

LOVE OF GOD IN MOUTH AND HEART.

– DEUT. 11:20. – SEPTEMBER 14. –

IN HIS VALEDICTORY Moses proceeded to rehearse to Israel the Law of the Lord in full, reciting the blessings that would come from obedience to this Law, and the curses which would surely follow a disobedient course. He even proceeded to prophesy, and in the same chapter, in verses preceding our lesson, he points out that Israel would experience both the blessings and the curses, and that as a result they would ultimately be scattered throughout the earth, but that God, in infinite mercy, would remember them and finally bring them back to himself, and circumcise their hearts, a type of which circumcision they already had in the flesh. – Compare Rom. 11:25-30.

Here the words of our lesson come in and seem to apply specially to Israel restored under the new conditions of grace. Even the most faithful under the Law were obliged continually to say, "O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from this death-condemnation" in which I am, under this Law? – Behold the Law of God is just and good and right, and I approve the same with my heart, but am unable to comply with its conditions because of weakness, – death working in my mortal body! The time of Israel's return to divine favor at the close of the Gospel age is the period mentioned by the Lord through the Prophet Jeremiah; saying, "After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people; and they shall teach no more every man his neighbor and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord, for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord, for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more." – Jer. 31:33,34.

Under that blessed arrangement of the New Covenant, established in the hands of the greater Mediator, the Christ, the great Prophet, the

desires and intentions of the heart, accompanied with the best endeavors of the flesh, will be accepted, even tho the latter be imperfect for a time, and require the blessed influences of the "times of restitution" to bring them to perfection. Moses' prophecy looks down to this time, grasps the new situation, sees Israel turned to the Lord with new hearts, enabled to keep his Law perfectly; it will not be too difficult for them, but new and plain and possible.

That this is the proper thought to be attached to this prophecy of Moses, is shown by the Apostle Paul. (Rom. 10:4-10.) He applies these words to the Church during this Gospel age, as in contrast to the conditions of the Jewish age, which had just closed. The Gospel Church enters into the privileges and opportunities of the New Covenant now, in advance of Israel and the world in general. It is the privilege of the spiritual Israelite now, beforehand, by the exercise of faith to realize in himself acceptance with God, justification by faith; to realize further that the merit of Christ covering all his imperfections, which are not of the heart, continues him in this justified relationship with God, notwithstanding the imperfections of his flesh and of his works – for we "are not under the Law but under grace." To those who can now exercise the faith, all the blessings that will come to the world in the Millennial age are possible – and more. To such these greater blessings are not hidden, but may be seen with the eye of faith. To such they are not far off – pertaining to another age – but are possibilities of the present time, through the **[R3071 : page 270]** operation of faith. Such, having the ear of faith, are not saying, We cannot know the mind of the Lord, for he is afar off in heaven; who shall bring us a clear, definite statement of his will? These already have this declaration of the divine will in the person of Christ, in his teachings, personally and through the apostles. Neither will such say, Christ indeed has come, has died, has gone into the sleep of death; who shall now bring him forth that he may instruct us? For with the same eye and ear of faith they both hear and see that he is no longer dead, but is risen, glorified, empowered of the Father, and that he ever lives

to be the blesser and High-priest for all those who approach the Father through him.

What then is this message which can thus be heard with the ear and recognized by the eye of faith? The prophet as well as the Apostle declares that it is possible for us to have this salvation, an ever-present power within us, in our hearts and in our mouths. The Apostle declares that this which Moses prophesied is the Gospel which he preached, which we have received; viz., the confession of the Lord with our mouths and faith in him in our hearts.

It is noteworthy that both the Prophet Moses and the Apostle Paul state the matter in the same manner; first, the confession with the mouth; second, the belief in the heart. This form of statement is probably not of accident, either. The confession with the mouth is the first outward evidence given of a faith in the heart; and indeed it seems to be a part of the divine arrangement that all confession of the truth is necessary to a full appreciation of it. True, we cannot properly confess what we do not believe; hence a belief must have precedence to a confession; but the confession is necessary to the expanding, enlarging and completing of faith in the heart. Who ever thinks that the light he has received in his heart can be maintained without a public confession of it is deceived, and hence it is declared, "With the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." The righteousness started by faith cannot go on and reach the completion which will mean eternal salvation, **[R3072 : page 270]** unless it be accompanied by acts of faith, most prominent of which is the confession of the lips.

We would like to impress this feature of the divine truth upon all of the Lord's dear people everywhere; realizing that many are weak, puny, sickly, in their spiritual health, because of their failure to follow the Lord's direction – to declare courageously – *and as wisely and lovingly as possible* – what great things the Lord hath done for our souls. It is not sufficient that we confess the first blessing received, tho

that is necessary before we can receive additional blessing. But each blessing as received should be promptly confessed, to the praise of him who has called us out of darkness into his marvelous light. This is the law of spiritual development. This is the command to the spiritual Israelite. If he is not obedient, that which was nigh, in his heart and in his mouth, will ere long become far off to him; – the eye of his understanding will cease to see clearly; the ear of faith will cease to distinguish plainly and he will gradually go further and further away from the glorious privileges which are ours, as new creatures in Christ under the New Covenant.

LIFE AND GOOD; DEATH AND EVIL.

To Spiritual Israelites, who have been begotten of the spirit, adopted into the family of sons of God, and made prospective joint-heirs with Jesus Christ their Lord, the message is the same that it will be during the Millennial age to the world of mankind; viz., choose life or death. Thank God we have gotten free from that horrible doctrine of Moloch which, perverting the plain Word of God, would declare to us that God has set before us eternal blessing or eternal torment! Not so; his Word is most explicit; the rewards are life or death. Thus our Lord positively announced, "He that hath the Son hath life; he that hath not the Son shall not see life" – and those not seeing life, of course could not experience eternal torment. Nevertheless, this proposition of life or death is a very serious one; much more potent in its influence than any other, because we can believe it; because we can see its reasonableness. How reasonable it is that God should declare to his spiritual Israel of this Gospel age that if, after they come to know him, taste of his good Word, experience the power of the age to come; after they have had the eyes of their understanding opened; after they have heard, seen, appreciated, the divine plan – if after all this they do not love the Lord their God, and trust him in their hearts, and sufficiently, too, to confess him with their mouths, they are unworthy of eternal blessing which he has to give – their lack of appreciation of divine mercy means their unworthiness of life!

How reasonable, too, is this declaration as respects the world of mankind during the Millennial age! Life and death will be the alternatives set before them also. The great Prophet, the Christ, Head and body, as representative of the Father and of his Law, will make matters very clear, very plain, to all those who, when they know the Lord's goodness, have any desire or appreciation thereof. But they too must learn to acknowledge the Lord in their lives, in their hearts, and to confess him with their mouths, else they will be unworthy of the future life. The difference between the two classes, – we of the Gospel age, they of the Millennial age, – will not be as respects the question of life and death. The penalty in either case will be Second Death; the reward in either case will be eternal life. The difference in the reward will be that the faithful overcomers of spiritual Israel will be granted joint-heirship with their Lord on a higher plane of life, sharing with him his glory, honor, immortality; while the faithful of the world, tho blessed in lower degree with a restoration of human perfection and life, will, nevertheless, be blessed fully and completely up to their very highest ability to appreciate and desire.

The essence of this command, now applicable to the Gospel Church, by and by to be applicable to restored Israel and all who, under the favorable conditions **[R3072 : page 271]** of that Millennial age, will be accepted as the children of Abraham, is the Law of Love. "I command thee this day to observe the Law of the Lord thy God, to walk in his ways and keep his statutes, and his commandments and his judgements." It is the correct thought that love to God must be from the heart, – voluntary, in order to be of the kind which he desires and will appreciate. "He seeketh such to worship Him as worship Him in spirit and in truth." Why, then, does Moses say, "I command you"? Why does the Lord command love, through the Prophet, since a commanded love would not come up to the standard of voluntary love?

We answer that the Lord sets before us the standard of love necessary to be attained if we would enjoy the blessings which he purposes to give. He commands, in the sense of laying before us

plainly and distinctly His only terms for life eternal. As previously pointed out, love is a matter of development and begins with a kind of duty love, which gradually growing out as we grow in grace and in knowledge, expands into gratitude, then into admiration, and finally ridding itself of all dross and selfishness, becomes pure and fervent love. The Lord is pleased if in our hearts he sees this endeavor to approach in truth the way of life which he has opened through the death of his Son. He is pleased to note our expansion and development under the light of his favor. He is pleased to grant us the covering of the Lord Jesus' merit, and to reckon to us perfection, and to adopt us from the very beginning of our love and consecration; and he will be pleased when we have finished our course, when we have attained the mark, when we have come up to the standard he has set – perfect love – to grant us the blessing of life eternal, which He cannot grant upon any other condition.

These things, really intended for spiritual Israelites, were spoken to natural Israel, as were all the prophecies of the Old Testament. Hearing, Israel heard but did not understand, as now it is our privilege to understand, because we are of the "house of sons," adopted and begotten of the spirit; whereas they were of the "house of servants," for "Moses verily, as a servant, was faithful over all his house; but Christ as a son, over his own house, whose house are we, if we hold fast the beginning of our confidence firm unto the end." To the extent that any natural Israelite comprehended even in part this Law of Love, and endeavored to grasp it, in that proportion he was blessed, notwithstanding the fact that he was under the Law and bound by the Law, and thus a servant and unable to become a Son. We see noble illustrations of these faithful ones of the past, in Moses himself, Joshua, Caleb, Samuel, David, and all the prophets, whose faithfulness the Apostle records, as having been pleasing to God, and who shall have corresponding rewards, altho they will not have the reward that is promised to the Church – "they without us shall not be made perfect." – Heb. 11:39,40.

In the closing words of this grand oration, the Prophet cautioned his brethren again concerning any disposition to leave the Lord and accept instead other gods. His words are specially applicable to spiritual Israelites, and we do well to give them earnest heed. We are already by faith in this blessed condition; we have heard the words of eternal life. We already have entered the Canaan-rest condition by faith in our Lord. We, therefore, are in danger from the besetments of our own flesh and from the besetments of sin abounding and from the Adversary – in danger of making other gods, and turning our hearts away from the proper center of their affections, either to the god of wealth or the god of fame or the lesser gods of the family circle and home, or to the most ignoble of all, self. We are not to be drawn away by any of these from our loyalty to God, nor to render worship or service in any sense to any of these. To do so would mean to turn away from the hopes and joys and blessings now ours. To resist these temptations, and to abide in the Lord's favor, on the other hand, will mean to continue in the joys and blessings and rest of our present state of grace. Thus the Lord sets before us the blessings and the curses, the advantages and the disadvantages, the right course and the wrong course, life and death.

Our choosing of life and blessing and righteousness and God are not merely the choice of a moment; the daily trials and testings of life prove whom we love and whom we serve. Let us examine our hearts and our daily course of life, and note for what we are spending life's energies, what fills our affections, what "satisfies our longings as nothing else could do." To the extent that we find the Lord the center of our lives, our hopes, our aims, and his will the ruling law in every affair of life, in that same proportion we find joy and peace and blessing and growth spiritually. If we thus, under present conditions and trials and oppositions of the world, the flesh and the devil, separate from them and cleave to the Lord, we are choosing the better part, the part of blessing, choosing life, and we shall live and shall inherit the goodly land of promise, the Millennial Canaan, and there be joint-participators with our Master in bringing God's promised blessing to

the world, that they also may hear and know and obey his voice, and cleave to him and thus have life, and inherit the other, the earthly, features of the Abrahamic blessing.

Our Golden Text is quite appropriate to this lesson. It is in vain that we say we love the Lord if we do not seek to do those things pleasing in his sight. He is not seeking those who merely give outward allegiance, but those who at heart love him and his righteous arrangements. He is satisfied, indeed, to accept us at the beginning, largely upon our professions of faith and devotion, under the robe of Christ's righteousness, knowing that in our imperfect development **[R3073 : page 271]** we could not love perfectly; but he expects us to grow in grace, knowledge and love, and only by so doing can we abide in his love, and only by abiding in his love can we hope to attain the glorious things which he has in reservation only for those who love him.

=====