

WHO IS WISE AMONG YOU?

"Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you?" inquires the Apostle James (Jas. 3:13); and the question is one which all may consider with profit. Many indeed are endued with considerable knowledge, who display but little wisdom. Knowledge truly is of great importance, but it is only as it develops wisdom – sound judgment and pure and high-toned sentiment. This is the main object of God's revelation of himself to us. And the wisdom that comes thus, through the channel of divine truth, the Apostle describes as, "first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy." – Verse 17.

Such a character is the result of the transforming influence of divine truth. God's revelation is a mirror of his character, in which we see reflected his purity and love and goodness; and as we therein trace the lines of his glorious character the desire grows and strengthens to be more like him whom we thus learn to admire and love. The sincere heart, accepting the divine plan and its gracious provisions of salvation and blessing through Christ, at once begins to fashion itself in conformity with God's character by first putting away sin and then by striving daily to live a life of purity and holiness. With this effort come in the peace of God and the love of God, to rule and take possession of the whole man. And when the heart is thus cleansed and filled with God, the fruits of such an indwelling life-principle become very manifest to all beholders, in gentleness, mercy, goodness, and pure and holy friendship with all who are like-minded.

In contrast with this wisdom which cometh down from above the Apostle mentions another kind, which he describes as earthly, sensual, devilish. It is a wisdom or low cunning which is prompted by a spirit of envy and strife, and is always productive of

"confusion and every evil work." Pride and selfishness are the inspiration of this kind of wisdom, just as in the case of Satan; and therefore let every one who names the name of Christ keep very humble. To harbor such a spirit of malice, of bitter envy and strife, while still professing to have the spirit of truth, the Apostle describes as "lying against the truth." God forbid that it should find place in the hearts of any who have thus far been faithful and have run well.

How carefully we need to guard our hearts against the slightest rising of pride and worldly ambition, and against every root of bitterness which, springing up, might trouble us. There are thousands of occurrences and circumstances in life which are calculated to bring us into bondage to the spirit of the world, and only those who keep a vigilant watch and an ever-prayerful attitude can hope to be kept in this evil day. Temptations and trials seldom give us warning of their approach, and therefore our armor of righteousness must ever be adjusted and securely buckled on.

"Leave no unguarded place,
No weakness of the soul;
Take every virtue, every grace,
And fortify the whole."

Heed carefully the Apostle's instruction – "Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? let him show by honorable conduct his works with meekness of wisdom." It is by our conduct and not by our professions that we are to be judged; and if any man have the true heavenly wisdom which is always coupled with meekness – humility – it will surely manifest itself in a straightforward, manly, honorable course of conduct, dictated by the wisdom which cometh down from above, which is always pure [unselfish], peaceable, gentle, compassionate and sincere.

May the Lord grant to all his loyal sons an abundance of this heavenly wisdom and the rich rewards of grace and peace that

always accompany it. Put away all these – Malice, Envy, Hatred, Selfish-ambitions – and put on those adornments of Christ's spirit – Humility, Gentleness, Generosity, Meekness, Love. "If any man have not the spirit of Christ [in some degree] he is none of his." And he in whom these graces are not being cultivated and increased [R1448 : page 282] will soon lose them and be choked with the selfish and ignoble spirit of the world.

There are some of the children of the world who have cultivated outward gentleness and benevolence for policy's sake, whose hearts, as privately expressed, are full of bitterness, envy and selfishness; and there are some of God's children who naturally are very selfish and mean, but whose changed hearts are fighting against the weaknesses of the flesh, and who afterward repent of selfishness and meanness. But let such press along the line and seek for grace to help in every time of need. Their progress toward the likeness of Christ will gradually manifest itself to them and to others. "If the spirit of Christ dwell in you, he [God] that raised up Christ from the dead [has also the power and] will also quicken [to activity in his service and to his praise, in the present life] your mortal bodies."

Here, then, we have the earthly wisdom which is based upon *selfishness* contrasted with the heavenly wisdom based upon *love and service* to others. Whoever is really wise will choose the heavenly – the end of which, in Christ, is everlasting life.
