

PROPER AND IMPROPER JEALOUSY

"Jealousy is cruel as the grave; the coals thereof are coals of fire, which hath a most vehement flame." – Song of Sol. 8:6.

JEALOUSY of another is always an evil quality; as the text states, it is "cruel as sheol," which engulfs all mankind; it is unreasoning and insatiable. One has said of it, "Jealousy is really – whether so recognized or not – a thirst for blood, life; at any moment, when reason is a little weaker than usual, jealousy is ready to kill the thing it hates or the thing it loves." It signifies either apprehension of being displaced in the affections of another, or of being outdone by a rival in matters of favor or popularity with others.

The jealousy mentioned in our text is the most vicious kind of cruelty, committed in the name of love, or through envy; it is one of the great foes which confront every Christian and is closely allied to hatred, malice, envy, strife, and should be slain on sight as an enemy of God and man, and of every good principle; and to the extent that its presence has defiled the heart even for a moment, a cleansing by the spirit of holiness and love should be invoked. It is not only a cruel monster of itself, but its poisonous fangs are almost certain to inflict pain and trouble upon others. The mind which is once poisoned with jealousy so rapidly brings everything within its environment to its own color and character that it is with great difficulty that it can be entirely cleansed from it.

"I, THE LORD THY GOD, AM A JEALOUS GOD"

Nevertheless, love, wisdom, hatred, jealousy, are attributed to God and should all be in us. We read, "I, the Lord thy God, am a jealous God." If man could have his hatred and his jealousies along the same lines as God, it would be all right. We, as God does, should hate sin, but not the sinner. God's jealousy is just and is sure to bring to the sinner a just punishment. He tells us that when we have other

gods, we must consider *him* jealous; but the impropriety of jealousy is when it leads to bitterness and other like qualities to which the fallen human mind is subject and liable. When the Lord announces himself as a jealous God, he means us to understand that he wants all of our affections, all of our confidence, our entire trust. He wants that we should be so fully in accord with him that his will shall be supreme in all the affairs of life.

This is not to be considered selfishness on the part of the Almighty; because this, under his overruling providences, means to his creatures the largest amount of happiness, the largest amount of success in the duties and affairs of the present life, and the fullest preparation for the blessings which God has prepared for, and promised to, those who love him.

"I AM JEALOUS OVER YOU WITH A GODLY JEALOUSY"

When St. Paul wrote, "I am jealous over you with a godly jealousy" (2 Cor. 11:2), we cannot understand that he was actuated by a mean jealousy, but that he was jealous *for*, or in the interest of, the *Corinthians*; he was jealous also for the things that were right and that they should be in accord with them. His jealousy, therefore, was an earnest, anxious solicitude and vigilant watchfulness, a godly jealousy for the best interests of the Lord's precious Truth. This, of course, is a jealousy such as we all should feel in the Church. If we see a condition such as that to which the Apostle refers, a departure from the simplicity and purity which is in Christ, we should feel, "This is all wrong," and should do all in our power and in reason to correct this difficulty. So, if we see anything in one member of the Church that would be likely to cast a reflection upon the Lord's cause, we should feel it proper to put forth efforts to correct that one, lest harm be done.

When we have that jealousy in the Lord's cause, it is different from a jealousy in our own interest. Very few get too jealous in the Lord's cause; however, it would be well, even in his cause, to scrutinize our words, deeds, etc., properly; and while we should be

very zealous, very jealous in the Lord's cause, yet we must be very sure that it is not a private matter; and should consider whether or not we are "busybodies." Then, too, we should consider whether it may be a proper thing for the elders to deal with, and whether or not it would be *our* duty to go to the *elders*. We should all have a great deal of jealousy for the Lord's cause and the Lord's work, but be very careful that it is not the bitter kind mentioned in the text; in other words, we should be very sure that it is not jealousy *of* another, but jealousy *for* another, for his interests and best welfare.

