

September 15

Come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you. 2Corinthians 6:17

THOSE who conscientiously live separate from the world in spiritual matters, and

(Deu 13:13 KJV) "Certain men, the children of Belial, are gone out from among you, and have withdrawn the inhabitants of their city, saying, Let us go and serve other gods, which ye have not known;"

R1588 "UNEQUALLY YOKED" *"Be not unequally yoked together with unbelievers; for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? And what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial...or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God... Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty."*—2 Cor. 6:14-18...

Through this and the preceding chapter he has been discoursing about the doctrine of Christ. He has been preaching the gospel of redemption and resurrection, and of the privilege of being new creatures in Christ, and showing that, having by faith received the blessed gospel, we are ambassadors for Christ and co-workers together with him in making it known to others; and that as such we should be faithful to our commission, and under no circumstances allow the truth to be mixed with error. The idea is not that the saints should be unkind or unneighborly to the unbelieving: on the contrary, they are to be kind to all men, to the thankful and to the unthankful, to the believing and to the unbelieving (Luke 6:35; Gal. 6:10); but it is that they should not be friends in the sense of having communion and fellowship.

To be "yoked" together with another signifies more than a mere passing friendliness or neighborly kindness. It signifies an intimacy, a companionship, a fellowship of spirit. If two are bound together with the same yoke, they must of necessity walk together; and if they cannot agree to walk together, they must sever the yoke, whether it be a literal wooden yoke, or a yoke of friendship. Friendship is more than a passing kindness, and never exists without some bonds of fellowship. With a loyal and faithful Christian the bonds of fellowship or friendship can be none other than those of a common faith and hope. He has renounced the world with its ambitions and aims, has lost its spirit, and has received instead the spirit of Christ with all its new and heavenly aspirations and hopes; consequently, if he be true to his profession, those earthly things can no longer constitute bonds of fellowship with him: he cannot submit to be yoked with those who are of the world. He has also renounced all the vain philosophies of human invention and has taken for his guide, and has found his delight in, the infallible Word of divine truth; consequently, if he remain true to his profession, the theories and speculations of men can constitute no bond of fellowship with him; for he has no sympathy with them. And, further, his commission as an ambassador for Christ

recognize as brethren only those who confess to circumcision of the heart and adoption into God's family, will find themselves opposed by moralists, liberalists and higher critics, as well as by the masses, who hate the light, because it condemns their darkness--doctrinal and otherwise. Nevertheless,

(2Cor. 5:20) not only precludes the possibility of fellowship on those terms, but it also arrays him, as a defender of the faith once delivered to the saints by the Lord and the Apostles, in opposition to every other form of doctrine...

And "what concord [what harmony] hath Christ [the body of Christ, the true Church] with Belial [with those who say, "Let us go and serve other gods"—See Deut. 13:13]?"...

"Wherefore, come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean, and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty."

How explicit and positive is the command, and how blessed the promise to the obedient. Every word of the command is full of significance:—

The first word—"Wherefore"—calls up the forceful argument preceding; *i.e.*, in view of the fact that it is impossible to serve two masters or to have the spirit of Christ, and still have fellowship with the opponents of Christ; in view of the fact that we must either be true and loyal to him, or else be none of his—"Wherefore, come out from among them [from among the enemies of Christ, whether the avowed or the deceitfully cloaked, who, although professing to be light-bringers and truth-seekers, love darkness better than light, because their hearts are not right; whose conduct shows that they do not love the Lord and the truth, and who only seek to entice the faithful away from the narrow path which God has marked out]; and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean."

...We are thus brought face to face with the alternative of making a definite choice between the Lord and his truth on the one hand, and the enemies of the Lord, whether open or covert, on the other. The command is, "Choose ye this day whom ye will serve." There is no neutral ground; and no half-way compliance can realize the blessed promise—"And I will receive you," etc...

What would be the natural conclusion of a husband, if he saw his wife, who professed loyalty and devotion to him, making a special friend or companion of his enemy, either secret or open? or of the wife whose husband found pleasure in fellowship and communion with one who is an enemy to her, or who in any way treats her with discourtesy or disrespect? And should we not be equally loyal to our heavenly Bridegroom and our heavenly Father? and equally sensitive and quick to discern the opposing spirit which seeks to undermine and destroy the faith and loyalty of God's elect?"

(1 Cor 10:21 KJV) "Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils: ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and of the table of devils."

R2492 "DANIEL IN BABYLON" *Daniel 1:8-21. "Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself."*

this is the only good and safe course to pursue. Better far is it that only true Israelites should be recognized as brethren, and thus the true wheat be separated from the tares. Z. '99-203 R2512:4

...The Israelites, under their Law Covenant, were forbidden to eat certain articles of food in common use amongst other nations...

Clean spiritual provender is important to the Lord's flock, and that those who have come to a knowledge of the truth should abstain from all food that is defiled. If this shall seem to restrict the bill of spiritual fare, and the opportunities for mingling with the Babylonians at their table, it will have its compensating advantages."

(1 Cor 15:33 KJV) "Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners."

F604-605 "The world and its spirit of pride, selfishness, etc. must be recognized as one of the chief foes of the New Creation. The whole world of mankind, operating under this general "spirit of the world," is moving in one general direction, as a great river, in some parts of which there is greater swiftness, and in other parts greater sluggishness, but all, nevertheless, following in the same general selfish direction. The New Creature, by his consecration, by the spirit of his new mind, is obligated to an adverse course, and is, therefore, opposed by all the current of popular sentiment... Collision cannot be avoided. It means not outward peace but outward conflict; this outward conflict, however, may signify inward peace and joy because divine approval is realized.

The world's aims and objects and methods are not always ignoble and unjust; but even its noblest aims and objects are generally contrary to those of the New Creation, because the world is acting under the impulse of human wisdom...

The New Creation must not, therefore, be surprised if the world hate it -- even the morally and religiously well-disposed of the world. And this hatred and opposition of the world, at times so vexatious and trying to faithfulness and patience, is to be received meekly; with the remembrance that the world is still blinded by the "god of this world" and sees not the "exceeding great and precious things," "the deep things of the Spirit," in the light of which we, by the grace of God, are enabled to count all things -- losses, trials, etc.--as but "loss and dross," that we may win the wonderful things promised us in the Word. To yield to the spirit of the world, to allow its sentiments to dominate us for the sake of its peace, would be giving evidence of an inferior appreciation of the Lord, his Truth, and the privileges of his service. The result would be that if we did not lose everything by going completely over to worldliness we might, at least, lose the prize, and have a portion with the "great company," and come up through great tribulation to an inferior place in connection with the glories to follow."

(Rom 8:7 KJV) "Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be."

R5738 "Whoever is fully satisfactory to the world may be sure that he is not satisfactory

to the Lord. Whoever is satisfactory to the Lord need not expect to be satisfactory to the world; for the fellowship of this world is enmity to God, and, therefore, the world is not subject to the Divine standard, neither indeed can be, as the Apostle explains. (James 4:4; Romans 8:7) Its heart is in the other direction.

The law of the New Creation--love for God with all our hearts and for our neighbor as ourselves--is to the world unreasonable, unthinkable, undesirable every way, and every reminder of it, even by the presence of those who at heart are on the side of righteousness, causes displeasure and discomfort. To these the Lord and His footstep followers have always been unwelcome--intruders. They prefer to be let alone, to have no suggestion offered to the effect that they are wrong. True, some of them have a pleasurable pride in generosity, a love of a good name, and a reputation for honesty and virtue. But they wish to be considered as standards and exemplars, and resent any intrusion, any measurements of their thoughts, words or deeds by the Divine standards. Therefore those who continually recognize and honor the Divine standards are disesteemed by them."

R5117 "Someone may ask, "Why should the godly suffer?" The Bible answers that sin has brought the world into opposition to God. Whoever, then, would have all men speak in commendation of him would not be in harmony with the Divine arrangement, for the masses of the world are pursuing a course that the Lord does not approve. We are not saying that everything which the world does is sinful, but that the standards of God are so high that because of their fallen condition the masses of the world are not subject to the Law of God, neither, indeed, can they be, for they are carnal, sold under sin. (Rom. 8:7; 7:14, 15) Those who wish to have influence with the world must cater to popular prejudices. On the contrary, those who would be God's people must be loyal to the principles of righteousness and consequently must go in the opposite direction to that of the world. Hence they are opposed by the world.

From the standpoint of God the course of the world is sinful. There is a tendency in our flesh to go with the world, who are laboring under false views of various kinds, because that course is in sympathy with the desires of our own fallen flesh. Hence to live godly is to live in opposition to the course of the world and of our own flesh. This would include not only living uprightly and avoiding sin, etc., but also the making of sacrifices as well, where principles are not involved. We are to beware, however, lest we be deceived along this line. Not only are we contending with the world, but we are wrestling with wicked spirits in high positions. Eph. 6:12."

(Eph 5:11 KJV) "And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them."

R2967 on Ephesians 5 "In verse 3, he mentions some evils which should be "not so much as *named* among you -- as becometh saints." In vs. 4, he mentions "foolish talking"... From the text we understand him to refer to coarse, *lascivious* talking, and to a more refined jesting with half-suggestions

of profanity or vice, sometimes practiced by the educated and witty.

We are to arise from all such low conditions of thought, word, and deed as we find prevalent about us; because as children of God, begotten by his spirit, we can have no fellowship with these things. We must regard them as the Apostle suggests, as "unfruitful works of darkness." The Apostle by this word, unfruitful, no doubt intended to give us the thought that sin is *destructive* instead of *productive*--that its tendency is toward death. On the contrary, the tendency of the new mind of Christ is toward fruit-bearing, development, blessing, uplifting, refreshment. Not only is this true in the individual Christian, but as our Lord's words suggest, the individual Christian exercises a preservative influence on others; wherever he may live he is a shining light dispelling the darkness of sin; he is the salt of the earth, preserving the mass from corruption. The moral standing of the civilized world today, is unquestionably largely due to the indirect influence of the holy spirit in God's people;--which as the Apostle declares, reproves the world. Our reproof of sin may always be through the living epistles of our daily lives which, as bright and shining lights, should ever reprove by manner, look, act, and tone, everything tending toward darkness and sin.--"Let your light so shine before men that they seeing your good works may glorify your Father in Heaven." Occasionally it may be proper, and still more occasionally it may be duty, for us to speak or to act in opposition to darkness; but the light of a godly life, testifying for the truth and exhibiting the holy spirit, is certainly one of the most forceful reproofs of sin that can be administered."

R5038 "We must "have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them." How searching, how positive--absolutely no fellowship with them! More than this, we must not be content with a negative opposition, but must reprove them. However wisely we may seek to fulfil these requirements, they are sure to bring to us the enmity, the disfavor and the disappointment of many whom we love, and whose good opinion we strongly desire. But as good soldiers of the Lord Jesus Christ we must be loyal, we must be faithful. He that is ashamed of the Master and His Word and the principles of righteousness for which He stands, of him will the Savior be ashamed when He comes to establish His Kingdom, when He comes to reckon with His servants.

Evidently the Apostle does not mean that we shall undertake to reprove everything that is out of accord with our high ideals of the Divine Law and the Divine will, because he here mentions the things to be reproved, saying, "It is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret"--uncleanness, impure practices, the Apostle evidently had in mind. We must manifest our disapproval when we are in close contact with such things.

This does not mean that we shall leave the preaching of the Gospel to go "slumming," to do "muck-raking." It may not mean that we shall even publicly denounce the evil, but it surely does mean that our lives shall be so contrary to all sinful and impure practices that all may take knowledge that we have been with Jesus, and have learned of Him."

R5413 "THE END OF THE AGE A PERILOUS TIME "In the last days perilous times shall come; men shall be traitors, heady,...lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God." -- 2 Timothy 3:4...

WORLDLY SPIRIT IN SOME OF THE CONSECRATED

These conditions of our day make it a perilous time for the Church. Do you ask, Would not the Church, on the contrary, be more than ever led to love God? And would this not guard them and keep them from danger? We answer that some of God's people are becoming more and more immersed in the world. The spirit of the world surges all around them. With great difficulty could these come to realize that the whole world is astray in their ideas and ways. The tendency of all such is to have the mind of the world, even though they be spirit-begotten.

This worldly spirit, the Apostle suggests, would affect the Church to some extent. Consequently some of the Lord's people would thus come into special peril at this time, because of neglecting their Covenant with the Lord. Others would remember that Covenant, and watch and pray, and so make good progress. Those who are living close to the Lord are, for this reason, developing in mind and heart. But these are few.

The Great Company class, while still loving the Lord, are becoming immersed in the spirit of the world. Even those who are living nearest to the Divine standard will be more or less imperiled through this spirit, unless they continue diligent in prayer and the study of God's Word. What we see going on about us seems natural to our minds. The way in which other people spend time and money is a temptation to the Lord's people which must be *steadfastly resisted*."

R565 "Take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life..."

Some who could not be induced nor pressed into worldliness, he will keep busy looking after the welfare of others, to the exclusion of their own growth in the knowledge of the truth... They are *leaving undone* that which is of greater importance, i.e., fitting themselves for union with Christ, and for efficient service in the world's great seed time and harvest in the age to come...

Love of the truth would lead us more and more *into* the truth, would make business cares and anxieties give place and stand aside while we take a sufficient amount of time to study God's word and worship him in spirit and in truth... "How shall we escape if we neglect *so great salvation*?" J. C. SUNDERLIN.

SM635-639 "As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the Household of Faith."--Gal. 6:10.

Development of character-likeness to our Lord Jesus Christ is the first duty of every consecrated child of God... Otherwise it might be with us as St. Paul points out -- that while preaching to others, we might ourselves become castaways. (1Cor 9:27)...

The Lord is not now dealing with the world, but only with the Household of Faith.

This statement is in harmony with the words of Jesus, who prayed not for the world, but for those whom the Father had given Him. (John 17:20,21)... To such our

Lord ministered especially, even neglecting His own temporal interests to do so. We may be sure, however, that He never ne-

glected His own spiritual needs; for the development of Himself as a New Creature was His first obligation—as it is our first

consideration. (2 Peter 1:4-11; 3:18)...

Under no conditions should we neglect our own spiritual growth."

R2510 (From Harvest Truth Database V5.0)

WHO MAY BE COWORKERS

SEPT. 3.--EZRA 3:10 TO 4:5

"The temple of God is holy, which temple ye are." -- 1 Cor. 3:17

ABOUT FOUR months must have been required for the return of the captives from Babylon to Palestine, for later Ezra, with a smaller company, required that length of time. (Ezra 7:9.) Arriving at their destination about July or August, probably the first steps were to provide at least temporary homes amid the ruins of Jerusalem and the small towns in that vicinity. But as it was a religious motive which prompted their return--faith in God and his promises--we find, as we might reasonably expect, that very speedily after their arrival the public worship of Jehovah was begun--probably about the beginning of their "new year," October.--*Verse 6.*

Evidently the Lord's hand was with them, and it was of his providential guidance that their first work, in connection with the restoration of the Temple and its divinely appointed services, was the building of the altar. This will at once appeal to the intelligent Christian as an illustration of the truth so forcefully set forth in the Scriptures, that all approach to God, all reconciliation, all at-onement with him, must be by and through the great sacrifice for sins which Israel's altar typically represented. Vain are all the approaches to God which recognize not as their basis the sin-offering which God himself provided--the "ransom for all."--1 Tim. 2:6.

The site of the Temple was Mount Moriah, and one of the most prominent spots on that mount is supposed to have been the site of the altar. This place selected for the altar, under divine guidance, is believed to have been the same spot upon which Abraham offered his son, Isaac, the type of Christ, and received him again as from the dead in a figure, the Lord providing as his representative, upon the same spot, the ram caught in a neighboring thicket.--Gen. 22:3-13; Heb. 11:17-19.

It is supposed that this same spot was subsequently the threshing-floor of Araunah, where David offered the acceptable sacrifice to the Lord which stayed the plague. (2 Sam. 24:21-25.) The Mosque of Omar now occupies the site of the ancient Temple built by Solomon; and the Mohammedans, who have great respect for the holy places, have left the site of the ancient altar exposed to view, protecting it with a railing. The visitor may there see to-day the very spot on which thousands of typical sin-offerings were sacrificed, the base of the various altars which were erected from time to time. It is of solid rock, and has a rather distinct groove or trench about it, which probably conducted the blood of the slain animals to what seems to be a natural drain or sewer by which the blood flowed in the direction of the Valley of Jehoshaphat--the valley of graves.

As we viewed this historic rock some years ago, and thought of the thousands of beasts slain there as types of the great ransom sacrifice, and noted the natural passageway by which the blood was carried off, our thoughts reverted to the Lamb of God, the great sacrifice for sins, and how the life which he laid down became a fountain or stream of life, not only for the dead of Israel, but all who died in Adam. The flow of blood toward the valley of graves seems to speak symbolically of life for the dead, secured through our dear Redeemer's sacrifice. But we remember that not only the bullock of the sin-offering was slain at this altar, but as well the goat of the sin-offering was slain there: not only the blood of the typical bullock, but also the blood of the typical goat, then, must have passed through that natural channel or drain; and this reminds us of how the Church, as members of the body of Christ, are during this age filling up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ, sacrificing even unto death--for we know that, as the bullock represented the great High Priest, our Lord, so the goat represented the under-priests, the Church which is his body." (Col. 1:24; Rom. 8:17.) And, as we have already seen, all the members of the body of Christ, the Church, must finish their course and lay down their lives, before the great work of this Atonement Day, the Gospel age, will be accomplished, and the healing and life-giving stream reaches the dead world with blessings and opportunities of eternal life.

The beginning of the offering of sacrifices in connection with the Feast of Tabernacles, at the beginning of their "new year" (in the seventh month of their civil year), was a time of special rejoicing with the Israelites --it was always the most joyous season, but on this occasion the return from Babylon and recent evidences of returning divine favor added to its joys. And immediately the work of

repairing the Temple was decided upon. They had brought certain gifts from the Israelites still remaining in Babylonia, and these were added to from the means of those who had returned, and the sum thus accumulated gives good evidence of the zeal of all concerned. As nearly as we may be able to judge, the total value of the gold and silver donated would amount to about \$400,000. (Ezra 2:68,69.) It would appear that this sum was of three parts of about equal proportions, one-third contributed by those who remained in Babylonia, one-third by the few wealthy of the returned Israelites, and one-third contributed by the mass of the people, about \$3 each.-- Nehemiah 7:71,72.

We have never considered it proper to solicit money for the Lord's cause, after the common custom; and yet we are thoroughly convinced that there is a great blessing in giving, and that those who do not learn to give deprive themselves of a great spiritual grace, and endanger their spiritual prosperity, if not their spiritual life itself. But the giving, to be acceptable in the Lord's sight, must be voluntary--free-will offerings --"not of constraint." Accordingly, it is our judgment that money raised by the various begging devices in the name of our Lord is offensive, unacceptable to him, and does not bring his blessing either upon the givers or the work accomplished. "The Lord loveth a cheerful [willing] giver." He seeketh such to worship him as worship and serve in spirit and in truth. --2 Cor. 9:7; John 4:23,24.

Full of zeal for the Lord's cause, the people celebrated the corner-stone laying of the new Temple with great *eclat*. One of the special features of their worship was praise, and we think it safe to say that singing the Lord's praise has been amongst the greatest blessings and privileges of worship enjoyed by the largest number of the Lord's people throughout this Gospel age also. The power to praise God in song has been conferred upon man only of all earthly creatures, and how appropriate that he should use this power to praise the King of kings!

If those Israelites, the house of servants, returning from their bondage, and remembering the covenant promises of God to them, had cause for singing and shouting Jehovah's praise, much more have we, who belong to the house of sons, great cause to tell abroad the great things which the Lord hath done for us. We were all servants of sin once, under the bondage of sin, ignorance, superstition and death, but God, through the great Cyrus, has permitted us to go free. Appropriately, therefore, our first step should be to recognize the sacrifice of the altar, and then to offer praise to him who hath called us out of darkness into his marvelous light, for "He hath put a new song into our mouths, even the loving kindness of our God."

The Apostle assures us that, however appropriate, inspiring and refreshing are the songs of our lips, still more appropriate and still more appreciated of the Lord are our heart-songs, the joy and rejoicing of the new nature--"singing and making melody in our hearts unto the Lord." (Eph. 5:19.) And this joy and singing in the heart, this heart-thankfulness to the giver of all good, necessarily finds expression, not only in Christian carols, but also in all the acts and words of life--all of which constitute the hymn of praise and thanksgiving continually ascending before God from his people.

"My life flows on in endless song,

Above earth's lamentation;

I catch the sweet not far-off hymn

That hails a new creation.

Through all the tumult and the strife

I hear the music ringing;

It finds an echo in my soul;

How can I keep from singing!"

We read, "They sang one to another in praising and giving thanks to the Lord, saying, For he is good, for his mercy endureth forever toward Israel." (*Rev. Ver.*) This is considered by some to be an indication of the Lord's will respecting Christian worship--that it should be done by choirs instead of by the congregation, and that it should be in the nature of solos and choruses. There can be no doubt whatever that selected and trained choirs can render better music than can the general average of Christians. Nor can we doubt that this would be particularly true of the time mentioned in our lesson, when musical and other education was very deficient, and when the most that the majority of people could do was to "make a joyful

* See *Tabernacle Shadows of Better Sacrifices*.

noise unto the Lord." But two things in this connection should be kept in mind:--

(1) That so far as the Christian Church is concerned, the Lord has left her entirely without restrictions in such matters--to praise the Lord with heart and voice, according to her love and zeal and judgment. It is not, therefore, for one to judge another respecting the use of his love, zeal and judgment in offering the Lord worship in songs of praise, whether with instrumental accompaniment or without: it is for each individual and each church to exercise the liberty which the Lord has granted. However, we do urge that all remember that it is not the excellence of our music that will make it acceptable to our Lord. For we may well suppose that the harmonies of the heavenly choirs quite outmeasure the best efforts of earthly choirs, and hence could not hope that the Lord will receive our songs of praise because of their intrinsic merit. Their acceptance at all will be because they are expressions of the heart sentiments; and this being true all who have heart sentiments of thankfulness and gratitude should be encouraged to make "a joyful noise unto the Lord," as acceptable and pleasing to him through the merit of our Redeemer.

"Let all his children sing
Glad songs of praise to God!
The children of the heavenly King
Should tell their joys abroad."

(2) It should be remembered that fleshly Israel was typical, and that their priests and Levites, selected for the offering of sacrifice and for the offering of praise, typified the Church, the "royal priesthood," and household of faith. We are to remember, too, that their songs of praise typified the songs and melodies of *our hearts*. From this standpoint we see that the setting apart of a special choir of Levites for praise would not be in any sense of the word a sanction or command for the selection of trained choirs, separate and distinct from the congregation of the Lord's people: indeed, it would quite contradict the common practice of hiring unbelievers to do church singing. None can offer acceptable praise to God except those who are of the priestly tribe,--"the household of faith."

Amongst those who were present at the laying of the foundation stone at the rebuilding of the Temple were some who probably as small children could dimly recollect the glorious Temple of Solomon, and who now, returning from seventy years' captivity, were eighty or more years old. These wept as they contrasted the glorious things of the past with the small beginnings before them. Doubtless there was a great contrast, and yet quite probably distance and childhood's eyes lent an enchanted glory to their recollection of the former things. But their cries were drowned with the rejoicing of hope, and this was well. So with Christians who have gotten free from Babylon, and who are seeking by the Lord's grace to build their faith again on the old foundation laid by Christ and the apostles at the beginning of this age--they are apt to think backward to the blessings and privileges of the early Church, and to weep and sigh for those by-gone blessings. It is well that we should highly esteem the favors of God manifested in the primitive Church, its simplicity of worship and purity of faith and apostolic privileges, to the intent that these may stand before our minds as ideals in the work of reconstructing our faith and hope and love upon the old foundation; but it would be quite improper for us to give way to weeping at such moments; rather should the necessities and exigencies of our time lead us to energy and the thought of divine favor in our deliverance from Babylon, lead us to rejoice and to sing the new song which the Lord has put into our mouths, even his loving kindness.

"The people of the land" were of mixed nationality, placed as colonists in that portion of the country of Palestine previously occupied by the ten tribes. This colonizing of mixed peoples was in pursuance of the general policy of the Assyrian and Chaldean empires, of removing captives from their native soil to new homes, thus breaking the ties of the fatherland, destroying patriotic feelings, that by these means the sympathies and interests of the people might be the more readily attracted to and united with the one central government at Babylon.

These "people of the land" (subsequently known as Samaritans) were disposed to be friendly to the returned Israelites, and proffered their aid in the building of the Temple, but their assistance was refused, the Israelites realizing that if these "strangers" were permitted to share in the work of constructing the Temple they could with propriety claim a share also in the character of the worship which would be established therein, and they foresaw that it would open the door to laxity in religious matters, and perhaps to the old idolatry, on account of which the Lord had so severely chastised them. Their course in this matter has been freely criticised as "narrow" and ungenerous, by those who have not rightly appreciated the situation. We are to remember that God's covenants were exclusively to the

seed of Abraham, and not to other peoples, who were known as Gentiles.

As an illustration of this exclusiveness, and a proof of its propriety, we note the fact that our Lord did not preach to others than the seed of Abraham, saying to his disciples, "Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not; but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." And of himself he said, "I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel."--Matt. 10:5; 15:24.

It would be well for those of Spiritual Israel who are now returning from captivity in the various provinces of "Babylon the Great" to remember this lesson. They find mixed peoples ready to express more or less of sympathy with them, and to offer more or less of cooperation in the reestablishment of the true worship of God in its primitive simplicity. The natural inclination would be to accept such proffered assistance, and to call every such assistant a "brother," and to accept and use not only the labor but the gold proffered, regardless of the fact that it comes not from true Israelites. Indeed, the general tendency of our time is not only to be willing to accept the money and other aid of worldly people in the Lord's service, but to beg for it, and to scheme to get it by every device conceivable,--fairs, suppers, subscriptions, collections, etc., etc. The tendency in every case must be to bring in a foreign and unsanctified influence, and to do great injury to the true Israelites. This indeed may be said to be one of the chief troubles with nominal Protestantism to-day. Zion is full of "strange children," and their voice and influence predominate in the business affairs of the churches, in the doctrines, etc., etc. The true Israelites in comparison are but as a little flock of sheep amongst many goats and some wolves.

When "the people of the land" found that their money and services were not acceptable, and that they could have neither part nor lot in the construction of the Lord's house, it offended them and made them enemies; and from that time onward they persistently opposed the work of the Israelites. So it will be with Spiritual Israel; ^[2]those who conscientiously live separate from the world in spiritual matters, and recognize as brethren in Christ only those who confess to circumcision of the heart and adoption into God's family, will find themselves opposed by moralists, liberalists and higher critics, as well as by the masses, who hate the light, because it condemns their darkness--doctrinal and otherwise. Nevertheless, this is the only good and safe course to pursue. Better far is it that only true Israelites should be recognized as brethren, and thus the wheat be separated from the tares.

^[3]Some one has well said:--"The Christian in the world is like a ship in the ocean. The ship is safe in the ocean so long as the ocean is not in the ship." One of the great difficulties with Christianity to-day is that it has admitted the strangers, the "people of the land," and recognized them as Christians. It does injury, not only to the Christians, by lowering their standards (for the *average* will be considered the standard), but it also injures the "strangers," by causing many of them to believe themselves thoroughly safe, and needing no conversion, because they are outwardly respectable, and perhaps frequently attendants at public worship. It lowers the standard of doctrine also, because the minister who realizes that at least three-fourths of his congregation would be repelled by the presentation of strong meat of truth, withholds the same, and permits those who need the strong meat, and could appreciate and use it to advantage, to grow weak, to starve. Furthermore, the worldly spirit and the fuller treasury have attracted "strangers" into the professed ministry of the Gospel, many of whom know not the Lord, neither his Word, and who consequently are thoroughly unprepared to feed the true sheep, were they ever so well disposed.

The lesson in connection with the building of the Temple, the Lord's Church, "which temple ye are," is that worldly persons, worldly methods and worldly aid and wisdom are to be rejected. As all the living stones are to be polished, fitted and prepared under the eye and direction of the great master-builder, the Lord, so all the servants, all the ministers of the truth, engaging in this work, are to be, so far as we have to do with the matter, such only as manifest a circumcision of heart, and thus show themselves to be Israelites indeed. Much and serious has been the injury done to the Lord's cause by the selection of workmen whose chief recommendation has been that they had some ability as public speakers, a good address. Rather let us remember that none may engage in this work as true Israelites unless they be in full accord with the Master-builder, and by their ability in rightly dividing the Word of truth show themselves to be workmen that need not to be ashamed.--1 Pet. 2:5,9; 1Cor. 3:17; 2 Tim. 2:15.

[2] Sep. 15 Manna, 2Cor. 6:27

[3] Aug. 3 Manna, Ezra 10:11