

"THE LORD KNOWETH THEM THAT ARE HIS"

– 2 TIMOTHY 2:19. – MARCH 31. –

THIS lesson is intended as a review for the quarter – from the Creation to Jacob. The Golden Text which we have chosen as the caption gives the key-thought of this lesson, namely, that the Bible, while incidentally dealing with many things that appertain to the earth and its people, mainly has reference to those who manifest a reverence for the Lord and to whom he correspondingly manifests his favor in various ways in various ages, cooperating with them for their present joy and their everlasting welfare.

The Scriptures everywhere represent the Almighty Creator as benevolent, generous, kind toward his creatures, desiring their welfare, and, where punishment is necessary, inflicting it merely with a view to their recovery out of wrong conditions or to make examples for others who may thus be deterred from wrong doing. True, the Scriptures do also present Satan and the forces of evil, but always picture them to us as adversaries of the Almighty and of all who are good and in harmony with righteousness. Thus the Bible is in many respects a history of the conflict between good and evil, and it faithfully shows us, as an artificial record would not, that the general tendency of our race is sinward – that the smaller proportion escape the delusions of the Adversary, develop a reverential love for the Creator, and manifest loyalty and obedience. However, the Scriptures are very explicit in their assurances that it shall not always be thus: that the time for the triumph of right over wrong, of God over Satan, is arranged for, its time fixed, and its accomplishment certain. Everywhere also they point us to the fact that the reign of righteousness could never be accomplished without divine assistance – that our race is so impaired and weak through the fall that perfection is a matter of

impossibility on our part, and hence that our help cometh from the Lord.

It was this promise of a coming blessing that worked so marvellously in the hearts of the patriarchs, fixed their minds upon the Lord and separated them from the ways of [R3964 : page 93] evil. And it is the same gracious promise which, in proportion to our faith in it, helps us of today as it helped the patriarchs of old. "According to thy faith be it unto you," is still God's rule, and those who have much faith and loyalty of heart to the Lord are sure to be blessed of him, for "the Lord knoweth them that are his." Moreover, it is the high reward which God has promised to these his faithful ones that constitutes a large proportion of the incentive which strengthens us in our battle with the world, the flesh and the Adversary. It was so with the patriarchs and so it is with us of this Gospel age.

"AS THE HEAVENS ARE HIGHER THAN THE EARTH"

It is when we get the grand sweep of the divine plan that we can see God's ultimate purpose of vanquishing sin and blessing all the families of the earth with the knowledge of his goodness and with a favorable opportunity for reformation – when we come to see that the election of the Jewish age and also of this Gospel age are but means to that grand end of blessing the world. Then we begin to discern how high are God's ways above man's ways and God's plans above man's schemes, and to discern the heights and depths and lengths and breadths of God's love and provision for the blessing of the world. And proportionately as we look upon this glorious picture we are strengthened by his might in the inner man, and lifted out of our narrowness and selfishness, and more and more constituted images of God's dear Son, and thus also images of the heavenly Father. O, then, that we might each and all be of those who are known of the Lord as the "very elect" – of

those whom he will use in the present time in connection with his present work of electing the little flock, and will be used by and by in his great work of blessing all the families of the earth. What trials and difficulties we might well endure with such a prospect!

If from five to twenty years are counted a reasonable portion for the education of children for the duties of a life of half a century, how much education would be reasonably appropriate for an eternal life? Nay, more, how much of an education would be necessary for the kings and priests who will be the teachers and judges of the world of mankind to develop them for eternal life? We are lost in amazement of thought, and wonder how any can be developed in the brief space at our disposal. How valuable, then, is every moment, every day, as it sweeps past, for the development of this character which our Lord seeks for, the learning of the lessons so necessary to our present joy and our everlasting usefulness in the Master's service. Let us heed the Apostle's exhortation to lay aside every weight and every besetting sin and to run with patience the race set before us in the Gospel, looking unto Jesus, the Author of our faith, until he shall become the Finisher of it.
