

February 22

Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have. Hebrews 13:5

SELFISH prayers are too expensive. Some have gained wealth and lost the truth and its service; some have gained health,

R4502 "Murmurers and complainers in typical Israel were not permitted to enter into Canaan's blessings (1 Cor. 10:10)."

R4200 "THE SIN OF INGRATITUDE... *Golden Text:--"Only fear the Lord, and serve him in truth with all your heart; for consider how great things he hath done for you."*...

Even amongst the Lord's people the grateful seem to be comparatively few... Who shall say that the grace of God would not have a transforming influence on their hearts, so that however ungrateful they might be by nature, they would be so changed by grace that gratitude would be one of the chief elements of their disposition?

We believe that this is true; and that the Lord's people may in considerable degree measure their spiritual growth and development in this manner. If they find in themselves a spirit of murmuring and complaining against the Lord, it is a sure sign that they are ungrateful; for we know that he is faithful, and faith tells us that it is surely true that all the experiences of life permitted to come to us are working for our good. (Rom. 8:28.) Whoever has this faith can give thanks to the Lord and can rejoice even through his trial and sorrow."

R4858 "GUIDED BY GOD'S EYE..."

One of the most important lessons for the spiritual Israelite to learn is to look to the Lord for leading in all of life's affairs... We are marching toward the antitypical Canaan and know that other experiences are due us and must be undergone ere we can inherit the promises. The lesson for us is prompt and thorough obedience to the Lord's leadings without murmurings -- with joyfulness; and this can be expected only on the part of those who have learned the lessons previously given them, and above all, the lesson of faith--confidence in the Lord's power and goodness and faithfulness."

R2351 "BE CONTENT WITH SUCH THINGS AS YE HAVE" *"Be content with such things as ye have; for he hath said, I will never leave thee nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.--Heb. 13:5,6..."*

Bad advice, says Mr. Worldlywiseman; it is because this advice has *not* been followed that we of America have made such progress within the past century. It is because the workmen of the United States are ambitious, energetic, and *not content* with such things as they have...that our nation has stepped rapidly to the front, and become noted for the genius, thrift and progressive-ness of its people.

Since 1799 we have been in the period known in the Scripture, as "the day of his preparation:" the period in which the Lord has been lifting the veil, and letting in upon the world, through natural channels, a stream of inventive genius designed to bring forward to perfection, through chemistry

only to find that with it they gained other trials no less severe: some have had their dear ones restored to them from the very jaws of death, only to wish afterward that God had not answered their prayers--or, more correctly, to wish that they had accepted the Lord's wisdom and providences

and mechanics and art, the devices and contrivances which will ere long most marvelously, under the guiding control of Immanuel, during the Millennium, make of this earth a Paradise... Ambition and discontent are present, and that they are helping in their way to bring forward the various devices... But on the other hand, we contend that just in proportion as discontent is spread, in that proportion unhappiness is present, and an anarchistic spirit begotten.

We see more clearly than those looking in other directions, that discontent is permeating the entire fabric of society and making it restless, and rapidly leading to the great catastrophe of trouble and anarchy which the Scriptures point out will be the end of this present age, "a time of trouble such as was not since there was a nation." We notice also that discontent and selfish ambition are at work in the home, in the mill, in the factory and in the Church; and that wherever these touch and grind, somebody is bruised or crushed, or at least made sore and sensitive. Wherever they abound, they blight peace, joy and a holy spirit. They are in antagonism to the spirit of Christ -- meekness, patience, gentleness, brotherly kindness, love. They tend toward the spirit of the Adversary, -- anger, malice, envy, hatred, strife, bitterness. What wonder, then, that the statistics show that despite the great increase of medical skill, especially in the treatment of nervous and mental ailments, and despite also the more favorable conditions of birth and living, mental and nervous diseases are greatly on the increase, and asylums are being enlarged and new ones built. Nor are these conditions confined to this country; reports from Europe are to the same effect,-- even worse as respects insanity and suicide.

It would be useless to point the world to the fact that *happiness*, the desirable quality, is on the decrease as wealth and business are on the increase--that the grandfathers of the present generation, altho less favorably situated every way, enjoyed life better because more contented than their grandchildren of to-day: the world would be unwilling to go back to the conditions which were happifying in the past, and have a craving for still more of luxury for the future, and will have it or at least strive to get it, whatever the cost. Indeed, knowing this, and knowing also of the divine provision for the future,... we think it wisest to let the world alone, to let it take its course and reap the reward of that course, and ultimately learn the lesson which Providence will teach...

THE THINGS WHICH WE HAVE--WITH WHICH WE ARE CONTENT

Nor should it be overlooked that this is the standpoint of all Scriptural address--the inspired injunctions and admonitions are not to the world, but to those who have become the Lord's covenanted people...

It is this class that the Apostle addresses in the words of our text. We that have such blessings would surely be unappreciative, unthankful, if we are not content with

trustfully, contentedly, uncomplainingly....Spiritual Israel should use wisely such things as are within their reach--accepting all as God's gifts with thanksgiving; but their petitions should be for spiritual gifts -- including patient endurance and heart contentment. R3061:3

such blessed things as *we have*. We have such things as should make us happy under the most adverse circumstances, so far as the present life is concerned. We, by the grace of God, have found the pearl of great price, and are not only content with the terms upon which it is offered to us, but most gladly, willingly, joyfully, we count all else but loss and dross that we may retain our ownership in it,--win Christ, and be found in him,--members of the body of the great Prophet, Priest and King, who shortly, as the antitype of Moses, shall stand forth as the deliverer of all who love righteousness, from the bondage of Sin and Satan.--Acts 3:22,23.

All who have intelligently taken the position of followers of Christ, knew from their start in the narrow way to expect trials and difficulties and adversities, and have said to the Master:--

"Not for ease or worldly pleasure,

Nor for fame my prayer shall be;

Gladly will I toil and suffer,

Only let me walk with thee, close to thee."

We should view every affair and incident of this present life that is not painful as a cause for thankfulness to the Lord; because it is that much less than our covenant might legitimately require; for our Master distinctly informed us that the way was rugged, saying, "Whosoever will live godly in this present time shall suffer persecution." And furthermore, our Lord's own example of suffering and enduring patiently the mockings, slanders, evil speaking, and general contradiction of sinners against himself, and the examples of the Apostles, who followed closely in his footsteps in the same path, all indicate that, all things considered, we of the present time who "have not yet resisted unto *blood* [death], striving against sin" and the machinations of sinners and the wiles of the Adversary, have much to be thankful for, that our lines have fallen unto us in comparatively pleasant places. We have every reason for thankfulness, no reason for murmuring.

And not only are we to be appreciative of the smooth places along the "narrow way," in which the Lord gives rest to our weary feet, but we are to be thankful also for all the trials and tribulations. If by faith we have laid hold, first, upon justification; and secondly, upon the high calling, and its exceeding great and precious promises, we must thirdly lay hold also by faith on *the assurances* of the Lord's Word that all things are working together for good to those who have made this covenant with him, and who are seeking to perform it;--to those who love God, and who were called according to his purpose, to this high calling. Viewed from the proper standpoint, all the trials and difficulties which come to us will be seen to be mercies and blessings, designed to shape us in conformity with the lines of character manifested in our Lord and Head, and to polish us and to make us fit for the inheritance of the saints in light. While, therefore, we are not to rush into temptation, nor to bring upon ourselves

persecution by injudicious conduct, yet when these things come to us as rewards for fidelity to principles of truth and righteousness, exercised in the spirit of meekness, gentleness, patience and love, we are to rejoice in them, as so many ministries of evil toward us, which under divine guidance are fitting and preparing us to further reflect the Lord's likeness, and to further be his representatives and ministers of righteousness, now and hereafter. And to shrink back from and to avoid the trials and difficulties and persecutions incident to faithfulness to the Lord and to his service, would be, in a measure at least, to draw back from our consecration, which is to suffer with him, that we may also reign with him--to be dead with him, that we may also live with him.

FEW ARE APPRECIATIVE--FEW VALUE THE THINGS THAT THEY HAVE

But evidently only the smaller number of those who have named the name of Christ, and who have made consecration of life and time and influence and all things to him, have ever appreciated these matters in their true light... Professed Christians are often among the most discontented and unhappy of individuals. Nay more, even some of those who have made the full consecration to the Lord, and some who have come to a considerable knowledge of present truth and respecting the wonderful time in which we are living, and the high calling and its object, and the glories to follow the sufferings of this present time,--many of these also, we fear, are among the discontented of the world,--unhappy, restless, not enjoying the *rest* which God provides for his people, not having "the peace of God which passeth all understanding" to rule in their hearts and keep all the other affairs of life in subjection and in order.

Brethren, these things ought not so to be. See to it that they do not so continue. Remember that according to our covenant we sacrificed all of our earthly interests and rights, that we might become sharers with our Master in the divine nature and all the heavenly promises. Remember that the only things of an earthly kind promised us by the Lord are that we shall have the things *needful*. If we learn aright the lessons of necessity, we will find that the things needful for our sustenance might mean a bill of fare of very limited variety and of very inexpensive food; and it might mean a wardrobe of great simplicity and of very little cost; and it might mean a home of very humble appearance and very small and very scantily furnished. Whatever we have more than *necessity* is that much more than the Lord has promised to us in this present time; and is a cause for thankfulness of lip, and gratitude of heart.

With these things rightly viewed, where is the occasion or the desire to murmur or complain about such things as we have? Where would be the desire to wish for, hope for, or ask for more than the Lord has promised to give us, and more than his unerring wisdom has seen would be best for us? If these lessons from the Lord's Word are received into the good soil of honest hearts, they will speedily bring forth, under the sunshine of the divine favor and the droppings of divine grace, a hundredfold more of joy and peace and trust and contentment and happiness and love, in the lives of all who put them into exercise: and

the influence upon our families, neighbors and associates will be a good influence, for their happiness as well as our own.

Instead of complaining about the weather, that it is too hot or too cold, too wet or too dry, too bright or too dark, or that it is too foggy or cloudy or murky, or something, let us be content with such weather as we have. We did not make it and we cannot change it. And since our wise and loving heavenly Father sees best to permit it so now, we see it best to have it so now...

If your health is not the best, do not go mourning and complaining all your days; be thankful -- thankful that it is not worse, remembering that as a member of the fallen race the full penalty of sin against you is pain and suffering unto death. Whatever therefore you have, that is moderate or endurable or in some measure enjoyable, be very thankful, very grateful, and make the most of it.

Our text, then, is not only a good medicine to bring us spiritual health and joy in the Lord, but also very profitable to our physical health; for it is unquestionably a fact that the majority of people aggravate their physical complaints and diseases by their fretfulness and unhappiness of mind... Our Heavenly Father knoweth what things we have need of, before we ask him; and he has already promised, that we shall have *what is best for us*.

If your position in life is a lowly one, and requires continual labor to secure the things needful, do not complain, but, on the contrary, render thanks--thanks for the health and strength to perform the needed labor; thanks for the realization that the present brief life is only the schooling time... Think then, on the other hand, of the fact that your condition is in some respects more favorable than that of some others who seem to be more prosperous or better situated: how many who have had wealth and leisure have found in them a curse! How many who have not been cursed by wealth have found that the deceitfulness of riches and the pride they are apt to induce are hindrances instead of helps in the "narrow way;" how many have found the meaning of the Lord's words, "How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the Kingdom of God."

Remember also the words of the Apostle, that not many rich, not many great, not many learned, are amongst God's chosen; that chiefly the poor of this world, rich in faith, shall be heirs of the Kingdom. Realizing that riches of faith, riches of trust, riches of contentment, and riches of godliness, with the fruits of the spirit which accompany these constitute the true riches, give thanks to the Lord that in his wisdom and grace he has so favorably situated you.

"HAVE FAITH IN GOD"--"LORD, INCREASE OUR FAITH."

The same principle holds good with reference to all of our affairs, no matter what... Faith rejoices not only in the glory that shall be revealed, but rejoices also in the sufferings and trials and difficulties and all the rich experiences which an all-wise Father sees best to permit. Let us therefore, as the Apostle exhorts, rejoice evermore, "in everything giving thanks."--1 Thess. 5:18; Eph. 5:20.

The best illustrations of this true faith, this *continuous confidence in God*, is found, as we should expect, in our dear Redeemer's

experiences and their narrative. Realizing that he was in the world for the purpose of serving the divine plan, he realized also continually the supervision of divine wisdom in respect to all his affairs: consequently he not only went to the Father frequently in prayer, and went to the Word of the Lord for guidance, but every experience through which he passed, and all the opposition with which he met, he recognized as being under the divine *supervision*. He knew that he was fully consecrated to the Father, and seeking not his own will but the will of him that sent him; he knew consequently that the Father's providential care was superintending all the affairs of his life.

This is forcibly illustrated in his answer to Pilate; when the latter said to him, "Knowest thou not that I have power either to deliver thee or to put thee to death?" Jesus answered, "Thou couldst have no power, except it were given thee of my Father." Again he said, with respect to the cup of suffering and ignominy, "The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?" Indeed, it was sufficient for him in any and every matter to realize that the Father was controlling; this thought gave him courage to do, to suffer and to bear...

The Father has prepared the cup, and will sustain and bless us while we drink it: our Lord Jesus, the Father's representative, oversees our trials and ignominy and suffering; he permits the cup to be prepared for us by blinded servants of Satan. This knowledge should not only enable us to take joyfully the spoiling of our goods (anything that we deemed precious, trade, influence, good name, etc.), but should enable us also to entreat with kindness and gentleness, and with a spirit of forgiveness those who prepare and administer the cup of our sufferings...

"WHAT IS FAITH'S FOUNDATION STRONG?"

In our text, after the Apostle has urged us to be "content with such things as ye have," he adds the reason or ground upon which this advice is given, saying, "For he hath said, I will never leave thee nor forsake thee." Yes; this is the true ground of contentment, the realization of the Lord's care, and that the Lord's wisdom and grace are being exercised towards us,--and that such things as he grants are the things which are best for us, and which we would choose for ourselves, if we had sufficient wisdom and insight into all the circumstances of the case.

The Apostle adds, "So then we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, I will not fear what man shall do unto me." The whole world has wondered at the intelligent courage of the humble ones of the Lord's people. The secret of their courage and of their strength is in their confidence that the Lord is their helper, that he, with wisdom and love which are infinite, is both able and willing to make all things work together for their good...

We believe that the lesson foregoing is of great importance, because the time is short; and those of the Lord's people who do not soon start to cultivate a spirit of contentment and thankfulness will not only not be fit for the Kingdom, but will as sharers of the world's spirit of discontent be in sore distress with the world very shortly, in the great time of trouble... Godliness and the fruits of the spirit, meekness, patience, gen-

tleness, longsuffering, brotherly-kindness, love, will not grow in the garden of the soul, where the weeds of discontent are permitted to sap the strength and vitiate the air with their noxious presence and influence.

The sentiment of one of our precious hymns is quite to the point...

"Content with beholding his face,

My all to his pleasure resigned,

No changes of season or place

Can make any change in my mind.

"While blest with the sense of his love

A palace a toy would appear,

And prisons would palaces prove,

If Jesus still dwell with me there."

Who can tell that the Lord may not ultimately

put some such tests to us, as these mentioned by the poet which were applied to himself and to others of the faithful in the past? Let us remember that we will not be faithful in large things unless we have learned to be faithful in little things. Let each, therefore, begin, and faithfully continue, a transformation of his life along these lines of godliness with contentment in the most trifling affairs of life. He will thus not only be making himself and others the happier in the present time, but he will be preparing himself for greater trials and tests that the Lord may be pleased to impose later, to prove to what extent we are overcomers of the world and of its spirit.

"This is the victory that overcometh the world, even your *faith*," because faith lies at the foundation of all loyalty to God and his cause. Faith in the divine supervision of all our affairs not only gives peace and content, but it saps the root of all selfish ambitions and vain gloryings and boastings; because of our faith in the Lord's Word, that "He that humbleth himself shall be exalted and he that exalteth himself shall be abased." Faith in the Lord's supervision *prefers* the Lord's arrangement to any other as respects the sufferings of this present time and the glory that is to follow; and hence it doth not puff up but builds up in the character-likeness of our Redeemer."

R3060 (From Harvest Truth Database V5.0 2006)
JOURNEYING TOWARD CANAAN

--NUM. 10:11-13,29-36--AUGUST 17.--

Golden Text:--"For thy name's sake lead me, and guide me."--Psa. 31:3.

ISRAEL spent nearly a year in the vicinity of Mt. Sinai. It was about a year and fifty days after their departure from Egypt that, by the Lord's instruction, they broke camp to journey toward the promised land--Canaan. Doubtless, their first impressions respecting the matter were that the Lord, through Moses, would lead them directly into the Land of Promise, and no doubt they wondered at the delay. We can see, however, that a nation reduced almost to the condition of slavery, would need many lessons to prepare the people for the glorious heritage which the Lord had promised them. In previous studies we have seen how the Lord inculcated lessons of trust, duty, obedience, worship and temperance, and subsequent events will prove to us that even with all these instructions the people were not yet ready to trust and obey the Lord so as to be properly fit for their inheritance.

During the eleven months spent in the vicinity of Mt. Sinai, important arrangements were effected--all tending to a larger degree of organization, government and personal responsibility amongst the people. When ready to leave Mt. Sinai they had not only their tribal organizations, but were additionally grouped in companies of ten and these into fifties and these again into larger groups or commands, so that the entire host was well marshalled. Besides this, they had in each tribe a Judge or lawgiver for minor questions; weightier matters being brought to Moses and through him to the Lord. Moreover, the Lord put his spirit upon seventy of the elders of the people, of all the tribes, so that they prophesied or taught the people, each in his own department; while the tribe of Levi had been specially set apart to the divine service. The Tabernacle had been made with all its appurtenances, and the regular order of worship had been established--typical, like the people, of the better things coming afterward.

If, as we see, it was appropriate that Israel according to the flesh should have training-lessons in trust, obedience, etc., we can readily understand that their antitype, spiritual Israel, has much need of instruction, much need to learn lessons along the same lines,--and still more particularly, if they would be prepared to enter into typical Canaan. We need to learn to trust the Lord implicitly after we leave Egypt, the world, and set forth on the way to our Canaan; we need to learn that he alone is able to deliver us from the spirit of the world which would still pursue us and bring us back into captivity; we need to learn to trust the Lord for the heavenly manna and to gather it day by day; we need to learn confidence in the Lord, not only in the presence of the leaders whom he raises up for us, but also in their absence, and not to set up for ourselves earthly idols to draw our hearts away in any measure from the Lord and his arrangements, and the great purpose for which we have started under his leadership; we need to learn the import of the Covenant which he has graciously made with us, sealed with the precious blood;--to be faithful to our share therein to the extent of our ability, and to trust the remainder to our great Mediator.

We need also to learn the Tabernacle lessons-- how and under what conditions we may have fellowship with God--may enter into the court and still further into the Holy, and ultimately, as members of the High Priest's body, into the Most Holy. We need to learn order in respect to natural as well as spiritual things; and that while the liberties of the Lord's people are to be conserved and bondage to evil is to be avoided, that, nevertheless, in all of the Lord's arrangements there is order, as represented in the order established amongst the Israelites. We are to learn first of all to be subject to the Lord,

and secondly, to every ordinance of God; we are to consider the truly consecrated people of God as a unit and are to seek to cooperate one with another, and to remember the Apostle's words, "Remember them which have the rule over you," (Heb. 13:7), and again, "Yea, all of you be subject one to another." (I Pet. 5:5.) All of these lessons are necessary to us, as similar lessons in type were necessary to typical Israel.

The cloud, representing the Lord, rested over the Tabernacle during the sojourn in the vicinity of Sinai; but in harmony with the instructions given through Moses, when the appointed time had come, the cloud lifted from the Tabernacle and went before the people and about one hundred and fifty miles distant, rested over another wilderness nearer Canaan. The people followed it in marching order and apparently at first with great enthusiasm, praising the Lord. Vs. 35 seems to refer to Psalm 68 which describes the journey; see also Psa. 132:8. But whatever were the joyful anticipations of the people, they found the wilderness of Paran into which the Lord led them the scene of great trial, for it was much more rugged than the wilderness of Sinai and much less adapted to the care of their flocks and herds. This brought to the people fresh trials of faith and courage and endurance and confidence in the Lord and appreciation of his promises.

So with spiritual Israelites: ⁽¹⁾after the Lord has given us certain lessons and experiences, some of which come to us under quiet and restful conditions, the order of procedure may be changed, and the indication of the Lord's providences may lead to some breaking up of conditions which had been both favorable and unfavorable in some respects--leading into new circumstances and conditions. It is not for the true spiritual Israelite to murmur or complain or even to express a choice; but to look to the Lord for guidance. If he can discern the leadings of divine providence, even though it be in a wilderness condition more arid and undesirable than that in which he has previously been, he is to follow the Lord's leadings unquestioningly and with songs of faith and confidence. ⁽²⁾We are marching toward Canaan and know that other experiences are due us and must be undergone ere we can inherit the promises. The lesson for us is prompt and thorough obedience to the Lord's leadings without murmurings-- with joyfulness; and this can only be expected on the part of those who have learned the lessons previously given them, and above all the lesson of faith,-- confidence in the Lord's power and goodness and faithfulness.

REBELLION AGAINST GOD'S PROVIDENCE

It was while in Paran that the people began to murmur again-- for the leeks and onions and garlic and fish, etc., of Egypt. As little children to a father, they lamented to Moses--even regretting that they had been led out of bondage. Moses appealed the matter to the Lord, and the latter granted the request in displeasure, telling Moses that he esteemed the people to be murmurers against himself; because he was the real Leader and Moses merely his servant. The people wanted more *meat*, expressing themselves as wearied of the manna, so God sent them quails. An immense flock of quails was blown by a providential storm from the south and east over the Elantic Gulf into their camp. A writer on Eastern subjects says: -- "These quails cannot sustain themselves long on the wing, and after

⁽¹⁾ Feb. 21 Manna, Psa 31:3

⁽²⁾ 1/2 Feb. 23 Manna

crossing the desert 30 or 40 miles they would scarcely be able to fly....When exhausted they would easily be taken as they flew at a height of about two cubits (3 or 4 feet) from the ground." The people got an abundance; but ate so greedily that a pestilence broke out among them, which cost the lives of many, so that they called that place Kibroth-Hattaavah--"Graves of Greediness." Thus the Lord permitted their discontent and spirit of rebellion to work out a severe penalty in a natural way.

Is it not sometimes after the same manner with the Spiritual Israelites? Do not some after being well fed on spiritual manna permit a selfish, craving spirit to interrupt their fellowship with the Lord to some extent--hankering for earthly, fleshly, good things; --forgetting the wisdom of our Leader, the Lord, and that his love which thus far has delivered us, and fed and led us, is still with us, as wise and as good as ever? Sometimes it is a repining against our lot in life, a desire for more ease and comfort and wealth and social influence, than are within our reach: sometimes it is a protest against our share of the aches and pains of the groaning creation and our inability to get rid of these: sometimes it is a protest against the illness and death of a loved one.

How unwise! Should not those who have been fed on the spiritual manna realize that all of Spiritual Israel's affairs are under the Lord's care and supervision? Should they not remember that,--He doth not willingly afflict the children of men, but for their good? (Lam. 3:33; Heb. 12:10.) Ah! some have found that the prayers of murmurers, even when answered, as were Israel's, sometimes bring unexpected drawbacks;--that ⁽³⁾selfish prayers are too expensive. Some have gained wealth and lost the truth and its service: some have gained health only to find that with it they gained other trials no less severe: some have had their dear ones restored to them from the very jaws of death, only to wish afterward that God had not answered their prayers;--or, more correctly, to wish that they had accepted the Lord's wisdom and providences trustfully, contentedly, uncomplainingly.

The lesson to Israel was, that they should trust the Lord implicitly; and accepting and using all that they had, all that the surroundings would supply, they should have used it as wisely and as thoroughly as possible--accepting all things, natural as well as miraculous, as God's gifts. And therewith they should have been content, thankful, happy. So, too, Spiritual Israel should use wisely such things as are within their reach--accepting all as God's gifts with thanksgiving; but their petitions should be for spiritual gifts --including patient-endurance and heart-contentment.

REBELLION AGAINST THE DIVINE ORDER

It was in Paran that Miriam and Aaron rebelled against Moses' leadership asserting themselves his equals in authority. Miriam, the prime mover in the matter, referred to Moses' marriage to a negress (Ethiopian) as an evidence of his general incapacity to manage his own affairs, much less those of a nation. The text of the complaint is given only in part, but undoubtedly the fact that they were now near to Canaan and well organized and that it was now comparatively easy to lead the people, led to this wrong position. Both were quite willing that Moses should be leader when the start was made and when all the chances seemed to be against the success of the movement.

Poor Moses! If it almost crushed him when the people murmured against him, how must he have felt when his two most trusted advisers thus showed that they too had a wrong view of the Exodus, and considered Moses a self-appointed leader! True, it does appear to us as though his meekness had led him into a marriage in every way beneath his education and station in life; but then, was he not under divine supervision in all his affairs? And could not the Lord have hindered the marriage unless he saw some way in which it could prove advantageous? And should not Miriam and Aaron have remembered this, and minded their own business? As a matter of fact we believe that the Lord was favorable to the marriage; --that thus he forestalled any inclination on the part of Israel to accept the children of Moses as their kings and lawgivers to the subversion of the divine program.

The Lord's indignation was shown in smiting Miriam with leprosy and refusing to heal her for seven days even at the entreaty of Moses;--that thus the camp of Israel might also get a lesson in harmony with a subsequent statement,--"Touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm."

The lesson of trusting to the Lord's vigilance in minding his business and the lesson that each Israelite indeed should mind his own business, are still closely identified. Many, nay all, still need to

learn these lessons. The officiousness which inclines so many to think that the Lord's work will go to wreck unless they control the lever and pass their judgment upon everybody and everything, is dangerous to all who have it, and their name is legion. It is born of too great self-conceit mixed with lack of respect for God's wisdom and with a desire to meddle as "busybodies in other men's matters." Each should early learn that while doing his own part with his might he should trust much to the Lord, and that to him each servant stands or falls. Failure to do this leads to leprosy--sin.

"COME THOU WITH US AND WE WILL DO THE GOOD"

Hobab, here introduced to our attention (vs. 29), was Moses' brother-in-law. (Judg. 4:11--R.V.) Raguel is here given as the name of Moses' father-in-law and is supposed to refer to the same person called Jethro in another place. The explanation offered is that Raguel was his proper name and Jethro, which signifies *Excellent*, was his title as a chieftain of the Midianites, of the clan known as Kenites which dwelt in Midian east of Sinai. Hobab, therefore, was also a chieftain amongst the Kenites and undoubtedly, as Moses' words suggest, was well acquainted with the country through which Israel would pass. Moses invited him to cast in his lot with the Israelites promising him that thus he, and such of his tribe as would come with him, should become joint-participants with the Israelites in the promises God had made them,--"Come thou with us and we will do thee good, for the Lord hath spoken good concerning Israel...and it shall be, if thou go with us, yea, it shall be, that what goodness the Lord shall do to us, the same will we do unto thee." Although Hobab at first refused, the promise of a share with Israel apparently influenced him favorably; because mention is made elsewhere of the Kenites as having share with Israel in the promised land.--Judges 1:16; 4:11; I Sam. 15:6; I Chron. 2:55.

Doubtless this narrative of divine arrangement with Hobab through Moses, was intended to convey a lesson to spiritual Israelites also. It represents that some who are not children of the promises according to the flesh, were, nevertheless, accepted of God because of the exercise of faith,--because of their willingness also to endure the trials and difficulties and warfare of the children of Israel, that they might be participants with them in the rewards and promises. So to-day, we may say to those who are still aliens, strangers, foreigners to the Lord's covenants, "Come thou with us and we will do thee good." We may tell whoever has an ear to hear of the gracious things which the Lord has promised, of everlasting life in Paradise, to all who are his,-- faithful to the end of the journey; and yet, it will be a matter for the exercise of their wills: if they share in the blessings, they must also be willing to share the difficulties of the way, and the reproaches of the Lord's people. Not only may we thus speak to people orally, inviting them to join with us, but our lives in general should be "living epistles," giving testimony of our faith in the Lord and in his promises;-- helpful, encouraging and attractive to others.

Our Golden Text applies to every spiritual Israelite, and surely all such must recognize the leadership of the Lord, else they cannot have peace and joy and blessing, and cannot make progress toward our Canaan. The Israelites learned to look for the movement of the cloud by which the Lord led them and only once is it recorded that they ever disobeyed its leading--and that once was accompanied by their reverse in battle before their enemies, which doubtless impressed the lesson. (Num. 14:44,45.) Similarly, ⁽⁴⁾one of the most important lessons for the spiritual Israelite is to learn to look to the Lord for leading in all of life's affairs--never to attempt any undertaking either temporal or spiritual without seeking to note the will of the Lord concerning the same.

The sooner this lesson is learned, the sooner disasters in life will be obviated; nevertheless, we are to remember that the Lord's providences may lead us into trying circumstances and conditions, and not always into pastures green. Yet in these, faith will be tested and developed and faithfulness to the Lord's leading will gradually bring us assurances that all things are working together for our good, for our spiritual welfare--the matters which appear to be favorable and comforting, and the experiences which seem to be rough and distressing. We are not to ask or expect the Lord's leading for our own sakes, nor for any merit or worthiness in us, but, as our Golden Text expresses it, for the Lord's sake--in accordance with his promise to us as spiritual Israelites, the seed of Abraham;--for his own name's sake and work's sake, in that he has purchased the blessing of the world, and is now taking out a people for his name to be his agents in this work of blessing,--for his own name's sake in that he has invited us, promised us the victory if we abide in his love.

[3] Feb. 22 Manna, Heb. 13:5

[4] 1/2 Feb. 23 Manna, Psalms 32:8