

January 9

Who maketh thee to differ from another? And what hast thou that thou didst not receive? 1 Corinthians 4:7

ALL of the Lord's consecrated people should realize that they have come into the

R5284 "Who maketh thee to differ from another? And what hast thou that thou didst not receive?"—1 Cor. 4:7...

The Scriptures very properly declare that the race in Adam was sold under Sin six thousand years ago. In this sense, therefore, we were not born *free*, but slaves of Sin. Neither are we born *equal*. No two persons are exactly alike in opportunity, talent and ability...God made Adam *perfect*. All the imperfections which encumber the human race are the results of the dying process. Sin has made us all to differ, then, from the original image and likeness of God...

The Apostle says that it is God who has set the various members in the Body as it has pleased Him; and that both this setting, or apportioning, of the different members of the Body and the bringing forth of the different degrees of fruitage are manifestations of God's grace in our hearts. Thus we are made to differ from each other.

CAUSE OF DIVERSITY OF ATTAINMENTS

The matter of growth in the Holy Spirit is one that is dependent in large measure upon each one's zeal to know, to do, the will of God... Their progress is not attributable wholly to themselves, but especially to the favor of God.

The Apostle goes on to say, Ye are God's workmanship; "it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure." We could not do this work ourselves. The power that is working in us is of God. He is preparing a glorious Temple. He has provided who shall be the chief corner-stone of this Temple, and who shall be the members of the Temple class. We could not choose the place for ourselves. But in God's providence we each responded to the call to be a living stone. The stones were first cut out of the dark quarry, and now they are being shaped and prepared for places in the glorious building.

DIVERSITY OF ANOTHER KIND

The great Master-Workman is doing a work upon us. He is chiseling and fashioning us. He is making us what we are. Consequently there is to be no boasting. There is a certain amount of personality connected with each one, however, and if there is too much cross-grain in the stone it will be abandoned. As the Apostle Peter exhorts, we are to humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt us in due time. The same Apostle also reminds us that we should look up to God and give Him praise for all that we have and are.—1 Pet. 5:6; 4:11."

R271 "And, dearly beloved, many blows and much polishing must we have—much transforming we must undergo, and much conforming unto his example, under the direction of the great Master-builder... We will need to see that we have no cross-grained will of ours to oppose or thwart his will being done in us..."

R5284 (continued) "We are colaborers with God. We give God the praise that He has made us to differ from our former selves,

present grace and truth, not by their own wisdom nor by the wisdom of others, but through the wisdom and grace of the Lord. The same thought should be entertained by all who serve the Church of God as ministers, servants in any department, in any

that He is making us thus to differ more every day, and that He will continue the good work as the days go by and as we seek to do His will. What have we of ourselves? Nothing! We were wholly dead through Father Adam's disobedience; we were born in this condition, having no right to everlasting life. But God has a Plan which is world-wide in its scheme of blessing. He has professed the blessings of the highest feature of this Plan to us, and invited us to come to Him in advance of the world. And this we receive through His grace."

SM387 "WHAT HAVE WE THAT WE HAVE NOT RECEIVED?" ...In these words of our text there is a thought which should help us toward humility, one of the graces of the Lord's Spirit, without which, He tells us, we could never be acceptable to Him as joint-heirs with our dear Redeemer in His glorious Kingdom... Everything that we possess -- every quality of character and of its development -- has come to us from the Lord; that we ourselves originated nothing whatever of which we could boast or of which we could be proud?—1 Cor. 4:7."

R2460 "What hast thou that thou didst not receive?" (1 Cor. 4:7), and the first response of his heart must be gratitude, thankfulness. It is this thankfulness which leads on to service, and to sacrifice in the Lord's cause as a manifestation of gratitude."

R5956 "It is a special privilege, indeed, to tell out the Message of God's grace to all who have a hearing ear... The Lord declares that all who are His consecrated people and who receive the begetting of the holy Spirit have, through it, the anointing to preach the Good Tidings to the meek and to bind up the broken-hearted! (Isaiah 61:1)..."

Old as the Message is, it is so new and wonderful, if rightly presented, as to awaken astonishment in the honest-hearted who hear. They wonder, how did this ordinary man (or woman) ever come to understand and be able so beautifully to portray these wonderful things? Perhaps they give a hint of their surprise. Then comes a danger-moment for taking the disease of spiritual pride. Just a little swing of the mind; and you think that it is wonderful that even you should know about such things when the great mass of mankind have not the remotest conception of them, and that even some of the ablest and most talented ministers of the Word of God are ignorant respecting these things in the Bible.

If you are taking the disease of spiritual pride you will doubtless feel a straightening of your back. You are beginning to feel more important, and to look more dignified and to feel that, after all, you are somebody great. Your voice indicates this, too; and your hearer notices it. Then he begins to feel that it is not the Word of the Lord, but that, as you seem to admit, it is something that you made up--something that you are responsible for, and he thinks less of it on that account.

The proper attitude, as all will agree, is that the Lord's people should feel greatly

manner responsible to the Lord for their position in the household of faith, and their opportunities to serve as the Lord's mouth-pieces should be felt and confessed. But failure to confess it implies a failure rightly to appreciate it. Z.'03-430 R3278

humbled instead of greatly *exalted* and heady in respect to these opportunities for telling the Truth to others. We should feel our unworthiness. We should realize that the Plan is not ours; that we have merely heard of it ourselves; that it is really God's Plan; that we are honored as His servants to tell it out. But if we allow any impression to go out that it is by any wisdom on our part, or any skill, that the beauty is seen in the Message, then to that extent we are taking glory to ourselves which belongs to the Lord, and doing injury to ourselves proportionately by failing to demonstrate our worthiness to be used by the Lord in the present and in the future. The wonderful privilege of speaking as ambassadors for the Lord, to tell of His greatness and Plan should humble us with the thought that He has privileged us, whereas He has angels, who excel in strength and whom He might have used in communicating this most wonderful Message."

ANY DISPOSITION TO BOAST NOT A GOOD SIGN

(Mat 6:1-4 KJV) "Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them: otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven. (2) Therefore when thou doest thine alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. (3) But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth: (4) That thine alms may be in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret himself shall reward thee openly."

R3150 "The Apostle declares that if he should give all of his goods to feed the poor—keeping nothing back—and yet do this without proper love as the mainspring to the conduct, it would profit him nothing... It implies that other motives are active in us, tending to neutralize in the Lord's esteem even services and sacrifices performed in his name and upon worthy objects. Let us be on guard against these neutralizing influences, and earnestly seek to be whole-hearted, full of love;—that our every service of the Lord and of the brethren and of the truth be from a pure heart, free from personal ambition, pride, etc."

R3542 "It is difficult for us to gage our own hearts thoroughly and hence we should use great charity in measuring the hearts and intentions of others, and should err rather on the side of too great sympathy and leniency than on the side of too strong condemnation... The human heart is exceedingly deceitful-- that it needs scrutinizing carefully lest, under the cloak of something good, it might harbor qualities which without that cloak we would despise or spurn.

As further illustrating this subject, and as helping us each and all to apply the lesson personally, we relate a dream told by a Scotch minister, Horatius Bonar, shortly before his death. He dreamed that his zeal was represented in a package of considera-

ble size and weight, and that some angels came to it and weighed it and assured him that it was full weight, an hundred pounds—all that was possible. In his dream he was greatly pleased with this report. They next determined to analyze it. They put it into a crucible and tested it in various ways and then reported the result thus: "Fourteen parts selfishness; fifteen parts sectarianism; twenty-two parts ambition; twenty-three parts love to man; twenty-six parts love to God." Awakening he realized that it was but a dream, yet felt greatly humbled, and doubtless was profited by it throughout the remainder of life. That dream may be equally profitable to each of us in leading us to a close inspection of the motives which lie beyond our words and thoughts and doings—especially beyond our service for the Lord and for the brethren."

R1159 "Let each servant who desires to stand approved of God, examine his own heart, analyze his own zeal, his own motives."

R5955 "Of all their temptations and beguilements, the sin of spiritual pride is probably one of the most dangerous... This spiritual sickness, unless curbed, would surely lead on to the Second Death..."

When you feel that your attendance at meetings, your reading of so many pages of SCRIPTURE STUDIES per day, your distribution of so many tracts, or your circulation or loaning of so many books, are matters to be boasted of—then take care!... Any disposition to boast of the matter should lead you to a careful scrutiny of thought—the motives lying behind these activities in the Lord's service...

We have nothing whereof to boast. If we gave all of our goods to feed the spiritually poor, all our time to circulating the Truth, and all of our energy to the honoring of the Lord's name, we should feel that, having done all, we had not really profited our Lord, but merely found an opportunity of showing Him a little of the devotion of our hearts in acknowledgment of the numberless blessings already received...

Another form of this disease of spiritual pride manifests itself in a hypercritical attitude of mind. When one attends a testimony meeting, or a Berean class, and hears no real good testimony but his own, hears no proper answer except his own to any of the questions, never sees an Elder in the chair who knows how to lead a meeting anyway—these should be considered dangerous symptoms of spiritual pride...

THE GREAT NECESSITY FOR SELF-EXAMINATION

But how shall we safeguard ourselves against this spiritual pride, knowing as we do its insidious character and evil influence? How may we know that we are keeping ourselves in the love of God and not straying away toward spiritual pride?...

Not only go to Him at the opening of each day and ask for Divine wisdom and supervision, and then through the day seek to live in accordance with that prayer, but additionally at the close of the day we have recommended a special self-inspection as respects the things done, the things neglected that should have been done, and the things done that should not have been done, in accordance with our vows of consecration to the Lord. If these reckonings and balancing every night with the Lord con-

tinue, and if they are done honestly, by a conscience that is not perverted, but that balances truly, we may surely expect that such, in harmony with the Lord's Word, will be keeping themselves in the love of God. They will be growing in grace, growing in knowledge, growing in love; and "the Wicked One will not touch them."

But let us not forget that while we are to exercise great leniency in viewing the words and deeds of others, ascribing only good intentions where they are professed, we are to scrutinize with all of our might our own hearts, our own intentions."

(Php 2:3 KJV) "...In lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves."

BEWARE OF PRIDE IN THE HEART

R5000 "*Every one that is proud in heart is an abomination to the Lord.*"—Pro. 16:5 ...

PRIDE IS VERY DECEITFUL and frequently cloaks or covers itself with humility. Because of our own imperfections it is well for us not to become *judges* of others, but merely limit our judgment to the outward manifestations. The Lord says, "By their *fruits* ye shall know them." (Matt. 7:20) We are to judge the outward conduct, but we cannot go beyond and say what is of the *heart*. Errors of judgment are not an abomination to the Lord. He may look upon mistakes with sympathetic eyes...

People with small self-esteem are often taken to be proud, when it is really not the case. In trying to look as though they were somebody they will carry themselves as though they thought they were everybody. Such persons are simply laboring in an unfavorable condition in which they were born. We cannot think that the Lord would abominate them. They are very often little to themselves and very humble with the Lord. Yet they try to make themselves appear in as favorable a manner as possible. We must admit that there is a propriety in this to a certain extent. It is wise for them to try to overcome their weaknesses of nature. They should try to think soberly of themselves (that is, to be of sound mind), and they should try not to overdo matters. They must act with meekness, as well as feel and think meekly...

Our thought, then, is that in this text "The proud in heart" are the haughty-minded—those who feel haughty toward others and are not sympathetic, who think of themselves more highly than they ought to think, who despise others. The heart of such a one is not that which God could love or that anyone could love; *it is an abomination in the Lord's sight.*

WHY PRIDE IS AN ABOMINABLE TRAIT

An abomination is that which is extremely displeasing—that which is repulsive—that which a person should not wish to entertain—should not harbor—must reprove. There *must be some reason* why God declares Himself thus in opposition to pride. We perceive that no one really has anything whereof to be proud. As the Apostle suggests in one place (1 Cor. 4:7), "What hast thou that thou didst not receive? Now, if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory as if thou hadst not received it?" What have we that we have not received of the Lord? If whatever we have received is a gift, where is our right to be proud of it? Evidently, such would be a very wrong condition of

mind to be in—to be proud of things not our own, not of ourselves, but a gift.

There is, therefore, no reason for any to be proud; but there is every reason to be thankful to the Great Giver of all good. And that which is true of us is true also of the angels. Hence, there is nothing in all the Universe for any of God's creatures to be proud of. Whatever conditions they are in are not of themselves. God seems to have arranged the conditions for humility, so that there could be *no ground* for pride.

Pride is merely selfishness, self-laudation; and selfishness is another name for sin. Sin and selfishness, therefore, are in opposition to the Divine Character and the Divine Plan—totally in opposition to it. It is, therefore, the right and proper thing that God should have the proud in detestation. Not having used His blessings aright, they could not have His favor. Whether they be proud of mental attainments, proud of physical strength, proud of wealth or ancestry, or proud that their "ancestors were monkeys," matters not. It is all pride, and an abomination to the Lord.

THE MOST DETESTABLE FORM OF PRIDE

But evidently the most detestable form of pride is *pride in the Church*—as though we had made the Plan and could boast in it! We do, indeed, see that anyone making the Plan might justly feel proud of it. But when we remember that none of us made the Plan, but that we are privileged to see it, we should be filled the more with humility, and should try day by day to better glorify His Name for the blessings which He has provided for the whole world.

We cannot suppose that any kind of pride would be more detestable in God's sight than pride of the Truth. If anyone should continue in such a course, manifestly it would lead him out of the light. We see this principle illustrated well in the case of Satan. Noble, grand, he allowed pride to enter his heart and said, "I will ascend above the others; I will have an *empire of my own.*" And this pride made him the opponent of God. (Isa. 14:12-17.) He is known in the Scriptures as the Adversary, Satan, the Devil.

All those who have the spirit of pride fail to recognize that "every good and perfect gift cometh down from the Father of Lights." (Jas. 1:17.) Every such one, therefore, has the spirit of the Adversary instead of the Spirit of God. If it be allowed to grow and bring forth fruit, it will lead eventually to the Second Death. It is appalling to see the nature of the temptations that come to God's people! But we are not to judge their hearts, to determine whether it is a pride of heart or not; for it may be merely a deception for a time. And even though they may miss the "high calling," they may get a place in the "great company." And when we see that the conduct is not at all in accord with what we should expect in those blessed with the Truth, it should make us all search our own hearts to see to what extent we have the *same traits of pride.*"

R4502 "My brethren, be not many masters (teachers), knowing that we (teachers) shall receive the greater condemnation (judgment, or trial). For in many things we offend all"—we are all imperfect.—James 3:1...

The majority of those who appear to stumble and fall from the truth are of this class... Whoever enters upon the work of

teaching should do so with a realization of the grave responsibility which he assumes, and the temptations or trials which beset his pathway toward the heavenly city...

If he find in himself, in either great or small measure, a spirit of ambition, a spirit of pride, a spirit of boastfulness, the desire to lord it over the brethren of the household of faith, then let him fear. With trembling heart either let him resign the service, or at the throne of grace rid himself, purge himself, of the evil ambitions of his heart, and be filled with the Spirit of the Master. That holy Spirit is the spirit of meekness, gentleness, patience, longsuffering, brotherly kindness, love; to desire simply and only the glory of God and the blessing of his people—the spirit that is ready to sacrifice self at any moment for the peace of the Body of Christ, or the assistance of the flock...

The besetments of teachers are, (1) pride, and (2) arrogance.

(1) Encouraged by the laudatory words of the brethren, the tendency is for them to feel that they are somebodies, and to attribute the success of their efforts to natural ability, talent, etc., rather than to the wonderful power and beauty of the Truth...

A proper allegiance to the Lord should lead us to hide ourselves, that all the glory and honor might go to the great Author of the Plan of Salvation... With these thoughts impressed upon our minds, the greater the

service permitted us, the greater should be our humility and our realization of unworthiness to be the mouthpieces of the great Lord of Glory...

(2) Arrogance we mentioned as one of the besetments. Alas! how inappropriate it is that any, because of being honored of the Lord as his mouthpiece for his message, should attempt to take the place of his Lord, and to act arrogantly toward his brethren, or, as the Apostle expresses it, to "Lord it over God's heritage." (1 Pet. 5:3) The Scriptures set before us the very reverse standard, namely, that those brethren permitted to serve as teachers, so far from being lords of the Church, are merely its *servants*. While they are servants of God, the Divine direction in the matter is to be sought through the Church. In a word, the Church's election of elders, pastors, or teachers is the election of those whom it esteems to be *the Lord's choice* for its service—to serve it in holy things, to minister to it the grace of God, to dispense for it the spiritual food of the Divine Word.

The Church has been responsible in a considerable measure for the stumbling of those whom it has recognized as Elder-brothers and teachers. While they should not think evil, surmise evil, surmise pride, or surmise arrogance, they should be so wakeful to their own duties and responsibilities toward these brethren that they would not

unduly flatter them, nor *unduly* encourage them, nor *stimulate* them to manufacture new light.

On the contrary, all who are spiritual should be helpful to those elder-brothers; should compliment them on their loyalty to the Lord, and to the old, old story, rather than commend them for fanciful fictions..."

R5982 "Let us remember that a correct understanding of the Lord's Word is not enjoyed by all the educated and talented, but comes to those who are of a meek and teachable heart, who study the Lord's Word and who live it and absorb its spirit. Thus we have illustrated to us the Divine declaration, "Not by might [greatness], nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord of Hosts."—Zechariah 4:6...

It is in view of these things that we feel justified in urging upon the Classes of Bible Students everywhere that they esteem with double honor such Elder brethren as manifest the Spirit of the Lord, the spirit of meekness, the spirit of gentleness, the spirit of patience, the spirit of long-suffering, the spirit of brotherly-kindness, and the spirit of love—those who have a good knowledge of the Word of God and of the Divine Plan, and who manifest an appreciation of the Spirit of Truth, the Spirit of holiness, and who have an aptness to teach; and that on the contrary, all others be refused."

R3277 (From Harvest Truth Database V8.0 2013)

"THE FEAR OF THE LORD IS THE BEGINNING OF WISDOM"

—1 KINGS 3:14,15.—DECEMBER 6.—

SOLOMON began to reign when he was twenty years of age, and under unfavorable conditions in several respects. His elder brothers were ambitious for the throne, and the chief General of King David's army, Joab, had been deflected from the course of fidelity to the King. So had Abiathar, one of the chief priests, so that the young King had not a path of roses before him. The loyalty of his heart to the Lord and to the duties imposed upon him by his divine appointment to the kingship are remarkable for one so young. They clearly indicate the good training he enjoyed, and his father's wisdom in putting him under the tuition of the Prophet Nathan. Amongst the earliest acts of Solomon's reign was the calling of a religious convention, to which was assembled the chief men of the nation at Gibeon. Solomon realized the importance of religion to himself and to the people—that God must be first; and this assemblage was doubtless intended to stir up the religious enthusiasm of the nation, as well as to convince all that Solomon acknowledged the Lord, and that the course of the new kingdom would be after the same pattern as that of his father—loyalty to the Lord as the great King, and recognition of himself as merely his servant and representative.

It is generally understood that the thousand burnt offerings sacrificed on this occasion were burnt offerings only in the sense that they were offered in connection with a religious ceremony in acknowledgment of God, that certain of the inward parts were burned upon the altar, and that the shoulder of each was devoted to the priesthood. It is generally understood that the multitudes feasted upon the remainder of the flesh of these sacrificed animals. This custom was not only recognized in Israel but in various heathen nations, each acknowledging its own gods. Thus Croesus, King of Lydia, "offered up three thousand of every kind of sacrificial beasts," to the god of the Delphian oracle, as Herodotus relates. Xerxes, according to the same authority, "made an offering of a thousand oxen to the Trojan Minerva." Whether the heathen nations copied these sacrifices from the Jews or not cannot be positively stated, but the earliest and most authentic histories seem to so indicate.

It was while Solomon's mind was active in religious matters at Gibeon that the Lord appeared to him in a dream and asked him to choose what he would of any gift. We are not from this to infer that all dreams are of the Lord, but simply to understand that God is able to use dreams when he so chooses to convey lessons and instructions to his people. Many illustrations of this might be sighted—for in-

stance, Joseph's dream Nebuchadnezzar's, Daniel's, Paul's, Peter's. We have the best of inspired assurance that these were really messages from the Lord, and hence are justified in attaching importance to them, believing in their fulfilment, etc. It is well to remember, however, that many dreams are simply operations of nature; that by reason of indigestion, or some other abnormal condition, one department of the brain seems to be awake while other departments are benumbed with sleep. Such dreams are apt to be inconsistent and unseasonable, because the judgment and counterpoise of reason from various standpoints and various sides are lacking. Such dreams are inconsistent and meaningless. Another kind of dream or vision should be mentioned, namely, those which are quite evidently inspired by evil spirits and which not infrequently represent the Lord as speaking to the individual, directing, commanding, etc.; these are in line with trance-medium development of spiritualism. The authorship of dreams being so much in doubt, as well as the fact that with the death of the apostles plenary inspiration ceased and the inspired class canonized, should make us very dubious, very skeptical, in respect to dreams that might come to any of us. Hence every dream and the lesson which it would seem to inculcate should be considered quite subordinate to the written Word of God. If they speak not in harmony with this Word, it is because there is no light in them. Those who are misled by dreams ascribe to them authority of a special revelation, and in so doing are not wise, but are greatly in danger of being side-tracked by our wily Adversary.

Solomon was living in a time before the Scriptures were completed, at a time when it could not be said that the Scriptures are able to make wise, sufficient that the man of God may be thoroughly furnished. (2 Tim. 3:17.) Besides, the declaration is that his dream or vision was from the Lord. Even then we see that the Lord was not operating contrary to the freedom of Solomon's will, because had the young King's mind been full of ambition for power, for victories over his enemies or for great riches, undoubtedly in the dream he would have responded by asking the things uppermost in his heart. His reply shows us that he was full of appreciation of the great work which God had committed to his care, that he recognized that his father's success had been of the Lord and not of his own power, and that whatever others thought of his father's real sentiments. Solomon recognized his loyalty to God, to truth, to righteousness, to uprightness of heart. In acknowledging the Lord's kindness in raising him to the throne he was acknowledging that God was the real King, that he merely sat upon "the throne of the kingdom of the

Lord." This is further evidenced by the words, "God, thou hast made thy servant King instead of David my father." What a strength it gave this young man to realize that he was in God's hands; that it was not merely to his father's foresight and wisdom that he came to the throne, nor by the superior prestige of his father's influence over the army and the majority of the people, but of the Lord's providences.

Similarly, this should give strength to ⁽¹⁾all of the Lord's consecrated people who realize that they have come into the present grace and Truth not by their own wisdom nor by the wisdom of others, but through the wisdom and grace of the Lord. The same thought should be entertained by all who serve the Church of God as ministers, servants in any department, in any manner responsible to the Lord for their position in the household of faith, and their opportunities to serve as the Lord's mouthpieces should be felt and confessed. But failure to confess it even implies a failure rightly to appreciate it.

The humility of the king is beautifully indicated by his declaration, "I am but a little child and know not how to order my course in life, my outgoings and incomings," and yet he was in the midst of the Lord's people, the center or head of the nation—though he felt himself incapable of the proper management of these high and responsible duties. He did not say "my people," but "thy people which thou hast chosen." We feel like suggesting a lesson here to some of the elders of the Lord's flock, who, after the manner of the Babylonians, are inclined to speak of the congregations to whom they minister, as "my people," "my flock," "my church." They probably do not realize how inappropriate are such expressions; that if natural Israel was the Lord's people, whom he had chosen, how much more the antitypical Israel should be thought of and spoken of as the Lord's people, the Lord's flock. The very fact that any one would speak of the congregation of the Lord's people as his own indicates a dangerous condition of mind and a tendency to be heady, high-minded, injurious, detrimental to the interests of spiritual Zion. Those who have had such a tendency of mind should correct themselves with fasting and prayer, peradventure their wrongdoing may be forgiven of the Lord and they may be kept from stumbling into further self-assurance. And the Lord's flock everywhere should be quick to resent any such human ownership or control. A failure to quickly discern and properly resent such self-assurance on the part of leaders is an indication that the flocks to whom they minister are not fully appreciating and enjoying the liberty with which Christ is pleased to make free all who are truly his sheep and who acknowledge him as their chief Shepherd.

In speaking of the numbers of Israel, Solomon used a form of expression common in his day for a large multitude—namely, a great people that cannot be numbered or counted for multitude. It is estimated that the numbers at this time were about 6,000,000, and probably without the conveniences at hand for taking an enumeration it was actually impossible to determine the number of people—the facilities for keeping track of births and deaths being much less convenient and much less accurate than at the present time.

With this preamble as showing his estimate of his own incapacity and of the greatness of the work, and that the people were the Lord's people, and that he himself was the Lord's appointment to be the King, Solomon now comes to the expression of his choice, namely, "an understanding heart to judge thy people, that I may discern between good and evil; for who is able to judge this thy great people?" Solomon recognized that the most necessary thing for the welfare of the nation was righteous judgment of the various questions pertaining to the nation's welfare as well as those affecting individual matters. Doubtless he had come to realize, as his subsequent written proverbs clearly indicate, that selfishness is a foe to justice, and that the very wisest and best of governments need to be carefully guarded lest the selfish interests of some should work injury to others—to many. The whole world realizes this today, and if we would ask civilized humanity in general what is the one great need of the world, the answer unquestionably would be, We need to have righteousness established between nations, between individuals, and we need wisdom to discern the right from the wrong, the false from the true, the pure from the evil. Many of the wisest people of the world, although realizing the needs of the present time, have reached the conclusion that it is useless to attempt to secure even-handed justice in all particulars, amongst all classes; and those who are best informed respecting the teachings of the divine Word have been led to pray with greater earnestness than ever before, "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." They

realize that earthly beings are all more or less fallen, more or less selfish, and that a crying need of the world today is for a perfect government, backed up by full power to enact, and to execute as well, laws of righteousness which shall control the whole world, subduing evil, exalting good. The antitype of Solomon, the Prince of Peace, Messiah, is to accomplish this in the world in the Father's good time, in the Millennial age.

The Lord was pleased with Solomon's choice; he could not have chosen better. Some have suggested that he might have chosen spiritual things, and thus have made a still wiser, better choice; but such forget that the spiritual things were not open to be understood or to be chosen or to be acquired in Solomon's day, nor until the great atonement for sin had been made—until the call went forth inviting believers who had fled from sin and who had laid hold on the hopes set before them in Christ to become self-sacrificers with him, joint-participants with him in the holy Spirit of adoption and ultimately to be joint-heirs with him in the kingdom. Solomon, therefore, chose as wisely as was possible for him to choose of the things that were known to him and attainable in his day.

It was just like our heavenly Father to give Solomon the riches and honors which he had not asked as a reward of his appreciation of wisdom. Indeed it is Solomon himself who expresses the thought that riches and honors are in the right hand of wisdom as her reward. It is thus implied that the Lord in giving to anyone wisdom, grants also the rewards which wisdom brings—namely, riches and honor. Some one then may inquire, How comes it that those who now seek the wisdom from above, the highest of all wisdom, first pure, then peaceable, easy to be entreated and full of mercy and good fruits—how is it that such very rarely get earthly riches and honors? We reply, that in Solomon's time the Lord was dealing with natural fleshly Israel, and his promises were along natural fleshly lines, but that during this Gospel dispensation he is dealing with spiritual Israel and his promises and blessings are along spiritual lines. The wisdom that his people are to seek and to enjoy, the wisdom that cometh from above, is not the wisdom of this world, as the Apostle clearly points out that the riches and honors which are in the hands of this heavenly wisdom, which comes to the Lord's consecrated Church, are spiritual riches and spiritual honors which the world sees not and appreciates not in this present time—which, like the wisdom itself, can be appreciated only by those whose eyes of understanding have been opened and who can and do thus discern the riches of God's grace toward his elect Church, which "eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither hath entered into the heart of [the] natural man, but which God hath revealed unto us by his Spirit."—1 Cor. 2:9,10.

The riches and honors which came to Solomon incidentally with his wisdom are world-renowned, and the blessing of long life which was made conditional was partly fulfilled. Solomon lived to be sixty, whereas, we believe, under this promise he would have lived until eighty had he been more obedient to the divine will, but with him as with many others, prosperity was much more difficult to stand than adversity.

When Solomon awoke and realized that these things had been a dream, a visitation of the lord, he returned to Jerusalem, the Capital city where the ark was located, and presented himself as a sacrificer, offering burnt offerings and peace offerings and making a feast for his servants, and realizing that the Lord was prospering him in the matter to which he had called him, he evidently was full of joy and satisfaction and peace. So it should be with all the Lord's people who have been called to be heirs of God, joint-heirs with Jesus Christ their Lord, for "an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled and fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you who are kept through faith and by the power of God unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time." They, too, should realize that the proper way to show their appreciation of the Lord's promised blessings is by a manifestation of faith in him, confidently trusting and rejoicing in these. Wherever we find fear, trepidation, unrest, we may know that these are symptoms of some spiritual malady; because whatever may be the outward disturbances, troubles, vexations, it is the privilege of those who are the Lord's to have the peace of God which passeth all understanding continually ruling in their hearts. It is their privilege to realize fully, thoroughly that all things are working together for good to them because they love the Lord, and with this thought of their call to the Kingdom and of the Lord's willingness that they should serve therein, and with the assurance that he will give grace and glory and no good thing withhold from those who walk uprightly, we certainly have reason for thankfulness and heart-rejoicing before him.

⁽¹⁾ Jan. 9 Manna, 1 Cor. 4:7