his providences on their behalf. In a word, we bless God with our tongues by showing forth his praises, who called us out of darkness into his marvelous light.

CHRISTIANS WHO CURSE MEN WITH THEIR TONGUES

But in what sense does the Apostle mean that Spiritual Israelites *curse men* with their tongues?--and that so commonly, so gener-

ally prevalent as to require public reproof? Surely no Christian curses his fellowman by oaths and profane swearing! But are there not other ways in which our tongues may be a *curse* and an *injury* to fellow-men? We are to remember that the meaning of our English word "curse" has somewhat altered in common usage within the last century, having very generally lost the sense of *injury* and assumed wholly the sense of swearing, profanity. In the Greek language different words are used when referring to a cursing oath (*viz.*, *anathema*, and *anathematiso*, used ten times in the New Testament), and when referring to a spoken condemnation as a blight or curse (*viz.*, *katara* and *kataraomai*, which signify condemnation, --to speak against, to speak evil of, to injure). The latter is the word used by the Apostle James: hence his language really is--With the same tongue wherewith we praise and honor God, we do injury to fellow-men, by evil-speaking, slandering, etc. Thus our Lord, using the same word, said, "Bless them that curse [speak evil of] you." The Apostle Paul, using the same word, admonishes God's people to "Bless and curse not"--speak favorably of others, but do not speak injuriously of them. Again, we are told that our Lord *curse*d (the same Greek word) the fig tree, saying, "Let no fruit grow on thee henceforth"--he injured it, he made a declaration unfavorable to its future development. Thus also the Apostle declares that the Jews under the Law were under a *curse*--not that the Law was evil, but that, because of imperfections of the flesh, the Israelites came under the *condemnation* (curse) of the Law. He declares also that "Christ hath redeemed us [formerly Jews] from the curse [condemnation] of the Law, being made a curse for us"--having suffered for us the full condemnation or blight which the Law imposed upon the transgressor. (Gal. 3:10-13.) He illustrated the same thought in connection with the word "curse," when he declares that garden land which had been overgrown with thorns and briars is "nigh unto cursing"--not ready for profanity, but for *condemnation*, as unfit for tillage, until burned over and its weeds exterminated.--Matt. 5:44; Rom. 12:14; Mark 11:21; Heb. 6:8.

Having thus before our minds the real word, and its significance as used by the Apostle, we see that while *curse* is a proper enough translation of the original, the whole difficulty is that present-day common usage and common education have largely hidden from sight this signification of the word. (Similarly the word *evil* has lost its original breadth of meaning, and is almost invariably considered to signify immorality, badness, wickedness; whereas in its breadth of meaning it may be used to refer to anything that is undesirable, not good, such as calamities, etc.)

Looking at the Apostle's statement from this stand-point, we see clearly that his charge is applicable to Christian people of to-day to an alarming extent. How many there are who do injury with their tongues to their fellow-creatures, who use the same tongue in offering praise to God. We know of no evil to which God's consecrated people are more exposed than to this one. With many it is as natural to gossip as to breathe: they do it unconsciously. We have even known people who took cognizance of the Scriptural injunction against slander and evil-speaking, who were so utterly confused on the subject, and so unaware of their own conduct, that they would declare their horror of speaking a slander in the very same breath in which they utter slanders. We mention this in proof that this evil is so ingrained in fallen human nature as to elude the notice of the new nature sometimes for years--and thus escapes the correction in righteousness which the Lord's Word directs, and which all who are truly the Lord's people desire.

Many are the peculiar subterfuges which the fallen nature will use, in its attempt to stifle the voice of conscience and yet maintain the use of this channel of evil,--long after it has been driven from evil practices which are less common, less popular, more generally recognized as sinful.

(1) It will say, I mean no harm to anybody; but I must have something to talk about, and nothing would be so interesting to friends and neighbors as something which has more or less of a gossipy flavor (scandal) connected with it. But is evil-speaking, slander, any the more proper on this account for the children of the light? By no means. Hence it is that the Scriptures instruct us, "Let your conversation be such as becometh saints;" "Let your speech be with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man;" "Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is *good*, to the use of *edifying*,--that it may minister grace unto the hearers." --Phil. 1:27; Col. 4:6; Eph. 4:29.

But the scandal-monger, however refined his methods and words, well knows that so far from the scandal ministering grace to the hearer, it ministers evil;--that the hearer is impelled by the forces of his fallen human nature to go quickly and tell the scandal further,

to others;--true or false, he knows not and heeds not: it has kindled in his heart a flame of carnal sentiment which issues from his lips to "set on fire the course of nature" in others, similarly weak through the fall. The fallen nature feasts and revels in just such things, feeling the more liberty to do so because they delude themselves that thus they are moralizing--preaching against sin, and that in thus discussing and impliedly denouncing the *said-to-be* transgressions of another, they are mentioning matters abhorrent to their righteous souls. Alas! poor, weak, fallen humanity's reasonings are seriously defective when the Lord's counsels in righteousness are ignored.

As for the point that there would be little else to talk about if scandals were thoroughly eliminated from Christian conversation, and were all to abide strictly by the Apostle's injunction, "Speak evil of no man," we answer: Is there not a wide scope for conversation amongst Christian people, on the subject of the riches of God's grace in Christ Jesus our Lord, expressed in the exceeding great and precious promises of the divine Word? In these things we have indeed that which not only ministers grace to the hearer, but which adds also to the grace of the speaker. It showers blessing on every hand, so far as the "new creature" is concerned, and assists in deadening the old nature with its evil desires, tastes, appetites.

This is what the Apostle had in mind, evidently, when he said that the Lord's people should "show forth the praises of him who called us out of darkness into his marvelous light." And a heart filled with the spirit of love, the spirit of God, the spirit of the truth, and overflowing with the same at the mouth will be sure to overflow that which is within, for, "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." An evil mouth, therefore, a mouth which does injury to others, either to fellow-members of "the body of Christ" or to those that are without, indicates an evil heart,-- implies that the heart is not pure. "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."--1 Pet. 2:9; Matt. 12:34; 5:8.

(2) Another excuse for gossip about other men's matters is offered by others, who say: I can talk about religious matters to those who are religiously inclined, but when I am with worldly people, or with professors of religion who take no interest in religious themes, I must be agreeable and accommodating, and must at least *hear* their gossip and news; and if I do not share in such conversation I would be considered very peculiar, and my company would not be desired. Yes, we answer; but this is to be one of the peculiarities of the "saints:" they are not only to be different from the world, but different also from the nominal professors of religion. Their religion is not merely to be on the surface, and on one day of the week, and under a certain suit of clothes; but is to be of the heart, related to all the affairs of life, for every day and every moment. To follow strictly the divine injunction will indeed separate you from some who are now your friends and who love such evil things,--forbidden us who have become sons of God and who have received of his spirit of sonship, the spirit of Love.

And that the Lord understood and meant this is evident from the fact that he foretold to us that the way of discipleship would be a "narrow way." If, therefore, your failure to be an entertaining visitor, neighbor, friend, is because of your fidelity as a "new creature" to the law of Christ, Love--which "worketh no ill to his neighbor," either in word or deed,--then indeed you have cause for rejoicing, because you are suffering a little, experiencing a loss, for Christ's sake, for righteousness' sake. The loss may at first seem heavy, but if you endure it for Christ's sake, in obedience to his righteous law of Love, you will soon be able to say with the Apostle that such losses are "light afflictions," not worthy to be compared with the offsetting blessings.--Phil. 3:7,8; 2 Cor. 4:17.

Your cause for rejoicing is that you have the Lord's promise that such suffering shall work out for your good. Companionship with those who are not seeking to walk according to the mind of the spirit, but according to the common "course of this world," is injurious to the saints, to those who are seeking to walk in harmony with the new mind. They are far better off without such worldly companions and friends, and in proportion as they are separated from these will they find closer fellowship with the Lord himself and with his Word, and with all who are true members of his Body, and under the direction of his spirit. It is in harmony with this that the Scriptures declare, in so many words, that the friendship of this world signifies enmity against God. (Jas. 4:4.) ⁽¹⁾God has purposely placed the matter in such a position that his people must take their choice, and lose either the divine friendship and fellowship, or the worldly friendship and fellowship; because those things which the Lord loves are distasteful to the worldly, and those things which the worldly love, evil

deeds and evil thoughts, evil-speaking, are an abomination in the sight of the Lord, and those who love and practice such things lose his fellowship--they are not of his spirit. "If any man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of his."--Rom. 8:9.

(3) Another way by which some otherwise good Christian people avoid this question, and justify themselves in this common fault of humanity, is by confining themselves (as they think) to the truth: tho how frequently their gossip-loving natures pervert their judgments and lead them to accept as truth things respecting which they have little or no knowledge, they never know. Nor are such anxious to know more, after they have circulated a slander with their stamp of verity on it: to find it untrue would prove them "false witnesses" and put them to trouble to correct the lie; the pride of the natural mind objects and refuses to believe the truth under such circumstances. Thus one evil leads to another.

Such will say,--Oh, I never tell anything for *truth* until I positively know it to be true--of my own observation, my own personal knowledge. Anything that I do not know of myself to be true I am always careful to so state, and say, I have heard thus and so, or, I am told thus and so; I do not vouch for the truth of it myself. Thus I am sure that I always avoid speaking evil of anyone. Perhaps there is no more common delusion on this subject than is thus expressed. ⁽²⁾The depraved taste hedges itself behind conscience, and declares that it is always right to speak the truth, and hence God cannot have meant that speaking the truth would be slander, but that in condemning evil speaking and slander, as works of the flesh and the devil, he must have meant the speaking of that which is false, untrue.

This is a great mistake: a slander is equally a slander, whether it is true or whether it is false, and is so regarded, not only in the law of God, but also in the laws of civilized men. True, in human law, if a suit were brought for slander, if it were proven that the charges made by the slanderer had some basis of fact, that would probably be considered by the Court and jury an extenuating circumstance, and would probably very much reduce the amount of the verdict for damages. ⁽³⁾A slander is anything which is uttered with the intention of injury to another, whether true or false, and the laws of men agree with the law of God, that such injury to another is wrong.

In other words, divine and human laws agree that a first wrong does not justify a second wrong. Human law says, If a wrong has been committed, the Courts are open to the injured one to seek redress or the punishment of the evil doer; but the injured one shall not be permitted to take the remedy into his own hands, either by making an assault with physical force nor by the use of the more subtle weapon, the tongue, to assassinate his character with the poisoned stiletto of envy and malice. True, many slanderers are never prosecuted; true also, the newspapers of the United States have sometimes escaped heavy damages for libelous slander by the plea that they did not publish the defamations as of malice, but simply as news, which, they claimed, properly belonged to the public as in the cases of politicians who were seeking the franchises of the people for positions of public trust. Then again, public men knowing that much of the false statements by the opposition press will be properly credited as falsehoods, consider it good policy to let any ordinary slanders go unchallenged in the Courts. The effect is a gradual growth of slander among the people--sure to work evil to themselves and to their institutions;--for government officers and courts and everybody of influence coming under such slanders (generally, we believe, untrue) lose their influence for good over the lower classes, who are thus being helped along to greater lawlessness day by day, and preparing for the period of anarchy which the Scriptures tell us is near at hand.

But the Law of God, the Law of Christ, goes much further and deeper into such matters, naturally, than do the laws of men; for it deals not with men, but with the "new creatures in Christ Jesus"--transformed by the renewing of their minds, and under special ^(a)New Covenant relationship, and bound by the law of that New Covenant--Love--which "worketh no ill to his neighbor," under any circumstances, under any provocation: which on the contrary returns "good for evil"--"blessing for cursing."

The Law of the New Covenant, Love, commands *silence* to all who acknowledge that law and the Law-Giver, saying, "*Speak evil of no man.*" (Titus 3:2.) It goes further than this and declares against evil thoughts, evil suspicions, evil surmisings, against neighbors. It declares that love filling our hearts will not only hinder evil conduct and injurious words, but will prevent evil thoughts: "Love thinketh

⁽²⁾ ½ Sept. 10 Manna, Eph 4:29

⁽³⁾ ½ Sept 10 Manna

^(a) See important clarification on New Covenant after this article.

⁽¹⁾ Sept. 8 Manna, Jam. 4:4

no evil,"-- can only be convinced of evil by indisputable proofs. Indeed, to impress this subject and its importance in his sight, the Great Teacher declares to the pupils in his school--With what judgment ye judge others, I will judge you. (Matt. 7:1.) And again he tells them to pray to the Father--"Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us." (Matt. 6:12.) Again he declares, If at heart ye treasure up resentment against others, the Heavenly Father will not forgive you. (Matt. 18:35.) Ah! indeed, a Christian after the Lord's pattern, a graduate of the school of Christ and prepared to teach others, is one who not only outwardly, but inwardly also, is clean--separated, washed by the water of divine instruction, from the meanness, the filthiness of the flesh. He is no longer the slave of sin, controlled by the desires and weaknesses of his fallen flesh and its spirit of the world, bearing fruits unto unrighteousness,--anger, malice, hatred, strife, slander, evil-speaking. (Col. 3:8; 1 Pet. 2:1,2.) ⁽⁴⁾From his high standpoint of appreciation of the divine law, the advanced Christian sees that in the Lord's sight hatred is *murder*, slander is *assassination*, and the destruction of a neighbor's good name is *robbery* and rapine. And any of these things done in the Church, among the professed people of God, is doubly evil--the assassination and robbery of a *brother*.--Compare 1 John 3:15 and Matt. 5:21,22.

To utter a defamatory or injurious remark against another, and then to add, "I do not know whether it is true or not," is to show that the speaker is exercised by an evil spirit and not by the spirit of Christ, the spirit of love;--he wishes to injure or curse his fellow-creature, is anxious to do so. He would feel restrained to some extent from telling what he knew to be absolutely untrue, but he delights to speak evil, and glad to know of evil that he may roll it as a sweet morsel over his tongue, and hence speaks of even those scandals which he *does not know to be true*, and attempts to excuse himself with such an apology as the above. Verily, it is with force that the Scriptures declare that the natural heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked. Those who thus speak, and thus attempt to justify their misconduct, have either never entered the school of Christ, or are as yet only in the infant-class, and do not know that theirs is the spirit of murder, and not the spirit of brotherly-love. Oh! that all true Christians might learn the scope of this law of Love, in its relationship not only to God, but also to fellow-men; what a bridling of tongues it would mean, what a carefulness of speech! As David said, "I will take heed to my ways, that I sin not with my tongue." And he who watches his tongue is putting a detective upon his deceitful heart and can the better know it and master it, for "out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh."--Jer. 17:9; Psa. 39:1; Matt. 12:34.

⁽⁵⁾The only exception to this rule, "Speak evil of no man," would come in where we might know of an absolute necessity for making known an evil--where the relating of the evil would be contrary to our heart's wishes, and only mentioned because of necessity--because of love for others who, if not informed, might be injured. For instance, the law of the land demands that, if we know of murder having been committed, it shall not be considered slander, but on the contrary be considered duty, to make known to the proper officers of the law the *facts* (not suspicions) which have come under our observation. Likewise, if we knew of some weakness in a brother or sister, and realized that they were about to be placed in a dangerous position, because of some other brother or sister not knowing of that weakness, it might become our duty to make known, either to the individual or congregation liable to be injured, so much of our knowledge of *facts* (not suspicions) as might be necessary to guard them against injury through the weakness mentioned. But this would not be speaking evil, but, on the contrary, would be speaking with a good motive, with the intention of preserving the one party from extraordinary temptation, and of preserving the other party from injury. And before anything should be said on the subject we should most positively satisfy our own consciences that our motive in speaking is a good one, and not an evil one, that we are about to use our tongue to bless, and not to injure. And even then, prompted by the spirit of love and kindness toward the weak brother, as well as toward the others, we should avoid mentioning one solitary item that would not be necessary to the object in view.

But some will object to limiting this liberty to cases of positive *knowledge*, and urge that absolute knowledge generally being small little could be said. We answer that this is in line with the Divine

law,-- "Love thy neighbor *as thyself*." ⁽⁶⁾You would not want your neighbor to use brain and tongue in evil surmises and slanders against you; and you should not do so to him. The law of the land does not demand that you should tell one word more than you *know* (of personal knowledge) against your neighbor--it does not ask your suspicions and evil surmisings. And on the contrary, ⁽⁷⁾the law of the Lord commands that all under the ^(b)New Covenant shall not utter one solitary suspicion against a neighbor: and that if suspicion beyond knowledge is *forced* upon the mind by associated circumstances, the new mind shall promptly, with its native benevolence, counterbalance the suspicions by suggestions of the possibility of misinformation or misinterpretation and always give the apparently guilty the benefit of the doubt.

Another will object,--Oh! I could never waste so much time in getting at *facts*. Life is too short! Why, I would have no time at all left for my own business, if I carefully hunted up the *facts* so as always to speak from *knowledge* and never from hearsay!

Just so! and the lesson to you should be to follow the Scriptural rule--"Speak evil of no man."

(1) Because you have not the time to get at the facts, and quite probably also lack the ability to judge impartially, if you had *all* the facts before you.

(2) Because, if you have the spirit of Christ, love, dwelling in you richly, you will prefer to tell no one the facts, even if you have the chain of evidence complete: you will loathe the matter the more in proportion as the known facts are unfavorable. What, then, must be the condition of those who have itching ears for scandals and of those whose tongues delight in scandal as a sweet morsel, and are anxious to scatter an evil report of which they have no knowledge--only prejudiced hearsay? The most generous view possible of such is that they have *little* of the spirit of Christ;-- that they are deficient in brotherly love and have never truly learned "the golden rule."

The Apostle inquires, "Doth a fountain send forth at the same opening bitter water and sweet?" The form of his question implies the answer, No; it is either good water only or brackish water only. He evidently wishes to suggest that we apply the same rule to our hearts and mouths: How is it possible if our hearts have been renewed that our mouths utter loving sweetness to God and bitter acrimony, envy, hatred, strife, towards or respecting our fellow-men?

There is but one way of understanding this, and accounting for it Scripturally. It is expressed by the Apostle Paul (2 Cor. 4:7): "We have this treasure [the new heart--the new nature] in an earthen vessel." Not that Christians are of two natures, for that thought is contrary to the science of the Bible. No mixture of natures can be recognized, hence it was that our human natures were first justified through faith and a renouncement of sin, and secondly were consecrated or sacrificed to death, that instead we might have spiritual natures and become "new creatures in Christ Jesus." The new creature, however, is as yet only in embryo, only the new mind which dwells in and proposes to regulate and govern the mortal bodies, which are reckoned dead so far as the will of the flesh is concerned.

Hence, every Christian may properly use the language of the Apostle, and speak of and think of himself and of other Christians from two different standpoints --the new mind (the new creature) reckoned alive and given control, and the old mind (the old creature) reckoned dead, and deposed from control. But as the new mind is only living a reckoned existence by faith, so the old mind is only dead in a reckoned sense through faith. And as the Apostle declares, these two are contrary the one to the other. There cannot be spiritual progress if the reign is divided. Hence, the new mind which is to us the "treasure," begotten of the spirit of the Lord, through the word of truth, is to keep the old or natural mind, will, or disposition, tastes and appetites, dead; that the new mind may thoroughly and completely control and exercise these mortal bodies, in works and words and thoughts in harmony with the new mind, in harmony with the new law of love, in harmony with the spirit of righteousness and truth.

When, therefore, our mouths are speaking forth heart-felt praise to God, who hath blessed us, lifted our feet from the horrible pit, and the miry clay, and placed us upon the Rock, Christ Jesus, and has put a new song into our mouth, our praise implies that the new mind is controlling at such a time, that the treasure in the new heart is overflowing in the mortal body, and going forth through the lips to the praise and edification, the comfort and encouragement, of those

⁽⁴⁾ ½ Jul. 14 Manna, Eph 4:31

⁽⁵⁾ ½ Jul. 14 Manna

⁽⁶⁾ ½ Dec. 1 Manna, Mat. 22:39

⁽⁷⁾ ½ Dec. 1 Manna

^(b) See important clarification on New Covenant after this article

who hear. Thus the fountain in our heart is sending forth sweet waters, carrying with them life, blessing, refreshment. But when our tongues speak evil of any, whether it be true or false, it implies that the new nature is, temporarily at least, overcome by the old nature; it implies that another fountain is now operating and using the tongue, the mouth, in issuing forth the words of malice or hatred or envy or strife or reproach or evil speaking of any kind--cursing or injuring others in any degree, great or small. This implies that the old nature, the old will, the will of the flesh, is not being kept under, as the Apostle Paul expresses it,-- kept dead, kept buried, kept out of sight: there is either a *truce* between the new mind and the old mind, by which the two use the mortal body between them, sometimes for good and sometimes for evil, or a stupor and lethargy has come over the new mind, which is taken advantage of by the mind of the flesh. Such a condition therefore implies slow spiritual development or retrogression--falling away on the part of the "new creature." All such should remember, as the Apostle Paul declares, "The time past of our lives sufficeth us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles," and again he says, "Yield not your members as instruments of unrighteousness; but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God."--1 Pet. 4:3; Rom. 6:13.

From this point of view we may console ourselves if in looking backward, we perceive that in our own cases from the same mouth has proceeded praise to God and injury and defamation and slander and evil-speaking and malice and hatred and strife, or any of these, toward our fellow-creatures. It does not, therefore, prove that our hearts were not truly justified, and sanctified by the holy spirit of adoption;--it does not prove that we are not sons of God and partakers of his spirit. It does prove, however, that we are in a sadly improper condition--spiritually sick and in need of taking a purgative, as the Apostle expresses it, saying, "Purge out, therefore, the old leaven [malice, etc.], that ye may be a new [unadulterated, pure] lump" or loaf,--proper representatives of the Body of Christ.--1 Cor. 5:7.

We may know assuredly that, until the "new creature" gains a thorough victory over the will of the flesh, we will not be winners of the great prize which is promised only "to him that overcometh." The overcoming, however, will be not in the *perfecting of the flesh*, but in the *perfecting of the heart*,--the will, the intentions. As for the blemishes of the flesh, some of them, undoubtedly, despite every effort on our part to eradicate them, will continue with us so long as we are in the flesh. The perfection which is to be hoped for, and aimed at and expected and gained by the overcomers, is the perfection of the will, heart, intentions. "Blessed are the pure in heart; they shall see God." Moreover, our physical weaknesses and defects not only vary in kind but in intensity. Some are by nature more inclined to gentleness, kindness, etc.; others, until accepted of Christ, may have very uncouth, coarse, rude, rough earthen vessels; and while the influence of the treasure within, the "new mind," will be sure in any case to exercise a modifying and transforming effect upon the earthen vessel, we cannot expect as much of a change in some as in others. We cannot expect as complete a correction in righteousness in the outward man where coarseness, rudeness, unkindness are, so to speak, bred in the bone and fibre, as we might expect in one born to fine sensibilities.

While recognizing this difference of "earthen vessels," we of course must use our best endeavors each to correct his own. We are to remember that our relationship to one another in the Body of Christ is not according to the flesh, but according to the spirit; hence, as the Apostle declares, we know one another no longer according to the flesh, with its weaknesses, imperfections and ungainly and ungraceful natural tendencies. We know each other only according to the spirit, according to the intentions, according to the heart,--as "new creatures," not as old creatures. (2 Cor. 5:16.) This will lead us to be very pitiful of one another's imperfections of the flesh, so long as we have the assurance that the flesh does not represent our brother's real self, his mind, his will. We are, therefore, to be gentle toward all, kindly affectioned one toward another, so that so far from desiring to wound one another, or to injure one another, or to devour one another with our tongues, we shall sympathize with each other, do each other good, and by words of grace and comfort, or of admonition and reproof spoken in love, may build one another up in the most holy faith--in the likeness of our Lord and Master.

Proceeding with this subject, the Apostle points out that there are two kinds of wisdom, a heavenly and an earthly, and that all of the Lord's people should discern these, and should see to it that theirs is the heavenly. The Apostle's intimation is that there may be some with the Church, who may have counted themselves in the Church, who may have associated themselves with the Church from

worldlywise motives--some who have caught sight of the fact that there is a reasonableness and a wisdom in the teachings of the Scriptures, which they admire and which they can turn perhaps to their own advantage. These, he implies, will be inclined to be heady and to make a show of their wisdom, and to be "puffed up" by it, and while outwardly acknowledging the propriety of the Christian graces, brotherly-kindness, gentleness, meekness, patience, love, they have in their hearts bitter envyings and strife--strife to have name and fame--envying those who may seem to them to have more of these.

These, the Apostle intimates, will find it difficult, yea, impossible, to avoid *cursing* (speaking evil of, injuring) the brethren. It will be so natural to them to do so that they cannot avoid it, because they have not pure hearts--they have not regenerated hearts. If their hearts ever were regenerated, they have returned like the sow to wallowing in the mire--like the dog to his vomit. The Apostle's advice to such as find that they have in their hearts envious and bitter feelings, is that they have no cause to glory or to boast, but on the contrary should acknowledge that, having these evil conditions in the heart, they are not Christians at all, and they should cease to lie against the truth--cease to act fraudulently, hypocritically--cease to continue to claim to have renewed hearts, sanctified in Christ Jesus.

He tells such plainly that their wisdom, their knowledge, is not of God, is not of the holy spirit,-- "This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish; for, where envy and strife are, there is confusion and every evil work [to be anticipated]." -- Jas. 3:15,16.

It seems evident that, altho the Apostle's denunciation applies to any professing to be Israelites indeed, he nevertheless is specially aiming his remarks at those who profess to be teachers in the Church, to have *wisdom* to a considerable degree. And his words remind us of the words of the Apostle Paul, when speaking of the various gifts distributed to the Church, he seemingly points out the dangers of those of large knowledge, and as an illustration of this principle which James presents, he says:--

Tho I could speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not Love, it would imply that I had become as a sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal, making a noise indeed, but having no feeling respecting the matter myself,--I have neither part nor lot with those who possess the spirit of Christ. Altho I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and tho I have all faith, and have not Love, I am nothing; and tho I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and give my body to be burned, and have not Love, it profiteth me nothing.--1 Cor. 13:1-8.

Thus the Apostle points out distinctly that knowledge and oratory are not the most vital tests, but that Love permeating the heart and extending out through all the course of life, and actuating and operating our mortal bodies, is the real test--the real proof of our divine relationship. He points out that those who had received gifts of God before they had come into a proper relationship to God might become sounding brass and tinkling cymbals, and thus become "nothing," if they lose the love, if they lose the spirit of Christ; for "if any man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of his."

It is well for the Lord's people to take particular note of these divine instructions from two of the chiefest of the Apostles, and to remember that valuable tho they be, neither *oratory* nor *knowledge* are to be considered amongst the "brethren" as sure proofs of their being in the right way, nor that their influence might not be injurious instead of helpful. The *leading* characteristic to be looked for in everyone accepted as a servant of the Church, to minister in holy things, should be first of all the spirit of love. We do not mean to say that knowledge and ability should be entirely ignored, but we do mean to say that these should be considered of secondary and not of primary importance, as is always the tendency. Look out from among yourselves holy men, full of the holy spirit, that they may have the charge of the spiritual interests of the different companies of the Lord's people. And for a divine explanation of how this holy spirit will manifest itself, of the qualities therefore that are to be looked for in the servants of the Church, see 1 Cor. 13:4-8; also 1 Pet. 1:22,23; 2 Pet. 1:1-13. For their own good, as well as for the good of the Church, all who, having other qualifications, give evidence of being puffed up and of desiring to lord it over God's heritage, the Church, or who manifest envy, strife, bitterness, evil-speaking--these should be passed by, as giving evidence of having the wrong spirit that cometh not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish. They are unsafe teachers, and are likely to do more harm than good, with whatever knowledge they may possess.

Continuing, the Apostle leaves no doubt respecting his meaning, for he distinctly outlines the course and fruitage of heavenly wisdom, saying,--"The wisdom that is from above is first pure"--

(truthful, honest, sincere, not put on, not used as a garment of light to deceive and to cover up selfishness, malice, hatred, strife; it makes no compromises with sin, impurity, in any shape or form.) It is "peaceable." (So far from being a quarrelsome, bickering disposition, the "new mind" desires peace--it will contend earnestly for the faith once delivered unto the saints, but it will not contend simply from a love of contention, a love of strife; on the contrary, the new mind is peaceably inclined, would prefer, so far as possible, to yield a non-essential point in a controversy; it loves its opponents and sympathizes with their difficulties.) It is "gentle" (not rude nor coarse, not rough, in action or word or tone; and if the earthen vessel through which it speaks have these rudenesses by nature ingrained, the "new nature" regrets them, strives against them, and seeks to conquer them; and where they do injury to others is ready, willing, glad to apologize, and to remove the smart). It is "easy to be entreated" (easy of approach, not haughty, not disdainful, not hard or cruel; yet it is firm on matters of principle-- principles cannot be bended or modified; they belong to God. But while affirming the principles, this spirit of wisdom points out its own willingness to moderation, by acknowledging any good features in its opponent, and by pointing out the reason why no modification is possible in relation to divine laws and principles). It is "full of mercy and good fruits." (It delights in all things prompted by love and kindness; it takes pleasure in doing for others; it takes pleasure, not only in showing mercy to dumb animals under its care, but it especially delights in mercy in dealing with brethren in respect to their faults. It is merciful also in the family,--not over-exacting, but generous, kind, benevolent. It is generous also with opponents, and those who are contentious,--not wishing to push a victory, even for the truth, to such a point as would be injurious, hurtful, unmerciful to the antagonist.) It is "without partiality." (It loves the good, the true, where these are found; and opposes the untrue, the impure and the unholy, whether found amongst friends or enemies. Its justice is of the strictest kind, tempered with mercy; it will not approve a fault in a brother, because he is a brother, but would reprove the same with gentleness and meekness, remembering the liability of all to the assaults of the world, the flesh and the devil. It will not fail to see a virtue in an enemy, nor hesitate to acknowledge it. Truth is its standard, not prejudice, not partyism, not sectarianism.) It is "without hypocrisy." (It is thoroughly candid; it needs not to feign love, because it is love; it needs not to put on a kindly exterior and to smother feelings of wrath and envy and strife, for it is without envy, without strife. Such works of the flesh and of the devil have, by the grace of God, been seen to be earthly, sensual, devilish, and have been repudiated, and the heart has been justified, cleansed, sanctified to God, renewed in thought, intention, will, and is now full of the treasure of the holy spirit.)

With these thoughts before our minds, let us all, dear readers, more earnestly than ever, guard against the old nature, and its insidious attempts to gain control over our tongues. Let us, more and more, seek to appreciate, in ourselves and in others, this heavenly wisdom, whose operation is so forcefully presented by the Apostle.

IMPORTANT NEW COVENANT CLARIFICATIONS

When considering R2442 above, keep these clarifications & 6th Vol. foreword in mind:

CHURCH NOT UNDER THE NEW COVENANT

Fii "Inadvertently, the name New Covenant, which belongs to God's dealings with the world during the Millennium, has been used in respect to the Covenant which is now in operation during this Gospel Age with the Church. Our Covenant, of course, is a new covenant in the sense that it is different from the Jewish Covenant of Mt. Sinai, but it is not THE New Covenant. The Church's Covenant is referred to in the Bible as a "Covenant by Sacrifice."

NEW COVENANT WILL BE WITH NATION OF ISRAEL

(Jer. 31:31-32)

R4321 "As the old Law Covenant was with Israel only, so the New (Law) Covenant will be with Israel only. Other nations will share it by becoming Israelites, "Proselytes of the gate," not under the old but under the New Covenant. (Ezek. 16:60,61.) "He that hath

an ear to hear, let him hear." [Proselytes at the gate: Isa 56:6-7]

THE NEW COVENANT HAS NOT YET BEEN SEALED

R4477 "The New Covenant is not yet sealed. The blood of Jesus -- the merit of his sacrifice--which will eventually seal the New Covenant at the end of this age, is now being *otherwise used*. It has been applied to the Church for her Justification, in order that she might have justified human rights to sacrifice and thereby might come into membership in the Body of Christ, the great Mediator, the antitype of Moses, whom God has been raising up during this Gospel Age. (Acts 3:23.) So far from telling us that Christ sealed the New Covenant, the Scriptures tell us the very reverse, namely, that he became the "*surety*" of it. (Heb. 7:22.) A sealed Covenant needs no "*surety*," but an unsealed Covenant does need a "*surety*."

CHURCH HAS AN ADVOCATE

NOT A MEDIATOR (1Jn 2:1)

SM720 "Our Lord Jesus is not the Church's Mediator before the Father, but the Church's Advocate. There is a sharp distinction to be

The more important our members, the more influential, the more earnestly ought we to strive to keep them in full subjection to the Lord, as *his* servants. Our feet are useful members, consecrated to the Lord; we may use them in many errands of mercy, to the glory of his name and to the profit of his people. Our hands are likewise useful, if thoroughly consecrated to the Lord's service. Our ears are also useful in his service, to hear for him, to refuse to hear the evil, and thus to approve evil, and to set a good example to others. Our eyes are a great blessing from the Lord, and they also are to be kept from evil, from the lust of the eye and the pride of life, and are to be instruments or servants of righteousness, in seeing the good, in appreciating the good, and in assisting the good, and in helping us to know the will of our God.

But of all our members the most influential is the tongue. The tongue's influence exceeds that of all our other members combined: to control it, therefore, in the Lord's service, is the most important work of the Lord's people in respect to their mortal bodies and the service of these rendered to the Lord. A few words of love, kindness, helpfulness,--how often have such changed the entire course of a human life!--nay; how much they have had to do with moulding the destiny of nations! And how often have evil words, unkind words, slanderous words, done gross injustice, assassinated reputations, etc.!--or, as the Apostle declares, "set on fire the course of nature"--awakening passions, strifes, enmities, at first unthought of. No wonder he declares such tongues "set on fire of *Gehenna*" --the Second Death!

The public servants of the Church are to some extent specially its "*tongues*," and what an influence they wield for good or for evil, in the blessing and upbuilding of the Lord's people, or for their injury--cursing! How necessary that all the tongue-servants of the Lord's Body be such, and such only, as are of his spirit! Their influence not only extends to those who are in the Church, but in considerable measure they are mouthpieces heard outside. And the same principle applies to every individual member of the Church, in his use of his member, his tongue. He may use it wisely or unwisely, with heavenly wisdom or with earthly wisdom. He may use it for strife, and tearing down the faith and character of the brethren, in overthrowing love and confidence, or he may use it in building up these graces of the spirit. How many have proved the truth of the Apostle's words, that the tongue has great possibilities, either for defiling the whole body, the Church, and setting on fire the course of nature, by stirring up the evil poisons and propensities of the fallen nature! How few amongst the Lord's people have conquered the tongue to the extent of bringing it into subjection to the will of God, that they may minister good, and only good, to all with whom they come in contact! Let us, dearly beloved, be fully resolved that by divine grace (promised to assist us) the present year shall witness great progress in our control of this most important member of our bodies, bringing the same into full subjection and obedience and service to the King of kings and Lord of lords--to him who hath called us out of darkness into his marvelous light.

drawn between the two thoughts. A mediator implies a hostility between two principals, requiring the intervention of a third party; and this is not the case with the Church. We are not rebels. We are not alienated from God, but now through faith in the blood we are children of God, and our Redeemer assures us, "The Father Himself loveth you." (John 16:27.)... There is no need of a Mediator between the Father who loves His children and the children who love their Father."

SM728 "Mankind in general, the world, are in more or less of a rebellious attitude, lovers of sin, blind to their true interests. The Mediator undertakes a work on their behalf, to bring in reconciliation between God and these His rebellious subjects... By the end of that Millennial Age the Mediator will be ready to introduce the perfect members of the race to the Father, blameless and irrevocable..."

WE ARE MINISTERS OF THE NEW COVENANT

R5294 "St. Paul states that God has made us

able ministers of the New Covenant, thus indicating that we have something to do with the *preparation for it*. (2 Corinthians 3:6.) Unless there were Better Sacrifices, there would be *no basis* for that New Covenant." (Heb 9:23)

R5292 "The basis of mediation on the part of the better Mediator will be the *better sacrifices* of this Gospel Age."

SM49 "The entire Gospel Age antitypes Israel's Day of Atonement, and the sacrifices of our Lord and the Church, His Body, are the "better sacrifices," foreshadowed by the bullock and the goat offered typically by the Jews."

(Heb 13:11-14 KJV) "For the bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned without the camp. {12} Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate. {13} Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach. {14} For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come."

R4495 "In what way do Christ and the Church now minister for or serve that New Covenant? In various ways:

(1) In gathering the members of the Body of the great Mediator.

(2) In learning and teaching to others the lessons necessary to qualify for the position.

(3) In preparing the blood with which it is to be sealed--"his blood," "Jesus' blood," appropriated first to the Church and ultimately, after having served its purpose in the justification of the Church, to be passed on for the blessing of the world through the sealing of the New Covenant with Israel."

R4542 "GIVE THEE FOR A COVENANT" "...*Thus saith the Lord, In an acceptable time have I heard thee, and in a day of salvation have I helped thee, and I will preserve thee and give thee for a covenant of the people, to establish the earth, to cause to inherit the desolate heritages...*"--Isa. 49:7-9...

Note St. Paul's application of our text to the Church. He quotes the passage as applicable to the Body of Christ, saying, "We, then, workers together, beseech also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain. For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted [the antitypical Atonement Day], and in the day of salvation have I succored thee: behold, now is the accepted time [when we, like our Lord, may sacrifice earthly rights and restitution privileges and thereby attain the spiritual blessing of our 'high calling of God in Christ Jesus']; behold, now is the day of salvation"--the great salvation to the Divine nature.--2 Cor. 6:1,2.

Reading again the prophecy from which this quotation is made--our text--we perceive that there is no room to question that the entire Christ Head and Body was given as a Covenant for the people, the world, to institute general times of restitution of all things which God hath spoken by the mouth of all the holy prophets since the world began.--Acts 3:19-21.

We see, in this connection, also the appropriateness of our Lord's speaking of his "Cup" of suffering and death which he invited his faithful to share with him as being not only his own blood shed for us, but also "the blood of the New Covenant shed for many," in which we are privileged to *participate*. Those who see and who appreciate the privilege rejoice to be accounted worthy to have *fellowship* or participation with Christ in his sufferings and sacrifices, that they may have share with him also in his glories and work. The blood of the New Covenant signifies the "better sacrifices" by which God has been pleased to arrange to bring the whole world *anew* into Covenant relations with himself."

(1 Cor 10:16 KJV) "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?"

(Mark 10:38-39 KJV) "But Jesus said unto them, Ye know not what ye ask: can ye drink of the cup that I drink of? and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with? {39} And they said unto him, We can."

And Jesus said unto them, Ye shall indeed drink of the cup that I drink of; and with the baptism that I am baptized withal shall ye be baptized:"

R4605 "Now, if we should ever lose sight of this wonderful privilege, if we should ever come to the place where we fail to appreciate the fact that we have been invited to share in our Lord's "Cup," have been invited to participate with him in this blood of the New Covenant, this blood which is to ratify, to seal the New Covenant, it would be doing despite to all these privileges and favors which have been specially given to us, but never given to any other people in the world and never will be given again, a great privilege never offered to the angels, but offered only to the Lord Jesus Christ himself, and those who would have his spirit during this age."

R4331 "NOT OF THE LETTER, BUT OF THE SPIRIT... If the New Covenant were sealed now, the conditions are not such as would make it a blessing... The New Covenant is a Covenant of Law and of Works made possible --the same exactly as the Law Covenant, except with a better Mediator. If, therefore, the letter of the New (Law) Covenant could be enforced now, it would be a great disadvantage to all coming under it, and, as the Apostle suggests, it would be unto death. Hence it is much better for the world that it is not sealed and operative and that we who are connected with it as prospective members of its Mediator merely explain to the opposing world the spirit of that Covenant, which can profit and enlighten and encourage only those who are feeling after God, and who have no heart rebellion against him."

(Rev 20:12 KJV) "And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works."

(Rev 22:12 KJV) "And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be."