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COURAGEOUS DEALING – PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE

**"Deal courageously, and the Lord will be with the good."
– 2 Chron. 19:11.**

HERE is a Divine oversight of the affairs of those who serve God recognized here, and a Divine blessing may be expected eventually upon all who deal justly. All heathen religions, as well as the Christian religion – the religion of the Bible – incline to lead the devotee to expect Divine blessing. But no other religion sets forth, as does the Bible, a just God. No other religions are founded on the principle of Justice. This is one reason why the Bible has had potent influence for liberty. Wherever it has gone, it has been "Liberty enlightening the world."

There is no partiality with the Creator – no class distinction with Him – neither high nor low, rich nor poor, noble nor peasant. It is for this reason that when the teachings of the Lord were before the Israelites they were a liberty-loving people. In proportion as they fell into idolatry, they lost this spirit.

BIBLE BRINGS SPIRIT OF LIBERTY

With the spirit of liberty, of course, will go the spirit of heroism. Therefore the Bible is the source of the valiant qualities of the early Church in their withstanding persecution. Later on, when human traditions and heathen philosophies were heeded instead of the writings of Jesus and the Apostles and Prophets, the spirit of subjection, the spirit of slavery, the spirit of fear, the spirit of ignorance, proportionately prevailed, and brought on the Dark Ages. With the blessed influence [R5414 : page 71] which comes from the Word of God, we see, since the time of the Reformation, the spirit of liberty more manifest. Wherever the Bible has gone,

the spirit of liberty has gone. Wherever the Bible has not gone, the spirit of liberty has not prevailed.

Witness, too, the so-called Christian countries where the Bible has been ignored – Russia, Spain, Portugal and large districts of France, Poland, etc. Wherever the Bible is, liberty is more and more manifest. Even where the people do not recognize the Bible, the spirit of its teachings has had its effect. There is something of a realization that all are of one flesh and blood, one common brotherhood. God created of one blood all people that dwell upon the face of the whole earth. (Acts 17:26.) There are, of course, advantages in the way of birth, education, etc. Various circumstances affect conditions. But all mankind are responsible to the Creator, who is the great Judge over all. He is to be looked to as the One who will give rewards and punishments.

SPECIAL DEALINGS UNDER LAW COVENANT

Our text gives the words of the great king of Judah who became a reformer. He found that various degrees of injustice had crept into the customs of the people under the previous kings. In appointing officers and judges, King Jehoshaphat exhorted them to give their opinion according to the principles of justice. He said, "Deal courageously, and the Lord will be with the good." The Lord would bless those who would be faithful. The Lord would be with the good work that they would do, if they would do it faithfully.

We are to remember that there was a special arrangement [**R5414 : page 72**] existing between God and the people of Israel. Under that arrangement the Lord was to bless them in proportion as they were loyal to Him and to the principles of His Government. We are not, therefore, to apply these words indiscriminately to other nations, if some in other nations had attempted some kind of reform. God was not undertaking to deal with other nations at that time. He was letting them get a general lesson under their own supervision.

TEXT NOT APPLICABLE TO NATIONS TODAY

God intervened only where it would be injurious to allow certain peoples to carry their evil course any further; as, for instance, in the case of the Ninevites, the Sodomites, and the Amalekites. We could not say that we could apply this text today; and that if some good people were in public office and should deal courageously and put down all the wrong and uplift the right, God would give them success in the work. God is not dealing with the nations at all.

His whole dealing at this time is with the Church. The world today is still doing as it has always done, seeing what it can do for itself. In all probability these reformers today who would deal courageously would bring upon themselves great persecution if they should attempt to interfere with many of the entrenched vices. We have an example of this in New York City at the present time. Entrenched vice is hard to handle. Occasionally the world produces men who handle such things in a noble way. There are noble men inside and outside the Church. But we cannot say that the Lord would be with all of them.

It is a mistake to say that the present governments are under the grace of God. The Bible says that the governments of this time are under the influence of the Prince of this world, and that he has the upper hand at the present time. But when Messiah takes His great power and reigns, then Satan will be bound. Then all the evil influences will be brought under the control of the Messianic Kingdom. From that time onward, the saints will deal courageously in Messiah's Millennial Kingdom, and shall reign for the purpose of putting down sin, until eventually Christ shall have accomplished the work of causing God's will to be done on earth, even as it is done in Heaven.

CHURCH TO JUDGE COURAGEOUSLY IN NEXT AGE

The point we notice, then, is that our text was applicable to the Jews, because they were a *typical* people of God. The king of Israel made use of these words to certain ones whom he appointed judges in his day. The Church is now being prepared for the work of judging in the Kingdom. The Lord distinctly tells us that we are not to judge before the time. In the Kingdom we shall judge. Then it will be our business to judge. Then we shall be required to render righteous and courageous judgment, in full accord with the Lord's instructions.

As the Apostle Paul says, "Know ye not that the saints shall judge the world?" (1 Cor. 6:2.) We *do* know it. Our experiences now are fitting us to judge the world later, that we may do it successfully, courageously, lifting up all mankind who *will* to the glorious standard of perfection. All the evil doers shall be cut off. Then every knee will bow and every tongue will confess, to the glory of the Father and of the Son.

CHURCH NOW JUDGES ALONG CERTAIN LINES

The Scriptures instruct us that now the Church should judge its members along certain lines. We are not to judge one another's *hearts*. On the contrary, we are to take one another's word for their heart condition. But we are to judge one another's *conduct*. If one should live immorally, it would be the duty of the Church to deal with him according to the immorality of his conduct. The Apostle asks, Why should you go to law with the brethren before unbelievers? If you are unprepared to judge yourselves in small matters, how would you ever be prepared to judge in great matters?

In our judging, we are to remember the lines along which the Lord would have us judge. The Lord will be with the good, we may be sure of that fact. But we are to deal kindly, affectionately. "Be

kindly affectioned one toward another, with brotherly love." In dealing with one another, in proportion as we lay down hard, inflexible lines of judgment, in that proportion we would be fixing the gauge of the Lord's judgment with us. "For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged." With what allowance we mete out to others, the Lord will judge us. We are to be sympathetic with others, and to remember that all need mercy and forgiveness, even as we hope for these for ourselves.

Whoever has a duty to perform, let him not fear but be courageous; and if doing unpleasant tasks which are necessary, let us perform them in a kindly manner, both justly and lovingly. Let us not fear man, but rather fear the Lord, and be intent on pleasing Him.

