

18:1 Jan, 1896

4

The Watchword.

LAW AND GOSPEL.

A few weeks before Dr. Gordon passed away he told us of coming home one Saturday perfectly worn out, with no preparation for Sunday, and of how the Lord had greatly blessed him in preaching from Isa. 1: 18. Here is a rich extract from the sermon.

"Let us notice the difference between the law and the gospel. Under the law the command was to seek the Lord; under the gospel the declaration is that the Lord is seeking all men. 'Seek ye the Lord while he may be found' was the voice of God in the old covenant; but there were none who understood, not one who would seek after God; and he, looking over all this weary, suffering, sinful race, could not find one who would truly satisfy him. Under grace all this is reversed; for we read in the Gospel, 'God is a Spirit, and seeketh such to worship him,' 'The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.' Take the parable of the Prodigal Son. Had we been writing it, we would have represented the wanderer returning late at night, and knocking and praying at the door for admittance, and after long waiting being let in by the porter; but how different is the story of the father seeing him while yet a great way off, and running to meet him. It only proves the truth of that word, 'Before they call, I will answer.' Mercy outruns our swiftest thought, and so it is we find under grace God seeking man.

"Under the law the command was, 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart,' etc., but after waiting centuries God found no one who would love him with heart, soul, mind, and strength, so he completely inverted the law; and under the gospel this commandment reads, 'God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him shall not perish but have everlasting life,' as if God, said, 'If I cannot find any one who loves me with all their heart, I will love the world with all my

heart;' and that is why we see Christ upon the cross—God poured out his love in such unstinted measure."

IF YOU KNEW HIM.

BY A. J. GORDON.

AND if any of you ask me to-day, "Why cannot I believe in Christ?" the only answer I can find is, Because you do not know him. To make this just as simple as possible, let me explain. The thing which the Lord wants of you is that you should intrust your soul to his keeping. This is exactly what Paul meant when he said, "I know whom I believed, and am persuaded that he will keep that which I have committed" or intrusted or left on deposit with him, for so the words mean. Why was he so confident that he would keep it? Because he knew him. This is illustrated by the way trust funds are committed to the care of banks. After the trustworthiness of the bank is known, then the funds are confidently placed in its keeping. Witness Mary Magdalene, the penitent dying thief. You want peace. "Acquaint now thyself with him, and be at peace."

And not only do we need to be wise concerning God, the author of good, and Jesus Christ, the embodiment and manifestation of good, but we should study to be acquainted with *good itself* in all its forms. Contemplation begets likeness. Much converse with a good man assimilates us to his character. And so communion with good moulds us into the likeness of that good. This is why, I suppose, that the Bible is called a laver and a fountain of cleansing. It is rich in all good thoughts and good examples and good instructions and good words. And the good spirit *flows through* all these like a perennial spring. To come in contact with these forms and principles of good purifies the soul. "The washing of water by the word," as Paul uses the phrase, has a more real and literal meaning to my mind. A bad book stains the soul, just as sensibly as soot discolors the hands

001