

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

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1871 Jan 1896

which it touches; and a good book tends to cleanse away that stain just as sensibly. Therefore to the Psalmist's question, "Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way?" the highest possible answer is that which he gives: "By taking heed thereto according to thy word." And therefore we should keep our lives in daily contact with that word, bathing our souls in it and by perpetual ablutions in it through thought and study and meditation seek to come to that state where the Master can say to you as to his first disciples, "Now are ye clean through the word which I have spoken to you."

And now may the Spirit of all good help us to keep ourselves in untaught "simplicity concerning evil" and grow in all wisdom concerning that which is good. To know God "is the highest good," for this is eternal life.

THREE KINDS OF PREACHING.

DR. GORDON often told of a Sabbath he spent abroad, on which day he went in the morning to hear a distinguished preacher who was celebrated for his biblical knowledge. He came home delighted with the clear and brilliant expositions of the truth that he had heard, but chilled with the icy coldness of the message. It was true, clear, scriptural truth, but as cold as an iceberg.

He went in the afternoon to hear another preacher distinguished for his fervor, and he came back delighted with the earnestness and unction of the preacher, but it was a fire of shavings, and there was not truth enough in it to make it lasting.

He went again at night, and heard a third preacher, and he came away not only instructed, but thrilled; because this sermon had been not only an exposition of scriptural truth, but it had also been alive with the power of God, and full of the fire of the Holy Ghost. It was not a fire of shavings, but of substantial fuel, and it left not only a memory of truth, but a glow of warmth that filled his heart with joy and love. This

is the power of the Holy Ghost speaking the truth in love; the Bible ablaze with holy fire; the Word of God dissolved in unction and love, until it can be observed in every fibre of our being and become the nutriment of our life.

MISSIONARY SERVICE.

BY GEORGE MULLER.

(1.) We must be ourselves believers, or we may do great injury to others who are unbelievers, instead of doing them good. (2.) We must know for ourselves that we are regenerate. Lack of this will soon lead to half-hearted service. We shall be looking back to this present evil world. (3.) We must seek habitually after happiness in the Lord. We are to rejoice in our God. By this our work will be greatly affected; for it is not so much the amount of our work, as the spirit in which it is done.

In order to be thus happy believers (4) we must be lovers of Holy Scripture. After my conversion in 1825 I used to read the Bible, but it was not till about four years later that I was a lover of God's Holy Word. I believe this is one chief reason that I have been kept in happy useful service, because I have been a lover of Holy Scripture; and I love it more now than ever I did. It has been my habit to read the Scriptures through four times in a year; and it is important to read it in a prayerful spirit, to meditate upon what we read, and to apply it to our own hearts. Do I understand this? Do I obey this? What has this word for me?

Then (5) we must practise what we find in the Scripture, and the result will be a happy man, a happy woman. I have been for sixty-nine years a happy man; and I desire for my beloved brethren and sisters that they may be happy, happy, happy, ten times more happy than ever I have been in my life; for it is impossible to tell what God may give to us in this way if we are thus lovers of Holy Scripture. (6.) We must take joyfully and gratefully the place that God gives us. (7.) All our