

TESTIMONY  
FOR  
THE CHURCH.

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### The Great Rebellion.

KORAH, Dathan, and Abiram, rebelled against Moses and Aaron, and so against the Lord. The Lord had placed special responsibilities upon Moses and Aaron in selecting them for the priesthood, and in conferring upon them the dignity and authority of leading the congregation of Israel. Moses was afflicted by the continual rebellion of the Hebrews. As God's appointed, visible leader, he had been connected with the Israelites through seasons of peril, and had borne with their discontent, their jealousies, and murmurings, without retaliation, or seeking to be released from his trying position.

When the Hebrews were brought into scenes of danger, and where their appetite was restricted, instead of their trusting in God, who had done wondrous things for them, they murmured against Moses. The Son of God was the leader of the Israelites, although invisible to the congregation. His presence went before them, and conducted all their travels, while Moses was their vis-

ible leader, receiving his direction from the angel, who was Jesus Christ.

#### BASE IDOLATRY.

In the absence of Moses the congregation demanded of Aaron to make them gods to go before them and lead them back into Egypt, it was an insult to their chief leader, the Son of the Infinite God. They had only a few weeks before stood trembling with awe and terror before the mount, listening to the words of the Lord, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me." The glory which sanctified the mount when the voice was heard which shook the mountain to its foundation still hovered over it in sight of the congregation ; but the Hebrews turned away their eyes and asked for other gods. Moses, their visible leader, was in converse with God in the mount.

They forgot the promise and the warning of God, "Behold, I send an angel before thee, to keep thee in the way, and to bring thee into the place which I have prepared. Beware of him, and obey his voice, provoke him not ; for he will not pardon your transgressions; for my name is in him."

The Hebrews were cruelly unbelieving and basely ungrateful in their impious request, "Make us gods to go before us." If Moses was absent, the presence of the Lord

remained. They were not forsaken. The manna continued to fall, and they were fed by a divine hand morning and evening. The cloudy pillar by day and the pillar of fire by night signified the presence of God, which was a living memorial before them. The divine presence was not dependent upon the presence of Moses. But at the very time that he was pleading with the Lord in the mount in their behalf, they were rushing into shameful errors, in transgression of the law so recently given in grandeur.

We see the weakness of Aaron. Had he stood with true moral courage, and in boldness rebuked the leaders in this shameful request, his timely words would have saved that terrible apostasy. But his desire to be popular with the congregation, and his fear of incurring their displeasure, led him to cowardly sacrifice the allegiance of the Hebrews in that decisive moment. He raised an altar, and made a graven image, and proclaimed a day to consecrate that image as an object of worship, and to proclaim before all Israel, These be the gods which led you out of Egypt. He calmly witnesses the merriment and dancing to this senseless image, while the top of the mount is still illuminated with the glory of God. Moses is sent down from the mount by the Lord to rebuke the people. But He would not consent to leave the mount

until his pleadings in behalf of Israel is heard and his request granted that God would pardon them.

THE TABLES OF THE LAW BROKEN.

Moses came from the mount with the precious record in his hands, a pledge of God to man on condition of obedience. Moses was the meekest man upon the earth; but when he viewed the apostasy of Israel, he was angry and jealous for the glory of God. In his indignation he casts to the ground the precious pledge of God, which was more dear to his soul than his life. He sees the law broken by the Hebrews, and in his zeal for God to deface the idol they were worshiping, he sacrificed the tables of stone. Aaron stood by, calmly, patiently bearing the severe censure of Moses. All this might have been prevented by a word from Aaron at the right time. True, noble decision for the right in the hour of Israel's peril, would have balanced their minds in the right direction.

Does God condemn Moses? No, no; the great goodness of God pardons the rashness and zeal of Moses because it was all on account of his fidelity, and his disappointment and grief at the sight of his eyes in the evidence of Israel's apostasy. The man who might have saved the Hebrews in the hour of their peril is calm. He

does not show indignation because of the sins of the people, neither does he reproach himself and manifest remorse under the sense of his wrongs, but seeks to justify his course in a grievous sin. He makes the people accountable for his weakness in yielding to their request. He was unwilling to bear the murmuring of Israel, to stand under the pressure of their clamors and unreasonable wishes as Moses had done. He entered into the spirit and feelings of the people without remonstrance, and then sought to make them responsible. The congregation of Israel thought Aaron a much more pleasant leader than Moses. He was not so unyielding. They thought Moses showed a very bad spirit, and their sympathies were with Aaron, whom Moses so severely censured. But God pardoned the indiscretion of honest zeal in Moses, while he held Aaron accountable for his sinful weakness and lack of integrity under a pressure of circumstances. Aaron, in order to save himself, sacrificed thousands of the Israelites. The Hebrews felt the punishment of God for this act of apostasy ; but in a short time they are again full of discontent and rebellion.

#### THE PEOPLE MURMUR.

When the armies of Israel prospered, they took all the glory to themselves.

When they were tested and proved by hunger, or warfare, they charged all their hardships to Moses. The power of God which was manifested in a remarkable manner in their deliverance from Egypt, and seen from time to time all through their journeyings, should have inspired them with faith, and forever closed their mouths from one expression of ingratitude. But the least apprehension of want, the least fear of danger from any cause, overbalanced the benefits in their favor, and caused them to overlook the blessings received in their times of greatest danger. The experience they passed through in the matter of worshiping the golden calf, should have made so deep an impression upon their minds as never to be effaced. But, although the marks of God's displeasure were fresh before them in their broken ranks and missing numbers because of their repeated offenses against the angel who was leading them, they did not take these lessons to their hearts, and by faithful obedience redeem their past failure, and again they are overcome by the temptations of Satan. The best efforts of the meekest man upon the earth could not quell their insubordination. The unselfish interest of Moses was rewarded with jealousy, suspicion, and calumny. His humble shepherd's life was far more peaceful and happy than

his present position as pastor to that vast congregation of turbulent spirits. Their unreasonable jealousies were more difficult to manage than the fierce wolves of the wilderness. Moses dared not choose his own course and do as best pleased himself. He had left his shepherd's crook at God's express command, and in its place had been given him a rod of power. He dared not lay down this scepter and resign his position, till God should dismiss him.

Satan's work is to tempt minds. He will insinuate his wily suggestions, and stir up doubting, questioning, unbelief, and distrust of the words and acts of the one who stands under responsibilities, who is seeking to carry out the mind of God in his labors. It is the special purpose of Satan to pour in upon and around the servants of God's choice, troubles, perplexities, and opposition, that shall hinder him in his work, and, if possible, discourage his heart. Jealousies, strife, and evil surmising, will counteract, in a great measure, the very best efforts God's servants appointed to a special work may be able to perform.

Satan's plan is to drive them from the post of duty by working through agents. All whom he can excite to distrust and suspicion he will use as his instruments. The position of Moses in carrying the burden he bore for the Israel of God was not



appreciated. There is in the nature of man, when not under the direct influence of the Spirit of God, a disposition to envy, jealousy, and cruel distrust, which, if not subdued, lead to a desire to undermine and tear down, while selfish spirits will seek to build themselves up upon their ruins.

Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, were men who, by God's appointment, had been intrusted with special honors. They had been of that number who went up, with the seventy of the elders, with Moses into the mount, and beheld the glory of God. They saw the glorious light which covered the divine form of Jesus Christ. The bottom of this cloud was in appearance "like the paved work of a sapphire stone, and as it were the body of heaven in its clearness." These men were in the presence of the glory of the Lord, and did eat and drink without being destroyed by the purity and unsurpassed glory that was reflected upon them. But a change had come. A temptation, slight at first, had been harbored and strengthened as it was encouraged, until the imagination was controlled by the power of Satan. These men upon the most frivolous pretense ventured upon their work of disaffection. They hinted and expressed doubts at first which took with many minds so readily that they ventured still farther, being more and more confirmed in their sus-

picious by a word from one and another, each expressing what they thought of certain things which had come under their notice, until these deceived, deluded souls really thought that they had a zeal for the Lord in this matter, and that they would not be excusable unless they carried out to the full their purpose of making Moses see and feel the preposterous position he was standing in toward Israel. A little leaven of distrust, and of dissension, envy, and jealousy, was leavening the camp of Israel.

Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, first commenced their cruel work upon the men to whom God had intrusted sacred responsibilities. They were successful in alienating two hundred and fifty princes, famous in the congregation, men of renown. With these strong and influential men in their cause, they felt sure of making a radical change in the order of things. They thought they could transform the government of Israel, and greatly improve it from its present administration.

Korah was not satisfied with his position. He was connected with the service of the tabernacle, yet he desired to be exalted to the priesthood. God had established Moses as chief governor, and the priesthood was given to Aaron and his sons. Korah determined to compel Moses to change the order of things, whereby he

should be raised to the dignity of the priesthood. To be more sure of accomplishing his purpose, he drew Dathan and Abiram, the descendants of Reuben, into his rebellion.

They reasoned that, being descendants from the eldest sons of Jacob, the chief authority which Moses usurped belonged to them, and, with Korah, they were resolved to obtain the office of the priesthood. These three became very zealous in an evil work. They influenced two hundred and fifty men of renown to join them, who were also determined to have a share in the priesthood and government. God had honored the Levites to do service in the tabernacle, because they took no part in making and worshiping the golden calf, and because of their faithfulness in executing the order of God upon the idolaters.

To the Levites was assigned the office of erecting the tabernacle, and encamping around about it, while the hosts of Israel pitched their tents at a distance from the tabernacle. And when they journeyed, the Levites took down the tabernacle, and bore it, and the ark, and all the sacred articles of furniture. Because God thus honored the Levites, they became ambitious for still higher office, that they might obtain greater influence with the congregation. "And they gathered themselves together against

Moses and against Aaron, and said unto them, Ye take too much upon you, seeing all the congregation are holy, every one of them, and the Lord is among them; wherefore then lift ye up yourselves above the congregation of the Lord?"

#### FALSE SYMPATHY.

There is nothing which will please the people better than to be praised and flattered when they are in wrong and darkness and deserve reproof. Korah gained the ears of the people, and next their sympathies, by representing Moses as an overbearing leader. He said he was too harsh, too exacting, too dictatorial, and that he reproved the people as though they were sinners when they were a holy people, sanctified to the Lord, and the Lord was among them. Korah rehearsed the incidents in their experience in their travels through the wilderness, where they had been brought into straight places and where many of them had died, because of murmuring and disobedience, and with their perverted senses they thought they saw very clearly that all their trouble might have been saved if Moses had pursued a different course. He was too unyielding, too exacting, and they decided that all their disasters in the wilderness were chargeable to Moses. Korah, the leading

spirit, professed great wisdom in discerning the true reason for their trials and affliction.

In this work of disaffection there was greater harmony and union between these discordant elements, in their feelings and views, than had ever been known to exist before. Korah's success in gaining the larger part of the congregation of Israel on his side, led him to feel confident that he was wise and correct in judgment, and that Moses was indeed usurping authority that threatened the prosperity and salvation of Israel. He claimed that God had opened the matter to him, and laid upon him the burden of changing the government of Israel just before it was too late. He stated that the congregation was not at fault; they were righteous. This great cry about the murmuring of the congregation bringing upon them the wrath of God was all a mistake. The people only wanted to have their rights; they wanted individual independence. As the sense of the self-sacrificing patience of Moses would force itself upon their memories, and as his disinterested efforts in their behalf while they were in the bondage of slavery, would come before them, their consciences would be somewhat disturbed. Some were not wholly with Korah in his views of Moses, and sought to speak in his behalf. The men,

Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, must assign some reason before the people for Moses' doing as he has done in showing so great an interest from the first for the congregation of Israel. Their selfish minds which have been debased as Satan's instruments, suggest that they have at last found out the object of Moses' apparent interest. He had designed to keep them wandering in the wilderness until they all, or nearly all, should perish, and he should come into possession of their property.

Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, and two hundred and fifty princes who had joined them, first became jealous, then envious, and next rebellious. They had talked in regard to Moses' position as ruler of the people, until they imagined that it was a very enviable position, which any of them could fill as well as Moses. And they gave themselves up to discontent until they really deceived themselves and one another, in thinking that Moses and Aaron had placed themselves in the position which they occupied to Israel. They said that Moses and Aaron exalted themselves above the congregation of the Lord, in taking upon them the priesthood and government, and that this office should not be conferred on their house alone. They said that it was sufficient for them if they were on a level with their brethren; for they were

no more holy than the people, who were equally favored with God's peculiar presence and protection.

#### CHARACTER TESTED.

As Moses listened to the words of Korah, he was filled with anguish, and fell upon his face before the people. "And he spake unto Korah and unto all his company, saying, Even to-morrow the Lord will show who are his, and who is holy; and will cause him to come near unto him, even him whom he hath chosen will he cause to come near unto him. This do; take you censers, Korah, and all his company; and put fire therein, and put incense in them before the Lord to-morrow; and it shall be that the man whom the Lord doth choose, he shall be holy; ye take too much upon you, ye sons of Levi. And Moses said unto Korah, Hear, I pray you, ye sons of Levi. Seemeth it but a small thing unto you, that the God of Israel hath separated you from the congregation of Israel, to bring you near to himself to do the service of the tabernacle of the Lord, and to stand before the congregation to minister unto them? And he hath brought thee near to him, and all thy brethren the sons of Levi with thee; and seek ye the priesthood also? For which cause both thou and all thy company are gathered together against the Lord; and

what is Aaron, that ye murmur against him?" Moses told them that Aaron had assumed no office of himself; that God had placed him in the sacred office.

Dathan and Abiram said, "Is it a small thing that thou hast brought us up out of the land that floweth with milk and honey, to kill us in the wilderness, except thou make thyself altogether a prince over us? Moreover, thou hast not brought us into a land that floweth with milk and honey, or given us inheritance of fields and vineyards; wilt thou put out the eyes of these men? We will not come up."

They accused Moses of being the cause of their not entering the promised land. They said that God had not dealt with them thus. He had not said that they should die in the wilderness. They would never believe that he had thus said; but that it was Moses who had said this, not the Lord; and that it was all arranged by Moses to never bring them to the land of Canaan. They spoke of his leading them from a land that flowed with milk and honey. They forgot in their blind rebellion their sufferings in the land of Egypt, and the desolating plagues brought upon that land. But they now accuse Moses of bringing them from a good land, to kill them in the wilderness, that he might be made rich with their possessions. They



inquired of Moses, in an insolent manner, if he thought that none of all the host of Israel were wise enough to understand his motives, and discover his imposture; or if he thought they would all submit to have him lead them about like blind men as he pleased, sometimes toward Canaan, then back again toward the Red Sea and Egypt. These words they spoke before the congregation, and they utterly refused any longer to acknowledge the authority of Moses and Aaron.

Moses was greatly moved at these unjust accusations. He appealed to God before the people whether he had ever acted arbitrarily, and implored him to be his judge. The people in general were disaffected, and influenced by the misrepresentation of Korah. "And Moses said unto Korah, Be thou and all thy company before the Lord, thou, and they, and Aaron, to-morrow; and take every man his censer, and put incense in them, and bring ye before the Lord every man his censer, two hundred and fifty censers; thou also, and Aaron, each of you his censer. And they took every man his censer, and put fire in them, and laid incense thereon, and stood in the door of the tabernacle of the congregation with Moses and Aaron."

Korah and his company who aspired to the priesthood in their self-confidence, even

took the censers and stood in the door of the tabernacle with Moses. Korah had cherished his envy and rebellion until he was self-deceived, and he really thought that the congregation was a very righteous people, and that Moses was a tyrannical ruler, continually dwelling upon the necessity of the congregation's being holy, when there was no need of it, for they were holy.

These rebellious ones had flattered the people in general to believe that they were right, and that all their troubles arose from Moses, their ruler, who was continually reminding them of their sins. The people thought if Korah could lead them, and encourage them, and dwell upon their righteous acts, instead of reminding them of their failures, they would have a very peaceful, prosperous journey, and he would without doubt lead them, not back and forward in the wilderness, but into the promised land. They said that it was Moses who had told them that they could not go into the land, and that the Lord had not thus said.

#### THE REBELS PERISH.

Korah, in his exalted self-confidence, gathered all the congregation of Israel against Moses and Aaron, "unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. And

the glory of the Lord appeared unto all the congregation. And the Lord spake unto Moses and unto Aaron, saying, Separate yourselves from among this congregation, that I may consume them in a moment. And they fell upon their faces, and said, O God, the God of the spirits of all flesh, shall one man sin, and wilt thou be wroth with all the congregation? And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the congregation, saying, Get you up from about the tabernacle of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram. And Moses rose up and went unto Dathan and Abiram; and the elders of Israel followed him. And he spake unto the congregation, saying, Depart, I pray you, from the tents of these wicked men, and touch nothing of theirs, lest ye be consumed in all their sins. So they gat up from the tabernacle of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, on every side; and Dathan and Abiram came out, and stood in the door of their tents, and their wives, and their sons, and their little children. And Moses said, Hereby ye shall know that the Lord hath sent me to do all these works; for I have not done them of mine own mind. If these men die the common death of all men, or if they be visited after the visitation of all men; then the Lord hath not sent me. But if the Lord make a new thing, and the earth open her mouth, and swallow them

up, with all that appertain unto them, and they go down quick into the pit, then ye shall understand that these men have provoked the Lord.”

As soon as Moses ceased speaking, the earth opened and swallowed them up, and their tents, and all that pertained unto them. They went down alive into the pit, and the earth closed over them, and they perished from among the congregation.

And as the children of Israel heard the cry of the perishing ones, they fled at a great distance from them. They knew that they were in a measure guilty, for they had received the accusations against Moses and Aaron, and they were afraid that they should also perish with them. The judgment of God was not yet finished. A fire came from the cloud of glory and consumed the two hundred and fifty men that offered incense.

These were princes; that is, men generally of good judgment, and of influence in the congregation, men of renown. They were highly esteemed, and their judgment had often been sought in difficult matters. But they were affected by a wrong influence, and became envious, jealous, and rebellious. They perished not with Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, because they were not the first in rebellion. They were to see their end first, and have an op-

portunity of repenting of their crime. But they were not reconciled to the destruction of those wicked men, and the wrath of God came upon them, and destroyed them also.

“And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, that he take up the censers out of the burning, and scatter thou the fire yonder; for they are hallowed. The censers of these sinners against their own souls, let them make them broad plates for a covering of the altar; for they offered them before the Lord, therefore they are hallowed; and they shall be a sign unto the children of Israel.”

#### THE REBELLION NOT CURED.

After this terrific exhibition of God's judgment, the people returned to their tents, but not humbled. They were terrified. They had been deeply influenced by the spirit of rebellion, and had been flattered by Korah and his company to believe that they were a very good people, and that they had been wronged and abused by Moses. They had their mind so thoroughly imbued with the spirit of those who had perished that it was difficult to free themselves of their blind prejudice. If they should admit that Korah and his company were all wicked, and Moses righteous, then they would be compelled to receive as the word

of God, that which they were unwilling to believe, that they should certainly all die in the wilderness. They were not willing to submit to this, and tried to believe that it was all imposture, and that Moses had deceived them. The men who had perished, had spoken pleasant words to them, and manifested especial interest and love for them, and they thought Moses a designing man. They decided that they could not be wrong; that, after all, those men who had perished were good men, and Moses had by some means been the cause of their destruction.

Satan can lead deceived souls to great lengths. He can pervert their judgment, their sight, and their hearing. It was so in the case of the Israelites. "But on the morrow all the congregation of the children of Israel murmured against Moses and Aaron, saying, Ye have killed the people of the Lord." The people were disappointed in the matter, resulting as it did in favor of Moses and Aaron. The appearance of Korah and his company, all impiously exercising the priests' office with their censers, struck the people with admiration. They did not see that these men were offering a daring affront to the divine Majesty. When they were destroyed, the people were terrified; but after a short time all came in a tumultuous manner to Moses and Aaron,

and charged them with the blood of those men who had perished by the hand of God.

“And it came to pass, when the congregation was gathered against Moses and against Aaron, that they looked toward the tabernacle of the congregation; and, behold, the cloud covered it, and the glory of the Lord appeared. . . And Moses and Aaron came before the tabernacle of the congregation. And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Get you up from among this congregation, that I may consume them as in a moment. And they fell upon their faces.” Notwithstanding the rebellion of Israel, and their cruel conduct to Moses, yet he manifested for them the same interest as before. He fell upon his face before the Lord, and implored him to spare the people.

While Moses was praying before the Lord to pardon the sins of his people, he requested Aaron to make an atonement for their sin, while he remained before the Lord, that his prayers might ascend with the incense and be acceptable to God, that all the congregation might not perish in their rebellion. “And Moses said unto Aaron, Take a censer, and put fire therein from off the altar, and put on incense, and go quickly unto the congregation, and make an atonement for them; for there is wrath gone out from the Lord. The plague is be-

gun. And Aaron took as Moses commanded, and ran into the midst of the congregation; and, behold, the plague was begun among the people. And he put on incense, and made an atonement for the people. And he stood between the dead and the living; and the plague was stayed. Now they that died in the plague were fourteen thousand and seven hundred, besides them that died about the matter of Korah. And Aaron returned unto Moses unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and the plague was stayed."

#### THE SUBJECT APPLIED.

In the case of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, we have a lesson of warning lest we follow their example. "Neither let us tempt Christ as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents. Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer. Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples, and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come."

We have evidences in God's word of the liability of the people of God being greatly deceived. There are many instances where what may seem to be a sincere zeal for the honor of God has its origin in leaving the soul unguarded for the enemy to



tempt and impress the mind with a perverted sense of the real state of things. And we may expect just such things in these last days; for Satan is just as busy now as he was with the congregation of Israel. The cruelty and strength of prejudice are not understood. After the congregation had the evidences before their sight of the destruction of these leaders in rebellion, the power of suspicion and distrust which had been let into their souls was not removed. They saw the earth open and the leaders in rebellion go down into the bowels of the earth. This fearful exhibition before them surely ought to have cured them, and led them to the deepest repentance for their abuse of Moses.

Here God gave all Israel an opportunity to see and to feel the sinfulness of their course which should have led them to repentance and confession. He gave the deceived ones overwhelming evidence that they were sinners, and that his servant Moses was right. They had an opportunity to pass one night in reflection upon the fearful visitation of Heaven which they had witnessed. But reason was perverted. Korah had instigated the rebellion. Two hundred and fifty princes joined him and spread the disaffection. All the congregation were, to a greater or less degree, affected with the

prevailing jealousy, surmisings, and hatred, against Moses, which had brought the displeasure of God in a fearfully marked manner. Yet our gracious God shows himself a God of justice and mercy. He made a distinction between the instigators—the leaders in the rebellion—and those who had been deceived or led by them. He pitied the ignorance and folly of those who had been deceived.

God spoke by Moses to bid the congregation to leave the tents of the men whom they had chosen in the place of Moses. The very men whose destruction they premeditated were the instruments in the hands of God of saving their lives upon that occasion. Said Moses, "Get you up from the tabernacle of Korah." They were in alarming danger of being also destroyed by the wrath of God in their sins; for they were sharers in the crimes of the men to whom they had given their sympathy, and with whom they had associated.

While Moses was trying the test before the congregation of Israel, if these men who had started the rebellion had repented and sought forgiveness of God and of his injured servant, the vengeance of God would even then have been stayed. But there stood Korah, the instigator of the rebellion, and his sympathizers boldly in their tents, as if in defiance of God's wrath, as though

God had never wrought through his servant Moses. And much less do these rebellious ones act as though they were men who had been so recently honored of God by being brought almost directly with Moses into his presence, beholding his unsurpassed glory. These men saw Moses come down from the mount after he had received the second tables of stone, while his face was resplendent with the glory of God, so that the people would not approach him, but fled from him. He called to them; but they seemed terrified. He presented the tables of stone. He said, I plead in your behalf. I have turned the wrath of God from you. I have urged that if God forsake and destroy his congregation that my name may be blotted from his book. Lo, God has answered me, and here these tables of stone I hold in my hand are the pledge given me of his reconciliation with his people.

The people perceive that it is the voice of Moses, that although he is transformed and glorified, he is yet Moses. They tell Moses that they cannot look into his face; for the radiant light in his countenance is exceedingly painful to them. His face is like the sun. They cannot look upon it. When Moses finds out the difficulty, he covers his face with a vail. He did not plead that the light and glory upon his face was the

reflection of God's glory that he placed upon him, and the people must bear it; but he covers his glory. The sinfulness of the people made it painful to behold his glorified face. Just so will it be when the saints of God are glorified, just previous to the second appearing of our Lord. The wicked will retire and shrink away from the sight; for the glory in the countenances of the saints will pain them. But all this glory upon Moses, all this divine stamp seen upon God's humble servant, is forgotten.



#### SLIGHTED MERCY.

The Hebrews had an opportunity to reflect upon the scene they had witnessed in the visitation of God's wrath upon the most prominent ones in this great rebellion. The goodness and mercy of God was displayed in not completely exterminating this ungrateful people when his wrath was kindled against the most responsible ones. God gave the congregation who had permitted themselves to be deceived space for repentance. The fact that the Lord, their invisible leader, showed so much long-suffering and mercy in this instance, is distinctly recorded as evidence of his willingness to forgive the most grievous offenders, when they should have a sense of their sin and return unto the Lord with repentance

and humiliation. The congregation had been arrested in their presumptuous course by the display of the Lord's vengeance; but they were not convinced that they were great sinners against the Lord, deserving his wrath for their rebellious course.

It is hardly possible for men to offer a greater insult to God than to despise and reject the instrumentalities he has appointed to lead them. They had not only done this, but purposed to put both Moses and Aaron to death. These men fled from the tents of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, through fear of destruction; but their rebellion was not cured. They were not in grief and despair because of their guilt. They felt not the effect of an awakened, convicted conscience because they had abused their most precious privileges, and sinned against light and knowledge. We may here learn precious lessons of the long-suffering of Jesus, the angel who went before the Hebrews in the wilderness.

Their invisible Leader would save them from a disgraceful destruction. Forgiveness is lingering for them. It is possible for them to find pardon if they will even now repent. The vengeance of God has now come near to them and appealed to them to repent. A special, irresistible interference from Heaven has arrested their presumptuous rebellion. Now if they re-

spond to the interposition of God's providence they may be saved.

The repentance and humiliation of the congregation of Israel is required to be proportionate to their transgression. The signal power of God revealed has placed them beyond uncertainty. They may have a knowledge of the true position and holy calling of Moses and Aaron if they will accept it. But the neglect of the Hebrews to regard the evidences God had given them was fatal to them. They did not realize the importance of immediate action on their part to seek pardon of God for their grievous sins.

That night of probation to the Hebrews was not passed by them in confessing and repenting of their sins, but in devising some way to resist the evidences which showed them to be the greatest of sinners. They still held their jealous hatred of the men of God's appointment. They strengthened themselves in their mad course of resisting the authority of Moses and Aaron. Satan was at hand to pervert the judgment and lead them blindfolded to destruction. Their minds had been most thoroughly poisoned with disaffection, and they had the matter fixed beyond a question in their minds that Moses and Aaron were wicked men, and that they were responsible for the death of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, whom they

thought would have been the saviours of the Hebrews by bringing in a better order of things, where praise would take the place of reproof, and peace the place of anxiety and conflict.

The day before all Israel had fled in alarm at the cry of the doomed sinners who went down into the pit, for they said, "Lest the earth swallow us up also."

"But on the morrow all the congregation of the children of Israel murmured against Moses and against Aaron, saying, Ye have killed the people of the Lord." In their indignation they were prepared to lay violent hands upon the men of God's appointment, whom they believed had done a great wrong in killing those who were good and holy.

The Lord's presence was manifested in his glory over the tabernacle, and rebellious Israel was arrested in their mad, presumptuous course. The voice of the Lord from his terrible glory speaks to Moses and Aaron in the same words which they were the day before commanded to address to the congregation of Israel, "Get you up from among this congregation that I may consume them as in a moment."

Here we find a striking exhibition of the blindness that will compass human minds that turn from light and evidence. Here we see the strength of settled rebellion.

Here we see how difficult is rebellion to be overcome. Surely, the Hebrews had the most convincing evidence in the destruction of the men who had deceived them. But they still stood forth boldly and defiantly, and accused Moses and Aaron of killing good and holy men. "For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry."

Moses did not feel the guilt of sin, and did not hasten away at the word of the Lord and leave the congregation to perish, as the Hebrews fled from the tents of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram the day before. Moses lingered; for he could not consent to give up all that vast multitude to perish, although he knew that they deserved the vengeance of God, for their persistent rebellion.

He prostrated himself before God, because the people felt no necessity for humiliation. He mediates for the people, because they feel no need of interceding in their own behalf. Moses here typifies Christ. In this critical crisis, Moses manifested the true shepherd's interest for the flock of his care. He pleads that the wrath of an offended God may not destroy utterly the people of his choice. He holds back by his intercession the arm of vengeance, that a full end shall not be made of disobedient, rebellious Israel. He directed



Aaron what course to pursue in that terrible crisis when the wrath of God had gone forth, and the plague had begun. Aaron stood with his censer waving it before the Lord while the intercessions of Moses ascended with the smoke of the incense. Moses dared not cease his entreaties. He took hold of the strength of the angel as did Jacob in his wrestling, and like Jacob he prevailed. Aaron was standing between the living and the dead, when the gracious answer came, I have heard thy prayer, I will not consume utterly. The very men whom the congregation despised and would have put to death, are the ones to plead in their behalf that the avenging sword of God might be sheathed and sinful Israel spared.

#### NEW TESTAMENT APPLICATION.

The apostle plainly stated that the experience of the Israelites in their travels has been recorded for the benefit of those living in this age of the world, upon whom the ends of the world are come. We do not consider that our dangers are any less than those of the Hebrews, but greater. There will be temptations to jealousies and murmurings, and there will be outspoken rebellion, as is on record in regard to ancient Israel. There will ever be a spirit to rise up against the reproof of sins and wrongs. But shall the voice of re-

proof be hushed because of this? If so, we shall be in no better situation than the various denominations in our land, who are afraid to touch the errors and prevailing sins of the people.

Those whom God has set apart as ministers of righteousness have solemn responsibilities laid upon them to reprove the sins of the people. Paul commanded Titus, "These things speak and exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no man despise thee." There are ever those who will despise the one who dares to reprove sin. There are times when reproofs must be given. Paul directs Titus to rebuke a certain class sharply, that they may be sound in the faith. Men and women who are brought together, with their different organizations, in church capacity, have peculiarities and faults. As these will be developed, they will require reproof. If those who are placed in important positions never reprove, never rebuke, there would soon be a demoralized condition of things that would greatly dishonor God. But how shall the reproof be given? Let the apostle answer: "With all long-suffering and doctrine." Principle should be brought to bear upon the one who needs reproof. But never should the wrongs of God's people be passed by indifferently.

There will be men and women who despise reproof, and who will ever in their feelings rise up against it. It is not pleasant to be told of our wrongs. In almost every case where there is a necessity of reproof, there will be some who entirely overlook the fact that the Spirit of the Lord has been grieved, and his cause reproached. These will pity those who deserved reproof because personal feelings have been hurt. All this unsanctified sympathy places the sympathizers where they are sharers in the guilt of the one reproofed. In nine cases out of ten, if the one reproofed had been left under a sense of his wrongs, he might have been helped to see them, and thereby have been reformed. But meddling, unsanctified sympathizers place altogether a wrong construction upon the motives and nature of the reproof given, and by their sympathizing with the one reproofed lead him to feel that he has been really abused, and their feelings rise up in rebellion against the one who has only done his duty. Those who faithfully discharge their unpleasant duties under a sense of their accountability to God, will receive his blessing. God requires his servants to be always in earnest to do his will. In the apostle's charge to Timothy, he exhorts him to "preach the word; be instant in season, out of season;

reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine."

The Hebrews were not willing to submit to the directions and restrictions of the Lord. They simply wanted their own way, to follow the leadings of their own mind, and be controlled by their own judgment. Could they have been left free to do this, there would have been no complaints made of Moses. They were restless under restraint.

God would have his people disciplined and brought into harmony of action, that they may see eye to eye, and be of the same mind, and of the same judgment. In order to bring about this state of things there is much to be done. The carnal heart must be subdued, and transformed. God designs that there should ever be a living testimony in the church. There will be a necessity of reproofs and exhortations, and some will need to be rebuked sharply as the case demands. We hear the plea, Oh! I am so sensitive, I cannot bear the least reflection. If these would state the case correctly, they would say, I am so self-willed, so self-sufficient, so proud spirited, I will not be dictated; I will not be reprov'd; I claim the right of individual judgment; I have a right to believe and talk as I please. God would not have us yield up our individuality. But what man is a proper judge of

how far this matter of individual independence should be carried.

Peter exhorts his brethren: "Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility; for God resisteth the proud and giveth grace to the humble." The apostle Paul, also, exhorted his Philippian brethren to unity and humility as follows: "If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies, fulfill ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. Let nothing be done through strife or vain-glory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others. Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus." Paul exhorts his brethren, "Let love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good. Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honor preferring one another." He wrote to the Ephesians, "Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God."

The history of the Israelites presents before us the great danger of deception. Many do not have a sense of the sinfulness

of their own natures, nor of the grace of forgiveness. They are in nature's darkness, subject to temptations and to great deception. They are far from God; yet they have great satisfaction in their lives when their conduct is abhorred of God. This class will ever be at war with the leadings of the Spirit of God, especially against reproof. They do not wish to be disturbed. They have occasionally selfish fears, occasionally good purposes, some anxious thoughts and convictions. But they have not a depth of experience, because they are not rivited to the Eternal Rock. This class never see the necessity of the plain testimony. Sin does not appear so exceedingly sinful, for the very reason they are not walking in the light, as Christ is in the light.

There is still another class who have had great light, and special conviction, and a genuine experience in the workings of the Spirit of God; but the manifold temptations of Satan have overcome them. They do not appreciate the light that God has given them. They do not heed the warnings and reproofs from the Spirit of God. They are under condemnation. These will ever be at variance with the straight testimony, because it condemns them.

God designs that his people shall be a unit; that they shall see eye to eye, and