

February 11

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secuted they the prophets which were before you. Matthew 5:11,12

OPPOSITION and persecution are the inevitable concomitants of activity in the service of God, and they should be met with reason and candor; and when these fail of their purpose, then, with solemn warnings

of the dangers of such a course, the wilful opposer should be left to pursue his own course while we turn to others with the message of salvation. In the opposition which our Lord incurred and the manner in which He met it, there are valuable lessons for all who are similarly tried. Z.'94-368R1736:6

R1735 (From Harvest Truth Database V5.0 2008)

OPPOSITION TO CHRIST

IV. QUAR., LESSON VIII., NOV. 25, MARK 3:22-35

Golden Text--"He came unto his own, and his own received him not."--John 1:11

As the fame of Jesus increased, because of his miracles and teaching (Luke 4:14,15,33-37; 5:12-15,19,25,26; 7:16,17; 8:1-4; Matt. 4:23,24; 9:18,26,35; Mark 1:27,28; 3:20), the opposition to him became more and more pronounced, especially from the Chief Priests, Scribes and Pharisees, as they were brought into competition and unfavorable comparison with him as public teachers; and the indications were that all the people would be drawn after him, and that they would soon be left out of their official positions and the accompanying honors and emoluments. For such a change they were not in heart-readiness, although the prophet had foretold that "unto him [the Messiah] shall the gathering of the people be." (Gen. 49:10.) They did not have the humble, unselfish spirit of John the Baptist, who meekly said, "There standeth one among you, whom ye know not: he it is who, coming after me, is preferred before me, whose shoe's latchet I am not worthy to unloose:...he must increase, but I must decrease."--John 1:26,27; 3:30.

Instead of manifesting such a spirit, they allowed pride, envy and malice to fill their hearts and actuate their conduct, and sought by every means in their power to obstruct and counteract the Lord's teaching. In this way they shut the door of the Kingdom of Heaven against themselves and against all those into whom they infused the same evil spirit. (Matt. 23:13.) They wickedly blinded their own eyes, and then, with their deluded followers--the masses of the whole Jewish nation--they stumbled into the ditch of divine disfavor, where as a nation they must remain until the fulness of the Gentiles --the elect number to constitute the bride of Christ--has come into possession of the Kingdom and eternal glory, which they proved themselves unworthy of and therefore failed to receive, although it was offered to them first.

In the instance of this lesson, it seems probable that these caviling scribes were commissioned by the Jewish ecclesiastics at Jerusalem (*verse 22*) to come as spies to watch his words, withstand his teachings and if possible, find some occasion against him.

While the multitudes marvelled at the miracle which cast a devil out of a dumb man, enabling him to speak and to be clothed in his right mind, saying, "It was never so seen in Israel" (Matt. 9:32-34), these Scribes and Pharisees circulated the idea among the people that Jesus was possessed of a devil, and that he cast out devils through the power of the prince of devils.

When this report came to the Lord's notice, he called the objectors to him and made manifest the absurdity of such teaching, saying in substance, with reference not only to the miracle just performed, but to his entire work as known and opposed by the Scribes and Pharisees, "How can Satan cast out Satan?" etc. That would be suicidal. It would be equivalent to a king stirring up strife in his own kingdom and working against his own cause; or the head of a house alienating and disrupting his own family and opposing the operation of his own plans. It is not presumable that Satan would thus seek to thwart his own purposes and oppose his own plans, unless he had reached great straits and found his kingdom already falling from his grasp.-- *Verses 23-26.*

Again our Lord reasoned with them (*verse 27*), that "No man can enter into a strong man's house and spoil his goods, except he first bind the strong man; and then he will spoil his house." The "strong man" here referred to is Satan, who is the powerful "prince of this world"--his dominion or house. He will surely hold his dominion and pursue his own policy as long as possible, and will diligently resist every binding influence which threatens the loss of his power. The work and teachings of Jesus were just such binding influences; and the opposition which his word met was what might be expected as a manifestation of Satan's wrath. During the Gospel age generally the Prince of Darkness has flourished, and consequently a large portion of it is known as the "dark ages." But since the beginning of the time of the end, in 1799, God has specially let in the light, --and particularly since 1878. The more the "light" shines, the more active is this adversary to preserve his power; but God's assur-

ance is that Christ, as the Strong Messenger, will now quickly bind Satan's power and release humanity from his dominion. (Rev. 20:1,2.) Then Christ, already the Redeemer, will be the Savior or Deliverer of all who come unto God by him. That will be salvation to the uttermost. What we now enjoy is salvation by faith and hope. (Rom. 8:24,25.)

That Satan's house is now dividing against itself is manifest in that we see those who with deep and cunning sophistries oppose the truth, teaching the doctrines of Satan, at the same time doing the good works of healing, etc. Thus, for instance, Christian Science (falsely so-called, for there is nothing either Christian or scientific in it) denies both the redemption by Christ Jesus and also the very existence of God, and yet its advocates undoubtedly perform marvels of healing. Can any one claim such healings to be of God? Not unless God's kingdom is divided against itself. Which horn of the dilemma shall we accept? Is it likely that God would thus endorse the doctrines of Satan? Is it not more probable that Satan would exert his power to imitate the works of God, thereby to support his doctrines and to deceive? Such must be our conclusions in view of the warnings given us to the effect that thus it should be in the last times.

Before Satan will submit to the binding influences of the rightful Prince of this world, who now comes to take the dominion to himself, we should, as we are forewarned, expect Satan to transform himself into a minister of "light" (2 Cor. 11:14,15), that he may preach false gospels and perform "many wonderful works," healing, etc., insomuch as to "deceive, if it were possible, the very elect." Such manifestations (and we now see them multiplying all around us --in Christian Science, Spiritism, Theosophy and other delusions of which we were forewarned (Matt. 24:24; 2 Thes. 2:11), are evidences that Satan's kingdom is being hard pressed by the truth and is nearing its end.

Our Lord's reasoning, although clear and logical, did not change the attitude of those malicious, wilful opposers, who manifested a large measure of Satan's spirit. The Lord saw this, and hence the rebuke and solemn warning which followed.--See *verses 28-30.*

The sin which cannot be forgiven, and which, therefore, must be expiated or punished before the sinner's repentance can be accepted, is that of blasphemy against the holy spirit, or wilful opposition against that which is known to be holy and of divine appointment. The spirit which instigates such conduct is that of treason against God, and those who manifest it in any degree are *in danger* of eternal condemnation --eternal death; for, according to Heb. 10:26-31; 6:4-8, wilful opposition, in the face of clear, full knowledge of the divine will, incurs that penalty. Consequently, every approach to such a treasonable spirit is *dangerous*. And a manifestation of any measure of that spirit is a sin which must be punished with stripes. (Luke 12:47,48.) Every sin against light increases the danger of going into the second or eternal death.

The punishment meted out to such is, however, no part of the satisfaction to divine justice whereby deliverance from Adamic death is secured: that was done by Christ, whose sacrifice was the all-sufficient ransom which reconciles the repentant sinner to God. The "stripes" for every measure of wilful sin against the light which emanates from the spirit of God are a necessary part of the *corrective discipline* of Christ in bringing the reckonedly justified but erring ones back to full harmony with God. But if the corrective discipline does not produce reform, the increase of knowledge and experience will shortly make it a wilful sin against *full* knowledge, for which the *full* penalty would be inflicted --second death. *Verses 20,21,31* (See *Emphatic Diaglott*), seem to indicate more of a spirit of fear and anxiety on the part of the Lord's mother and brethren, than of opposition. His brethren did not believe in his claims and doctrines at that time, and seemingly could not understand why he was so revolutionary in his teachings and so antagonistic to all the

recognized religious teachers of his day, etc., etc. (John 7:5), while his mother doubtless still pondered the mystery in her mind. Yet hearing of the attention he was attracting, and the increased murmurings of opposition and violence against him, they came from Nazareth to see and talk with him, and doubtless to urge him to greater caution for his safety and to more care for his physical necessities of rest and refreshment.

The occasion of their call upon him was an opportunity for the expression of his strong and tender affection for all that do the will of God. The heavenly relationship was the one *dearest* to him.

R4865 "*Blessed are ye when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely for My sake.*"—Matt. 5:11.

PERSECUTION implies that the person or thing persecuted possessed some qualities or powers that are feared. When the persecution is for religion it proves that the persecutor realizes his own weakness to meet the arguments in a more rational way. It implies either that the persecutors are weak, or that the arguments of the persecuted are strong.

There have been persecutions from the earliest dawn of history. Cain persecuted his brother Abel to the death because the latter was right and the persecutor was wrong. It is safe to say that the persecutors are always wrong even if we cannot say that the persecuted are always right. The principle of persecution is a wrong one. Whoever, therefore, finds himself disposed to persecute another, either with physical torture or by harassings of slander and epithets should immediately inquire respecting his own heart condition, for there is surely something wrong."

R5544 "Some, it is true, might be reviled for something evil or unwise that they had done. There would be no blessing in such an experience. The blessing comes when the accusation against us is false and is for the Truth's sake." (See Mat 5:11-12)

R2412 "When the persecutions come, be prepared for them--forearmed by God's Word; for they will be temptations to your flesh: through them the Adversary will seek to embitter your soul and to stir up in you the elements of the old nature reckoned dead--anger, malice, hatred, envy, strife. If this be the effect of persecutions in you, the Adversary is gaining the victory--you are not overcoming evil, but being overcome by it. The old nature will even call upon its best qualities to fight against persecution--it will call upon your natural sense of Justice... love of family and friends, and every other good quality... All will be appealed to either to fight the persecution or to abandon the course of godliness which led to it."

R5878 "*When He giveth quietness, who then can make trouble?*"--Job 34:29...

AFFLICTION NO PROOF OF GOD'S DISFAVOR...

Job was not a great sinner. On the contrary, we have every reason to believe that he was a true Prophet of God, a true servant of God. He was one whom the Bible tells us God especially loved. This is shown in Ezekiel 14:19,20. "If I send a pestilence into that land, and pour out My fury upon it in blood, to cut off from it man and beast, though Noah, Daniel and Job were in it, as I live, saith the Lord God, they shall deliver neither son nor daughter; they shall but

^[1]In the opposition which our Lord incurred and the manner in which he met it, there are valuable lessons for all who are similarly tried. Opposition and persecution are the inevitable concomitants of activity in the service of God, and they should be met with reason and candor; and when these fail of their purpose, then, with solemn warnings of the dangers of such a course, the wilful opposer should be left to pursue his own course while we turn to others with the message of salvation.

[1] Feb. 11 Manna, Mat. 5:11-12

deliver their own souls by their righteousness." Again, the Apostle says, "Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful and of tender mercy."--James 5:11.

It is quite true that Job's trouble could not have come upon him if God had not permitted it. If God had wished him to have quietness, no one could have made him trouble. But He permitted trial to come to test His servant, just as He permits trouble to come upon His Church, and as He permitted it to come upon His well-beloved Son. He permitted that men should do all manner of evil against His Son--should scoff at Him, should spit upon Him, should smite Him, should scourge Him, and finally crucify Him. The Lord has not always given quietness in these cases, but often trouble.

The lesson of the text for those who have put themselves in God's care, is that no one can make them trouble without Divine permission. The Lord tells us that during this Gospel Age He will make all things work together for good to His children, and that He will not suffer us to be tempted above what we are able to bear, (1 Corinthians 10:13.) In our Lord's case it pleased Jehovah to bruise Him, to allow suffering and death to come upon Him. (Isaiah 53:10.) It pleased God to adopt this Plan for the recovery of the world, because it best illustrates His Justice, His Wisdom, His Love and His Power. It also resulted in great honor and glory to our Lord Jesus.

As concerns the Lord's people, there might be certain matters relating to dispensational changes that could best be accomplished through severe trials coming upon them. Then, additionally, God wishes certain trials to come upon His people because He desires them to *trust* Him where they cannot *trace* Him. He wishes them to have unwavering faith in Him. The children of God, then, can take these words of our text in a very different way from that originally suggested to Job by Elihu. We may truly say, "When God giveth quietness, who then can make trouble?" We recognize that there is a certain quietness and rest of heart that all the Lord's saints may enjoy. We realize this even when He permits severe trouble.

The Apostle Paul in his Epistle to the Hebrews says, "We who have believed do enter into rest." We enter into rest by coming into the attitude where we can believe, where we can and do exercise entire trust in God. Sometimes outward difficulties are helpful in overcoming a wrong spirit. The Lord's people are not discouraged by the things that would utterly crush out the vitality and the courage of others. They get the wrong spirit pounded out of them; but it is the hand of love that administers the blows, and the Lord knows just how many and how severe ones are needed.

KEPT IN PERFECT PEACE

"Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace,

whose mind is stayed on Thee." (Isaiah 26:3.) This thought is very precious to us as New Creatures. "The peace of God which passeth all understanding," is to rule and keep our minds and hearts. (Philippians 4:7.) We are to count the things of the present life as not worthy of comparison with the glories of eternity. And so the Apostle says, "For our light affliction which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal." (2 Corinthians 4:17,18.) When our minds are stayed on the Lord, and we take the proper view of our experiences, we can sing with the poet:

"No storm can shake our inmost calm,
While to this Refuge clinging."

We have peace, no matter what the outward conditions may be. The trials and the difficulties of life come to the Lord's people commingled with joys--the rain and storm, then the sunshine. They enjoy all righteous pleasures that are in harmony with their consecration. They learn to cultivate patience in trial, knowing that patience works out experience, and experience works out more and more that hope which maketh not ashamed.--Romans 5:3-5.

So, then, it is to the Christian that our text brings the assurance that when God gives quietness, none can make trouble. They "shall say all manner of evil against you falsely for My sake," said the Master, but *then* we are to "rejoice and be exceeding glad." "Let not your heart be troubled." (Matthew 5:11; John 14:1.) We think our text very precious when viewed from our standpoint.

TROUBLE NECESSARY TO OUR PROVING

Our Heavenly Father designs that various kinds of trouble shall come upon us, that these may develop and prove our characters. It is a part of the Divine Plan to permit us to have experiences of affliction. (Psalm 119:67,71,75; 34:19,20.) So when we see God's people in trouble or trial today we are not to say that God is against them. We are each to demonstrate our willingness to suffer according to His will, and often to suffer unjustly. Our Lord set us an example of cheerful, patient submission to God's will. We are to walk in His footsteps. And we have the example of the Apostles, when trials and difficulties and persecutions came upon them; and the example of other saints all down the Age.

Trouble is not necessarily a sign of the disfavor of God. On the contrary, we know that "many are the afflictions of the righteous," and that "All that will live godly in Christ Jesus *shall* suffer persecution." The *Truth* will cost them something. *Faithfulness to the Lord* will cost them much. As

the Apostle says, "If ye be without chastisement [discipline, training], then are ye bastards and not sons." (Hebrews 2:8.) If God gives peace of heart, who can upset the one who is thus in harmony with God, in whom this peace of heart is ruling? This, then, is the greatest blessing of all. And He grants this peace to those who are faithfully striving to walk in the footsteps of Jesus. We have a Refuge which none but His own can know. No harm can reach us within this Shelter; no storm can shake us from our moorings, for we are securely anchored to the Rock of Ages. "And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to the called according to His Purpose." (Romans 8:28.) And as Job's *after* blessings far outweighed his brief trials, so it will be with the Lord's saints today.

"What though my joys and comfort die!
The Lord, my Savior, liveth;
What though the darkness gather round!
Songs in the night He giveth.
No storm can shake my inmost calm,
While to that Refuge clinging;
Since Christ is Lord of Heaven and earth,
How can I keep from singing?"

R4558 "SINCE the Lord's followers have fallen flesh it is not possible for them to be perfect as God is perfect-- except in heart, in intention. But this good heart intention is not sufficient to prove us worthy of a share with Christ as his "elect" to the glories of his Kingdom. Our profession of pure heart and God-likeness must be tested. It must be demonstrated and developed to the point of fixity of character. It must stand tests of temptation. It must endure faithfulness under stress. Hence those accepted as disciples of Christ are required to be faithful under very trying circumstances."

E490 "Ye shall be hated of all men for my sake," "they shall say all manner of evil against you falsely for my sake." Marvel not if the world hate you: ye know that it hated me before it hated you. These words by the great teacher were to be true "even unto the end of this age": and they are as true today as ever. Whoever will faithfully *exercise* his ambassadorship, and not shun to declare the whole counsel of God, will speedily know something of the sufferings of Christ and can say truly--"The reproaches of them that reproached thee are fallen upon me." Matt. 5:10-12; 10:22; Psa. 69:9; Rom. 15:3

And here again we behold the wonderful wisdom of the divine plan; for it is while performing his priestly ministry of "the word of reconciliation" to which the spirit of anointing impels, that each priest finds the necessity for offering up himself, a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, and his reasonable service. Rom. 12:1

Hence the measure of self-sacrifice and sufferings for Christ, endured by each of the consecrated, becomes a *measure* (from God's standpoint--for man cannot always discern it) of the faithfulness of each as ambassadors. Every priest who fails to suffer for Christ's sake, for the Truth's sake, must therefore have been an unfaithful ambassador and minister of the New Covenant. And only to those now faithful as good soldiers of the cross will be granted the inestimable privilege of being participators with the great High Priest in the glorious at-one-ment work under the favorable conditions of the Millennial age. If we suffer with

him we shall also reign with him. If we deny him, he will also [then] deny us. Rom. 8:17; 2 Tim. 2:12,13; Titus 1:16

Take heed that no man take thy crown. Rev. 3:11 "Be thou faithful unto death and I will give thee a crown of life." Rev. 2:10"

R5942 "St. Paul labored hard with the Church at Corinth; and to have them fail to make proper progress in the Truth because they thought of him as an incompetent teacher seemed to him to be a pity. Hence in our lesson he is doing what he styles "foolish boasting." He did not approve of boasting; and yet for the sake of his hearers, he would inform them along certain lines. And how glad we are that the Holy Spirit so directed the Apostle, that we also may know him better and may fully appreciate his loving loyalty to the King of kings and the fact that he was the chosen vessel of the Lord for the communication of the Truth even to the Household of today!

But the Apostle did not boast about himself--about his talents, about his oratory, about how the people were spellbound, about how many people recognized his ability, etc. No; he rather would boast of the things which others would think to be for his shame. He would tell them what God's providence had permitted him to suffer for the Truth's sake--scourging, whipping with rods, imprisonment, perils of the deep, perils from false brethren, perils from the heathen. To him these things were the marks of Divine love and favor, and bore witness also that he was a lover of the Lord and His righteousness, and that he had been willing to suffer for the Lord's sake, for the Truth's sake.

Thus seen this lesson is a very valuable portion of the Word of the Lord. It gives us information which we find in no other quarter. It sets before us crisply a picture of a soldier of the Cross and what he endured. It says to us, "Be thou faithful unto death"--follow in the footsteps of Jesus and this noble follower of His--boast not in yourself, but in the Lord and in your privileges of service in connection with His Truth.

THE SECRET OF HIS SUCCESS...

The secret of the Apostle's endurance of so great privations-- scourgings, imprisonments, buffetings of various kinds--is presented to us in the words of our Golden Text. The Lord's grace was sufficient. The Lord's power was made perfect in his weakness. And is this not the secret of every successful Christian life? Was it not even so of our Master--that the Father's Spirit in Him, His reliance upon the Father, and His looking for the light of the Father's countenance, were indeed the power of God working in our Savior to will and to do the Father's good pleasure?

The same is true with every follower of the Lord since His day. The Master truly said to His followers, "Without Me ye can do nothing." (John 15:5.) It is the Divine Power which operates through our Lord Jesus, through the Word of Truth, through the followers of Jesus; and this Power can operate in the weakest members of the Body of Christ as well as in the strongest. The Lord's grace is sufficient for all and for every time of need. We are not to forget, however, that this great sufficiency is not poured out upon the Lord's people unconditionally, but in answer to their appreciation of their need and their prayerful request for

grace Divine in every time of need."

(Mat 5:10 KJV) "Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

R5545 "When the Scribes, the Pharisees and the Doctors of the Law tried to trump up charges against the Master and to put evil constructions upon what He said, He was patient under all these trying conditions. He submitted to the treatment. It might be asked, Why did God permit His Holy Son to suffer such revilings? Why did He not smite down those who did so wickedly? The answer is that the Father wished to demonstrate the kind of character that was pleasing to Him, and He wished to test the loyalty of Jesus Himself. Would He be submissive and obedient or would He resent these affronts?... His painful experiences were thus tests of His loyalty to the Father...

Would He continue loyal to the Father and carry out His purposes? If so, He would be worthy to be the Messiah, worthy to be the Divine Son of God throughout eternity."

R4814 "The chief opposition to our Lord came from the religious leaders and professors."

R5545 "If our great Master was called Beelzebub, we cannot expect that the members of His Household will be treated any better. If He who was perfect was held up to scorn as the Prince of Devils, we may expect similar treatment to be meted out to His followers by those whom the Adversary has blinded; for we are less able to uphold the standard of righteousness than was He. When His enemies attempted to make His character appear vile in the sight of others, He did not retaliate."

R3736 "REVILED FOR CHRIST'S SAKE"

The Lord's people are not to revile each other or anybody under any circumstances, but are to remember that they are pupils, followers of him who when reviled reviled not again. Whatever evil others may say or insinuate about us we must be faithful to our Teacher and not return evil for evil, reviling for reviling, nor insinuation for insinuation, but contrariwise must speak evil of no man and be pleased to notice and to mention any good qualities which even our enemies may possess.

Our Lord's words, however, warrant us in expecting that those who will be faithful to him will share his experiences of being evil spoken of. With his words before our minds we should not be surprised at false charges and false insinuations made against his true followers, and that in proportion to their prominence as his servants and followers...

His followers, like himself, honorable, moderate, possessing the spirit of a sound mind, truthful, honest, virtuous, would naturally be highly esteemed amongst the Scribes and Pharisees, the nominally good; they would have a high place, were it not for their fidelity to the Lord and to his Word. Because of loyalty to truths contradictory of popular errors, because of their faithfulness to the Word of the Lord, they are unpopular...

It becomes a test also to the faithful ones--Are they willing to endure these persecutions and oppositions cheerfully as a part of the cost of being the Lord's disci-

ples? If under the pressure they yield and revile in return, and slander and backbite, they are proving themselves unworthy of a place in the Kingdom. If on the other hand they receive these lessons and experiences with patience and long-suffering, these serve to develop in them more and more of the character-likeness of their Redeemer and tend the more to fit and prepare them for a share with him in his glorious Kingdom...

THE SALT OF THE EARTH...

As salt is useful in arresting decomposition, so the influence of these, though they be few in the world, is preservative...

Before very long we expect that all of the overcoming members of the body of Christ will be changed, glorified, and the body completed on the other side the veil will be without members on this side. The lights will have gone and the darkness will hold fuller sway than ever; the salt will be gone and the corruption will take hold swiftly, and the result will be the great time of trouble such as was not since there was a nation."

R5544 REJOICING IN TRIBULATION

"Blessed are ye when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for My sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in Heaven; for so persecuted they the Prophets which were before you."—Matthew 5:11,12...

"Blessed are ye," signifies that *persecution* is a favor from God. Consider it as a favor from the Father when men shall revile you—not because of the reviling, but because they shall say these things of you *falsely*, for Christ's sake...

"All who will live godly shall suffer persecution," is the promise, the assurance of Scripture. We should not court it, but should desire this evidence of our faithfulness, and should wish to be one of the "blessed" ones, of whom the Master speaks in our text. Then let us ask ourselves, Do I have persecution for Christ's sake? We should make a prayerful examination of our hearts to see whether we are fully loyal to God, to see whether we are letting our light shine out properly. If we lack this proof of sonship, we should inquire, What is the reason?

PERSECUTION A SURE RESULT OF FAITHFULNESS

A sister once said to the Editor, "I have no persecution, no opposition. Everything seems to be going favorably with me." She seemed troubled. We asked the sister to study her own heart to see whether or not she was as faithful as she knew how to be. Upon her reply we said, "Probably you take your persecutions with such grace that you are happy under them." The sister replied that she *would* be happy if she thought that was the case. Then we told her that the only other explanation we could think of was that the Lord was allowing her time to gain strength in order that she might bear what would come to her later. We told her to pray about it. A year or two after we again saw the sister. We recalled the circumstance, and asked her if she had yet had any persecution. She answered, "Oh, yes. I have had plenty of persecution, but I am happy and rejoicing in it!"

R4814 "The Lord and all those who are his "members" and followers would be unsym-

pathetically viewed, hated, persecuted; for the presentations of the Truth make manifest various errors and hypocrisies in contrast with Divine standards."

R4326 "Sometimes the persecution comes from those who once were brethren in the Truth—those who once dipped with us in the dish of Divine nourishments at the table of the Lord. The trial is all the more severe when it comes from this quarter. Yet was it not so with our Lord, and does it not seem to have cut him to the quick that Judas kissed him at the very moment that he betrayed him?"

But as none of these things moved the Master away from confidence in the Divine providence shaping affairs in the interest of the Church, and as he returned not railing for railing, neither must we. And such experiences rightly received will no doubt make us more and more copies of his dear Son...

We must not think it strange if the Adversary shall seek to misrepresent the facts and put light for darkness and darkness for light. It is for each of us to preserve a conscience void of offense towards God and men, that, like the Apostle of old, we may be able to call upon all men everywhere to witness whether or not we have coveted their silver or their gold, or done ought to their injury, or left undone any good toward them that was within our power.

In this connection let us remember also that the decision in each of our cases is with God. As St. Paul declares, "It is a light thing that I should be judged of you or of any man. Yea, I judge not mine own self, but he that judgeth me is the Lord."

R5546 "THE REBUKE OF HIS PEOPLE SOON TO VANISH

As our Master was hated *without a cause*, so let this be our experience, as far as possible. Let us see to it that the hatred, the malice, the envy and spirit of murder which is heaped upon us is entirely undeserved. Let it be our earnest endeavor that our lives, as fully as we are able, shall reflect the light of the Truth, shall be as noble and upright as possible in all things; that our words and actions shall glorify the Lord whom we serve, and be eloquent of our love for all mankind, especially for the Household of Faith, whether enlightened by Present Truth as yet or not.

In a very little while, we believe, we shall be glorified with our Lord, if faithful. Then a new Dispensation will be inaugurated; and those who hate us now, chiefly because blinded and misled by the Adversary, will bow their hearts before us as the Anointed of the Lord, and we shall have the blessed privilege of uplifting them, of enlightening and forgiving them, of helping them to attain the perfect image and likeness of our God.

HOW FAR ARE OUR EXPERIENCES SUPERVISED?

The question might arise with some, To what extent does God supervise the experiences of His children? The Master said, "The cup which My Father hath poured for Me, shall I not drink it?" Then how would it be with our cup? Is God not also our Father? Are not we members of Christ? Who, then, but the Father pours our cup? But we know that God is not a participator in any evil thing: how, then, has He anything to do with the evils that come to His people?

We answer, There are all manner of evil forces and influences surrounding us. These evil influences are of Satan and the fallen angels. "Our Adversary, the Devil, as a roaring lion walketh about, seeking whom he may devour," and the fallen angels also go about seeking how they may assault the children of the Lord. But they can have *no power whatever* against us except as the Father shall permit it. He will permit no evil influence to touch us to our injury as New Creatures, if we keep close to Him. And He will prevent harm or injury to our persons, unless he sees it will outwork good to us, if we are rightly exercised by it.

ALL THINGS WORKING FOR OUR GOOD

We have also the opposition of the world. But Satan, the Prince of this world, succeeds in blinding the minds of men, putting error for Truth, and darkness for light, in order to make the way of righteousness and obedience to God appear foolish and undesirable and extreme. Those who have more or less of the spirit of the world bring against the Lord's children in a perfectly natural way, aside from the direct influence of the Evil One and his cohorts, a certain amount of opposition. For instance, our Lord, as the time of His death drew near, was speaking to the Apostles about the great climax of His experiences—that He would go up to Jerusalem, that men would crucify Him, etc. Then Peter said, Lord, do not allow your mind to run in this channel! You have come to earth to be the great King! Do not let the thought get into your mind that you are to be crucified! And the Lord turned to Peter and said, "Get thee behind Me, adversary!" He was the Lord's adversary for the time.

So the world often become adversaries of the children of God in their zeal for what they think the more honorable and advantageous course for us. They urge, Do not take such an extreme view of things, and you will get along better. This is opposition to our consecration vow; and when we resist their well-meant efforts, they seek to thwart us and to bring us back to their views and ideas...

Our flesh is our constant, ever-present adversary. It tries to say, No, no! Do not carry this thing so far! Our flesh is inclined to be in harmony with the world. But our New Creature replies, Jesus walked the way of sacrifice and suffering—and St. Paul, St. Peter and St. John...

THE PRECIOUS PROMISES OUR STRENGTH

We are to remember, dear brethren—and this is to be a parting thought with us—that nothing can by any means harm us, aside from our Father's will. We are promised that not one hair of our heads shall be hurt—figuratively. And we have the guarantee from the Lord that "all things shall work together for good to those that love God," who put *their trust* in Him. Whatever would not be a blessing to us will not be permitted. Our trials and tribulations, rightly received, are to work out for us "a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory."—2Cor. 4:17,18...

THE NIGHT ALMOST OVER...

Persecution will come to those who have the courage of their convictions... But the night is almost over. Soon the Lord will rise up. He will stretch forth His hands—His Power—and His children shall be delivered."