

January 29

The fear [reverence] of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. Psalm 111:10

THIS is the only proper attitude of the creature toward the Creator, the Author of our being, and the Creator, Preserver and Lord of the whole universe.

When He speaks, therefore, our ears should be reverently attentive to His voice, and every power alert to do His bidding. Our safety, our happiness, and that nobility of character which prompts to love and gratitude, and which promptly and wisely heeds instruction and advances

in knowledge and wisdom, all depend primarily upon our supreme reverence for the Lord. And therefore the Lord would foster and cultivate in us that becoming, filial reverence that is due to His name. Z.'96-155 R2002:3

R5286 *"Let us have grace, whereby we may offer service well-pleasing to God, with reverence and awe."--Hebrews 12:28. R.V...*

The Body of the Spiritual Seed of Abraham, of which Christ Jesus is the Head--His faithful, saintly followers -- are now being tested as respects their worthiness for so high a station. St. Paul's words in our Golden Text are very forcefully applied to these: "Let us have grace, whereby we may offer service well-pleasing to God, with reverence and awe."

PSALMS 111:10

PD1 "The reverence of Jehovah is the beginning of wisdom." Only the foolish say in their heart, "There is no God." "Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge." "The heavens declare the glory of God."--Psalms 111:10; 14:1; 19:1,2

(Psa 8:3-4 KJV) "When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained; {4} What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?"

R1814 "GREAT AND MARVELOUS ARE THY WORKS LORD GOD ALMIGHTY"

While the revelations of divine wisdom and grace concerning the intelligent creation of God com-

mand our deepest reverence, no less should his mighty works in the physical creation inspire us with reverence and awe."

R4462 "Our coming to the Lord was inspired by reverence for him so our faith in Christ was based on reverence for God's message of grace. Then consecration followed, a result of further reverence. Then reverence aided in perfecting our sacrifices and kept us back from presumptuous sins and helped to fix the characters God had predestinated should alone be acceptable to the elect. In such faithful ones personal ambition will not only be subjected to the divine arrangement, but will be crushed out, "mortified," eradicated, and the highest ambition of the heart will be that expressed by our Lord, "I delight to do thy will O my God; yea, thy law is written in my heart." (Psa. 40:8) Such delight in sacrifice in the Lord's service and never forget that obedience is still more highly prized of the Lord than sacrifice. Such the Lord will keep by his own power, "As the apple of his eye," "In the hollow of his hand." (Deut. 32:10)"

R4455 "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom."

...It was necessary that we should reverence before we had a desire to come to the Lord... Our reverence increased with every step of our progress, with every increase of our know-

ledge... Finally, overwhelmed with an appreciation of God's goodness to us, we were ready to hear with appreciation and to obey the Apostle's exhortation, "Present your bodies living sacrifices, holy and acceptable to God and your reasonable service."—Rom. 12:1...

Every failure on our part after reaching consecration and Divine acceptance and begetting of the Holy Spirit would be because of a loss of reverence or of a failure to continue to grow therein... Neglect of Bible study and prayer implies a loss of reverence, or a deficiency of reverence. Likewise a failure to heed the Divine Word, which is able to make us wise unto salvation, or a neglect to assemble ourselves as Divinely exhorted would mean a lack of reverence for the Divine wisdom which gave the exhortation... Carelessness on the part of the Church in respect to the election of its servants, whereby sometimes unsuitable brethren were chosen to be the Lord's mouthpieces, was the result of a lack of reverence for the Lord, for had he been properly revered his instruction on the subject would have been more particularly sought and more carefully followed... Deflections from the Gospel message might be safely attributed to an insufficiency of reverence for the Lord's Word, which allowed self-seeking ambition to draw aside from the narrow way of

humility and service and self-sacrifice. In a word, practically every difficulty with which God's people have to contend is the result of an insufficiency of reverence."

R1391 Psa 19:7-11 "The testimony of the Lord is sure [not doubtful, but clear and positive], making wise [not the heady and wilful who have plans and theories of their own and who do not submit themselves to the will and plan of God, but] the simple" [the single hearted who have no will or plan of their own which they wish the Lord to adopt, but who seek the Lord's will only].

The statutes [*piqqudim*--appointments: the appointed plans] of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart." Yes, indeed, God's glorious, appointed plan of the ages rejoices the hearts of all who have come to a knowledge of it.

"The fear [*yirah*--reverence] of the Lord is clean [a pure and lofty sentiment based upon love and gratitude, and not upon a servile recognition of tyranny and power], enduring forever."

(Psa 103:17-18 Lamsa) *"The mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that reverence him, and his righteousness to children's children, {18} To such as keep his covenant, and to those that remember his commandments to do them."*

R1122 "This reasonable faith, rooted and grounded in the divine testimonies and promises, calls into exercise all the noblest faculties of our moral nature and centers the affections upon the great Author of all truth, whom to know is to love and worship and adore. And this faith, working by love, purifies the heart and trans-

forms the character into the glorious likeness of the blessed God.

Such is the power of love and of a sound mind. It serves God from purest filial love and gratitude, and the only fear it knows is that filial fear of failure to fully manifest love and thankfulness, which is the fear mentioned by the Psalmist (111:10) as the beginning of wisdom. Perfect love casts out all servile fear, and brings the studious and devoted servants of God into active co-operation with all his benevolent plans for the blessing of all his creatures. This is the kind of service God accepts: Those who worship him acceptably must worship him in spirit and in truth -- in love and verity, and not hypocritically through fear.

Such results never have been and never can be produced by the "orthodox" doctrine of fear [eternal torment]..."

(Job 28:28 KJV) *"And unto man he said, Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding."*

R1518 "The reverence of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy is understanding." "The reverence of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and instruction."—Prov. 9:10; 1:7; Job 28:28; Psa. 111:10 ... All of the fallen human nature have more or less of the earthly wisdom of selfishness, which disposition continually gravitates lower and lower unless it is resisted and displaced by the heavenly wisdom whose fruits are love, mercy and truth. This heavenly wisdom, we are told, has its beginning in the reverence of the Lord. That is, we must look away from our own narrow thoughts, plans and schemes and allow our minds to

dwell upon the grandeur of God's benevolent, loving and glorious character until a gleam of his glory awakens in us a feeling of admiration, veneration and love, and then of longing to be conformed to his image. And while we, as God's *faithful* children, thus look and hold ourselves in position to receive the impressions from above, the divine likeness is traced upon our hearts, as we study God's revelation; and the heavenly wisdom begins to manifest itself in the peaceable fruits of righteousness.

Those who thus reverence him, the Lord is pleased to recognize as his sons, and to acquaint them with his plans for their salvation..."

DIVINE SECRETS REVEALED

R2209 *"The Secret of the Lord is with them that fear him; and he will show them his Covenant."--Psa. 25:14...*

Our text speaks merely of the fear (reverence) of the Lord, but, as we have seen, this reverence *continued* leads into the very deepest work of grace obtainable; --to a fullness of consecration to the Father's will and service. It is of this class who fear (reverence) the Lord that we read,--"They that feared the Lord spake often one to another, and the Lord hearkened and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared [reverenced] the Lord, and that thought upon his word [esteeming his Name, his Honor, his Will above any earthly, sectarian name or work]. And they shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them [they "shall be accounted worthy to escape" the severity of the great time of trouble with

which this age shall end], as a man spareth *his own son* that serveth him." These who reverence the Lord, in this full and Scriptural sense, are surely the Lord's "elect," "the body of Christ," the "overcomers," the "little flock," the "royal priesthood," who shall reign with Christ, and with him bless all the families of the earth in due time.

The privilege of this "royal priesthood" to know "the Secret of the Lord," to comprehend "the deep things of God" hidden from others, was beautifully symbolized and typified in the privileges of the Jewish priesthood. When the Tabernacle was set up, with its beautiful golden furniture, lamp stand, table of shew bread, golden altar, etc., all symbolizing spiritual things, they were covered over, hidden, not only from the ordinary Israelite, but even from the Levitical "servants" of the Tabernacle, who were not even permitted to *look therein*. The privilege of seeing those typical secret things, reserved exclusively for the priests, thus typified "the royal priesthood" and their exclusive privilege of understanding the mysteries of God, his Secret."

R1532 "Knowledge of God is not only an intellectual knowledge of his great and loving plan: it includes also a personal

acquaintance with God, a heart to heart communion and fellowship with him--an established sympathy of love and common interest and co-operation. Such a knowledge or acquaintance with God is gained through the study of his precious word with reverence and diligence, through the personal application of the principles of that word in every day life and through secret prayer and communion with God."

(1 Pet 3:15-16 KJV) "But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear [margin--reverence]: {16} Having a good conscience; that, whereas they speak evil of you, as of evildoers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ."

R2957 "Stephen's defence before the Sanhedrin Court turned out to be a defence of the truth, rather than of himself. Full of zeal for the Lord and for a proper use of his privileges as a minister of the truth, Stephen was courageous--seemingly to the extent of ignoring all thought of personal safety...

The charge against Stephen was blasphemy against the holy place, Jerusalem (and especially its holy Temple, which sanctified

it), and against the law of Moses. Passing by the charges, Stephen went into a history of the Lord's leading of Israel from the time of Abraham down to his own time; and thus showed his full faith in the holy places and in the promises and presence of God, which made them holy. His familiarity with the facts, and the reverent manner in which he stated them, and the conclusions which he drew from them, must have shown his judges clearly that so far from being a blasphemer of Moses and his institutions and holy things, he was a firm believer in these, and a zealous advocate of them. So with us: when discussing holy things there may at times be those who, intentionally or ignorantly, will attribute to us evil conditions or evil motives. With us, as with Stephen, the best manner of dealing with such charges is to show, without ostentation, and by deeply reverent manner, that we are trusting implicitly in the gracious promises of God, and that we appreciate fully his various providential leadings and dealings in the past, not only as respects ourselves, but with all his holy people. Now, as in Stephen's case, the best answer respecting our fidelity to the holy things is represented in our knowledge of them, and in the reverent manner in which we mention them."

THE special teaching of the incident of this lesson is the reverence of the Lord. "Holy and reverend is his name;" and "the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain."* "God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints, and to be had in reverence of all them that are about him." When God appeared unto Moses in the burning bush to speak with him, he commanded him, saying, "Put off thy shoes from off thy feet; for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground." So also when he appeared on Mount Sinai in the sight of all the people of Israel, enveloped in a thick cloud, there were great demonstrations of awe-inspiring solemnity, and special restrictions to guard against any irreverent familiarity. Israel was also specially commanded to reverence his law and his sanctuary.--Psa. 111:9; Exod. 20:7; Psa. 89:7; Exod. 3:5; 19:11-13; Lev. 19:30.

Reverence is defined as a feeling of profound respect, often mingled with awe and affection; a feeling of worshipful regard when directed to the divine or sacred: also conduct inspired by, or conformed to, such feeling. "The fear [reverence] of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." (Psa. 111:10.) ^{1}This is the only proper attitude of the creature toward the Creator, the Author of our being, and the Creator, Preserver and Lord of the whole universe. When he speaks, therefore, our ears should be reverently attentive to his voice, and every power alert to do his bidding. Our safety, our happiness, and that nobility of character which prompts to love and gratitude, and which promptly and wisely heeds instruction and advances in knowledge and wisdom, all depend primarily upon our supreme reverence for the Lord. And therefore the Lord would foster and cultivate in us that becoming, filial reverence that is due to his name.

The ark of God was the symbol of the divine presence in Israel, and as such it was the most sacred thing about the typical tabernacle. It was made by divine direction, as was everything belonging to the tabernacle; and its place was in the holy of holies, where only the high priest (who represented Jesus, the great high priest) was permitted to enter; and that only once a year, on the day of atonement. As the symbol of the divine presence, like the divine presence itself, it was guarded from irreverent

handling, and also from the common view. Only the priests, who typically represented the body of Christ, the saints of this age, were permitted to see or to touch it. The Levites, who represented all justified believers of this age, were appointed solemnly and reverently to bear the ark when the Tabernacle was removed from place to place, but it must be first carefully covered by the priests; for even the Levites might not look upon it nor touch it.--Num. 4:15-20.

Previous to the event of this lesson religion was at a very low ebb in Israel, and for many years the ark of the covenant had been separated from its place in the tabernacle. As the visible symbol of the divine presence, wherever the ark went the power and favor of God went with it; as, for instance, when Israel crossed over Jordan on dry land, the waters parting before them as soon as its bearers reached the brink of the river; and again when the walls of Jericho fell before it and Israel had a great victory. But when Israel sinned against God, no such power accompanied the symbol. It was even permitted to fall into the hands of their enemies, and the Philistines were allowed to capture it while Israel suffered a great defeat. But though Israel was thus punished God did not long permit the sacred emblem of his presence to remain in Gentile hands, and the Philistines were punished for retaining it until they were glad to restore it again to Israel. In returning it there were no anointed priests among the heathen to cover it, nor Levites to bear it; so the Philistines placed it upon a new cart, and left the oxen without a driver to take their own course, and God guided them back to the land of Israel, to Beth-shemesh. Thus was the ark restored to his people. But the people of Beth-shemesh, ignoring the restrictions of the divine law with reference to the ark, presumed to look into it, and God punished them with a great slaughter in which fifty thousand and seventy men perished. Thus they were taught to fear the Lord and to reverence his commandments; and they said, "Who is able to stand before this holy Lord God, and to whom shall he [this symbol of his presence] go up from us? And they sent messengers to Kirjath-jearim....And the men of Kirjath-jearim came and fetched up the ark and brought it into the house of Abinadab...and sanctified Eleazer his son to keep the ark of the Lord." There it remained for twenty

* See our issue of May 15, '93.

^{1} Jan. 29 Manna, Psa. 111:10

years. (1 Sam. 6:1-21; 7:1,2.) The Lord's dealings with Israel were on the lines of the Law Covenant made with them at Mount Horeb. The lesson to us of the ^{2}New Covenant is that those favored by one part of God's covenants are held accountable proportionately. We are not, however, to think of those fifty thousand men as destroyed in the Second Death; for the trial of Israel under its Law Covenant was only typical, and did not decide the final destiny of all under it.

But when David was finally established upon the throne of all Israel he purposed to bring the ark up to Jerusalem, and to lead the people as a nation back to the hearty and reverent worship of God, the restoration of the sacred ark of the covenant being necessarily the first step to that end. He gathered together thirty thousand representative men of the nation thus to make the restoration a national act, and in so doing to call the whole people to a revival in the worship of God.

The method chosen for the conveyance of the ark to Jerusalem was not, however, according to the law which prescribed that it should be reverently borne by the Levites, but patterning after the example of the Philistines in returning it to Kirjath-jearim they set it upon a new cart drawn (probably) by oxen. While God tolerated the ignorance and inability of the Philistines, who were not his people, to comply with the requirements of his law in this matter he did not so regard the forgetfulness or carelessness of Israel, but gave them a severe reminder of his displeasure. In the midst of the general joy and rejoicing with music of many voices and all kinds of instruments the sudden jostling of the cart seemed to endanger the position of the ark so that Uzzah put forth his hand to steady it, when instantly he was stricken down dead.

This was a severe and a most necessary rebuke. It halted the procession, and was understood by the king and all the people as a rebuke to the whole nation in that they had ignored the commandment of the Lord and had failed to properly reverence the symbol of his presence. And the fear of the Lord fell upon the king and all the people; the music and the festivities were hushed; the multitudes dispersed and thoughtfully returned to their homes: and the king, fearing to continue his purpose of taking the ark to Jerusalem, turned aside and bore it to the house of Obed-edom, a Levite, who doubtless reverently received it; for we read that in consequence "the Lord blessed the house of Obed-edom and all that he had."--1 Chron. 13:13,14.

There the Ark remained for three months, while King David, still zealous for the Lord and anxious to lead the people to a closer observance of his worship was quietly studying the lesson of this strange providence. And it was told David, "The Lord hath blessed the house of Obed-edom, and all that pertaineth unto him, because of the ark of God." Then David read the lesson clearly, and he determined to act upon it at once--to carry out his original purpose of bringing up the ark to the chief, the capital city, to give it the chief place of honor in the whole nation, as he had before intended, and again to call the representatives of all the people together that the restoration might be a national act and lead to a great national revival of religion. But this time he would see to it that the symbol of the divine presence should be reverently borne according to the divine directions.

"And David made him houses in the city of David, and prepared a place for the ark of God, and pitched for it a tent. Then David said, None ought to carry the ark of God but the Levites: for them hath the Lord chosen to carry the ark of God, and to minister unto him forever...For because ye did it not at first, the Lord our God made a breach upon us, for that we sought him not after the due order. So the priests and the Levites sanctified themselves to bring up the ark of the Lord God of Israel. And the children of the Levites bare the ark of God upon their shoulders, with the staves thereon, as Moses commanded, according to the word of the Lord. Thus all Israel brought up the Ark of the covenant of the Lord with shouting, and with sound of the cornet, and with trumpets and with cymbals, making a noise with psalteries and harps."--1 Chron. 15:1,2,13-15,28.

"And it was so that when they that bare the ark had gone six paces he [David] sacrificed oxen and fatlings, and David danced before the Lord with all his might [another expressive symbol of joy], and David was girded with a linen ephod. So David and all the house of Israel brought up the ark of the Lord with shouting and with the sound of the trumpet."-- 2 Sam. 6:13-15.

While Israel was thus taught the reverence of the Lord, the lesson applies with equal force to the Church of the Gospel age. It is not our part to change one iota of the ordinances of God. We may not turn the ordinance of the baptism of believers into the sprinkling of infants, nor change the simplicity of the Lord's supper, or the time of its observance as indicated by its superseding the celebration of the typical passover. Nor have we a right to abate the just requirements of his holy law, nor

^{2} See New Covenant Clarification Volume 6 Foreword

to render null and void the authority of his precepts and instructions in order to please the worldly-minded. The law and the testimonies of God must be received into good and honest hearts without regard to human philosophies and idle speculations. The reverence of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom and blessed is the man that trusteth in him,

and to whom a "Thus saith the Lord" is the end of all controversy on every subject.

"If our lives were but more simple,
We should take him at his word;
And our lives would be all sunshine,
In the sweetness of our Lord."

R2053 "One of the peculiarities of our day, and particularly pointed out by the Apostle Paul (2 Tim. 3:1-5'), is the lack of reverence which manifests itself, not only in the world, but also amongst those associated as believers and in their families."

R5952 "Some are disposed even to speak jestingly of the Lord and the Scriptures. This is a dangerous practice. "The REVERENCE of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom"; and it must continue in us, and increase as the years go by, if we would make our calling and election sure to the glorious things which God has in reservation for them that love Him and reverence Him."

R2872 "It was a lack of reverence for the Lord that permitted mother Eve to be deceived and to become the first transgressor. It was a lack of reverence for the Lord that led our father Adam into disobedience, into practical suicide, because of his love for Eve, and because he had not yet learned the proper reverence for God which would have led him to be obedient and to trust the results of Eve's disobedience to divine wisdom. It was lack of reverence for the Lord which operated in Satan to an evil ambition, and thus to his fall. It was lack of reverence for the Lord and for his rules of government that permitted the angels of the first dispensation to leave their own condition, and thus to get into sin with humanity. It was a lack of rever-

ence for the Lord on the part of the world in general that caused the world to be full of violence and ready for destruction in the flood.

It was a proper reverence for the Lord that controlled Noah and his family, and kept them separate from the evil of their time, and that brought to them ultimately the divine blessing and preservation through the flood. It was a proper reverence for the Lord that enabled Abraham to forsake home and country in response to a divine promise, and that guided him throughout his pilgrimage and kept him separate from the Sodomites and the evil influences of that time. Similarly, on Isaac's part, it was reverence for the Lord which kept him in his father's footsteps; and we have just seen how fully Jacob was imbued with this reverence for divinity, and for all the gracious promises by which the Lord represented himself to him. We have seen the hand of the Lord with all those who had this reverence, and that even though they passed through numerous and severe trials, difficulties, etc., they were not forsaken, but upheld.

On the other hand, we have seen Lot's insufficiency of reverence, which permitted him to associate with evil-doers, and which ultimately brought upon him a share of their trouble. We have seen Ishmael's lack of reverence, and Esau's lack of reverence, and how these though not injured of the Lord, nevertheless missed greater blessing which a

different course might have brought to them.

The lesson for us is that which Joshua expressed to Israel later, saying, "Choose ye this day whom ye will serve; as for me and my house we will serve the Lord." (Josh. 24:15'.)"

(2 Cor 7:1 KJV) "*Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear [Reverence] of God.*"

R3985 "This perfecting of holiness is to be attained through a reverence for the Lord--an appreciation of his greatness, his perfection. The Christian who according to the flesh is deficient in veneration will have greater difficulty along this line of perfecting holiness than one who has naturally large veneration. A great deal of reverence for God and holy things is surely a great aid in our appreciation of the Lord's wonderful greatness and wisdom, power, justice, love; and the greater our appreciation of him, the higher our esteem of the pattern set before us, the better undoubtedly will be our success in the copying of it."

(Exo 3:5 KJV) "*Put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground.*"

R3989 "THE BURNING BUSH

Here our lesson opens, showing Moses at eighty years of age shepherding his flock on the

rearward side of Mount Horeb, called Mount Sinai, where subsequently the law was given. As Moses looked, behold a bush burned near him, supposedly a thorn-bush, which sometimes grows to quite a height and quite a thickness in that country, and is known as shittim wood--the kind of wood used in the construction of the Tabernacle. As Moses looked at the flame he perceived that the bush was not consumed, and considering this a most remarkable phenomenon he turned aside and drew near to it to observe the matter. It was then that the Lord spoke to him from the midst of the burning bush, and Moses at once knew that what he had witnessed was a miracle by which the Lord would attract his attention with a view to communicating some important lesson.

God usually has a symbolical meaning in every miracle, and in this one the representation is supposed to be Israel in the midst of tribulation, yet not consumed. Later on, in Reformation times, the Church of Scotland appropriated this burning bush as its emblem on its banner, because its experience had been similar in that it had passed through severe afflictions and distresses and trials, yet had not been consumed. And is not the burning bush a good illustration of the experience of Christ and all of his members? Are they not indeed

surrounded by fiery trials? and do they not emerge from these unscathed, uninjured?--on the contrary, blessed, developed, strengthened, made meet for the inheritance of the saints in light?

Well do the Scriptures declare that the fear, reverence, of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. We greatly deplore the growth of irreverence in our day, and urge upon all of our readers for themselves and for their families the cultivation of this proper attitude of mind, so helpful to our preparation for the life that now is and that which is to come. Liberty and independence, while excellent qualities, are always to be valued and conserved and protected, are never to become license, never to lead in any degree to irreverence. This is the more necessary to us for two reasons: (1) Because of the growing irreverence of the world about us, born of a declining faith in God and everything supernatural; (2) because of our growing enlightenment in the Truth, by which we see that the fears of an eternity of torture were groundless, there is a danger of losing that proper reverence for God which belongs to and is an integral part of love.

The Prophet David writes, "Keep thy foot when thou goest into the house of God"--take heed to your standing, take heed to your walk, take heed to your conduct. Whether the house of

God be a great temple, as in past times, under divine direction, or whether it be the temple of God, which is the Church of Christ in the flesh, we should realize that reverence is befitting to us in connection with everything that is holy and consecrated. We should realize that whoever neglects the cultivation of reverence in respect to these matters is making his own pathway slippery and dangerous. He who reverences little and is careless is much more likely to stumble, to fall, and be utterly cast down. If even Moses, the "meekest man in all the earth," needed from the Lord as his first instruction a lesson of humility, shall we not suppose that such a lesson is necessary to us? Yea, verily!

Let us honor the Lord in our hearts, in our outward demeanor. Whether we bow to give thanks for our daily bread, whether we bow our knee night and morning in acknowledgment of divine care and providences, or whether we meet with those of like precious faith, let us see to it that reverence marks our conduct and our words as well as rules in our hearts. Let us, too, take off our shoes, let us lay aside the ordinary conduct of life by which we are in contact with the world, and in all our ways acknowledge him, especially when we hearken to his voice in the study of his Word as his people."

R5186 (From Harvest Truth Database V5.0)

DECORUM IN THE HOUSE OF GOD

"Keep thy foot when thou goest to the House of God, and be more ready to hear, than to give the sacrifice of fools: for they consider not that they do evil."--Ecclesiastes 5:1.

THE WISE MAN was undoubtedly not talking about literal feet or literal steps, but giving some wise counsel, which his hearers might appropriate, just as we do. They understood him to mean that they must be circumspect in their daily lives.

"Keep thy foot." Notice where you are going. Do not go to the House of God as you would go to

the market-place or to some place of amusement. Go as to the place where God will meet with His people. The wise man goes on to assume what would be heard in the House of God. Be not ready *"to give the sacrifice of fools."* This would seem to refer to laughter, levity, foolish talk and jesting.

This Scripture is one which may very properly

be taken to heart by all of God's people at the present time. Reverence is very becoming. We have lost the fear that God will cast us into eternal torment. We know our Heavenly Father better than to suppose that He would have any such evil intention toward any of His creatures. But we should not go to the House of God as we would go to the marketplace. Many of the Lord's people do not appreciate the fact that decorum is necessary in every place where God is worshiped.

REVERENTIAL CONDUCT TO BE CULTIVATED

It is for us to realize that we have God in the Church today in a sense that He never was in the typical temple. Wherever there is a meeting of the members of the Church, the Lord has declared that He will be there. The living stones constituting the Temple of God should be as fully revered as temples made of literal stones.

Whether we meet in a parlor or in a church or in an opera house, the fact that God's people are there, makes that building, whatever it may be, a holy place. Therefore whoever approaches it should do so with a watchfulness of his feet. When he arrives, he should be appreciative of the place where he is, and should be ready to "hear"--listen--not full of mirth. All conversation should be of a kind that would edify--build up--along spiritual lines. If we cannot talk along such lines, it would be better for us to hear the discourse, join in the singing, and then withdraw.

Whatever conversation be carried on, it should be with reverence, not merely for the place, but for the occasion. There should be no turning about and saying, "Here comes Brother So-and-so, Sister So-and-so. We shall hear them sing." Such conduct is very improper.

We do not know any lesson the Lord's people need to learn more than that of *reverence*. The Lord will not *call* any one devoid of reverence, and He wants that quality to *grow strong*. But when *fear* is banished, the tendency is to *less reverence*. Special care in this respect is to be observed when we go to the House of God, or to any place where Divine service is to be held.

CONSIDERATION OF THE RIGHTS OF OTHERS

Not only should we watch our *feet* in going to the House of God, but we should watch what we

take with us. We should see that we go there clean; that we take no vermin in our clothing; that we have no bad odors about us. We should also see that we do not take children who are not properly trained. Thus we shall not be in danger of annoying others.

There may be occasions when children may be left alone at home. When this is impossible, it would be better for the parents to take turns in coming to the meetings. No one has a right to take children to the meeting, when their presence would be detrimental to the spiritual interests of others. We believe, however, that a way could be devised whereby the child could be left at home until of such an age as not to disturb the Class. The majority of parents become so accustomed to the ways of their children that they do not realize that others are being annoyed --when probably every motion of the child is disturbing others. The others have their own trials to tax their patience.

PUNCTUALITY A MARK OF CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT

It would seem that some need to watch, not only their feet, but also their *watches*. To come into the meeting late is out of harmony with the principles of both justice and love. All who attend ought, in justice to others, to see that they arrive in time. They ought so to arrange their affairs that they can be at the meeting promptly at the hour.

Doubtless the Lord would view our efforts to be punctual and not to annoy others as marks of Christian character-development, which would have His approval, and which would help to prepare us for the Kingdom. He who is indifferent to the rights of others manifests that he is lacking in the spirit of love, the spirit of Christ. And whoever has not the spirit of Christ, well developed, will not have a place in the Kingdom.

Hence these matters--unruly children, tardiness at meeting, etc., will have to do with our fitness for a place in the Kingdom. By this we do not mean that we are being judged according to our work, or that we have any right to judge others according to their work. The Lord said, "Judge not." We should show that our *endeavors to do the Lord's will* are equal to the *desires of our hearts*. If we exercise determination in trying to live up to these, we shall be glad when we experience our change in the Resurrection.