

QUARTERLY REVIEW

- *SEPTEMBER 29.* -

Golden Text: – "The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and plenteous in mercy." – Psalm 103:8.

BEFORE starting the studies of a new quarter we are urged to take a glance back over what we have seen during the present one. It discloses an interesting panorama and a profitable one. Israel's history therein depicted is in sharp contrast with that of any other nation of earth. How consistent with the facts is the Scriptural declaration concerning Israel, "You only have I known of all the families of the earth." (Amos 3:2.) God, of course, knew of the other nations, and in a general way caused his sun to shine upon the just and the unjust, the evil and the good. He has supervised the affairs of the nations to the extent of hindering conditions which would be inimical to his gracious plans for the ultimate blessing of all the families of the earth; but, as declared, he revealed himself to and was in active cooperation with the nation of Israel alone, the seed of Abraham, up to the time that they were cast off, when they rejected Messiah. Since then, as we have seen, the divine care, blessing, promises, revelations, etc., have been turned to Spiritual Israel – the Spiritual Seed of Abraham, Christ and the Church, the new nation, the Royal Priesthood, the Holy People.

We get the most good from the experiences of fleshly Israel by seeing through them as types, figures, illustrations, the Lord's providences toward Spiritual Israel. Thus Israel's deliverance from Egyptian bondage corresponds to our deliverance from the bondage of sin, condemnation and death. Their deliverer, Moses, corresponds to our deliverer, Jesus. Their trial and testing at the Red Sea correspond to the test of our full consecration to the Lord at the beginning of our journey – the entrance upon the

narrow way. The springs and oases of their desert journey to Sinai correspond well with the times of refreshing of a spiritual kind granted to us in the midst of our trying experiences, resulting from our following our Leader and finding as a consequence the world against us. Their coming to Sinai corresponds in some measure with our growth in knowledge and our greater responsibility therefor, and our fuller realization of the greatness of our God and the responsibilities of the relationship to him into which we have entered. Their daily portion of manna, God's supply, but painstakingly received, corresponds well to our spiritual sustenance received of the Lord from his storehouse, the Bible. Although the supply is sufficient, time and patient perseverance are requisite for securing it, for gathering it. The fact that their manna came every day, and in the proportion necessary, well illustrates the fact that our spiritual food must be partaken of daily, must be gathered daily – "meat in due season."

The short journey to Kadesh-Barnea, from whence spies went forth, indicates the short time which should elapse with us before we should enter into the riches of God's favor by faith. The viewing of the land enjoyed by Caleb and Joshua represents well the joyful experiences of those who fully trust in the Lord and fully [R4056 : page 270] consecrate to him and are already able even on this side the veil to enter into the joys of the Lord by faith. The evil report of the other spies, and the unwillingness of the Israelites to go forward in faith to possess the land, represent well the condition of the majority of the Lord's people – they cannot enjoy because they cannot believe, because they have not sufficient faith in the power of God and in the certainty of his promises.

MERCIFUL AND GRACIOUS, SLOW TO ANGER

Our Golden Text reminds us that the Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and plenteous in mercy, and we see this

well illustrated in the case of fleshly Israel in the wilderness experiences, in the history of the Lord's people of this Gospel Age, nominal spiritual Israel, and also in the cases of the faithful ones. Can we not all realize how patient and merciful the Lord has been to us in our various experiences in life? Can we not see how he would have been fully justified in canceling our Covenant long ago, and that only of his mercy and love have we been permitted to come thus far on the way toward the heavenly Kingdom? Surely a realization of these things should make us both humble and trustful. Moreover the Lord informs us that he has a still further requirement, namely, that if we would appreciate his greatness and mercy through Christ in our own cases we shall exercise similarly mercy and forbearance toward others who may transgress against us. Indeed, so earnest is the Lord in impressing this matter upon us that he positively declares that none of us can maintain relationship with him except as he shall develop this spirit, this character, in relationship to his brethren and fellow-servants. How generous, how considerate, how moderate, how forgiving, all this should lead us to be in our dealings with the brethren, especially with those who have in any measure wounded or injured us or our interests.

Finally, let us remember Moses on Mount Nebo looking across Jordan into the promised land – and preparing for his burial. Let us more and more realize that this should be our attitude; that as the Body of Christ in the flesh we are soon to die, and that beyond the veil we will be New Creatures. Let us remember that the mountain-top of Christian experience should now be our portion, and that from thence the clear eye of faith should be able distinctly to discern the outlines of the glorious inheritance which the Lord hath in reservation for them that love him, the possession of which we are hoping so soon to share.
