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THE TEACHING OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURES

FOR
YOUNG PEOPLE'S CLASSES
IN
ALL EVANGELICAL CHURCHES

An Outline Study

BY
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PHILADELPHIA
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FOREWORD.

These lessons are intended as a simple outline of the teachings of the Holy Scriptures, presented in logical form, but free from the usual technical terms. Each lesson should be carefully read and compared with the Scripture references as given; then recited to the teacher, parent, or pastor in answers to the printed questions. The references to be most helpful should be looked up and read in the class. The personal prayer and verses following each lesson should be learned and repeated from time to time. The entire forty lessons in this volume may be taken up week by week in the period corresponding to the school year in the United States, beginning some time in September and ending in June, or they may be taken three times a week, between the holidays and Easter. The classes may be composed of young persons from the age of about twelve to fifteen years and upward, according to their previous training and personal disposition; but some who are much older may also find the lessons profitable as a statement of the Christian faith from a present-day, evangelical standpoint. Should these pages present a broader view and a deeper insight into the essential truths of the Holy Scriptures as a source of religious authority, the result will be well worth all the

effort that may be necessary. For ours is a Christian civilization, and these are the teachings that for nearly two thousand years have underlaid our social life, our moral standards, our humane progress, and our spiritual faith and hope for the Future.

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PART FIRST

I.

THE HOLY SCRIPTURES.

THE Bible is sometimes called the Holy Scriptures, because it contains the early history and teachings of the Christian religion; and because it is composed of many different books, written at various times and places by men of the Hebrew race;—prophets, priests, and apostles, or their associates and companions.¹ but the exact date and authorship of each book cannot always be ascertained.

These Scriptures are usually divided into two parts called the Old and New Testaments; the former containing all the sacred writings accepted by the ancient Jewish Church, and the latter containing the personal history and sayings of Jesus Christ, also the writings of his apostles and followers who became the builders of the Christian Church.²

The Old Testament is accepted also by Christians as containing many things necessary for the instruction of mankind, and to prepare the world for the coming of Jesus Christ, who lived and taught the perfect form of religion in Palestine some 1900 years ago, and who is still held in reverence as the ever-living Saviour of men, the head of a divine and spiritual kingdom.

There are thirty-nine books or writings in the Old Testament, all of which are believed to have been written and collected several centuries before Christ. These writings contain an account of the creation of the world and of the early history of the human race; also the annals of the Hebrew people from the patri-

archs down to Ezra, the builder of the second temple at Jerusalem.

They also give us the laws of Moses for reverence, purity, justice, and mercy; and the laws of the priesthood, sacrifices and offerings. Besides all these, we have the Psalms of meditation, prayer, and praise to Almighty God, the Hebrew Proverbs, the Books of Wisdom, and the story of Job; also the preaching and visions of the Hebrew prophets.⁴

The high morality of these ancient writings, their spiritual types and prophecies which since have been realized in the Christian religion, and their general agreement with the revelations of modern science and discovery, all lead us to accept their claims of divine inspiration; that is, that their teachings were imparted to good men by the Spirit of God.⁵

That a human element exists in the Bible, and that its contents have been slightly modified in transmission through the centuries, does not materially impair either its essential truth or its authority as an instructor.⁶

The twenty-seven books of the New Testament rest upon the life, teachings, and character of Jesus Christ as the promised Messiah, and the Author of spiritual life in them who truly believe on Him.⁷

“The most learned, acute, and diligent student can this one volume. (The more deeply he works the mine, the richer and more abundant he finds the ore). New light continually beams from this source of heavenly knowledge, to direct our conduct and illustrate the work of God and the ways of men: and he

will at last leave the world confessing that the more he studied the Scriptures, the fuller conviction he had of his own ignorance, and of their inestimable value."

SIR WALTER SCOTT.

"There are no songs comparable to the songs of Zion; no orations equal to those of the prophets; and no politics like those the Scriptures teach."

JOHN MILTON.

REFERENCES.

¹ 2 Tim. 3:14-17. John 5:39. Heb. 1:1-2. Rom. 15:4, 16:25-26.

² Deut. 31:9-12, 24-26. Josh. 1:7-8. Luke 4:16-22. Jno. 21:24-25.

³ Gal. 3:24-25. John 5:45-47. Luke 24:25-27. Matt. 5:17-18.

⁴ Gen. 2:4, 5:1. Num. 36:13. Deut. 1:1, 4:1-14. Josh. 1:7-8, 8:34-35. 2 Kings 22:8-13. Neh. 8:1-5, 17. John 1:17, 45, 7:19, 22-23. Matt. 12:40-42. Luke 20:42, 24:44. Jas. 5:11, 17-18.

⁵ Ex. 4:10-15, 33:9-11. Lev. 26:46, 27:34. 1 Sam. 23:1-2. Job 32:8. 2 Cor. 4:5-7. 2 Peter 1:19-21, 3:15-16.

⁶ Matt. 5:21-22, 33-34, 38-39, 43-44. John 6:63. Rom. 2:29, 7:6. 1 Cor. 13:9-12. 2 Cor. 3:6.

⁷ Matt. 14:33. Luke 20:1-8. Acts 2:22-24, 32-36, 4:10-12. Heb. 9:13-15.

QUESTIONS.

What name is often applied to the Bible, and why?

Into what two parts are the Holy Scriptures divided?

Who are the people that accept only the Old Testament?

What matters are contained in the New Testament?

Why is the Old Testament accepted also by Christians?

Who was Jesus Christ, and how is he still regarded?

How many books in the Old Testament, and when written?

What matters of history, law, devotion, wisdom, and prophecy do they contain?

What three reasons have we for accepting the claim of divine inspiration for the Old Testament Scriptures?

How is this claim affected by a human element in the Bible, or by slight changes in long transmission?

Upon what persons's life and teachings does the authority of the New Testament chiefly rest?

PRAYER.

O Lord, I am but a child before thee, and in great need of thy instructions. Show me, I beseech thee, the path of life, that I may walk therein and find a blessing. May thy word be revealed to my understanding, making me wise unto salvation. May thy truth and grace enable me to see the light in thy light, and to dwell with thee forevermore. Amen.

HYMN. (TUNE, BURLINGTON.)

WHAT glory gilds the sacred page!
Majestic like the sun,
It gives a light to every age,
It gives, but borrows none.

The power that gave it still supplies
The gracious light and heat;
Its truths upon the nations rise,
They rise but never set.

Lord, everlasting thanks be thine
For such a bright display,
As makes a world of darkness shine
With beams of heavenly day.

My soul rejoices to pursue
The steps of Him I love,
Till glory breaks upon my view
In brighter worlds above.

WM. COWPER.

II.

THE SUPREME BEING.

IN all ages and countries, men of every condition have been made to feel from time to time their own weakness and littleness in the presence of the unknown forces around them and in the vicissitudes incident to our human lives. They have also realized a sense of dependence upon some mysterious Power that is higher and greater than themselves.¹

Hence some have turned to a rock or a tree, a stream of water or a mountain top, which they worshipped as the seat of a supernatural presence, and the source of some malign or protecting power. Others have sought an animate thing, as a bird, or beast, or reptile, and worshipped these because of the life in them, whether manifested in a beautiful or repulsive form, not reflecting that such creatures are lower than themselves.²

Again, some have turned to the sun, or moon, or stars, as enduring objects far above the world and its corruptions; or they have personified and adored the powers of Nature, often representing them in images of human or partly human form, to express the idea of a personality.³

A few have worshipped their deceased ancestors, or great men, as though these had not once been like ourselves on the earth, and equally dependent on some higher Power; while still a few others in modern days have turned to adore an abstraction, like "the unknown God," once worshipped at Athens.⁴

Now, it is one of the marks of inspiration in the

Holy Scriptures that from the very first verse of the sacred record they present us with a far higher and more satisfying conception of God than has yet been attained by any of these religions.

The teaching of the Bible on this subject is most clear and satisfactory. The basis of all religious faith and hope is the assurance that there is a personal and holy God, of infinite wisdom and power, who is the Author and Preserver of the Universe, and presides over the lives and destinies of all creatures, including ourselves.⁵

Since God is a spirit, He is not dependent, as we are, upon any physical conditions of cold or heat, light or darkness, food or drink, form or locality; but He dwells in our midst, a constant Presence and Power, while hidden to sight and sense, and far transcending all visible things in His nature and sovereignty.⁶

Since, too, He is the Supreme Being, there may be, and indeed, we are told there are, other spiritual beings, as angels and demons, cherubim and seraphim, and the souls of people who once lived on this earth; yet there is and can be only one Lord God Almighty, "in whom we live and move and have our being."⁷

And, because God is a Person, and not an Abstraction, He is full of life, and feeling, and a prudent concern for the order of the Universe and for the best interests of His kingdom; so that He cannot be indifferent to the welfare of His creatures, nor to the moral consistency of things, no matter where they are found.⁸

Moreover, God is a perfect Being in whom there can be nothing of darkness, or defect, or contradiction, or failure; and hence His never ceasing life and activities are all and ever directed to an outcome of truth, righteousness, and love.⁹

“We know God easily, if we do not constrain ourselves to define Him.”

JOUBERT.

“The very word “God” suggests care, kindness, goodness; and the idea of God in his infinity, is infinite care, infinite kindness, infinite goodness. We give God the name of “Good.” It is only by shortening that it becomes God.”

H. W. BEECHER.

“We should give God the same place in our hearts that He holds in the universe.”

UNKNOWN.

REFERENCES.

¹ Gen. 4:26, 8:20, 12:7-8, 32:6-11. Job 14:1-6. Ps. 16; 46:1-7, 71:1-3. Jonah 1:5.

² Ex. 20:4-5, 32:1-6. Deut. 12:1-3. 1 Kings 12:26-33, 14:22-23. Isa. 44:9-19.

³ Deut. 4:15-19. 2 Kings 21:3-6, 23:4-6. Isa. 47:13. Jer. 8:1-2. Acts 19:35.

⁴ Dan. 4:28-37. Isa. 14:4-19. Acts 12:20-23, 17:22-23. 2 Thess. 2:3-4.

⁵ Heb. 11:6. Job 12:9-10. Ps. 139:1-12, 145; 146; 147. Acts 14:14-18.

⁶ 1 Kings 8:27. John 1:18, 4:24. Acts 17:24-29. 1 Tim. 1:17. Rev. 1:8.

⁷ Gen. 3:24, 28:12. Ps. 34:7, 103:20. Matt. 12:24-28, 25:31. Heb. 1:4-7, 12:22-23. 1 Peter 3:22. Rev. 3:5, 5:11.

⁸ Gen. 18:23-26. Job 34:10-12, 21-25. Ps. 34:15-22. Jer. 16:17, 32:17-19.

⁹ Matt. 5:48. John 1:4-5. 1 Tim. 6:15-16. Jas. 1:17. 1 John 1:5.

QUESTIONS.

What two kinds of feeling leading to some sort of worship are natural to men everywhere?

What is the first class of objects they worship?

Mention another class of objects of worship.

Name still a third and fourth class of such objects.

Are men and abstract notions ever worshipped?

Where was found a case of the last mentioned?

How does the Bible doctrine of God compare with all these?

What is the basis of all religious faith and hope?

How far is a spirit God dependent upon physical conditions, and where is His dwelling place?

Are there any other spirit beings besides God?

Does God care for His creatures or for moral conduct?

In what senses is God a perfect Being?

Toward what objects are His activities directed?

PRAYER.

Grant me, O Lord, to know Thee, the only true and living God, who inhabitest eternity, and who visitest the children of men. Cause me to see Thy wisdom and power in all Thy works, to behold Thy glory in the sanctuary. Verily, Thou art a God that hidest Thyself; yet wilt Thou dwell with him that is of a lowly and a contrite spirit, that seeketh to worship Thee. Amen.

HYMN. (TUNE, HAMBURG.)

THINE, Lord, is wisdom, thine alone;
Justice and truth before Thee stand,
Yet nearer to Thy sacred throne
Mercy withholds Thy lifted hand.

Each evening shows Thy tender love,
Each rising morn Thy plenteous grace;
Thy wakened wrath doth slowly move,
Thy willing mercy flies apace.

To Thy benign, indulgent care,
Father, this light, this breath we owe;
And all we have, and all we are,
From Thee, great Source of being, flow.

Thrice Holy, Thine the kingdom is;
The power omnipotent is Thine:
And when created nature dies,
Thy never ceasing glories shine.

E. LANGE, tr. by J. WESLEY.

III.

THE WORK OF CREATION.

THE teaching of the Holy Scriptures is that God not only rules the visible Universe,¹ and its living creatures; but that all these things, living or non-living, are made by him for his own wise and holy purposes.² What he was doing before the world was made, we do not know; nor is it necessary for us to know; although there are suggestions in the Bible of a previous order of things where God was also Ruler.³

Now this teaching that the present world has not always been in existence in its present form or nearly so, as some persons have fondly imagined, is another of the strong indications that the Holy Scriptures are true. For everything around us appears to be constantly in a state of change; the winds, the weather, the seasons, the flowers and fruits of the earth; some are growing, while others are maturing or passing away, and so the whole living world is being made new every few months or years.

But the same thing is true of the very foundations of the earth, only they have been much longer on the way; yet science teaches us that they also had a beginning, as doubtless had also the sun, moon and stars in the sky, and everything that we can possibly see or know. Now, all these things are so complicated, yet so orderly, so useful, and in the main so full of beauty and grace, that we cannot possibly think they have made themselves or that they are the result of a grand, happy set of chances.⁴

The Scriptures do not declare that all the world was made at once, nor in a single day. The work of creation required six days, according to the wisdom of God; and as there was no sun to mark the days at first, no one knows how long they really were; but they were probably very, very long, indeed, for God never has to be in a hurry about his work.⁵

The order of these days as given in Genesis is wonderfully like that which appears in a study of the rocks and other elements of the present earth. First, the whole earth was formless and empty, a great waste of waters covered by thick darkness; but the Spirit of God, that is, his Spirit of wisdom and power, brooded over the face of the deep, and He caused the light to break forth out of darkness.⁶

Then the clouds of rain were separated from the deep, and through their rifts the sky began to appear; while the surface of the globe was divided into seas and continents, with smaller islands and inland lakes and rivers.⁷ Then vegetation began to appear on the land; the grass, the herbs, and trees; and presently clearer weather began to let the sun, moon and stars be seen in their places; while the swimming creatures of the seas and the flying things of the air above preceded the creeping things of the earth, the beasts of the forest, and the cattle of the field.⁸

At last, the mighty work was finished; and when there was a garden-like place fit for the abode of human beings, man was created, last of all, just as science also declares, confirming the Scripture account.⁹

"The world is God's letter to mankind. His thoughts are flashing upon us from every direction."

PLATO.

"It is a beautiful and blessed world that we live in, and to lose the right enjoyment of it while life lasts is a sin."

A. W. CHAMBERS.

"The heavens and the earth alike speak of God, and the great natural world is but another Bible, which clasps and binds the written one; for nature and grace are one;—grace the heart of the flower, and nature but its surrounding petals."

H. W. BEECHER.

REFERENCES.

- ¹ Ps. 66:7; 103:19. Dan. 4:25. John 19:10-11. Rev. 15:3-4.
- ² Gen. 1:1. Ps. 33:6-9. John 1:3, 10. Col. 1:16-17. Heb. 1:10.
- ³ Job 38:4-7. Ps. 90:1-2. Prov. 8:22-31. John 17:5, 24. 2 Peter 2:4. Jude 1:6.
- ⁴ Ps. 104:24. 146:5-6. Prov. 3:19-20. Jer. 10:10-13. Acts 14:15.
- ⁵ Gen. 2:1-4. Ex. 20:11. Ps. 90:4. 2 Peter 3:8.
- ⁶ Gen. 1:2-5. Job 38:12-29. Isa. 40:12-14. 2 Cor. 4:5-6.
- ⁷ Gen. 1:6-10. Job 26:7-13; 38:8-11. 2 Peter 3:5.
- ⁸ Gen. 1:11-25. Ps. 59:10-12; 104:10-31. Luke 12:6, 24, 27.
- ⁹ Gen. 1:25-30; 2:7, 8. Ps. 8:1-9, 94:9. Prov. 20:12. Isa. 40:23-31.

QUESTIONS.

What is God's relation to the visible universe according to the Holy Scriptures?

What was God doing before the world was made?

How is this idea of world creation confirmed?

Why may we not think the world came by chance?

How long did God work in creating the world?

What confirms the Bible account of the order of Creation?

Name the successive stages of Creation, whether by days or as steps in the great progress of that work?

What was the last work of God's creation?

PRAYER.

Help me, O God, to remember that Thou alone art the Creator. Thou hast spread out the heavens like a curtain. Thou hast established the earth upon the floods. In thy hands is the breath of all the living. Thou preservest man and beast, and givest them their food in due season. O Lord, our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth! Amen.

HYMN. (TUNE, DIX.)

Let us with a gladsome mind
Praise the Lord, for he is kind,
For his mercies shall endure
Ever faithful, ever sure.

Let us sound his name abroad
For of Gods he is the God,
Who by wisdom did create
Heaven's expanse and all its state.

Did the solid earth ordain
How to rise above the main;
Who by his commanding might
Filled the new made earth with light.

Caused the golden tressed sun
All the day his course to run;
And the moon to shine by night
Mid her spangled sisters bright.

All his creatures God doth feed,
His full hand supplies their need;
He hath with a pitying eye
Looked upon our misery.

Let us, therefore, warble forth
His high majesty and worth,
For his mercy shall endure,
Ever faithful, ever sure.

JOHN MILTON.

IV.

THE NATURE AND PLACE OF MAN.

THE Scriptures tell us that all mankind, or the human race, is derived from a single pair of persons; and therefore, in a general sense, all men are equal in the sight of their Creator, as all are endowed with the same nature and faculties, although in varying degrees of development.¹

Moreover, woman is not the inferior nor the superior of man; but his equal and helpmeet; that is, as filling a peculiar social sphere, which is indispensable to the well-being of the race.² It follows that children should yield respect and obedience to their parents; while the latter are to exercise a wise care and patient control over their children.³

More than this, all men are to have regard for the rights of others, whether rich or poor, wise or simple, great or small, remembering that all are children of one Father, and that each is entitled to some of that divine favor which we all desire for ourselves in our earthly life.⁴

At the same time, the Scriptures teach that man is the highest of all God's creatures in this visible world, far above bird, or beast, or fish, or any other animate being, because he alone enjoys the gift of reason and moral sense; thus being able to know right and wrong, to apprehend his duty to God, and to live a life of real progress.⁵

Because of these special endowments, man is said to have been "created in the image of God;" that

is, with a personality of feeling, reason, and will, which is, in a sense, like the personality of God, and brings us to enjoy conscious relations with Him, and also to have the prospect of an eternal life with Him in heaven.⁶

To man was given the power of articulate speech, and dominion over all the other creatures, and also over the very elements of Nature itself; so as to build houses, weave fabrics, work in metals, till the earth, sail the seas, and a thousand things that belong to the development of the human race, of which much is still to be realized.

All this was ordered that men might develop character, self-control, and responsibility, and show themselves worthy to be called "the children of God," as He also permits us to call Him "Father." To cultivate this highest and noblest side of our human nature is the work of true religion, and the object of God in giving us the Bible.⁷

Many, indeed, have already realized much of this splendid aim in the conduct of their lives and in the work they have done for others, often at the cost of great labor and sacrifice; but no less with the reward of great moral satisfaction and the approval of God himself.

"Man himself is the crowning wonder of creation; the study of his nature is the noblest study that the world affords."

W. E. GLADSTONE.

REFERENCES.

¹ Gen. 3:20, 6:17-20, 7:17-23, 9:19, 10:32, 11:1-9. Job 34:18-19. Acts 17:26.

² Gen. 1:27, 2:21-23. Prov. 18:22, 19:14, 31:10-31. 1 Cor. 11:11-12.

³ Ex. 20:12. Deut. 5:16. 1 Sam. 3:13. Ephes. 6:1-4. Col. 3:20-24. Luke 2:51. Ephes. 6:4. Col. 3:21.

⁴ Prov. 22:2. Luke 10:25-37. Acts 10:28. 34-35. Gal. 3:28. Col. 3:11.

⁵ Gen. 1:26-28, 9:1-3. Ps. 8:3-8. Matt. 10:31, 12:12. Heb. 2:6-8. Rom. 1:19-20.

⁶ Gen. 3:22. Ps. 36:7-9, 63:1-7. Matt. 4:4. 2 Tim. 1:10. John 17:3.

⁷ Ps. 145:8-21. Isa. 55:6-13. Hosea 14. John 20:31.

QUESTIONS.

What does the Bible say of the origin of our race?

What of the equality of woman with man?

What of the equal rights of all men before God?

How is man the highest of God's creations?

What is meant by the "image of God" in man?

What are some elements of progress in humanity?

What appears to be the object of our existence here?

What is then the aim of true religion and the Bible?

PRAYER.

What is man, O Lord, that Thou delightest in him? Thou hast made him a little lower than the angels. Thou hast crowned him with glory and honor. Thou hast given him dominion over the works of Thy majesty; for he is created in Thy image, and in Thy likeness of feeling, thought and will. Aid us, O Lord, to be worthy of our wonderful gifts and inheritance. Amen.

HYMN. (TUNE, DUKE STREET.)

ALL people that on earth do dwell
Sing to the Lord with cheerful voice,
Serve Him with fear, His praise forth tell,
Come ye before Him and rejoice.

The Lord, ye know, is God indeed,
Without our aid He did us make;
We are His flock, He doth us feed,
And for His sheep He doth us take.

O enter, then, His gates with praise,
Approach with joy His courts unto;
Praise, laud, and bless His name always,
For it is seemly so to do.

For why? The Lord our God is good,
His mercy is forever sure,
His truth at all times firmly stood,
And shall from age to age endure.

WM. KETHE.

V.

THE MORAL LAW.

ALL life and being are controlled, at least to some degree, by law. Most of us are already acquainted with the various kinds of law or laws, such as the civil laws of the land in which we live; the laws of the natural world around us, as manifested in life and physical activity of all sorts; the laws of society, or of trade, or of health; which none of us may violate without great danger of inconvenience and damage.

But the highest of all laws in the universe are those which are concerned with God's will and character in relation to His creatures, and more particularly in relation to us as His children. We must live and think and act in harmony with Him in order to attain what He desires for us.¹

There is a right way as well as a wrong one in every part of our life, and it is often difficult to find the right way, especially in matters of duty and morals. This is very evident from the low standards of conduct and character among most of the nations of this world; and to a great extent even among many so-called Christians, who come far short of living creditable lives.

From this we see the necessity for a standard of moral law in relation to ordinary conduct, such as we have in the Holy Scriptures.² This is found specifically in that part of the law of Moses called "the Ten Commandments;" and after a more refined and

spiritual manner, in "the Beatitudes" pronounced by Jesus Christ at the opening of His Sermon on the Mount; but both of these outlines of duty are further elaborated by many precepts and examples in both the Old and New Testaments.

The Ten Commandments express the moral law after a negative manner, by forbidding us to have any other but the one true God, or to worship idols, or to profane the name of God or the Sabbath day, or to show disrespect to our parents, or to kill, or commit adultery, or to steal, or bear false witness, or to covet another's goods; and each of these expresses a great moral principle.³

But the Beatitudes teach the more positive inner spirit of the moral law by declaring the blessing of God upon those who are poor in spirit, who mourn for their sins, who are of a meek disposition, who hunger and thirst after righteousness, who are merciful in conduct, who are pure in heart, who are makers of peace, and who endure persecution for the sake of what is right.⁴

That these two statements of the moral law are one in essentials is shown by our observation of human nature and history; also by the fact that Jesus Christ includes them all in two great Commandments: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, thy soul and mind and strength," and "thy neighbor as thyself." Both of these are strongly confirmed by our daily experience as true conditions of happiness and blessing.⁵

"The seat of law is in the bosom of God; her voice is the harmony of the world. All things in heaven and earth do her homage; the very least as feeling her care, and the greatest as not exempt from

her power. Both angels and men, and creatures of whatever condition, though each in a different sort and name, yet all with one uniform consent, do admire her as the mother of their peace and joy."

RICHARD HOOKER.

"True law is right reason in conformity with nature, universal, unchangeable, eternal; whose commands urge us to duty, and whose prohibitions restrain us from sin."

CICERO.

"Ignorance of the law excuses no man."

SELDEN.

REFERENCES.

¹ Ps. 19:7-11, 40:7-8, 71:15, 19, 24, 111:3. Rom. 2:1-23. Jas. 2:10-11.

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³ Ex. 20:1-17. Deut. 5:6-22. Luke 18:18-21. Rom. 13:8-10.

⁴ Matt. 5:1-12. Luke 6:20-23. Rom. 12:10-21. 1 Tim. 4:8.

⁵ Matt. 22:34-40. Mark 12:28-34. Luke 10:25-37. 1 John 4:16-21.

QUESTIONS.

What power controls all life and being in this world?

Mention several kinds of law that are familiar.

What is the result of violating any of these laws?

Which is the highest of all kinds of law?

How must we live in relation to God in order to be happy?

Is it always easy to know what God requires of us?

Where do we see the lack of true moral standards?

How has God supplied this lack for his people?

When and where were the Ten Commandments given?

What various kinds of evil do they prohibit?

When and where were the Beatitudes uttered to men?

How do they differ in spirit from the Ten Commandments?

In what two Commandments did Jesus Christ sum up the whole duty of man?

PRAYER.

O Lord, Thou art full of righteousness and truth, and Thy kindness ruleth over all. In equity Thou dost judge the world, and hast given Thy law to the sons of men. May we learn to know Thy law and to love it well! May we meditate therein day and night that our profit may appear before Thee, and under the shadow of Thy wings may we rejoice. Amen.

HYMN. (TUNE. SALOME.)

How shall the young secure their hearts
And guard their lives from sin?
Thy word the choicest rule imparts
To keep the conscience clean.

When once it enters to the mind,
It spreads such light abroad,
The meanest souls instruction find
And raise their thoughts to God.

'Tis like the sun, a heavenly light,
That guides us all the day;
And through the dangers of the night,
A lamp to guide our way.

Thy word is everlasting truth;
How pure is every page!
That holy law shall guide our youth
And well support our age.

ISAAC WATTS.

VI.

SIN AND ITS CONSEQUENCES.

SIN, or the violation of God's moral laws, is one of the saddest and most terrible facts in human life. Since to man has been given the power to exercise his own will for good or evil, it is highly necessary for us all to appreciate the perils of an evil life.

The nature of sin is various in both quality and intensity ; but its origin with our first parents in Eden seems to have been a turning from the innocent pleasures and comforts of life, represented by "the tree of life," to taste of the forbidden fruits of another tree, called "the tree of the knowledge of good and evil," against which they had been warned by the voice of God in their own hearts.¹

Why they disobeyed this warning is difficult to explain, just as it is hard to account for sin to-day among people of much intelligence and culture. However, it now shows a certain moral weakness, vanity, or corrupt tendency from which none are wholly exempt, and which is wrought upon by some external power of influence toward evil, called in the Scriptures, "Satan," or "the adversary."²

Sin is the greatest cause of misery in this present world ; for while men are more or less subject to ignorance and poverty, sickness and accident, all of which bring to us pain and sorrow in this life ; yet we might endure these with some resignation, but for sin which poisons our life at its very source,

separates us from the love of God, and overwhelms us with shame and regret without limit and without end.³

The beginnings of sin are usually small and insidious, perhaps little more than a simple missing of the mark or line of true righteousness, failure to realize the purposes of God with respect to our existence. Or, it may be an actual transgression of the Divine law, an overstepping of the bounds of safety and obligation as fixed by our Creator. Or, it may be a spirit of willful disobedience and rebellion against His holy and sovereign will, which has become irksome to our heart.⁴

In any case, the tendency of each sinful act, whether by word, thought, or deed, is to grow by repetition or indulgence, and to become a constant element in our character, unless it can be checked, and overcome, and rooted out.⁵

For the consequences of sin are clearly set forth in the Holy Scriptures, and this is also confirmed by experience. "The wages of sin is death;" that is, moral and spiritual degeneracy and ruin, eternal separation from God's blessings and mercies, and receiving in ourselves the recompense that is meet for the wrong we have done to ourselves, to others, and to God.⁶

For, those who are led captive by sin, either by open transgressions, or by carelessness and neglect of duty, become incapable of enjoying communion with God, or the society of the pure and good in heaven; and they could not long be content even with each other, because they would not live in real peace.

Therefore, such lives are fit at last only for the burning refuse heap, unless reached by the truth of God, and redeemed from the power of sin and death by His saving grace.⁷

"Sin is essentially a departure from God."

LUTHER.

"Sin is first pleasing ; then it grows easy, then frequent, then habitual, then confirmed ; then the man is impenitent, then he is obstinate, then he is resolved never to repent, and then he is ruined."

LEIGHTON.

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⁵ Ps. 139 : 23-24. Hosea 14 : 1-4. 1 Cor. 5 : 6-7, 15 : 33. Gal. 5 : 9, 12. 2 Tim. 2 : 16, 3 : 13-14.

⁶ Gen. 2 : 17. John 8 : 21, 24. Rom. 6 : 23. Gal. 6 : 7-8. Jas. 1 : 13-15.

⁷ Zech. 3 : 1-2. Luke 11 : 17-26. 1 Cor. 6 : 9-10. Gal. 4 : 3, 9. 2 Tim. 2 : 24-26.

QUESTIONS.

What is sin in its most general sense?

Is man responsible for doing good or evil?

What was the nature of the first sin in Eden?

What is the real occasion and cause of sin?

Why is sin the greatest source of human misery?

What is said of the usual beginnings of sin?

What three classes or degrees of sin are noted?

What is the usual tendency of sin in each life?

What are its final consequences, if not overcome?

Why are those who constantly commit sin at last incapable of enjoying heaven or God's presence?

PRAYER.

O Lord, my God, show me the error of my ways, and keep me back from presumptuous sins. Let them not have dominion over me. Be merciful unto me, O God, and preserve me from falling into the pit of the destroyer. May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in Thy sight, O Lord, my strength and Redeemer. Amen.

HYMN. (TUNE SPOHR.)

I WANT a principle within
Of jealous, godly fear;
A sensibility of sin,
A pain to feel it near.
I want the first approach to feel
Of pride or fond desire;
To catch the wandering of my will
And quench the kindling fire.

From Thee that I no more may part,
No more Thy goodness grieve,
The filial awe, the fleshly heart,
The tender conscience, give.
Quick as the apple of an eye,
O God, my conscience make!
Awake my soul when sin is nigh,
And keep it still awake.

CHARLES WESLEY.

VII.

THE HOLY SPIRIT.

God's general way of working among the souls of men and revealing to them His holy will and the elements of moral truth; also of preparing and inclining them to a better life, and the fulfillment of His gracious purposes in the world, is by and through the Holy Spirit.

This is a personal being, part of God Himself, for whose influences a receptive capacity has been implanted in the souls of men. By Him not only were the spiritual truths of the Scriptures first imparted to holy men of God, but a work of divine leading has been carried on through the ages, chiefly, though not always, within the Church of God.¹

Thus we are taught that the Holy Spirit strove with sinful men in the days before the flood; that He was upon Moses and the elders of Israel in the wilderness; that He raised up various leaders for the deliverance of Israel from time to time; that He spake by the mouth of David, the shepherd king and the sweet psalmist of Israel; that He came upon Balaam, the son of Zippor, who prophesied the future prosperity of Israel; that He was in the prophets, directing their messages and foretelling things to come. We read also that He had much to do with the birth, the baptism, and the ministry of Jesus Christ; that He was promised as the Comforter after Christ should go away; that He was poured out upon

the disciples on the day of Pentecost ; and that He accompanied the preaching of the apostles to give efficiency and power to their words among the Jews and Gentiles.²

In fact, so prominent is this feature in the New Testament that it is sometimes called the dispensation of the Holy Spirit ; since He is now promised to all who are sincere believers in Jesus Christ and who are earnestly striving to do the will of God.

Yet there are many hindrances to the work of the Spirit in the world at large, and sometimes in the Church. For instance, it is said that the presence of the Holy Spirit is often simulated by false prophets and by persons who have gone aside into the ways of corruption ; but the true Spirit of God is known by His fruits in men's lives, and also by a certain consistency with his own record in the past.³

Again, we read that there is an antagonism of the flesh against His work, so that the natural and unawakened soul of man does not discern nor sympathize with the mind of the Spirit.⁴ Yet it is His presence in the Church which gives true spiritual life and power to the body of believers as such, and which renders the word of preaching and testimony powerful in the conviction and regeneration of sinful men and women.⁵

Thus, in the Old Testament as well as the New, we learn that success in God's work is to be accomplished "not by might nor by power ; but by My Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts."

It is the Spirit of God who warns us of danger, convicts us of sin, and invites us to be reconciled to God through Christ. One of the last passages in the New Testament says, "The Spirit and the Bride say, Come ; and whosoever will, let him come."⁶ Yet the good Spirit may be grieved and vexed by our

hardness of heart. Yea, He may be blasphemed and driven away forever.⁷

“What is there in man so worthy of honor and reverence as this,—that he is capable of communing with something higher than his own reason, more sublime than the physical universe,—that Spirit which alone is self-subsistent, from which all truth proceeds, without which is no truth?”

JACOBI. (Adapted.)

“Love God and He will dwell with you. Obey God, and He will reveal to you the truth of His deepest teachings.”

ROBERTSON.

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⁴ John 3:6. Acts 8:14-24. Rom. 8:5-13. 1 Cor. 2:12-15. Gal. 4:29, 5:16, 17.

⁵ Joel 2:28, 29. John 6:63. Acts 4:31. Rom. 8:1-4, 14-17. 2 Cor. 3:3, 6-8, 14-18. Gal. 4:6. Ephes. 1:13, 2:18, 3:5, 4:3, 4, 6:17, 18.

⁶ Zech. 4:6. Luke 12:11-12. John 16:7-15. Acts 1:8. 1 Thess. 1:5. Heb. 4:12, 13. Rev. 2:7, 11, 17, 29, 3:6, 13, 22, 4:5, 22:17.

⁷ Gen. 6:3. Ps. 78:40, 41. Matt. 12:31-32. Acts 7:51. 1 Thess. 4:8, 5:19. Ephes. 4:30. Heb. 3:7, 8, 6:4-6. 1 John 5:16.

QUESTIONS.

What is God's general way of working among men for their moral enlightenment and improvement?

What do you understand by the Holy Spirit and his work? Mention some scriptural instances of his work.

What kind of dispensation is the Gospel sometimes called?

How may the Spirit of God be known from false spirits?

What do the Scriptures say about the Spirit and the flesh?

What do they say about the Spirit in the Church?

What is the final result of continued resistance to the voice of God's Spirit in our hearts?

PRAYER.

Grant unto me, O merciful Lord, the kindly light and the gracious leading of Thy Holy Spirit, day by day, that I may know Thy will, that I may walk in Thy ways, and be kept from the power of evil. So may my heart be purified, and my mind made clear and strong, to do only those things that are well-pleasing in Thy sight, and to be a blessing unto others. Amen.

HYMN. (TUNE, ST. MARTIN'S.)

COME, Holy Ghost, our hearts inspire,
Let us Thine influence prove,
Source of the old prophetic fire,
Fountain of life and love.

Come, Holy Ghost, for moved by Thee,
The prophets wrote and spoke,
Unlock the truth, Thyself the key,
Unseal the sacred book.

Expand Thy wings, celestial Dove,
Brood o'er our nature's night,
On our disordered spirits move,
And let there now be light.

God through Himself we then shall know,
If Thou within us shine,
And sound, with all Thy saints below,
The depths of love divine.

CHARLES WESLEY.

VIII.

PRAYER AND DIVINE PROVIDENCE.

WHEN people find themselves in trouble because of their wrong doings and sins, like Jacob fleeing from his brother Esau, and especially when danger threatens them, as David in exile from the Court of Saul, they are often impelled by the Holy Spirit to call upon God for help and comfort ; and this is a very natural and reasonable practice, for there is no other power so well able to relieve our real sorrows, or to direct us in our ignorance, or to assist us to be better and to make us acceptable unto God in life and character.¹

By thus lifting up our thoughts, and even our voices, in prayer for the Divine favor, or in songs of praise and honor to our Heavenly Father for His daily mercies and benefits toward us, we are greatly aided in realizing the personal presence and power of the Lord.² This blessed sense of communion with Him also grows with practice and experience in the things of the soul as contrasted with those of the world.³

The Scriptures teach us that God is always ready and willing to hear the prayer of all who call upon Him in sincerity and with persevering faith, providing their motives are pure and worthy, and also provided that their petitions can be granted consistently with His own wisdom and goodness.⁴

Thus we learn both from the Bible and from personal experience that the Almighty does often grant

special mercies of grace and providential kindness to those who call upon Him ; and this is so true that the history of the world itself seems marked by many instances of Divine control over the course of human interests and affairs. Yet God's chief aim is not to show wonders and marvels.⁵

We may know that there is a special providence of God in the affairs of men from the fact that He is not only the Creator, but also the Preserver of this visible world, "upholding all things by the word of His power," and having regard to the least as well as the greatest of His creatures.⁶

Yet we are not to expect that, simply because God is able, He would therefore do any of those things which would bring confusion into the natural world, or gratify our weakness and selfishness, or would destroy the wholesome discipline of our lives on earth by bringing full reward or punishment before their time. God prefers to do His favors in a more quiet and appropriate way.⁷

Even in the Scriptures we read only of three brief periods of the open and miraculous signs of God's wonder-working power among men, in the days of Moses, and of Elijah, and of His Son Jesus Christ ; and those signs were barely sufficient to establish the faith of the people in ages of great spiritual need.

But prayer for God's secret care over our daily affairs, and more especially for His grace and guidance in our heart life and in our spiritual relations with Himself, are always encouraged in the Scriptures, and promises are made that He will in some way answer such petitions. Yet these must be something more than mere formal prayers. They must be earnest, and from the soul of him who prays ; and such a one will often also need special preparation in order to be able to claim an answer from

God, especially in the more serious and really difficult matters of human experience, and in purely temporal matters.⁸

"Prayer is a sincere, sensible, affectionate pouring out of the soul to God, through Christ, in the strength and assistance of the Spirit, for such things as God has promised."

JOHN BUNYAN.

"Practice in life whatever you pray for, and God will give it to you more abundantly."

JOHN PUSEY.

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³ Gen. 18:17-33. Num. 14:11-25. Ps. 39:4-7, 61:1-4, 63. Rom. 8:26-28.

⁴ Ex. 3:7, 9-10. Job 33:26. Ps. 32:6. Prov. 15:8, 29. Matt. 7:7-12, 21:22. Luke 18:1-7, 9-14. John 9:31. Mark 11:22-26. Jas. 4:3, 5:15-16. 1 Peter 3:12. Rev. 5:8, 8:3, 4.

⁵ 1 Kings 8:22-61, 18:17-40. 2 Kings 19:14-20, 35. Neh. 1:4-11. Acts 4:31, 9:11. 10:30-31, 12:1-19, 16:19-26. John 4:48. Luke 16:31.

⁶ Ps. 103:104, 145:8-21. Isa. 55:8-13. Mal. 3:10-12. Matt. 6:25-33. Luke 12:22-30.

⁷ Eccles. 3:1-17. Luke 13:1-5. John 9:1-3, 12:23-28. Mark 10:35-40.

⁸ Matt. 6:5-15, 17:20-21. Luke 11:1-13. Mark 11:23-26. 1 John 3:22, 5:14-16.

QUESTIONS.

What are some Scriptural instances of prayer?

What are we helped to realize by prayer?

What other things add to a prayerful disposition?

What do the Scriptures teach about answers to prayer?

Does God interfere by His providence in our affairs?

Why does He not seem to do this more frequently?

What kind of prayers cannot be consistently answered?

What kind of prayers are most encouraged?

What is sometimes necessary in the serious and doubtful affairs of human life?

PRAYER.

Teach me, O Lord, to pray. Show me my own need, and Thy abundant power to supply it all. Help me to look to Thee for daily grace and blessings from above. So may I come to feel Thee near, to rejoice in Thy mercy, and also to acknowledge Thee in all my ways. Thus shall I find grace in Thy sight, O God. Amen.

HYMN. (TUNE, PLEYEL'S HYMN.)

LORD, we come before Thee now,
At Thy feet we humbly bow:
O do not our suit disdain;
Shall we seek Thee, Lord, in vain?

Lord, on Thee our souls depend:
In compassion now descend;
Fill our hearts with Thy rich grace,
Tune our lips to sing Thy praise.

In Thine own appointed way,
Now we seek Thee, here we stay,
Lord, we know not how to go,
Till a blessing Thou bestow.

WM. HAMMOND.

IX.

THE COVENANT WITH GOD.

THE essence of true personal religion must not be thought of as merely a sentiment or feeling toward God on our part, nor as a mere influence from God on our behalf ; but it comes in a more definite form as an agreement between God and ourselves leading to a life of service and blessings. It requires not only a disposition to pray and to seek the favor of God, but also a disposition of obedience and surrender to His Holy will.¹

This was the reason why in ancient times, when Moses gave the Law to the children of Israel by the direction of the Holy Spirit, he called upon them to take the Lord for their God, excluding all other so-called gods, to honor and serve Him with a sincere heart, and to keep His laws forever ; for this was to be the condition of God's favor to them.²

It was the same way in the days of Joshua, and of Samuel, and of Elijah, when all those prophets called upon the people, then in a backslidden and sinful state, to forsake their evil practices and their idols, and to serve only the one true, living, and holy God.³

It is no less true at the present day, that if we would escape the bondage and guilt of a sinful life to become the children of God and heirs of heaven, we must commit our way fully unto Him alone, and

confess Him as our Lord before men in order that He may one day confess us before the angels in heaven.⁴

Some people try to take a middle course, by doing as little wrong as possible and yet refusing to accept the duty of coming out openly for God before the world ; but there are no promises of God for such persons, because they ignore the basis of Christian character ; and He will not have us keep back a part of our heart from Him for our own pleasure and selfishness.⁵

Such were the conditions of God's saving grace in the days of Moses, when the Ark of the Covenant was the visible sign both of God's promises and of man's acceptance of them. So to-day, we are offered, in effect, the same conditions of salvation in the Gospel of Jesus Christ, of which His Cross is the sign and seal.⁶

The Old and New Testaments of the Bible are simply the old and new Covenants of God as given by Moses and by Christ ; the first rude and preparatory the second spiritual and complete ; but fitting into each other as equal parts of God's wise and eternal plan for saving men from sin. Now, when God's word is offered to us in these later days, we have only to accept its teachings and promises, putting them into daily practice in our lives, looking for God to do His part by us and trusting Him for the salvation of our souls.⁷

In all this, we have help and assurance ; for the Holy Spirit of truth and grace is always with the sincere servants of God, as the pillar of fire and cloud was with ancient Israel, going before them on the march, and resting on them at every camping-place, until they reached the promised land of their inheritance.⁸

“No principle is more noble, as there is none more holy, than that of a true obedience.”

GILES.

“All the world over it is true that a double-minded man is unstable in all his ways, like a wave on the streamlet, tossed hither and thither with every impulse of its tide.”

PUNSHON.

“There is no road to success but through a strong, clear purpose. Nothing can take its place, for purpose underlies character.”

UNKNOWN.

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⁷ Jer. 3:16. 17. 31:31-34. Ezek. 37:26. 27. 2 Cor. 1:5:17-21. Gal. 4:22-24. Heb. 8:6-13.

⁸ Exod. 40:34-38. Num. 9:15-23. 1 Kings 8:10-11. Rom. 8:14. 1 Cor. 10:1-4. Ephes. 4:4.

QUESTIONS.

What besides a sentiment or influence is religion?

What personal disposition does this require?

What was God's covenant with His ancient Church?

Who renewed this covenant from time to time?

What is also required of us at the present day?

Why is it impossible to take a middle course?

What two objections to a partial pledge to God?
 What does God's pledge demand from us and why?
 What is said of the promises in God's word?
 What are the two signs of the old and new covenant?
 What is the difference between these covenants?
 What are the witnesses to these covenants?

PRAYER.

O Thou Almighty One, clouds and thick darkness
 are around about Thee, and Thy glory is hidden
 from the eyes of sinful men. Yet in Thy great
 mercy, Thou hast caused us to hear Thy voice;
 Thou hast invited us to serve Thee; and Thou hast
 entered into covenant relations with men by sacri-
 fice and sacrament. So may we hearken unto Thee,
 and obey Thy word, that we may also receive Thy
 heavenly care and blessing. Amen.

HYMN. (TUNE, SILVER STREET.)

COME ye that love the Lord,
 And let your joys be known,
 Join in a song with sweet accord,
 While ye surround His throne.

Let those refuse to sing
 Who never knew our God,
 But servants of the heavenly King
 May speak their joys abroad.

The men of grace have found
 Glory begun below,
 Celestial fruit on earthly ground
 From faith and hope may grow.

Then let our songs abound
 And every tear be dry,
 We're marching thro' Immanuel's ground
 To fairer worlds on high.

ISAAC WATTS.

X.

THE SEPARATION OF GOD'S PEOPLE.

A SINGULAR thing in the history of ancient Israel was their separation from the people of Egypt, and their long wandering in the desert on the way to finally inherit the land of Canaan which was promised by the Lord to their forefathers. This was no doubt ordered of God, so that after they had made a covenant with Him, they should not immediately be contaminated again by the evil example and influence of the heathen, by hearing their wicked conversation, and sharing in their idolatrous manners and customs of life.¹

Moses also gave them many special laws to enforce the principle of purity, by habits of chastity and cleanliness, by the choice of their food, the materials of their garments, the care of their houses, and many other such marks of separation from the rest of the peoples around them in the world.²

All these rules had a spiritual meaning, and so long as the Israelites observed them in their lives and conduct, they seem to have been blessed and prospered; but when they departed from God's laws by adopting the customs of their heathen neighbors, they declined in prosperity, and fell under both the displeasure of God and the power of their enemies, by whom they were finally carried away, some into the land of Assyria, and some into Babylon.³

True, after great affliction and sore repentance, a part of them were restored to Palestine, as it was

called in later times, and to the observance of the laws and manners of their great leader, Moses; but now they were greatly limited in their civil liberties, and seem to have lost the Ark of the Covenant.⁴

Under the Christian Dispensation, all these outward restrictions of manners and customs have been done away, and the emphasis of purity is placed upon the state of the person's mind and heart; yet the principle of some sort of separation from evil still remains highly necessary to a Christian life.⁵

In the early days of Christianity, we are told there was such a contrast between the lives of the Christians and those of the heathen around them that the former were distinctly seen to be "a peculiar people," "in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation," "holding forth the word of life" to the unconverted world.⁶

The same practices of purity in life and conversation, or carefulness in reading, in amusements, in occupations, and in our devotional habits, is needed also at the present day to mark the children of God, and to preserve them uncontaminated from the corruption of the world. While we must live here and do our work as good citizens and members of the social community, we must avoid the sins of the world and its idolatry of worldly things, lest we go down at last in the same destruction that awaits all who live in sin and reject the grace of God in their hearts.⁷ Therefore we must keep the laws of God.

"A religion that never suffices to govern a man will never suffice to save him. That which does not distinguish him from a sinful world will never distinguish him from a perishing world."

JOHN HOWE.

"The silent, serene beauty of a holy life is the most powerful influence in the world, next to the might of the Spirit of God."

PASCAL.

"The beauty of holiness has done more and will do more to regenerate the world and bring in everlasting righteousness than all other agencies put together."

CHALMERS.

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² Exod. 19:5, 33:16. Lev. 20:22-26. Deut. 7:1-6. Neh. 13:1-3.

³ 1 Kings 3:3-15, 28, 4:20-25, 9:1-9. 2 Kings 17:6-23. 2 Chron. 24:17-25, 36:11-21.

⁴ Ezra. 1, 2:1, 64-70, 3. Neh. 7:66-73. Zech. 7:8-14. 8:1-8. Haggai 2:1-9.

⁵ Acts 11:1-18, 15:22-29. Rom. 2:28-29, 12:1-2. 1 Cor. 5:9-11. 2 Cor. 6:14-18.

⁶ Matt. 5:14-16. John 12:35-36. Phil. 2:15. 1 Peter 2:9-10. 1 John 2:15-17.

⁷ Ephes. 5:1-16. Col. 3:1-8, 4:5-6. 1 Thess. 4:9-12. 1 John. 5:21.

QUESTIONS.

Why did God call His ancient people out of Egypt?

What danger comes after making a covenant?

How did He separate them from other peoples?

What was the result of their obedience to God?

What was the result when they disobeyed Him?

How did God later show His mercy to them?

What treasures had they lost meanwhile?

Where is the emphasis laid in the New Dispensation?

Does the principle of separation from evil still hold?

What was the moral state of the early Christians?

In what ways should Christians be careful now?

How are we to live in the world and not be of the world?

PRAYER.

O Lord, Thou desirest truth in the inward parts. Therefore we beseech Thee to separate us from our sins, and from the workers of iniquity, that we may be a chosen people, zealous for righteousness and the glory of Thy holy name. Sacrifice and burnt offering Thou dost not desire, but rather the works of faith and obedience. So may we be Thy children, Lord, forevermore. Amen.

HYMN. (TUNE, CONSECRATION.)

TAKE my life and let it be
Consecrated, Lord to Thee,
Take my moments and my days,
Let them flow in ceaseless praise.
Take my hands and let them move
At the impulse of Thy love.
Take my feet and let them be
Swift and beautiful for Thee.

Take my voice and let me sing
Always, only, for my King,
Take my lips and let them be
Filled with messages from Thee.
Take my silver and my gold;
Not a mite would I withhold.
Take my intellect and use
Every power as Thou shalt choose.

Take my will and make it Thine;
It shall be no longer mine.
Take my heart, it is Thine own;
It shall be Thy regal throne,
Take my love, my Lord, I pour
At Thy feet its treasure store,
Take myself, and I will be
Ever, only, all for Thee.

FRANCES R. HAVERGAL.

XI.

THE LAW OF REVERENCE TOWARD GOD.

OF the ten Commandments given by Moses to the children of Israel, the first four relate to the duty of reverence toward God. A knowledge of the one true, everlasting, holy God is surely one of the highest and most precious of our privileges, and should have a very great influence for good on the conduct of our lives. Therefore, this knowledge is not to be abused nor neglected by us under any circumstances; but we should cherish it as a sacred possession, and endeavor in all possible ways to grow better acquainted with God and all that pertains to His holy will.¹

Certainly we should avoid everything that savors of disrespect toward Him, especially in the wrong use of His name, of His written or spoken messages to mankind, or of anything pertaining to His worship or His Spirit of grace; for all these evil acts will bring our souls into condemnation by turning the light that is given us into darkness.²

But this feeling of reverence toward God may also be kept alive and quickened in our hearts by studying the Scriptures, especially those portions of them which reveal His great power and majesty in lofty descriptions and in the visions of patriarchs, prophets and apostles; or when his wisdom and tenderness toward all of his creatures are shown to us by the writers of the Psalms, or by the prophets, or by Christ our Saviour in his discourses in the Gospels.³

In both these respects the character of God and our dependence upon him for all the mercies and blessings of life are further to be seen by a contemplation of his works in the natural world around us, which contains so many evidences of his handiwork and of his constant presence and beneficent operations. Sometimes, like Elijah at Mt. Horeb, we are much impressed by these tokens, as when we see a great storm of clouds and lightning and rain, or a mighty earthquake, or a volcanic eruption, or a great conflagration, or a mighty flood of waters, or a time of pestilence, or other natural phenomena which show us our littleness and weakness.⁴

Yet, we also need to learn that God is ever with us, in the stars and in the sunshine, in the sea and in the mountains, and no less in the springing of the grass, the opening of the buds and flowers, the songs of the birds, the moving of the wild creatures in the woods and the tame animals in the field, in the harvest and fruitful autumn, in the life of all the living.⁵

Most of all, He is revealed to the hearts of them that seek Him in prayer, that honor Him in their lives, and that endeavor to obey His will in all things, turning from sin and vanities of every sort to learn his saving truth. To such persons the majesty of his power, the beauty of his holiness, the tenderness of his love, are a real vision of the heart and a constant feast to the soul.⁶

God of my fathers! holy, just and good!
Creator! Father! and unfailing Hope!
Jehovah! let the incense of Thy praise
Accepted burn before Thy mercy-seat;
And let Thy presence burn both day and night.

ADAPTED FROM POLLOCK.

REFERENCES.

¹ Job 11:7-9, 22:21-30. Ps. 34:1-10. Jer. 10:10-16. Hab. 2:20. Nahum 1:1-8. John 1:1-14. Heb. 1:1-2.

² Job 21:7, 14-21, 22:12-17. Ps. 10:4-6. Matt. 6:23, 21:12, 13. John 3:19-21. Rom. 1:16-25, 28.

³ Ex. 20:1-7. Ps. 11:4, 5, 19:9-11, 111:10. Isa. 6:1-5, 40:12-31. Matt. 6:25-33. Luke 10:21, 22.

⁴ Ex. 19:16, 20:18. Num. 16:31-35. 1 Sam. 7:10. 2 Sam. 22:8-16. 1 Kings 18:17-39, 19:11-13. Ps. 18:7-15. Heb. 12:29.

⁵ Job 36:26-33, 37. Ps. 65, 104, 145, 147. Acts 14:16, 17.

⁶ Ps. 63:1-8, 89:1-18, 103, 146. Jas. 4:8. 2 Pet. 3:9.

QUESTIONS.

What is a knowledge of God as compared with a knowledge of other things?

How should we cherish this knowledge of God?

How should we avoid all disrespect toward God?

What is the consequence of such disrespect?

How may our reverence toward God be quickened and developed by a study of the Scriptures?

What signs of God may we find in the world around us?

What tokens of God commonly impress us most?

What other tokens of Him are equally instructive?

To what kind of persons is God most clearly revealed and under what conditions of life?

What three things become to such persons a vision of the heart and a feast of the soul?

MEDITATION AND PRAYER.

The Lord reigneth; let the people tremble. He sitteth between the cherubim; let the earth be moved. Clouds and darkness are round about him; righteousness and judgment are the habitations of his throne. The Lord is great in Zion; He is high above all the people. Let them praise Thy great and terrible name, for it is Holy. Exalt ye the Lord our God, and worship at His footstool; for the Lord our God is Holy. Amen.

HYMN. (TUNE, MILLENIUM.)

THE Lord Jehovah reigns,
His throne is built on high;
The garments He assumes
Are light and majesty;
His glories shine with beams so bright
No mortal eye can bear the sight.

The thunders of His hand
Keep the wide world in awe;
His wrath and justice stand
To guard His holy law;
And when His love resolves to bless,
His truth confirms and seals the grace.

And will this sovereign King
Of glory condescend,
And will He write His name,
My Father and my Friend:
I love His name, I love His word;
Join all my powers to praise the Lord.
ISAAC WATTS.

XII.

THE LAW OF SABBATH REST AND WORSHIP.

THE law of the Sabbath, which was also first given by Moses, is a consequence of the moral nature of man, because he needs time to rest from his daily cares, to lay aside his worldly interests, and to seek after the things of God for the good of his own soul.¹

Our bodies find rest in leisure and sleep. They are also nourished by our daily food, and refreshed by a change of place and exercise, which are good for both young and old. So again, our minds are benefitted by rest and relaxation, by meeting with new things and people; and especially do they need ample time for learning the lessons and ways, the arts and duties, that are necessary for our later years.

In like manner the moral nature in the immortal soul of man, needs time and attention for its nourishment in spiritual things, for development in the habits of religion and in preparation for the life to come. For this reason God has given to His children one day in seven, called the Holy Sabbath, to be set apart for rest from ordinary labor, and to be used as a day of quietness and worship, and of learning to know and to do the things which are pleasing to Him.²

When rightly used, the Sabbath is a precious day to all, not only because it is a day of rest for both

body and mind; but because it reminds us of God and Heaven, of mercy and purity and all good things, and even of our own high estate as children of the Almighty; while the neglect of the Sabbath destroys all these ideas.³

In many places the observance of the Sabbath is now greatly neglected or actually cast aside for mere business, or traveling, or for various amusements; and this tends to the great detriment of morality also, because it destroys the main support of religion, which is the influence of the Gospel in human lives. The ancient prophets declared that this was one principal cause of the downfall of Israel and Judah, that God had cast them off because they despised his covenant by profaning his Holy Sabbath day; and the same principles may apply to the conduct of many who are called Christians at the present time, no matter how specious are their reasons and excuses.⁴

It is true, however, that Jesus Christ spoke out against the foolishness and insincerity of the Jewish Pharisees, because they prohibited even works of mercy and necessity on the Sabbath day and introduced many useless restrictions which were of no real help to religion.⁵ Jesus Himself and his apostles did many good works on the Sabbath day.⁶

Moreover, it appears from his own words and from the writings of the apostles that He authorized them to change the old order and to place the Christian Sabbath on the first instead of the seventh day of the week.⁷ Thus, his resurrection occurred on the first day of the week, and also the descent of the Holy Ghost on the disciples at Jerusalem; after which it was regularly observed by them as the day of religious assembly, of church collections, and of the worship of God.⁸

"He who ordained the Sabbath loves the poor."

J. R. LOWELL.

"The longer I live, the more highly do I estimate the Christian Sabbath, and the more grateful do I feel to those who impress its importance on the community."

DANIEL WEBSTER.

"Without a Sabbath, no worship; without worship, no religion; and without religion, no permanent freedom."

MONTALEMBERT.

"I have found by long and sound experience that the due observance of the Sabbath day, and of the duties of it, have been of singular comfort and advantage to me. The observance of the day hath ever had joined to it a blessing on the rest of my time; and the week so begun hath been blessed and prospered to me."

SIR MATTHEW HALE.

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¹ Gen. 2:2, 3. Ex. 16:23, 29-30, 20:8-11, 31:13-17. Deut. 5:12-15.

² Exod. 35:2. Lev. 23:3. 1 Chron. 23:30-31. Ps. 92, title.

³ Neh. 9:14. Isa. 56:1-7, 58:13-14. Jer. 17:21-27.

⁴ 2 Chron. 36:20, 21. Ezek. 20:12-16, 19-21. Neh. 13:15-22. Lam. 1:7.

⁵ Matt. 12:1-8. Mark 2:23-28. Luke 6:1-5. Col. 2:16.

⁶ Matt. 12:10-13. Mark 1:21, 3:1-5. Luke 4:16, 6:6-10, 13:10. John 5:9-10, 16, 9:14-16. Acts 13:14, 42, 44, 16:13, 17:2, 18:4.

⁷ Luke 6:5, 23:56, 24:1. John 20:1, 19, 26.

⁸ Acts 2:1. (Explain the day of the week on which Pentecost fell: see Lev. 23:15, 16.) Acts 20:7. 1 Cor. 16:2. Rev. 1:10.

QUESTIONS.

When was the law of the Sabbath first given?

How is the Sabbath a requirement of man's moral nature?

How is it also a benefit to his body and mind?

For what moral ends do we need time and attention?

What then are the purposes of Sabbath observance?

How may the Sabbath be to all a precious day?

What is the present state of Sabbath observance?

What did the prophets say was the result of the violation of the Sabbath among the Jews?

How did Christ criticize Jewish Sabbath observance?

What use did Jesus make of the Sabbath day?

What proofs have we that he authorized the apostles to place the Christian Sabbath on the first day of the week?

PRAYER.

Lord, I thank Thee for the Holy Sabbath day; for its sweet rest, its precious associations and privileges. I pray for grace to appreciate them fully, and to make a sacred and worthy use of them under all circumstances, that I may live aright on earth and be fully prepared to dwell with Christ in Heaven forevermore. Amen.

HYMN. (TUNE, MENDEBRAS.)

O DAY of rest and gladness, O day of joy and light;
O balm of care and sadness, Most beautiful, most
bright.

On Thee the high and lowly, Through ages joined in
tune,

Sing holy, holy, holy, To the great God Triune.

On Thee, at the creation, The light first had its birth;
On Thee, for our salvation, Christ rose from depths of
earth;

On Thee, our Lord, victorious, The Spirit sent from
heaven;

And thus on Thee, most glorious, A triple light was
given.

To-day, on weary nations, The heavenly manna falls;
To holy convocations, The silver trumpet calls.
Where gospel light is glowing, With pure and radiant
beams,
And living waters flowing, With soul-refreshing
streams.

New graces ever gaining, From this our day of rest,
We reach the rest remaining, To spirits of the blest;
To Holy Ghost be praises, To Father and to Son;
The Church her voice upraises, To Thee, blest Three
in One.

CHRISTOPHER WORDSWORTH.

XIII.

THE LAW OF THE FAMILY AND RESPECT TO PARENTS.

THE institution of the Home and Family is among the first things in all social order, civilization, and morality, and was so recognized by Moses and by Jesus Christ. While men were permitted to have more than one wife in the earlier ages, it was no longer so in later times, when people became more settled in their homes, and there was better protection for the weak and defenceless.¹

The family tie is one that unites one man and one woman for their natural lives, obliging them to restrict their desires, and even their intimate friendships, to such as are consistent with their mutual relations to each other and to their own children; to live together and labor for the maintenance of their own household; and to provide for their common welfare in all things.²

This obligation is one that cannot be annulled by sickness, disappointment, or even distress; and hence it is a very serious burden in many cases. Yet without it, children would often be left in the direst poverty and neglect by their own parents.³

But this also brings an obligation on the part of the children to respect and obey their parents, who are their natural guides and protectors. Even in later years this obligation does not wholly cease; for as the child is nourished and defended by his parents when young, so he should care for them, if necessary, in old age.⁴

These relations are the more important and sacred because the family circle is the place of our earliest impressions, our tenderest affections and recollections, and usually of the influences that form our character in life. There also we are most likely to act out our real character, whether for good or bad, happiness or misery, regardless of how we may speak or act in public.⁵

The home, therefore, should be carefully preserved from all evil and made happy by the spirit of order, obedience, and respect. Children must bear in mind that their parents are older than themselves, that they have more experience, and that usually their counsels are intended for the good of their children. If some things are hard to be borne at times, it is better to await one's maturer years with patience than to bring in confusion by disobedience.⁶

This is an important part of that training which is necessary to fit each one of us for our own responsibilities in later life, for our duties as members of society and as good citizens of the community where we shall reside. It is no less important in order to fit us for habits of love and obedience toward God, our Heavenly Father, and for usefulness and honor in His kingdom forever.⁷

Still, if a parent should command his child to do an act that is expressly against the laws of truth, of justice, or of chastity, it is possible that the child may have to obey God rather than man. But this will not be likely ever to occur if the parents themselves fear God and do the right; and especially if they maintain the custom of family worship, with a daily reading of the Scriptures and a prayer for God's personal guidance and blessing upon their home.

"Home, the spot of earth supremely blest,
A dearer, sweeter spot than all the rest."

MONTGOMERY.

"Our home joys are the most delightful that earth affords, and the joy of parents in their children is the most holy joy of humanity. It makes their hearts pure and good; it lifts men up to their Father in Heaven."

PESTALOZZI,

"He is the happiest, be he king or peasant, who finds peace in his home."

GOETHE.

REFERENCES.

¹ Gen. 2:23-24. Ps. 127, 128. John 2:1-2, 11. 1 Tim. 3:2, 4:3, 5:14. Heb. 13:4.

² Gen. 24:15-67. Ps. 45:10-17. Prov. 18:22, 19:14. Ephes. 5:23-33. 1 Peter 3:1-7.

³ Matt. 19:3-9, 13-15. Mark 10:2-16. Luke 16:18. Gen. 21:9-21.

⁴ Ex. 20:12. Lev. 19:3. Deut. 5:16. Matt. 15:3-6, 19:19. Ephes. 6:1-4.

⁵ Gen. 27:37. 2 Sam. 15:1-18, 18:31-33. Luke 15:11-32.

⁶ Prov. 1:7-9, 3:11-12, 4:1-13, 6:20-23, 17:25, 19:18-26, 20:20.

⁷ Col. 3:20-21. 1 Tim. 3:4-5, 12. Titus 1:5-6. Judges 11:30-40. 1 Sam. 14:36-40.

QUESTIONS.

What is the place of the family in social order?

By what two authorities is it recognized in the Bible?

Is it permitted to have more than one wife or husband?

What is the general obligation of husband and wife?

How can this marriage obligation be set aside?

How would children be affected by such action?

What, then, is the duty of children to their parents?

Why are these family ties so sacred and important?

How then should family life and affairs be conducted?
 What should children think of a parent's counsel?
 What should they do when duty seems very hard?
 When only may a child be possibly exempt from the duty
 of obedience to parents?
 How many such conflicts of duty be prevented?

PRAYER.

Help me, O Lord, to be thankful for the blessings
 and the restraining and uplifting influences of a
 Christian home. Here may I learn obedience, pa-
 tience, and holy love, in return for the loving care
 so freely given to me. May Thy divine grace rest
 daily upon us all, and guide us in the duties of
 righteousness, for thine own name's sake. Amen.

HYMN. (TUNE BRADBURY.)

SAVIOR, like a shepherd lead us,
 Much we need Thy tender care,
 In Thy pleasant pastures feed us,
 For our use Thy folds prepare.
 Blessed Jesus,
 Thou hast bought us, Thine we are.

We are thine; do Thou befriend us,
 Be the Guardian of our way,
 Keep Thy flock, from sin defend us,
 Seek us when we go astray.
 Blessed Jesus,
 Hear, O hear us, when we pray.

Early let us seek Thy favor
 Early let us do Thy will;
 Blessed Lord and only Savior,
 With Thy love our bosoms fill;
 Blessed Jesus,
 Thou hast loved us; love us still.

UNKNOWN.

XIV.

THE LAWS OF COMMON MORALITY.

THERE are certain classes of wrong-doing that offend against the order and welfare of society, or the whole body of people, wherever such wrong-doing takes place; and which are also forbidden in the Ten Commandments and in many other portions of the Holy Scriptures. Among these sins or crimes are such as murder, adultery, stealing, lying, and coveting or desiring to obtain another person's goods by any practical means, regardless of his own feelings or his interests.¹

It is easy to see that all such evil deeds must bring confusion, pain, and trouble upon somebody, and often the consequences of such actions will come back upon the doer of them in shame, or in the divine judgment; which at last will overtake all transgressors, unless they do truly and earnestly repent of their sins, seeking the forgiveness of God. Because life and property, honor and reputation, are never long safe where such things are tolerated by public sentiment, we may put all these commands together on a common basis as the Laws of common Morality.²

But each of these laws is broader in spirit than the mere letter of the Commandment, and includes the inward disposition of the heart.³ For instance, the spirit of the Sixth Commandment forbids not only murder, but hatred, cruelty, and every unmerciful act toward men, or even toward the dumb animals

that God has made.⁴ So, too, in spirit, the Commandment against adultery forbids all base, impure, and wanton acts or words whereby our own lives or those of other persons would be made unclean.⁵ So, the Commandment against stealing covers in effect all robbery, cheating, gambling, and other forms of unjust dealing whereby one obtains what is not rightfully his own.⁶

The Commandment against false witness is also directed against all forms of gossip, evil speaking, deceit, and hypocrisy, whereby people are disturbed and used unjustly.⁷ The last Commandment is against selfishness and meanness of conduct toward others, especially such as is commonly practised in this world.⁸

The opposite of all this is expressed by our Saviour in the words, "Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so unto them." This is often called "the Golden Rule," and it is the only real guarantee of public peace and private security among men, no matter how simple or how cultured their social condition, nor how prominent may be their personal position before the world.

"Let us with caution indulge the supposition that morality can be maintained without religion. Reason and experience both forbid us to expect that national morality can prevail in exclusion of religious principles."

WASHINGTON.

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¹ Ex. 20: 13-17. Deut. 5: 17-21. Hos. 4: 1-3. Matt. 19: 16-18. Rom. 1: 28-32.

² Prov. 11: 37, 12: 15. Eccles. 9: 18. Isa. 1: 28-31, 59: 1-15. Jer. 7: 1-16. Micah. 2: 1-3. Mal. 3: 5. Matt. 23: 13-33. Gal. 5: 19-21.

³ Prov. 4 : 23. Matt. 12 : 33-35. Luke 6 : 43-45. Rom. 8 : 27.

⁴ Gen. 37 : 18-28, 45 : 3-5. 1 Sam. 24 : 1-7. Prov. 1 : 10-19. Matt. 5 : 7, 21-23. Luke 6 : 36. Jas. 2 : 13.

⁵ Gen. 39 : 7-9. 1 Sam. 2 : 22-25, 3 : 11-14. Ps. 50 : 16-22. Prov. 2 : 10-22, 6 : 23-32. Hos. 5 : 3-5. Matt. 5 : 27-28. 1 Peter 4 : 1-5.

⁶ 1 Kings 21 : 1-19. Ps. 10 : 8-15, 73 : 1-20. Prov. 21 : 7. Isa. 5 : 7-10. Micah 2 : 1-5. Matt. 23 : 14. Jas. 5 : 1-4.

⁷ Gen. 37 : 31-35. Ex. 23 : 1-2. Ps. 15 : 2-3, 52 : 1-5, 101 : 5, 7. Prov. 6 : 12-19, 19 : 5. Isa. 59 : 1-15. Matt. 12 : 36-37. Eph. 4 : 25.

⁸ Ps. 10 : 3, 119 : 36. Prov. 28 : 16. Isa. 5 : 8-10. Jer. 6 : 13, 8 : 10. Micah 2 : 2. Hab. 2 : 9. Luke 12 : 15, 21. 1 Tim. 6 : 7-10.

QUESTIONS.

What various kinds of wrong doing have we here?

Who are injured by these moral offenses?

What is the final result to the doer of such things?

What interests are not safe where these are tolerated?

How are these commands to be understood by us?

What things are forbidden by the Sixth Commandment?

What things are forbidden by the Seventh Commandment?

What things are forbidden by the Eighth Commandment?

What things are forbidden by the Ninth Commandment?

What things are forbidden by the Tenth Commandment?

How did our Saviour sum up our whole duty?

Of what things is the Golden Rule the only guarantee?

MEDITATION AND PRAYER.

Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? Or who shall stand in His Holy place? He that hath clean hands and a pure heart, who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity nor sworn deceitfully. He shall receive the blessing from the Lord, and righteousness from the God of his salvation. Therefore, keep my heart, O God, from evil, and my lips from speaking guile. So may I find favor in Thy sight. O Lord of Hosts. Amen.

HYMN. (TUNE, SPOHR.)

I WANT a principle within
Of jealous, godly fear;
A sensibility of sin,
A pain to feel it near.

I want the first approach to feel
Of pride or fond desire;
To catch the wandering of my will
And quench the kindling fire.

From Thee that I no more may part,
No more Thy goodness grieve,
The filial awe, the fleshly heart,
The tender conscience, give.

Quick as the apple of an eye
O God, my conscience make;
Awake my soul when sin is nigh,
And keep it still awake.

CHARLES WESLEY.

XV.

THE DUTY OF REPENTANCE FROM SIN.

THE duty of turning away from all known sin with sincere sorrow and true repentance is found in many parts of the Old Testament, but more especially in the Psalms and Prophets, where we are also taught to ask forgiveness of God and power from Him to lead a better life thereafter.¹

Since all men are naturally weak and fallible, there is none that keeps the moral laws of God to perfection, although in this respect there is a great difference in conduct.² But whenever any one truly and earnestly asks forgiveness of God, expecting to receive His gracious blessings, and to be spiritually saved in this life and for the world to come, he must and will repent of all his sins by turning away from them with all his heart.³

As previously stated, the effect of sin is always to destroy; first, our innocence and peace of mind; then, finally, our moral nature, and the very soul itself. But this work of sin is gradual, and may often be arrested before it has passed beyond recovery. Yet there are certain results that must follow each sinful act, since what is done can never be truly undone, nor can all of its consequences be averted.⁴

Like the flower that has been rudely torn, like the fresh new garment that has been soiled, or like the person's face or body that has been scarred by accident or violence, so the first innocent impulses and affections of the soul, when once injured or corrupted

by sin, can hardly be restored to their earliest state. And while our sins may be forgiven in answer to prayer, yet some of the harm that we have caused to ourselves, or perhaps to other people, can never be fully recalled, although we may regret them forever, and try to make up for them by earnest and holy living.⁵

Yet there is a great difference between sins that are committed in ignorance or thoughtlessness and those that are committed knowingly and wilfully. The ignorant sinner may easily be instructed in the right way, and be convicted of his duty, and turn to become a different kind of person by the help of God.⁶

But when one knows that he is committing sin, and wilfully continues in his wickedness, by and by, his conscience becomes deadened to a sense of right, his heart grows cold and hard against good impressions, and the Holy Spirit is compelled to leave him to his sins; until at last it is very difficult, if not wholly impossible, for him to be brought to repentance and salvation.⁷

This is a great and important reason why every one should seek the Lord in his youth, before he is drawn into gross sin and falls away from God forever.

“True repentance consists in the heart being broken for sin and broken from sin. Some often repent, yet never reform. They are like a man travelling on a dangerous path, who frequently starts and stops, but never turns back from his danger.”

THORNTON.

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¹ Ex. 32:30. Ps. 32:1-6, 51:1-3, 130:3-4, 7-8. Isa. 1:16-18, 55:6, 7. Jer. 3:12-13, 22. Matt. 3:2, 4:17, 9:10-13. Mark 1:4, 15. Luke 13:3-5, 15:7-10. Acts 3:19. ² Peter 3:9. Rev. 2:5, 16, 22, 3:3, 19.

² Job 15:14-16. Prov. 20:9. Psal. 14:3, 53:3. Eccles. 7:20. Rom. 3:23. 1 John 1:8.

³ 2 Chron. 15:12, 15. Jer. 29:11-13. 2 Cor. 7:9-11. Heb. 12:1. 1 John 1:9.

⁴ Gen. 3:7. Num. 20:7-12, 27:12-14. 1 Sam. 15:16-23. 1 Kings 11:9-11.

⁵ Matt. 26:31-35, 69-75. Acts 7:58-60, 9:19-22. 1 Cor. 15:9.

⁶ Luke 12:47-48, 23:34. John 16:1-3. Acts 3:17. 1 Tim. 1:13.

⁷ Prov. 29:1. Matt. 13:11-15. Luke 11:45-52. John 9:39-41, 15:21-24. Eccles. 12:1.

QUESTIONS.

In what spirit must men turn away from sin?

For what may they then ask God in prayer?

Are any exempt from the transgression of the law?

What may one expect from God after true repentance?

What final results follow from a sinful life?

When and to what extent can these results be averted?

Can the first innocence of the soul be fully restored?

What becomes of the harm that we have committed?

What excuse or advantage has the ignorant man here?

What is the final result of sinning against the light?

Why, then, should everyone seek the Lord in youth?

MEDITATION AND PRAYER.

Hearken unto the voice of my cry, my King and my God; for unto Thee will I pray. My voice shalt Thou hear in the morning, O Lord; in the morning will I direct my prayer unto Thee. For Thou art not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness; nor shall evil doers dwell with Thee. Have mercy upon me, O God, according to Thy loving kindness; and

according to the multitude of Thy tender mercies,
blot out my transgressions from Thy book, forever.
Amen.

HYMN. (TUNE, TOPLADY.)

Rock of Ages, cleft for me
Let me hide myself in Thee;
Let the water and the blood
From Thy wounded side which flowed,
Be of sin the double cure,
Save from wrath and make me pure.

Could my tears forever flow,
Could my zeal no languor know,
These for sin could not atone;
Thou must save and Thou alone;
In my hand no price I bring;
Simply to Thy cross I cling.

While I draw this fleeting breath,
When my eyes shall close in death,
When I rise to worlds unknown
And behold Thee on Thy throne,
Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in Thee.

A. M. TOPLADY.

XVI.

THE NECESSITY OF CONFLICT WITH EVIL.

BESIDES our first repentance from sin, and the daily renewal of our covenant with God, there is a certain conflict against opposing influences within ourselves and outside of ourselves, which every one must undertake who truly desires to continue in the favor of God and reach final salvation.¹

Sometimes, when one is surrounded by heathen or other bad people who are bitterly opposed to the truth of God and the Christian life, there are so many and such severe difficulties to be met that these may occasion a real war for existence; and in extreme cases this seems to be justifiable.

Such cases are seen in the situation of ancient Israel in the midst of powerful heathen neighbors, who would have utterly destroyed God's people if they had been permitted to do so; and again in the Dark Ages when the Mohammedan people tried to destroy the Christian nations of Europe; and again in the struggles for liberty and conscience in the era of the great Reformation in the Sixteenth Century.² Yet, generally, there is another and a better way, more in accord with the teachings of Jesus Christ; which is, to bear all things with patience and prayer, trusting God to make it right at last.³

Even where there is no open persecution of the good, with personal abuse and suffering, or perhaps with the loss of home and friends, or property, or position, for the sake of conscience and of doing

the will of God, there is still a great moral conflict going on about us which none may hope to escape wholly.

The three great opposing influences that come to test the Christian life of every one are commonly called "the world," "the flesh," and "the devil;" and these terms are also found in the Holy Scriptures to express the enemies of the true servant of God.

The "world" embraces all those influences of social pride, pleasure, and vanity which minister to our natural love of applause, of companionship, and of excitement, regardless of our moral surroundings or of the effects of the same upon our inner life.⁵

The "flesh" designates our own physical appetites, passionate impulses, or tendencies to indolence, and all the weaknesses that seem chiefly due to the inherent qualities of our physical frame, when left to themselves without proper control.⁶

The "devil," or "Satan," refers more especially to those strange and often unaccountable moods of selfishness, or of doubt, or of idle curiosity, or evil surmising, or sudden lure to sin, which so often overtake the unwary soul, dragging him down to perdition, and which are attributed in the Bible to the Enemy of God and man.⁷ Against all these the good man must put on the whole armor of God, and watch and pray lest he fall.

"A certain amount of opposition is a great help to a man. It is what he wants and must have to be good for anything."

JOHN NEAL.

REFERENCES.

¹ Ps. 3:1-7, 35:11-26, 56:64. Jer. 28. Dan. 6. Matt. 10:16-22. Luke 22:46. Acts 14:22. 2 Tim. 3:11-12.

² Gen. 14:13-20. 2 Sam. 5:17-25, 18:1-8. 1 Kings 20:1-21. Neh. 4:1-23. Acts 13:6-13, 16:35-39, 22:24-29, 25:10-12.

³ Matt. 5:38-48. Luke 6:27-31, 23:34. Acts 7:60. Rom. 12:18-21. 1 Pet. 2:21-23, 3:9.

⁴ Matt. 16:24-27. 2 Cor. 10:3-5. Ephes. 6:13-18. 1 Tim. 6:12. 2 Tim. 2:3, 4:7, 8.

⁵ Matt. 5:2-4, 6:24. John 15:18, 19, 17:14-16. Rom. 12:2. 1 Cor. 7:29-31. Jas. 4:4. 1 John 2:15-17.

⁶ Rom. 6:12-17, 8:1-17. Gal. 5:16-21. Ephes. 5:3-7. Col. 3:5. 1 Peter 4:1-5.

⁷ Matt. 4:1-11, 13:38, 39. Ephes. 6:11, 12. Jas. 4:7. 1 Peter 5:8-9. 1 John 3:8.

QUESTIONS.

What comes to every servant of God after his conversion?

Is resistance to evil and persecution ever justifiable?

Mention some historic instances of that kind.

What better way is usually to be preferred?

What conflict must we meet besides open persecution?

What are the three great influences opposed to the right?

State some of the evil influences that come from the "world."

What kind of evil influences are inherent in the "flesh?"

What sort of temptations are more especially attributed to the "devil" or "Satan?"

What must a child of God do with reference to all these enemies of his soul?

MEDITATION AND PRAYER.

Give ear, O Lord, unto my prayer, and attend unto the voice of my supplication. In the day of my trouble I will call upon Thee; for Thou wilt answer me. In God have I put my trust; I will not be afraid what man can do unto me. Thy vows are upon me, O God. I will render praises unto Thee,

for Thou hast delivered my soul from death. Wilt Thou not preserve my feet from falling, that I may walk before Thee in the land of the living? Amen.

HYMN. (TUNE, ST. GERTRUDE.)

ONWARD, Christian soldiers,
Marching as to war,
With the cross of Jesus,
Going on before.
Christ, the royal Master
Leads against the foe;
Forward into battle,
See, His banners go.

Cho.—Onward, Christian soldiers,
Marching as to war,
With the cross of Jesus
Going on before.

Crowns and thrones may perish,
Kingdoms rise and wane,
But the church of Jesus
Constant will remain;
Gates of hell can never
'Gainst that church prevail;
We have Christ's own promise,
And that cannot fail.—*Cho.*

Onward, then, ye people,
Join the happy throng,
Blend with ours your voices
In the triumph-song;
Glory, laud, and honor
Unto Christ the King;
This through countless ages,
Men and angels sing.—*Cho.*

SABINE BARING GOULD.

XVII.

THE PRINCIPLE OF MORAL SACRIFICE.

IN this earthly life of so many opposing elements, it is clear that no one, and certainly no good man, can enjoy all the things that come to him as objects of desire or even of honest ambition.

Some things must be set aside in order that others may be attained; and some things that are possibly very dear to him must be given up in order that others dearer still may not be lost. Physical ease must often be put away to make room for unfolding our talents, and even the beautiful things of life may have to be laid aside at the call of duty or for the good of souls.¹

To get rid of the power of sinful habits or evil associations is often like plucking out an eye or cutting off the right hand of the sufferer who is thus involved; but the Gospel declares it is far better so than to lose one's soul forever; and therefore, we must cut them off at all hazards.²

Again, much of the most important and precious work in this world must be done by good, earnest people who are willing to forego their own ease, pleasure, comforts, or opportunities in life for the sake of others, like the mother for her children; and without this, the world would not be saved at all. Yet it might be hard to show that self-sacrifice is any more the duty of those people who have lived such lives than of many others who are living only for their own pleasure and selfish ends.³

A sense of the absolute necessity of separation from evil, even at the cost of suffering and death, seems to be expressed in the custom of offering animals on the altar of sacrifice by the patriarchs, and also in the ancient church of Israel.⁴ The same thing, with the additional idea of a propitiatory offering to sustain the dignity and authority of God's moral government over men, seems to find place in the offering of Jesus Christ upon the cross of Calvary, in the course of His labors for the world's redemption from the power and consequences of sin.⁵

At any rate, we cannot suppose for a moment that the Master would have suffered voluntarily such a death without some great and compelling motives; and these are just the motives ascribed to Him in the Gospels. We may never be able to fully fathom the mystery of this redemption; but it appears that both before and after the sufferings of Christ, the cause of truth and righteousness has often been sustained or advanced among men only as some were willing to sacrifice their ease, or even their very lives, for that holy cause.⁶ And the need of gifts and offerings, nay, of real sacrifice, for the kingdom of God among men, has not yet ceased in the world; nor is it likely to cease for many years, until "the glory of the Lord shall fill the whole earth."⁷

REFERENCES.

¹ Matt. 4 : 18-22, 6 : 19-21, 10 : 37, 38, 13 : 44-46, 19 : 27-29. Mark 10 : 21, 28-30. Luke 6 : 20-26, 9 : 57-62, 10 : 38-42, 12 : 16-34, 18 : 28-30. Phil. 3 : 7-8.

² Matt. 5 : 29, 30, 16 : 25, 26, 18 : 7-9. Mark 9 : 43-45, 47. Luke 9 : 23-26, 18 : 22-25.

³ Ex. 2 : 11-15. Judges 6 : 11-35. Neh. 2 : 1-8. Esther 4 : 10-17, 5 : 1-3. Acts 18 : 1-3, 20 : 33-35. Phil. 2 : 4-8. John 12 : 24-25.

⁴ Gen. 8:20-21, 15:9-11. Ex. 12:3-14, 21-30, 29:38-46. Lev. 16. 2 Sam. 6:17-18.

⁵ Heb. 9:6-28. Matt. 20:28. John 1:29, 11:49-52. Acts 13:38-39. Rom. 4:24-25, 5:6-21. 1 Pet. 1:18-19, 2:24, 3:18.

⁶ 1 Kings 19:2-3, 10:14. Mark. 6:14-30. Acts 5:41, 7:59-60, 14:19, 20, 15:25-26. 1 Cor. 4:8-15. 2 Cor. 11:23-28. 1 Thess. 2:9. Rev. 1:9.

⁷ Matt. 27:57-60. Mark 15:40-41. Luke 8:3. John 12:1-8, 19:39. 2 Cor. 8:7-9, 9:5-8. Phil. 4:10-18. Ex. 35:20-29. Ezra 1:2-6, 68-69, 7:24-30. Neh. 7:70-72.

QUESTIONS.

Can any person enjoy all good things in life?

How then must he choose between his objects?

To what is the removal of some evil things compared?

How must this world be saved, if it is saved at all?

What was the idea expressed in the ancient sacrifices?

What other idea is also found in them, but made more clear by the offering of Jesus on the cross?

Would Jesus so have suffered without good reasons?

Is it a strange thing or a matter of common experience that sacrifice is essential to moral welfare?

When will the need of gifts and offerings to God cease?

Is a man's love to God complete without a sacrifice?

MEDITATION AND PRAYER.

Gather my saints together unto me; those that have made a covenant unto me by sacrifice. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and a contrite heart Thou wilt not despise. Offer unto God thanksgiving, and pay thy vows unto the most High; and call upon Him in the day of trouble. He will answer thee and thou shalt glorify Him. So may the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in Thy sight, O Lord, my strength and Redeemer. Amen.

HYMN. (TUNE, ST. AGNES.)

LORD, it belongs not to my care
Whether I die or live;
To love and serve Thee is my share,
And this Thy grace must give.

If life be long I will be glad
That I may long obey;
If short, yet why should I be sad
To soar to endless day?

Christ leads me through no darker rooms
Than He went through before;
He that into God's Kingdom comes
Must enter by this door.

Come, Lord, when grace hath made me meet
Thy blessed face to see;
For if Thy work on earth be sweet,
What will Thy glory be?

RICHARD BAXTER.

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XVIII.

THE PROPHECIES AND PROPHETIC TYPES.

THE real connection between the Old Testament and the New is clearly seen in the numerous types and prophecies of the former, which have no explanation except as they look forward to a more spiritual dispensation and find their fulfillment in the person and Gospel of Jesus Christ. Thus it appears that the true religion, given from God and adapted to the instruction and salvation of men, is one in all lands and ages; but, like a tender plant growing from the sprouting seed into a mighty tree, each of whose branches was in early ages coming slowly into form.¹

The types of the Old Testament are of various kinds; the Passover, the sacrifices, the utensils of the sanctuary, and the garments of the high-priest, as foreshadowing the mystery of the Messiah who should come and make an atonement for the sins of the world;² also the history of Israel coming out of Egypt, as a type of the spiritual history of the Church of Christ in bringing men from the house of bondage under sin into a promised land of liberty and abundance;³ also many visions, historical incidents, and the entire lives of various historical personages, as Joseph, Joshua, David, Solomon, Daniel, Jeremiah, and others whose experience was repeated after a spiritual manner, in the life and character of Christ.⁴

The Old Testament prophecies begin with the promise to our first parents that "the offspring of the woman should bruise the serpent's head," which

is seen to be fulfilled in Jesus Christ, the son of the Virgin Mary. Then we have the promise to Abraham, saying, "In thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed," which evidently points to a world Redeemer. Next, is the promise given by Moses to the children of Israel. "And a Prophet shall the Lord thy God raise up unto thee of thy brethren, like unto me, and unto him shall ye hearken," which looks toward the preaching of the Gospel by Jesus Christ.

The Psalms contain various passages indicating that the Messiah should be born of the royal line of David, and that He should establish the kingdom of God among men of all nations and for all time. Isaiah tells us that the Messiah is to bear such names as "Wonderful," "Counsellor," "The mighty God," "The everlasting Father," "The Prince of Peace," and that he should inherit the throne of David forevermore.⁵

In Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, and the other prophets, are various other passages which foretell the preaching of the Messiah, his sufferings and final triumph over the grave, the spiritual nature of his kingdom, the conversion of the Gentiles, and many other particulars of his career; also the descent of the Holy Spirit upon his followers. The Jews undoubtedly possessed and cherished these prophecies for centuries before the coming of Christ, in whom they were all so wonderfully fulfilled.⁶ The New Testament also contains various prophecies which are now being fulfilled, and which we shall notice later on in these lessons.

"Christ is the great central fact in the world's history. To Him everything looks forward or backward. All the lines of history converge upon Him.

All the march of providence is guided by Him. All the great purposes of God culminate in Him. The greatest and most momentous fact in the history of the world is the fact of His birth."

SPURGEON.

"All history is incomprehensible without Christ."

RENAN.

"History is but the unrolled scroll of prophecy."

J. A. GARFIELD.

REFERENCES.

¹ 1 Peter 1:10-12. Heb. 11:39-40. Matt. 5:17. Luke 24:27, 44. Acts 3:18, 22-25. Rom. 3:31, 15:4, 8-9. 1 Cor. 10:11.

² John 1:29. 1 Cor. 5:7. Heb. 8:4-5, 9:1, 23, 24-28, 10:1-14. 1 Peter 1:18, 19.

³ 1 Cor. 10:1-4, 11. Ps. 95:7-11. Heb. 3:7-19, 4:1-9. 1 Peter 2:9-10.

⁴ Ezek. 47:1-12. Dan. 2:44-45. Zech. 3:4. Mal. 3:1. Gen. 37:27-28. Deut. 31:23. 1 Sam. 7:8-11.

⁵ Gen. 3:15, 22:18. Deut. 18:15-19. 2 Sam. 7:16. Ps. 2:72, 89:35-37, 110:64. Isa. 9:1-7.

⁶ Isa. 25:1-10, 35, 42:1-7, 53, 55:1-5, 59:16-21, 61:1-3, 9, 11. Jer. 23:5-6. Dan. 9:24-27. Mic. 5:2. Hag. 2:6-9. Zech. 9:9-10.

QUESTIONS.

How is the connection between the Old Testament and the New most clearly seen?

How only can these types and prophecies be explained?

How is the true religion one, and yet different in form?

Mention some of the Old Testament types and their meaning.

What was prefigured in Israel coming out of Egypt and into the land of Canaan?

Mention some of the Old Testament persons who were also types of the Messiah or Christ, and briefly explain the types.

What was the promise of a Christ to our first parents? To Abraham? To Moses? To David? To Isaiah?

What additional facts concerning the Messiah are found in the Psalms and the various prophetic writings?

MEDITATION AND PRAYER.

My times are in Thy hand, O God. Deliver me from the hand of mine enemies and from them that persecute me. Make Thy face to shine upon Thy servant; save me for Thy mercies' sake. Oh how great is Thy goodness, which Thou hast laid up for them that fear Thee; which Thou hast wrought for them that trust in Thee before the sons of men. So may my soul hope in Thee, O Lord, and find Thy blessing at the latter end. Amen.

HYMN. (TUNE, ST. GEORGE'S.)

WATCHMAN, tell us of the night,
What its signs of promise are.
Traveler, o'er yon mountain height
See that glory-beaming star!
Watchman, does its beauteous ray
Aught of hope or joy foretell?
Traveler, yes! it brings the day
Promised day of Israel.

Watchman, tell us of the night;
Higher yet that star ascends,
Traveler, blessedness and light,
Peace and truth its cause portends.
Watchman will its beams alone
Gild the spot that gave them birth?
Traveler, ages are its own;
See it bursts o'er all the earth!

Watchman, tell us of the night,
For the morning seems to dawn,
Traveler, darkness takes its flight;
Doubt and terror are withdrawn.
Watchman, let thy wandering cease;
Hie thee to thy quiet home,
Traveler, lo, the Prince of Peace.
Lo, the Son of God has come.

SIR JOHN BOWRING.

XIX.

THE PREPARATIONS FOR MESSIAH'S COMING.

NOTWITHSTANDING the decline of the Jewish nation about the time of the Captivity and afterward, yet the writings of the prophets in their latter days show a great advance in spiritual ideas over the earlier times of the patriarchs, and even of Moses.¹ Less emphasis was laid on the observance of the ceremonial law of the priesthood and sacrifices, while far more stress was placed upon righteousness and the real state of the heart in relation to the moral law of God and the welfare of our fellowmen.²

It was also shown that the calamities of the nation were chiefly due to a general lapse into sin, such as avarice, oppression, cruelty, bloodshed, deceitfulness, unchastity, and idolatry, which had aroused God's wrath against them, because they had wholly forsaken his covenant.³

At the same time, the prophets showed the responsibility of individuals, each for himself, declaring that to please God something more was required than to be of Jewish or Israelitish blood; and that the good character of parents should not save their children, nor should children suffer on account of their bad parents; unless they were like them.⁴ Thus the whole idea of a religious life was gradually separated from the services of the tabernacle, or the temple, and framed upon a more moral and spiritual basis of personal loyalty to God and fidelity in the ways of righteousness.⁵

Moreover it was promised by the prophets that the

new kingdom to be established in the world by the coming Messiah should be seen to have for its principal object the promotion of peace, justice, goodwill, and happiness among men of all nations, both Jews and Gentiles. Thus the hearts of the people were kept full of hope for a better day, and their minds were lifted up toward a right view of the coming kingdom, so that they might be prepared to appreciate and enjoy its practical benefits, and also to understand its spiritual aims.⁶

It is true that many of the Jews still held to the hope of a Messiah who should be a great temporal ruler and conqueror. But this was partly compensated by the many Gentiles who had also heard of the Messiah, and who looked for the world to be blessed through Him. Whatever men might think of the ancient writings of the Jews, it is certainly wonderful how fully, and even beyond all possible human anticipation, this far-spread desire and hope was actually fulfilled in the coming of Jesus of Nazareth to be the spiritual Savior of mankind.⁷

REFERENCES.

¹ Compare the writings of Isaiah and Jeremiah with the glimpses we have of Samuel, or of Elijah and Elisha.

² Ps. 40: 6-8, 50: 7-21, 51: 16-17. Isa. 1: 10-20. Jer. 3: 16-17, 7: 1-7. Hos. 4: 1-9, 10: 1-4, 12, 13: 1, 9, 14. Joel 2: 12-19. Mic. 4: 1-4, 7: 18-19.

³ Isa. 5: 1-25. Jer. 7: 21-34, 11: 6-12. Ezek. 5: 5-11, 6: 1-10. Dan. 9: 4-14. Hab. 2: 9-20. 2 Chron. 36: 14-16. Neh. 1: 6-11.

⁴ Jer. 31: 29-30. Ezek. 3: 17-21, 18: 1-4, 26-32, 33: 1-20.

⁵ Isa. 55: 61. Jer. 17: 5-10, 31: 31-34. Ezek. 11: 19-20, 36: 25-27.

⁶ Isa. 11: 1-10, 32: 1-20, 35, 42: 1-7. Jer. 33: 15-16. Zech. 8: 1-8.

⁷ Isa. 49: 5-10, 18-23, 60: 1-9. Jer. 16: 19-21. Hos. 2: 21-23. Zech. 2: 11, 8: 20-23.

QUESTIONS.

What change is found in the writings of the later prophets as compared with the earlier writings of the Old Testament?

What matters are emphasized less, and what more?

To what did they say that the calamities of the Jewish nation were chiefly due?

What new emphasis was placed upon the subject of personal responsibility?

How did their teachings change the popular idea of the essentials of a religious life?

What kind of a kingdom did the prophets say should be established by the coming Messiah?

Did all of the Jews accept these spiritual ideas?

Were any Gentiles interested in the coming of the Messiah?

What was the basis of their hope?

MEDITATION AND PRAYER.

Give the king thy judgments, O God, and Thy righteousness unto the king's son. He shall come down like rain upon the mown grass, as showers that water the earth. For He shall deliver the needy when He crieth; the poor also, and him that hath no helper. His name shall endure forever; it shall be continued as long as the sun; and men shall be blessed in Him. All nations shall call him blessed. Amen.

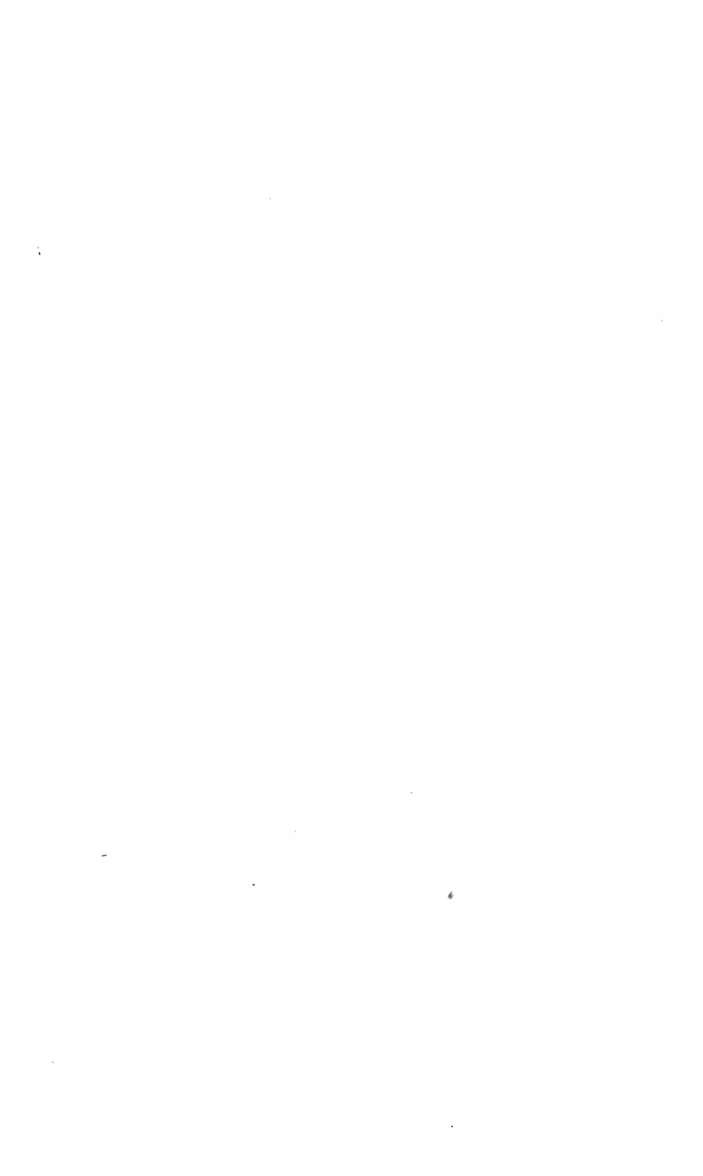
HYMN. (TUNE, ITALIAN HYMN.)

THOU, whose almighty word
Chaos and darkness heard,
And took their flight;
Hear us, we humbly pray,
And where the Gospel day
Sheds not its glorious ray,
Let there be light!

Thou, who didst come to bring
On Thy redeeming wing
 Healing and sight,
Health to the sick in mind,
Sight to the inly blind,
O now, to all mankind,
 Let there be light!

Spirit of truth and love,
Life-giving, holy Dove,
 Speed forth Thy flight;
Move o'er the water's face
Bearing the lamp of grace,
Bearing the lamp of grace,
And in earth's darkest place
 Let there be light!

JOHN MARRIOTT.



PART SECOND.

XX.

JESUS CHRIST, THE SAVIOUR.

THE New Testament contains four different Gospels, or histories, of the life, character, teachings, crucifixion, and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth, who is called the Christ; that is, the Messiah foretold by the prophets in the Hebrew Scriptures.¹

While these four Gospels purport to be written by different authors from among the disciples of Christ, and while they vary much in the detailed incidents of his life and ministry, as also in the reports of his sayings and discourses, yet they substantially agree in all general matters, both as to his person and the nature of his doctrines, and are further confirmed by the other books of the New Testament.² The first three Gospels agree more closely, and are often called the Synoptists. The fourth Gospel was written a few years later.

They tell us that Jesus was miraculously born of the Virgin Mary, espoused wife of Joseph, at the city of Bethlehem in Judea during the reign of Herod the Great, king of that country under the Romans, of which we have more particulars in secular history. His birth was foretold by an angel and heralded by angels to shepherds keeping their flocks by night in the fields near the city. These visited the infant Saviour in His manger cradle; and later, Wise Men came from the East and gave Him costly presents as a token of their faith and veneration. To escape the envy of Herod, He was carried by His parents into

Egypt, whence He returned in two years to Nazareth in Galilee.³

After this, little is said of His personal history, save a happy youth and a single visit to Jerusalem, until He began His public preaching of the Gospel of the Kingdom of Heaven, or the New Spiritual Dispensation, in the cities and villages of Galilee, where also He gathered about Him His first disciples. This beginning of His ministry, as Luke informs us, was during the preaching of John the Baptist in Judea, and in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Cæsar over the Roman Empire, which corresponds to the year twenty-six of our common era.⁴

There is no statement as to how long His public preaching continued before His crucifixion by Pilate at the instigation of the Jewish leaders; but tradition, which is confirmed by several circumstances in connection with the date of Pilate, and by the dates in the Acts of the Apostles, tends to fix the length of His ministry at three and one-half years.⁵

Many wonderful things, such as His Baptism, His Temptation, His Transfiguration, and Resurrection, are related as having confirmed the faith of His disciples; ⁶ but to us, His fulfillment of the ancient prophecies, His transcendent moral and spiritual doctrines, and also His abiding and beneficent influence upon mankind, are a sufficient basis for His claims on our faith and reverence, while they also tend to confirm our confidence in the history of Christ as related in the Gospels.⁷

“The nature of Christ’s existence is a mystery, I admit; but this mystery meets the wants of man. Reject it, and the world is an inexplicable riddle; believe it, and the history of our race is satisfactorily explained.”

NAPOLEON.

"As little as humanity will ever be without religion, so little will it be without Christ."

STRAUSS.

"In His life, Christ is an example, showing us how to live; in His death, He is a sacrifice, satisfying for our sins; in His resurrection, a conqueror; in His ascension, a king; in His intercession, a high priest."

LUTHER.

REFERENCES.

¹ See the titles of the four Gospels; and also Matt. 1:1. Mark 1:1. Luke 1:1-4. John 1:14, 41, 45, 21:24-25.

² Acts 1:1-3, 21-22, 2:22-24, 32-36. Heb. 2:3-4. 1 Peter 5:1. 2 Peter 1:16-18. 1 John 1:1-3.

³ Matt. 1:18-25, 2:1-2, 11-14, 19-23. Luke 1:5, 26-37, 2:1-20.

⁴ Luke 2:40-52. John 1:19-27, 35-45. Mat. 4:17-25. Mark 1:14-22. Luke 3:1-3, 4:14-15.

⁵ (See Josephus: "Ant. of the Jews," B. 18.) Acts 1:13-15, 2:1, 14, 41, 4:5-6, 13, 27, 11:27-30, 12:20-23.

⁶ Matt. 3:13-17, 4:1-11, 17:1-9, 28, and all the other Gospels.

⁷ Luke 24:25-27, 44-48. Matt. 7:28-29. Mark 1:22. John 6:66-68, 7:46, 8:30-32.

QUESTIONS.

What is the main subject of the four Gospels?

What is the meaning of the title "Christ"?

How do the four Gospels differ from one another?

How do they substantially agree among themselves?

How are they further confirmed in a general way?

What do they tell us of the birth and childhood of Jesus?

What general account and incident of his youth is given?

What was the principal theme of his public preaching?

When and where did his public ministry begin?

How long is his ministry thought to have continued?

What finally brought his earthly work to an end?

What wonderful things confirmed his disciple's faith?

What other things in him appeal to our faith to-day?

What is the bearing of these things on the Gospel history?

PRAYER.

O God, I thank Thee for the wonderful gift of Thy Son, who came to save a sinful world from eternal death. May I become blessedly acquainted with Him, to know the divine beauty of His words and works, and the power of His spiritual grace unto salvation, both in this world and in the world to come. So may He be my friend and guide forevermore. Amen.

HYMN. (TUNE, ANTIOCH.)

Joy to the world! the Lord is come;
Let earth receive her King!
Let every heart prepare Him room,
And heaven and nature sing.

Joy to the world, the Saviour reigns;
Let men their songs employ;
While fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains,
Repeat the sounding joy.

No more let sin and sorrow grow,
Nor thorns infest the ground;
He comes to make His blessings flow
Far as the curse is found.

He rules the world with truth and grace,
And makes the nations prove,
The glories of His righteousness
And wonders of His Love.

ISAAC WATTS.

XXI.

HIS SERMON ON THE MOUNT.

THIS is the first and broadest statement of Jesus Christ concerning moral and spiritual principles, and the real nature of true religion. It is most fully reported by Matthew, and begins with the nine Beatitudes, the most beautiful and perfect description of a happy and blessed character that the world has heard from any teacher or prophet; for they are like the strings of a mystic harp, all tuned in perfect accord, and full of all manner of melodies and harmonies and hidden cadences that come to us over and over in life's experiences, bringing us into a sense of personal harmony with God.¹

The Lord then says that His disciples are to be as the salt of the earth and the light of the world in the influence of their example and conversation among men. After this, He proceeds to explain the quality of true righteousness, which is the same under His Gospel as under the Law and the Prophets; but which must be realized by something more than a mere formal observance of the Law, such as was practised by the Scribes and Pharisees.²

It demands that the conscience shall be sensitive to the spirit of the law even more than to its literal requirements; and therefore that we must guard against evil thoughts and wicked desires and little indulgences in sin which corrupt the heart, and make our service to God wholly unacceptable.³

He warns men to be of a forgiving disposition, to cut loose from sin at all costs, to be pure and innocent in life, to be careful not to use profane words, and above all not to harbor revenge against our neighbors; but rather to do them good as becomes the children of God, who is kind, not only to the good, but to the unthankful and the evil.⁴

Again, He goes on to caution men against a spirit of vanity and hypocrisy in religion, as in almsgiving and in the making of prayers to be seen and heard of men; but He commends rather the practice of religion without ostentation, and gives us a model of petition to God which is commonly called "The Lord's Prayer," and which Christians are in the habit of using everywhere.⁵

He teaches us to call every man our brother, and to know God as "Our Father in Heaven," who will not fail to reward all those who serve Him and put their trust in Him. He says it is better to do good and thus lay up treasure in Heaven than to lay up treasure on earth where it is liable soon to pass away. He tells us not to be too anxious about the things of this world, but to remember that all good things are the gift of God, who cares for His children.⁶

This sermon closes with a number of practical suggestions against a hasty judgment of others, or making holy things cheap and common among bad men. We are taught to seek God diligently in prayer and in earnest efforts to do right. We are warned against false prophets in sheep's clothing and told to judge of men's professions by their real actions. Finally, Jesus tells us the story of two men who built their houses, the one on the sand and the other on a rock, and the consequences in each case.⁷

"As to Jesus of Nazareth, my opinion of whom you particularly desire. I think His system of morals and His religion, as He left them to us, are the best the world ever saw or is likely to see."

BENJ. FRANKLIN.

"Religion finds the love of happiness and the principles of duty separated in us, and its mission is to reunite them."

VINET.

"Morality looks that the skin of the apple be fair, but religion looketh to the very core."

CULVERWELL.

"Anything that makes religion a second object makes it no object."

RUSKIN.

"Religion's home is in the conscience. Its watchword is the word *ought*. Its highest joy is simply in doing God's Holy will."

CUYLER.

"So comprehensive are the doctrines of the Gospel that they involve all moral truth known by man; so extensive are its precepts that they require every virtue and forbid every sin; nothing has been added either by the labors of philosophy, or the progress of human knowledge."

UNKNOWN.

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² Matt. 5:13-20. Mark 9:50. Luke 11:33-36. Jas. 2:10-18.

³ Matt. 5:21-37, 18:7-9. Mark 9:43, 45, 47. Rom. 7:6. 2 Cor. 3:6. Ephes. 5:1-4. 1 John 3:6-10.

⁴ Matt. 5:38-48. Luke 6:27-38. Rom. 12:19-21. Jas. 3:11-13. 1 Jno. 3:11-15.

⁵ Matt. 6:1-18. Luke 11:1-4. Rom. 12:12. Ephes. 5:17-21. Phil. 4:6.

⁶ Matt. 6:19-34. Luke 12:22-34. Phil. 4:11-14. 1 Tim. 6:6-10.

⁷ Matt. 7. Luke 6:37-49, 18:1-14. Jas. 1:22-25.

QUESTIONS.

What is the first and broadest statement of his doctrines by Jesus Christ?

Where is it found? And in how many chapters?

What are the first few verses called? Describe them.

What did Jesus say about enduring persecution?

What did he remark about salt and light?

What did he say here about the scribes and Pharisees?

Mention some of his examples of the spirit of righteousness, as contrasted with the letter of the laws of Moses.

How does a life of evil thoughts and indulgences affect our religion?

What did Jesus say about revenge and forgiveness?

What did he say about giving alms, praying, and fasting?

Can you repeat the Lord's Prayer from Matthew?

What did Jesus say about laying up treasure on earth?

Why are we to trust God for our daily necessities?

What is the difference between prudence and anxiety?

What is said about hasty judgment of others?

What about placing holy things before the reckless?

What about the duties and privilege of prayer to God?

What is said about the straight path? Of false prophets?

How are the lives of men compared to trees?

How will some people be disappointed at last?

Give the story of the two men and their houses.

PRAYER.

O Lord of all light and truth, do Thou enable me to receive Thy wondrous words into an honest and obedient heart, that I may profit by them, and not come into condemnation by sinning against the truth of the blessed Gospel of Christ. So may I come into the way of life eternal for His Name's sake. Amen.

HYMN. (TUNE. ROCKINGHAM.)

How sweetly flowed the Gospel's sound
 From lips of gentleness and grace,
 While listening thousands gathered round
 And joy and gladness filled the place!

From heaven He came; of heaven He spoke,
 To heaven He led His follower's way;
 Dark clouds of gloomy night He broke,
 Unveiling an immortal day.

Come, wanderers, to my Father's home;
 Come, all ye weary ones, and rest.
 Yes, sacred Teacher, we will come,
 Obey Thee, love Thee, and be blest.

SIR JOHN BOWRING.

XXII.

HIS MIRACLES OF MERCY AND POWER.

BUT Jesus did not teach by words only. He taught by example, and went about doing good to all sorts and conditions of people, especially to those who seemed to need Him most because of their infirmities, whether physical or moral.¹ While engaged in this blessed work, He healed many who were sick, halt, maimed, blind, deaf, and dumb, and those who were possessed with evil spirits, whatever may be really meant by that expression, which seems to involve affections of the mind.²

His cures were performed without medicine, and usually by a word or a command, or in some instances, merely by a touch of His hand or garment.³ Most of these cures were performed in public places, some of them in the presence of such persons as the leading scribes and Pharisees, who mocked at Him and said that He cast out the devils in the name of Beelzebub, the prince of devils. But Jesus only reminded them that since He was doing good and not evil, this was not the work of Satan. He also warned them against the wickedness and folly of rejecting these proofs that He came from God, and that He was thereby manifesting the goodness and power of God toward humanity in this world of error, infirmity, and sin.⁴

Sometimes he wrought these miracles in direct support of His divine claims, as when He said to the Jews before healing the man with the palsy, "That ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, I say unto thee, Arise, take up

thy bed and walk," and immediately the sick man arose and took up his mattress and went to his home.

Also, when the Jews looked to see whether He would heal the man with the withered hand on the Sabbath day, He said unto them, "The Son of man is Lord also of the Sabbath day;" and to show it, He said to the man, "Stretch forth thine hand," and immediately it was made sound as the other.⁵

Among His other miracles were the feeding of four and five thousand people with only five and seven loaves; his stilling the storm on the sea of Galilee; His walking on the water and enabling Peter to do the same; the miraculous draught of fishes; and His raising of three persons from the dead, including Lazarus of Bethany, who had lain for four days in the tomb.⁶

In all these miracles, there is a blending of divine power with nature, a beautiful simplicity in the exercise of His supernatural gifts, and a wise manifestation of God's abounding mercy and power; but there is nothing of mere magic to gratify vain curiosity. Only once did He show the destructive power of God, when He cursed the barren fig tree and it withered away.⁷

We need not speak further of the miracles of His birth, His baptism, and temptation, His transfiguration, and resurrection, as these are a part of the Gospel history, to be established on the general grounds of competent testimony and of consistency with His lofty character and utterances.

"The quality of mercy is not strained. It droppeth as the gentle dew from Heaven upon the place beneath; it is twice blessed; it blesseth Him that gives and Him that takes; 'tis mightiest in the mightiest;

and becomes the throned monarch better than His crown. Mercy is an attribute to God Himself, and earthly power doth then shine likest God's, when mercy seasons justice."

SHAKESPEARE.

"Miracles are the educating expedients of the early periods of the world. As such they are divinely wise; but after they have served their purpose as such, it is foolish to pretend to have them."

H. W. BEECHER.

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² Mark 1:23-34, 39-45, 5:1-20. Matt. 8:1-4, 28-34, 15:29-31. Luke 4:33-36, 40-41, 5:12-15, 7:21-22, 8:26-36, 9:37-42.

³ Matt. 8:5-13, 16-17, 9:20-22, 27-31, 32-35, 18:22-25. Luke 7:1-10, 8:43-48. John 9:1-12. Mark 5:24-34, 6:55-56, 10:46-52.

⁴ Matt. 9:32-34, 12:22-30. Mark 3:22-30. Luke 11:15-20. John 3:18-21, 9:13-37, 10:37-38.

⁵ Matt. 9:2-8, 12:10-13. Mark 2:1-12, 28, 3:1-5. Luke 5:18-26, 6:1-11, 13:11-17, 14:1-6. John 5:1-16.

⁶ Matt. 8:23-27, 9:18-25, 14:15-21, 22-33, 15:32-38. Mark 4:36-41, 5:21-24, 35-43, 6:35-52, 8:1-9. Luke 5:1-11, 7:11-18, 8:22-25, 41-42, 49-56, 9:10-17. John 6:5-15, 11:1-46.

⁷ Matt. 12:38-40, 13:54-58, 16:1-4, 26:51-54. Mark 8:11-12. Luke 20:1-8, 23:8-9. John 1:14, 2:1-11, 5:17-18, 36.

QUESTIONS.

What generous example did Jesus set for men?

What defense did he make for eating with sinners?

What physical maladies did he heal?

How were these cures commonly performed?

How did the Pharisees explain his miracles?

What was Jesus' reply to them?

When and how did he work miracles in support of his divine claims?

Mention some of his miracles which were not cures.

What are the general qualities of Christ's miracles?
Why would he not gratify the curiosity of men?
Which was his only miracle of destroying power?
What is here said of the greater miracles of his own
personal history while here on the earth?

PRAYER.

Grant me, also, O God, to have a share in the benefits of the wonder-working power of Thy dear Son, that my conscience may be quickened, my sins forgiven, and my whole nature renewed and sanctified by His Blessed Grace. For in this I greatly need His help, and the aid of a power far above my own. Grant these things to me for His sake. Amen.

HYMN. (TUNE, DENNY.)

We may not climb the heavenly steeps
To bring the Lord Christ down,
In vain we search the lowest deeps
For Him no depths can drown.

But warm, sweet, tender, even yet
A present help is He;
And faith has still its Olivet,
And love its Galilee.

The healing of the seamless dress,
As by our beds of pain;
We touch Him in life's throng and press,
And we are whole again.

Through Him the first fond prayers are said
That lips of childhood frame;
The last low prayers of our dead
Were burdened with His name.

O Lord and Master of us all,
Whate'er our name or sign,
We own Thy sway, we hear Thy call,
We test our lives by Thine.

JOHN G. WHITTIER.

XXIII.

HIS PARABLES OF THE KINGDOM.

A LARGE part of Jesus' preaching was about the Kingdom of Heaven, or of God, which He was come to establish among men on this earth; and in order to explain the nature and object of this spiritual Kingdom, He uttered many parables which are easily understood and which linger long in the memory.¹

Some of the earliest of these, as the parables of the Hidden Treasure and the Pearl of Great Price, were to impress the great importance of attending to the salvation of the soul before anything else. But the great parable of the Sower was put forth in order to show how the spread of the Kingdom is effected by scattering or preaching the word of divine truth among all kinds of men everywhere, and that they will receive it in different ways according to their dispositions. Yet, although many will make a failure for various reasons, some will yield a bountiful return to God for the gifts of His truth and grace.²

In the parable of the Leaven, the Mustard Seed, and the Blade of Corn, He showed the gradual progress of the work of grace in the hearts of men; and in that of the Wheat and the Tares, He sets forth the mixed quality of the persons composing the visible Church, and the reasons why it must be so until the Judgment, when the good shall at last be separated from the bad, and each shall receive according to his own works. Here belongs also the parable of the Rich man and Lazarus.³

This last point is further opened up in the beautiful parable of The Ten Virgins, and the terrible one of The Sheep and the Goats at the last great day. Many of the parables are short and almost fragmentary, as those of the two ways, the friend who goes to ask for bread at midnight, and the evil spirit who returns to his home after he had left it for a while. Others, as the parables of the Great Supper, the Marriage of the King's Son, and the Wedding Garment are brought forth to illustrate God's gracious invitations to men.⁴

Such also is the more elaborate story of The Prodigal Son, which has no parallel in literature. The story of the Good Samaritan is likewise as remarkable for its beauty as its teaching power. The parables of the Dishonest Steward and the Unjust Judge were doubtless intended to stir up the prayers and the earnest service of God's children.⁵

Those of the Laborers in the vineyard, and the Pounds and the Talents are equally for saint and sinner, who are all responsible to God for the use of their opportunities; while those of the Children playing in the Market-place, of the Pharisee and the Publican, and of the Wicked Husbandmen are doubtless directed against the Jews for their obstinacy in refusing to hear the Gospel.⁶

Two of the sweetest and richest of all the parables are those of the Good Shepherd, and the Vine and its Branches, both of which are designed for the inner circle of true believers to illustrate their spiritual relation to Christ.⁷

“To know how to suggest is the art of teaching.”

AMIEL.

“Allegories, when well chosen, are like so many tracks of light in a discourse, that make everything about them clear and beautiful.”

ADDISON.

“Late, late, so late and dark the night and chill!
Late, late, so late! but we can enter still,”

“Too late, too late! ye cannot enter now.”

“No light had we;—for that we do repent,
And learning this, the Bridegroom will relent.”

“Too late, too late! ye cannot enter now.”

“No light! so late! and dark and chill the night,—
O let us in that we may find the light.”

“Too late, too late! ye cannot enter now.”

“Have we not heard the Bridegroom is so sweet?
O let us in, though late, to kiss his feet! ”

“No! no! too late! ye cannot enter now.”

ALFRED TENNYSON.

REFERENCES.

¹ Matt. 4 : 17, 23, 9 : 35. Mark 1 : 14, 15. Luke 4 : 14-21, 31-32, 43.

² Matt. 13 : 1-13, 18-23, 44-46. Mark 4 : 1-20. Luke 8 : 4-15.

³ Matt. 13 : 24-43, 47-52. Mark 4 : 26-34. Luke 13 : 18-21.

⁴ Matt. 25 : 1-13, 31-46, 22 : 1-14. Luke 11 : 5-13, 24-26, 12 : 35-48, 14 : 15-24, 16 : 19-31.

⁵ Luke 15 : 1-32, 10 : 25-37, 16 : 1-12, 18 : 1-8.

⁶ Matt. 25 : 14-30, 11 : 16-19, 20 : 1-16, 21 : 33-46. Luke 19 : 12-27, 7 : 31-35, 18 : 9-14, 20 : 9-20.

⁷ John 10 : 1-18, 15 : 1-8.

QUESTIONS.

What was a large part of Jesus' preaching about?

What did he use to explain his kingdom, and why?

What were the parables of the Treasure and the Pearl?

Give and explain the parable of the Sower.

State the parables of the Leaven, Mustard Seed, and Blade of Corn.

State the parables of the Wheat and Tares, and the Net full of Fish.

Give and explain the parable of the Ten Virgins.

State the parable of the Sheep and the Goats.

State the parables of the Two Ways, the Barren Fig-tree, the Friend at Midnight, and the Evil Spirit's Return.

What other parables illustrate God's invitation to men?

Recite the parable of the Prodigal Son.

Recite also the parable of the Good Samaritan.

What are the parables of the Unjust Judge and Dishonest Steward?

What is the lesson of the parables of the Pounds and the Talents?

Give the parables of the Children playing in the Streets, the Pharisee and the Publican, and the Wicked Husbandmen.

What are three of the last and sweetest among all the parables, and what is their meaning?

PRAYER.

Show me, O Lord, the way of true salvation amid the confusion and distractions of this sinful world. Aid me to know the best things, those that make for spiritual life and blessing rather than for a little brief and foolish pleasure. Grant me the gift of a pure heart and a sound understanding, that I may be rooted and grounded in the Gospel of Christ. Amen.

HYMN. (TUNE, OLNEY.)

"All things are ready," come;
Come to the supper spread;
Come, rich and poor; come, young and old,
Come, and be richly fed.

"All things are ready," come;
The invitation's given,
Through Him who now in glory sits
At God's right hand in heaven.

“All things are ready,” come;
The door is open wide;
O feast upon the love of God,
For Christ, His Son, has died.

“All things are ready,” come;
To-morrow may not be;
O Sinner, come; the Saviour waits
This hour to welcome thee.

ALBERT MIDLAND.

XXIV.

HIS CONVERSATIONS WITH MEN.

MUCH of the Master's teaching was imparted in conversations with one or more persons at a time, which gives an air of practical force and of naturalness not always to be realized in His more formal discourses either to the disciples or before the general public.

Indeed, His ministry seems to have begun in the personal interviews which He had with some of the followers of John the Baptist, who were also fishermen of Galilee, and their friends; as it also closed men of Galilee, and their friends, as it also closed at last in a similar manner in the days that followed His resurrection at Jerusalem.¹

Many of these conversations are only mentioned, and scarcely reported at all; as the first talks with His disciples, His meeting with His mother and His brethren at Capernaum, which must have been of surpassing interest, and His conference with Moses and Elijah in the Mount, where only the subject of their talk is given.²

In many other instances, only a few words of the conversation are reported, though these are very important; as when He talked with John the Baptist, with Nathaniel, with the centurion whose servant was sick, with the woman of Syrophenicia, with the people at Nazareth, with Levi, and Zaccheus, and blind Bartimeus, with the rich young man, and the Jewish lawyer, and others not a few.³

Among the most important of these occasions was when the Master talked with the woman of Samaria

at Jacob's well, disregarding the race prejudice between Jews and Samaritans, revealing to her the secrets of her past life, telling her the nature of true worship, that it consists not in forms or in places, but in the knowledge of God and the sincerity of the worshipper. Another great conversation was that of the Lord with Nicodemus, the Jewish ruler, who visited him by night, and to whom he declared the doctrine of the second birth by water and the spirit, without which a man shall not see the Kingdom of Heaven; also the doctrine of the world's redemption in Christ, who is the true and only-begotten Son of God.⁴

In various conversations with His disciples, he not only explained His parables, but instructed them more fully as to the nature of the Kingdom of God, and also as to their work of the ministry of the Gospel, and how they should behave toward the world.⁵ When the mother of James and John came to him asking preferment in the Kingdom for her two sons, He took occasion to instruct them all in the grace of humility. Likewise, when dining at the house of Simon of Bethany, and when Mary came in to anoint the Saviour with spikenard, He took occasion to tell His host of the grace of gratitude.⁶

Other important conversations were those with the Herodians, the Sadducees, and the Pharisees at Jerusalem; and with the Jewish High Priest and Pilate before His crucifixion; also with Thomas and Peter after His resurrection; and especially that with the two disciples on the way to Emmaus.⁷

“A single conversation across the table with a wise man is worth a month's study of books.”

CHINESE PROVERB.

"Conversation derives its greatest charm, not from the multitude of our ideas, but from their application."

UNKNOWN.

"As iron sharpeneth iron, so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend."

HEBREW PROVERB.

"I had rather sit on one end of a log with Mark Hopkins on the other, and listen to his conversation, than enjoy the whole curriculum of some universities."

JAS. A. GARFIELD.

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- ¹ Mark 1:16-21. Acts 1:3-8. 1 John: 1-4.
- ² John 1:35-44. Matt. 4:18-22, 12:46-50. Luke 9:30-31.
- ³ John 1:45-51. Matt. 3:13-15, 15:21-28. Mark 2:24-30, 10:17-22. Luke 4:16-32, 5:1-11, 7:1-10, 10:25-28, 38-43, 19:1-10.
- ⁴ John 4:1-42, 3:1-21.
- ⁵ Matt. 10:1-20, 16:5-28, 18:1-22, 19:23-30. Mark 13:1-13. Luke 7:19-23.
- ⁶ Mark 10:35-45, 14:3-9. Luke 7:36-50. John 12:1-9.
- ⁷ Matt. 21:23-27, 22:15-46, 26:57-68. John 18:19-23, 33-38, 19:8-12, 20:11-18, 24-29, 21:15-22. Luke 20:1-8, 19-26, 27-40, 22:66-71, 24:13-53. Mark 11:27-33, 12:13-34, 14:60-65.

QUESTIONS.

What is the special value of Jesus' conversations?

What were some of his first and last conversations?

What are some of his unreported conversations?

Mention some of his conversations of a personal nature that have been briefly reported, and give the subject that was discussed in each.

Give a report of his conversation with Nicodemus, and the two doctrines that Jesus then enunciated.

Give a report of his conversation with the woman of Samaria, and his doctrine of true worship.

What were some of the themes on which Jesus conversed privately with his disciples?

What did he say to Zebedee's sons and their mother?

What did he say in the home of Simon at Bethany?

What did he say to the Herodians, the Sadducees, and the Pharisees?

What did he say to the high priest at his trial?

What did he say to Pilate before his crucifixion?

What did he say to Mary Magdalene after his resurrection?

What did he say to Thomas after his resurrection?

What did he say to Peter after his resurrection?

PRAYER.

Teach me Thy ways, O Lord, and reveal Thyself to me as Thou dost to the humble and contrite in heart. Give me a teachable spirit, and open to me the doors of secret communion with Thee by meditation and prayer. So may I delight in Thy instructions more than in all the wisdom of this present world. Amen.

HYMN. (TUNE, WOODSTOCK.)

TALK with us, Lord, Thyself reveal,
While here o'er earth we rove;
Speak to our hearts and let us feel
The kindlings of Thy love.

With Thee conversing, we forget
All time, and toil, and care;
Labor is rest, and pain is sweet,
If Thou, my God, art here.

Thou callest me to seek Thy face,—
'Tis all I wish to seek;
To attend the whispers of Thy grace,
And hear Thee inly speak.

Let this my every hour employ,
Till I Thy glory see;
Enter into my Master's joy,
And find my heaven in Thee.

CHARLES WESLEY.

XXV.

HIS PROPHECIES OF THE FUTURE.

BESIDES the circumstance that Jesus Christ never said anything which is really in conflict with the world's far riper general knowledge of things at this day, we have the important fact set forth in the Gospels that He possessed a knowledge of the future.¹

Not only is this declared in the parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus, and elsewhere in His teachings; but he foretold to His disciples various events which came to pass in their own lifetime and experience; such as that He Himself would be betrayed into the hands of the Jews by Judas Iscariot, one of the twelve apostles; that Simon Peter, another apostle, would deny him in that night; that the chief priests and elders would deliver Him into the hands of the Romans to be put to death; that He should suffer upon the cross; that on the third day He would rise again.²

He also foretold the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the disciples at Pentecost, and their successful preaching of the Gospel thereafter; the great persecutions that should come upon the early Church of true believers; and a time of great trouble in which Jerusalem should be compassed with armies and standards of eagles, and destroyed, so that not one stone of the temple should be left upon another. All of these things, as we are well informed by secular history, came to pass about forty years thereafter,

and the Jewish nation has been in exile since that time.³

Moreover, Jesus uttered other prophecies which are still in process of fulfillment before our eyes in these modern and enlightened ages of the world. One of these is in reference to the permanence of His Church, of which He said to Peter, after his confession concerning the Master's divine nature, "On this rock will I found My Church, and the gates of Hell shall not prevail against it." It is certainly a remarkable fact that the small, obscure, and persecuted band of His disciples should have been able to hold out, and that the Church stands to-day after so many trials from without and within.⁴

Another of His prophecies was that "this Gospel of the Kingdom shall be preached unto all nations," which was apparently impossible when the words were spoken, and has in fact been delayed for many centuries; but is now being wonderfully fulfilled.⁵

Finally, we have the Master's promise, "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world," by which we understand that the evidence of His spiritual power and blessing are to follow the preaching of His Gospel throughout all lands and ages until the end.⁶ No other religion can boast of such promises as these, which are still going on to fulfillment, year by year.

Besides all these, Jesus Christ has left on record other promises, which are in the nature of prophecies; the promise of His own Second Coming, of a Day of Final Judgment, of rich rewards for the righteous and punishment for the wicked, and of a place that he has now gone to prepare for His disciples.⁷

"Whatever is foretold by God will be done by man; but nothing will be done by man because it is foretold by God."

WORDSWORTH.

"The golden age is not in the past, but in the future; not in the origin of human experience, but in its consummate flower; not opening in Eden, but coming out from Gethsemane."

E. H. CHAPIN.

"God will not permit man to have a knowledge of things to come; for if he had a foreknowledge of his prosperity, he would be careless; and if he had an understanding of his adversity, he would be despairing and senseless."

ST. AUGUSTINE.

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¹ Matt. 11:27, 19:27-30. Mark 6:11. Luke 6:20-26. John 2:18-21, 24-25, 6:61, 64, 7:6, 8:14, 28, 11:40-42, 12:23-24, 13:1, 21:17-19.

² Matt. 26:21-25, 31-35. Mark 8:31, 9:31, 10:32-34. Luke 16:19-31, 18:31-34.

³ John 14:16-17, 26, 16:7-13. Luke 24:49. Acts 1:4-8. Matt. 10:16-22, 23:34-39, 24:9-28. Mark 13:2, 9-13. Luke 17:25-37, 19:41-44, 21:20-24.

⁴ Matt. 16:18, 21:42-44, 24:35. Mark 12:10. Luke 20:17-18.

⁵ Matt. 24:14, 26:13, 28:18-19. Mark 13:10. Luke 24:47.

⁶ Matt. 28:20. Mark 16:20. Acts 2:21, 39:46-47. Rom. 10:13.

⁷ Matt. 24:30, 25:31-33. Mark 13:24-37. Luke 12:31-48, 13:24-30. John 5:25-29, 10:27-29, 11:25-26, 12:26, 14:1-3, 17:24.

QUESTIONS.

How is the divine wisdom of Jesus seen in our modern days?

What were some of the things that he knew of men?

What things did he prophecy concerning himself?

What concerning two of his own apostles?

Which of his promises was fulfilled at Pentecost?

What did he foretell concerning persecution?

What did he say about the City of Jerusalem?

What prophecy concerning the permanence of his Church is still in process of fulfillment?

What prophecy concerning the extent to which the Gospel would be preached is also being fulfilled?

What other prophecy still stands in experience?

Has any other so-called religion such prophecies?

What further prophecies of Christ are yet before us?

PRAYER.

O Lord, how wonderful are Thy words, and Thy ways past finding out! Thou alone knowest all things from the beginning, and Thou hast sometimes lifted a little the veil which hides the future from our eyes, that we may be assured of Thy presence and power in the world. Help us to see Thy hand in the events of time, and to trust Thee for the fulfillment of Thy promises in days to come. All this we ask in Jesus' name. Amen.

HYMN. (TUNE, LIGHT OF DAWN.)

THROUGH the night of doubt and sorrow,
 Onward goes the pilgrim band,
 Singing songs of expectation,
 Marching to the promised land.
 Clear before us through the darkness
 Gleams and burns the guiding light;
 Brother clasps the hand of brother,
 Stepping fearless through the night.

One the light of God's own presence,
 O'er His ransomed people shed,
 Chasing far the gloom and terror,
 Brightening all the path we tread;
 One the object of our journey,
 One the faith which never tires,
 One the earnest looking forward,
 One the hope our God inspires.

One the strain that lips of thousands
Lift as from the heart of one;
One the conflict, one the peril,
One the march in God begun;
One the gladness of rejoicing
One the far eternal shore,
Where the one Almighty Father
Reigns in love forevermore.
R. S. INGEMANN. Tr. by S. BARING-GOULD.

XXVI.

HIS DISCOURSE AT THE SUPPER.

IN the fourth Gospel are several discourses of Jesus which are of a more or less mystical character; that is, they treat of spiritual matters which cannot be fully expressed to our understanding without using a great deal of figurative language. This is harder to grasp than the simpler teaching of the other Gospels, but not on that account untrue or at all misleading.¹

Indeed, some parts of these discourses are among those most cherished of all by Christians, and are not at all difficult to be understood; as, for instance, the Parable of the Good Shepherd. But others, as the discourse on the Spiritual Resurrection, that on Spiritual Freedom, that on the Bread of Heaven, and the one on Spiritual Blindness, based upon the restoration of sight to the man who was born blind, are somewhat more difficult, although not beyond the reach of ordinary minds.²

The greatest of all these mystical discourses, however, is that which the Lord delivered to His apostles after He had celebrated the Jewish feast of the Passover with them for the last time, and had instituted the Supper as a perpetual memorial of his sacrificial death for us.³

He began with a reference to His own departure from them, which was now very near at hand, and said, "Let not your heart be troubled. Ye believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are

many mansions. If it were not so I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you, and if I go, I will come again, and receive you to Myself; that where I am, ye may be also. And whither I go, ye know, and the way ye know." After these things, He went on to tell them, in answer to their questions of wonder and anxiety, of His unity with the Father and the manifestation of the Father through Himself unto the disciples. Also, that after His departure, He would send to them the Holy Spirit, who should guide them into a more perfect knowledge of the truth, and would bring back His words to their remembrance.⁴

Again, He continued and uttered the beautiful parable of the Vine and its Branches to illustrate the spiritual union of the disciples with Himself. He besought them to become as branches that bear much fruit; and said they should no longer be His servants, but His friends, because they were in His fullest confidence.⁵ Finally, he told them to be faithful and of good courage, and that in a little while they should see Him again.⁶ After this He prayed for them all in the most wonderful prayer that was ever uttered on earth, a prayer in which all who should believe on Him through their word were remembered, and in which He clearly anticipates a future life that is far beyond our present comprehension.⁷

"A religion without mystery must be a religion without God."

UNKNOWN.

"In dwelling on divine mysteries, keep thy heart humble, thy thoughts reverent, thy soul holy."

JEREMY TAYLOR.

"As a defect of strength in us makes some weights to be immovable, so likewise, a defect of understanding makes some truths to be mysterious."

SHERLOCK.

"Like a morning dream, life becomes more and more bright, the longer we live, and the reason of everything appears more clear. What has puzzled us before seems less mysterious, and the crooked paths look straighter as we approach the end."

RICHTER.

REFERENCES.

¹ John 3:11-13, 16:12-14. 1 Cor. 3:1-2. Heb. 5:11-14.
² John 10:1-18, 5:19-29, 8:31-39, 6:27-58, 9:39-41, 3:19-21, 12:35-48.

³ John 13:1-3, 31-38, 14, 15, 16. Matt. 26:14-20. Mark 14:12-17. Lev. 22:7-20.

⁴ John 14:1-4, 20-24, 15-19, 25-27. Matt. 11:25-30. Lev. 10:17-24, 11:13.

⁵ John 15:1-7, 8, 16, 13-15, 18-21. Matt. 7:16-20. Luke 22:28-30.

⁶ John 16:1, 16-20, 22-24, 28-33. Matt. 10:16-33. Luke 12:32-40.

⁷ John 17. Mark 1:35-36, 6:46. Luke 6:12, 9:18, 28-29, 22:31-32, 39-41.

QUESTIONS.

Which Gospel contains the most mystical discourses?

What is the meaning of this word "mystical?"

Is mystical teaching either untrue or misleading?

Why is it used to some extent in the Scriptures?

Is all mystical teaching hard to understand?

Give the parable of the Good Shepherd and its meaning.

State the main idea of the Spiritual Resurrection.

Tell what is meant by Spiritual Freedom.

What did Jesus mean by the Bread of Heaven?

What did he say about Spiritual Blindness?

Which is the greatest of Christ's mystical discourses?

On what occasion and to whom was it uttered?

Is it arranged in logical order?

What is the first leading thought it contains?

What does it say of Christ's unity with the Father?

What does it say of the Holy Spirit, the Comforter?

What does it say about the Vine and its Branches?

How did the Lord then encourage his disciples?

For whom did he pray after this discourse?

(The class Instructor should assist in finding suitable answers.)

PRAYER.

Give me, O Lord, a reverent and enlightened mind,
that I may behold the beauty and glory of Thy
Word, and that I may grow in knowledge and also in
grace. But grant that I may walk where I cannot
run, and that I may feel my way where I cannot see,
until I shall know as I am known at last. Amen.

HYMN. (TUNE, PENITENTIA.)

HERE, O my Lord, I see Thee face to face;
Here would I touch and handle things unseen;
Here grasp with firmer hand eternal grace,
And all my weariness upon Thee lean.

Here would I feed upon the bread of God;
Here drink with Thee the royal wine of heaven;
Here would I lay aside each earthly load,
Here taste afresh the calm of sin forgiven.

Too soon we rise; the symbols disappear;
The feast, though not the love, is passed and
gone,
The bread and wine remove, but Thou are here,
Nearer than ever, still my shield and sun.

I have no help but thine, nor do I need
Another arm save Thine to lean upon;
It is enough, my Lord, enough indeed;
My strength is in Thy might, Thy power alone.
H. BONAR.

XXVII.

HIS SUFFERINGS, DEATH AND RESURRECTION.

THE leaders of the Jewish people had long been envious of Jesus because of His popularity, His apparently lowly origin, His disregard of their own authority and traditions, and His plain reproofs of their prevailing religious shallowness and avarice.¹

On the same night after His memorable discourse at the Last Supper, the officers of the Jews were guided by Judas to the garden of Gethsemane whither the Master had retired to pray with His disciples. There they took Him without resistance, and brought Him to the high priest's house in Jerusalem.

Peter and the rest of the apostles would have defended Him by force; but He forbade them, saying that He could have assistance from the heavenly powers; but that it was the will of God that it should be done to Him according to all that was written in the prophets.² Afterwards, when Peter saw his Master in the hands of His enemies and being foully misused, his courage failed, and he denied being one of Jesus' disciples when accused of it by the servants.³

The Jewish council was called together very early in the morning, and went through the form of a trial which was only a farce. The high priest finally asked Jesus whether He were the Christ, and He frankly admitted the charge. On this charge He was voted guilty, and sent to Pilate, the Roman governor, with a declaration that He was making Himself a king of the Jews.⁴

Pilate did not wish to punish an innocent man,

as he believed Jesus to be; but learning that He was from Galilee, he sent Him to Herod, king of Galilee, who was then in the city. Herod soon became vexed because Jesus would not talk to him, nor perform a miracle to gratify his vain curiosity. He therefore directed his soldiers to make a mock king of Jesus, and after shameful abuse, sent Him back again to Pilate.

After this, Pilate talked further with the Master, and finding that His was only a spiritual kingdom of truth and righteousness among men, he brought Him forth again to the Jews and asked their permission to release Him. But to this they would not consent, preferring one Barabbas, a robber. Finally, after further parley, and washing his hands in token of laying the guilt of the matter on the fanatical Jews, Pilate weakly consented to the death of Jesus, who was immediately scourged by the soldiers and then led away to be crucified.⁵

Along the way, many people followed Him, lamenting and weeping, and one Simon of Cyrene carried his cross; yet Jesus bade them not to weep for Him, but for themselves and their children, because of His rejection as the Messiah. When they came to the hill of Calvary, He was crucified between two thieves, and His raiment divided among the soldiers. Meanwhile, He prayed for His enemies, comforted one of the thieves who asked for His Divine Mercy, and commended His Mother to the care of the apostle, John.

All the agonies of the cross He endured with fortitude, calling upon God at the last in His bitter anguish, and soon afterward bowed His head in death, saying, "It is finished," in token that the work was accomplished which had been the object of His coming into this world. Then the Roman centurion who

was in charge of the execution, cried out, saying, "Truly, this was the Son of God!" The body of Jesus was then taken down by Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea, and laid in a new rock tomb which was closed and sealed and watched by Roman soldiers.⁶

But on the third day, which was the first day of the week, certain women from Galilee, and also the apostles Peter and John, coming to the tomb, found it empty. Angels told them that the Master had risen from the dead, and many of the disciples both saw and talked with Him again before His ascension at Bethany, which took place forty days thereafter.⁷

"Self-preservation is the first law of nature; self-sacrifice the highest rule of grace. Yet sacrifice is found in nature, too."

UNKNOWN.

"The deep undertone of the world is sadness, a solemn bass, occurring at measured intervals, and heard through all other tones. Ultimately, all the strains of this world's music resolve themselves into that tone; and I believe that, rightly felt, the cross, and the cross alone, interprets all the mournful mystery of life, the sorrow of the Highest, the Lord of Life, the result of error and sin; but ultimately remedial, purifying, and exalting."

F. W. ROBERTSON.

"The cross of Christ, on which He was extended, points, in the length of it, to heaven and earth, reconciling them together; and in the breadth of it, to former and following ages, as bringing equally, salvation to both."

UNKNOWN.

REFERENCES.

¹ Matt. 12: 14-15. 22-23, 13: 54-57, 15: 1-9, 12-14, 16: 1-12, 21: 12-16, 23-27, 45-46, 23. Mark 11: 18. Luke 19: 47-48, 20: 1-8, 19-20, 45-47, 22: 1-6. John 5: 10, 17-18, 6: 41-42, 7: 1. 10-15, 20, 25, 30-32, 40-53, 11: 47-57.

² Matt. 26: 36-57. Mark 14: 26-53. Luke 21: 39-54. John 18: 1-14.

³ Matt. 26: 69-75. Mark 14: 54, 66-72. Luke 22: 54-62. John 18: 15-18, 25-27.

⁴ Matt. 26: 57-68, 27: 1-2. Mark 14: 55-65, 15: 1. Luke 22: 63-71, 23: 1-12. John 18: 19-24, 28.

⁵ Matt. 27: 11-32. Mark 15: 2-21. Luke 23: 13-26. John 18: 29-40, 19: 1-17.

⁶ Matt. 27: 33-50. Mark 15: 22-41. Luke 23: 27-49. John 19: 17-30.

⁷ Matt. 27: 57-66, 28. Mark 15: 39, 42-47, 16. Luke 23: 50-56, 24. John 19: 31-42, 20. Acts 1: 1-3, 9-11. 1 Cor. 15: 1-20.

QUESTIONS.

What were some of the reasons why the Jewish leaders opposed Christ's teaching and sought to kill him?

When and in what manner was he taken by them?

Why was he not defended by Peter and the other apostles?

Whither was he taken and how was he treated there?

What did Peter do when he saw the Master in that place?

What did the high priest ask Jesus, and what was his answer?

To whom did they send him, and with what accusation?

To whom did Pilate send him, and with what result?

What did Jesus say to Pilate about his kingdom?

When Pilate sought to release him, whom did the Jews prefer?

How did Pilate finally end the matter?

How did the people behave when they saw him led away?

What things did Jesus do and say while upon the cross?

Who took charge of his body, and what did they do with it?

What witnesses and proof have we of his resurrection?

PRAYER.

In the cross of Christ, O God, may I behold the wondrous mystery of Thy love to sinful man; and, thus beholding, may I be ashamed of sin forever. Teach me, O God, to be crucified with my Saviour to all forms of sin and selfishness, and to also bear my cross from day to day for His blessed sake. Amen.

HYMN. (TUNE, RATHBURN.)

In the cross of Christ I glory,
 Towering o'er the wrecks of time;
 All the light of sacred story,
 Gathers round its head sublime.

When the woes of life o'ertake me,
 Hopes deceive, and fears annoy,
 Never shall the cross forsake me;
 Lo, it glows with peace and joy.

When the sun of life is beaming
 Light and love upon my way,
 From the cross, its radiance streaming
 Adds more luster to the day.

Bane and blessing, pain and pleasure,
 By the cross are sanctified,
 Peace is there that knows no measure,
 Joys that through all time abide.

SIR JOHN BOWRING.

XXVIII.

THE APOSTOLIC CHURCH.

JUST before His ascension, which occurred in the presence of a large number of His disciples, Jesus left two important directions to His followers; first, that they should "Go and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things which I have commanded you;" and second, that they should "tarry at Jerusalem until they should be endowed with power from on High," after which they should be witnesses to His name and His Gospel, "in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and unto the uttermost parts of the earth."¹

All this was fulfilled when the disciples, to the number of one hundred and twenty, had spent ten days after the ascension of their Master in waiting upon God in prayer in an upper room in Jerusalem. At the end of that time the Holy Spirit was sent upon them from heaven with remarkable manifestations of the presence and power of God. All the disciples are said to have spoken in strange tongues, and the apostles immediately began to preach to the people in the city, declaring with great boldness and convincing arguments that Jesus, who had lately been crucified, was risen from the dead, and that He was the Messiah promised in the Old Testament.²

Thousands of people were soon converted to the new faith and baptized into the Church, where they were as brothers and sisters in Christ, uniting in

their prayers and testimonies, celebrating again the Last Supper as had been commanded by the Lord, and sharing each other's goods and property in common.³ They also appointed deacons who should attend to the temporal interests of the congregation, and later some of these also became preachers of the Gospel. Meanwhile special provision was made for the widows and orphans and other dependent persons who were members of the congregation of believers in Christ, so that they should not depend on the outside world.⁴

After matters had continued in this way for some time, and various persecutions had occurred, a fierce attack was made by the Jews upon the Church, in which Stephen, a deacon, was stoned and died a glorious death. This caused the members of the Church at Jerusalem to be scattered abroad in Judea, Samaria, Galilee, and even as far as Antioch, carrying the Gospel and gathering new converts wherever they went. One of these new converts was Saul of Tarsus, a young student of the Jewish rabbis, who had been present at the death of Stephen.⁵

At first only Jews were admitted to the Church; but when Cornelius, a Roman centurion, and his family, were converted under the preaching of Peter at Caesarea, there was a council of the apostles over the matter, and Gentiles were admitted thereafter.⁶ Barnabas, and Saul, whose name was changed to Paul, were sent out from Antioch, where the disciples were first called Christians, to preach to the people of Asia Minor, and to ordain elders for the churches which they had founded in every city. Thus the Gospel was soon spread throughout the Roman Empire, which then embraced most of the civilized world.⁷

"Christianity is not a theory nor a speculation, but a life of fellowship with God."

COLERIDGE. (Adapted.)

"It matters little whether or not Christianity makes men richer. But it does make them truer, purer, and nobler."

BECKWITH.

"Christianity everywhere gives dignity to labor, sanctity to marriage, and brotherhood to man. It is profitable alike for this world and the world to come."

LORD LAWRENCE.

"Christianity is a missionary religion, converting, advancing, aggressive, encompassing the world. A non-missionary church is in the hands of death."

MAX MULLER.

"Had the doctrines of Jesus been preached always as pure as they came from his lips, the whole civilized world would now have been Christians."

THOS. JEFFERSON.

REFERENCES.

¹ Matt. 28:19-20. Mark 16:15-16, 19, 20. Luke 24:45-49. John 15:27, 20:30-31. Acts 1:4-8.

² Acts 1:12-14, 2:1-36, 3:12-26, 4:5-13.

³ Acts 2:37-47, 4:4, 31-37, 5:12-16, 24-42.

⁴ Acts 6:1-8, 8:5, 26:21, 8. 1 Tim. 5:4-10.

⁵ Acts 6:9-15, 7:54-60, 8:1-4, 5-6, 14-17, 25:26-27, 9:1-31.

⁶ Acts 11:19-21, 10:19-34, 44-48, 11:1-18, 15:1-33.

⁷ Acts 11:22-30, 12:24-25, 13, 14:23, 15:35-41, 16, etc.

QUESTIONS.

What were Jesus' last two commands to his disciples?

What was the number of the first disciples in Jerusalem?

Where were they to witness to the Gospel of Christ?

Where and how did they spend the first ten days?

- What came upon them at the end of that period?
 What were some manifestations of supernatural power?
 What was the substance of the apostles' first preaching?
 What was the first believers' manner of living and worship?
 For what purpose were deacons appointed?
 Who was the first Christian martyr and who was present?
 What was the effect of this first bloody persecution?
 Under what circumstances was Saul of Tarsus converted?
 What proselyte was converted under Philip's preaching?
 What Gentiles were converted under Peter at Caesarea?
 What decision did the apostles make in this matter?
 What three things occurred at Antioch? (Acts 11:20, 21, 26, 13:1-3.)
 What countries were evangelized by Paul and Barnabas?
 What country later, by Paul, with other fellow laborers?

PRAYER.

"Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name, Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever." Amen.

HYMN. (TUNE, AURELIA.)

THE Church's one foundation
 Is Jesus Christ her Lord;
 She is His new creation,
 By water and the word.
 From heaven He came and sought her
 To be His holy Bride;
 With His own blood He bought her,
 And for her Life He died.

Elect from every nation,
 Yet one o'er all the earth,
 Her charter of salvation,
 One Lord, one faith, one birth.

One holy name she blesses,
Partakes one holy food,
And to one hope she presses,
With every grace endued.

'Mid toil and tribulation,
And tumult of her war,
She waits the consummation
Of peace for evermore.
Till with the vision glorious
Her longing eyes are blest,
And the great Church victorious
Shall be the Church at rest.

SAMUEL J. STONE.

XXIX.

THE GOSPEL METHOD OF SAVING MEN.

The new plan of salvation as preached by the apostles and their successors was something like this: First, they followed the example of Christ, the Master, in so presenting the truth, the beauty, and the blessedness of a perfectly sincere and holy life, that men were charmed by its view and led to compare their own lives with the pattern set before them in the Gospel.¹

Second, the personal application of spiritual truth as found in the parables and conversations of Jesus was now pressed home to men in a way to reveal their hidden motives and secret affections, thereby searching the soul as with a lighted candle, and showing to each his own sinful condition, in order to lead him to repentance.²

Third, the story of the Saviour's life, His teachings and miracles, and of His sufferings on the Cross and His glorious resurrection, was repeated to men in such a manner as to touch the heart and the conscience. The purpose of His death was also explained as an atonement for human sins and a means of reconciliation between God and man, so as to lead each one to an earnest effort to amend his life with the aid of the Holy Spirit which is freely promised in the Gospel.³

Sometimes the particulars of this preaching took one form, and sometimes another, according to circumstances. Frequently, the process of instruction and persuasion was a short one; but it was always

intended to lead up to the vision or knowledge of Christ Himself as the one Master and Friend, the everliving and all-sufficient Saviour of those who to the Father by Him. No one was so high or so lowly, so good or so evil, that he might not receive this Gospel of Salvation through Christ, regardless of race, language, or condition in life.⁴

Moreover, all who accepted the Gospel by prayer and faith, however long or short their spiritual conflicts, were brought into the Christian life and made members of the spiritual kingdom of God in Christ. Here we see a new principle of religion, that of a Mediator, or a personal Redeemer, which was a powerful factor in arousing and developing the minds and spiritual consciousness of men, and became, in fact, a new force for the conversion of the world to God.⁵

At the same time, this did not set aside the Old Testament doctrines of worship and morality, nor of God's own eternal truth and righteousness; but it rather confirmed and fulfilled them.⁶ Besides all this, the preaching of the Gospel had the advantage in its appeal to men of being founded on a series of wonderful events and practical doctrines, all springing from the person and instruction of Jesus Christ. Thus men saw a definite source of authority for the promises, and also rested their faith in the tangible facts of history.⁷

To be sure, not all could have an opportunity to hear the Gospel, or capacity to understand and accept it when heard; but even such persons are not wholly left without some provisions of grace; for there are the "uncovenanted mercies," or general blessings of temporal good and moral intelligence which God bestows in some degree on all men, whereby they may seek Him in prayer and be saved.⁸

There are also the "unconditioned benefits" of Christ's atoning sacrifice, by which all young children and unenlightened persons become the objects of divine mercy, and are held to a lesser responsibility than those who are older and better instructed.⁹

Finally, we have the blessed way of positive grace and salvation by faith in the Gospel of Jesus Christ, which is the only direct and sure method of approach to God for all who are in any wise able to receive and appropriate its holy privileges.¹⁰

"The preaching of the Gospel is the form in which human agency has been and still is most efficaciously employed for the spiritual improvement of men."

WEBSTER.

"I preached as never sure to preach again,
And as a dying man to dying men."

BAXTER.

"My grand point in preaching is to break the hard heart, and to heal the broken one."

JOHN NEWTON.

"The only way to realize that we are God's children is to let Christ lead us to our Father."

PHILLIPS BROOKS.

REFERENCES.

¹ Matt. 7:28-29. Mark 1:21-22. Luke 4:31-32. John 7:46.

² Matt. 13:18-23, 36-43, 52, 15:15-20, 20:25-28. Mark 10:14-31, 12:28-34, 37. Luke 5:8-11, 7:40-50. John 3:14-21, 4:17-19, 28-29.

³ Acts 2:22-24, 32-33, 36-39, 3:12-21, 4:8-13, 13:23-41, 18:28. Rom. 1:4, 16-17, 3:20-26, 5:1-11, 8:1-17, 10:4-10.

⁴ Acts 8:26-39, 9:17-22, 10:34-48, 16:25-34. Rom. 10:12-13. Gal. 3:28.

⁵ 2 Cor. 1:19-20, 4:5-6. Gal. 4:4-7. Ephes. 1:3, 7, 10, 12. 1 Tim. 2:5-6.

⁶ Rom. 3:31, 6:15-18, 10:1-13. 2 Cor. 3:12-16. Heb. 1:1-4, 9:8-15, 23.

⁷ Matt. 28:16-20. Mark 16:9-14, 19-20. Luke 24:45-48. John 20:30-31.

⁸ Matt. 5:45. Acts 10:34-35, 14:16-17. Rom. 3:13-15, 10:13-18. 1 Peter 3:10-12.

⁹ Matt. 19:13-15. Luke 12:47-48, 18:15-17. John 9:40-41. Acts 17:30.

¹⁰ Mark 2:10-12. Luke 10:16-22. John 3:14-21, 5:20-24. Heb. 10:19-22.

QUESTIONS.

Whose example did the apostles follow in preaching the Gospel, and how did they do this?

What truths were thus pressed home to men's consciences and with what results?

What was the last and most touching element in their message, and how was the death of Christ presented?

Were all sermons and conversions alike as to manner; and if not, how were they different?

What was the new principle of the Gospel in saving men?

How was this related of the Old Testament doctrines?

What was the basis of facts and authority for the Gospel?

What is meant by the "uncovenanted mercies" of God?

What are the "unconditional benefits" of Christ's death?

What is the only direct and sure way of salvation, and to whom is it especially given?

PRAYER.

O God, I thank Thee for the blessings of Gospel light and Christian privileges. Help me at all times to appreciate their inestimable value, and to profit by them to the salvation of my soul through Jesus Christ, Thy Son. Grant me also a love for the perishing souls of men, and a zeal for the glory of Thy kingdom in the earth, that I may finally share it in heaven, for Jesus' sake. Amen.

HYMN. (TUNE, ROCKINGHAM.)

OF Him who did salvation bring
I could forever think and sing;
Arise, ye needy, he'll relieve;
Arise ye guilty, he'll forgive.

Ask but His grace, and lo, 'tis given!
Ask, and He turns your hell to heaven;
Though sin and sorrow wound my soul,
Jesus, Thy balm will make it whole.

To shame our sins He blushed in blood;
He closed His eyes to show us God;
Let all the world fall down and know,
That none but God such love can show.

BERNARD OF CLAIRVAUX.

Tr. by A. W. BOEHM.

XXX.

THE CALL OF GOD TO THE SINNER.

IF the true religion were only a set of principles and of rules of conduct, or if the Gospel plan of salvation were merely a series of precepts and promises leading to certain kinds of emotion in the believer, there would be lacking the vast variety of the personal divine call to the sinner which is of more than romantic interest; since upon it depends not only our character in this present life, but our possibilities for weal or woe in a world to come.¹

This is a great element of charm in the Scriptures,—the stories of the personal calling and conversion to God of men and women, young or old, in many different times and circumstances. The call of Abraham to leave his native city, Ur of the Chaldees, and go forth to a land which God would show him, is an instance. So was the experience of young Jacob at Bethel, when he dreamed of the ladder, and afterward, when he wrestled with an Angel for a blessing. So was the case of Moses, whom the Lord met in the burning bush in the desert and sent him to rescue his people from bondage in Egypt.²

And there are many more, such as Gideon, who was called to destroy the idol standing near his father's home; Samuel, the child, who was called by the Lord while sleeping in the tent of the Holy Tabernacle; Saul, the young man, who was called while seeking his father's beasts that had strayed from home; David, whose youthful heart was touched by

the Spirit while he kept his sheep in the fields; and Elisha, who was called from the plow with his yoke of oxen.³

The New Testament also furnishes many examples; the young fishermen by the sea of Galilee, Nathanael under the fig tree, Levi at the receipt of Roman customs, Saul of Tarsus on his way to Damascus, the dying thief on the Cross, the eunuch of Ethiopia in his chariot, and the jailer of Philippi at the hour of midnight.⁴ Women, too, are not wanting, for there was Mary of Nazareth at her devotions, the Samaritan woman at Jacob's well, Martha busy with her domestic cares, and Lydia, the seller of purple, wandering by the river bank near the city; all these and many more there were who heard and accepted the Call.⁵

It is an important hour in any one's life when this voice from God begins to stir and awaken the soul, when the sense of religious duty and privilege comes to the heart. Sometimes, as we have seen, it comes in early life, while the dew of youth is upon us. Again, it seems to arrive in later years, in the midst of pleasures and vanities, or among our earthly toils and perplexities. Or, again it comes just as the last hour of earthly opportunity is approaching; but always and every where it is God's call to the sinner, saying to us, "Son," "Daughter," "Give Me thine heart." "Take My yoke upon you and learn of Me; and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light."⁶ The manifold voices of the Church, the ever constant testimony of the Word in the Scriptures, the silent but powerful whisperings of the Holy Spirit, will come to us all sooner or later, perhaps have come to us already, and we cannot afford to reject the Call.⁷

"Thou wind! which art the unseen similitude of God, the Spirit, His most sweet and mightiest sign."

BAILEY.

"As Martha came and spoke to her sister Mary in a "psychological moment," as modern writers would say; that is, in the crisis of her life experience; so to us and to many has come the same glad message by the Spirit, "The Master is come and calleth for thee." It is a call to the Divine Presence, to a personal interview with the great Healer of sorrows and of souls. It may come and be unheeded; it may come and be rejected; but it comes to all."

THE AUTHOR.

"The Spirit and the Bride say, Come; and let him that heareth say, Come; and whosoever will, let him come and take of the water of life freely."

BIBLE.

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¹ Prov. 1:23, 33. Jer. 11:7. Isa. 43:1-7. John 6:37, 44, 65, 10:3. Acts 2:39. Rom. 8:28. Ephes. 4:4. 1 Thess. 2:12. 1 Peter 2:9, 5:10.

² Gen. 12:1-2, 28:10-15, 32:24-30. Ex. 3:1-10.

³ Judges 6:11-24. 1 Sam. 3:1-10, 10:9-13, 16:1-13. 1 Kings 19:19-21.

⁴ Matt. 4:18-22. John 1:47-51. Luke 5:27-29, 19:1-10, 23:39-43. Acts 8:26-40, 9:1-22, 16:25-34.

⁵ Luke 1:26-28, 7:36-50, 10:38-42. John 4:5-30. Acts 16:14-15.

⁶ Eccles. 12:1-7. Luke 15:17-18. Acts 16:1, 18:8, 24:25, 26:28.

⁷ Matt. 20:1-7, 21:28-32. John 9:39-41. Isa. 65:12, 66:4. Rev. 22:16-17.

QUESTIONS.

Does true religion consist only in rules or principles?

Does it consist entirely in certain kinds of emotion?

What important matter would there be lacking?

What things depend upon God's call to the soul?

Are all men called of God in same manner?

State the call of Abraham, of Jacob, and of Moses.

How was Gideon called? Samuel? Saul? David? Elisha?

Tell about the calling of the first disciples of Christ.

Of Nathanael, of Levi, of the dying thief, of the Ethiopian.

Of Saul of Tarsus, and of the Philippian jailer.

Tell of the calling of several women also.

Mention some general circumstances of this call.

What is the language of God's sweetest invitation?

In what various ways is God calling to-day?

PRAYER.

O Thou ever-blessed Lord, who hast given me life, and hast watched over me all my days until now, help me, I humbly pray Thee, to hear and hearken to the voice of Thy Holy Spirit, and to answer His call aright. May I be willing and obedient, repenting of every sin and giving myself, with all my hopes and plans, to Thee, to live according to Thy Holy Will forevermore, for Jesus' sake. Amen.

HYMN. (TUNE, RIVAULX.)

God calling yet! shall I not hear?

Earth's pleasures shall I still hold dear?

Shall life's swift passing years all fly

And still my soul in slumber lie?

God calling yet! shall I not rise?

Can I His loving voice despise?

And basely His kind care repay?

He calls me still, can I delay?

God calling yet! and shall He knock,

And I my heart the closer lock?

He still is waiting to receive,

And shall I dare His Spirit grieve?

God calling yet! And shall I give
No heed, but still in bondage sin?
I wait, but He does not forsake;
He calls me still; my heart, awake!

God calling yet! I cannot stay;
My heart I yield without delay;
Vain world, farewell, from thee I part;
The voice of God hath reached my heart.
GERHARD GERSTEEGEN. Tr. by J. B.

XXXI.

THE NEW BIRTH OF THE SOUL.

THE doctrine of the New Birth of the soul, or spiritual regeneration, as taught by Christ and the apostles, is also found to some extent in the Old Testament, as the doctrine of a new heart, or a change of heart, or the receiving of a right spirit.¹ But in the Gospels and the Epistles, the second birth of the soul appears as the sign or standard of a state of salvation, or of personal acceptance with God, and is usually accompanied by the unction or witness of the Holy Spirit, which is also symbolized in the Sacrament of Baptism.²

Other types of this change are seen in the history of Naaman, the Syrian captain, who was healed of his leprosy by washing seven times in Jordan; and the healing by Christ of lepers and other persons with incurable infirmities; of the man who was born blind, and to whom Jesus restored his sight; and especially of the man out of whom the evil spirits were cast, so that he was afterward found, "clothed, and in his right mind, sitting at the feet of Jesus."³

The real nature of this heart experience is always the same, but its manifestation is largely dependent upon the age, the natural temperament, and the personal history of the individual soul who thus becomes a true spiritual child of God.⁴

However, a young child, particularly if he has been carefully trained and brought up in the true Christian faith and in habits of daily prayer to God,

may often come into this state of personal faith, hope, and love toward Jesus Christ as his Saviour, without knowing precisely when and how it occurred, since it comes almost with his sense of responsibility.⁵

But in other cases, perhaps in the vast majority, there is a manifest tendency of the young soul to follow the natural impulses and desires of the unregenerate heart, which must be repented of and put away before we can receive the grace of God. Every such one who has been regenerated is likely to know and remember his change of heart. Some who are older and have become either great unbelievers or great sinners are liable to have a still sharper experience, if they are ever converted at all.⁶

The child Timothy is an illustration of the first kind of conversion, and Saul of Tarsus of the last kind; but the first is the safest and far preferable, for those who receive it are thus "kept for the Master's use." Indeed, the idea of the new birth of the soul consists largely in going back to the spiritual state of a child, in humility, sincerity, and obedience to all that God requires of us, as babes in Christ; yet, as true members of the great spiritual family of God in whose fellowship we may sooner or later grow up to the full spiritual stature of men and women in the service of Jesus Christ.⁷

The experience of this new birth in millions of souls is one of the greatest facts in support of the Gospel religion.

"Conversion" is a deep work, a heart work. It goes throughout the man, throughout the members, throughout the entire life."

ALLEINE.

"Grace comes into the soul, as the morning sun into the world; first a dawning; then a light; and at last the sun in all his brightness."

F. ADAMS.

"The religion of Christ reaches and changes the heart, which no other religion does."

HOWELLS.

"The religion of a (saved) sinner stands on two pillars; namely, what Christ does for us in the flesh, and what He performs in us by His Spirit. Most errors arise from an attempt to separate these two."

CECIL.

"Grace is but glory begun; and glory is but grace perfected."

JONATHAN EDWARDS.

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¹ 1 Sam. 10:6, 9. Ps. 51:10. Ezek. 11:19-20. Zech. 3:1-5.

² Matt. 11:27. Luke 11:13. John 3:3-7. 2 Cor. 5:17. Rom. 8:14-17. Acts 1:5, 19:1-7. Ephes. 1:13-14. 1 Pet. 1:23. Gal. 6:15. 1 John 5:4-6.

³ 2 Kings 5:1-14. Matt 8:3. Mark 5:15. Luke 7:19-23. John 9:1-7.

⁴ Acts 9:17-19, 10:44-46, 13:12, 48, 16:14-15, 25-34, 18:8.

⁵ Prov. 22:6. Ps. 78:5-8. Ephes. 6:4. 2 Tim. 1:5, 3:14-15.

⁶ Gen. 6:5. Ps. 81:11-12. Isa. 53:6. Rom. 3:19-20. Luke 18:26-27.

⁷ Matt. 18:3. Luke 10:21. 1 Peter 2:1-3. Ephes. 4:11-15.

QUESTIONS.

Where is the doctrine of a new or clean heart first found?

Where is it taught as a new birth of the soul?

Of what is this new birth made a sign or standard?

By what witness is it usually accompanied?

In what sacrament is this witness symbolized?

Mention some historical incidents of the Bible which also appear to symbolize the new birth.

Is the real nature of this change always the same?

How about its manifestation in our experience?

What is sometimes a child's experience, and why so?

What is true in the great majority of people?

What is usually the experience of those who have grown older under the power of sin and unbelief?

Mention some examples of the two extremes of experience. Which of the two is preferable, and why so?

How is the new birth like going back to childhood?

What is expected of all who are babes in Christ?

What does such experience prove to the world?

PRAYER.

Grant me, O Lord, to know the meaning of the new birth unto the Spirit of God. Forgive all my past sins, take away my inclinations toward sin, and so fill me with Thy Holy Grace and Love that I may abide in Christ and do His will in all things. So may I be of the number of Thy spiritual children, and have my name written among the good in heaven, for Christ's sake, who gave Himself for me. Amen.

HYMN. (TUNE, TRUMAN.)

I HEARD the voice of Jesus say,
"Come unto Me and rest,
Lay down, thou weary one, lay down,
Thy head upon My breast."
I came to Jesus as I was,
Weary and worn and sad,
I found in Him a resting place,
And He hath made me glad.

I heard the voice of Jesus say,
"Behold; I freely give
The living water, Thirsty one,
Stoop down, and drink, and live."
I came to Jesus, and I drank
Of that life-giving stream;
My thirst was quenched, my soul revived,
And now I live in Him.

I heard the voice of Jesus say,
 "I am this dark world's light;
Look unto me, Thy morn shall rise,
 And all Thy days be bright."
I looked to Jesus and I found
 In Him my star, my sun;
And in that light of life I'll walk
 Till traveling days are done.

HORATIUS BONAR.

XXXII.

THE LAW OF CHRISTIAN LIBERTY.

WHEN the prophecies and types of the Old Testament had been fulfilled in Jesus Christ as the Messiah and Redeemer of the world, and after the Christian Church began to be established by the apostles, it was seen by them that the old ceremonial law of the Jewish Church was no longer of any necessary force or binding obligation.¹

This was the more evident after some of the Gentiles were converted, and the question arose whether they, too, should have to keep the ceremonial law, which was clearly unnecessary if they had only a genuine saving faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Yet the true moral law is always the same, and could not be abolished nor set aside, because it rests on the eternal principles of righteousness.²

The true follower of Jesus Christ is always the man or woman who truly intends to do what is right under any and all possible circumstances. They intend to do this because they have turned away from sin and accepted the Gospel call to a new life; because they have been born again from above and are full of affection and zeal for Jesus Christ as their Saviour; because they have been received into the one great spiritual family of God, and are bound not so much by formal rules as by filial love.³

These high privileges of believers were taught by Jesus when he said to his disciples, "Henceforth, I

call you not servants, but friends; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth; but I have called you friends." On another occasion he said, "Whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother and sister and mother."⁴

But the sign of a true child of God is found in his readiness to follow the leadings of the Spirit of truth and grace. Otherwise, "the love of God is not in him," or "he is cast forth as a branch and withered." Even the effort to seek salvation by the observance of certain forms or special precepts is not good, "for the letter killeth, but the Spirit maketh alive."⁵

No prescribed rules are necessary to make an honest man honorable in his business dealings, or even to make a patriotic man stand for the interests of his country, since he cannot do anything else without changing his character. So the true Christian cannot bear that which is dishonorable to his Lord.⁶ As in our social and civil life the boon of freedom depends on the right and honorable intentions of each neighbor and citizen, so it is in the kingdom of God; and whenever one deliberately and wilfully does wrong, he puts himself back again in the power of Satan.⁷

"True liberty consists only in the power of doing what we ought to will, and in not being constrained to do what we ought not to will."

JONATHAN EDWARDS.

"If liberty with law is fire on the hearth, then liberty without law is fire on the floor."

HILLIARD.

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¹ Luke 16:16. Matt. 5:20. Rom. 9:31, 10:3. Heb. 7:18-19, 10:1-14.

² Acts 15:1-31. Rom. 2:28-29, 3:31, 7:6. Gal. 4:9-11, 5:1-14. Jas. 1:25. 1 Peter 2:11-16.

³ John 8:31-32. Rom. 6:1-4, 17-18, 22, 13:8-10. Jas. 2:12. 1 Peter 4:1-5. 1 Jno. 5:3.

⁴ Matt. 12:46-50. John 15:14-15. Col. 3:1-4. Ephes. 2:19-22.

⁵ John 15:5-6. Rom. 8:14. 2 Cor. 3:6. Gal. 5:16-18, 6:7-8. 1 John 2:15-17.

⁶ Matt. 7:16-20, 12:33-35. Luke 6:43-45. John 14:21, 23-24. 1 Peter 2:9.

⁷ Luke 11:23. John 8:34-39. Rom. 6:16. Phil. 2:12-16. 1 John 3:8.

QUESTIONS.

What portions of the Old Testament were fulfilled in Jesus Christ as the Messiah and Redeemer?

What then became of the Jewish ceremonial law?

What circumstance soon rendered this evident?

What was essential now instead of the Jewish law?

How did this change affect the moral law of God?

What does the true disciple of Christ always mean to do?

Give three reasons why his intentions must be good.

What did Jesus call his disciples and followers?

Mention a special sign of a true child of God.

Why may not the observance of forms and precepts save us?

How do rules of conduct affect an honest man or a patriot?

What is that which a true Christian cannot bear?

On what does freedom depend in social and civil life?

How does this rule work in the kingdom of God?

What is the result when a Christian wilfully and deliberately does what he knows to be wrong?

PRAYER.

O Lord, I thank thee for the great privilege of walking in thy ways under the sweet influence of love to Christ and of love for the truth, the right, and

the good. May I ever abide in this blessed way, and may my heart be kept by thy tender grace from the love of sin and evil in all of their forms. This I ask in the name of Jesus Christ, my Saviour. Amen.

HYMN. (TUNE, LOVE DIVINE.)

Love divine, all love excelling,
Joy of heaven, to earth come down.
Fix in us Thy humble dwelling,
All Thy faithful mercies crown.
Jesus, Thou art all compassion,
Pure, unbounded love Thou art,
Visit us with Thy salvation,
Enter every trembling heart.

Breathe, O breathe, Thy loving spirit
Into every troubled breast,
Let us all in Thee inherit,
Let us find that second rest.
Take away our bent to sinning,
Alpha and Omega be,
End of faith as its beginning,
Set our hearts at liberty.

Come, Almighty to deliver,
Let us all Thy grace receive,
Suddenly return, and never,
Nevermore Thy temples leave;
Thee we would be always praising,
Serve Thee as Thy hosts above,
Pray and praise Thee without ceasing,
Glory in Thy perfect love.

CHARLES WESLEY.

XXXIII.

THE DANGERS OF TEMPTATION.

WE must remember, however, that when one becomes a true Christian and a child of God, he does not thereby cease to be a human being, nor does he go immediately out of this world; but remains for some time subject to its conditions, as a member of society with personal duties.¹

His moral nature has been renewed, and he has been "strengthened with might in the inner man," so that in a manner, "all things have become new;" yet he must "walk worthily before them that are without," he must keep himself as "a vessel unto honor," and "do all things to the glory of God."²

Yet, if some of the angels in heaven were once tempted and "kept not their first estate," so must the Christian beware of the assaults of Satan, who "goeth about as a roaring lion," seeking whom he may devour and destroy. It was the Lord's injunction to his own chosen ones, "Watch and pray, lest ye enter into temptation;" and this is still the duty of every Christian.³

There are pitfalls on every side for the unwary, deceit for the ignorant, discouragement for the inexperienced, and perils for those of weak courage; so that generally speaking, it takes a right manly man to be a true man of God, and one must be on his guard in constant prayer and watchfulness to escape being cast down by sudden temptation.⁴

Like a strong but tender Father, who loves his child and does not charge him with every little mis-

take, because he knows his heart is right, so the Lord does not hold us sharply for every slip; "for he knoweth our frame, that we are dust;" yet every yielding to sin is dangerous.⁵

We must be positive, decided, and steady in character, holding fast to the truth, making no compromise with wrong, avoiding every appearance of evil, always doing good as we have opportunity, and zealous for the honor of the Lord, if we would stand in the evil day, and come off the field victorious.⁶

If some mistake has been made, some error committed, some weakness in us revealed, we can come like a child to its Father, and ask not only forgiveness, but strength to resist for the future; and God will surely answer our prayers, if sincere, and if uttered in a spirit of earnest desire for strength.⁷

But wilful sin and a selfish desire to please God while holding on to our wrong doing, whatever may be its nature, cannot long endure; for we may be sure our sin will find us out. Then, either there must be quick and earnest repentance, or our hearts will be swallowed up by the elements of the world to see the glory of God no more.⁸

"Occasions of adversity best discover how great virtue or strength each one hath. For occasions do not make a man frail but show what he is."

THOMAS A KEMPIS.

"Every moment of resistance to temptation is a victory."

FABER.

"Temptations are like a file. They rub off much of our self-confidence."

FENELON.

“To pray against temptations, and yet rush into occasions of them, is to thrust your fingers into the fire, and then pray that they might not be burnt.”

SECKER.

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² Titus 3:5. Ephes. 3:14-19, 4:1. 1 Cor. 10:31. Col. 4:5-6. 2 Tim. 2:19-21.

³ 2 Peter 2:4. Jude 6. 1 Peter 5:8-9. Luke 22:40, 46. Ephes. 6:10-18.

⁴ Matt. 24:4-5, 11-12, 24. Luke 21:25-26, 34-36. 1 Cor. 16:13. 2 Cor. 11:13-15. 1 Tim. 4:1-4, 6:9-12. 2 Tim. 2:1, 3, 16, 17, 3:1-5, 13, 14. Jas. 1:12. 1 Peter 1:3-9.

⁵ Ps. 79:38-39. 103:8-18. Luke 23:34. Rom. 2:4, 5:10. 2 Peter 3:9. 1 John 5:16-17.

⁶ Luke 9:57-62, 14:25-35. 1 Cor. 10:12-13, 15:58. 2 Thess. 3:6-7, 14-15. Gal. 6:9-10.

⁷ Matt. 23:12. Luke 18:9-14. John 13:8-10. Jas. 4:10, 5:14-15. 1 John 1:9.

⁸ Luke 16:13. Acts 8:18-24. Heb. 12:14-17. Jas. 1:8, 13-15. 2 Pet. 2:20-21.

QUESTIONS.

Where must one live after becoming a child of God?

What are a Christian's duties with respect to the world?

Is it needful to make an effort after conversion?

What are some things a Christian must try to do?

What great example have we of the power of temptation?

What is said of the character of Satan, the enemy?

What was the Lord's injunction to his apostles?

Mention some common kinds of temptation.

What kind of a man, then, must a Christian be?

Does God enter into sharp judgment with his children?

Is every yielding to temptation really dangerous?

What attitude must we then take toward all sin?

Is it possible to overcome every sort of temptation?

If we have made a mistake, what must we do?

What is the promise of forgiveness for such sins?

What is the speedy result of self deception, or indulgence in a deliberate life of sin?

PRAYER.

Help me, O Lord, to watch and pray daily and hourly, lest I enter into temptation unawares and be taken in the snare of the enemy. Make me strong and true, brave and consistent, in all my conduct, that others may see that I am indeed a true child of God; and in every hour of trial, grant me some way to escape or overcome the evil, through Christ, my Redeemer, that I bring no reproach upon his name. Amen.

HYMN. (TUNE, ARLINGTON.)

“AM I a soldier of the cross
A follower of the Lamb,
And shall I fear to own His cause,
Or blush to speak His name?

Must I be carried to the skies
On flowery beds of ease,
Whilst others fought to win the prize
And sailed through bloody seas?

Are there no foes for me to face?
Must I not stem the flood?
Is this vile world a friend to grace
To help me on to God?

Sure I must fight if I would reign;
Increase my courage, Lord;
I'll bear the toil, endure the pain,
Supported by Thy word.

Thy saints in all this glorious war
Shall conquer, though they die;
They see the triumph from afar;
By faith they bring it nigh.”

ISAAC WATTS.

XXXIV.

THE LIFE OF CHRISTIAN SERVICE.

BESIDES prayer and watchfulness, probably there is no better defense against all kinds of temptation than a life of earnest service to Christ, and of following as best we can the example of Him who went about while here on earth, doing all possible good both to the bodies and the souls of our fellow-men, thus promoting the interests of the kingdom of God.¹

The Lord has various ways of working in this world. Many things are done by him directly in the course of his providence. Other things are done or have been done through the Son of God and the Holy Spirit. But it seems to be a part of God's all-wise purpose that many things should be done by us as his personal agents and children. Surely this is a very great and high privilege for us. Angels are represented in the Scriptures as being often sent forth on errands of love and mercy to fulfill God's gracious pleasure. But this is the same kind of work that is set for us to do, in making the world better and brighter where we pass, and bringing in the spirit of Christ among men.²

Many of the greatest, sweetest, and most wonderful lives ever known to the world have been spent in this way of service to Christ and humanity, whether as prophets, apostles, missionaries, reformers, or as workers in other and less conspicuous places among men. No one is excused because his lot is a humble

one, or because he has only a single talent to be given to the Lord. What the Master thinks of such service was shown more than once in his ministry; as when he commended the poor widow who had cast her two mites into the Lord's treasury, or when he declared that whosoever should give so much as a cup of cold water in His name should be rewarded.³

Every age, and especially our own, abounds in opportunities for engaging in this service of Christ, who is calling still for laborers to enter the fields that are "white unto harvest." There is no place in city or country, at home or abroad, where there are not calls for service; and always both the sower and the reaper shall have their wages.⁴

Christian work is not always easy, and often it is very hard, indeed; but then, the difficult places are usually where there is the greatest need of all, and where the spirit of Christ is most a stranger. Whoever can and will enter these needy places, and do the Lord's work, is as truly a hero as any soldier on the field of battle; and this is a holy warfare for the honor and success of the kingdom of God.⁵

Every sad heart cheered, every weak one strengthened, every weary one helped along in life's dusty highway, every soul rescued from the power of evil, shall be like so many jewels in our crown, by and by. For, said the Master, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these, ye have done it unto me."⁶

"Do all the good you can, in all the ways you can, to all the souls you can, in every place you can, at all the times you can, as long as ever you can."

JOHN WESLEY,

"A kind heart is a fountain of gladness, making everything in its vicinity freshen into smiles."

IRVING.

"I expect to pass through life but once.—If, therefore, there be any kindness I can show, or any good thing I can do to any fellow-being, let me do it now, and not defer or neglect it, as I shall not pass this way again."

WM. PENN.

"I had rather never receive a kindness than never bestow one."

SENECA.

"Sow good services; sweet remembrances shall grow from them."

MME. DE STAEL.

"Kind hearts are more than coronets,
And simple faith than Norman blood."

ALFRED TENNYSON.

"With malice toward none and charity for all, let us go forward and do the right as God gives us to see the right."

A. LINCOLN.

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² Luke 10:1-9, 22:43. Ps. 103:20-21. 2 Cor. 8:7, 9, 12, 9:6-15. Phil. 2:12-16. 1 Thess. 3:12. 1 Tim. 6:17-19. Heb. 1:7, 14, 13:15-16. 1 Peter 4:9-10.

³ Matt. 10:40-42. Luke 7:38, 21:1-4. Phil. 4:3, 2:17. Heb. 11:24-26, 12:2.

⁴ Matt. 9:36-38. John 4:35-36. 1 Cor. 3:8-9, 12-14. Gal. 6:9-10.

⁵ Matt. 10:16, 34-36. Luke 12:4-5, 49-53. 1 Cor. 4:9-13. 2 Cor. 4:8-12, 23-28.

⁶ Matt. 25:40, 45. Acts 3:6. Rom. 15:1-3, 14:20-21. 1 Cor. 9:19-22. Gal. 6:1-2. Jas. 5:19-20.

QUESTIONS.

What is one of the best defenses against temptation?

Whose example should we follow in this service?

What two classes of benefits may we confer upon others?

What general interests are always thereby promoted?

Mention three ways by which God works among men.

What other agency does He very frequently employ?

What appears to be the employment of angels?

How, then, may we share the privileges of angels?

What have been among the greatest lives in history?

Why are we not excused on account of a humble lot?

What is said of the man with but a single talent?

State two instances where a small service was commended by Christ as worthy of mention or deserving a reward.

Are there many opportunities to work for Christ?

In what places are these calls Christian service?

Is such service usually easy or difficult? What is said of the heroic spirit of some Christian workers?

What kind of deeds will add to our joy by and by?

Repeat the promise of Christ to those who have rendered some service to their needy fellowmen.

PRAYER.

O Lord, I thank thee for the great privilege of doing some good in the world, and being of some use to thy kingdom. Make me to be diligent and faithful in every duty and opportunity, that I may have cause to rejoice in the day of Christ, when He comes to reckon with his servants. I ask it all in His blessed name. Amen.

HYMN. (TUNE, ILLINOIS.)

Go, labor on; spend and be spent,
Thy joy to do the Father's will;
It is the way the Master went;
Should not the servant tread it still?

Go, labor on; 'tis not for naught;
Thine earthly loss is heavenly gain;
Men heed thee, love thee, praise thee not;
The Master praises,—what are men?

Go, labor on; your hands are weak;
Your knees are faint, your soul cast down;
Yet falter not; the prize you seek
Is near,—a kingdom and a crown!

H. BONAR.

XXXV.

THE CHRISTIAN VIRTUES.

THERE are certain noble qualities, or traits of personal character, which come out sooner or later in every truly strong and consistent Christian life; and which are the ornaments and attractions of such a life in the sight of God, and man, and the holy angels.¹

These we may call the Christian Virtues, because they are the manifestation of a sincere Christian spirit; and at least seven of these are noted by the apostle Peter, namely: diligence, virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness. He also mentions faith and charity; but these will go into the next lesson. It will be well for us to lay up this list in memory, and consider from time to time in which of them we may most lack.²

The first is *diligence*; or activity, punctuality, and faithfulness in performing all the ordinary duties of a Christian; such as daily prayer, reading the Scriptures, doing all possible good, and attending on the customary means of grace with God's people; also seeking out our best opportunities for improvement and usefulness.³

The second is *virtue* itself; or as here presented, a genuine manly or womanly spirit of moral courage and firmness in our profession at all times and in all places, regardless of bad example or temptation; and glorying in loyalty to Jesus Christ, our Saviour.⁴

The third is *knowledge*; or a personal understanding and sound judgment of the teachings of the Holy Scriptures; and of all matters connected with the practice of religion, and of our proper deportment toward our fellowmen.⁵

The fourth is *temperance*; which means not only a care to avoid things hurtful in eating and drinking, but a wise and steady self-control over all our appetites and passions; that we be not led into trouble and evil habits thereby. It may also include moderation in our words and opinions.⁶

The fifth is *patience*; or a spirit of constancy and endurance under the trials that come to us; either in the things that are incident to the common lot of human life, such as injustice, sickness, disappointment, and sorrow; or in those things, such as temptation, or personal sacrifice, and duty, which belong to our Christian profession.⁷

The sixth is *godliness*; which means the cultivation of true devotion to God in the heart, the consecration of all our powers to him, and abstention from undue levity, or unseemly conversation, or other conduct that would tend to bring reproach upon our holy religion.⁸

The seventh is *brotherly kindness*; which certainly needs no definition; for it is of the very spirit of Christ, in all gentleness and humility, in all sympathy and mercy, in opening our hearts, our hands, and even our homes to comfort or encourage any who are trying to please God, or to do what we can for any who need assistance.⁹

To the above we may yet add another general trait of the true Christian which is commended to us by the apostle Paul in his epistle to the Philippians. It may be called *highmindedness*, or the spirit of honesty and justice, of purity and loveliness, of

honor and loyalty to all that is true and beautiful and good in the sight of God and man.¹⁰

“To be innocent is not to be guilty; but to be virtuous is to overcome our evil feelings and intentions.”

WM. PENN.

“I am no herald to inquire of men’s pedigrees; it sufficeth me if I know their virtues.”

SIR PHILIP SIDNEY.

“Every virtue gives a man a degree of felicity in some kind.”

WALSINGHAM.

“The virtues, like the Muses, are always seen in groups.”

JANE PORTER.

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³ Rom. 13: 11-12. 1 Cor. 15: 34. 1 Thess. 5: 5-11. Rev. 3: 15-16. 2 Peter 3: 14.

⁴ Matt. 10: 26, 28-31. Luke 12: 4-8, 32-40. Acts 4: 13, 19-20. 1 Cor. 15: 58.

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⁶ Luke 16: 19. Rom. 13: 13-14. Gal. 5: 16-24. Phil. 3: 19, 4: 5. 1 Peter 2: 11, 4: 2-4.

⁷ Luke 21: 16-19. Rom. 5: 3-4, 15: 4-5. Col. 1: 11. Heb. 10: 35-36. Jas. 1: 2-4, 5: 7-8.

⁸ Matt. 22: 36-37. Ephes. 2: 1-7, 4: 25-32, 5: 1-21. Col. 3: 15-17. 1 Tim. 4: 8, 12-16, 6: 6, 11-16.

⁹ Luke 10: 29-37. Rom. 12: 10. Ephes. 4: 31-32. Col. 3: 12-13. 1 Jno. 3: 14-17.

¹⁰ Phil. 4: 8-9. Rom. 8: 12-21. Psal. 29: 1-2, 90: 16-17, 96: 6-9.

QUESTIONS.

- Are there any special traits of Christian character?
 Do these add to the attraction of a Christian life?
 How many and what traits are named by St. Peter?
 Why are these called the Christian Virtues?
 State some of the things included in Diligence,
 Mention some qualities implied in Virtue itself.
 Tell what is understood by Christian Knowledge.
 Give a definition of Christian Temperance.
 Under what conditions do we require Patience?
 What positive and negative traits in true Godliness?
 What are some manifestations of brotherly kindness?
 Repeat the passage quoted from the epistle to the Philip-
 pians.
 What is this general trait here called by the one general
 name of High-mindedness?
 How does it compare with the other standards of honor
 that are recognized in this world?

PRAYER.

Lord, keep me from living a poor, selfish, barren
 life, like the unfruitful tree or vine. But make me
 to delight and abound in all the qualities of a true
 Christian, doing my duty toward Thee, to myself, and
 my fellow-men, in a spirit of love and honor. So
 may my life be a blessing to others, and receive
 a daily blessing from Thee, for Jesus' sake. Amen.

HYMN. (TUNE, SOMETHING FOR THEE.)

SAVIOUR, Thy dying love, Thou gavest me,
 Nor should I ought withhold, Dear Lord, from
 Thee.
 In love my soul would bow, My heart fulfill its vow,
 Some offering bring Thee now, Something for
 Thee.
 At the blest mercy seat, Pleading for me,
 My feeble faith looks up, Jesus, to Thee;
 Help me the cross to bear, Thy wondrous love de-
 clare,
 Some song to raise or prayer, Something for
 Thee.

Give me a faithful heart, likeness to Thee,
That each departing day, Henceforth may see,
Some work of love begun, Some deed of kindness
done,
Some wanderer sought and won, Something for
Thee.

All that I am and have, Thy gifts so free,
In joy, in grief, through life, Dear Lord, for
Thee;
And when Thy face I see, My ransomed soul shall
be,
Through all eternity, Something for Thee.”
S. D. PHELPS.

XXXVI.

THE CHRISTIAN GRACES.

THERE are still other elements of the Christian life which are higher, deeper, and broader than those we have last discussed; but which form the very soil, the nourishment, and the spiritual life principles in and by which the virtues are planted and developed; while they are yet also the very atmosphere of our holy religion because they are felt wherever a Christian life exists.¹

The three Christian Graces, often so-called, are *Faith*, *Hope* and *Charity*, which are beautifully described in several portions of the New Testament as being the common inheritance of all true Christians.²

Faith is belief, confidence, trust in a person, or in a promise, or in a statement of facts or principles. We are often urged in the Scriptures to have faith in God; that is, in his wisdom, his righteousness, his providence, his Word, and his Holy Spirit. Again we are taught to have faith in Christ as the Son of God in his gospel of the Kingdom of God among men, and in his promises of grace and salvation unto all who come to God by him. This faith is a realizing sense of the truth and power of the religion which is given to us in the Gospel; and it is also a duty because it comes to us in proportion as we attend to the truths and privilege which it presents. The soul which is seeking after God and his spiritual favor, which is truly hungering and thirsting after the virtues of the Christian life and personal salvation from all sin, will usually find the matter of faith vastly easier to grasp than one who is wholly given

over to secular pursuits, or perhaps to things directly opposed to the spirit of the Gospel.³

Hope is an aspiration, a prospect, an expectation of the soul concerning something that is desirable and good; but more especially, and in the highest sense, the looking for a final and lasting state of spiritual comfort and safety, beyond the reach of sin and shame, trial and sorrow, forevermore. This hope is held out to us in the Christian religion with a definiteness and a reasonableness found nowhere else in the wide world, and it is an anchor to the soul who has thus committed his future to the hands of the Lord. It makes him strong in adversity, steadfast in good purposes, patient in temptation, and joyful under afflictions, and helps him to develop a strong Christian character. Besides, the fact of hope buoys up the soul in age and weakness, when all things earthly are passing away, because we look for "an house from heaven not made with hands," and for a city which hath eternal foundations.⁴

But *Charity* is the flower and crown of the Christian Graces, the ripest and richest fruit of the Christian life. More than faith and hope, it is something to be seen, and felt, and enjoyed by the possessor, and by those who come into personal relations with him; for it yields fragrance and delight wherever it goes. True charity, however, is the mark of a soul made great by the grace of God, often through much trial; for that spirit, strong and loving, innocent and patient, humble and yet victorious, which compels even one's enemies to be at peace with him and to admire him, is of the highest culture and the rarest refinement. Yet it is sometimes possessed by obscure Christian people who are unaware of any greatness in themselves, content to serve God wherever it may please Him to give them a place,—choice souls of

whom this world is not worthy, and whom it does not understand.⁵

“The Christian graces are like perfumes, the more they are present, the sweeter they smell; like stars which shine brightest in the dark; like trees, which, the more they are shaken, the deeper root they take, and the more fruit they bear.”

BEAUMONT.

“Grace is but glory begun, and glory is but grace perfected.”

JONATHAN EDWARDS.

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² 1 Cor. 13:1-13. Phil. 2:1-3, 12-16. 1 Thess. 1:2-4, Col. 1:4-5.

³ Matt. 9:29. Mark 11:22. Luke 17:6. Acts 3:16, 15:9. Rom. 1:17, 5:1. 1 Cor. 16:13. 2 Cor. 5:7. Gal. 2:16, 20. Eph. 1:15-19, 3:17. Col. 2:5, 7. Heb. 10:22, 38, 11:1-40. Jas. 1:5-6. 1 Peter 1:5, 7, 9. 1 John 5:4.

⁴ Ps. 39:7, 71:5, 146:5. John 14:1-3, 18-19. Acts 26:6-7. Rom. 5:2-5, 8:24-25, 15:13. Ephes. 1:18, 2:12-13. Phil. 1:20. Col. 1:5, 23, 27. Titus 1:2, 2:13, 3:7. Heb. 3:6, 6:10-11, 18-20. 1 Peter 1:3-4, 21, 3:15. 1 John 3:1-3.

⁵ Matt. 5:43-48. Luke 9:51-56, 23:34. John 13:34. Acts 3:17-18. Rom. 14:14-15, 19-21. 1 Cor. 8:1, 13:1-13, 16:14. Col. 3:14. 2 Thess. 1:3. 1 Peter 4:8. 2 Pet. 1:7. Ephes. 4:32. 1 Jno. 3:10-14.

QUESTIONS.

What is here said concerning other elements of a Christian life besides the virtues last mentioned?

How are these related to the Christian virtues?

Why do we also call them the atmosphere of religion?

Where are the Christian Graces described?

What is Faith in a general sense?

What is meant by having faith in God?

What is meant by having faith in Christ?
 What, then, is the place of faith in our religion?
 What things tend to make faith easy or difficult?
 What is Hope in a general way?
 What is the great object of a religious hope?
 How does the Christian hope compare with other hopes?
 What is its effect upon him who possesses it?
 What place does Charity hold in the Christian life?
 In what ways is it even more than faith and hope?
 What does true charity indicate in its possessor?
 What is its influence upon those around us?
 In what sort of people is it often found?

PRAYER.

O God, my heavenly Father, assist me day by day
 that I may grow in the knowledge and grace of
 Jesus Christ, my Saviour, and come up to the full
 stature of a Christian man. Fill my heart with thy
 spirit, my mind with thy truth, my lips and my
 hands with thy service. So may I be made to abound
 in faith, hope, and Christian charity, for Jesus' sake.
 Amen.

HYMN. (TUNE, BELLEVILLE.)

LORD, Thou hast promised grace for grace
 To all who daily seek Thy face;
 To them who have, Thou givest more
 Out of Thy vast, exhaustless store.

Each step we take but gathers strength
 For further progress, till at length
 With ease, the highest steps we gain
 And count the mountain but a plain.

Who watch and pray, and work each hour
 Receive new life and added power,
 A power fresh victories to win,
 Over the world, and self, and sin.

Help us, O Lord, that we may grow
 In grace, as Thou dost grace bestow;
 And still Thy richest gifts repeat
 Till grace in glory is complete.

SAMUEL K. COX.

XXXVII.

THE VALUE OF DISCIPLINE.

THE full measure of Christian grace and character is not to be reached by any one in a day or a year; but is usually the outgrowth of much experience and earnest devotion to the work of God. Thus the soul is gradually perfected in the knowledge and love of God through the Gospel of Christ, and this is supplemented by the aid of the Holy Spirit.¹

For whether one be a farmer, or a craftsman, or a soldier, or a sailor, or a merchant, or a physician, or a teacher, or a ruler of men, he must engage in the exercise of his calling in order to master it. So, too, the Christian must exercise himself in religion in order to acquire real power, wisdom, and sympathy in things pertaining to the spiritual side of life.²

Thus he will presently come to stand for something in the cause of God, and to be of some real worth in the cause of God, and to be of some real worth to the Kingdom of Heaven. Yet these positive elements of character are gained no less by a steady perseverance and patient endurance than by the outward successes that we accomplish; for even these do not always mark the highest attainments in strength of personal character.³

As iron is wrought into useful forms upon the forge with many blows, and as gold is refined by passing through the fire, so it must be with God's children, and so it has been with the noblest men and women of all the ages. Even Moses, the mighty lawgiver of Israel, was sorely discouraged at times.

So was Elijah, when he fled from Ahab and Jezebel to Mt. Horeb; and so was Jeremiah among his people at the fall of Jerusalem.⁴

The life of the apostle Paul was no less wonderful for the great fight of afflictions that he endured than for his great successes in preaching the Gospel; and like nearly all the rest of the apostles, he sealed his testimony at the last with a martyr's death. Thus it is also written of Christ himself, that "the Captain of our Salvation" was "made perfect through sufferings;" and that having been "tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin, he is able to succor them that are tempted."⁵

Such experiences as these are doubtless hard to be borne, and they are often the occasions of sore perplexity to true Christians; yet they have their use in revealing to us the hidden strength of the Spirit, in weaning our hearts away from the perishing things of this world, and in thus preparing us to better appreciate and enjoy a home in heaven.⁶

It would appear from the Scriptures that there is special honor in the world to come for such as have been thus perfected in grace while on earth, and have glorified the Lord by their constancy, showing that He saves even unto the uttermost.⁷

"God had one Son on earth without sin; but never one without suffering."

ST. AUGUSTINE.

"Blessed be the discipline which makes me reach out to a closer union with Jesus! Blessed be the dews of the Spirit which keep my leaf ever green! Blessed be the trials which shake down the ripe golden fruits from the branches!

CUYLER.

"Many secrets of religion are not perceived till they be felt, and are not felt but in the day of a great calamity."

JEREMY TAYLOR.

"With the wind of tribulation, God separates the wheat from the chaff in the threshing-floor of the soul."

MOLINOS.

"Extraordinary afflictions are not always the punishment of extraordinary sins; but sometimes the trial of extraordinary graces."

MATTHEW HENRY.

"There is no Christian but has his Gethsemane; but every praying Christian will find there is no Gethsemane without an angel."

BINNEY.

"A stern discipline pervades all nature; which is a little cruel that it may be very kind."

SPENSER.

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² Matt. 10:38-39, 16:24-27. Phil. 2:12-13. 1 Tim. 4:7-8, 11-16. Heb. 5:12-14.

³ Matt. 5:10-12. Acts 5:41, 14:21-22. 2 Tim. 2:3, 11-12. 1 Peter 1:6-7, 4:12-19.

⁴ Num. 11:10-15. 1 Kings 19:1-4. Ps. 73:1-18. Lam. 1:12. Jonah 4:3, 8.

⁵ Luke 22:39-44, 24:46. John 12:23-33. 2 Cor. 4:7-11, 11:18-28. Heb. 2:9-10, 17-18, 5:7-8. 1 Peter 2:21-23.

⁶ 1 Cor. 4:9-14, 7:29-31. 2 Cor. 6:1-10. Heb. 10:32-34, 11:32-40, 12:1-11. Jas. 1:12. 1 Peter 4:16-19.

⁷ Matt. 19:27-30. Luke 22:28-30. 2 Cor. 4:17-18. Rev. 7:13-17.

QUESTIONS.

- Is the full measure of grace to be reached at once?
 By what agencies is this state to be attained?
 What must the Christian himself do to this end, and why?
 What effect will these efforts have on him personally?
 What other experiences tend to a positive Christian character?
 Mention some symbols of this sort of training.
 Mention some Bible examples of the same kind.
 What are some things said about Christ's suffering?
 Why are such experiences so very hard to endure?
 However, what are some of their uses to us?
 What appears to be an especial outcome of such trials for those who have met and borne them successfully?

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PRAYER.

Help me, O Lord, to be faithful under temptation, submissive in affliction, steady and true in all the trials of a Christian life, that I may show myself to be thy child, and that I may also know the way of blessing and the vision of glory. Keep me in every hour of conflict from falling away from thee, for Jesus' sake. Amen.

HYMN. (TUNE, CUTLER.)

THE Son of God goes forth to war,
 A kingly crown to gain;
 His blood-red banner streams afar;
 Who follows in His train?
 Who best can drink his cup of woe,
 Triumphant over pain,
 Who patient bears his cross below,
 He follows in His train.

The martyr first, whose eagle eye
 Could pierce beyond the grave,
 Who saw his Master in the sky,
 And called on Him to save;

Like Him, with pardon on His tongue,
In midst of mortal pain,
He prayed for them that did the wrong,
Who follows in His train?

A glorious band, the chosen few
On whom the Spirit came,
Twelve valiant saints, their hope they knew,
And mocked the cross and flame;
They climbed the steep ascent of heaven
Through peril, toil and pain.
O God, to us may grace be given
To follow in their train!

R. HEBER.

XXXVIII.

THE FELLOWSHIP OF BELIEVERS.

IN order to serve the Lord more efficiently, to sustain and encourage each other in the Christian life, and to labor together for the salvation of souls and the extension of Christ's kingdom among men, we need the union or fellowship of all true believers as established by Jesus Christ in his Church.¹

The *basis* of the Church is one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in the hearts of all true believers, who bear witness to the fact by their Christian profession, and also by the godly character of their daily lives.²

The *work* of the Church is to instruct the people in the principles and practice of the Gospel, to testify to a living faith in Jesus Christ as the Son of God and the Saviour of men, to show forth and cherish the spirit of fellowship among Christians, to train up the children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, and to seek for the conversion of sinners.³

The *institutions* of the Church are the Christian Ministry, the Christian Sabbath, the Christian Family, and the Christian Sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper. The administration of these sacraments, the taking of the marriage vows, the solemn rites for the burial of the dead, and the conducting of public worship, are all usually in charge of the Ministry; that is, of men called and set apart for that purpose.⁴

As it is the duty of all men to seek the grace of God in the forgiveness of their sins and the renewing of their hearts through our Lord Jesus Christ; so it is also the duty of every true believer in Christ to unite with some branch of his visible Church; in order, to confess publicly his faith in Christ as a Saviour, to share the sympathies and privileges of God's children, and to bear his portion of their responsibilities for the maintenance and extension of Christ's kingdom on earth.⁵

Moreover, every duly constituted Church is invested with a measure of authority over its own members, to receive those who are truly seeking after the grace of God, to conduct its own services and manage its own affairs decently and in order, and also to exclude those who become persistently neglectful, unworthy, and subversive of good order.⁶

As the Apostolic Church was spread abroad without absolute unity of rule and visible organization, so we believe that such visible unity is not absolutely required at the present day in order to our salvation. Yet we desire to cherish "the unity of the Spirit in the bonds of peace," and we hope to see a day when all branches of the Church, still holding to the plain teachings of the Gospel, shall be more closely united in the name and work of our common Lord, even as most of us are already united to Him by a historic succession of the hands of the elders.⁷

"Christ alone is the Head of the Church, by his truth to instruct it; by his authority to govern it; by his grace to quicken it; by his providence to protect and guide it; by his Holy Spirit to bless and sanctify it."

UNKNOWN.

"The Church is the great uplifting and conserving agency in the world, without which the race of men would soon relapse into barbarism, and press its way to perdition."

SAMPLE.

"The Church of Christ glories in her history, in her brotherhood, in her conquering march over the world, as being the custodian of great ideas, as having furnished a complete account of the moral economy,—explaining sin, interpreting conscience, manifesting God, and paving the way for man's return to the Almighty."

F. L. PATTON.

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² Matt. 16:16-18. Acts 4:11-12. 1 Cor. 3:9-11. Ephes. 2:19-22, 4:1-6. 1 Peter 2:4-10.

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⁴ Acts 1:17, 24-26, 6:2-5. 1 Cor. 12:27-28. Ephes. 4:11-12. Acts 20:7. 1 Cor. 16:2. Ephes 5:22-23, 6:1-4. 1 Peter 3:1-7. Matt. 28:19. Luke 22:15-20. Acts 2:41-42, 8:12, 9:18, 10:47-48. 1 Cor. 10:14-17, 21, 11:20-29. Acts 13:1-3, 14:23. 1 Tim. 4:6, 5:17-19.

⁵ Matt. 10:32, 11:30, 12:29-30. Luke 11:23, 12:8. Mark 8:38. John 5:23-24. 1 Cor. 12:12-26. Gal. 6:2-6.

⁶ Matt. 16:19, 18:15-20. John 20:20-23. Acts 8:18-24. Rom. 16:17. 1 Cor. 5:6-13. 1 Thess. 5:12-13. 2 Thess. 3:14, 15. Heb. 13:7, 17. 1 Peter 5:1-5.

⁷ Luke 9:49-50. Acts 18:24-28, 19:1-7. 1 Cor. 1:9-13, 3:1-9. Gal. 1:15-24, 2:1-13. Ephes. 4:1-3. Rev. 2:1-3. 1 Tim. 4:14, 5:22. Acts 6:6, 13:3. 2 Tim. 1:6-14.

QUESTIONS.

Why do we need the fellowship of all true believers?

State the general basis of union in doctrine.

What are the two marks of this faith in true Christians?

State five objects of the work of the Church.

Name five institutions of the Christian Church?

What matters are usually in charge of the Ministry?

Give two reasons why all men should seek the grace of God.

Give three reasons why every one should unite with the Church.

In what respects is each true Church clothed with authority?

Is absolute unity of visible organizations essential? Why not?

How is a spiritual unity still possible and desirable?

PRAYER.

O God, I thank Thee for the Institution of Thy Church, with all its precious associations, its sacred teachings, its spiritual power, its holy ordinances, and its privileges of fellowship with Thy children, with Thy Son, and with Thyself. May I ever be ready to confess Christ before men, to take up my own duties in a manly spirit, and thus to seek the peace, the sanctity, and the rule of Thy kingdom among men, for Jesus' sake. Amen.

HYMN. (TUNE, ST. THOMAS.)

I LOVE Thy kingdom, Lord,
The house of Thine abode,
The Church our blest Redeemer saved
With His own precious blood.

I love Thy Church, O God!
Her walls before Thee stand,
Dear as the apple of thine eye,
And graven on Thy hand.

For her my tears shall fall;
For her my prayers ascend;
To her my cares and toils be given;
Till toils and cares shall end.

Beyond my highest joy
I prize her heavenly ways,
Her sweet communion, solemn vows,
Her hymns of love and praise.

Sure as Thy truth shall last
To Zion shall be given
The brightest glories earth can yield,
And brighter bliss of heaven.
TIMOTHY DWIGHT.

XXXIX.

THE THINGS TO COME.

HUMAN life on this earth is brief and uncertain, for it is as "a vapor which appeareth for a little while, and then vanisheth away." The Scriptures treat this fact sometimes with simple pathos, and sometimes with an air of serene majesty, based on the fact that God still rules above, and that He will surely care for his own, both in this life and in the world to come.¹

Jesus Christ and the apostles speak of death as a mere passing of the soul out of one world into another; and the importance of this transition is chiefly because it precedes the judgment of God which fixes our moral and spiritual state forever. To the child of God, therefore, death is but entering into a larger and more blessed life with Christ; but to the unsaved it is the end of hope and joy.²

The parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus is instructive here, but it leaves many questions still unanswered. We learn, however, that the final state of the righteous and that of the impenitent is seen, in part, immediately after the death of the body, and that beyond the grave there is no place for repentance.³ But the Gospel seems to declare that this world and human history are but running a course that will presently come to an end in God's own appointed time, after the Gospel shall have been preached unto all the nations of the earth, and all the divine plans and prophecies have been fulfilled.⁴

It is usually understood that the Millenium, or age of righteousness and peace, will precede the end; but what that shall be is not fully known, either as to its extent or its precise moral nature. Then will be the second coming of Christ, the Lord, to this world, accompanied by the angels of God and all the glory of his Father's kingdom, to call the dead to life, and to judge the world according to the deeds done in the body, whether they be good or bad, and to gather his elect from the four quarters of heaven.⁵

Here again, we are in great ignorance as to the way and manner in which these things shall come to pass; but we are assured that the event will be awful and mysterious, and that it will mark the end of earthly time; after which the good will be received into the kingdom prepared for them by the Father, while the evil and reprobate will be cast away from him forever.⁶

That the present world should come to an end is not only not impossible, but it is in harmony with all that we see and know of created things; neither is it strange that earthly time should come to a close in a manner befitting the dignity of human nature and the glorious majesty of God.

Beyond the judgment, we are told that the reprobate shall be cast into an abyss of fire, which is the second death; but the children of God shall dwell in the city of saints called the New Jerusalem, where Christ is, and the tree of eternal life, and the celestial river. Even if these expressions are to be taken as figurative, that does not materially affect the outcome of eternal life in a future state of blessedness or woe.⁷

"It is impossible that anything so natural, so necessary, and so universal, as death, should ever have been designed by Providence as an evil to mankind."

SWIFT.

"If thou expect death as a friend, prepare to entertain him; if as an enemy, prepare to overcome him. Death has no advantage, except when he comes as a stranger."

QUARLES.

"Let the end come when it will, it can do the Christian no harm, for it will be a passage out of a prison into a palace; out of a sea of troubles into a haven of rest; out of a crowd of enemies, to an innumerable company of angels; out of shame, reproach and contempt, into exceeding great and eternal glory.

BUNYAN. (*Adapted.*)

"If God hath made this world so fair,
Where sin and death abound.
How beautiful beyond compare,
Will Paradise be found! "

MONTGOMERY.

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QUESTIONS.

To what is human life compared by James?

How do the Scriptures treat this great subject?

How do Jesus Christ and the apostles speak of death?

What then is the real importance of this change?

Where do we learn the conditions of souls just after death?

What will finally become of this world, and when?

What is meant by the Millenium?

What events will occur at Christ's second coming?

What do we know about the time and manner of this event?

Is it anything strange that the world should come to an end?

Is it to be expected that this end will be majestic? Why?

What will become of the reprobate after the judgment?

Where will the redeemed of Christ then dwell?

PRAYER.

O Lord, make me to know mine end, and the measure of my days, what it is; that I may know how frail I am. Yet help me to fill my heart and hands with happy service; because blessed is that servant, whom, when his Lord cometh, he shall find at the post of duty. In Thy presence is fulness of joy, and at Thy right there are pleasures forevermore. May I so live on earth that I may never come short of thy mercies; for Jesus' sake. Amen.

HYMN. (TUNE, DIES IRAE.)

DAY of wrath, O dreadful day!
When this world shall pass away,
And the heavens together roll,
Shriveling like a parched scroll,
Long foretold by saint and sage,
David's harp and sibyl's page.

Day of terror, day of doom,
When the Judge at last shall come!
Through the deep and silent gloom,
Shrouding every human tomb,
Shall the archangel's trumpet tone,
Summon all before the throne.

O just Judge, to whom belongs
Vengeance for all earthly wrongs,
Grant forgiveness, Lord, at last,
Ere the dread account be past!
Lo, my sighs, my guilt, my shame!
Spare me for Thine own great name.

Thou who bad'st the sinner cease
From her tears, and go in peace,
Thou who to the dying thief
Spakest pardon and relief.
Thou, O Lord, to me hast given,
E'en to me, the hope of heaven.

THOMAS OF CELANO. Tr. by ARTHUR P. STANLEY.

XL.

PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY.

OUT of the midst of this wonderful history, these lofty moral and spiritual truths, and these mysterious shadows of the future which come to us from the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament, there arises always one high clear note of invitation and warning from God. It is the note of our personal responsibility to him for the use or neglect of our present opportunities to become acquainted with his law and reconciled to His will through His Son Jesus Christ, the Word of the Gospel, the exercises of personal prayer, and the appointed means of grace.¹

However simple, or narrow, or strange the Way may seem, it is the Way that leads to eternal life; and those who seek it find a personal peace and blessedness therein that is above all words and all price, so that even their neighbors call it a blessed life; whereas all who go to the contrary way find nothing at last but darkness and ashes as their reward.²

The Holy Spirit of God is calling on all men everywhere, especially in these days of enlightenment, to forsake their evil ways, to trust in God and do the right, to believe in Jesus Christ, his Son, who hath brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel, and to confess Him before men that He may confess us before his Father. We are thus called not only to a theoretical faith; but to a holy life of prayer and righteousness, and to an experience of divine grace in our inmost soul.³

The question then before every human soul is, Will I hear the voice of the good Spirit? Will I accept the teachings of Jesus Christ as my rule of life? Will I obey the requirements of the Gospel for salvation? This is sometimes easy, and sometimes it seems hard; but the result is surely worth all possible cost, both for this present life and the world to come.⁴

Two great practical hindrances are commonly met with in this connection. One is the disposition to put off our definite religious consecration to God until a more convenient time, which never comes; but leaves us at the last betrayed by our own neglect. The other is a desire to compromise the matter by pleasing God in part and ourselves still more, or by serving Christ in part and the world still more; but against all such half-hearted resolutions we are earnestly warned in the Scriptures, "Ye cannot serve God and Mammon," was said by our Lord; and the apostle James says, "A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways."⁵

Therefore there is no other way remaining to the sincere and earnest soul than that of the fishermen by the sea of Galilee, who, when they heard the voice of the Master, "immediately forsook all and followed him." And later, when they asked him what they should have, he answered, "In the regeneration, when the Son of Man shall sit upon the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones judging the twelve Tribes of Israel."⁶

"If ever I reach heaven I expect to find three wonders there; first, to meet some I had not thought to see there; second, to miss some I had expected

to see there; and third, the greatest wonder of all, to find myself there."

JOHN NEWTON.

"One sweetly solemn thought, comes to me o'er and o'er,

I'm nearer to my home to-day, than I ever have been before:

Nearer my Father's house, where the many mansions be;

Nearer the great white throne, nearer the crystal sea;

Nearer the bound of life, where I lay my burden down;

Nearer leaving my cross; nearer wearing my crown?

PHOEBE CARY.

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QUESTIONS.

What is the leading and most practical theme in the entire range of teaching in the Scriptures?

What are some of the present means offered us for becoming acquainted with God and saved through Christ?

Is this way sometimes felt to be a narrow road?
 What are some of its precious compensations?
 What is the result of following the contrary way?
 What is the Holy Spirit calling on all men to do?
 What besides a formal faith is included in this call?
 What then is the practical question for each soul?
 How is the cost of this life to be estimated?
 What two hindrances are commonly met with?
 What do the Scriptures say of a divided mind?
 What great example of decision is in the Gospels?
 What was the promise of Christ to his disciples?

PRAYER.

O God, my heavenly Father, and the Father of my
 Saviour Jesus Christ, grant that I may not spend my
 years in vanity, nor delay the consecration that shall
 make me forever a true child of thine. May I come
 to the throne of everlasting grace to-day, leaving all
 sin and evil affection behind me, and may thy seal
 of pardon and love be set upon me by the Holy Spirit.
 So may I live for thee, through Christ my Redeemer,
 that I may also dwell with thee in heaven at last,
 for thy mercy's sake. Amen.

HYMN. (TUNE, ELLESDIE.)

JESUS, I my cross have taken
 All to leave and follow Thee;
 Destitute, despised, forsaken,
 Thou from hence my all shalt be;
 Perish every fond ambition,
 All I've sought, or hoped, or known,
 Yet how rich is my condition,
 God and heaven are still my own.

Let the world despise and leave me,
 They have left my Saviour too,
 Human hearts and looks deceive me,
 Thou art not, like them, untrue.

And while Thou shalt shine upon me,
God of wisdom, love and might,
Foes may hate and friends may shun me;
Show Thy face, and all is bright.

Men may trouble and distress me,
'Twill but drive me to Thy breast;
Life with trials hard may press me;
Heaven will bring me surer rest.
"Haste Thee on from grace to glory
Armed by faith and winged by prayer;
Heaven's eternal day's before thee,
God's own hand shall guide thee there."
HENRY F. LYTE.

THE HEAVENLY CITY.

HYMN. (TUNE, MATERNA.)

O MOTHER dear, Jerusalem!
When shall I come to thee?
When shall my sorrows have an end?
Thy joys when shall I see?
O happy harbor of God's saints!
O sweet and pleasant soil!
In thee no sorrow may be found,
No grief, no care, no toil.

Thy gardens and thy goodly walks
Continually are green;
Where grow such sweet and pleasant flowers
As nowhere else are seen;
Right through Thy streets with silver sound,
The living waters flow,
And on the banks on either side
The trees of life do grow.

Those trees forevermore bear fruit
And evermore do spring;
There evermore the angels are,
And evermore do sing,
O my sweet home, Jerusalem,
Thy joys when shall I see?
The King which sitteth on thy throne
In His felicity?

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