

**"LET HIM THAT THINKETH HE STANDETH
TAKE HEED."**

"All these things happened unto them for ensamples [types]: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.

Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall."

– 1 Cor. 10:11,12.

IN THE ten preceding verses, the Apostle has pointed out that, as Israel after the flesh was a type of spiritual Israel, so the various evidences of divine favor toward them were types of the greater favor of God bestowed upon his Church in the Gospel age – spiritual Israel.

As the consecrated people of God are now baptized into Christ, the Mediator of the new Covenant, the appointed leader of the Lord's people, – their wills immersed into his will, their personal identity lost sight of in their identity as members of the body of Christ (beautifully illustrated in symbol in water baptism), so this was typified in the immersion of all the Israelites, when they passed through the Red Sea, with the waters rising on either side as a wall and with the waters of the cloud overhead: they were all thus baptized, buried, unto Moses, in the cloud and in the sea. They all recognized him as the leader upon whom depended their deliverance from Egypt and their finding of the promised land.

So also our spiritual food, the bread which cometh down from heaven – Christ and his word of truth, the gospel of his salvation, were typified in Israel's case by the manna which fell for them daily, and was for a long time their only sustenance. As we require the spiritual food continually, as our daily bread, to give us strength for the journey of life toward the heavenly Kingdom, so fleshly Israel had need of the manna, provided for their strengthening in their way to the typical Kingdom. As the truth and the spirit of the truth must be sought daily by us, if we would enjoy its benefits, and as it is found in small

particles, here a little and there a little, and as it requires searching for and pains-taking labor to gather our daily portion of grace and heavenly food and experience in spiritual things, by searching the Scriptures, etc., so this also was typified in natural Israel's experience. They could not gather a stock of manna for the future. It was their daily bread, daily sought. Nor did they find it in large pieces and without difficulty. On the contrary, those who would be fed must pains-takingly gather up its small pieces, and with diligence. Thus "they did all eat of the same spiritual food" – or rather, they did all eat of the food which had a spiritual significance.

As the Lord's consecrated people now have the refreshment of his grace all along the journey of life, and whenever weary and thirsty may come to the Lord for refreshment, and whenever needing purification, may come to the washing of the water through the Word of him who died for us, – so this spiritual truth was typified to fleshly Israel. When in their journeyings they famished for water and cried unto Moses, and Moses cried unto the Lord for them, relief was granted through the smiting of the rock, which typified the smiting of Christ at the hands of the Law, as our atonement sacrifice, our redemption price. As the grace which flows to us through Christ comes as a result of his being smitten for us, his death on our behalf, so the waters flowed to Israel as a result of the smiting of the typical rock. It was dry before the smiting – the waters gushed forth after the smiting. And not only did they drink of the waters freely at that time, but the waters formed a brook which went with them for a long time in their subsequent journey through the wilderness. Thus they did all drink of the same spiritual drink – of the drink which had a spiritual significance, for they drank of the rock which was typical or had a spiritual significance, the waters of which went with them, and that rock was Christ in type, and that water represented the grace of God in Christ.

Having thus established the identity of fleshly Israel's experiences with the experiences and favors of spiritual Israel, the Apostle is ready to enforce from these a lesson. He would have us note that not only

God's favors were typical, but that Israel's conduct with respect to these favors was typical of the conduct of nominal spiritual Israel in respect to the realities, the antitypes. "With many of them God was not well pleased:" this implies that he will not be well pleased with many in the nominal spiritual Israel. [R2299 : page 134] Again, many of the typical people, "were overthrown in the wilderness:" so the proper inference is that many of nominal spiritual Israel will be overthrown in the wilderness and fail to reach the antitypical Canaan. For "these things were our figures, examples, – to the intent that we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted." The thought seems to be that in their experiences God gave us a lesson, or illustration, of what results would come to us if we received his mercies and favors in an improper manner. They were object lessons in wrongdoing, and God's treatment of the wrongdoers was intended to instruct us in respect to what would happen to us if we, blessed with the antitypical favors, should misuse them, and desire or lust after the former things, the sinful things which we left when we quitted the world (typified by Egypt) to follow Christ (typified by Moses).

The Apostle then itemizes some of the notable mistakes made by typical Israelites, and suggests that the temptations of spiritual Israel are along the same lines, only on a higher plane – that their experiences and temptations were typical of the temptations which we must expect to endure, and which he urges us to overcome.

(1) Idolatry. He points out how Israel was exposed to idolatrous influences and yielded to them, leaving it for us to apply the lesson to ourselves, and to find what idols are most alluring to spiritual Israelites. Alas! we find that idolatry is very common amongst the nominal spiritual Israelites. Idolatry is the inordinate or undue respect, homage, reverence, or devotion paid to any person, system or thing, – aside from the Lord. Judged by this standard, how many are idolaters! Some idolize money, wealth: they are so devoted to it, so enslaved to it, that they can scarcely think of anything else; they bend all their energies to its service, even at the cost of dwarfing their moral and intellectual

powers, and at the cost of health, and sometimes even the loss of name and fame are risked by the devotees of this idol. This is one of the oldest as well as one of the most revered of all the idols of Christendom.

Another idol is Self: reverence paid to this idol is known as selfishness. Its worship has a very ignoble and debasing effect upon its worshipers. It is worshiped under various forms and name – pride, selfish ambition, self-esteem, boastfulness, love of show, tyranny, unreasonable self-will, self-ease regardless of others, gratification of passions, gluttony, drunkenness. After all these things do the Gentiles seek; but true Israelites are supposed to have left or put off all these, when they left Egypt, the world, to become followers of God as dear children, no longer to worship at the shrine of self, but to worship God and to more and more seek and strive after the spirit of his holiness – Love.

Another idol much worshipped is Denominationalism: this form of idolatry had become so popular in nominal spiritual Israel that anyone who does not worship at some of its many shrines is regarded as almost a heathen. One of the principal shrines is Roman Catholicism; another, Greek Catholicism; another, Methodism; another, Pan-Presbyterianism – indeed, there are so many of these shrines that we cannot take time to enumerate them. Suffice it to say that those which do not count their worshippers by millions, count them at least by thousands and hundreds of thousands.

This is one of the most dangerous idolatries of all. Its influence upon many is most insidious, for it has a "form of godliness" – it closely resembles the true worship of deity but is delusive and ensnaring in the extreme. Whoever becomes a fervent devotee at these shrines is apt to bind himself hand and foot, and in doing so often thinks, mistakenly, that he does God service. The true Israelite should awake to the fact that there is but one proper object of devotion – to whom his consecrations should be made, and his every power of service rendered – God only. **[R2300 : page 134]**

(2) He points out that with them the sin of fornication was prevalent and caused many of them to fall – 24,000, as is recorded in Num. 25:1-9. As the food they ate typified something higher, as the water they drank typified something better, as the idolatry they practiced found its parallel in more subtle besetments to Spiritual Israel, so their fornication foreshadowed a fornication on a higher plane, and along more subtle lines. While deprecating this sin in the form in which Israel transgressed, we are glad to believe that it is far from being a common or general sin in Spiritual Israel to-day, even as the lower forms of idolatry, the worshiping of the golden calf, etc., are not common to-day, indeed, never practiced amongst those who profess to be of Spiritual Israel. The temptation before Spiritual Israel, which was illustrated by fornication in fleshly Israel, is of a more insidious kind, and we are frequently warned against it, in the book of Revelation. (See Rev. 2:21; 14:8; 17:2,4,5; 18:3; 19:2.) The use of the word in these cases cited seems to imply as its higher meaning or symbolical significance any illicit fellowship with the world, on the part of those who have betrothed themselves to be God's consecrated people: in other words, fellowship in spirit with those who have not the spirit of the Lord, but the spirit of the world. To how large an extent is this improper course, this sinful fellowship, indulged in by the professed Church of Christ! Are not the worldly not only invited but almost pressed into foremost positions in the nominal Church, while those who are **[R2300 : page 135]** faithful to the Lord and who stand aloof from and rebuke worldly aims and methods, are disesteemed as being fanatical and peculiar people? How many will *fall* through this cause!

(3) "Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted [their leader Moses], and were destroyed of serpents." The reference here evidently is to Num. 21:4-9, which relates how the Israelites rebelled against God's leading at the hand of Moses, and relented that they had started in the wilderness journey for Canaan, and spoke against the manna – desiring the leeks, onions and fleshpots of Egypt, and in consequence were bitten by fiery serpents, so that many of them

died. This would seem to represent a tendency or temptation to Spiritual Israelites to lose their appreciation for spiritual things, for the bread of divine truth, and a hungering instead after the pleasures, ambitions, etc., of the world; a rebellion against the providential leadings of the Lord, which are intended not only to bring them ultimately to Canaan, but meanwhile to discipline and fit them and prepare them to enjoy its blessings everlastingly. Such an evil condition, such a yielding to worldly appetites and desires on the part of any, will surely expose them to the bite of the great serpent of sin, whose poison will effectually destroy in them the spiritual life. Any who have already been bitten by such worldly ambitions and desires, are by this lesson taught to look away speedily from themselves to the Crucified One, if they would have life – if they would recover from the bite of the serpent.

As they "*look*" at him who was made a sin offering for us, him who knew no sin of his own, and behold how he who was rich for our sakes became poor, and how he left honor and riches of glory to become our deliverer and to bring us to the heavenly Canaan, they will have such a lesson in humility, and submission to divine providence, and in waiting for the exaltation and glory which God hath in reservation for them that love him, that they will recover from the bite of the serpent. Nevertheless, many in Spiritual Israel have been thus bitten who never recover, because they keep looking upon the serpents and keep under the influence of the evil, instead of looking away to him who is the author and by and by will be the finisher of our faith.

(4) "Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured and were destroyed of the destroyer." The reference here seems to be to the account given in Num. 16 of a conspiracy on the part of certain leaders of the people, two hundred fifty, "famous in the congregation," who resented the leadership of Moses and declared themselves equally competent, and better qualified, to do the work of leading Israel and ministering to them in holy things. The result of this conspiracy was (1) that the conspirators were destroyed (vss. 28-35), and (2) that

many of the people of Israel, being in sympathy with the conspirators, were offended and blamed Moses for having caused the death of the conspirators; in consequence of which the Lord visited upon them the plague; they were "destroyed of the destroyer," and nearly 15,000 perished (vss. 41-49). The lesson of this example, written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the age have come, seems to be (1) that we are to expect *leadings of divine providence* in connection with the journey of Spiritual Israel. We are not to regard the matter of the Christian progress of the past eighteen centuries as being merely of human leadership, nor to think, therefore, that human leaders could today take hold of Israel's affairs and right matters and bring in the Millennium, as the higher critics, social reformers and religious politicians of our day propose to do. The Lord, the antitype of Moses, is still at the helm, still guiding; nor will he permit the matter to be taken out of his hands. Altho Canaan has not been reached as yet, and altho the journey has been a long and tedious one, with numerous trials and besetments, nevertheless, it has been accomplishing what God designed in the way of valuable lessons and experiences which his people could not do without, and yet be prepared for the inheritance promised. We are to draw from this ensample, also, the lesson that the Lord is at the helm in respect to the very smallest affairs which affect his Zion, that "he setteth up and he pulleth down," and that whosoever attempts to place himself in position in the Church, is violating the divine arrangement, as it is written, "Now God hath set the various members of the body as it hath pleased him." Whosoever, therefore, shall conspire in any manner to overthrow the divine arrangement, will be summarily dealt with by the antitypical Moses. Moreover, all who sympathize with those whom the Lord shall overthrow will be in danger also of dying the second death, because of being murmurers against the Lord and lacking of sympathy with his arrangements or providences.

Based upon these examples from the past, the Apostle urges us, the Gospel Church, each individual Israelite, to be on guard lest we should fall from the Lord's favor and fail to enter Canaan, after the

manner of the examples herein set before us, and which the Lord provided for this very reason. It is the common thought, especially with those who are in most danger, that they cannot fall, that they are secure, just as some of the transgressors, herein mentioned, boasted that they were God's holy people, saying, "All the congregation are holy, every one of them, and the Lord is among them." (Num. 16:3). Boastfulness is not a sign of piety, but rather the reverse. Meekness [R2300 : page 136] and humility, a realization of our own littleness and of the Lord's greatness, is the most favorable condition for those who would keep faithfully on the pilgrim way and reach the Canaan of promise. Thus the Apostle stated it respecting himself, saying, "When I am weak, then I am strong." It is when we realize our own weakness that we realize also our dependence upon the Lord and are willing to be guided of him in his way. Hence, the Apostle in this lesson specially exhorts that those who feel that they are standing, who feel strong, who feel that they are in no danger, shall take special heed to the examples hereinbefore presented, lest they fall.
