

## VIEWS FROM THE WATCH TOWER

## DEATH OF CHRIST A PUZZLE TO DR. MORGAN

The Rev. G. Campbell Morgan preached on the life of Christ to a large congregation at the Fifth Avenue Presbyterian church yesterday. "In the light of the revelation of the life of Christ, I come face to face with a great moral mystery," said Dr. Morgan. "There is some infinite meaning in the death of Jesus, and it is the stumbling block of my faith. At the cross of Christ I must be either an infidel or a believer. In the presence of the death of Christ I am compelled to deny the existence of a moral governor and admit his death a most terrible blunder or the presence of the most wonderful love that man has known. Notwithstanding the wonderful teachings of this man, God permitted him to die at the age of thirty-three. Humanly speaking, his work was undone—just commenced, as a matter of fact. Not a volume written, not a school founded, but just as he reached the commencement of his career he was foully murdered. I want an explanation of this. My mind demands it."—*Exchange*.

It is astounding that any man should consider himself competent to preach the Gospel who does not know why Christ died. It is still more astounding that a body of Christians should appoint, engage and salary, as their teacher, a man who gives us every reason for believing that he needs that some one teach him the first principles of the doctrine of Christ. We can only conclude that the people recognizing and employing such a teacher are similarly ignorant of Christian fundamentals.

To what advantage is it that thousands of church edifices are built every year, and that millions of money are spent on theological seminaries, and on salaries for preachers, organists and choiristers, if this is the net result;—ignorance of the fundamentals.

Are such people, who know not why Christ died, to be considered Christians? Certainly not. It is not good clothes, nor Sunday observance, nor even good morals that constitute men and women Christians, but *faith*—faith in the very thing that these people confess that they know nothing about. A Buddhist or Mohammedan or Confucian may have, and some of them do have, everything that a Christian has except this one all-important essential to Christianity—faith that Christ died as man's sin-offering, as his *ransom-price*, in order that God might be just and yet be the justifier of sinners who believe in this sacrifice and by faith accept forgiveness of sins and become on this basis followers of Christ.

How plain the whole matter from the standpoint of the *ransom*, its necessity and results. How clearly we can see that all the sermons and books imaginable would have been of no avail until first of all the New Covenant had been sealed with the precious blood. Hearken to our Lord's words, "The Son of Man came . . . to give his life a ransom for many." (Matt. 20:28) He came not to preach and write books. Others under divine power and inspiration could do and have done those things, but he alone had an unforfeited life "to give for the life of the world." As he said again, "O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that is written in the prophets: ought not Christ to suffer and to enter into his glory?" (Luke 24:25, 26) He did suffer death—"the just for the unjust"—and thus made atonement for our sins, paying the death penalty against us. He did enter into his glory and is fully prepared to give forth the vivifying blessing so much needed by the whole groaning creation.

Why then did he not at once—as soon as glorified—begin the kingdom work of rescuing Adam and his children from the grasp of sin and its penalty, death? Because in the divine plan it was arranged that first a church-bride should be selected as his companions in sufferings and future glories. Soon the testing of those called to this joint-heirship will be completed and then our prayer, "Thy kingdom come," will be answered, and the blessing of the world at the hands of the Good Physician and his bride will begin. The great uplift of that blessed Millennial day will be not merely physical but mental and moral—not partial and temporal, but to those who *will* to obey, it will be made complete and everlasting.

## A NAVAL OFFICER ON PERSONAL RELIGION

Captain Mahan, of the U. S. Navy, evidently knows something else than naval warfare. He delivered an address worthy of being considered by a larger audience than heard it. He said:—

"In my judgment the church of today, laity and clergy, have made the capital mistake in generalship of reversing the two great commandments of the Law; the two fundamental principles of her war, established by Christ himself. Practi-

cally, as I observe, the laity hold, and the clergy teach, that the first and great commandment is 'Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.' Incidentally thereto, it is admitted, 'Thou shouldst love the Lord thy God.' It is of course too egregious an absurdity to openly call that the second commandment. It is simply quietly relegated to a secondary place.

"You may perhaps dispute this deduction as a matter of fact or remind me of St. John's words, 'He who loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, can not love God whom he hath not seen.' It is evident, however, on reflection that St. John is in no sense inverting our Lord's order. He simply appeals to evidence. This man says he loves God. Very well, where is the proof of it? Does he love his brother? If not, he certainly does not love God, for the love of the brethren is the sure, inevitable fruit of loving God. In fact the whole missionary spirit, and much that is not narrowly missionary, involves love for brethren whom we have no more seen than we have seen God. The love of God is the one sure motive and source of the love for man."

Is it not true, Captain Mahan inquires, that within the last thirty years the church has been teaching that "a man's personal piety is of small consequence alongside of his external benevolent activities"? Has not the church come to stand for the idea that "external activities, outward benevolent, are not merely the fruit of Christian life, but the Christian life itself"? He continued:

"Is not the judgment of the world expressed, and is it not a true judgment, in the words of indifferent contempt for a man who is trying to save his own soul—his miserable soul, as I have sometimes read? And yet what is a man's soul? It is the one thing inexpressibly dear to God, for which, if there had been but one, he was content to give his Son, and this he has intrusted to man as his own particular charge. I do not say his only charge, but the one clearly and solely committed to him to make the most of. It is the talent which he is to multiply by diligent care; not that he may delight in it himself, but that he may present it to God through Jesus Christ. . . . Because care of one's own soul, by internal effort and discipline, seemed selfish, men have rushed to the extreme of finding in external action, in organized benevolence, in philanthropic effort, in the love of the neighbor, and particularly of the neighbor's body, for the neighbor's soul was naturally of not more account than one's own—not merely the fruit of Christian life, but the Christian life itself. That the kingdom of God is within you, an individual matter primarily and in essence, and only in consequence, and incidentally external, as all activity is but a manifestation of life and not life itself—all this was forgotten. This I conceive to be the state of the church now, I mean as an organization; for I doubt not the multitudes of earnest cultivators of their own souls for the glory of God—perfecting holiness, as St. Paul says, in the fear of the Lord."

There is but one remedy, declares the Captain and that is the restoration of "personal religion"—"the direct relation of the individual soul to God—to that primary place in the Christian scheme which it has momentarily lost." In conclusion he said:

"Within this generation there has been given much vogue to a secular phrase, the prevalence of which seems so indicative of the temper of the day as to point just where the sagacious Christian warrior, crafty as St. Paul was to seize opportunity and capture men with guile for Jesus Christ, may lay hold upon men's hearts and minds. Self-culture—we have all heard much of it; sweetness and light, and all the rest of it. No new thing. The Stoics cultivated themselves, their personality, that they might reach self-sufficiency, which, being attained, could be presented to themselves in the form of self-contentment. Let this human conception receive consecration. What is self-culture, but deliverance from evil unto good—salvation from sin? And who shall thus save his people? Who but Jesus Christ? And what is personal religion but the coöperation of man's will with the power of Jesus Christ, that man's soul, man's whole being, may be saved; not for his own profit chiefly, but that he may lay it, thus redeemed, thus exalted, at the feet of him who loved him and gave himself for him."

The "salvation" of the philosopher is the growing one today, everywhere; because faith in the Bible is giving way to Higher Criticism and Evolutionism, which are mere human philosophies. A living faith must have a foundation in the divine revelation, the Bible. It alone shows what righteousness is and that "there is none righteous, no not one." It

alone shows how sin came into the world (Rom. 5:12) and that personal *faith* in a personal Savior is the only ground for hope of a personal salvation.

"Truth people," as well as others, need to be on guard on this subject. Some of them seem to get the false impression that head-knowledge is the basis of brotherhood. While encouraging Bible study and growth in knowledge we must still recognize heart-salvation as the aim and object of all our proclamations of the Gospel. Knowledge is merely the lamp which guides the way toward heart-salvation,—*"sanctification of the*

spirit [mind] through the belief of the truth."—1 Pet. 1:3-6.

With some, the thought that "our salvation is to be brought unto us at the revelation of our Lord and Savior" at his second advent seems to mean that it would be a mistake to speak *also* of a present heart-salvation translating us, even now out of the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of God's dear Son. We may be sure that none will attain the "great salvation" promised to the elect who does not in the present time experience heart-regeneration or salvation from the love of sin.

## OUR MEMORIAL NUMBER

Our subscribers have recently received Vol. I of the MILLENNIAL DAWN series as a number of this journal. This cheap edition we are supplying at 5c per copy postpaid to any address you please in the United States and Canada, or 9c per copy to any foreign address, except Canada. Confident that our readers will want to send these out to their friends in large quantities, we have given an order for 300,000 copies, and of these we have already received 100,000. Thus you see we are prepared for your orders and ready to execute them promptly—20 copies for \$1, or more or less at the same rate.

The experience of our readers we are sure agrees with our own, viz., that tracts and sample TOWERS and conversations and sermons are valuable in spreading the present truth only in proportion as they lead up to a study of the DAWNS. Whoever will not give time and attention to a careful reading of the DAWN, will apparently never become thoroughly rooted and grounded in present truth. And those who are most clear in the truth have re-read the books several times. These books stand re-reading, because they are practically the Bible put in another form—Bible topics treated systematically,—the testimony of the various prophets and apostles, etc., being gathered together and arranged under the various appropriate heads. We could wish that our readers would all begin afresh the study of these volumes. It is noted sometimes how rapidly beginners now make progress, and occasionally seem to outstrip others who have been much longer in the way. The reason generally is that they have studied the DAWNS *more recently*, and therefore have the various features more distinctly before the mind, with their strong interlocking and corroborative testimonies.

Our readers are aware from the annual reports that large numbers of DAWNS are continually going out, but very few, perhaps, are aware that the first volume has passed the one million (1,000,000) point, and is rushing along more rapidly than ever before. The new WATCH TOWER edition at 5c per copy may be considered a memorial of the one million copies already in circulation. The Lord's hand seems very markedly manifest in connection with this great sale; for booksellers, under the influence of denominational prejudice, will not handle the DAWNS. The Lord seems to intend that it shall be circulated only by those who are consecrated to him and his service; and he is raising up evangelists—colporteurs—who are carrying this message of the divine plan of the ages to all parts of the world. We are continually finding, too, that some of these have borne fruit without our knowledge—

some coming into the light of present truth without learning of the WATCH TOWER and getting into our list. We trust that all of the dear brethren and sisters who love to serve the truth will be more and more on the alert to introduce the WATCH TOWER to all of the consecrated, who have a deep interest in the things of the kingdom. We want their names on the list, and that they should have the regular visits of the TOWER, whether they can afford to pay for it or not. We have a fund for the very purpose of paying the subscriptions of those who cannot afford to pay.

We cannot say that all who purchase the DAWNS are deeply interested in them. Quite the contrary. Some are prejudiced by misrepresentations so that they will not read, even after having purchased them. However, we do find indications which lead us to believe that, when the great time of trouble shall be upon the world, many of the sincere-hearted who now are prejudiced by misrepresentations will look up these books and study them earnestly, and receive both comfort and profit from them under the trying conditions in which they will then be placed.

When we inform you that over 14,000 DAWNS (quite apart from the new cheap edition) went out during June, as many more during July, and that the August output bids fair to be still larger, you will get an idea of the growing magnitude of the harvest work. It keeps us busy urging our printers and binders up to the notch, thus to keep the colporteurs in every quarter properly supplied; and all hands connected with the service here are endeavoring to do with their might for the service of the Lord and his cause. The WATCH TOWER office force consists of twenty-five persons engaged in various parts of the service, yet we do not do any printing or binding of our own. Five printing establishments are turning out papers, books and tracts, so that the total number employed in the work, directly and indirectly, must be very considerable.

Incidentally, we note that the volunteer work, this year, is progressing remarkably. The two million volunteer tracts prepared in the Spring are practically all in circulation, and another million is ready for delivery now. These are aside from our ordinary tracts, which are going out freely also. Order all you can use judiciously.

Pray for the divine blessing upon our service, and join to the extent of your ability in the reaping work of this time, and thus add to your joy, both now and everlastingly.

## FOLLOWERS OF JESUS: CROSS-BEARERS

*"If any man will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me."*—Matt. 16:24.

Our Lord's invitation to forsake all and follow him is presented in very different language from the usual invitations given in his name today;—the thought, the sentiment, is wholly different. The general thought today, in connection with an invitation to "Come to Jesus," might be expressed thus:—"We invite, we urge upon you to escape an eternity of torture, of misery, by accepting Jesus as your Savior. It is a question of eternal happiness or eternal misery, and therefore, you have practically no alternative, but must accept him." How different from this is our Lord's presentation of the matter in this text. He says nothing whatever about there being no choice, nor about an eternity of misery for those who do not elect to become his followers. His words imply that it is a matter of choice with the individual, and not a matter of compulsion in any sense of the word.

Our text contains no urging, no insistence that there is no alternative. On the contrary it presents to the mind obstacles which must be encountered by those who become the Lord's followers—the crosses they must expect; and thus it invites them to consider well what they are doing, before taking the step. The invitation contains neither rant nor cant, but is, in every sense of the word, logical and reasonable, and so stated as to avoid any misunderstanding. In this respect

it corresponds with our Lord's other utterances on the subject; as, for instance, when he gave the parable of the man who proposed to build a house and laid the foundation, but afterwards was not able to complete the structure. On this parable the Lord builds the teaching that his followers should count the cost of discipleship, in the same cool, methodical, calculating manner in which they would count the cost of the erection of a building; and that they should make sure that they sufficiently desire the result to carry forward the conditions necessary to attain them. His words are, "Then said Jesus unto his disciples, Whosoever doth not bear his cross and come after me, cannot be my disciple." He explains, further, that this implies that he will love the Lord more than father and mother and wife and children and brethren and sisters—yea, more than his own life.—Luke 14:26-30.

Furthermore, it is proper that we notice the class of people to whom the Lord addresses these searching requirements of discipleship. He addressed not vile sinners, not aliens, strangers, foreigners from God's covenants and blessings; but those who were already the recipients of these—Israelites. Our text shows that his invitation was addressed to those who were already, in some sense of the word at least, our Lord's "disciples"—believers in him and, to some extent, al-

ready cooperating with him. And so, still, we understand these words to be applicable, not to sinners but to those who have accepted of God's grace in Christ to the forgiveness of their sins. The Lord is seeking a very special class of followers, separate not only from the world in general, but separate and distinct from the ordinary class of followers or disciples. Without prejudice to the general interests of the world, the blessing of which will come in due time;—without prejudice to the general disciple or believer, who will experience some blessing, some favors more than the world;—our text is pointing out the conditions of that highest degree of discipleship, the reward of which will be to be with the Master, see him as he is and share his glory as joint-heir with him in the kingdom which the Father has promised him—through the instrumentality of which kingdom all the ordinary disciples and the world in general shall be eventually blessed.

Our Lord wished, evidently, to draw a sharp line of distinction between all other classes and those followers who would walk in his steps, bearing their crosses after him. It is of this class that he declares, "No man having put his hand to the plow and looking back is fit for the kingdom of God" (Luke 9:62). This special class must be thoroughly imbued with a zeal for God and for righteousness; must gain some reasonable conceptions of the good things which God has in reservation for them; must have some appreciation of the kingdom privileges, else they will not be persevering enough, nor zealous enough, to "fight the good fight of faith" and overcome the spirit of the world, with the Lord's assisting grace. It will require these qualities of heart, in addition to the grace, mercy and strength which the Lord has promised to enable them to take up their cross and follow the Lord in the narrow way of self-sacrifice. And it was not only a kindness on the Lord's part to make clear and definite the terms of the sacrifice, but it was reasonable also that he should not inveigle any into taking such a course contrary to the true zeal of their hearts. It was eminently proper that he should put the matter just as he did put it, and that we, as his followers and mouthpieces, should present the matter to each other and to all who purpose to become his disciples in the same straightforward manner.

Some might be inclined to think that urging to accept the Lord and to seek to be his follower, with the thought that any other course would mean eternal torture, might be considered a deception which would work out benefit to the deceived ones—a deception which would do good rather than harm. We dispute this. We hold, on the contrary, that the erroneous teaching has done great injury in various ways.

(1) Its misrepresentation of the divine methods and arrangements has caused many to doubt not only the love but the justice of God.

(2) While people have theoretically claimed that only those who follow closely in the footsteps of Jesus and take up their crosses, following him in self-sacrifice, will be saved, and all the remainder of mankind be damned to eternal torture, nevertheless few believe it, few act upon such a belief, few are making an effort to be followers of the Lord as if they believed it; and extremely few of the many who are not trying to take up their crosses and follow the Lord give evidence of any fear of an eternity of torment because of neglecting his words.

(3) As a consequence there is a nominal church of professed followers of Christ, extremely few of whom are followers in the sense comprehended by the Lord in the text.

(4) As a result of this, nominal Christianity and nominal discipleship having crowded out the true condition of discipleship which our Lord specified as necessary to joint-heirship in the kingdom, we find that nearly all the preaching and other religious efforts and services of today are going in another direction entirely—to produce merely justified believers, and not to produce the sanctified followers described.

(5) As a consequence, present conditions, teachings, etc., are extremely unfavorable to the development of the very class which this Gospel age was intended to select and perfect as joint-heirs with their Lord in the kingdom.

It is because, under the Lord's providences, the mists of the dark ages are scattering and the light of the Millennial morning creeping in, that we are privileged to see the inconsistencies and falsities of the traditions of men which have beclouded the inspired records; and therefore, we are led to inquire for the "old paths," and to listen, not for the confused babel of error, but for the clear words of the great Shepherd of the flock and his inspired representatives, the apostles. Listening to these—listening to the voice of God through these—the inspired plan of God is becoming clear and luminous to

us, and its every feature reasonable, harmonious and beautiful.

It is from this standpoint that we are enabled to view our text with pleasure; and seeing the grand designs of our Almighty Father, are enabled to rejoice that we are accounted worthy, through our Redeemer's merit, to be invited to walk in his footsteps and to take up our crosses and to follow him through evil and through good report. And we are assured of his sustaining grace by the way, and of final victory and joint-heirship with him in the kingdom, if we thus continue steadfast to the end.

"If any man will come after me," signifies, If any man desires to be a follower of mine, to walk in my steps of obedience to the Father's will, and to share with me in the Father's reward. Such are to know that the cost of such discipleship will be cross-bearing. Cross-bearing signifies endurance of trials, difficulties, disappointments—the crossing of the human will and preferences by circumstances and conditions permitted of the Father. Our Lord's will was fully submitted to God, so that it was his delight to do the Father's will, and this must be our attitude to commence with; but after this consecration has taken place comes the trial and testing. If we were in heaven, where all is in full accord with the divine will, we could have no crosses from the time we fully consecrated to the Lord; because our wills being in accord with the Father's will and with all righteousness, and there being nothing in heaven contrary to that which is right, we would be in accord with everything, and everything would be in accord with our newly consecrated minds. Our crosses come because we are living in "this present evil world," because the spirit of the world is contrary to the Lord and his spirit of righteousness and equity, and because our adversary, Satan seeketh continually to stumble and ensnare us; because, also, our new wills are circumscribed and hindered and opposed by the desires of our natural bodies, which are more or less in accord with the things of this present time, its conditions, its aims, its sentiments; and because the new will strives to use the body in a manner and in a service which, under present evil conditions, continually causes it annoyance and suffering. These things are to be taken into consideration as the cost of discipleship—the cost of a share in the kingdom and its glory, honor and immortality, promised to the "called, chosen and faithful."

#### "GOD KINDLY VEILS OUR EYES"

It is fortunate for us that in the outstart we do not, can not, estimate or appreciate the full meaning of the words, sacrifice, cross-bearing, etc. If we could look into the future and see from the start the various trials and difficulties to be encountered in the "narrow way," doubtless few of us would have the courage to make the consecration and the start—if we could not see or appreciate, beforehand, the rewards and blessings which under divine providence come to us in connection with every trial—more than compensating us for every earthly self-denial and endurance. Nor can we in advance appreciate how the Lord wishes to test our zeal and our faith, by letting us come to the crosses of life one at a time, and letting us see their ruggedness,—hiding from us the assisting hand by which, as soon as we take hold of the cross and put forth our efforts, our Lord lifts the real weight of it, so that we have no more at any time than we are able to bear. So careful is he of all those who thus become his foot-step followers and cross-bearers, and prospectively his joint-heirs in the kingdom, that he will not "suffer them to be tempted above that they are able, but with the temptation will provide also a way of escape."—1 Cor. 10:13.

#### SACRIFICING PRECEDES CROSS-BEARING

The first step in following the Lord is properly designated in the Scriptures a sacrifice; but it is not a taking up of the cross. When we sacrifice our wills, when we submit ourselves fully to the Lord, it is the sum of all sacrifice—in the sense that the giving up of the will means the surrender of our all to the Lord, that his will may be done in respect to all our affairs. The will is the individual, the ego, and holds the command, the rulership of our time, influence, abilities, and every talent; hence the surrender of the will to God means a surrender of all these things to him. All subsequent sacrifices which we may make in the Lord's service are included in and represented by this sacrifice of the will. If the will changes, draws back, ceases to be obedient to God, ceases to be submissive to his arrangements, the whole condition changes and the relationship to God as a member of the body of Christ terminates. But if the will continues faithful to God and desirous of serving him and his cause, though the service and cross-bearing be not done faithfully, the Lord will carry such through, and by chastisements and corrections in righteousness

they shall ultimately be "saved so as by fire"—by tribulation. This is the essence of the doctrine of "the final perseverance of the saints." So long as they continue to be consecrated—to have their wills sanctified to the Lord—they continue to be his, even should they, from lack of zeal, fail to win the prize offered to the zealous, the "overcomers."

But if the will remain loyal to the Lord, and the crosses are approached and lifted and borne in faith and trust, not only will the Lord's grace suffice, but his comfort and assistance will be given in the narrow way;—so that its trials and difficulties may be esteemed as "light afflictions, but for a moment." Eventually this class shall be the victors, joint-heirs with the Master in his kingdom, because by his assisting grace they shall have walked in his footsteps faithfully, even unto death—and that with greater ease and peace and joy and satisfaction than others who with less zeal seek to avoid the crosses of their consecration.

The statement that the consecration of the will—its surrender, its sacrifice, that the Lord's will may be received instead—is not one of the crosses we are called on to bear, may need further explanation. In order for the sacrifice of our wills to be acceptable to the Lord at all, it must be no cross to us: the desire to give up our own will and to accept God's will must be a joy, a pleasure. Our wills must be sacrificed willingly, else the sacrifice will not be accepted of the Lord, and we shall have neither part nor lot with him. Unless the will be joyfully resigned to the Lord's will, all subsequent sacrificing or cross-bearing will count nothing whatever to our advantage. Our Master's expression respecting the surrender, the sacrifice, of his will to do the Father's will, illustrates this matter clearly; and it will be noticed from the language that there was no cross connected therewith.

Our Lord's sentiments were, "I delight to do thy will, O my God; yea, thy law is within my heart." (Psa. 40:8) And so all who would be his disciples must not only count the cost of cross-bearing because of the opposition of the world, the flesh and the devil, but they must have a somewhat similar spirit to that of our Lord in connection with the sacrificing of their wills; they, too, must delight to have God's will done in them—delight to surrender or sacrifice their own wills. Let us see this clearly, and if there is anything lacking in respect to the sacrifice of our wills let us give it our first attention. He who has completely sacrificed his will to the Lord's will has gained the victory at the start which will make all the remainder of the "narrow way" comparatively easy. He who has merely hacked and mutilated his will instead of killing it outright, will find extra difficulty at every step of his journey, and can never gain the victory until he has finished the sacrifice which he imperfectly began.

#### IN WHAT DOES CROSS-BEARING CONSIST?

The Master's cross-bearing did not consist in fighting the weaknesses of the flesh, for he had none; nor are these weaknesses of the flesh our crosses. Because all our weaknesses of the flesh are fully covered by the merit of our Lord's sacrifice; our standing before God is as new creatures and not as imperfect fleshly creatures—the imperfections of the flesh, which are contrary to our wills and opposed by them, being fully pardoned by the Lord. The Lord's cross-bearing consisted in the doing of the Father's will under unfavorable conditions. This course brought upon him the envy, hatred, malice, strife, persecution, etc., of those who thought themselves to be God's people but whom our Lord, who read their hearts, declared to be of their father, the devil. We are not able to read the hearts of those about us who profess to be the Lord's people, yet we may be sure that there are plenty still who profess the name of God and of Christ and who have none of his spirit and are not his children, but are the children of the adversary,—begotten of an evil spirit.

Since we are walking in the same "narrow way" that our Master walked, we may reasonably expect that our crosses will be of similar kind to his—oppositions to our doing the will of our Father in heaven—oppositions to our serving his cause and letting the light shine out as our Master and Leader directed. It is a pleasure for us to do the Father's will—no cross about that. We delight not only to consecrate our wills, but the Lord's law of righteousness is in our hearts to such an extent that we delight to serve the right, the truth. Our cross-bearing comes when we find that the truth, so beautiful to us, so charming, is hated by others and draws upon us their anger, malice, hatred, as the same truths drew the same opposition upon our Master. Our faithfulness in cross-bearing consists in our willingness to stand up for the truth and for every principle of righteousness:—meekly, humbly, yet firmly, speaking the truth in love, no matter what the cost of friendships broken or enmities enkindled, or evil words spoken against us falsely for the truth's sake.

Our Master forewarned us of just such experiences when he spoke of our crosses in following him. He was explaining the matter more fully when he said, "Marvel not if the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you." "If ye were of the world the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you." If they have called the Master of the house Beëlzebub,—prince of devils,—think it not strange if they will call his followers by evil names also. Yea, he forewarned us, "They shall say all manner of evil against you, falsely, for my sake." He even implied that some who are not children of the devil would be found amongst the persecutors of the cross-bearers, and assured us that some of these would verily think that they were doing God service. And are they not doing God and us also a service in the sense that Satan is serving God's purposes in the present time, in the persecution of the church;—in making her path a "narrow" one, and filling it with difficulties; that thus the Lord's faithful cross-bearers might be tested and proven, and that he might thus select and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works and zealous of the truth?

#### CROSS-BEARERS MUST BATTLE WITH THE FLESH, ALSO

While we pointed out, foregoing, that cross-bearing is quite separate from battling with the weaknesses of the flesh, nevertheless whoever has the mind of Christ, whoever is seeking to be a cross-bearer and to stand up as a representative of the Lord and the truth in the midst of a wicked and perverse generation, as an ambassador of God, will surely realize that he could not be an acceptable ambassador and could not claim that his will is sacrificed to the Lord's will, if he did not strive against the weaknesses and imperfections in himself as well as stand for the general principles of righteousness and truth everywhere. The Apostle included this thought and much more in this expression,—*"He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked."* (1 John 2:6) He is to walk as our Lord walked, in his general deportment and relationship to everything that is good; and correspondingly to avoid everything that is evil. He is to walk as nearly as possible in the footsteps of Jesus.

This, however, does not mean that he either should or could, in an imperfect body, walk up to all the perfection of his Lord, who even in the flesh was perfect. It means just what it says, that we should walk as he walked—in the same way, in the same direction, toward the same mark and standard that he recognized and established. The Apostle Paul gives us a suggestion along this line, very helpful when rightly understood. His words are, *"The righteousness of the law is fulfilled in us who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit."* (Rom. 8:4) To walk after the flesh is to walk after sin—to knowingly, willingly, intentionally, do those things which we recognize to be contrary to the divine will, even though we should not go to the extreme of wickedness. So, likewise, to walk after the spirit does not mean to walk up to the standard of the spirit, which would be impossible for us who were born in sin, shapen in iniquity, and thus blemished by sin according to the flesh. As "new creatures" we are living in the earthly tabernacle, which is imperfect; and so long as we are thus limited, we cannot do all that we would. As "new creatures," begotten of the holy spirit, we desire to do perfectly. We desire that every thought, word and act should be perfect in the sight of our heavenly Father,—as perfect as were those of our dear Redeemer; but this we know from the Scriptures and from experience is impossible. We are glad, therefore, that the Lord shows us, as in this statement of the Apostle, that what he requires is that we should walk after the spirit;—that he does not require of us that we should walk up to it, which would be an impossibility.

It is because we could not walk up to the spirit, up to the perfect standard of the divine requirement, that God has mercifully provided an arrangement of *grace* on our behalf. By this grace, those who start as members of the body of Christ, to walk in the footsteps of Jesus—to walk henceforth *not after the flesh*, but on the contrary to walk *after the spirit*, and as nearly as possible up to the spirit's requirements—have their deficiencies made up for them by their Redeemer's meritorious sacrifice. The divine arrangement for this is a unique one, which adapts itself to the various conditions and circumstances of each and all called to walk in this narrow way. If one by reason of being well born and having a good environment has for this reason a better balanced and equipped mortal body in which the new mind can exercise itself with the greater freedom;—and if such a one by reason of these advantages be able to walk nearer to the spirit's standard than a less favored brother, whose will, however, is equally



loyal to the Lord, the divine arrangement is that each shall have imputed to him *grace sufficient*,—so that both may be counted perfect—counted as having walked up to the spirit's requirements.

This matter may be more clearly before our minds if we imagine a scale marked off from naught (0) to one hundred (100)—a scale on which we will suppose mortal stamina to be measurable, one hundred representing the full, complete character which God requires. On this scale imagine five brethren with different degrees of physical imperfections, yet all fully consecrated to the Lord, all seeking to the best of their ability to "walk not after the flesh but after the spirit"—as nearly up to the full (one hundred) standard as possible. One has ten points of character, another twenty, another thirty, another forty, another fifty. From the Lord's standpoint, because they are all trusting in Christ and walking in his way, and seeking to do his will, they are all counted as up to the full standard, one hundred—all acceptable with the Lord—the weakest as well as the strongest of them. This wonderful divine arrangement for man's necessities tells of the wisdom of God as well as of his mercy and love. Who else could have devised such an equitable plan, by which whosoever cometh unto the Father through the Redeemer, with full consecration of heart, of will, and full intention of life, might be acceptable—nothing short of perfection being acceptable?

It is for this reason that we are told that we are reckonedly justified—"justified by faith." Mark now the words of the Apostle, "Where sin abounded, there did grace so much more abound." He here expresses a general principle of the divine arrangement. Those hearing the invitation in this present time, and desiring to accept God's grace and call, are all thus put on an equality: he who has little character with many weaknesses and imperfections, has accredited to him of the Lord's grace and merit proportionately; he who has more of character naturally and who needs, therefore, less of grace, gets also according to his needs. But let it be clearly noted that there is "none righteous, no, not one"—none who

can come up to the divine standard. All need to have the Lord's merit imputed to them, and hence the Lord makes this arrangement for all who would approach him and accept his favor, his call to joint-heirship with his Son. They can have neither part nor lot in the matter until they have acknowledged their own imperfections and have accepted the imputed merits of our Redeemer, "In whom we have redemption through his blood."

All of the Lord's people—not all of the nominal church, not merely nominal disciples, but the true followers mentioned in the text—are not only walking in the same pathway, but similarly all find it narrow and difficult. Similarly all in this pathway have the same spirit, mind or disposition—to do the Father's will and to serve his cause. This is the spirit of Christ, and by it all men may take knowledge of his disciples; they, like him, will be loyal to the principles of righteousness and truth. They will be willing to suffer opposition and persecution for the Truth's sake for righteousness' sake, and thus with him to be cross-bearers.

The Apostle Paul brings out this thought when, writing to the Corinthians respecting Titus, he asks, "Walked we not in the same spirit? Walked we not in the same steps?" (2 Cor. 12:18) Assuredly Paul and Titus must have been walking in the same spirit and the same steps if they were both walking in the spirit and steps of the Master,—taking up life's crosses and following him. And this, dear brethren and sisters, will be true of each and all of us. While we each have our individual peculiarities and differences of temperament, conditions, surroundings, opportunities, etc., the same spirit and the same steps can be noted in all who are followers of the Lamb. "If any man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of his." If any man walk not in the footsteps of Jesus he is not one of his followers, in this special sense pointed out by our text, and consequently would not be one of the joint-heirs in the kingdom. But let us keep in memory the Lord's assurance that his grace is sufficient for us, and that his strength is made perfect in our weakness, and that this is the victory that overcometh the world—even our faith.

## OVERCOMING EVIL WITH GOOD

1 SAM. 26:5-12, 21-25.—AUGUST 30.

GOLDEN TEXT:—"Love your enemies, do good to them that hate you."

This lesson concerns the seven years of David's experiences as a fugitive from the envy and hatred of King Saul. The latter, though still the nominal representative of the Lord upon the throne of Israel, had lost the divine blessing and power which, in considerable measure, had been transferred to David after his anointing to be Saul's successor. The lesson brings before our minds in sharp contrast the king, whose better judgment was overcome by evil impulses, and David, the "man after God's own heart," who, although far from perfect, strove successfully for mastery over himself, and overcame promptings of evil under the guidance of principles of righteousness. We are not to think of David as perfect. Neither are we to be blind to his faults and sins, nor to excuse them nor to copy them. David was not one of the "saints" in the New Testament sense. He lived at too early a date to share in the high calling, nor could he follow in the footsteps of Jesus, since the captain of our salvation and our forerunner in the narrow way had not yet come. David was a man after God's own heart, in the sense that he was full of faith in God and aimed aright. At heart he desired to do the Lord's will, and wherever he failed of this it caused him grief and led him to repentance. He lived before the time of God's revelation of his own character and plan and perfect will concerning his people. All things considered, David's attainments in faith and obedience were quite remarkable, so that although as a whole he was not to be considered as a model or pattern by the church of the Gospel age, nevertheless many beautiful illustrations of proper faith and obedience may be drawn from his career, and some of them are noted in the lesson before us.

The seven years from the time David fled from the wrath of Saul until Saul died must have seemed to David a peculiarly long period of trial of faith and patience. His own course had been a noble and true one. He had served his king and his nation most loyally, yet he suffered as a reward. He was for a time an exile in a foreign land, and his father's family was obliged to remove to Moab for protection. It must have seemed peculiar to David that the Lord should permit him, anointed to succeed King Saul, to be thus delayed from coming into his kingdom, and instead to be hunted and persecuted as an outlaw. This, however, was a valuable test of his faith, and doubtless helped to strengthen its roots, and thus to make his character stronger and his trust in the Lord

firmer. But besides this, we may readily see that those seven years were valuable to David as a preparation for his kingly office. They made him intimately acquainted with the people and their usual manner of life and general sentiments—acquainted also with the neighboring peoples. Above all, he became intimately acquainted with the Lord, and, we may be sure, learned to trust his providences even where he could not trace them. Several of the Psalms were either written during this period and describe David's experiences on the spot, or written subsequently describing the lessons learned from those experiences. Amongst these Psalms may be mentioned numbers 34, 52, 56, 57, 63.

Spiritual Israelites who have already received the adoption and anointing of the Lord to future service as kings and priests, who shall reign on the earth with our blessed Lord and Head, to bless all the families of the earth, can easily trace valuable lessons in the trying experiences of David at the time of this lesson. The prince of this world is our enemy, not because we have done evil, but because he realizes that he has but a short time, and because he has a spirit that is opposed to the Lord's spirit in us. We too, at times, may wonder why the Lord—having anointed us and assured us of the glory, honor and immortality in the kingdom—permits us to have such trying experiences and such severe conflicts with the world, the flesh and the devil. The reason becomes evident as we learn the way of the Lord more particularly—as we learn that the present "afflictions which are but for a moment [comparatively] are working out for us [fitting us for] a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." We have need of patience, and that can only be gained by trials. We have need of faith, and that can only be developed by necessities. We have need of experience for our future work, which can be gained only by such experiences, which permit us to be touched with a feeling of the infirmities and difficulties and trials of those about us, to whom we shall be ministers and representatives when we reach the throne. For us, then, as for David, the lesson of present experiences is to resist evil,—and not with evil but with good.

In considering the story of David and other Bible heroes we are impressed with the candor of the narratives—that the evil things of their conduct are told with the same frankness as their good deeds. This is one of the peculiarities of the

Bible and one of the internal evidences of its truthfulness. How easy it would have been to have glossed the history of David so as to have avoided everything that would be to his discredit; and how surely this would have been done, especially in the case of a king, had the preparation of the Bible not been under divine supervision. Some, we are sure, incline to the thought that the Bible would have been much better reading had some of the faults of its prominent persons been omitted; we, however, are not sure of this. The story of the trials and failures and repentances of some of these noble characters have been no less blessings than the records of their noble deeds and sentiments. As some of the Lord's people have realized their own weaknesses in the flesh, having at times come short of their ideals in the battle against sin, they have found encouragement in the experiences of others related in the Scriptures—not to delve further into sin but to realize that "there is forgiveness with the Lord that he might be feared." As such have noted the failures of David on various occasions and his repentance, contrition and restoration to the Lord's favor, it has given them courage to similarly repent and to similarly trust in God's mercy and in their own forgiveness, and similarly to be encouraged to arise from their dejection and sin and start afresh in the battle for righteousness, truth, purity, etc.

Our lesson deals with one of David's experiences when pursued by Saul. The erratic course of King Saul under the control of an evil spirit doubtless led him to deal unjustly with other men, as he did with David,—with some for one cause, with some for another. Such people as incurred Saul's enmity, and those that were forced to become fugitives and to be ranked with outlaws, sought out David and put themselves under his superior control. These numbered at one time 400 and later on 600. (1 Sam. 22:2; 25:13; 27:2) These men, hindered from engaging in the ordinary pursuits of life by reason of the king's erratic course, moved about from place to place, and, since they must eat, their presence was doubtless an affliction upon the farmers wherever they went. Their foragings may have been carried on in harmony with the Jewish law, which provided that any hungry persons might enter any farm, orchard or vineyard and eat to his satisfaction without molestation.

Doubtless it was because the people of the village of Ziph desired to curry the king's favor, and also because they feared the foragings of so many men, that they sent word to King Saul that David and his company could be found in their vicinity. The king hurriedly gathered a troop of 3,000 and went to the place, probably anxious to capture David and his followers. The latter, however, were not so easily caught; indeed they were much better used to scouting than the regular army would be. They readily ascertained all about the king and his army, while the king knew little or nothing of them.

The story shows how David with one trusty companion went into Saul's camp. King Saul and the whole army were sleeping without tents, clothed in their outer robes, as is frequently the custom in Palestine even yet. The king lay not in a "trench" but in a space or corral formed by the army wagons; and at his head, to distinguish him from the rest of the army, his spear was erected near his head-rest, as is still the custom among the chiefs of the Bedouins of that country. Secure in the thought that David and his handful of followers would be afraid of the king and his army and would not think of coming nigh them, no provision had been made for pickets or watchmen, so that David and his companion readily found the king, and could have murdered him in his sleep and escaped without detection had they chosen so to do. It was not that David was so obtuse that he could not see the advantage that would come to him that he refrained from killing the king, but because of his respect for God and his loyalty to him. David recognized fully that God was the King of Israel, and that God had set Saul in the position he occupied and anointed him as king; and that it was the duty of the people to honor the king as God's representative. (Kings among the Gentiles are not thus divinely set.) He did not have so weak a conscience as would have permitted him to reason that as God had anointed him to be Saul's successor he had now providentially put Saul's life in his power. On the contrary he reasoned properly that God was still King and that he had all the power necessary to dethrone Saul and to bring him to the throne in his own way; and that the Almighty needed not the assistance of murder on his part for the accomplishment of his plan.

To make the test still stronger David's companion suggested all this, and proposed to carry it out; so that the entire matter might have been done without David saying a word or lifting a finger. To a weaker mind this would have been an extremely strong temptation—he would have argued

with himself that the crime would not be his,—that by merely keeping silent and refusing to interfere the whole matter might be accomplished by another. But David knew that his companion would not act without his consent, either formal or implied. He recognized that the responsibility still would be his, whoever might be the tool in the murder. He decided that he would not meet Saul's envy, malice, hatred and murderous spirit with the same spirit,—returning evil for evil,—but, instead, he would requite his evil and murderous intentions with mercy. This was not merely a matter of policy, but evidently David never had in his heart any murderous spirit towards Saul, for this was now the second time he had him in his power and might have destroyed him. We are not to suppose that David loved Saul with an affectionate love any more than he would have loved any other person of such a character. He loved him in the sense referred to in our Golden Text—with the kind of love it is proper to feel toward our enemies;—the love of sympathy and compassion which, however it might disapprove the character, etc., of the enemy, would neither do him injury nor encourage others to do so, but would spare his life and be ready in any manner to do him a kindness.

There is a good lesson here for all spiritual Israelites. We are to recognize the Lord's appointments and permissions, not in respect only to earthly governments, but also, and particularly, in respect to those whom God has set in the church. Even though such should become enemies of righteousness, it is not for us to accomplish their destruction. The Lord, who called us to the kingdom and who has promised to give it to us in his own due time, declares it his will that in the present time we should live peaceably, and to exercise patience, moderation and kindness even toward our enemies—toward those who would destroy us or who are pursuing us with the intention of assassinating our characters, or what not. We are not to render evil for evil, nor railing for railing, nor slander for slander; but contrariwise, are to speak as kindly of our enemies as we can, and to think as generously of them as possible—in no sense of the word either physically or with our tongues or otherwise may we retaliate or manifest their spirit, but return good for evil, mercy and compassion for malice and injury.

After David and his companion had reached a position of safety, and when the proper time had come, they hailed the king and chief general, and called their attention to the fact that the king's life had been in jeopardy, but had been spared; and as proofs they showed the spear and water bottle and informed the king that these would be returned to a messenger whom he might send for them. It was not improper that David should let all know the spirit of magnanimity which had controlled his conduct in this matter. The king at once recognized the situation, and had manhood enough to confess it promptly and to apologize for his own contrary course. David's procedure conquered him.

The results of well-doing are not always so apparent as in this case, because some evil-doers have less character and principle than had Saul,—unappreciative, envious and malicious as he was. But even if our rendering of good for evil fail to bring the acknowledgment of the evil-doer it nevertheless is right, and becomes a blessing to us. It is the evil-doer who loses by his failure to be conquered by our kindness. Although Saul evidently repented, David knew better than to trust himself to his power; and there is a lesson in this for us also, viz., that while generous toward our enemies, returning them good for their evil, we should not be too readily convinced of reformation on their part, but should realize, as David did in Saul's case, that he was under control of an evil spirit, and that therefore any acknowledgment of wrong or profession of reformation should be esteemed a passing emotion rather than a change of disposition until reasonable time should be given for a demonstration of a change of heart.

David's answer to Saul, under all the circumstances, was a model of truthfulness and forbearance. He neither affirmed nor denied Saul's guilt, nor did he solicit the king's favor and mercy. On the other hand he declared his confidence in God—that he would deal with every man according to his righteousness and mercy—and showed that it was his respect for God and his standards that spared the king's life. He declared that as he had shown mercy toward the king, he was trusting in the Lord to show mercy toward him, and that in the Lord—not in the king—he trusted for compassion and help, to deliver him from all tribulations. To what extent David appreciated the high standard of his own expression we do not know. Being a prophet, he frequently typified the Christ, head and body. His words are certainly more appropriate for the church than they were for him personally. David was still under the law and must therefore be judged

by the law, which, as the Apostle declares, proves that there is none righteous, no not one. In our day, however, we may be covered with the robe of Christ's righteousness, so that "the righteousness of the law may be fulfilled in us who are walking not after the flesh but after the spirit." Our heart intentions for righteousness are acceptable to the Lord under the merits of Christ's sacrifice. Our desires and endeavors to be faithful to him and to his Word are accepted instead of perfect works, and hence we may expect that in due time the Lord will accept us in the Beloved, to the glory of his kingdom. Again David's sentiments are ours and his principles those which appeal to us when he declares that God would have mercy upon him as he had mercy upon Saul. This is the very essence of our Master's teaching—"If ye forgive not men for trespasses against you neither will your heavenly

Father forgive your trespasses"—he who shows no mercy shall obtain no mercy.

As Saul recognized the spirit that was in David as being more righteous than his own, and declared that ultimately David would be prospered greatly, so do the enemies of spiritual Israelites realize the difference between their conduct and that of those who are guided by the Lord's spirit—although they do not often candidly acknowledge the matter as did Saul. The class represented by Saul is a numerous one. It discerns and acknowledges righteousness but follows unrighteousness: it discerns the good but opposes it with evil. Let us, in respect to faith in God and desire to please him, be like David, whose name signifies beloved, and who, as already intimated, in many respects was a *type* of the Beloved—Christ, head and body.

## GREAT OPPORTUNITIES MISUSED

1 SAM. 31:1-13.—SEPTEMBER 6.

**GOLDEN TEXT:**—"There is a way that seemeth right unto a man; but the end thereof are the ways of death."—Prov. 14:12.

King Saul's life as a whole was a blunder and a failure. It opened with grand possibilities and opportunities under divine favor and the love and adoration of his countrymen. Not only his personal qualities were in many respects estimable, but even his physical proportions—head and shoulders above his fellows, goodly to look upon, and attractive to his people—had added to his influence. Yet he failed. A valuable lesson may be drawn by each of us from the causes of his failure. A contemporary sums up his case thus:

"Saul had many noble and lovable qualities, such as bravery, promptitude—in his earlier days modesty and generosity. All these he had by nature, but there is no sign that he ever sought to cultivate his moral character or to win any grace that did not come naturally to him; nor is there any reason to suppose that religion had ever had any strong hold upon him. From the baleful influence of his selfishness, as before some hot poison-wind, all the flowers of good dispositions were burned up, and the bad stimulated to growth. His earlier virtues disappeared and passed into their opposites. Modesty became arrogance, and a long course of indulgence in self-will developed cruelty, gloomy suspicion and passionate anger, and left him the victim and slave of his own causeless hate. He who rebels against God mars his own character. The miserable last years of Saul, haunted and hunted as by a demon by his own indulged and swollen rebellion and unsleeping suspicion, are an example of the sorrows that ever dog sin; and, as he fell by his own sword in his final battle at Gilboa, the terrible saying recurs to our memory: 'He that being often reproved hardeneth his neck, will suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy.'"

Saul's difficulty, which led to all this disaster, was his selfishness—and he was not unusually selfish either. The great majority of mankind are equally selfish—self-willed; and the great majority, like him, make a failure of whatever possibilities were before them at the first. As David's career illustrates the wisdom and advantage of an early consecration to the will of the Lord, and the blessing which must surely attend such a course—even though those blessings be accompanied with trials and difficulties—so Saul's course in a general way illustrates the error of those who measurably ignore the Lord and attempt to direct their own paths. Such will surely find themselves misled by their selfish ambitions as Saul was by his. Saul's two special transgressions were: (1) his offering of sacrifice, which, according to divine arrangement, he had no right to offer (1 Sam. 13:1-14); (2) his disobedience of another direct command of the Lord, as recorded in 1 Sam. 15:1-13. It may be argued that King David also erred and did contrary to the Lord's will on several occasions, but we are to notice the wide difference between these two characters, in that David's heart was apparently always loyal to the Lord, and that when overtaken in a fault his sorrow therefor was sincere and led to greater carefulness in the future. With Saul, on the contrary, the difficulty seems to have been with the heart—that at heart he was not submissive to the Lord's will but was guided by his own will, and merely repented and apologized through fear of consequences and not from sorrow at having deviated from the Lord's way.

Herein we may note a great difference between people nominally the Lord's today: The truly consecrated may stumble, may err, but at heart they are ever loyal to the Lord and wish to serve and please him. These are spiritual Israelites indeed, and the blessing of the Lord is upon them. The other class professes to be the Lord's people, but at heart are far from him, and merely draw nigh with their lips and outward ceremonies. They have neither part nor lot with the others,

and will surely reap the results of their own self-will so far as any opportunities under the present call are concerned. Another writer has well said:

"When Saul forsook God there necessarily was a separation between him and God; and an evil spirit took possession of his heart. We see no sign of God's doing anything direct to hasten Saul's doom. He was left to work out the natural results of an evil heart, and a life guided by passion and selfishness, without the help and direction of God. He spent his time in hunting David instead of overcoming his enemies. His kingdom was thus neglected, his people discontented, many of his best men abandoned him and went over to David, and together were driven into the enemies' country. His army lost courage, and in the last great battle he was weakened and worn by spending the night in consulting a witch instead of preparing for his work. So that he perished miserably by suicide at last. 'He ate of the fruit of his own way, and was filled with his own devices.'"—Prov. 1:3.

Our lesson concerns the closing days of Saul's experiences. The Philistines with an army had penetrated the kingdom of Israel, and Saul, with an opposing army, went forth to engage them in battle. The two armies encamped not far from Nazareth. We can easily imagine the dejection of mind which led King Saul on the night before the battle to consult the witch at Endor. In his self-will he neglected the Lord's will in general and was filled with hatred for David, because he realized that it was the Lord's will to ultimately bring the latter to the throne of Israel. He realized, therefore, that in opposing David, who did him no harm, but was really one of his most loyal subjects, he was in fact fighting against God. And now, on the eve of battle, it is no wonder that he felt downcast and dejected, because when he sought to inquire of the Lord he got no response. He bethought him of the witch of Endor and concluded to inquire of her respecting the outcome of the battle on the morrow. Here again he knew that his course was in opposition to the divine will; for he himself had given instructions for the execution of the Lord's command of Deut. 18:10, 12; Exod. 22:18. His course in this matter illustrated the quality of his disposition which the Lord disapproved. Knowing that communication with the evil spirits through mediums was disapproved of God, he nevertheless pursued the wrong course. Similarly some of God's people today, notwithstanding the instruction of the Scriptures that they should not seek those having familiar spirits, etc., have attended Spiritualistic seances "just to see how it is done." Such a disposition to be careless of the Lord's instruction, self-willed, was the one which got Saul into trouble and surely will make trouble for those who have it today. God is not pleased with those who are careless of his commands: he lets them take their own way as he permitted Saul to take his own way; but, however wise such a self-willed way may appear at the time, the end is sure to be disastrous so far as peace and fellowship with the Lord are concerned. Only those who are fully committed to the Lord and who love the Lord's will better than their own can expect to have fulfilled toward them the promise, "All things shall work together for good to them that love God."

The narrative of the lesson is very simple and requires very little comment. Saul and three of his sons and his entire bodyguard perished in the battle, in which the Philistines seemed to have specially pursued the royal party. Saul committed suicide, lest falling alive into the hands of his enemies they would have tortured him, as was not infrequently the custom in that day. The Philistines, of course, rejoiced in his discomfiture, and as an evidence of their victory his head was sent as a trophy to one and another of their cities. They