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By
W. W. Dawley, D. D.

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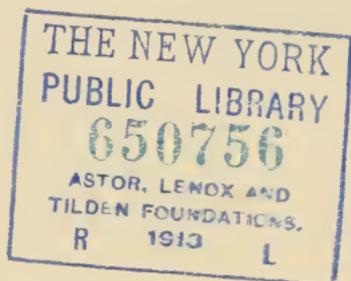
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PREFACE

IN preparing these twelve lessons on the most momentous themes ever contemplated by the mind of man the author has been confronted with the necessity of condensing into a few hundred words what in other works has filled hundreds of pages. Therefore, much has been left out that to some will seem most essential, and that would doubtless have made more clear the themes herein presented.

I have ever kept in mind in the presentation of this little volume that it is designed primarily for young people, who do not care to wade through musty volumes and hazy discussions of abstract doctrines, but who desire to have the thoughts given to them put in the clearest possible light and stated in the language of common life rather than that of the schools. Hence the absence of many theological terms and phrases. In the simplest way and in words easily understood I have sought to set forth the thoughts in "Truths that Abide."

I make no pretension to originality or newness in the thoughts and ideas herein offered. Wher-

Preface

ever I have found what appealed to me as truth applicable to my theme I have made use of it, and hereby proffer to the author my heartiest thanks for his assistance. With the consciousness of its incompleteness, but with the full assurance that the essence of precious truths is in it, I offer it to the young people for their consideration and study. That the little they shall find herein may stimulate a desire to know more, and incite them to a life in consonance with the truths that they here learn, is my sincere wish and devout prayer.

W. W. D.

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH, SYRACUSE, N. Y., July, 1911.

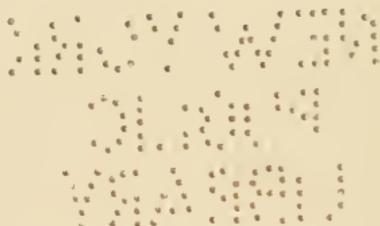


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TRUTHS THAT ABIDE

CHAPTER I

OUR FATHER (GOD)

How Known. Who is God? What is he like? Can we know him? Has he given mankind any means of getting acquainted with him? These are the anxious queries of human hearts, yearning to know more of the Creator of a universe. God has made himself knowable through his works, the things that he has put round about men in the world where they live. The first witness that attracted the attention of humankind was the nature about them with its starry skies, its myriad wonders, its mysterious forces, its matchless beauties, and its marvelous adaptableness to human needs. That was man's primer on God, his first lessons concerning his Creator. But a fuller revelation of the Lord is treasured up for seeking souls in the choicest and best of all literatures, the Bible, wherein God tells us more of his nature, his ways of working, his purposes and love than we have been able to discover in the volume of the skies, or the sea, or the earth. Then God has shown to the world the very image of himself and the shining of his glory in the person of Jesus Christ, who was "in the form of God," and in whom God speaks to men.

A final and satisfactory knowledge of God comes to mankind at first hand, in a better way than reading and hearing, when a person is willing to trust him and make an attempt to do his will, for "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him."

In the Beginning God. "In the beginning God" is the opening sentence of our best text-book on God, the Bible. No words could be more fitting and none more suggestive of the truth than these. There is where he was, in the beginning of all things, and where he belongs, for before all things, behind all things, in all things, and over all things in heaven and in earth, is GOD. "He giveth to all life, and breath, and all things," and, "in him we live and move and have our being," is Paul's way of telling men that God is the source, the supply, and the sustainer of all life (Acts 17:25, 28). But God has not created a world with its myriad forms of life, and then withdrawn from them and left them to chance or to shift for themselves as best they can. He stayed in the world he made, and is still living in it, dwelling in it as the spirit dwells in the body, ruling it and caring for it as surely as the mind of man rules and directs the movements of his own body, but is greater than his body. The Master still inhabits what he has created, and is the life of it.

God a Spirit. God is in the nature about us, but he is not simply Nature. He is everywhere

present in the universe, but he is not shut up in it. He is more than the universe, just as the maker of a thing is more than the thing made, just as the mind of the writer is more and greater than the thoughts of his book, or the man is more than the body he inhabits. "God is a Spirit," said the One whom God sent from heaven to earth to make known to men what God is (John 4:24). By the term spirit, we understand it to be something unlike the material things that we touch and handle, as the heathen do the idols made with hands, or we do the articles that are found in our homes, or stores, or fields. The spirit is that in us that thinks and feels and wills. So God, the Spirit, is the "being who thinks and feels and wills." He has power and uses it. He plans things, and purposes, and brings to pass what he purposes. He has a heart, and so can be impressed with what causes joy or sorrow, pleasure or pain. We are conscious that there is something in us that is different from the body, and that because of that something (which we call spirit) we can think out things, conceive schemes, and experience sensations pleasurable or painful. Likewise there is in the universe, but greater than the universe, a great Spirit, God, possessed of a mind to think, a heart to feel, and a will to enforce his decrees.

God a Person. God is a person as well as a spirit, for personality is not necessarily a bodily thing. The being who thinks and speaks and feels

is a person. By calling God a person we mean that he is conscious of himself, that he has power and knowledge, and that he directs himself and others. He is not simply a force, blind, unfeeling; for a force has neither ability to think or feel. He is not simply a law, for law is but the rule of his own action, the method of his operations. He operates according to law, but he is not helplessly bound by laws so that he cannot act in unexpected ways. He is a law unto himself, controlling all forces according to his own will. All that we associate with a person belongs to God and more too. The faculties that we look upon as belonging to a person are, as far as we know them, imperfect, limited in their scope, undeveloped. But in God we conceive of them as perfectly developed, with nothing to set a limit to their operations, so that character is perfect, flawless, and the will free and unhindered.

Presented as a Person. God calls himself a person. He uses concerning himself personal pronouns. When speaking of himself, he says, "I," and he allows others to address him as "thou." All through the Scriptures he is presented as a person, and described by the use of personal terms. Jesus, his interpreter, addresses him as "thou," speaks of him as "he," and calls him "Father," a term that would be meaningless, unless he was what people understand as a person. All through the Bible he is represented as a person, using

powers and language just as a person would. Jesus, when he called him "Father," well knew that the world would understand thereby what they meant by the word person, one endowed with intelligence, heart, and will, and that they would invest him in their thought with those faculties and powers. True it is that Jesus must needs employ language and use terms that the people to whom he spake would understand, but it is inconceivable that he would make use of language that would give them a false impression. He sought to make clearer and more intelligible to mankind what God was, and had he not been what they would conceive to be a person, Jesus could have made himself better understood by using the word "it" instead of the word "Father." But Jesus never used the impersonal pronoun when speaking of God.

God the Father. It is by the favorite word on the tongue of Jesus of Nazareth, "Father," that we obtain our most intelligible, satisfactory, and clearest ideas of God. Associated with this word, and centering in it, are our purest and best notions and conceptions of character and conduct in an individual. It was what seemed most meaningful to Jesus. Under the mystic spell of the thoughts embodied in it, and with resistless yearning to feel in his soul their soothing and inspiring influence, he often withdrew from the thronging multitudes and sought quiet communion with his "Father," even as the wearied or frightened child seeks the

open and encircling arms of the loving parent. But Christ made use of the term to set forth the relation of God to the race as well as to himself. When he would have men and women to be assured of the closest and most loving relationship with God, he taught them to say "Our Father."

Other Names. That is not the only name by which God has been known to mankind. In the early days of the race, such as the patriarchal age, God was revealed as it seemed to men as a being of power. Great might seemed to be his chief characteristic. So they used the term "The Almighty" (Exod. 6:3). This he was also in the creation of the world, as pictured in the first chapter of Genesis. In connection with the deliverance of the children of Israel and their beginning as a chosen people, when his presence and help were so manifest, they gained another idea of what God was. They thought of him as One who could be known by them, and with whom they could have dealings and make covenants. So they called him "Jehovah" (Exod. 6:3). Still later he was known as the "Holy One," by which emphasis was placed upon his holiness. Then, as in the days of Samuel and David, he was recognized as leader and ruler in the battles and affairs of men, and named the "Lord of Hosts." Other names or phrases were applied to him in the history of Old Testament times to bring out some new feature or characteristic of his nature or work, but all of these appella-

tions so full of historic meaning pale in their splendor and significance before the name in which the whole historical revelation is summed up, "Father."

The Best Name. That word is the best and truest description of God that can be given in one word. It not only tells so much, but it suggests so much, so much that makes him a real being, that encourages the soul to feel that there is help at hand and a hand to help. It sums the other names all up, just as the word love sums up all the commandments. It contains the essence of what is good in them all, just as the first acorn contained the elements of all the oaks grown in the earth. Nature about us discloses to men the power and deity of God (Rom. 1:20). The alternation of the seasons and the general harmony of the different parts of creation show design on the part of the Creator. Cyclones and earthquakes suggest supernatural might. But the word "Father" expresses the ideas of judge, lawgiver, ruler, leader, friend, benefactor, lover, all together. It is the key that unlocks the door to a heart in which cluster the most precious things in life, as the leaves of the rose cluster about the stem, or as the grains of gold lie together in the mine. It unveils the treasures of love as the morning sun does the glories of the landscape. It puts affection at the side of mind and will, and shows undying love sitting in council with unerring wisdom and unlimited power,

as they devise the best things for children of the eternal and omnipotent God.

The Old Testament prophets had spoken of God as father, but it had been mainly as father of Israel. It remained for Jesus to invest the term with its fulness and richness of meaning for us, by enabling us to perceive that God was father to the individual as well as to the nation. He clothed the word with preciousness, and made it radiant with glorious light, and eloquent with knowledge when he taught us to say "Our Father," and when he said to the weeping Mary at the empty tomb: "I ascend unto my Father and your Father." When he told the parable of the Lost Son, he showed how fatherhood carried with it unquenchable love, forgiveness for transgressions, and an inheritance reserved for the undeserving.

Father Drives. A father and his little son were once riding along a familiar road with a gentle horse. To gratify his child the father placed the reins in his hands, but at the same time, unseen, retained his own hold on them. As they rode on they saw approaching them at a terrific speed a runaway team. The danger was great and imminent. But the father guided his horse so that a collision was avoided. When all was over, the little son looked up to his father, and with choking utterance, said: "I thought I was driving; but I wasn't, was I, papa?" This then is the revelation that we have—a God who has made him-

self known unto us. He drives. The reins are in his hands, unseen by us. He is so directing all things in our lives, although we may know it not, that we can be saved from dangers that threaten us. We can rest assured that he who made the world is still in it, a ruling and animating power. His mind thought out a universe and is thinking out our salvation. His heart was moved with compassion when man sinned, and is still moved with compassion for us. He willed to create a world for mankind, and still wills that man shall be heir to a world of blessings eternal.



Quiz

1. What are the means by which we may know God? 2. What is the highest revelation of God? 3. What is God's relation to his world? 4. What is God's relationship to his children? 5. How may we describe God? 6. Give some of the names by which God has been known. 7. Why is the name "Father" the best of all?

Topics for Further Study

1. The value and limitations of nature's revelation of God. 2. Name evidences that God now controls in the affairs of common life. 3. What is meant by "pantheism"? 4. How does pantheism dishonor God? 5. Why have we so many names for God in the Bible? 6. Discuss John 21:17.

CHAPTER II

OURSELVES (MAN)

ONE of the most intensely interesting studies in which man ever engaged is that of man himself. Man is God's crowning creation, being endowed with what was not possessed by any other creature. When a home had been prepared for man, and stocked with all that was necessary to minister to the needs of his life and being, then God made man and put him in the home builded for him. God put man on the earth after it had been fitted for a human habitation, and appointed him to be its ruler (Ps. 8: 5-8; Heb. 2: 6-8).

Man God's Image. Man, who has been called "the top of creation," comes the closest to God and is the most like him of all created beings. He may be said to be the acme of the Lord's creative energy, the climax of God's fashioning skill. The greatest being whom God could make would be one like himself. So he made man, and crowned him "with glory and honor." The chiefest element in his superiority to the other created inhabitants among whom he was appointed to live and reign was that he bore the image of God, for we are told that "God created man in his own image"

(Gen. 1:27). Man was the only being in the universe who bore the distinguishing glory of having been invested with a likeness to his Creator, for it is nowhere said of any other that he was made in the image of God. This is his title alone, and justifies him in laying claim to the supremest honor among the creations of his universe.

Man a Personality. But what is intended by this expression used by the Creator concerning the creature, when he said: "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness"? (Gen. 1:26.) In order to get the clearest understanding of it, it will be necessary to refresh our minds with what we decided in the preceding lesson God's nature was. There we learned that three things distinguished God and constituted him a person. They were that he could think and feel and will. His universe showed itself to be the result of thought. God had manifested emotions, and the way he brought things to pass showed that he had what we call a will. These three elements make up personality. The being then who was created in his likeness, and after his image, would need to possess the same. So we find man with these faculties of mind, sensibility, and will. James H. Snowden, D. D., in "The Basal Beliefs of Christianity," when speaking of man who thus stands at the head of creation and holds rule over nature, aptly says: "He is thus a reduced copy of God and parallels him at every point." This marvelous being, endowed at

his creation with an intellect to know and understand the world in which he lives, with an emotional nature that makes it possible for him to be impressed and stirred by the things about him, and with a volition so that he can determine his own way and shape his own career, is the creature to whom the psalmist referred when he exclaimed: "What is man? . . . For thou hast made him but little lower than God, and crowned him with glory and honor" (Ps. 8: 5, R. V.). Being like God in mental structure, God can make himself known to man and talk with him, and man can understand God. Dr. W. N. Clarke truthfully declares: "If the two (referring to God and man) were not alike, there could be neither revelation nor science. God could not manifest himself to man, and man could not understand the works of God."

Body and Spirit. Man is of divine origin, but he is also human. He has something more than spirit. He has a body, and so is twofold in his nature. He is animal-like as well as Godlike. We fully believe this whenever we come to examine ourselves or watch others. Man is a spirit and has a body, for the spirit is that wherein he resembles God. The story that pictures his creation in Genesis sets forth these two component elements in his nature: "The Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul" (2:7). That intimates that the house was made first, and

then the spirit put in to possess it and be its ruler. Some interpreters prefer to make man out a being with three component elements or divisions—body, soul, and spirit. With these scholars the soul is the seat of the natural human life, and the spirit is the abode of the divine life. But this non-bodily part of man may be looked at as having two relations, or two sides, one being particularly related to God, and the other related more closely to the body. The same faculty may come into touch with God and enable us to know him, and also come to share in the experience and life of the body that it inhabits. It may be influenced by both God and the body. When it is directed chiefly by God, we may well think of it and speak of it as spirit. When it is living according to the desires or dictates of the animal life, being moved by its passions and appetites, it may be called the soul. Some one has pithily put it thus: "Man's nature is not a three-storied house, but a two-storied house, with windows in the upper story looking in two directions, toward earth and toward heaven—an outlook toward things below, and a skylight through which to see the stars."

More than Animal. By man's bodily part he is brought into close and intimate relation to the rest of the animal world. Into the construction of his physical being there have entered the same elements that are found in the planet on which he lives. It is governed by the same laws that operate in all

the physical world. In its organization man's body is like the bodies of other animals, and it lives much the same kind of life. So man is akin to earth and the other creatures upon it. But while the rest of the animal world may share somewhat in the essential powers of man, there is a vast difference between himself and the animal nearest to him. When the Creator breathed into man's nostrils the breath of life, he became the possessor of something higher than that which the other animals that God had made had in them. In this spirit that constitutes the image of God reside qualities that make a wide interval between the lowest man and the highest animal that treads or crawls upon the earth. He has a quality of thought, and a consciousness of right and wrong unrevealed in the others. His choice of the highest good and his inventive genius mark him off as the superior to the other creatures on the earth with him. Animals other than man do some things that seem marvelous, but there are other things that man is constantly doing that they cannot. He dwells in a realm of activity they cannot enter. Well has Doctor Clarke said: "Beavers may dam a stream, but man alone can make it turn a wheel to grind his food or weave his raiment."

Method of Creation. This being that we call man, "fearfully and wonderfully made," and exalted to a preeminence above the beasts of the field or the jungle, is the direct handiwork of God.

He is the expression of God's mind, but also the result of his creative might. He is set forth in the early chapters of the Bible as being the direct outcome of the divine energy. However widely men may differ as to these chapters of Genesis, they are agreed in this, that therein man is represented as being God's creation and that his life was from God. One man believes that the account in Genesis is literal history, giving the exact method of man's making. Another sees in the picture there given a story told to illustrate the fact that man came from God, a story suited to the childhood of the human race, just as truth is presented to children in narratives and stories. The Christian evolutionist prefers to think of man as the result of a long process of development from a life originally from God, and that there have been many steps in the ascent to his present condition. But they would not exclude God from his province as the giver of life. They seek to account for the development of man's life, not for the origin of it. Says another: "Evolution is simply God's way of doing things, and it no more excludes him from the development of a race than it does from the growth of an individual animal or man." God is in it all whether the time be long or short, whether the steps be few or many. President Strong well says: "Though man came through the brute, he did not come from the brute, but from God."

Man's Original State. What was the original state of this man as he came into the world where he was to live? The searchlight of human science cannot throw its rays back to the days of primitive man. Human history has no records of the creative era. Almost the only light that is at hand is that in the Scriptures. They show that he was a being possessed of powers and passions that needed moral control. Being entrusted with these it was possible for him to disregard his Creator's wish. He had the right and power of choice, so sharing with God a free agency, and having the ability to do either what was right or what was wrong. Thus it was possible for him in the exercise of this freedom of choice to develop his character. Snowden says: "God made man as an outline sketch, as a germ or bundle of latent powers, and left him to fill out the sketch, to develop the germ and unfold himself into the blossom of his glorious achievements."

The Twofold Sonship. The Fatherhood of God implies the sonship of man. If God is the Father of all men, then all men certainly are the children of God. This is what might be called the natural or universal sonship of mankind. But there is another kind of sonship set forth in the Scriptures, which might be termed the realized sonship. Sons may be in rebellion against the father and so not enter but little, if at all, into the experience or blessings of children. They fail to come into the

inheritance that might be theirs. Others respond to the calls and wisdom of the father, co-operating with him in his plans and thus receiving the riches and blessings that are possible for the children. This may illustrate what is intended by the two sonships that seem to be presented in the sacred writings. The New Testament especially depicts the sonship realized through the conscious choice and conduct of one who lives like a son, "living at home with God as a loyal child." In this way sonship by nature may become sonship by belief. Sonship is not complete at one's birth into the world, nor so long as the child lives in rebellion toward God. Only when he falls in with his Father's plans, and seeks to keep in fellowship with him, is the real sonship a possession for him. Not when the prodigal child was in the "far country" of sin, but when he returned in penitence to the father's arms and the father's home was he invested with the father's gifts. So by faith and repentance is the natural sonship of man converted into the spiritual sonship of God that brings with it the full inheritance of the children of God.



Quiz

1. What is man's highest dignity? 2. In what does man's likeness to God consist? 3. What do you understand by "spirit and soul and body" in 1 Thess. 5:23? 4. How far can man be classed

with animals? 5. What has distinguished man from the lower creatures? 6. How can evolution be consistent with the idea of divine creation? 7. What have you to say about man's state at his creation? 8. Describe the double sense in which we use the word "sonship."

Topics for Further Study

1. "The image of God," what does it mean? 2. Discuss Ps. 8:5 in the King James' version and in the American Revised version. 3. Can the statement of Doctor Snowden, "man is a reduced copy of God and parallels him at every point," be maintained? 4. How important is the fact of correspondence between God and man? 5. Does the theory of evolution necessarily eliminate God? 6. Why need men have the power to sin?

CHAPTER III

OUR LEGACY (GOD'S REVELATION)

God in Nature. As we have seen in the first chapter of our studies, the Creator has made himself known to men in more ways than one. He first spoke to the people whom he placed in the home that he had fitted for their abode in what they saw about them. That was their first study in God's teachings concerning himself. The earth proffering them food, the sun sending down its vivifying and warming beams, and the canopy above them enveloping them like a star-spangled banner at night, were the beginners' lessons, daily telling them about the doings and character of an intelligent Creator. These simple teachings were written in a language adapted to their condition, for "the invisible things of him since the creation of the world are clearly seen, being perceived through the things that are made, even his everlasting power and divinity" (Rom. 1:20). Nature is a visible disclosure of the mind of God, manifesting his law and order, and showing thought and purpose. All the sciences with their wonderful discoveries are to-day telling an astonished world more and more of the doings of a wonder-working God, whether

they are looking into the dazzling effulgence of the heavens or into the darkness of the bowels of the earth; whether seeking to solve the processes of the human mind or the growth of the plant life about them. The universe is mankind's first text-book on God. It is that by which, in part, he may learn of him. Doctor Snowden eloquently exclaims: "The mountains are his thoughts spread out, the seas his thoughts poured into their vast basins, the stars are his thoughts on fire, the flowers are his thoughts shaped into lovely forms."

The Bible. The advance lessons, those which picture to us more fully and clearly God, his thoughts and purposes, his will and heart, are found in the Scriptures, wherein we have the interpretations of God as given through the words of prophets and psalmists, the apostles and the Son of God, with whom they associated and studied. These teachings have been gathered into a single volume, called "The Bible." "Biblia" is the word from which we get our word Bible, or what is sometimes called "The Book." It is plural in the Greek, from whence it comes, and means books or booklets, and thus indicates that originally our Bible was a collection of books. It is divided into two parts, known to us as the Old and the New Testament; the former consisting of thirty-nine books, and the latter of twenty-seven; making a total of sixty-six parts, bound in one great volume, filled with deep truths and opening up to interested students

wonderful and illuminating views of both God and man.

Language and Purpose. This book, or collections of books, was written by men for the instruction of men. It was not written in an age of science nor by scientists, neither was it produced for the purpose of teaching human science. Therefore, while it contains some things of a scientific character, we are to remember that primarily the Bible is a religious book and given to teach religious truths, and is therefore first of all a textbook on religion. Being intended for the people and to teach the people who were not versed in scientific language, it was written in the language of the people. Its writers spoke and wrote in the words and language of common life, and not in the technical phraseology of either science or philosophy. Therefore, when they referred to the facts of nature, they described them as they appeared to the ordinary mind of mankind, and used the terms then in vogue with the men of that day and age. When they referred to the motions of the sun, they called them the rising and setting thereof, describing them as they appeared to the observation of men, and as they were understood by the people of their day. The purpose of the writers of the Bible was not to give to the world a treatise on geology, or psychology, or astronomy, or ethics, but to make God known to men, to let them see his works and plans and so bring them into obedi-

ence and fellowship with him. Therefore they put into it facts that would especially disclose God and his doings, and put those facts in such words as men would best understand. Cardinal Baronius, Galileo's friend, once said to another: "The Bible was given to teach us how to go to heaven, and not how the heavens go."

Its Writers. The Bible was not made in heaven and dropped down to earth in some miraculous manner in its present form. It was written and arranged in its present form by men in touch with God, but living among men on the earth. Some of the composers and authors are known by name and some are unknown. They were human, not angelic, and lived in different ages and countries. Therefore they wrote in different languages. While they conformed to the rules of grammar and rhetoric, they produced various forms of literature, such as poetry, prose, history, biography, hymns of devotion, proverbs, codes of law, and letters to individuals and churches. They used their own natural powers of memory, observation, logic, imagination, and reason. Consequently the peculiarities of the different authors, their personalities, and points of view, are impressed upon their writings, and are reflected in the way they present some facts, or recite some story, or use some events of history, or state some local usage or custom. They see God from different standpoints or from different surroundings. Therefore their language is

not identical when describing the same event, as in the narration of the occurrences in the life of Christ.

A Growing Revelation. The Scriptures are the records of the historic facts of Christianity, of the doctrines taught men, and of a life of faith wherein God has given a manifestation of himself. But these facts, teachings, and life were not all given at one time nor in one place. "At sundry times and in divers manners" God has spoken to men and disclosed himself to them. The revelation in the Bible is a growth, becoming brighter and clearer as the authors seemed to come to a fuller understanding, and to catch better glimpses of the mind and purposes of God, and his dealings with men. Men had to be taught somewhat as children are taught in their educational life. They needed such views of truth and such statements of principles as were adapted to their condition and stage of development. Such were given them. Later, after they had gained some knowledge and understanding of the simpler forms of truth, God gave them the higher or deeper truths, adapted to their improved state. God showed himself and his will in clearer light and fuller meaning as the race progressed in ability to understand him and his truths. He gave them their primer teachings first, and afterward the more advanced lessons. As they grew in their knowledge certain practices, social usages, and morals that were before per-

mitted, were cut off or modified little by little. Therefore slavery and polygamy that were in vogue in Moses' day were forbidden or restricted in later times, and wholly condemned in Christ's day. So some doctrines or truths that are dim or vaguely hinted at in the earlier pages of the Bible are given in clearness in the later books, or parts thereof. W. N. Rice, in his book, "Christian Faith in an Age of Science," says: "Like the pillar of cloud and fire in the wilderness, God's revelation marches through the centuries before his people, never so far in advance as to be out of sight, always far enough in advance to keep devout and obedient souls moving forward."

The Canon. The Bible itself, which is a record of the revelation that God has given to mankind in history and through his life in the lives of men, gradually came into its present form. "From Moses, its first writer, to John, who probably wrote its closing page, its growth stretches through something like fifteen hundred years." These various writings were culled and sifted from other writings of their day and finally brought together, first those of the Old Testament and later those of the New Testament. The selection of these books and forming them into the Old Testament and the New, we call "the formation of the Canon of the Scriptures." Little by little the religious judgment of the believing people, under the influence of the divine Spirit, produced what we call our Bible by

gathering together what they called the Sacred Writings. They were doubtless guided by a consideration of the truths that they contained, and also by the character of the writers who produced them.

A Divine Book. While the contents of these Scriptures were originally inscribed by human hands on parchments made by men, and thus are in a sense human writings, yet they are more than human. They are also divine productions. In this Bible there is a divine element that places it far above all other literatures and makes it unique. "We see this divinity in the plan and purpose that shaped its history and unfold in the Bible from the first to its last page. The breath of God is blowing through this book" (Snowden). The sublime character of the doctrines contained in the Bible, and the creative geniuses who directed the human history to the accomplishment of divine ends are evidence of a divine influence.

But there is another way in which the inspiration of God is in the Bible. He was in the men through whom he gave us these writings. He filled their minds and touched their hearts and guided their lives. "Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit" (2 Peter 1:21). This Book is the record of what God did and said through men inspired by his Spirit. Under the power and influence that gave "man's powers to the divine Spirit for all high uses," some men were

led to speak and others to write what God had said through men's lips and lives. Some of them recorded the events of history so as to teach important lessons. Some of them, under the influence of the same Spirit, gave us the story of the life of the Man of Galilee; others set forth the doings of the early church; and still others stated the practical teachings as to the building up of Christian character and the conduct of men toward one another.

Our Guide. This Book that has been subjected to the closest scrutiny and severest criticism of all ages still remains with no essential doctrine discredited or impaired. It rests on foundations unshaken by the attacks of men and against which "the gates of hell" cannot prevail. It is "profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work" (2 Tim. 3: 16, 17, R. V.). This is therefore our guide in matters of faith and practice, affording us a knowledge of the true God and explaining to us the way to serve him. It is our storehouse of religious principles and precious truths for all lives and all times.



Quiz

1. What do you think of creation as a revelation of God? 2. What is the origin and significance of

the word "Bible"? 3. What is the chief purpose of the Bible? 4. How freely were human powers used in writing the Bible, and how were they aided? 5. How do you account for prohibition in one place in the Bible of what was allowed in another? 6. How long a period was the Bible in preparation? 7. How were the books of the Bible selected and brought together? 8. How has the Bible withstood the attacks of its enemies?

Topics for Further Study

1. Discuss the inadequacy of nature as a revelation of God. 2. Polygamy and slavery in the Bible. 3. The formation of the Bible. 4. The inspiration of the Bible. 5. The unfailing sufficiency of the Scriptures.

CHAPTER IV

OUR REDEEMER (JESUS CHRIST)

A Unique Figure. In considering the character and person of Jesus Christ we are dealing with a unique personage, one like and, at the same time, unlike the great characters presented to us on the pages of the world's history. He spake as never man spake; he did what man before him never did; he proffered to mankind what the richest and greatest of men could not give; and made claims such as none other among men dared assert. He stands apart from mere man "like some mysterious visitor from a higher sphere." In the morality that he taught, the self-sacrificing life that he lived, the sympathy that he displayed for a world's woes, the steadfastness of purpose that swayed him in the midst of the unequaled discouragements and oppositions that he encountered in life, Jesus of Nazareth looms up as "an oasis of heaven in a sin-blasted desert of earth." Friends and foes alike agree in this testimony to his uniqueness of character.

Human, but Divine. In his person he reveals a significant character and combination. He was human, but more than human. His body was a real

human body in every sense of the term. He was born of a human mother, reared in an earthly home in the midst of surroundings that were the common lot of many another of his day. He passed through the different stages of growth from infancy to manhood. Hunger, thirst, weariness, sorrow, and joy were not strangers to him. He learned wisdom and acquired knowledge in the same way that others did. He lived a life of faith, prayer, and obedience. He was subject to temptations, and suggestions of evil did not fail to make their appeal to him and their assault upon him. He was a real man, sounding and experiencing the feelings and meeting the trials that are incident to humanity.

But he had a divine nature too. He lived with God before he came to live among men and before the world was. He was the Word, the expression of God, but he was God (John 1:1). He allowed Thomas to accost him as "my Lord and my God," and did not rebuke him for it. Divine attributes were both ascribed to him by others and claimed by him, such as eternal existence, the creatorship of all things, supreme knowledge, all authority, and even equality with God himself. He did things that belonged only to God, such as forgiving sins and claiming to be the Judge of the world. He was Son of God as others are not, "the only begotten Son." He certainly lived in relation to God as did no other among men. "God was in him as he never was and never will be in any other

human being," declares Dr. W. N. Clarke, and Dr. James H. Snowden confirms that sentiment in these words: "The whole New Testament is saturated with the divinity of Christ."

Without Sin. One feature stands out in Alpine grandeur in the record of the career of Jesus as he is depicted in the New Testament, and that is that he was absolutely free from sin in the midst of sinful surroundings and associations with sinful people. He was among them and yet not like them. As a human being he felt the allurements to evil, and yet he yielded not to wrong suggestions. He was "one that hath been in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin," "guileless, undefiled, separated from sinners" (Heb. 4:15; 7:26). His disciples who had been called on purpose to be with him, so that they could watch him, observe his life, note his spirit, hear his utterances, and mark his words, after three years of intimate association with him, sleeping with him, eating with him, working with him, and suffering with him, would assuredly agree with one of them, when he afterward wrote of him, "who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth" (1 Peter 2:22). He was also tested by his enemies who, with eagle eyes, sought for flaws in his character and conduct; but, after being challenged by him to point out sin in him, they were silent. There was a traitor among the Twelve who journeyed with him, able to give away to his enemies any secret fault or

weakness, but even Judas never was able to point out a wrong in the Christ of God. Both Herod and Pilate, Roman judges, who knew him and examined him to find some wrongful thing whereof they might accuse him, agreed and declared that they "found no fault in this man." John's testimony remains unimpeached and unimpaired in our day: "In him is no sin" (1 John 3:5).

God and Man Shown. The sinless Jesus came into the world to make clear to men two things, or in other words, to afford them a twofold revelation. He uncovered God to the gaze of men, showing his being, opening his heart, illumining his plans and purposes, and pointing out the way to the home that he had prepared for them who loved him. "Being in the form of God," he illustrated what God was. Coming from God's bosom, he knew what God felt and thought and planned to do. Jesus made God intelligible to humankind, throwing light upon his very nature, explaining his dealings with the world, and making unmistakable the reality and the depth of his love. Jesus was a sermon on God (John 1:18). He uncovered the Fatherhood of God, for such is the meaning of the word that Matthew uses concerning him, the word "reveal" (Matt. 11:27).

But the Jesus who disclosed God also exhibited what was possible for man to be, and what God aimed to make him. In what Jesus was, God pictured what man may be and ought to be. He

was a perfectly balanced man, in whom all virtues were combined in perfect harmony, "the one flawless diamond and supremely beautiful character." But what he showed himself to be was a demonstration of what man will be when God has done with his fashioning work upon him, for "we shall be like him" (1 John 3:2). He was an example, showing men how he wanted them to live; but he was also a pattern of what they were to be made. He taught the world the infinite worth of a human soul, and its need of help to sever itself from the destroying power of sin; but he illustrated in his sublime character and flawless life the photograph of human possibilities under divine tuition.

His Culminating Work. Christ came not only to be something, but to do something. He had a work to do as well as a life here on earth to live. What he had to do linked itself with human salvation. In his death the work of Christ found its climax, there overtopping in its high significance, and eclipsing in its achievement, all that had gone before it. The sacrifices and prophecies of the Old Testament and the substance of the New Testament teachings are in essence therein found. His death makes clear and meaningful types and symbols as well as sayings before mysterious and bewildering. From that death as from a perennial fountain pour forth refreshing streams of light, comfort, and hope. His lifework culminated on the cross. The full meaning of what Christ did no man has ever been able

fully to clothe with words. The many attempts of men to give expression to it, and the different figures of speech with which they have sought to expound it, demonstrate that what Christ has done for the race is a bigger thing than any man's definition of it, or statement of it. Atonement, propitiation, redemption, reconciliation, sacrifice, satisfaction, and salvation are all big words that have been used by Scripture writers and their interpreters with a view of setting forth to human understanding the greatness and importance of what Christ did when he died on the mount called Calvary. But in each case the writer has only succeeded in placing emphasis upon some part or phase of it, rather than in showing all its meaning. Each one has attempted to set forth his theory of what has been named "the atonement of Christ," and each has given us only a theory. Patriotism is a greater thing than any party's theory of tariff or finance. Christianity is a vaster thing than any denomination of Christians. So the atonement of Christ is bigger than any one author's statement of it, deeper than any one's comprehension of it, and richer in significance than any one's measure of it.

Scriptural Statements. Recognizing and believing that our safest and surest guide to its meaning is the Scripture statements themselves, and that we can accept and believe what we cannot in fulness explain, let us turn for instruction and comfort to the record of men who spake "as they were

moved by the Holy Spirit." "The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister and *to give his life a ransom for many*," says Matthew in his Gospel (20:28). Paul told Titus, his son in the gospel, whom he would teach about the death of Christ and its meaning, that Jesus "*gave himself for us*, that he might redeem us from all iniquity" (Titus 2:14). He wrote to the Christians at Rome this explanation: "Being justified freely by his grace through *the redemption that is in Christ Jesus*, whom God set forth to be a *propitiation through faith, by his blood*, to show his righteousness, because of the passing over of the sins done aforetime" (Rom. 3:25, R. V.), and to the Ephesians he added: "In whom we have *our redemption through his blood*, the forgiveness of our trespasses" (Eph. 1:7). Peter uses these words when speaking about the same thing: "Christ *also suffered for sins once*, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God" (1 Peter 3:18). John asserts his view as follows: "Ye know that he was manifested *to take away our sins*" (1 John 3:5).

The Conclusion. From these passages, taken from many that might be cited, some things seem clear to human understanding and almost beyond controversy. Among them are the following: Jesus Christ did something in his death to bring God and men together; what he did was for the unrighteous, and it did show God to be righteous; what he

did was done for the sake of the salvation of sinners; that because of that death on the cross forgiveness of sins is possible; that he put away in his death the sins that brought him to his death; that in so doing God was satisfied, his love was revealed, and his condemnation of sin pronounced. Christ is assuredly shown to be God's means of saving men through faith. These seem to be patent facts, revealed in the Scriptures, and on them we may safely stand, although we may not be able to explain them altogether or give a real and satisfactory philosophy of the atonement, or reconciliation, of Christ.

The Resurrection. After Christ had died on the cross he was buried in a new tomb. The sepulcher, that belonged to a friend of Jesus, was made secure by means of a Roman seal upon the stone that closed the entrance into it, and by a Roman guard. These precautions had been taken by the Jews lest he should be stolen by Jesus' disciples and the claim be made that he had risen from the dead as he had declared he would do. But in spite of all that had been done to keep him in the grave, he did come forth alive, and appeared to those who had known him best before his death, and who were able to identify him afterward. For forty days he was among them, going and coming; showing himself to them at different times and in various places; talking with them and eating with them. At least on eleven different occasions he showed

himself to some of them, proffering to them every opportunity to test the reality of his being alive again. Paul, within six years after the death of Jesus, made an investigation undoubtedly when he went up to the city of Jerusalem and spent fifteen days with Peter and James. This scholar, who had been such a bitter and ferocious opponent of Jesus and his resurrection at first, and who had dragged people to the dungeons because they believed in them, has given us a list of the witnesses of the resurrection, and declared that most of the five hundred who had seen Jesus alive were themselves alive at the time when he wrote the account of his belief in the resurrection (1 Cor. 15: 1-20). The witnesses to his resurrection, not expecting to see him alive again, were at first in despair, but within three days they began to be so firmly convinced of it that they were soon prepared to go forth preaching it with boldness, and were ready to go into prison and unto death for the sake of that belief. Divine wisdom, perhaps anticipating the denial of the resurrection of Jesus from the dead and seeing the importance of it, has buttressed this fact with evidence such as can be found for hardly another single event of history.



Quiz

1. In what respects was Jesus unlike ordinary men? 2. Indicate evidences of the humanity of

Jesus. 3. What is there to show that he was perfect in his humanity? 4. What is the further significance of the sinlessness of Jesus? 5. Show that Jesus was divine. 6. What is the supreme purpose for which Jesus came into the world? 7. How many times did Jesus appear after his resurrection? 8. How strong is the evidence that Jesus did rise from the dead?

Topics for Further Study

1. Is it strictly true to say "To err is human"? 2. Discuss Jesus' claim to divinity. 3. The unique man. 4. The comprehensive work of Jesus. 5. The post-resurrection appearances of Jesus. 6. The evidences of the resurrection.

CHAPTER V

OUR TEACHER (THE HOLY SPIRIT)

Definition of the Spirit. God has been revealed unto men under three different names, those of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. By men these have been called three different manifestations of God, or three distinctions in the Godhead, or three distinct persons. One of the simplest statements, as to what the Holy Spirit is, is given us by Dr. W. N. Clarke thus: "The Holy Spirit is God in man; God working in the spirit of man, and accomplishing the results that are sought in the work and mission of Christ." Dr. James H. Snowden in his recent book, "The Basal Beliefs of Christianity," describes the Godhead in these words: "The Father is the creator from whom all things proceed; the Son is the medium or agent through whom the Father operates, and the Spirit executes the purposes and applies the power of the Father and the Son. The Holy Spirit is thus the executive of the Godhead, and is immanent in all its activities in the world." H. B. Swete calls him: "Christ's substitute and representative on earth, and the work assigned to him is that of an advocate." The Holy Spirit is God as spirit,

operating in the spirit of man to accomplish the purpose for which Jesus came into the world.

In the Old Testament. The Holy Spirit ought not to be thought of as wholly a new gift to the New Testament age, appearing for the first time in the days of Jesus Christ. The Spirit has been in the world and at work ever since the creation, when the "Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters" (Gen. 1:2). The Spirit was the power of God that brought all things into being and fashioned them into form and beauty. As a creative and renewing power the Spirit has always been in the world. The psalmist says of his work: "Thou sendest forth thy Spirit, they are created; and thou renewest the face of the ground" (Ps. 104:30). He was present with Abraham and David as surely as with the men of the apostolic era. He is recognized by the writers of the Old Testament and the men described in it, as among them, giving them wisdom and understanding, inspiring the prophets and being the source of energy and life. Men were what they were in their workmanship and skill because of the Spirit of God (Exod. 31:3). But in the New Testament we have a new era of the Spirit, when his powers and gifts were more signally manifested and recognized in the spiritual life of God's people among whom he had come to abide.

His Different Names. It is both interesting and profitable to recall the names by which the Spirit

has been recognized, as he operates as God's agent or Christ's representative in the lives of men, carrying on to completion the work of the Father and the Son. These are a few of the appellations that have been applied to him: "The Spirit of God," "The Holy Spirit of God," "The Holy Spirit which ye have from God," "The Spirit of his Son," "The Spirit of Christ," "The Spirit of the Father," "The Spirit of Truth," "The Holy Spirit," "Another Comforter," and the like. The fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth chapters of the Gospel according to John are particularly rich and full in throwing light upon the work and presence of the Spirit. He was promised to men to quicken their memories, to enlighten their minds, to disclose to them new truth, to qualify them to give testimony, and to beget within them settled and clear convictions as to the great realities of the spiritual life.

A Divine Person. That the Holy Spirit is a divine person is clearly set forth in the New Testament. He is there presented as a person operating in harmony with and for God and the Son. He is more than an influence, such as God exerts on men's minds and hearts. He is not an impersonal something that affects people for a little time and then vanishes away. Biblical writers present him as the Spirit of God at work and in contact with human spirits. Where he lives and works, there God is said to live and work. (See 1 Cor. 3:16;

2 Cor. 3:17.) He is spoken of as a person, and called "he," not "it" (John 14:16; 16:13). Christ declared that he himself was present in the Spirit (John 14:18; 16:22), and that it was through the Spirit that he, the ascended Christ, was to dwell in the church (Rom. 8:9, 10). But while these three are united in one Godhead, yet they are separate, for they are named as being distinct and separate in such places as in the Great Commission of our Lord (Matt. 28:19) and in the benedictions of the apostles (2 Cor. 13:14).

General Work. Generally speaking, we may say that the work of the Spirit is to take up and carry on to completion the work of love and salvation that God initiated in Christ Jesus his Son. That would be his crowning achievement. In doing this he would act upon the minds of God's people so that they would recall truths that they had been taught, and be led into the discovery of new and deeper ones than those they had known before. He would also impart to their minds new conceptions of Christ and his work in revealing God, and so they would be brought into fuller fellowship with God and Jesus Christ. Thereby they would glorify the Son. Sin, righteousness, and the judgment would appear as never before also to their minds, when illumined and quickened by the Spirit (John 14:13-15; 16:8-11). He would be as a guide to the disciples, a guide in their thinking as well as in their action. Things that the Spirit had

heard in the presence-chamber of God the Spirit would tell to the believers in Christ. This was to be done as fast as they were able to comprehend the things to be made known, and in just such degrees as was adapted to their state of knowledge. "He shall guide you into all truth," but not all at once. Little by little, as they were able to bear them, would the Spirit unveil to them things that Jesus said they were not able to receive when he was present with them.

His Gifts. But the province of the Spirit was also to give something as well as tell something. He was to impart to them gifts that men had not before, as well as to show them truths that they knew not before. The Spirit came not empty-minded, neither did he come empty-handed. He came laden with precious wares for undeserving but needy souls. In the days of the apostles the Spirit bestowed upon men gifts and powers that were needful and profitable for that age, and that fitted the actors in those scenes for the specific tasks that God intended them to accomplish. The twelfth chapter of Paul's first letter to the Corinthian church enumerates many of them, and declares their purpose. But the same Spirit is present in our day, and not destitute of gifts and the disposition to bestow them upon people of this generation, just as they may be needed to qualify them for the work of their day and age. Convictions that move people and impel them into the pathway

of duty are the work of that Spirit. He comes to create a sense of guilt in the sinful soul, to reveal the need of salvation, and to incite them to seek it through faith in Jesus Christ and repentance toward God. The assurance of sonship with God and of the certainty of rewards yet to be received are made possible through that Spirit of God (Rom. 8: 16, 17).

A Daily Helper. One more function, and by no means the least important part of the Holy Spirit's doings for men and women, is that of acting as helper for them in their weakness and ignorance, and in their attempt to live a Christian life. He teaches us how to pray and also aids in our infirmity (Rom. 8: 26). When we are weak, he imparts power to us. When we know not what to do, he enlightens our minds and influences our judgments. When a sense of desertion oppresses, then he is present, making the presence and help of Jesus more real and certain, and our hearts to burn within, as he did the hearts of the two disconsolate ones to whom Jesus appeared on their way to Emmaus. He helps us to live a life consonant with God's desire and commandments (Gal. 5: 16). He taps the source and supply of spiritual power, and turns into our souls streams of fructifying, invigorating, and purifying might, thereby making to grow the fruits of the Spirit, as described in the letter to the believers of Galatia, such as love, joy, peace, etc. (Gal. 5: 22, 23).

Quiz

1. Give Doctor Clarke's statement about the Holy Spirit. 2. Which of the statements given about the Holy Spirit do you most approve? 3. What evidence is there of the presence of the Holy Spirit in the world before the days of Jesus? 4. Why did Jesus speak of the coming of the Spirit as future? 5. Why do you think of the Holy Spirit as a person rather than a mere influence? 6. What Bible chapters particularly present the office and work of the Holy Spirit? 7. What are the works of the Holy Spirit?

Topics for Further Study

1. Have we one God or three? 2. Discuss the suggestiveness of the variety of names given in the Scriptures to the Holy Spirit. 3. The gifts of the Spirit in the present day. 4. What is meant by the "Leading of the Spirit"? 5. What is the significance of "The Comforter"?

CHAPTER VI

OUR DESTROYER (SIN)

Sin. The world that a good God has made is not what one would expect it to be. In the production of a good and wise Creator one would naturally look for harmony and holiness universal. But the dweller on the earth opens his eyes upon scenes of discord and degradation. He sees nations as well as individuals at war with one another. The good and right betimes appear to go down to defeat, while the wrong triumphs. The elements of nature about him are in a wrangle that brings death in their wake. Man himself, although made in the image of God, is very ungodlike in character and action. He does not appear to be making much progress toward the attainment of the high destiny that awaits him. In his inmost self he himself feels that he is far from what he might and ought to be. He finds himself pursuing that which entails pain and unhappiness upon him and, although he knows what the result will be, still he keeps up the following of it. He chooses the base things instead of the best. Rather than make the very most of the powers that he finds lodged within him, he does the very things that thwart their develop-

ment and the attainment of glorious possibilities. He sees wrong, feels wrong, and suffers wrong. He knows that things are not as they should be. Something has come into the creation of a holy and loving Father and bankrupted the world that was made for the purpose of helping man to be what he was intended to be, the image of God. That something we call SIN.

Sin is a Recognized Fact. Sin is a recognized fact of human existence. Men are conscious of its presence and power. It does exist outside of mankind's imagination, and exposes all the race to its poisoning touch. "Through one man sin entered into the world," Paul said; but we know that it did not stop with one man. It has overtaken all men. It is a recognized fact from the first to the last book of the Bible—recognized to be something still existing, something so dangerous to the weal of mankind that men are repeatedly warned against its attacks and influence. They are urged time and again to accept help to rid themselves of a real, not an imaginary, peril that threatens their welfare and future. Men themselves admit that they are conscious of a something that fights against their better selves, and that hinders them from being and doing what they know they ought to do, and what otherwise they would do. All the religions of the race have endeavored to provide help for men to save them from this something that we call sin. Human governments have set penalties to be

visited upon the wrong-doer, and so have admitted that evil is a factor with which they have to reckon, and that it is dangerous to the best interests of the State. Sin's trail is found in all history and all literature, and its victims line all the highways of the nations. One's own conscience tells in emphatic tones and startling certainty that sin is not only at the door, but in the heart. Jesus Christ left his celestial abode, robed himself in human flesh, and came to dwell with men for the purpose of destroying this destroyer. "He was manifested to take away sins," the Apostle John avows. If sin was not a fact, then the Son of God came for naught, and was himself deceived and in pursuit of a phantom. (See 1 Tim. 1:15; Heb. 9:26.)

Not Bodily Appetites. But what is this thing that the world calls sin, and that has wrought discord, degradation, and death among men? It is not simply the presence of the bodily appetites and passions. Matter is not essentially sinful in itself. Men are not sinners just because they have bodies, and because those bodies have desires and inclinations. Sin does not consist in the fact that mankind has a nature akin to that of the animals below them. Evil may approach through the animal nature. Its passions may be the occasion for the coming of sin and help it along to its triumph over men. Having appetites and passions does not of itself make us sinners, but letting appetites and passions have us does. Doctor Clarke has pithily

stated it thus: "The sin does not dwell in the fact that man still retains a nature akin to that of the animals below him, but in this, that the nature that is akin to God yields to the nature that is common to man and beasts." The Scriptures make this fact sure, or at least make out that there are sins that are not those of the physical appetites. Here are some of them: "Enmities, strife, jealousies, wraths, factions, divisions, heresies, envyings" (Gal. 5: 20, 21).

Sin and Self-will. Man himself is responsible for sin. Any definition of sin that does not put the blame upon man himself fails to state it all. Sin is not a disease for which man is not to blame, but a destroyer that he himself has invited in. It is not a misfortune against which he could not guard himself and which he could not foresee; neither is it something to which he had to submit whether he would or not. Sin has to do with man's own will and choice. When man's will has put itself up against the will and purpose of God, then sin has arrived. Sin reveals itself in the making of self the end and aim of life, and in the striving for what will minister to the needs and delights of one's self to the exclusion of others' weal and God's wish. The first pair in Eden illustrated this when they sought to gratify their own desire by doing what was contrary to God's command and appointment. The human will took the throne against the will of the Creator. Self took the reins

into its own hands and chose its own way. This lifting up of self as against or above God may lead along many ways and into many different manifestations of itself; but selfishness or self-will is in them all as the controlling factor. Prof. Samuel Harris has distinguished four forms of selfishness which, according to his notion constitute sin: "Self-sufficiency, instead of faith; self-will, instead of submission; self-seeking, instead of benevolence; and self-righteousness, instead of humility and reverence." "All forms of evil run down into selfishness as the taproot of sin," declares Doctor Snowden.

Missing the Ideal. James makes sin out to be the letting of desire have control of us to the extent that it shall stay with us (James 1: 14, 15). When man's self-will resists God's authority and government, it produces the sin of rebellion. When it crosses God's laws or commandments, the sin of disobedience comes in. When it refuses to choose and do the best that is possible for one to have or do, sin is coming short of what might be and what ought to be. This is missing the mark, failing of the ideal that God has set. That is the meaning of the word that Paul repeatedly employs when he speaks of sin: "For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3: 23). "Sin is the transgression of the law," and "all unrighteousness is sin" according to John's view of it (1 John 3: 4; 5: 17).

Sin in the Race. The result of the incoming of sin into the world is that our race has been infected with evil. That evil has propagated itself in all the generations, and has breathed its blight upon every soul. The human stock has become corrupted, and successive generations have come into existence with a nature that brings forth evil. There are in mankind elements that are struggling for the higher or the lower things in life. They feel the influence of the predispositions to evil, or the evil tendencies that seem to be bequeathed to each one of us. But there are also good influences that are a part of the race inheritance and that are transmitted from generation to generation. But our race-connection does not doom any soul to a destiny from which there is no escape. Man is still measurably free, and has the making of his own destiny within his own reach. "So that no soul is condemned and lost for the sins of others, but only for its own sins." There are two encouraging considerations about this disposition to evil that has affected the stream of life. They are given in Doctor Snowden's words: "Evil is in a measure limited to the third and fourth generation, it runs out or kills itself off, whereas good is unlimited and runs on cumulatively for 'a thousand generations'" (Exod. 20: 5, 6).

Sense of Guilt. But sin brings with it more than a nature prone to evil. It leaves in the soul of the sinner more than just a tendency toward the

wrong. It fills the soul with a sense of guilt that the soul feels, and that makes it conscious of being separated from God and under his condemnation. No one else needs to tell the wrong-doer that he is guilty before God. His own conscience pronounces judgment upon him. He knows and feels that he is unworthy of the favor of the God whose rules he has defied and whose heart he has grieved. This stinging sense of guilt follows close upon the heel of the transgression itself. He does not have to wait for a future judgment to tell him that he is in disfavor with his Lord, against whom he has rebelled. He knows that he is "condemned already."

Sin's Consequences. In the wake of sin a whole legion of consequences trail along, destroying actual good in their way and thwarting the good that might be. Sorrow and suffering keep close company with sin. Pain and poverty, wrong and wretchedness, disappointment and degradation mark sin's entrance into the individual, into society, into the home, or into the government. Innumerable and baneful are the results of evil. But worst of all, death itself stalks on behind sin. Death, both physical and spiritual, are on the way in the sinner's life. It is only a question of time when it shall overtake him. The seed is sown and the harvest is sure. Sin is represented as growing to maturity, and "when it is full grown, it bringeth forth death" (James 1:15). "The wages of sin is death" (Rom. 6:23). Sin thus shuts the door

to fellowship with God here and bars it against the sinner's entrance into God's home and heaven beyond (Matt. 25:46).



Quiz

1. What kind of a world would one naturally expect from the hand of a good God? 2. What is the most conspicuous moral quality in our world? 3. Name sins other than those of animal appetites. 4. What is the essential quality of sin? 5. What is our relation to race sin? 6. What are the consequences of sin?

Topics for Further Study

1. Why is sin allowed in the world? 2. What does the word "sin" mean? 3. What has the sin of Adam to do with me? 4. Is sin a fact or a phantom? 5. Is good or evil the greater power in the world? 6. What is the source of our sense of guilt?

CHAPTER VII

OUR SAVIOUR (GOD SEEKING THE LOST)

God's Disapproval of Sin. God hates sin, but loves the sinner in spite of his sin. The love of the Father was not quenched by the misdeeds of his children. God's love did not go out when wrongdoing came into the home and heart of his people. He did not throw away the key to the treasure-house of priceless and imperishable wares when his creatures refused to enter in and take them. He did not give up trying to help them because they had broken the terms upon which he had provided so much for their happiness and blessing.

But neither did God, because of undying love for his creatures, let them spurn his desires and break his commandments without his letting them know and feel his disapproval. He was displeased with their transgression of his law and their putting up their wish against his will. He also expressed his condemnation of their sinfulness. The sufferings and death of Jesus Christ are a revelation of God's abhorrence of man's evil-doing. His love for man and his disapproval of sin are both shown in the Christ of God. "God commendeth his own love toward us, in that, while we were yet

sinners, Christ died for us"; but God, "sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and as an offering for sin, condemned sin in the flesh" (Rom. 5:8; 8:3). God has shown himself both as hating sin and being righteous himself. His Son's sacrifice showed both his own character and his attitude toward evil. "Whom God set forth to be a propitiation through faith, by his blood, to shew his righteousness because of the passing over of the sins done aforetime" (Rom. 3:25). This feeling of God toward wrong is frequently spoken of as "wrath," "indignation," "anger," and the like, all of which are intended to express the recoil of God's soul from all that is sinful. The greatness of that hatred for sin is displayed in what was done to Christ and in his sufferings.

The Father's Yearning Love. But, as we have intimated above, while the heavenly Father hated the sin that drove man from him, yet he did not give him up nor did he cease to plan and work for his recovery. He neither lost interest in his sinful creature nor did he lose heart for him. David did not forget Absalom, who had plotted to usurp the throne on which he himself sat, when he fled for his life. Nay, we are told that David's heart yearned for the unworthy son, and that he took measures to bring him back. So the great heart of God yearned for those who had turned against him. Instead of giving them up and letting them go on in their separation from him, he took meas-

ures and instituted means to recover them from their sins, and to bring them back into fellowship with himself. He wanted man to be restored again to his favor, and that reconciliation between them and him might be effected. This God sought in love and tenderness. As a shepherd would seek for his wandering sheep, so God would go after his sinful people. That yearning love was displayed in Christ. Jesus Christ and his life of love for man showed how God felt for sinners, and how he yearned to have them saved. In what he did he manifested what God would do to bring them into more favorable relation to him, so that they would not have to be dealt with according to their sins, but "according to his own purpose and grace which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began" (2 Tim. 1:9).

Love's Initiative. What brought Jesus from heaven to earth? What induced him to leave his abode with the Father and make his abode with sinful men? Because the sinful world's cry was for him to come to their relief? Nay. Why did God send him, knowing what agonies he would have to endure and what oppositions and outrages he would be subject to from the very ones whom he went to save? Because these people, in danger from their own acts, loved him with unfeigned affection? Nay. They loved him not. They did not care to have him come, and never asked for help. Jesus Christ came, not because love asked

for him, but because love sent him. The love of the great God was behind the coming of a great Saviour. Love, undying love, was the moving power that gave the world a Redeemer and sinners a Saviour. Love in the heart of God planned, prosecuted, and perfected a scheme that made possible the saving of erring and sinful men. "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son." "We love, because he first loved us" (1 John 4:19). God himself took the first steps toward the reconciliation between a wronged God and the ones who did wrong. This he did not after Jesus had come and died for mankind, but long before the memory of men. Knowing that sinners could be saved, the Father in heaven set in motion forces, perfected and pushed plans, that were prompted by love and that satisfied the love of his heart—plans that dated way back to the beginning before the world was, plans to be carried out to completion by the coming and dying of Jesus Christ (Eph. 3:8-11). God himself originated, set going, and carried out through Jesus all that was necessary as "the propitiation for our sins."

God in Christ. Christ was a disclosure to the world of God and his doings for man. What Jesus did, God was doing. The two ought not to be separated in our thought, neither ought we to feel that Jesus was any more anxious for us than was God, nor that we could come any closer to the Son of man than to God himself. A person said

to me a short time ago: "Jesus always seems a little nearer to me than God. I feel as though he was a little more like us." But God is as near as Christ, for he was in Christ Jesus and working through him. In the Man of Galilee the God of heaven and of earth was living out his love for man, proving that he was not indifferent to man's sin, and that something must be done in order that he might treat sinners with favor, after they had turned from him and trampled down his love. In Christ, God bore the sins of the world. God did something in the life and death of Christ that made it possible for God to be righteous, and at the same time forgive man's sins. Whatever else the "atonement" of Christ may mean, it certainly means this: That what Jesus did in his life and death was God's action; that because of what Christ did and suffered, God was able to do for sinners what otherwise he would not have been able to do and at the same time be righteous; that through God's action in Jesus penitent sinners may be received into God's favor, receive the forgiveness of their sins, and be made heirs of eternal life. "We have our redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace" (Eph. 1:7, R. V.). How God did all this, and how it makes possible what he now does, and manifold more questions we cannot settle, although many people are guessing and speculating about them. The fact that Jesus died for our sins and

that through Christ we have forgiveness is put beyond question in the Scriptures. Here we may trust if we cannot explain it all.

God's processes are not all opened to human vision, nor has he turned over to curious man the key to the storehouse where are treasured the solutions of life's vexing problems. But he has made some things known to man, some things inexpressibly precious and thrillingly comforting.

Salvation Possible. One thing is that there is a salvation for mankind. By that term we mean that man can be separated from his sins and their guilt through Jesus Christ, that he can be brought into such fellowship with God, that his life here on earth will undergo a change through the incoming of a new life principle. The means by which this is effected are a union with Christ by faith and the operation of the Holy Spirit in the heart of the believer. Through man's confiding trust in Jesus the life and spirit of Christ are in him, even as the life of the tree is in the branches through their connection with the trunk thereof. "In Christ" is a favorite expression with Paul in his letters, and it evidently means, in union with Christ. Doctor Snowden has attempted to make it clear thus: "We may conceive of this relation as being somewhat like that of our thoughts, feelings, and volitions to our souls. These mental states are in our souls and our souls in them, and yet the self and its states remain distinct. So Christ and the

believer remain personally distinct, and yet Christ is in the soul and the soul is in Christ."

Jesus' Teachings. In the teachings of Jesus he seems to present the saved one as entering upon a new way of living, a kind of living that is in harmony with the character that children of such a Father as God ought to have. The chief characteristics of that new method of being and doing are "righteousness, brotherly love, and trustful dependence upon God." According to his conception salvation is a present experience, not one wholly reserved for the life beyond the grave. The beginning and the progress of this life of salvation may be felt and known in this present time. It was made a fact for the sinful woman in Simon's house, and also for Zaccheus, who took Jesus home to dine with him and divided his riches with the poor (Luke 7: 50, 19: 9).

Deliverance from Sin and Death. Salvation in the primary thought of it carries with it the notion of a deliverance for the saved one. The sins that one has committed must be taken away, and the one who committed them be delivered from their penalty and guilt. This is done through Jesus, for he was named Jesus because he "shall save his people from their sins" (Matt. 1: 21), and he was "manifested to take away sins." "He came into the world to save sinners" (1 Tim. 1: 15) affirms Paul, and Luke asserts that God's purpose in sending his Son was to bring the blessings that

come from being turned away from iniquity (Acts 3:26). But, as sin entails death, the salvation that delivers from sin must also bring deliverance from death itself. This is a fact also, for Jesus hath "abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel." The effects of being saved do not end in this life. They reach beyond and enrich the life yet to be. "So the final end of unchecked sin is ever deeper degradation and misery in this world and eternal death in the next; and from this course and end the believing sinner is saved outright by the pardoning grace of God" (Snowden).

Consequences Overruled. In the meantime, while our salvation is attaining to its full consummation, some results of sinful disposition and acts remain with us. These temporary consequences are not all removed through the pardon that gives us the assurance of a life to come and a helper at hand. We suffer from them natural effects. But even in them there is a comfort, for we have a promise that these shall all work together for good (Rom. 8:22). Our improvement shall thus be effected through what we may suffer. All things in a believer's life, whether sweet or sorrowful, painful or pleasant, delightful or disappointing, are like workmen in a shop, each doing something for the making of what the owner has in mind. That is Paul's figure. The author of the book of Hebrews has likened these things to the

discipline to which loving parents subject their children, in order that they may become developed and reliant and fitted for the life that the wiser parents know awaits them (Heb. 12:5-11). Some of the beneficial results of these experiences we may see now, but we may believe that the loving Father above is making them all to co-operate together for disciplinary and remedial ends in the lives of his people.



Quiz

1. What does the death of Jesus reveal as to God's attitude to sin? 2. What does the death of Jesus show as to God's regard for the sinner? 3. What prompted the gift of Jesus to be man's saviour? 4. Can you distinguish between God and Jesus as saviour? 5. What are some of the results of the death of Jesus? 6. What are some of the consequences of rejecting Jesus?

Topics for Further Study

1. The effects of sin in this life. 2. The consequences of sin after this life. 3. The double meaning of the cross—God's love and God's hate. 4. "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself." 5. The symbolic sacrifices of the Old Testament. 6. Salvation only through Jesus.

CHAPTER VIII

OUR PART (MAN'S CO-OPERATION)

Two Sides. In the work of human salvation God is not the only actor. There are two sides to the redemption that is possible for mankind. The union of the soul with Jesus Christ in saving relation is effected on the divine side by the agency of the Holy Spirit, who is the gift of divine mercy and love. There is also a human side to salvation. Man has something to do with his own salvation. He is not wholly passive even at the beginning of the divine life. Man's part is no less important than God's. God and men are co-partners in the grand work of saving men. The desired results cannot be obtained without the work of both. In the divine plan there is a place appointed for man himself and his action. Man therefore must cooperate with God in the securing of the redemption of his soul and in the leading of the holy life.

Conversion. The new life that is lived by the believer in union with Jesus Christ may thus be viewed from two standpoints. Regarded from the human side the change that takes place in the believer, in the common language of the people, is

called conversion. It is a term that is used to designate what appears to take place when a soul in penitence and faith turns to God, and thus comes into fellowship with him. It means a turning, and that is what seems to occur when a soul is filled with a sense of sin and danger, and comes seeking God's forgiveness and favor. It is the human side of what theologians call regeneration, or a change of heart, or a new birth. It is the soul's free action in turning to God under the influence of the Spirit of God.

Repentance not Sorrow. There are two chief acts in the life of the believer at the beginning of his new life with God. They are repentance and faith. Repentance is too often and mistakenly associated with tears and sorrow. With people not a few it is thought of as some painful experience through which one must needs go in order to become a Christian. Feelings of regret and grief may come to the soul that seeks safety and life in Jesus Christ. But those feelings do not constitute the essence of repentance. The soul that awakes to a consciousness that it is in rebellion against the best friend ever known, and losing the most precious things in life as well as a hope for the life eternal, naturally would feel regretful for the past and sad over the loss already incurred.

Repentance a Change of Mind. But Bible repentance is more than tears and stings of conscience. Real repentance is a change of attitude toward God

and sin both, a change that manifests itself in turning to one and turning away from the other. Primarily, repentance is a change of thought as a result of thought. In the language of the New Testament it means a change of mind or purpose. It may or it may not be accompanied with painful feelings and tearful regrets. They are not uncommon in the experience of those who have been led to see what great and costly mistakes they might and ought to have avoided. But the essence of repentance is not in them, but in the determination of mind and purpose of heart that sets the soul to seek what God wants and what Jesus offers.

A Turning from Sin. When a man changes his mind, you may reasonably look for a change in his conduct. When a new purpose has settled in the heart, there is likely to be some changes in the furniture. 'A change in determination of the mind will produce a change in demeanor of the life. When the mind is set on a new purpose, the man will soon be set on a new career. The second step in repentance is a getting away from sin. As soon as the higher standard of life has been accepted, the soul will make haste to break off the evil ways and practices that are contrary to the better choice. Repentance, then, is a change of mind or purpose that results in a change in life. Moody used to say that repentance meant three things: "Halt; right about face; march." John the Baptist told the crowds who came out to him for baptism to "bring

forth therefore fruits worthy of repentance," *i. e.*, fruits that show that there is a real change of purpose (Luke 3:8). Peter declared to the alarmed multitudes on the day of Pentecost, as they cried out for knowledge as to what to do, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ," *i. e.*, change your purpose and mind and show that change in an act of your life (Acts 2:38).

Faith More than Assent. Another primary act of soul closely connected with that of repentance, and in the Scripture frequently associated with it is faith. "Repentance looks back and forsakes. Faith looks forward and accepts." Faith is more than is sometimes attributed to it. It is more than a mere intellectual assent to any doctrine or set of doctrines or truths. Assent to all the truths that are known about God and religious things would not be biblical faith. A man may believe the whole Bible and yet not have Bible faith, or faith as it is taught in the Bible. The devils are said to believe and tremble, but they are not said to have saving faith that gives them fellowship with God.

Faith a Commitment. Faith is such a confidence in God as leads one to surrender his soul to God. It is a trust in a Person rather than a proposition, the acceptance of a Christ rather than a creed. "The soul believes in God's presence and promises, and commits itself to Christ," is Doctor Snowden's explanation of it. Faith is such a trust in Christ as

leads one to venture upon him in spite of his sinfulness and with all his needs. The eleventh chapter of the book of Hebrews is full of beautiful illustrations of what is meant by faith. There the soul is committed to God in absolute trustfulness, as Moses committed his and the other patriarchs who "endured as seeing him who is visible." "Whenever a soul has such a persuasion concerning God or Christ that it will yield itself to him to do his will, then saving faith has arrived, whether the knowledge possessed is much or little, whether tears flow from the eyes or smiles irradiate the countenance."

Obedience. There is a third step in man's cooperation with God in the transforming of a soul into his likeness. It is no less important than the other two already mentioned. That is obedience. These three attributes all rendezvous in the same soul. In both the Old and the New Testament obedience is especially emphasized. By one act of obedience Christ is said to have become the author of eternal salvation, but that same salvation is the portion of those who obey him (Heb. 5:9). Following God's commandments is made the test of man's love for God (John 14:15, 23). It is only through carrying out God's orders that man can prove his trust in him, and only in the doing of his will that he puts himself in the way so that God can do for him and with him what his infinite love and wisdom have planned for him. By obey-

ing God man becomes a co-worker with God, even as the clerk who heeds the instruction of the overseer becomes a co-worker with him. The man who does not at least make an honest and earnest attempt to obey God shows himself destitute of the trust that would commit his soul to him and make a complete surrender.

Right Standing. When a man has repented of his sins and forsaken them, when he has committed his soul to Christ in an attempted obedience to his requirements, then he is in good standing with God, then he is in right relations to him, then he stands as he should with and before God. When he has done these things he occupies the position that is meant by the New Testament term, "justified." He is pronounced right, and is right before the Judge of all the earth. God "is just himself and the justifier of him that hath faith in Jesus" (Rom. 3:26, R. V.). This does not mean that the man is perfect, nor that he has never done any wrong. But it means that he is in a new and right relation to God. He has turned from his sins and turned to God. He has accepted God's gracious help, and is trying to do what God asks him to do. Thereby he is just where he ought to be, and where God wants him to be. So God recognizes him and regards him as an accepted man. God sees him in Christ, to whom he is united by faith, and he is "justified in his blood" as Paul declares it, or as he states it in Rom. 5:1, "justified by faith."

Quiz

1. What is the divine side of our salvation called?
2. What is the name given to the human side of our entrance into the Christian life?
3. What do you understand by "repentance"?
4. What will follow true repentance?
5. What do you understand faith to be?
6. What is the natural sequel to faith?
7. What is the standing of the man who thus truly trusts in Jesus Christ?

Topics for Further Study

1. Is man selfish in his desire for salvation?
2. Is salvation a crisis, or a process, or both?
3. How can we explain the use in Scripture of the three expressions "saved," "being saved," and "shall be saved"?
4. Explain "Now is salvation nearer to us than when we first believed" (Rom. 13:11).
5. What is the ground of assurance in salvation?
6. What is involved in the expression "surrender to Christ"?

CHAPTER IX

OUR NEW LIFE (THE LIFE OF FAITH)

Our salvation is due primarily to the power and the sacrifice of Jesus Christ acting as and for God. But when we have put faith in the Son of God and have started in the way of obedience to his commands, we have only begun what is to continue until life here ends. There is a life divine to live here on the earth as well as a Saviour divine to love and follow. Our salvation has begun, but we are to work it out (Phil. 2: 12).

Life of Faith. The life of the soul that is in touch with God through faith is carried on through divine influences that are perpetually at work. God works in the believing soul his wonders to perform, but he works mysteriously as well. His Spirit helps our infirmities. But man has a part in keeping up and building up the new life that he helped to set up at the beginning of his new career. He began by committing his soul to Christ. He must continue by trusting it still with Christ. The life that had a beginning through personal reliance on God must be sustained and fed by incessant resting on him. As one trusts a friend, a business associate, or companion in society enough to

heed his word, so the Christian needs to trust God by seeking for instructions and by following them. He looked to God for pardon at the start of his new life. Now he must look to him for wisdom and strength after he has been pardoned. The God who called him and saved him waits to help and guide him in every event and experience of his life here and now, and to give him final triumph in death. "I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I that live, but Christ liveth in me: and that life which I now live in the flesh I live in faith, *the faith* which is in the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself up for me" (Gal. 2: 20, R. V.). Such is the faith life that belongs to the believer, and ought to be sought by him.

Prayer Life. The soul that lives trustfully with God will often talk with God. He will yearn to be with him oft, and will seek zealously to find out what his mind and will are, especially as they concern his own little life. Therefore he will approach the Father in prayer, lifting up his voice to him and opening his heart toward him. That will be one way that faith will be kept strong and vigorous, for prayer is bread for faith. Prayer is one of the greatest helps, ever at the believer's side and within his reach. Prayer has been called communion with God, the soul's address to God on matters of interest to mankind, the opening of the heart with all its desires to God, "the soul giving expression of its needs and aspirations unto God."

The practice of prayer is one of the most profitable exercises of the soul. Jesus often in the midst of his busy and trying career resorted to his Father in prayer. Often he would leave his disciples and go away to be alone with the Father so that he might talk with him. When he had some great experience to endure or some important duty to perform, he usually went first to God in prayer. So when he was baptized he was in prayer. Before he chose the twelve apostles to be with him, he sought the Father in consultation. Prayer is more than asking something from God. It is the making known of our thoughts and desires unto God in a spirit of dependence upon him, and in a willingness to have his will done in us. Thus we bring ourselves into harmony with God. We get into the light where we can see things somewhat as God sees them. We put ourselves into such a frame of mind that God can use us, and that we are willing to be used by him and according to his love and wisdom. Nothing is too great or too small to take to God in prayer (Phil. 4:6). God has made great promises to those who live in this prayerful attitude toward him (John 14:13, 14; 15:7; 16:23).

While strangers to prayer we are strangers to bliss;
Heaven pours its full streams through no medium but this;
And till we the seraphim's ecstasy share,
Our chalice of joy must be guarded by prayer.
Prayer, prayer, O sweet prayer,
Be it ever so simple, there's nothing like prayer.

Knowledge of Truth. Another source of helpfulness in the life of faith is a knowledge of the truth. Every believer ought to be a student of God and his world. The son is interested in his father and in his business. The more he gets interested the more he seeks to familiarize himself with the details and workings of the concern. So ought the child of God to take an active and intelligent interest in all the affairs of God and his kingdom. He will grow and his soul will feed on that knowledge. One of the most stimulating things for a soul is an enlarging understanding of truth as revealed in the Bible or in nature, in science or in the excavations that are opening up the life of the past in the world's history to the gaze of the present generation. Jesus prayed for his disciples that they might be sanctified in the truth (John 17:17). In order that we may think God's thoughts we must know them. In order to know them we must seek them out. God is not going to thrust them upon us as he does the air we breathe. He is not going to illumine our minds as he does our earthly pathway by sending beams of sunlight to show them. If we get to know, we will determine to seek to know and do his will and mind (John 7:17). They who seek to know the most will be the best and stanchest Christians.

Like Christ. By faith, prayer, and a knowledge of truth the believer will find himself on the way to a career that will reveal the Christ in him, and

make the eagle-eyed world on the watch for flaws and foibles take notice of him that he is different from what he once was. That will be his supreme aim to become so possessed of the spirit of Jesus Christ that others shall note in him the growing elements of a Christlikeness. He will seek to be Christ in miniature. Honesty, truthfulness, sobriety, self-control, gentleness, kindness, courtesy, benevolence, and patience will find a cordial welcome to his soul and life. His word will be better than gold. His presence will be like the sun, warming and invigorating and brightening all about him. His whole ambition and creed will be summed up in the words of Christ, "Follow me."

The Ministering Life. To have a good time and to consume good things that others have prepared for him will not be the aim of one who has caught the Christ spirit. He will find himself in a world full of trouble and need, and awake to the fact that he has something that may serve to alleviate the world's woes, and soothe its aching hearts. He will find himself seeking to do good rather than to get good. It was said of Jesus, and it was one of the noblest eulogies ever pronounced upon him, that he "went about doing good" (Acts 10:38). When the Son of God would explain what his life was intended to be, he added: "The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many" (Matt. 20:28). Jesus lived that life of service for others.

Nothing short of it ought to be the Christian's aim. It is by lives that have been touched and toned by the Spirit of Christ that the world is to be leavened, as the loaf is by that which has leaven in it. The natural and first thing for the Jesus spirit is to help somebody. James and John went after their brothers as soon as they found out what was in the Christ; Philip sought out his countryman, Nathanael; Dorcas sewed for the widows of Joppa; Barnabas sold his farm that he might relieve the want of his fellow-Christians; Aquila and Priscilla taught Apollos the way of the Lord; and the believers in Rome went out to meet and cheer the prisoner on his way to death. Such a life of helpfulness to some one around is the sure index of the presence of the spiritual life that is in and through faith in Christ Jesus. The Christian's happiness hinges upon the doing of what he knows he ought. "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them" (John 13:17). Surely the highway to joy and greatness too is the pathway of service for others (Matt. 20:26).



Quiz

1. What obligation attaches to the man who says, "I am a Christian"? 2. What is true prayer? 3. How can a Christian come to know God's will? 4. What is the Christian's ideal in living? 5. What was the conspicuous characteristic of the career of

Jesus? 6. What do you understand by the text Gal. 2:20?

Topics for Further Study

1. Prayer as an aid to Christian living.
2. Knowledge of God's will necessary to right action.
3. The authority of conscience in a Christian's life.
4. The value of the testimony of an upright life.
5. Scientific studies a help to Christian life.
6. How may tendencies and habits be corrected?
7. Taking up the cross to follow Jesus.

CHAPTER X

OUR NEW RÉGIME (THE KINGDOM OF GOD)

Something New. Something new among men was what Jesus came into the world to establish. He did not bring religion into a world which had none, but he gave a new idea of what real and vital religion was, showing that it did not consist in meat and drink, but in a new spirit. He did not teach men for the first time to be great, but he pointed out a new way to attain greatness, saying to his followers: "Whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister, and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant" (Matt. 20: 26, 27). When he would come into a man's soul, that one would become a new creature although he be the same man. So he would introduce into the world a new order of life and a new kind of rule in the relationship of men to one another. Things should be done among the people of earth as they are done in heaven. The same spirit should govern in men's conduct and dealings with one another while living here that obtains among the dwellers in the heavenly regions, where they do the will of God. The kind of rule that God would have Jesus secure among men was

set forth in the phrase, "The kingdom of God," or "The kingdom of heaven."

Men's Ideas. So when Jesus started out on his mission in the earth, he taught men so to live that "the kingdom of God" might be ushered in. When he sent out his disciples into the towns and villages round about, he commanded them to preach "the kingdom of heaven," or the gospel of the kingdom. Men are not perfectly agreed as to exactly what the expression means. Prof. Shailer Mathews says: "By the kingdom of God Jesus meant an ideal social order, in which the relation of man to God is that of sons, and to each other that of brothers." Prof. J. Orr thinks that it is "a new principle of divine rule into the hearts of men, through the word, the truth, the Spirit, in virtue of which, changed in disposition, they become doers of the will of the Father in heaven." Prof. W. N. Clarke maintains that Jesus intended by it "the spiritual reign of God in the actual life of men," while Rev. James H. Snowden asserts that the common meaning of it as used in Scriptures is "God's reign in the hearts and lives of his believing people."

Jesus' Presentation. Now let us turn to examine what Jesus himself said of it and commanded concerning it. When he entered upon his public ministry among men, his first announcement was, "The kingdom of heaven is at hand." We are also told that Jesus "went about all the cities and villages,

teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom." According to Jesus' view, membership in it was almost priceless, so valuable that a man would make no mistake if he put it first among the things that he should seek, and accounted it worth more than all things else. It formed a chief element in his preaching from the beginning to the end of his ministry. His great aim was to bring men into the kingdom. It was something that men could enter at that time, and was present among them. The terms of admission to it were the doing of God's will (Matt. 7:21), or the possession of the childlike spirit (Matt. 18:3). To pray for its coming was equivalent to praying that God's will might be done in earth as it is done in heaven (Matt. 6:10). That it was to be a spiritual matter was indicated when Jesus told Nicodemus that to enter into it meant a change so great that it would practically amount to a new birth, a birth from above (John 3:3, 5).

Affects all Life. But while the kingdom was spiritual, yet it would be something that would so affect the members in it that they would be found carrying out the will and wish of God in all that they did. It would begin within them, but would manifest itself in the outer life. It would work within their inner life, and then work itself out into their life and dealings with one another. This life that is tantamount to the life of God in men, that amounts to the introduction in human con-

duct of the principles and spirit of the heavenly realms, must needs touch life at every angle and in every relationship of man with man. That would involve the execution of God's will in man as a citizen, as a member of society, as a dweller in the home, as a worker in the shop or office, and as a character-builder for himself. Such, I think, is Christ's notion of the kingdom of heaven among men.

Not the church. The kingdom is not equivalent to the church. It is something that is to be furthered and established by means of the church. Unlike the church, it has no officers nor organization. It is unlimited by national boundaries or by racial distinctions, but in the end it is to embrace all nations and kindreds of mankind. It is possible for one to be in the church and not be in the kingdom, and also possible for one to be in the kingdom and not be in the church. The kingdom includes all believing souls who are living a righteous life wherever they are and whatever may be their nationality or color. Whatever therefore promotes the good, whatever helps people to become Godlike in spirit and action, and whatever enables them to exemplify the spirit of brothers, is helping to bring about the establishment of the kingdom of heaven among men.

Helping on the Kingdom. This view of the kingdom of God brings to each one a part in its setting up on earth. Jesus and his apostles did not do

all that was to be done to effect it. The bringing to pass of such a condition of things in the earth that men and women will be like children of a holy God, treating one another as brothers and sisters is not such an accomplished fact that the people of our day have nothing to do in it. In the Lord's directions for prayer we are taught to pray for its coming. It would be almost mockery for Jesus to ask us to pray for what has already come to pass. Jesus evidently expected men to labor to bring to a reality that for which they are to petition their heavenly Father. Here then is mankind's opportunity. By embodying in human life what gives it a heavenly flavor and makes it tally with the teachings of Jesus, each one can have some part in bringing to earth the kingdom for which men are to pray. All attempts to find and help others to the possession of a character like that of Jesus is work of such a nature that it will contribute to the presence of this rule of God among men. Here is the field for the church's operations and influence. The church is the visible representative of the kingdom among men, and although it is not yet perfect, still it is the one institution that stands for the kingdom as its champion and advocate.

Final Triumph. The final triumph of this kingdom is still in the future, for we see not yet God's will as the universal rule in the world, nor all things as yet brought into subjection to him. But the battle is on, and the fight is hot between right and

wrong, between truth and falsehood, between righteousness and sin. Victory is to perch in the end upon the banner of the conquering Christ as carried by his believing people. The kingdoms of this world are yet to become the kingdom of the Anointed of God, and his knowledge fill the earth as the waters cover the sea. The chariot wheels of the Son of God are rolling on, and will not stop until the last enemy yields submission to the King of kings and Lord of lords. Therefore be of good courage, and put on the whole armor of God, and having done all, to stand—stand for the right until right shall reign and God is all in all.



Quiz

1. Why did Jesus come into the world? 2. What do you understand by the words "The kingdom of heaven"? 3. What are the conditions of entrance into the kingdom of heaven? 4. How is the kingdom of heaven at once both here and coming? 5. What is the difference between the church and the kingdom? 6. What are the present prospects for the kingdom of heaven? 7. What can we do to advance the kingdom of God?

Topics for Further Study

1. What is the real mission of the church? 2. The kingdom of God—what is it? 3. In what respects does the kingdom in the New Testament

differ from the kingdom in the Old Testament? 4. If a church fails to recognize its relation to the kingdom does it lose its value in the world? 5. Social service and kingdom progress. 6. Can the State serve to advance the kingdom of God?

CHAPTER XI

OUR ORGANIZATION (THE CHURCH)

Jesus the Founder. Advocates of political ideas are organized into parties, soldiers are brought together into armies, and the early Christians assembled together in societies, called churches. The new conceptions of life and the new principles of conduct that Jesus announced were to be made known and explained to the people, who were expected to adopt and follow them. This could best be done by gathering together into assemblies those who believed them, and who had already begun to fashion their lives after the pattern of the Perfect One. Therefore to keep alive the ideas that he taught, and to give them to the whole world, for whom they were intended and to whose needs they were adapted, Jesus called twelve men, and for three years trained and taught them that they might go out and teach others. Then, with them and those who would become his disciples and accept his teachings, Jesus founded the church, and to it he entrusted his truths, the gospel of the Son of God. Thus he preserved for all time the precious seeds of divine truth, and provided for their sowing among all the kindreds of mankind. It is due

to the work and teaching of this church that these treasures of knowledge and life have not been lost to the race, but are bringing forth rich harvests in all quarters of the globe, in better governments among the nations, in purer notions of society, in more exalted conceptions of the life of the home, in truer living among individuals, and in the recognition of one's responsibility for the welfare of others besides himself.

Original with Jesus. While Jesus said little about this church while he walked and talked with his apostles, he did announce its founding and principles to them. It was, therefore, original with him, and from him started on its glorious and beneficent career. It was not an Old Testament institution modified to suit the needs of his day, and providing for an elaborate ritual with its bloody offerings and endless ceremonies. It was a new organization, based upon new ideas, and so simple in its form that it could be used among all nations of men. The Jewish church was not fit for the work and ideas that Jesus was setting up and setting going. It was too dead and stilted for the spiritual doctrines of the Christ, whose kingdom was not of this world. The religious leaders of the schools of Jesus' day would have made little progress in explaining and enforcing the spiritual principles that were to revolutionize society, government, and the dealings of men with men. So Jesus established and appointed a new institution, with twelve espe-

cially trained men to organize it and to give it footing among the people. The first time that the word for church is used in the New Testament it is given as falling from the lips of the Christ himself (Matt. 16:18). The meaning of the word that he employs to designate his church is "an assembly, or congregation." Hence it signifies an assembly of believers, composed of such people as Peter was when he made his notable confession of Christ as the Son of the living God (Matt. 16:16-18). Once afterward Jesus referred to the church when it means a local body of Christians (Matt. 18:17).

Growth of the Church. The church filled a large place in the lives and thought of the apostles, as is shown in the Acts of the Apostles and in the Epistles of the New Testament. These men, upon whom Jesus had breathed the Holy Spirit and whom he had commissioned to go into the world and preach his gospel, went out into the towns and provinces, proclaiming the word of God, gathering converts and forming them into churches in the places where they held their meetings. They were groups, or gatherings, of those who had believed and been baptized. They were like loving families of spiritual disciples, meeting together for worship, and observing the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper, both of which Jesus himself had appointed to be observed. They had no imposing houses of worship at the first. They met

together wherever they could, sometimes in the homes of some of the believers, at other times on the river banks or elsewhere. They had no ornate ritual nor sacrifices. Rapidly the number of these assemblies grew up in many places on or near the shores of the Mediterranean Sea. From the day of Pentecost, when three thousand were converted into believers in a day, these churches multiplied.

Officers. At the first the apostles, as was natural, were the leading figures in these democratic assemblies. They had the general oversight of the congregations. But, as the number of disciples multiplied so fast, they soon found that their duties were getting so numerous and so much attention was demanded of them in the administration of the affairs of the congregations, that they had too little time for the preaching of the gospel and the expounding of the word. The poor were so many and the care of them so great, that to save their time and at the same time see that the needs of the poor were met, certain men were especially selected for that duty. They were chosen by the whole body of disciples, and then set apart to the work by the apostles, by prayer and the laying on of hands (Acts 6: 1-7). These were the first officers of which we have any record in the New Testament. Later, other officials were appointed as the church grew and the occasions demanded. The church was a growth in organization as well as in numbers. Several of the officers are named, such

as "apostles," "evangelists," "prophets," "pastors and teachers," men who evidently had gifts that qualified them especially for the duties that they were chosen to perform (1 Cor. 12:28; Eph. 4:11).

Two classes of officers have come down to our day, and seem to have been the two that were generally recognized in the early church. They are called pastors and deacons. "Elder" and "bishop" are two other titles that occur in the New Testament. But they seem to refer to the same office that belonged to the pastor, and the terms seem to have been used synonymously and interchangeably. Paul and Barnabas "ordained them elders in every church" (Acts 11:30) as they proceeded upon their missionary tours. That the names of elder and bishop refer to the same office is seen in Paul's use of them both, in describing the same persons. He sent for "the *elders* of the church" of Ephesus, and when they had come to him, he charged them to take heed "to all the flock in which the Holy Spirit hath made you *bishops*" (Acts 20:28, R. V.). There is not a word in the New Testament about handing down any office from generation to generation in "apostolic succession." Doctor Snowden truthfully says: "The apostles originally were the immediate disciples and witnesses of Christ, and in this sense could have no successors."

Government and Creed. The churches were originally independent bodies of believers, each

having its own officers and governing itself according to its own rule. They were democratic assemblies, the whole assemblies having a voice in their deliberations and in making their decisions. Each congregation was a little State of itself, making its own laws and choosing its own officials. But as these assemblies multiplied in numbers, they found occasions where mutual consultation and conference were needed. Accordingly, they used to send delegates from the different churches to meet in council with one another in some appointed place, for deliberation and advice on questions that perplexed them. The first one of these of which we have a record met in Jerusalem and decided a question that threatened to divide Christendom (Acts 15). These churches had no binding creed of an intellectual character to which its members had to give assent before being admitted. They believed and were baptized, but there is no record that they had to acknowledge assent to any statement of doctrine. "It is the glory of the earliest church," says Phillips Brooks, "that it had for its people no demanded creed of abstract doctrine whatsoever."

Ordinances. While these bodies of Christians were so free from binding rules, elaborate rituals, and costly sacrifices, and could worship anywhere, indoor or out, at home or in a building set apart specially for that purpose, still they had two ordinances that they observed. They were baptism and

the Lord's Supper, sometimes called, "the breaking of bread." These two ordinances were appointed by Jesus Christ, and practised by his apostles as they went out to organize churches and evangelize the multitudes. Baptism was the immersion of a believer in water. "To immerse, plunge, or dip" is the generally accepted meaning of the word that the New Testament writers use when they speak of baptism. That this is its true meaning is confirmed by the practices of the apostles, as given in the book of Acts. Jesus set the example by going down into the river Jordan and being baptized by John the Baptist (Matt. 3:13-17; Mark 1:9). He commanded it to be practised by those who were to carry on his work after him (Matt. 28:19). The apostles did as they were told, baptizing those who believed (Acts 2:38; 8:38; 9:18; 10:48; 16:15, 33). Paul uses this rite as a symbol to declare in visible form the burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ (Rom. 6:4) and the union of the believer to him. Thus it becomes a public profession of faith in Christ. The Lord's Supper was instituted by Jesus with his apostles about him (Matt. 26:26), and Paul assures us that he appointed it for all time, till the Christ shall come again (1 Cor. 11:23, etc.). It is to be observed as a memorial of Jesus and his death, the bread and the wine used symbolizing the broken body and the shed blood of the Saviour who "died for our sins." Its observance becomes, therefore, an exhibition of faith

in him and a pledge of loyalty to him. If these two ordinances were important enough in the mind of Jesus Christ to be commanded by him, they certainly ought to be of sufficient worth to be observed by his followers.

This church, founded by Jesus and his apostles, is not in the world for naught, nor has it been useless. In spite of all the imperfections of its members, the mistakes of its leaders, and the false ones who have found admittance to it, the church of Jesus Christ has stood for, and as the champion of, the best and purest things of life, and been the dauntless defender of "the faith once delivered to the saints." It has had within its folds the noblest and most Christlike men of history. It has dotted the world with benevolent institutions of almost every character and description. It has illumined the dark places of earth with a celestial radiance, and set a light in every tomb. It is, with irresistible might and influence, permeating heathen lands with a civilizing and Christianizing element, and is making the forces of evil gradually surrender their hold upon human society, government, and home. It is and always will be the defender of the helpless, the champion of the right, the promoter of the pure, and the invincible foe of wrong until darkness and sin have fled away and the dawn of the perfect day has come. The world needs it as it needs the atmosphere we breathe or as the light that shines upon our way.

Quiz

1. With whom did the church originate? 2. Who are qualified for membership in the church? 3. What are the ordinances of the church? 4. What are the proper officers for a church? 5. Describe the growth of the church idea among the early Christians. 6. What relation did one church bear to another in early times? 7. Account for Associations and Conventions as they exist to-day. 8. Name some things that have been accomplished by the church.

Topics for Further Study

1. Does the simplicity of our church organization limit its efficiency? 2. Is the church failing to meet the needs of to-day? 3. What are the advantages of an institutional church? 4. Is the church of to-day too elaborately organized? 5. Advantages and disadvantages of credal statements. 6. What about religious organizations outside of the church?

CHAPTER XII

OUR FUTURE (THINGS TO COME)

Our Ignorance. Let us tread carefully, let us think charitably, let us follow trustfully, as we come to look ahead and into things that prophets and angels have desired to see and have not seen, and of which even inspired men have spoken in language hard to be understood, and in figures of speech and wordy pictures that cannot be interpreted with absolute certainty even in our day. The language of the Scriptures in the description of coming events is largely pictorial and figurative. Instead of plain statements, the writers have used pictures set in words, allusions to things almost unknown, and many times have been absolutely silent concerning matters intensely interesting to scholars and Christians alike. Therefore it is with the greatest difficulty that one can construct a satisfactory course for future events out of the materials revealed. We heartily agree with Doctor Clarke when he says: "In this vast and fascinating field of thought it is difficult to be faithful to our own ignorance." One thing is certain, that our salvation and hope for the future do not hinge upon our holding to any one view of the future, nor upon our

being able to set forth a harmonious arrangement of the figurative revelations in the Bible concerning the things to come.

Christ's Second Coming. One of the events that is constantly presented in the New Testament is what has been commonly termed "The Second Coming." Jesus often referred to it himself in such passages as those of Matt. 16:27; 24:29-31; 25:31, etc. The subject occupies a large place in the Epistles, where the writers appeared to think of it as something that was likely to occur in their day and generation. They repeatedly urged their readers to be ready at all hours, saying: "The time is short," "The Lord is at hand," and "Be ye sober and watch." But Jesus informed men that all men and angels, and even himself, were in ignorance of the day or hour. "Of that day and hour knoweth no one, not even the angels in heaven, neither the Son" (Mark 13:32, R. V.).

Three Views. Differences of opinion have always been entertained as to this great event, and all men will probably never agree upon it until they see it for themselves. One view is that called "Premillennial, or Premillenarian." According to this conception, the world is to grow worse and worse until Christ himself shall come in visible form, when he will inaugurate what is called "the millennium," and reign a thousand years. Then shall come the general judgment. The dead in Christ are to rise at his coming, and the impenitent dead

at the close of the thousand years. This view is based on such passages as 1 Thess. 4:13-17 and Rev. 20:1-7. The idea of the "postmillennial," or "postmillenarian" view is that the gospel is to be preached and transform the world into "a millennium," at the close of which Christ is to appear in the general judgment. The advocates of this theory contend that the teachings of Christ imply a slow process and a long time to bring about the prevalence of such a spiritual state. They appeal to the parables of "the good seed and the tares" and that of "the leaven." A third theory is that Christ left a work incomplete, and that he was to come back to carry it on to completion. The champions of this belief maintain that he did come in his spiritual presence with his people, as in the pouring out of his Spirit at Pentecost, and in the destruction of Jerusalem in A. D. 70. They think that his coming is not an event, but a process of steady advance in the spiritual kingdom.

Life after Death. That there is to be a life after this one somewhere and somehow has been generally held by all peoples as far as they have been heard from. That the soul shall live again in another realm is the certain teachings of the Scriptures. The cheering thought of another existence and the hope of another meeting for the dead was not absent entirely from the Old Testament presentation. But it is in the New Testament that this hope gains its sure support and radiant light.

There it is so clearly revealed that even death loses its terrors and the grave its horror. Jesus pointed it out and lighted it up in his teachings, bringing "life and immortality to light through the gospel" (2 Tim. 1:10). "Because I live ye shall live also" and "he that believeth on me, though he die, yet shall he live: and he that liveth and believeth on me shall never die" (John 11:25, 26) give the tenor of a large number of passages that make undoubted the hope of eternal life, and the inhabiting of a house "not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." A glorious inheritance is also held out as awaiting the redeemed of the Lord (1 Peter 1:3-5).

The Resurrection Body. This hope of entering into a blessed life of fellowship with God, and of union with loved ones beyond the pale of death, carries with it the necessity of the resurrection of the dead. The resurrection of the dead is guaranteed by that of Christ, and was explicitly taught by him (Matt. 22:23-33; John 5:28, 29). Paul outlines an extended view of the same doctrine with especial emphasis upon the resurrection of the body (1 Cor. 15). That the spirit is to have a body is undeniable from this chapter. The spirit is to be clothed with a spiritual body. The earthly body is adapted to the earthly surroundings and suited to the demands of the existence here. The spiritual body will be adapted to the spiritual environments, and answer to the demands of a spir-

itual existence. To this end the earthly body is to undergo such changes as will be equivalent to the making of a new one. The Lord Jesus Christ will "fashion anew the body of our humiliation, that it may be conformed to the body of his glory" (Phil. 3:21, R. V.). While we cannot pierce the veil that hides the glorified beings about the throne of God from our vision, yet from these hints we can be sure that one of these days we shall be clothed upon with a garment of glory as unsurpassable as that of Christ, and have a body as obedient to our spirits as was that of Jesus after his resurrection, when he appeared and disappeared at will.

Time of the Resurrection. The time of the resurrection is another point on which thinkers and teachers divide. The premillenarians believe that the believing dead will rise at the advent of Christ, and then, after a thousand years of Christ's reign, the rest of the dead will come forth, and the judgment will ensue. The postmillenarians contend that Christ will come to the earth in visible form, when all the dead will be raised and the judgment will take place. Still others assert that the resurrection takes place for each individual at the time of his death, and that the soul rises with a new organism of a spiritual character, so that the person is complete at his ascent. All are agreed that there is such a thing as a resurrection from the dead, and that all that is necessary for perfect hap-

piness and usefulness will be the possession of the believing soul. That is all that we need to know or believe.

The Judgment. Connected with the future life is another and by no means unimportant event. That is the judgment. Here too, it is most difficult to be "faithful to our ignorance," and not state for facts what is only fancy. That there is to be a judgment for all men is an incontrovertible allegation of Scripture (Rom. 14:10-12; Matt. 25:31-46; John 5:22, 27; 2 Cor. 5:10; Acts 17:31). God is to be our judge, and the test will be our works, as they have been revealed in our lives and have manifested our spirit and faith. What is in the life shows what was in the heart, as the water in the bucket shows what was in the well. To judge by our works is to judge by what was back of them and prompted them, even as the life of the tree works itself out into the leaves and blossoms.

Time of Judgment. When will this judgment be pronounced upon men? The answers to this are again many. By those who take the twenty-fifth chapter of Matthew as a literal, rather than a pictorial, representation of the judgment, there is to be a great assize, when all nations will be gathered together before the bar of God, and there and then be judged. But there is a growing number of scholars who believe that that is a pictorial setting forth of the fact that there is a judgment for every

soul, and that there is no escape therefrom, and that it should be interpreted as a picture, intended to illustrate one thing, rather than as giving the details of such a scene as the judgment of humanity. These affirm that the judgment occurs for each one at the time of his death, even as the resurrection does. Here again the thing of importance for us is that all believe in the fact of a judgment for every one, that it is one according to our lives, and that the judge will be God. Beyond that we get into the midst of controversy and into mists of uncertainties.

After Judgment. All people will not live together in the life to come, regardless of what kind of people they have been here. There is to be a separation some day. The wicked and the righteous are not to dwell in the same place nor in the same state. Two different states await two different classes of people. Those who have sought to conform their living to God's desires and to his standard of conduct, through faith in Jesus Christ, can rest assured that unspeakably precious and eternal rewards await them, and those who have refused so to live shall be cut off and suffer eternal loss. We cannot understand, nor have we been told, the details as to the states of the wicked and the righteous. Sufficient for some of us it is to know that the Bible teaches us that what is promised to the righteous is not what is pronounced to be the lot of the wicked in the hereafter. When

God and Jesus wanted to depict the future of the wicked and unbelieving, they used figures of speech and pointed out objects that in the human mind are associated with the most abhorrent and horrible things known, such as fire and hail, blackness and darkness, a horrible tempest, a lake of fire, fires that cannot be quenched, and everlasting punishment. But when they sought to represent the future of those who have done good, they employed just the opposite kind of figures and things, such as are pictured in the human mind with the sweetest, most desirable, richest, and most abiding experiences of life—feasts of fat things, festivals and marriages, pavements of gold, cities that have foundations, shining as the stars, a kingdom, thrones and crowns, where neither death nor suffering ever comes and where separation from loved ones is never known, and above all, the very home and presence of God and Christ. That is enough to know until we know as we have been known. Till then with Baxter we sing:

My knowledge of that life is small,
The eye of faith is dim;
But 'tis enough that Christ knows all,
And I shall be with him.



Quiz

1. What are some of the difficulties in the way of our knowing future things? 2. What does Jesus

say about his second coming? 3. What are the three views commonly held regarding his coming? 4. What is the significance of this variety of opinion? 5. On what basis does our hope for a resurrection and future life rest? 6. What is your conviction as to the destiny of the righteous and the wicked? 7. What is involved in the words "judged according to his works"?

Topics for Further Study

1. The importance of the study of Christian doctrine. 2. Why has Jesus left so much uncertainty about future things? 3. Will the body come from the grave in the resurrection? 4. Is the second coming of Jesus a fact to be realized? 5. What is to be obtained by the general judgment? 6. When there is so much uncertainty about future things, why study about them?



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