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LAST THINGS LAST.

We opened the year by writing upon "First things First," so it seems appropriate that we should offer a few remarks upon Last things in this closing issue of 1939. The subject suggested by this title could be dealt with in various ways. We might, for example, consider that procrastinating tendency of fallen human nature to put off till later things which ought to be seriously attended to now. *Death* was the last thing in the experience of the countless millions whose bodies now lie in the cemeteries: how many of them were prepared to pass out of time into Eternity? Like we, they knew that their life span would be but a comparatively short one at best. Yet, like most of our generation, it is greatly to be feared the majority of them lived as though they were going to continue here indefinitely, with plenty of time before them for preparing to meet their God. Here is a case where last things must not be left to the last. "O that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would *consider* their latter end!" (Deut. 32:29).

Or, we might well dwell on the fact that the closing days of another year call for a solemn *review* of the months now behind us: how far we have redeemed the time, or to what extent we have trifled it away. "Thou shalt *remember* all the way which the LORD thy God led thee" (Deut. 8:2). We should be humbled at the recollection of how frequently we grumbled because His way was not the one we desired. We should judge ourselves unsparingly because we so often lagged behind, and sought to turn aside into forbidden bypaths. We should ponder the amazing grace of God in condescending *to lead* us across this trackless desert, and think, too, of His infinite forbearance in *continuing* to lead those so ungrateful and intractable. We should praise Him for having kept us in the Narrow Way, which we had certainly forsaken had we been left to follow the bent of our own evil lusts. And we should return fervent thanks that we are now a year's march nearer our Heavenly Home.

Again, we might consider how this order of last things last is now being so extensively *displaced* in the modern world. In 1 Timothy 2, where the Holy Spirit issues the command, "Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence" (vv. 11, 12), He points out, "for Adam was *first* formed, *then* Eve" (v. 13). Headship was therefore given to the man (1 Cor. 11:3). In the church and in the home the man and not the woman is to bear rule (1 Peter 3:6). But more and more this Divine order is being defied, and those who should be in subjection are taking the lead, the last (in the order of creation) insisting they should be first. The harvest we are beginning to reap from this evil sowing is indeed tragic: seen in the unruliness and selfishness of the rising generation.

But it is quite another instance of this turning of things topsy-turvy against which we would here protest—one that seems to have escaped the notice of many—or at any rate, one which is now being widely tolerated. We allude to the course being followed in so many quarters of the insistent pressure of *Prophecy* upon young converts. No sooner do a number of young people make a profession of salvation than (in many places) Bible study classes are organized for their benefit, where, for the most part, they are entertained with a lot of sensationalism, drawn from the politics of the present national and international situation, under the pretence that such is the accomplishment of Divine prediction. Things of vital moment are relegated to the rear, and matters of far less importance are

pushed to the fore: doctrinal instruction, practical teaching, devotional incentives are largely ignored, and exciting disquisitions on future earthly events are substituted in their place.

In theological textbooks “Last things” (Eschatology) are rightly left for the closing chapters. We say “rightly,” for that is the order which God Himself has followed in the New Testament. Seven times over is the Apocalypse designated a “prophecy,” yet this is not placed at the beginning of the New Testament, but at *the end*—not that it is of least importance, but because we are not ready for it until we have digested the contents of the 26 books which precede it. It betokens gross spiritual incompetence, as well as carnal impudence, for self-styled Bible teachers to invert and so pervert this Divine order, and it results in harm and not good to those who sit under them. In our day-schools, teachers have too much sense than to turn their scholars to the last chapters of a textbook on grammar or arithmetic before they have thoroughly mastered the earlier ones. Alas, that the children of this world are so often wiser than the children of light.

Incalculable harm is being done by this putting of “Last things” first in the lives of young converts—this bringing before them the mysterious subjects of “the Revelation” before their characters have been formed after the example of Christ in the Gospels and by the precepts of the Epistles. Such a policy is as senseless and fatal as would be the teaching of infants how to fly an airplane. Instead of being exercised as to how they may please God, young converts are now having their minds diverted to how soon the battle of Armageddon is likely to be waged—a matter about which no one on earth has the slightest inkling. Instead of seeking a fuller knowledge of the Divine will for their own daily lives, babes in Christ are being occupied with profitless speculations as to how far Bolshevism and Fascism correspond to the “clay” and “iron” of Daniel 2:41. Instead of being instructed to seek a closer conformity to the image of Christ, they are puzzling their poor brains over the number and image of the Antichrist. Instead of giving themselves to earnest prayer for the revival of vital holiness, they are doting upon a “revived Roman empire.”

Moreover, at least nine-tenths of what is now being given out upon the subject of “Last things” is but vain speculations. Russellites [Jehovah’s Witnesses] and Adventists are capitalizing on political events by trading upon the credulity of the ignorant, and at the same time are fattening their purses at the expense of lovers of the sensational: but both blind leaders and blind victims all end in the Ditch. What is going to happen next among the Nations is no concern of those whose citizenship is in Heaven: our rest is not here, and therefore it is the part of wisdom to set our affection upon things above. God has given us “the Revelation” not to stimulate the spirit of curiosity, but to humble us into the dust over our ignorance. Any attempt to lift the veil of futurity is not only futile, but impious. Let those who are called to feed the flock of Christ see to it that they give them the nourishing milk of God’s Word, and not the filthy water of current happenings in the world. Leave “Last things” until the last!—A.W.P.

THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT.

13. *The Law and Retaliation*: Matthew 5:38-42.

In what is now to be before us we may perceive once more the deep importance of observing the *scope* of a speaker or writer—of ascertaining the meaning and relation of the context—before attempting to expound a passage. We will not enlarge any further here upon this, having already done so in the introductory paragraphs of one or more of the preceding articles. It is failure at this very point which has resulted in some commentators of renown missing the force of our present portion. They suppose that our Lord here announced a higher standard of spirituality than Moses did, that He introduced a more merciful code of conduct than that which was required during the Old Testament economy. Yet, incredible as it may sound, these same men insist that other verses in this very chapter do not belong to us at all, but pertain only to some “Jewish remnant” of the future!

It does seem strange that men who have no slight acquaintance with the letter of Scripture should err so flagrantly. Yet nothing is more blinding than prejudice, and when a pet theory is allowed to dominate the mind, then everything is twisted and forced to conform to it. Surely it is perfectly plain to every unbiased soul that, as the same God is the Author of old and new covenants alike, there can be no vital conflict between them, that the fundamental principles underlying the one and the other must be and are in full accord. If those who are so desirous of being looked up to as men who, “rightly divide the Word of Truth,” would cease their grotesque efforts to illustrate what they suppose are “dispensational distinctions,” and would rather seek to display the wondrous and blessed *unity* of the Old and New Testaments they would be rendering a more profitable service and God would be far more honoured.

A few of our own readers imagine that in our contending for the doctrinal and practical unity of the entire Scriptures that we confound two of its principal objects and subjects, and deny that there is any radical difference between the Law and the Gospel. This is quite an unwarrantable conclusion. Yet do not such mistakes have their roots in the supposition that the Gospel is peculiar only to the New Testament? But we ask, Doesn't the Old Testament contain more than types of the Gospel in the ceremonial law and predictions of it in the prophecies of Isaiah? Surely it does. Galatians 3:8 tells us expressly that the Gospel was preached unto Abraham, and Hebrews 4:2 insists that it was also proclaimed unto Israel in the wilderness. Does not the whole of Hebrews 11 make it very plain that the Old Testament saints were saved in precisely the same way and on exactly the same ground as we are? Assuredly it does.

“Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth: But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if any man will sue thee at the law and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also. And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile go with him twain. Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away” (Matt. 5:38-42). Christ is not here pitting Himself against the Mosaic law, nor is He inculcating a superior spirituality. Instead He continues the same course as He had followed in the context, namely, to define that righteousness demanded of His followers, which was more excellent than the one taught and practiced by the Scribes and Pharisees;

and this He does by exposing their error and expounding the spirituality of the moral Law.

“Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth” (v. 38). These words are found three times in the Pentateuch. They occur first in Exodus 21, a chapter which opens thus, “Now these are the judgments.” The word “judgments” signifies judicial laws. The statutes recorded therein were so many rules by which *the magistrates* were to proceed in the courts of Israel when trying a criminal. The execution of these statutes was not left to private individuals, so that each man was free to avenge his own wrongs, but they were placed in the hands of the public administrators of the Law. This is further borne out by the third occurrence of our text in Deuteronomy 19, for there we read, “And *the judges shall* make diligent inquisition . . . and thine eye shall not pity: but life shall go for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot” (vv. 18, 21).

A century or so ago such verses as those last quoted were made the object of bitter attacks both by atheists and Infidels, but today not a few who profess to be Christians denounce them as inhuman. In this flabby age, when sentiment overrides principle, the doctrine of an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth strikes many as being cruel and barbarous. We shall not waste time in replying to such rebels: in due course the Lord Himself will deal with them and vindicate His honour. Nor is there anything in His Holy Word which requires any apology from us: rather does it strengthen our faith when we find so many caviling at its contents. Nevertheless, there may be a few of the saints who are somewhat disturbed by the barks of these dogs, so for their sake we would call attention to one or two details.

First, this Divinely-prescribed rule was a *just* one: “And if a man cause a blemish in his neighbour: as he hath done, so shall it be done to him. Breach for breach, eye for eye, tooth for tooth: as he hath caused a blemish in a man, so shall it be done to him again” (Lev. 24:19, 20). What is more equitable than an exact quid pro quo? Surely it is a most elementary and unchanging principle of sound jurisprudence that the punishment should be made to fit the crime—neither more nor less. So far were the ancients in advance of our moderns that we find a heathen owning the righteousness of such a law: “But Adonibezek fled: and they pursued after him and caught him, and cut off his thumbs and his great toes. And Adonibezek said, Threescore and ten kings, having their thumbs and their great toes cut off, gathered under my table: as I have done, so God hath requited me” (Judges 1:6, 7). If it be objected that in this Christian era justice is far more tempered with mercy than was the case in Old Testament times, then we would remind the objector that, “Whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap” (Gal. 6:7) is found in the New Testament. “With what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again” (Matt. 7:2) are the words of Christ Himself.

Second, this Mosaic statute was a most merciful one. It is to be observed that in Exodus 21, both before and after the rule recorded in verses 23-25, legislation is there given concerning the rights of “servants,” or as the word really means “slaves.” If their masters, out of brutality or in a fit of rage, maimed them, then the magistrates were required to see to it that they in turn should be compelled to take a dose of their own medicine. Who can fail to see, then, that such a law placed a merciful restraint upon the passions of the owners and made for the safeguarding of the persons of their slaves. Moreover, this statute also curbed any judge who, in righteous indignation at the cruel injury of a slave was in-

clined to punish his master too severely: he was not allowed to demand a *life* for an eye, or a limb for a tooth!

Third, such an arrangement was a *beneficial* one for society as a whole, for this law applied not only to masters and servants but to all Israelites in general. It was designed to protect the weak against the strong, the peaceful from lovers of violence. It was a wise and necessary means for preserving law and order in the community. This is clear from the closing verses of Deuteronomy 19: "Then shall ye do unto him, as he had thought to have done unto his brother: so shalt thou put the evil away from among you. And those which remain shall hear, and fear, and shall henceforth commit no more any such evil among you" (vv. 19, 20). The fear of punishment—providing that punishment be severe and summary—would deter the passionate and vicious. Thus, so far, from this law being a cruel and barbarous one, it was a most just, merciful and beneficial one, calculated to remove "evil" and produce that which is good.

Ere passing on let it be pointed out that this law of judicial retaliation ought to be upon our statute books today and impartially and firmly enforced by our magistrates. Nothing would so effectually check the rapidly rising tide of crimes of violence. But alas so foolish and effeminate is the present generation that an increasing number are agitating for the abolition of capital punishment and the doing away with all corporeal punishment, and this in the face of the fact that in those countries where capital punishment is most loosely administered there is the highest percentage of murders, and that as corporeal punishment is relaxed crimes of brutal violence are greatly increasing. Those who have no regard for the persons of others are very tender of their own skins, and therefore the best deterrent is to let them know that the law will exact from them an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.

"No man needs to be more merciful than God. The benefit that will accrue to the public from this severity will abundantly recompense it. Such exemplary punishment will be warnings to others not to attempt such mischiefs" (From Matthew Henry's comments on Deut. 19:19-21). Magistrates were never ordained of God for the purpose of reforming reprobates nor to pamper degenerates, but to be His instruments for preserving law and order, and that, by being "*a terror to the evil*" (Rom. 13:3). The magistrate is "the minister of God," not to encourage wickedness, but to be an "avenger to execute *wrath* upon him that doeth evil" (Rom. 13:4). Let it not be forgotten that Christ Himself affirmed of the judge who refused to "avenge" the poor widow of her adversary, that he was one "who feared not God neither regarded man" (Luke 18:2).

Of course we do not expect to carry all our readers with us, and we shall be rather surprised if we receive no letters condemning us for such "harshness." But let us point out what we are firmly convinced are the causes of the moral laxity and the immoral sentimentality which now so widely prevails. We unhesitatingly blame *the pulpit* for the present sad state of affairs. The unfaithfulness of preachers is very largely responsible for the lawlessness which is now so rife throughout the whole of Christendom. During the last two or three generations thousands of pulpits have jettisoned the Divine Law, stating that it has no place in this dispensation of grace. And thus the most powerful of all *restraints* has been removed and license given to the lusts of the flesh.

Not only has the Divine Law been repudiated, but the Divine character has been grossly misrepresented. The attributes of God have been perverted by a one-sided presentation thereof. The justice, the holiness, and the wrath of God have been pushed into the

background, and a God that loves everybody thrust into the foreground. In consequence, the masses of churchgoers *no longer fear God*. For the past 50 years the vast majority of pulpits have maintained a guilty silence on Eternal Punishment so that few now have any dread of the wrath to come. This logically follows from the former, for no one needs to stand in any terror of One who loves him. The repercussions have been unmistakable, drastic, and tragic. Sickly sentimentality regulated the pulpit until it dominated the pew, and this evil leaven has so spread that it now permeates the whole nation.

Conscience has been made comatose: the requirements of justice are stifled: maudlin concepts now prevail. As eternal punishment was repudiated—either tacitly or in many cases openly—ecclesiastical punishments were shelved. Churches refused to enforce sanctions, and winked at flagrant offenses. The inevitable outcome has been the breakdown of discipline in the home and the creation of a “public opinion” which is mawkish and spineless. Schoolteachers are intimidated by foolish parents, so that the rising generation are more and more allowed to have their own way without fear of consequences. If some judge has the courage of his convictions and sentences a brute to the “cat” for maiming an old woman, there is an outcry raised against him. But enough. Most of our readers are painfully aware of all this without our enlarging any further: but few of them realize the causes which have led up to it—an unfaithful pulpit, the denial of Eternal Punishment, the misrepresentation of God’s character, the rejection of His Law, the failure of the churches to enforce a Scriptural discipline, the breakdown of parental authority.

“Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth.” This Divine statute, like those which were before us in the previous sections, had been grossly perverted by the Scribes and Pharisees. They had wrested its purport and design by giving it a false application. Instead of confining it to the magistrates in the law-courts, they had made the statute a promiscuous one. The Jewish leaders had so expounded this precept as though God had given permission for each individual to take the Law into his own hands and avenge his own wrongs. They intimated that it allowed each person to take private revenge upon his enemies: if your neighbour smite you and destroys one of your eyes, then go and do likewise to him. Thus the act of retaliation condoned.

Should it be asked, How came it that the Scribes and Pharisees so glaringly wrested this law which was manifestly designed for the guidance of magistrates only? We would point out, first, it is a natural opinion that a man may avenge himself in private when wrong has been done to him personally; second, answerable thereto there is a very strong desire *for revenge* in everyone’s heart by nature: and as the Jewish leaders sought to ingratiate themselves with the people rather than to please God, they pandered to this evil lust. In this we may see the workings of Satan; for in all ages his policy has been directed to the overthrowing of the Divine order. The great Enemy of God and man has ever sought to move corrupt leaders, both civil and religious, to so temper things to the depraved inclinations and popular opinions of the people that true piety may be overthrown.

Perceiving the earthly-mindedness and materialistic outlook of the Jews, the Devil moved their teachers to dream about a Messiah who should dispense mundane rather than spiritual blessings, so that when Christ came preaching salvation from sin and exhorting men to lay up treasure in Heaven, they despised and rejected Him. The Italians had ever been greatly addicted to sorcery and idolatry, as ancient writers testify; and though God vouchsafed them the true Gospel at the beginning of the Christian era, yet the Devil

knowing their natural disposition to superstition soon corrupted the Truth among them, so that in a short time their church abounded as much in idolatry as ever they did when they were heathen. The like malicious practice has the Devil shown among Protestants, for when he was unsuccessful in corrupting doctrine in the mouths of its leaders, he has greatly weakened it among the rank and file, by causing them to receive in their hearts only that which accords with their evil proclivities.

It is at this very point the true ministers of God stand out in sharp contrast from the Devil's hirelings. The latter are unregenerate men, with no fear of God in their hearts. "They are of the world, therefore speak they of the world, and the world heareth them" (1 John 4:5). They trim their sails to the winds of public opinion. They accommodate their preaching to the depraved taste of their hearers. Their utterances are regulated by a single motive: to please those who pay their salaries. But the servants of Christ shun not to declare all the counsel of God, no matter how distasteful and displeasing it may be to the natural man. They dare not corrupt the Truth and refuse to withhold any part of their God-given message. To glorify their Master and be faithful to the trust He has committed to them is their only concern. Consequently, they share, in their measure, the treatment which was meted out to Him.

"But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also" (Matt. 5:39). In this verse and the three which follow Christ confutes the false application which the Scribes had made of the Mosaic statute, and it is in this light that His exhortations here must be understood. That He is exhorting His followers absolutely to a passive endurance of any and every injury they may receive at the hands of wicked and unreasonable men, is to give a meaning to our Lord's words which the context does not warrant, and which other passages and important considerations definitely forbids. That which He was refuting was the taking of *private* vengeance on those who wrong us. Further proofs in support of this must be left for our next.—A.W.P.

THE LIFE OF DAVID.

96. *His Closing Days.*

The sand in David's hour-glass was running very low; the time appointed for his departure from this world had almost arrived; yet it is beautiful to behold him using his remaining strength in the service of God, rather than rusting out amid the shadows. The sun of his life had often been temporarily overcast, but it set in golden splendour, illustrating that word, "Better is the end of a thing than the beginning thereof" (Eccl. 7:8). The revolt of Adonijah was the last dark cloud to pass across his horizon, and it was quickly dissolved, to give place to blue skies of peace and joy. The final scenes are painted in roseate colours and the exit of our Patriarch from this world was one which well fitted the man after God's own heart. Blessed is it to see him using his fast failing energies in setting in order the affairs of the kingdom and to mark how the glory of the Lord and the good of his people was that which now wholly absorbed him.

The Holy Spirit has dwelt at quite some length upon the closing acts of David's reign, supplementing the briefer account given in 1 Kings by furnishing much fuller details in 1 Chronicles. It is to these supplementary accounts we now turn. In them we, first, behold him completing the extensive preparations he had made for the building of the temple. Second, his giving solemn charge unto Solomon concerning the erection of the Lord's house, concerning his own personal conduct, and concerning the removal of his enemies. Third, his charge to the princes to stand by and assist his son. Fourth, his ordering of the priesthood in their courses. Fifth, his charge to the officers of the Nation. Sixth, his entrusting to Solomon the pattern or plan of the temple which he had received from God. Seventh, his final charge to the whole congregation. Most carefully did David prepare for the end of his reign and for the welfare of his successor.

"And David said, Solomon my son is young and tender, and the house that is to be builded for the LORD must be exceeding magnifical, of fame and glory throughout all countries: I will therefore now make preparation for it. So David prepared abundantly before his death" (1 Chron. 22:5). The dearest desire of his heart had been to erect a permanent house for the worship of God, and a tremendous amount of materials had he already acquired and consecrated to that end. But his wish was not granted: another was to have that peculiar honour—yet he did not, like so many peevish persons when their wills are crossed, mope and fret, and then lose all interest in the Lord's service. No, he readily acquiesced in God's will and continued his preparation. Yea, so far from advancing age and increasing infirmities deterring him, they quickened him to increased diligence and effort.

The extent and value of the materials which David had gathered for the temple may be seen by, "Now, behold, in my trouble I have prepared for the house of the LORD a hundred thousand talents of gold, and a thousand thousand talents of silver; and of brass and iron without weight; for it is in abundance; timber also and stone have I prepared" (1 Chron. 22:14). These were all ready to hand to his successor, who made good use of the same. What encouragement is there here for us: much good may appear after our death, which we were not permitted to witness during our life. Often we grieve because we see so little fruit of our labour, yet if we are diligent in preparing materials, others after us may build therewith. Then let us sow beside all waters, and confidently leave the outcome with God. Those who are mature and experienced should consider the younger

ones who are to follow, and furnish all the help they can to make the work of God as easy as possible for them.

We turn next to the charges which David gave to his son. The first concerned his building of the temple, for this lay most of all upon his heart. "Then he called for Solomon his son, and charged him to build an house for the LORD God of Israel. And David said to Solomon, My son, as for me, it was in my mind to build a house unto the name of the LORD my God: But the word of the LORD came to me, saying, Thou hast shed blood abundantly, and hast made great wars: thou shalt not build a house unto My name because thou hast shed much blood upon the earth in My sight" (1 Chron. 22:6-8). Here we see how jealous God was of His types—as was also evidenced by His displeasure against Moses for striking the rock (on the second occasion) instead of speaking to it; and by His smiting Gehazi with leprosy for seeking a reward from the healed Naaman. The erection of the temple was a figure of Christ building His Church, and this He does not by destroying men's lives, but by saving them.

Continuing the "word" which David had received from the Lord, he adds, "Behold, a son shall be born to thee, who shall be a man of rest; and I will give him rest from all his enemies round about: for his name shall be Solomon (Peaceable), and I will give peace and quietness unto Israel in his days. He shall build a house for My name; and he shall be My son, and I will be his Father; and I will establish the throne of his kingdom over Israel forever. Now, my son, the LORD be with thee, and prosper thou and build the house of the LORD thy God, as He hath said of thee" (vv. 9-11). In what follows David enjoined his son (v. 13) to keep God's commands and to take heed to his duty in everything. He must not think that by building the temple he would secure a dispensation to indulge the lusts of the flesh. Nay, let him know that though king of Israel, he was himself a subject of the God of Israel, and would be prospered by Him in proportion as he made the Divine Law his rule (cf. Josh. 1:8).

A little later he addressed him thus: "And thou, Solomon my son, know thou the God of thy father, and serve Him with a perfect heart and with a willing mind: for the LORD searcheth all hearts and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts: if thou seek Him He will be found of thee but if thou forsake Him He will cast thee off forever. Take heed now; for the LORD hath chosen thee to build a house for the sanctuary: be strong and do it" (1 Chron. 28:9, 10). How concerned David was that his son should be pious. Faithfully did he set before him the inevitable alternative: blessing if he served the Lord, woe if he turned away from Him. Here was a case where Divine foreordination had made irrevocably certain the end, and yet where human responsibility was insisted upon. The perpetuity of God's kingdom to David's posterity was absolutely assured in Christ, yet the entail of the temporal kingdom was made contingent on the conduct of David's descendants: if they were self-willed and remained disobedient, the entail would be cut off.

The same note of contingency is struck again unmistakably in, "*If* thy children take heed to their way, to walk before Me in truth with all their heart and with all their soul, there shall not fail thee (said He) a man on the throne of Israel" (1 Kings 2:4). Alas, we know from the sequel what happened: God punished the idolatry of Solomon by the defection of the 10 tribes from his son, till ultimately the family of David was deprived of all royal authority. It has been thus all through the piece: man has utterly failed in whatever trust God has committed to him: sentence of death was written upon the prophetic, the priestly, and the kingly office in Israel. Was then the Divine purpose thwarted? No

indeed; that could not be: the counsels of God are made good in the Second Man and not in the first. It is in and by and through *Christ* the Divine decrees are secured. And as it is in the Second Man and not in the first, so it is in a *heavenly* realm and not in the earthly that the Old Testament promises find their fulfillment. Christ, according to the flesh, was made of the seed of David, and in Him the kingdom of God is *spiritually* realized.

“And David said to Solomon his son, Be strong and of good courage, and do it: fear not nor be dismayed, for the LORD God, even my God, He will not fail thee nor forsake thee until thou hast finished all the work for the service of the house of the LORD” (1 Chron. 28:20). It is noteworthy that that to which David principally exhorted his son was firmness and boldness. *Courage* is one of the graces most needed by the servants of God, for the Devil as a roaring lion will ever seek to strike terror into their hearts. This was the charge given to Joshua when called to succeed Moses: “Only be thou strong and very courageous, that thou mayest observe to do according to all the Law” (Josh. 1:7). To His servant the Prophet, the Lord said, “Fear them not, neither be dismayed at their looks, though they be a rebellious house” (Ezek. 3:9): the frowns of those who hate the Truth are no more to be regarded than the flattery of those who would quench the Spirit by puffing us up with a sense of our own importance. “Fear not them that kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear Him which is able to destroy both soul and body in Hell” (Matt. 10:28) said Christ to the Apostles—gifts are of no avail if we lack courage to use them.

The charge which David gave to Solomon concerning his old enemies is recorded in 1 Kings 2. “Moreover thou knowest also what Joab the son of Zeruiah did to me, and what he did to the two captains of the hosts of Israel, unto Abner the son of Ner, and unto Amasa the son of Jether, whom he slew, and shed the blood of war in peace, and put the blood of war upon his girdle that was about his loins and in his shoes that were on his feet. Do therefore according to thy wisdom, and let not his hoar head go down to the grave in peace. . . and behold thou hast with thee Shimei . . . which cursed me with a grievous curse . . . now therefore hold him not guiltless” etc (vv. 5-9). These orders are not to be regarded as issuing from a spirit of private revenge, but rather with a regard for the glory of God and the good of Israel. Joab had long deserved to die for his cold-blooded murders, and the part he had recently played in aiding the revolt of Adonijah. While such men as he and Shimei lived they would be a continual *menace* to Solomon and the peacefulness of his reign.

The charge David made to the princes is found in 1 Chronicles 22: “David also commanded all the princes of Israel to help Solomon his son, saying, Is not the LORD your God with you? and hath He not given you rest on every side? for He hath given the inhabitants of the land into mine hand; and the land is subdued before the LORD and before His people. Now set your heart and your soul to seek the LORD your God; arise therefore and build ye the sanctuary” (vv. 17-19). Once more we see how deeply concerned David was that the honour of Jehovah should be promoted by the erection of a suitable dwelling place for His holy ark, and therefore did he command the princes to give whatever aid they could to his son in this undertaking. Monarchs can only forward the work of God in their dominions as they are supported by those nearest to them in high office. David urged upon them their obligations by insisting that gratitude to God for His abundant mercies called for generosity and effort on their part. He bids them be zealous

by fixing their eyes on God's glory and making His favour their happiness. When the Lord truly possesses the heart neither sacrifice nor service will be begrudged.

From 1 Chronicles 23 and the chapters which follow we learn of the considerable trouble David went to in fixing the arrangements for the temple services and putting in order the offices of it, in which he prepared for the house of God as truly as when he laid up silver and gold for it. It is noticeable that the tribe of Levi had multiplied almost four-fold (1 Chron. 23:3, and cf. Num. 4:46-48), which was a much greater increase than in any other tribe. It was for the honour of Jehovah that so great a number of servants should attend His house—an adumbration of the countless millions of angels which wait upon the Heavenly Throne. A detailed account is supplied of the distribution of the priests and Levites into their respective classes and of their duties, such particularization showing us that God is a God of order, especially in matters pertaining to His worship. The distribution of the officers was made by lot (1 Chron. 24:5, etc) to show that all was governed by the Divine will (Prov. 16:3). The priesthood was divided into 24 courses (1 Chron. 24:18), a figure perhaps of the “twenty-four elders” of Revelation 4:4.

“Then David gave to Solomon his son the pattern of the porch and of the house thereof . . . And the pattern of all that he had by the Spirit of the courts of the house of the Lord . . . All this, said David, the LORD made me understand in writing by His hand upon me, even all the works of this pattern” (1 Chron. 28:11, 12, 19). David had received full instructions from God concerning the design of the temple and how everything was to be ordered in it: nothing was left to chance or the caprice of man, nor even to the wisdom of Solomon; all was Divinely prescribed. Moses had received a similar pattern for the building of the tabernacle (Exo. 25:9) both of them being a figure of Christ and heavenly things. But the worship of God in this Christian era is in marked contrast from that which obtained under the Mosaic economy: in keeping with the much greater liberty which obtains under the New Covenant, precise rules and detailed regulations for the external worship of God in every circumstance are nowhere to be found in either the Acts or the Epistles.

The charge which David gave to the Congregation was the longest of any. First, he warned them that Solomon was of tender years—less than 20 and therefore very young to assume such heavy responsibilities (1 Chron. 29:1). Second, he reminded them how he had himself, “prepared with all his might for the house of his God” (v. 2), having “set his affection” thereon, (v. 3), and urged his hearers to emulate his example by giving of their substance unto the Lord (v. 5). Both the leaders (vv. 6-8) and the people (v. 9) responded “willingly” and liberally, so that David “rejoiced with great joy.” Then he magnified the Lord in these notable terms, “Thine, O LORD, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty: for all that is in the Heaven and in the earth is Thine; *Thine is* the kingdom, O LORD, and Thou art exalted as Head above all. Both riches and honour come of Thee, and Thou reignest over all; and in Thine hand is power and might” (vv. 11, 12).

The *deep humility* of the man was again evidenced when David added, “But who am I, and what is my people, that *we* should be able to offer so willingly after this sort? for all things come of Thee, and of Thine own have we given Thee. For we were strangers before Thee, and sojourners as were all our fathers: our days on the earth are as a shadow, and there is none abiding. O LORD our God, all this store that we have prepared to build Thee an house for Thine holy name cometh of *Thine hand*, and is all Thine own” (1

Chron. 29:14-16). Beautiful is it to hear the king in his last words giving honour to whom honour is due. "And David said to all the congregation, Now bless the LORD your God. And all the congregation blessed the LORD God of their fathers, and bowed down their heads, and worshipped the LORD, and the king. And they sacrificed sacrifices unto the LORD. . . And they did eat and drink before the LORD on that day with great gladness" (vv. 20-22). What a grand finale was this to the reign of David: the king surrounded by his subjects engaged in joyfully worshipping the King of kings!

"Now the days of David drew nigh that he should die" (1 Kings 2:1): not that extreme old age necessitated his demise, but because his appointed time had arrived. The length of our sojourn on this earth is not determined by the care we take of our health (though human responsibility requires that we abstain from all intemperance and recklessness), nor upon the skill of our physicians (though all lawful means should be employed), but upon the sovereign decree of God. "Man that is born of a woman is of few days . . . His days are *determined*, the number of his months are with Thee, Thou hast appointed his bounds that he cannot pass" (Job. 14:1, 5). No, when the Divinely-ordained limit is reached, all the doctors in the world cannot prolong our life a single moment. Thus we are told of Jacob, "The time drew nigh that Israel must die" (Gen. 47:29)—"must" because God had decreed it. So it was with David: he had fulfilled God's purpose concerning him, his course was finished, and he could now enter into his eternal rest.

"And he charged Solomon his son, saying, I go the way of all the earth" (1 Kings 2:1-2). He realized that his end was very near, yet he was not afraid to admit it nor afraid to speak of dying. He calmly referred to his decease as a "way": it was not only an exit from this world, but an entrance into another and better one. He speaks of his death as "the way of all the earth": from the earth its dwellers are taken, and to it they return (Gen. 3:19). Even the heirs of Heaven (except those alive at Christ's return: 1 Cor. 15:51) must pass through the valley of the shadow of death, yet they need fear no evil. In like manner Paul spoke of his "departure" (2 Tim. 4:6), using a nautical term which refers to a ship being loosed from its moorings: so at death the soul is released from the cables which bound it to the shores of time, and it glides forth into eternity.

David made all the preparations for his departure with unruffled composure because he knew that death did not end all. He knew that as soon as he drew his last breath, the angels of God (Luke 16:22) would convey him into the abode of the redeemed. He knew that the moment his soul was absent from the body, he would be present with the Lord (2 Cor. 5:8). He knew that in the grave his flesh should rest "in hope" (Psa. 16:9), and that in the morning of the resurrection he should come forth fully conformed to the image of his Saviour (Psa. 17:15). "And he died in a good old age, full of days, riches, and honour: and Solomon his son reigned in his stead" (1 Chron. 29:28). His epitaph was inscribed by the Holy Spirit: "For David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell on sleep" (Acts. 13:36). May we, too, be enabled to serve our generation as faithfully as David did his.—A.W.P.

THE DOCTRINE OF ELECTION.

12. *Its Publication.*

During the last two or three generations the pulpit has given less and less prominence to doctrinal preaching, until today with very rare exception it has no place at all. In some quarters the cry from the pew was, We want living experience and not dry doctrine; in others, We need practical sermons and not metaphysical dogmas; and yet others, Give us Christ and not theology. Sad to say, such senseless cries were generally heeded. "Senseless" we say, for there is no other safe way of *testing* experience, as there is no *foundation* for practicals to be built upon, if they be divorced from Scriptural doctrine. Christ cannot be known unless He is preached (1 Cor. 1:23), and He certainly cannot be "preached" if doctrine is shelved. Various reasons may be given for the lamentable failure of the pulpit: chief among them being laziness, desire for popularity, superficial and lop-sided "evangelism," love of the sensational.

Laziness. It is a far more exacting task, one which calls for much closer confinement in the study, to prepare a series of sermons, on say, the doctrine of justification, than it does to make addresses on prayer, Missions, or personal work. It demands a far wider acquaintance with the Scriptures, a more rigid disciplining of the mind, and a more extensive perusal of the older writers. But this is too exacting for most ministers, and so they choose the line of least resistance and follow an easier course. It is because of his proneness to this weakness that the minister is particularly exhorted, "Give attendance to reading . . . take heed unto thyself and unto the doctrine: continue in them" (1 Tim. 4:13, 16); and again, "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a *workman* that needeth not to be ashamed" (2 Tim. 2:15).

Desire for Popularity. It is natural that the preacher should wish to please his hearers, but it is spiritual for him to desire and aim at the approbation of God. Nor can any man serve two masters. As the Apostle expressly declared, "For if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ" (Gal. 1:10): solemn words are those. How they condemn them whose chief aim is to preach to crowded churches. Yet what grace it requires to swim against the tide of public opinion, and preach that which is unacceptable to the natural man. On the other hand, how fearful will be the doom of those who, from a determination to curry favour with men, deliberately withhold those portions of the Truth most needed by their hearers. "Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish aught from it" (Deut. 4:2). O to be able to say with Paul, "I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you . . . I am pure from the blood of all" (Acts 20:20, 26).

A superficial and lop-sided "evangelism." Many of the pulpiteers of the past 50 years acted as though the first and last object of their calling was the salvation of souls, everything being made to bend to that aim. In consequence, the feeding of the sheep, the maintaining of a Scriptural discipline in the church, and the inculcation of practical piety, was crowded out; and too often all sorts of worldly devices and fleshly methods were employed under the plea that the end justified the means. Thus the churches were filled with unregenerate members. In reality, such men defeated their own aim. The hard heart must be plowed and harrowed before it can be receptive to the Gospel seed. Doctrinal instruction must be given on the character of God, the requirements of His Law, the nature and heinousness of sin—only then is a foundation laid for true evangelism. It is useless to preach Christ unto souls until they see and feel their desperate need of Him.

Love of the sensational. In more recent times the current has changed. A generation arose which was less tolerant even of superficial evangelism, which demurred at hearing anything which was calculated to make them the least uneasy in their sins. Of course such people must not be driven from the churches: they must be catered to and given something which would tickle their ears. The stage of public action afforded abundant material. The World-war and such characters as the Kaiser, Stalin, and Mussolini were much in the public eye, as Hitler and Abyssinia have been since. Under the guise of expounding Prophecy the pulpit turned its attention to what was styled “the Signs of the Times” and the pew was made to believe that the “dictators” were fulfilling the predictions of Daniel and the Apocalypse. There was nothing in such preaching (?) that pricked the conscience, yet tens of thousands were deluded into thinking that the very hearing of such rubbish made them religious; and thus the churches were enabled to “carry on.”

Ere proceeding further, let it be pointed out that the objections most commonly made against doctrinal preaching are quite pointless. Take, first, the clamour for experimental preaching. In certain quarters—quarters which though very restricted, yet consider themselves the very champions of orthodoxy and the highest exponents of vital godliness—the demand is for a detailed tracing out of the varied experiences of a quickened soul both under the Law and under Grace, and any other type of preaching, especially doctrinal, is frowned upon as supplying nothing but the husk. But as one writer tersely put it, “Though matters of doctrine are by some considered merely as the shell of religion, and experience as the kernel, yet let it be remembered that there is no coming to the kernel but through the shell; and while the kernel gives value to the shell, yet the shell is the guardian of the kernel. Destroy that, and you injure this.” Eliminate doctrine and you have nothing left to *test* experience by, and mysticism and fanaticism are inevitable.

In other quarters the demand has been for preaching along practical lines, such people supposing and insisting that doctrinal preaching is merely theoretical and impracticable. Such a concept betrays woeful ignorance. “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable (first) for *doctrine*, (and then) for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness” (2 Tim. 3:16). Study the Epistles of Paul and see how steadily that order is maintained. Romans 1-11 are strictly doctrinal; 12-16 practical exhortations. Take a concrete example: in 1 Timothy 1:9, 10 the Apostle draws up a catalogue of sins against which the denunciations of the Law are imminently directed, and then he added, “And if there be any other thing which is contrary to sound *doctrine*.” What a plain intimation is this that error in principles fundamental has a most unfavourable influence on practicals, and that in proportion as the doctrine of God is disbelieved the authority of God is disowned. It is the *doctrine* which supplies motives for obedience to the precepts.

In connection with those who cry, Preach Christ and not theology, we have long observed that they never preach Him as the One with whom God made a covenant (Psa. 89:3), nor as His “Elect” in whom His soul delighteth (Isa. 42:1). They preach a “Christ” which is the product of their own imaginations, the creation of sentiment. If we preach the Christ of Scripture we must set Him forth as the Servant of God’s choice (1 Peter 2:4), as the Lamb “foreordained before the foundation of the world” (1 Peter 1:19, 20), as the One “set for the fall and the rising again of many in Israel” (Luke 2:34), as “the Stone of stumbling and a Rock of offense” (Isa. 8:14). Christ is not to be preached as separate from His members, but as the Head of His mystical Body—Christ and those whom God

chose in Him are one, eternally and immutably one. Then preach not a *mutilated* Christ. Preach Him according to the eternal counsels of God.

Now if doctrinal preaching generally be so unpopular, the doctrine of election is particularly and pre-eminently so. Sermons on predestination are, with very rare exceptions, hotly resented and bitterly denounced. "There seems to be an inevitable prejudice in the human mind against this doctrine, and although most other doctrines will be received by professing Christians, some with caution, others with pleasure, yet this one seems to be most frequently disregarded and discarded. In many of our pulpits it would be reckoned a high sin and treason to preach a sermon upon election" (C. H. Spurgeon). If that were the case 50 years ago, much more is it now. Even in avowedly orthodox circles the very mention of predestination is like waving a red rag before a bull. Nothing so quickly makes manifest the enmity of the carnal mind in the smug religionists and self-righteous Pharisees as does the proclamation of the Divine Sovereignty and His discriminating grace; and few indeed are the men now left who dare to contend valiantly for the Truth.

Fearful beyond words are the lengths to which the horror and hatred of election have carried even avowedly evangelical leaders in their blasphemous speeches against this blessed truth: we refuse to pollute these pages by quoting from their ungodly speeches. Some have gone so far as to say that, even if predestination be revealed in the Scriptures it is a dangerous doctrine, creating dissent and division, and therefore it ought not to be preached in the churches—which is the self-same objection used by the Romanists against giving the Word of God to the common people in their own mother tongue. If we are to whittle down the Truth so as to preach only that which is acceptable to the natural man, how much would be left? The preaching of Christ crucified is to the Jews a stumblingblock and to the Greeks foolishness (1 Cor. 1:23): is the pulpit to be silent thereon? Shall the servants of God cease proclaiming the Person, office and work of His beloved Son, merely because He is "a Stone of stumbling and a Rock of offense" (1 Peter 2:8) to the reprobate?

Many are the objections brought against this doctrine by those who desire to discredit it. Some say election should not be preached because it is so mysterious, and secret things belong unto the Lord. But it is not a secret, for God has plainly revealed it in His Word. If it is not to be preached because of its mysteriousness, then for the same reason nothing must be said about the unity of the Divine nature subsisting in a trinity of Persons, nor of the virgin birth, nor of the resurrection of the dead. According to others, the doctrine of election cuts the nerve of all missionary enterprise, in fact stands opposed to all preaching, rendering it entirely negative. Then in such a case the preaching of Paul himself was altogether useless, for it was full of this doctrine: read his Epistles and it will be found that he proclaimed election continually, yet we never read of him ceasing to preach it because it rendered his labours useless!

Paul taught that, "It is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure" (Phil. 2:13), yet we do not find that on this account he ceased to exhort men to will and endeavour those things which are pleasing to God, and to work themselves with all their might. If we are unable to perceive the consistency of the two things, that is no reason why we should refuse to believe and heed either the one or the other. Some argue against election because the preaching of it shakes assurance and fills the minds of men with doubts and fears. But in our day especially we should be thankful for any truth which shatters the complacency of empty professors and arouses the indifferent to exam-

ine themselves before God. With as much reason might it be said that the doctrine of regeneration should not be promulgated, for is it any easier to make sure that I have been truly born again than it is to ascertain that I am one of God's elect? It is not.

Still others insist that election should not be preached because the ungodly will make an evil use of it, that they will shelter behind it to excuse their unconcern and procrastination, arguing that if they are elected to salvation that in the meantime they may live as they please and take their fill of sin. Such an objection is purile, childish in the extreme. But what truth is there that the wicked will not pervert? Why, they will turn the grace of God into lasciviousness, and use (or rather misuse) His very goodness, His mercy, His longsufferance, for continuance in a course of evil doing. Arminians tell us that to preach the eternal security of the Christian encourages slothfulness; while at the opposite extreme, hyper-Calvinists object to the exhorting of the unregenerate unto repentance and faith on the ground that it inculcates creature ability. Let us not pretend to be wise above what is written, but preach all the counsel of God and leave results to Him.

The servant of God must not be intimidated or deterred from professing and proclaiming the unadulterated Truth, His commission today is the same as Ezekiel's of old: "Be not afraid of them, neither be afraid of their words, though briers and thorns be with thee, and thou dost dwell among scorpions: be not afraid of their words, nor be dismayed at their looks, though they be a rebellious house. And thou shalt speak My words unto them whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear: for they are most rebellious" (Ezek. 2:6, 7). He must expect to encounter opposition, especially from those making the loudest profession, and fortify himself against it. The announcement of God's sovereign choice of men has evoked the spirit of malice and persecution from earliest times. It did so as far back as the days of Samuel. When the Prophet announced to Jesse concerning his seven sons, "the LORD hath not chosen these" (1 Sam. 16:10), the anger of his firstborn was kindled against David (1 Sam. 17:28). So too when Christ Himself stressed the distinguishing grace of God unto the Gentile widow of Zarephath and Naaman the Syrian, the synagogue worshippers were "filled with wrath" and sought to kill Him (Luke 4:25-29). But the very hatred this solemn truth arouses is one of the most convincing proofs of its Divine origin.

Election is to be preached and published, first, because it is brought forward all through the Scriptures. There is not a single book in the Word of God where election is not either expressly stated, strikingly illustrated, or clearly implied. Genesis is full of it: the difference which the Lord made between Nahor and Abraham, Ishmael and Isaac, and His loving Jacob and hating Esau are cases in point. In Exodus we behold the distinction made by God between the Egyptians and the Hebrews. In Leviticus the atonement and all the sacrifices were for the people of God, nor were they bidden to go and "offer" them to the surrounding heathen. In Numbers, Jehovah used a Balaam to herald the fact that Israel was "*the* people" who, 1. shall dwell alone and shall *not* be numbered among the nations" (23:9); and therefore was he constrained to cry "How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob, thy tabernacles, O Israel" (24:5). In Deuteronomy it is recorded, "The LORD'S portion is His people: Jacob is the lot of His inheritance" (32:9).

In Joshua we behold the discriminating mercy of the Lord bestowed upon Rahab the harlot, while the whole of her city was doomed to destruction. In Judges the sovereignty of God appears in the unlikely instruments selected, by which He wrought victory for Israel: Deborah, Gideon, Samson. In Ruth we have Orpah kissing her mother-in-law and

returning to her gods, whereas Ruth cleaves to her and obtained inheritance in Israel—who made them to differ? In 1 Samuel David is chosen for the throne, preferred to his older brethren. In 2 Samuel we learn of the Everlasting Covenant, “ordered in all things and sure” (23:5). In 1 Kings Elijah becomes a blessing to a single widow selected from many; while in 2 Kings Naaman alone, of all the lepers, was cleansed. In 1 Chronicles it is written, “Ye children of Jacob, His chosen ones” (16:13); while in 2 Chronicles we are made to marvel at the grace of God bestowing repentance upon Manasseh. And so we might go on. The Psalms, Prophets, Gospels and Epistles are so full of this doctrine that he who runs may read!

Second, the doctrine of election is to be prominently preached because the Gospel cannot be Scripturally proclaimed without it. Alas, so deep is the darkness and so widespread the ignorance which now prevails, that few indeed perceive that there is any vital connection between predestination and the Gospel of God. Pause, then, for a moment and seriously ponder these questions: Is the success or failure of the Gospel a matter of *chance*? Or, to put it in another way, are the fruits of the most stupendous undertaking of all—the atoning work of Christ—left contingent upon *human* caprice? Could it be positively affirmed that the Redeemer shall yet, “see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied” (Isa. 53:11) if all is left dependent upon the will of fallen man? Has God so little regard for the death of His Son that He has left it uncertain as to how many shall be saved thereby?

“The Gospel of God” (Rom. 1:1) can only be Scripturally presented as *the Triune God* is owned and honoured therein. The attenuated “Gospel” of our degenerate age confines the attention of its hearers to the sacrifice of Christ, whereas salvation originated in the heart of God the Father and is consummated by the operations of God the Spirit. All the blessings of salvation are communicated according to God’s eternal counsels, and it was for the whole election of grace (and none others) that Christ wrought salvation. The very first chapter of the New Testament announces that Jesus, “shall save *His people* from their sins”: not “may save,” but “shall save.” Not “shall offer to,” or “try to,” but “*shall save*” them. Again—not a single soul had ever benefited from the death of Christ if the Spirit had not been given to apply its virtues to the chosen seed. Any man, then, who *omits* the Father’s election, and the Spirit’s sovereign and effectual operations, preaches not the Gospel of God, no matter what is his reputation as a “soul winner.”—A.W.P.

THE HOLY SABBATH.

8. *Its Observance.*

In previous articles it has been shown that the Sabbath was instituted in Eden, observed by the Patriarchs and renewed at Sinai—and that Israel's prosperity and enjoyment of God's blessings was to a large extent determined by their observance or non-observance of this Divine ordinance. Turning to the New Testament we have seen that Christ expressly affirmed the Sabbath was "made for man" and not for the Jews only, that He is "Lord of the Sabbath" and therefore invested with authority to determine which day of the week shall be sanctified as a holy rest. And we saw in Hebrews 4 the Apostle proves that "another day" than that which obtained under the old covenant has been appointed for its celebration during the Christian era—the first day suitably celebrating the Saviour's entrance into His mediatorial rest. This is demonstrated by the practice of the early Church (Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 16:1, 2).

We are now to consider the all-important matter of how the Sabbath is to be kept. The chief end of God's Word and of all instruction therein is that the doctrinal principles which it enunciates may direct us unto a performance suited thereto. The light which we receive from the Living Oracle lays upon us a binding obligation to walk accordingly. Doctrine must regulate deportment. This was the grand rule laid down by the Supreme Teacher: "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them" (John 13:17). The design of our learning Scripture Truth is for us to obtain such an understanding thereof that conduct accordant therewith may be produced. Where there is knowledge without the corresponding discharge of duty, the truth is held "in unrighteousness" (Rom. 1:18), and then double is our guilt. Practice must conform to the precept.

It is, then, to the practical side of our subject we now turn: may Divine wisdom be so granted us that we are preserved from going to an undue extreme either on the right hand or on the left. No one who is acquainted with human nature or who is conversant with the history and literature on this branch of our subject, can honestly doubt there is a real danger of failing to preserve the balance here—as everywhere. On the one hand care must be taken lest in our zeal for the sanctity and spirituality of the Sabbath we go to an excess in multiplying rules for its observance, and thereby fall into the Pharisaic error of rigour and excess. On the other hand, there is a far greater danger today of erring on the side of laxity and of accommodating the laws regulating this institution to the lusts of the flesh and yielding to the corrupt practices of an evil and adulterous generation.

The strict requirements of God's holiness must be insisted upon, no matter how the world scoffs at or opposes them. As these very lines are being written [1939] God is manifesting His displeasure at the increasing desecration of His holy rest-day by disturbing the rest of Christendom—those nations which have enjoyed most of the privileges of the Gospel being seriously threatened with war. And the blame for this widespread desecration rests first and chiefly upon the churches: by the banishing of the Law from its pulpits, by the feeble or total lack of protest to legislative bodies for letting down the bars and legalizing the profanation of the Lord's Day, and by the general worldliness of its members. It is therefore high time that Christian leaders should faithfully expound the Fourth Commandment and cease accommodating it to the perverse wills and ways of the ungodly.

Sad, indeed, is the declension in genuine piety. The foundations have been forsaken, standards have been lowered, the spirit of compromise has prevailed till now, "Truth is

fallen in the streets.” Nor can the apostasy be checked by temporizing the commands of God to the corrupt course of the world. Yet we must beware of *adding to* those commands. Said the Puritan Owen, “I will not deny but that there have been and are mistakes in this matter. Directions have been given, and that not by a few, for the observance of a day of holy rest, which either for the matter of them or the manner prescribed, have had no sufficient warrant or foundation in the Scriptures. For whereas some have made no distinction between the Sabbath as moral and as Mosaic, unless it be merely in the change of the day, they have endeavoured to introduce the whole practice required on the latter into the Lord’s Day.”

How is a happy medium in Sabbath observance to be obtained? What will preserve us from undue laxity on the one side, and unwarrantable severity on the other? Where shall we turn for that much-needed guidance which will deliver us from the grievous yoke of Pharisaical excess, and which will also prevent us from degenerating into the lawlessness of our Moderns? We have searched long and diligently for a satisfactory answer to this question, but (amid much that was helpful on other branches of our subject) have failed to meet with anything clear and definite. Personally our firm conviction is that we shall be kept from going wrong in this matter, if we, first, adhere strictly to the *letter* of the Fourth Commandment; and second, apply that commandment to the details of our lives in the *spirit* of the New Covenant.

It should be apparent that we have now arrived at the most important branch of our subject. Unless both writer and reader are genuinely and earnestly desirous of keeping the Sabbath in a manner which will be pleasing to the Lord and beneficial to the soul, then all our previous efforts to prove that this Divine ordinance is binding upon us today, will avail little or nothing. But the task before us now is no easy one: our chief difficulty being the avoidance of too great editing on the one hand, and too much brevity on the other. We do not wish to extend these articles to the point of wearying our friends, yet we must not abbreviate so much that we withhold the help which is desired upon various problems that exercise not a few. Some have had no instruction upon Sabbath observance: others have been given so many rules to follow that a spirit of bondage has been engendered. We shall therefore endeavour to steer a middle course.

Taking Exodus 20:8-11 as our starting point, we note first that that which outstandingly characterizes this season is its *sacredness*: “Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy.” This is basic and foremost. It is “the Lord’s Day,” being instituted for His honour and glory. God, by the appointing and blessing of it, has *made* this day: we, by the worship of Him and performance of spiritual exercises therein, are to keep it holy. And let it be carefully borne in mind that holiness pertains not only to external actions, but also and mainly to the spring from which they proceed, namely, the heart: unless we sanctify the Sabbath in our hearts, the performing of outward devotions will avail us nothing. As the other six days are concerned mainly with secular things, the seventh is to be consecrated unto spiritual ends. Holiness stands opposed not only to all that is *sinful*, but also to the use of such things (our time and energy) as are *commonly* employed.

“Remember the Sabbath *day* to keep it holy”: not a part thereof, but the whole of it. In all countries where Romanism dominates, its deluded votaries spend a part of the morning in religious exercises, and for the balance of the day give themselves up to feasting and pleasuring. Sad to say this evil is becoming more and more rife in Protestant circles: though we may not yet have gone to the same lengths of profanity as is general “on the

Continent,” yet thousands in this land who attend some morning service, spend the afternoon and evening in making social calls on their friends, car riding, and other fleshly and worldly activities. It is this unholy mixture, this “lukewarmness”—being neither hot nor cold—which is so nauseating to the Lord. Because it is the Lord’s Day, we rob Him of His due if we regard any part of it as ours.

The second thing we note in Exodus 20:8-11 is that the Sabbath is expressly affirmed to be a day of *rest*: “the seventh day is the Sabbath of the LORD thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work.” That prohibition is qualified (as the example and teaching of Christ made clear) at two points only: the doing of that which is really essential to life and health, and engaging in acts of love and mercy. Apart from those exceptions, all work and labour—be it manual or clerical, physical or mental—is Divinely forbidden. And this, as was pointed out in earlier articles, is a merciful provision of the Creator for His creatures. Continuous toil is injurious to our constitution. “The Sabbath was made for man,” for his well-being, because he needed one day of rest in each week. This law is as binding upon and holds good for the wife equally as for the husband, for the servant as much as his master, yea, for his beasts of burden too.

This law is as binding upon our private lives as upon our public, upon the way in which we conduct ourselves within the home as on the outside. It is just as real a profanation of the Holy Sabbath for a merchant to cast up his ledger or write business letters on that day, as for a farmer to go out and plow his fields or sow corn. So, too, is it equally sinful for his wife to prepare and cook elaborate meals on the Lord’s Day as it would be for her to do her weekly washing and ironing then. Nor can this be evaded—as many seem to suppose—by the mistress accompanying her husband to the morning service and leaving her daughter or maid to cook the biggest dinner of the week. Alas, in many homes, not only does the cook have no rest on the Lord’s Day, but it is the heaviest one of the week for her.

Let us next point out that there is a positive side to the Fourth Commandment as well as a negative. Not only are we to abstain from all worldly business, but we are to be active in spiritual exercises. A day spent in idleness is not one which is kept holy. The Day of Rest is not to be one of indolence, but one of blessed and sacred diligence. Physical rest is necessary, but spiritual rest is yet more essential. In its higher aspect, true Sabbatical rest is the soul resting in the Lord. This is evident from the fact that the Sabbath is both an emblem and a pledge of the eternal rest of the saints, concerning which it is said “His servants shall serve Him” (Rev. 22:3), which means that they will be actively engaged in His worship. Inasmuch then as the duties of this day are eminently spiritual, they are such as lie beyond our own powers to perform, and therefore we must seek the aid of the Holy Spirit.

A third thing we should observe is that the Sabbath is to be a *season of rejoicing*: “This is the day which the LORD hath made: we will rejoice and be glad in it” (Psa. 118:24). The immediate context contains a grand Messianic prophecy, wherein the triumph of Christ was set forth. Under the figure of “the Stone,” He is viewed first, in His humiliation, as despised and rejected by men, as being refused by the builders. Next He is portrayed in His glorification, as owned and honoured of God, as being made “The Headstone of the corner.” The exaltation of Christ was in three stages: when He was raised from the tomb, when He ascended to Heaven, and when He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high. “This is the LORD’S doing: it is marvellous in our eyes” (v. 23).

The exaltation of Christ was wholly of the Lord: the product of His eternal counsel, the product of His mighty power; and it is the subject of never-ceasing wonderment to His redeemed.

“This is the day which the LORD hath made,” and therefore it is peculiarly and pre-eminently “the *Lord’s* Day,” and so it is expressly denominated in Revelation 1:10. It is the day which the Lord made specially for this Christian dispensation, namely, the first of the week. It is the day which has been made forever memorable by loosing the Redeemer from the pains of death. It is now the day in which His people are to celebrate the Saviour’s victory over the sepulchre. And therefore Christians must exclaim, “we will rejoice and be glad in it”: not only because of its appointment, but because of its occasion, for Christ’s resurrection was both for His own honour and for our salvation. Holy mirth, then, should fill our hearts at this season: Sabbath days ought to be unto us as foretastes of Heaven itself. Then let us welcome each weekly return of it, and duly tune our hearts to show forth His praises therein.

The *order* of Truth in the passage last quoted, is the order we must observe if we are to enter experimentally therein. We shall be glad and rejoice in proportion as our hearts are truly occupied with the risen Redeemer and of our being risen in Him. As Spurgeon well put it, “What else can we do? Having obtained so great a deliverance through our illustrious Leader, and having seen the eternal mercy of God so brilliantly displayed, it would ill become us to mourn and murmur. Rather will we exhibit a double joy, rejoice in heart and be glad in face, rejoice in secret and be glad in public, for we have more than a double reason for being glad in the Lord. We ought to especially rejoice on the Sabbath: it is the queen of days, and its hours should be clad in royal apparel of delight.”

What abundant cause have we for rejoicing therein! The resurrection of Christ marked the end of His inexpressible humiliation, and signaled the beginning of His unending glorification. It demonstrated that He had made an end of sins, effected reconciliation for iniquity, and brought in everlasting righteousness (Dan. 9:24). It affords proof of God’s approval of the Mediator’s work and the acceptance of His sacrifice. It meant that the whole Election of Grace were delivered from death and Hell when their federal Head became “alive for evermore.” The resurrection of Christ is both the pledge and the prototype of the resurrection of His sleeping people. “If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above” (Col. 3:1). And what are those things which are above? Spiritual rest, spiritual joy—complete deliverance from our warfare with sin, unalloyed rejoicing in the Lord. Then “seek” them: by the actings of faith, by the exercise of hope, by the outgoings of love. We should have a double enjoyment of the things above: by anticipation now, by realization then.

The same keynote is struck in the first stanza of Psalm 92. It is to be noted that the inspired heading to this Psalm is, “A Song for the Sabbath.” And what is its opening theme? This, “It is a good thing to give thanks unto the LORD, and to sing praises unto Thy name, O Most High: To show forth Thy lovingkindness in the morning, and Thy faithfulness every night. Upon an instrument of ten strings, and upon the psaltery; upon the harp with a solemn sound. For Thou, LORD, hast made me glad through Thy work: I will triumph in the works of Thy hands. O LORD, how great are Thy works; and Thy thoughts are very deep” (vv. 1-5). Praise is Sabbatical work: the joyfulness of hearts resting in the Lord. Since a true Sabbath can only be found in God, it is essential that we be supremely occupied with His perfections on that day.—A.W.P.

OUR ANNUAL LETTER.

“But whoso hearkeneth unto Me shall dwell safely, and shall be quiet from fear of evil” (Prov. 1:33). This has been a year wherein the tranquility of the world has been repeatedly and rudely disturbed, when the air has been filled with ominous threats, and when ruthless aggressors have terrorized the weak. The rattling of sabers has been heard on every side, politicians have fermented a spirit of unrest, newspapers have vied with each other in fostering sensationalism, and “signs-of-the-times” men have issued the most alarming predictions. In many lands mass hysteria more or less has seized the public, and generally speaking, men’s hearts have failed them from fear of the dreadful things which they believe are about to take place. But throughout it all, it was the privilege of God’s children to possess their souls in peace and patience and be “quiet” even from the very fear of evil.

But how is such a state to be arrived at? What conditions must be met if this rest of mind is to be enjoyed? Important questions these: more important still that we obtain the right answers. God does not bestow this blessing arbitrarily, but according to *rule*—that is to say, if such a privilege is to be enjoyed, then we must meet the specified requirement. Yet this is not to bring in a legalistic element nor to imply that this boon may be *earned*: rather is it to point out *the road* in which it is to be met with. It is most necessary to be clear on this point, for it is one on which some are not a little confused. Wisdom’s ways are ways of pleasantness, “and all her paths are peace” (Prov. 3:17). But those “ways” must be entered and those “paths” have to be traversed if her gracious reward is to be received. Turn we into the bypaths of folly and unpleasantness and unrest will be our certain portion. Quietness is not to be found in the regions where self-will reigns: the wicked are like the troubled sea which cannot rest. And why? because they have turned their backs upon the Rest-giver.

The chief requirement for the enjoyment of this spiritual security and tranquility is stated in our opening passage: “whoso hearkeneth unto Me.” Note also the tense of the verb—not merely “hearkens,” but “hearkeneth”: it is not so much an act as an *attitude* which is in view. To hearken unto the Lord denotes submission, faith, love, obedience. It is the heart of the renewed answering to the voice of its Beloved. It is the response made to the revealed will of God by those who have been forgiven much by Him. It is their yielding of themselves unto His royal authority. It is those who have been made wise unto salvation voluntarily entering into and treading Wisdom’s “ways.” According as they do so, are they preserved from danger, delivered from error, and freed from fear, for their minds are stayed upon Jehovah. From His word they obtain a knowledge of His mind which has a sobering and steadying effect, whereas the world remains in darkness and subject to the terror of the night.

“But whoso hearkeneth unto Me,” There is much in Scripture upon the subject of “hearkening,” especially hearkening unto other voices than that of God’s. It is most solemn to note the first time the word occurs in Holy Writ: “And unto Adam He said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife” (Gen. 3:17). In consequence thereof, so far from “dwelling safely,” Adam was driven out of Eden (Gen. 3:24), and instead of “peace” the curse of God was his portion. “And Abram hearkened to the voice of Sarai” (Gen. 16:2). Alas, how many men since then, Christian men also, have followed the carnal counsel of their wives, rather than the commands of God. Equally solemn is it to observe how many verses there are which record the Lord’s complaint thereon: “But

My people would not hearken to My voice and Israel would have none of Me" (Psa. 81:11 and cf. 106:25). "They refused to hearken, and pulled away the shoulder, and stopped their ears that they should not hear" (Zech. 7:11). And what is the penalty for refusing to hearken? "The anger of the LORD was hot against Israel . . . because that this people . . . have not hearkened unto My voice" (Judg. 2:20). "I will bring evil upon this people . . . because they have not hearkened unto My words" (Jer. 6:19). What warnings are these!

"Hath the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and *to hearken* than the fat of rams" (1 Sam. 15:22). The prime and essential element in hearkening to the Lord is the rendering of *obedience* to His precepts: that which we receive from Him by the ear is to be translated into conduct—into an actual compliance with His revealed will. And let it be carefully noted that God esteems obedience above and beyond worship, yea, He will not accept our worship while our wills are not in subjection to His. To honour God with our lips while our hearts are far from Him, and His commandments are disregarded, is hypocrisy of the worst sort (Matt. 15:7-9).

While it is our happy privilege to be quiet from fear of evil, we cannot but mourn over the state of Christendom—the low level of genuine godliness evidenced on every side. It seriously affects such a work as this, for there is a steadily diminishing number who truly relish spiritual literature and are willing to contribute to its maintenance. "I will do all I can to get a few more readers—or rather supporters. It is easy enough to get 'readers' provided they get all their reading for *nothing*. That, I am afraid, is a strong feature of the people among whom my lot is cast: they are keen readers but poor payers." There was a time when most of the able-bodied in this land had too much self-respect to beg or trade upon the charity of others, but slowly yet surely the welfare system has undermined the moral stamina of the masses, till now few have any scruples upon the matter. Thousands of preachers who receive a larger salary than the annual income of most of their members feel that someone ought to make them a present of the literature from which they cull much of their sermon matter. This conscienceless seeking of something for nothing is worldwide, and we refuse to be a party to it, even though it forces us to cease publishing.

During 1939 our circulation has shown a further marked decline, but for the sake of the handful who do appreciate this monthly messenger we hope to have sufficient readers to warrant our continuing for one more year. A considerable number of names on our list must be dropped with this issue, and therefore the realization of our hope to publish throughout 1940 will largely depend upon the number of *new readers* obtained for us by those who would deplore the cessation of this magazine. By the Lord's goodness, gifts have come in freely so that each bill has been promptly paid, and we close again with a balance to the good. In the kind providence of God both of us have been preserved throughout another 12 months in good health and strength.

We have now completed our lengthy study of the Life of David: this will be followed by a much shorter series on the life of Elijah. We have also nearly finished our discussion of the important doctrine of election, and we then expect to take up the spiritual inability but moral responsibility of fallen man. The articles on the Sabbath will be completed by a consideration of some of the difficulties raised by and objections brought against the same. The Sermon on the Mount will continue to engage our attention. These are our tentative aims, dependent for their realization on the sovereign will of God. The political

outlook is so obscure, the diplomatic situation so uncertain, the leaders of the nations are following such a “hush” policy, that ordinary business is largely disorganized and most of the usual planning ahead is brought to a standstill. But the *Lord* has not changed, and is in complete charge of the whole situation: not merely “permitting” this and that, but *working* “all things after the counsel of His own will” (Eph. 1:11). So long as He makes it possible, we shall continue publishing this magazine as before. We are hoping to have this year’s issues bound as usual (though the price is likely to be higher) and to insert a notice about them in the January issue. We would appreciate it if regular customers send in their orders early, at say 5/ (\$1.15) so that we can fill them as soon as the volumes come to hand. Friends in Australia and America please correspond as formerly (mail services though slower, are continuing) but forward all monies by International Money Orders.

“But whoso hearkeneth unto Me shall dwell safely, and shall be quiet from fear of evil.” Precious indeed is this assurance at such a time as the present. O that Divine grace may enable both writer and reader to hearken unto the Divine threatenings, precepts, and promises, and then shall we enjoy the smile of God’s countenance and the protection of His mighty arm. We heartily thank our few remaining friends for all their loyal support and know they will not fail us now that things are more difficult. Lovingly commending them to the God of all grace, and earnestly soliciting their continued prayers, we remain, by His abounding mercy.—A.W. and V.E Pink.

