

of the Savior as he does. We are not always able to determine with certainty the character of any transaction—that is to say, of the spirit and motive that influence and promote action—merely from what we see, nor yet from what somebody may tell us. It is necessary that we become enlightened by the Holy Spirit, to enable us to see as God sees, and to understand the motives, purposes and designs of the hearts of our fellow men. God judges us all according to the motives and designs of the heart. If our purpose is to do good, and that which is right in His sight, he judges us accordingly, though we may, through our weakness, or through circumstances that we are not always able to control, do things that are not strictly in their outward appearance right and correct, or we may neglect to do that which we should do. The Lord judges all men according to the motives that prompt the action, rather than from the action itself. It is not murder in the sight of heaven always, when a man is killed, for sometimes he brings his blood upon his own head by thrusting himself upon some other one to destroy him and is himself slain in the attack, and his blood is therefore upon his own head, and it is not counted murder to the man that slew him. The one who only saw a part of the transaction might accuse the other of murder; but when it comes to be sifted to the foundation, and both hearts can be scanned, and the cause that resulted in the conflict discovered, it is found that the man that slew is innocent, and the man that was slain is the guilty one. I refer to this as a sample. So with many of the transactions of life. So also we may neglect duties that we should attend to, but we neglect them in our ignorance, when we are

uninformed, and the Lord does not lay it to our charge until we are better instructed and our defects pointed out to us. Then if we neglect them He holds us responsible for that neglect. So also we may do things that in themselves are not right, not strictly correct, and yet if we are not posted and are ignorant of the evil of the transaction, it is not imputed to us as evil. This is the doctrine that Jesus laid down. “That servant, which knew his Lord’s will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes.” That is, a few stripes shall be meted out to him merely to vindicate the law, and to make an impression upon him that what he had done was wrong, though he was ignorant of it before; but a little punishment is meted out, just enough to satisfy and vindicate the law, and to correct the impression upon the individual, to show him that he must be careful, for he had trodden upon forbidden ground. This is a rule that our Father is governed by in judging His children, and it is a rule that we should strive also to be governed by in regard to one another, and especially those who are called to be judges in Israel, or whose calling and duty it is to settle difficulties and assist in adjusting differences among their brethren and sisters.

“And he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked.”

I understand this to be a figurative expression of the Prophet Isaiah: the rod of His mouth by which He should smite the earth. I understand that to be the word that proceeded out of His mouth, the words given