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# BIBLE READING LEAFLET.

HANNAH WHITALL SMITH, EDITOR.

Superintendent of the Bible Reading Department for the World's W. C. T. U.

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## SUBJECT:—IN EVERYTHING GIVE THANKS.

*Foundation Text.*—I Thess. 5:18.

In every thing give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.

There are three things to emphasize in this passage. First, that we are to give thanks, second, that we are to give thanks in *everything*, and third, that this is *God's will* concerning you. I am afraid we do not always read this as it is written. We change the words "give thanks," into "be resigned," and the words "every thing," into a "few things," and leave out altogether the words "this is the will of God concerning you." Have we ever come face to face with the fact that it is absolutely God's will that we should give thanks in everything? Have we ever even imagined that we *could* do it? I am afraid the greatest height to which many Christians have risen is to strive after being resigned to most things and patiently to endure them; but actually to give thanks, that seems like an impossibility, and they entirely overlook the fact that God has commanded it, and that therefore it must be possible. The result is that thanksgiving is almost an unknown exercise among Christians, and that, instead of giving thanks in everything, many of God's children hardly give thanks in anything. I very much fear indeed that Christians as a body are a thankless set. It is considered in the world a very uncourteous thing for one man to receive benefits from another man and fail to thank him; and I cannot see why it is not just as uncourteous a thing not to thank God. And yet we find people who would not for the world omit an immediate note of thanks upon the reception of any gift however trifling from a human friend, but who have never given God real thanks for any one of the innumerable benefits He

has been showering upon them all their lives long.

And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit; speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord; giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.—Eph. 5:18-20.

"Giving thanks always for all things;" not for a certain class of things only, not for instance for so-called religious things only, but for *all* things, spiritual and temporal, things that look good and things that look bad, pleasant things and unpleasant things, for everything in short that God sends, or, what is the same thing, permits to come. "All things were made by Him and without Him was not anything made that was made." Therefore, however it may look on the surface, those who have eyes that can see below surfaces KNOW that God is in everything, and behind everything, and that nothing can happen outside of His love and His care.

For every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving: for it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer.—II Tim. 4:4, 5.

For all things are for your sakes, that the abundant grace might through the thanksgiving of many redound to the glory of God.—II Cor. 4:15.

The reason we do not give thanks in everything is partly because we do not really believe that every creature of God *is* good, and because instead of believing that "all things are for our sakes," we believe a great many things are entirely against us. God's gifts look often so much like curses instead of blessings, that we, in our short-sightedness, judge by the seemings only, and altogether miss the reality beneath.

Do not err, my beloved brethren. Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and



cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.—Jas. 1:16, 17.

How many "good and perfect gifts" we must have had during our lives which we have looked upon only as curses, and for which we have never returned one thought of thanks! And for how many gifts also which we have even acknowledged to be good have we thanked ourselves, or our friends, or our circumstances, without once looking behind the earthly givers to thank the Heavenly Giver from whom in reality they all come!

It is as if we should thank the messengers who bring us our friends' gifts, and should never send any word of thanks to our friends themselves.

Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him and bless his name. For the Lord is good; his mercy is everlasting: and his truth endureth to all generations.—Ps. 100:4, 5.

Rejoice in the Lord, O ye righteous: for praise is comely for the upright. Praise the Lord with harp: sing unto him with the psaltery and an instrument of ten strings. Sing unto him a new song; play skillfully with a loud noise. For the word of the Lord is right: and all his works are done in truth.—Ps. 33:1-4.

I believe if we should count up we would find that there are in the Bible more commands given and more examples set for the giving of thanks "always for all things" than for the doing or the leaving undone of anything else. It is very evident from the whole teaching of Scripture that the Lord loves to be thanked just as much as we like it; and that our failure to thank Him for His "good and perfect gifts" wounds His loving heart just as our hearts are wounded when our loved ones fail to appreciate the benefits we have so enjoyed bestowing upon them. What a pure joy it is to us to receive from our friends an acknowledgment of their thanksgiving for our gifts, and is it not likely that it is a joy to the Lord also?

But you may say, Ah, yes, I understand about giving thanks for pleasant things, but what about unpleasant things? Do we not thank a skillful physician for his treatment of our disease, even though that treatment may have been very severe? Why then can we not thank the Divine Physician when He is obliged, as He often is, to give us bitter medicine or to perform a painful operation?

I will praise the name of God with a song, and will magnify him with thanksgiving. This also shall please the Lord better than an ox or bullock that hath horns and hoofs.—Ps. 69:30, 31.

A great many people who are ready and willing to offer up an ox or a bullock seem never to have thought that a little genuine praise and thanksgiving offered to Him now and then would "please the Lord better" than all their great sacrifices made in His cause. As I said before, the Bible is full of this thought from beginning to end. Over and over it is called a "sacrifice of thanksgiving," showing that it is as really an act of religious worship as is any other religious act. In fact, the "sacrifice of thanksgiving" was one of the regular sacrifices ordained by God in the book of Leviticus.

And when ye will offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving unto the Lord, offer it at your own will.—Lev. 22:29.

Oh that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men! And let them sacrifice the sacrifices of thanksgiving, and declare his works with rejoicing.—Ps. 107:21, 22.

By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name.—Heb. 13:15.

Forty-four of the Psalms begin with notes of praise, and the words expressing the ideas of praise and thanksgiving are used in the Bible at least hundreds of times.

O come, let us sing unto the Lord: let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation. Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving, and make a joyful noise unto him with psalms.—Ps. 95:1, 2.

Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving.—Col. 4:2.

As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him: rooted and built up in him, and established in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving.—Col. 2:6, 7.

These are only a few samples, out of the many, just to give us a little glimpse into God's mind on the subject. It is such an easy thing to offer the "sacrifice of thanksgiving," that one would suppose every body would be keen to do it. But somehow the contrary seems to be the case; and if the prayers of Christians were all to be noted down for any one single day, I fear it would be found that nine out of every ten offered no genuine thanks at all.

We need to cultivate the *habit* of thanksgiving. As it is, I fear we are far more apt to cultivate the habit of complaining. We pass over our blessings without notice, and fix our eyes on our trials and our losses instead. And we think and talk about these until our whole horizon is filled with them, and we come to forget that we have any bless-

ings at all. In a capital little tract called "Mrs. Pickett's Missionary Box," a poor woman who had never done anything but complain all her life long, and who, consequently, had got to thinking that she had no benefits for which to give thanks, received a missionary box with the words written on it, "What shall I render unto the Lord for all His benefits towards me?" and was asked by her niece to put a penny into the box for every blessing she could discover in her life. I will let her tell her own story.

"Great benefits I have!" says I standing with my arms akimbo an' lookin' that box all over. 'Guess the heathen won't get much out of me at that rate.' An' I jest made up my mind I would keep count jest to show myself how little I did have. 'Them few pennies won't break me,' I thought, and I really seemed to kinder enjoy thinkin' over the hard times I had.

"Well, the box sot there all that week, an' I used to say, it must be kinder lonesome with nothin' in it, for not a penny went into it until next missionary meetin' day. I was sittin' on the back steps gettin' a breath of fresh air when Mary come home an' set down alongside o' me an' begun to tell me about the meetin'; an' it was all about Injy an' the widders there, poor creturs, an' they bein' abused an' starved an' not let to think for themselves—you know all about it better'n I do!—an' before I thought, I up an' said,— "Well, if I be a widder, I'm thankful I'm where I kin earn my own livin', an' no thanks to nobody an' no one to interfere!"

"Then Mary she laughed an' said there was my fust benefit. Well, that sorter tickled me, for I thought a woman must be pretty hard up for benefits when she had to go clear off to Injy to find them, an' I dropped in one penny, an' it rattled round a few days without any company. I used to shake it every time I passed the shelf, an' the thought of them poor things in Injy kep' a comin' up before me, an' I really was glad when I got a new boarder for me best room, an' felt as if I'd oughter put in another. An' next meetin', Mary she told me about Japan, an' I thought about that till I put in another because I warn't a Jap. An' all the while I felt kinder proud of how little there was in that box. Then one day, when I got a chance to turn a little penny sellin' eggs,

which I warn't in the habit of, Mary brought the box in where I was countin' of my money, an' says,—

"A penny for your benefit, Aunt Mirandy."

"An' I says, 'This ain't the Lord's benefit.'"

"An' she answered, 'If 't ain't His, whose is it?' An' she begun to hum over somethin' out of one of the poetry books that she was always a readin' of:—

God's grace is the only grace,  
And all grace is the grace of God.

"Well, I dropped in my penny, an' them words kep' ringin' in my ears, till I couldn't help puttin' more to it, on account of some other things I never thought of callin' the Lord's benefits before. An' by that time, what with Mary's tellin' me about them meetin's, an' me most always findin' somethin' to put in a penny for, to be thankful that I warn't it, an' what with gettin' interested about it all, and sorter searchin' round a little now and then to think of somethin' or other to put a penny in for, there really come to be quite a few pennies in the box, an' it didn't rattle near so much when I shook it."

How many pennies would some of us have collected during the past year if we had kept count of those benefits for which we have really given thanks?

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.—Col. 3:16, 17.

He that regardeth the day, regardeth it unto the Lord: and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it. He that eateth, eateth to the Lord, for he giveth God thanks; and he that eateth not, to the Lord he eateth not, and giveth God thanks.—Rom. 14:6.

In "whatsoever we do," we are to give thanks, even when we eat or when we do not eat. Nothing in our lives lies out of the region of thanksgiving, for everything comes to us from God, no matter who or what may be the channel used to convey it. The children of Israel recognized this fact very fully and were always ready to give thanks in "whatsoever they did." In fact, they often appointed companies of "them that gave thanks."

Then I brought up the princes of Judah upon the wall, and appointed two great companies of them that gave thanks, whereof one went on the right hand upon the wall toward the dung gate.—Neh. 12:31.



When they had collected treasures for building the Temple, they gave thanks, and when the Temple was finished, they gave thanks. And again, when they were laying the foundations of the second Temple, they gave thanks.—I Chron. 29: 10-13; Ezra 3: 10, 11; II Chron. 5: 13, 14.

I wonder how many of our works are begun and carried on and completed after this fashion!

I want us to notice the result of their thanksgiving in the last extract. "It came to pass as the trumpeters and singers were as one, to make one sound to be heard in praising and thanking the Lord; \* \* that *then* the house was filled with a cloud, even the house of the Lord, so that the priests could not stand to minister by reason of the cloud; for the glory of the Lord had filled the house of God." I am convinced that the reason our hearts are not oftener filled with the "glory of the Lord," is, because we do not often enough make our voices to be "heard in praising and thanking the Lord."

Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise; be thankful unto him, and bless his name. For the Lord is good; his mercy is everlasting; and his truth endureth to all generations.—Ps. 100: 4, 5.

We can enter into the gates of the Lord more quickly and surely with the key of thanksgiving than with any other key. Try it, dear reader. The next time you feel dead and cold and low-spirited, begin to praise and thank the Lord. Enumerate to yourself the benefits He has bestowed upon you, and thank Him heartily for each one, and see if your spirits do not begin to rise, and your heart get warmed up. Sometimes you feel, it may be, too disheartened to pray; try giving thanks instead; and, before you know it, you will find yourself "glad" in the multitude of His loving kindnesses and His tender mercies.—Ps. 92: 1-4; Jonah 2: 1-10.

Even when his soul "fainted within him," while in the prison of the fish's belly, Jonah remembered the Lord and gave Him thanks. No depth of misery

is too great for thanksgiving. We cannot, it is true, give thanks for the misery, but we can give thanks to the Lord *in* the misery, just as Jonah did. No matter what our trouble, the Lord is in it somewhere; and, of course, being there, He is there to help and bless us. Therefore, when our "souls faint within us" because of our troubles, we have only to remember Him and thank Him for His presence and His love. "O give thanks unto the Lord, for He is good," this is the continual refrain from beginning to end of the Bible.

O give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good; for his mercy endureth for ever. Let the redeemed of the Lord say so, whom he hath redeemed from the hand of the enemy.—Ps. 107: 1, 2.

O give thanks unto the Lord; for he is good; for his mercy endureth for ever. O give thanks unto the God of gods; for his mercy endureth for ever. O give thanks to the Lord of lords; for his mercy endureth for ever.—Ps. 136: 1-3.

It is not because *things* are good that we are to thank the Lord, but because *He* is good. We are not wise enough to judge as to things whether they are really in their essence joys or sorrows, but we always know that the Lord is good, and that His goodness makes it absolutely certain that everything He provides or permits *must* be good, and must therefore be something for which we would be heartily thankful, if only we could see it with His eyes.

Read the last six Psalms, and see what you think. To my mind, the fact that God so continually commands us to give thanks in everything, is a positive proof that, whether we can see it or not, there is in everything a cause for thanksgiving, for He could never be so tyrannical as to tell us to give thanks for things that were, after all, not deserving of thanks.

The summing up of the whole matter then is this, that it is the will of God for us to give thanks in everything, and that, therefore, we have no alternative, but to do it. It is not an optional matter. Let us begin at once.


So we thy people and sheep of thy pasture will give thee thanks for ever; we will shew forth thy praise to all generations.—Ps. 70: 13.

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# BIBLE READING LEAFLET.

HANNAH WHITALL SMITH, EDITOR.

*Superintendent of the Bible Reading Department for the World's W. C. T. U.*

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## SUBJECT:—WHAT THINK YE OF CHRIST?

*Foundation Text.*—Matt. 22 : 41, 42.

While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them, saying, What think ye of Christ?

The crucial question for each one of us is just this, "What think ye of Christ?" To some the question may seem to require a doctrinal answer, and I do not say at all that there is no idea of doctrines involved in it. But to my mind the doctrinal answer, valuable as it may be, is not the one of most importance. The vital answer is the one that would contain our own personal knowledge of the *character* of Christ; not what He is doctrinally, but what He is intrinsically in Himself. For, after all, our salvation does not depend upon the doctrines concerning Christ, but upon the person of Christ, upon what He is and upon what He does.

For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.—11 Tim. 1 : 12.

Paul knew Him, therefore Paul could trust Him; and if we would trust Him as Paul did, we must know Him as intimately. I am afraid a great many people are so taken up with Christian doctrines and dogmas, and are so convinced that their salvation is secured because their "views" are sound and orthodox, that they have never come yet to a personal acquaintance with Christ Himself, and, while knowing a great deal about Him, it may be, do not know Him Himself at all.

For I desired mercy, and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings.—Hosea 6 : 6.

It is Phillips Brooks, I think, who says, "There are two distinct ideas of Chris-

tianity. One of them magnifies doctrine, and its great sin is heresy. The other magnifies loyalty, and its great sin is disloyalty. The first enthrones a creed. The second enthrones a person. The first is like a carefully collated botanical manual, the second is like a living and growing plant. Christ always says, Believe in me, not, Believe this or that about me; but, Believe in ME.—John 14 : 1-9.

It is not the doctrines concerning Christ, but what He is in Himself that constitutes the foundation of our faith. "I am the way, I am the truth, I am the life," He says, "I myself; and if you knew me, you would know my Father also, and would understand that there can be nothing in all the universe to make your heart troubled or afraid."

Looked at in this light, the question, "What think ye of Christ?" becomes a question of vital personal import to each one of us. And it becomes also a question that each one can answer personally and individually for himself. If it were doctrines only that were in question, we might find it necessary to appeal to the creeds and dogmas of our own peculiar sect or denomination in order to find out just what we do believe or at least ought to believe. But when it is our personal estimate of our Lord and Master that is in question, we can surely each one of us discover very easily what our individual thoughts about Him are; what is our own opinion of His character and His ways; what sort of a person in short we really think Him to be. Is He kind and loving, or is He harsh and severe? Is He trustworthy? Is He sympathizing? Is He true to His promises? Is He faithful? Is He self-sacrificing? Is He full of compassion, or is He full of condemnation?



Is He our tender brother, or is He our hard task-master? Does He care most about Himself, or about us? Is He on our side or against us?

It is by our answers to questions like these that we shall reveal what our real estimate of Christ is. We may have all the Christian doctrines at our fingers' ends, and yet not have the faintest conception of the real character of Christ Himself. And therefore I would urge upon us a personal answer to this personal question, "What think ye of Christ?"

Because he hath set his love upon me, therefore will I deliver him: I will set him on high, because he hath known my name.—Ps. 91:14.

To "know His name" does not mean to know that He was called Christ or Jesus, but it means to know His character. God's namings always mean character. They are never arbitrary, as our namings are, having no connection with the work or character of the one named. They are always revelations. They tell us what the person is or what he does. "Thou shalt call His name Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins"; Jesus meaning a saviour.

And God spake unto Moses, and said unto him, I am the Lord: and I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by the name of God Almighty, but by my name Jehovah was I not known to them.—Exod. 6:2, 3.

For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.—Isa. 9:6.

So will I make my holy name known in the midst of my people Israel; and I will not let them pollute my holy name any more: and the heathen shall know that I am the Lord, the Holy One in Israel.—Ezek. 39:7.

To "pollute God's holy name" must mean to attribute to Him a character that is contrary to His goodness. Continually we find the Lord calling upon the people not to profane His name, that is, not to live and act and talk in such a way as to give others a false idea of His character and His works. And continually we find the saints of all ages calling upon the people to praise His name.—Ps. 135:3.

Give unto the Lord the glory due unto his name: bring an offering, and come into his courts.—Ps. 95:8.

Both young men, and maidens; old men and children: let them praise the name of the Lord: for his name alone is excellent; his glory is above the earth and heaven.—Ps. 148:12, 13.

We have thought of thy lovingkindness, O God, in the midst of thy temple. According to thy name, O God, so is thy praise unto the ends of the earth: thy right hand is full of righteousness.—Ps. 48:9, 10.

The question, "What think ye of Christ?" may, therefore, equally well be rendered by the question, "By what name do you call Christ?" for name and character are one. What then are the names we individually are bestowing upon our Lord? In *words*, no doubt, we are calling Him our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, but in *thought* and *act* we are unconsciously calling Him by many other names, and some of them, it may be, names that it would shock us very much to hear spoken or to see in print. So few of us, I fear, really know Him!

Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am.—John 13:13.

And why call ye me Lord Lord, and do not the things which I say?—Luke 6:46.

It is of no use for us to call Him "Master and Lord," while we are refusing to do the things He commands. Our words may hide our thoughts, but our actions reveal them. If we really think He is our Lord, we will not fail to obey Him. It is his thoughts, not his words, that control a man's actions.—Isa. 29:13, 14.

It is very easy to draw nigh to the Lord with our mouth, and honor Him with our lips; but the thoughts of our hearts, what are they? Let us test ourselves by comparing our secret thoughts of Christ with our public words concerning Him. The Bible teaches us to call Him by certain names which express what He is. We reverently and conscientiously, it may be, use these names as far as *words* go; but how is it about our *thoughts*? Do our words express our thoughts, or do our thoughts and our words differ?

Let us take a very familiar instance. The Bible calls Christ by the name of the good Shepherd, and Christ Himself adopts the name as His own. "I am the good Shepherd," He says. No doubt, each one of us has called Him by this name hundreds of times. "The Lord is my Shepherd," we have *said*, over and over and over, times without number, ever since our babyhood. But how about our *thoughts*? Do they correspond with our words? What do we *think* of Christ? Do we think of Him as being really and truly a good Shepherd? Or do we feel as if we ourselves were the shepherds who must keep a strict watch on Him in order to make Him faithful to us?

There are certain characteristics that are required of every good shepherd. He

must devote himself with all his strength and wisdom to the care of his flock. He must forget his own ease and comfort in promoting their well-being. He must protect them from every danger, and must stand between them and all their enemies. He must never forget them nor neglect them, and must be willing to lay down his life for their sakes. Now, is this what we think of Christ when we call Him by the name of Shepherd? I very much doubt it! I am afraid we look upon Him too often as a bad shepherd, as the hireling who, when he sees the wolf coming, "leaveth the sheep and fleeth"; or as the shepherds of Ezekiel's prophecy who "fed themselves and fed not the flock." We honor Him with our lips, it may be, but alas, the hearts of too many are far from Him.

Ye hypocrites, well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying, This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoreth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.—Matt. 15:7-9.

Or again, take the name of Comforter. How many of us really believe that Christ will not and does not leave us comfortless? A comforter must be one who understands our sorrow and our need, and who sympathizes with our sufferings. A comforter must not criticize or judge harshly. He must be tender, and considerate, and full of that charity that covers a multitude of faults. A comforter must put arms of love about us, and must whisper in our ears words of infinite kindness. A comforter is for dark times, not for bright times. If any one should *call* himself our comforter, and should then run away and hide himself when storms and trials came, we would consider that his name of comforter was merely an empty title, and all his promises of comfort would sound to us like idle tales. What is it that we *think* of Christ when we read that He has promised not to leave us comfortless but to come and abide in our hearts as an ever-present Comforter? If we go uncomforted, it can only be because we do not think He really is our Comforter, however often we may repeat His words about it.

And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you.—John 14:16-18.

Again take the name of Saviour. If Christ is called by any one name more than another it is Saviour. He is called over and over the Saviour of the world. No one can question that this is without any controversy His God-given name. Now, what is a Saviour? Manifestly he is one who saves. He is not one who merely *offers* to save, but he must of necessity from the very nature of the name, be one who actually does it. The only claim to the name lies in the fact behind the name. We might as rightly call a man a king who had only *offered* to reign, as to call a man a saviour who has only offered to save. When, then, we say Christ is our Saviour, what are we *thinking* of Him? Do we think of Him as One who is actually saving us now? or do we think of Him as One who only offers to save us at some future time, and who has accompanied that offer with such well-nigh impossible conditions that the salvation is practically not available for us? Everything in our Christian life depends on what we think of Christ as our Saviour.

And many more believed because of his own word: and said unto the woman, Now we believe, not because of thy saying: for we have heard him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world.—John 4:41, 42.

And they that know thy name will put their trust in thee: for thou, Lord, hast not forsaken them that seek thee.—Ps. 9:10.

For our heart shall rejoice in him, because we have trusted in his holy name.—Ps. 33:21.

The name of the Lord is a strong tower, the righteous runneth into it, and is safe.—Prov. 18:10.

The "name of the Lord" can only be a strong tower for us in proportion as we believe that name to express a fact. If I say with my lips that I believe Christ is the Saviour of the world, and at the same time question in my heart whether He saves *me*, my words are but mere idle tales, and I am really profaning His holy name. It is an absolute fact that they that "know His name" will, without any doubt, put their trust in Him. No one could help trusting Him as their Saviour who thought of Him as a real and genuine Saviour who saves.

Had I time I might bring forward many more of the names by which our Lord is called, and press home the same question in connection with each one, "What think ye of Christ?" But enough has been said to show the vital necessity of there being a perfect agreement between



our thoughts of Christ and the Bible words concerning Him. Only in this way can we come to know Him, and not to know Him means certain misery, and loss, and sin.

My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me: seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children.—Hosea 4 : 6.

They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service. And these things will they do unto you, because they have not known the Father, nor me.—John 16 : 2, 3.

“Because they have not known,” ah, dear friends, how many ugly things we have done because we have not known Christ! Again I repeat, therefore, that the one absolutely essential thing is to know the Lord. I do not mean know about Him, that avails but little, but to become acquainted with Him Himself, to have a personal knowledge of a personal Saviour, to know what sort of a being He is, to know Him as a man knows his nearest friend, to know Him so intimately as to make it impossible for doubts ever again to assail us.

And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.—John 17 : 3.

Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith: that I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death.—Phil. 3 : 8-10.

I can well understand how Paul could say so confidently that he counted all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ; for when once the soul has come to this knowledge, all fear and doubt and even perplexity are at an end, and perfect peace must of necessity reign undisturbed. No one can possibly know Him really to be what the Bible declares He is, without entering into absolute rest forever; as long at least as that knowledge lasts. It is like the rest and peace of the little child in the presence of its mother. The child knows

instinctively that its mother will not let anything harm it, therefore it has no fears. And Christians who know the Lord, know intelligently that He will not let harm come to them, and therefore they can have no fears either. Where there is a perfect care-taker there can be no cares; where there is an invincible protector there can be no fears. What is needed then is for Christians to find out that they have just such a Care-taker and Protector in Christ; and this is why Paul could say, and we can all unite with him, that all things are to be counted as loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ.

But some may ask, How can I acquire this knowledge? I answer, “Just as Paul did; count everything else as loss, and accept Christ in His fullness as your all-sufficient portion.” It is the prerogative of every child of God, and therefore yours, to have this knowledge.

For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord: I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people: and they shall not teach every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest. For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more.—Heb. 8 : 10-12.


It is an essential part of the new covenant that “all should know Him from the least to the greatest.” He reveals Himself, we have only to believe His revelations. It is very simple. He tells us He is the good Shepherd; we are to believe that He actually is, and are to accept Him as our Shepherd. He tells us He is the Saviour who saves now and here, and we are to believe that it is really true, and are to accept His salvation. Of every revelation He has made of Himself in the Bible, we are to say, “That is true, that is true.” We are simply to lay aside all our own preconceived ideas, and are to accept God’s ideas instead. We are to answer the question, “What think ye of Christ?” by replying, “I think of Him what the Bible tells me to think, and I think nothing else.”

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# BIBLE READING LEAFLET.

HANNAH WHITALL SMITH, EDITOR.

Superintendent of the Bible Reading Department for the World's W. C. T. U.

LONDON, ENGLAND.

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## SUBJECT:— THAT YE MAY KNOW.

*Foundation Text*:— I John 5 : 13.

These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.

There is a great deal of longing and a great deal of hoping among Christians, but I am sometimes afraid there is not much knowing. And yet the whole Bible was written for the purpose of making us know. The object of a revelation is to reveal. If nothing has been revealed to us by the Bible beyond longings and hopes, it has failed of its purpose for us. And yet how many Christians there are who never get beyond hopes. "I hope my sins will be forgiven some day;" "I hope I may be favored to reach heaven at last;" "I hope God loves me;" "I hope Christ died for me." These are samples of the style of much Christian testimony in the present day. Indeed, I have even known Christians who could never get further than to say, "I hope that I have a hope." If this word were used in the sense that the Bible always uses it, that is, the sense of firm expectation, it might be all right; but in the use of it which I have described, there is so great an element of doubt that it does not amount to a Bible hope at all. We need sometimes to bring our words out into the light to see what we really do mean by them, and I am afraid in very many cases we should find that the word "hope" would mean, being interpreted, the word "doubt."

Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.—I Cor. 2 : 12.

The Holy Spirit is given to Christians, not to make them have longings and hopes only, but to enable them to "know

the things that are freely given to us of God." Doubts and uncertainties belong to the spirit of this world, knowledge belongs to the spirit which is of God. As long as we fail to say, "I know" in regard to spiritual things, just so long are we allowing the spirit of this world to rule instead of the spirit which is of God.

And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.—John 20 : 30, 31.

He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son. And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.—I John 5 : 10, 11.

The "record" God has given us of His Son has been given for the express purpose of making us know that in His Son we have eternal life. "This is the record"—*i. e.*—"that God hath given to us eternal life" in Christ, and whoever believes in Christ has this life, and, of course, ought to know it. If we do not believe this record, and consequently do not know that we have eternal life, we are "making God a liar." These are solemn words, and yet, taking the common sense view of things, what is a doubt of God's record but the making a liar of God? If I doubt the record of one of my friends, I do in effect make that friend a liar, although I may never dare to use the word. The only way in which we can really honor God is to declare that what He says is true, and that we know we have eternal life, because He says so, whatever the seemings to the contrary may be.

And we know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness. And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an



understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life.—I John 5 : 19, 20.

How would this passage have sounded, had the word hope been substituted for the word know? In fact, never anywhere in the Bible is there the slightest intimation given us that God's children were to be anything but perfectly sure of their relationship to Him as children, and of His relationship to them as Father. The flood of doubt and questioning that has so overwhelmed Christian hearts in these latter times, was apparently never so much as conceived of by our Lord or His apostles, and consequently it was nowhere definitely provided against. The one uniform foundation upon which were based all commands and all exhortations, was the fact, taken for granted, that of course those to whom the commands and exhortations were addressed, *knew* that they were God's children, and that He was their Father.

I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake. I write unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning. I write unto you, young men, because ye have overcome the wicked one. I write unto you, little children, because ye have known the Father. I have written unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning. I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one.—I John 2 : 12-14.

Even the little children in Bible times were supposed to know that their sins were forgiven, and that God was their Father. In fact, common sense would tell us that the knowledge of one's position and standing in any relation of life is always the essential foundation of all action in that relation; and how the Church ever came to tolerate (if it does not even sometimes inculcate) such a mist of doubt and uncertainty in regard to the soul's relations with God, is incomprehensible to me.—Num. 1 : 1-19, and Ezra 2 : 62, 63.

No service could be rightly performed by any Israelite who was doubtful as to his nationality or his family record.

Before they could be numbered among the men of war, they had to "declare their pedigree."

Before they could exercise the office of priest, they had to "find their register" and "reckon their genealogy." Any doubts and uncertainties on these points made them, "as polluted," unfit to serve,

And I believe the same thing is true of Christians as well. We can neither be numbered among the Lord's soldiers, nor enter into priestly relations with Him, until we also can "declare our pedigree" as children of God, and "reckon our genealogy" as being born of Him.

There seems something very anomalous in the fact of a man undertaking to call people back to their Father's house, who does not know whether he himself has any right there or not. And yet I fear it is far too common a thing for even clergymen not to know anything certainly in regard to their spiritual "pedigree" or "genealogy." I knew a congregation of Quakers where at one time a Friend had been for a year or two "exercising his gift in the ministry." Among the Quakers "ministers" are not made by colleges or by bishops, but after a man or woman has "exercised their gift" in the congregation for a sufficient length of time, the spiritually minded in that congregation meet together and decide whether, in their judgment, their friend has really received from the Lord a "gift in the ministry"; and if their decision is favorable, that gift is then acknowledged, and that friend becomes an "acknowledged" or "recommended" minister. The case of the Friend I speak of had been laid before the spiritually minded members of his meeting several times for "acknowledgment," but a favorable decision could never be arrived at, because one man invariably declined to sanction it. The Friend in question finally asked this man the reason of his persistent opposition. After a little hesitation, the man replied it had been a great grief to him that he could not unite in acknowledgment of the Friend's gift, "But," said he, "I have listened to thy preaching very carefully, and I have heard thee very often express a 'humble hope' that at some future time the forgiveness of sins and the gift of eternal life might be thy portion, but I have never heard thee express one single time the knowledge or belief that these blessings had really been bestowed upon thee, and I cannot feel that it is right to encourage any man to preach a gospel to others about which he himself has so little knowledge." This reply left the Friend without excuse, and he inwardly resolved never again to open his mouth to tell others about eternal life in Christ

until he could say with assurance that he knew that that eternal life was his own. Ashamed of the uncertainty, which before he had cherished as a sign of humility, he went to the word of God to see what was there taught. His faith laid hold of the announcement in I John 5 : 1, "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God," and he said, "I do believe that Jesus is the Christ with all my heart, and God says that consequently I am born of Him, therefore I know I must be;" and he was able from that moment boldly to assert it in the face of every seeming to the contrary.

But when the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father. Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.—Gal. 4 : 4-7.

"The adoption of sons," surely this is an adoption about which there can be no uncertainty! We whom Christ has died to redeem cannot question the fact or refuse to cry, "Abba, Father!" And yet how many do refuse, and think it is presumption to call God their Father, and to take their places boldly as His undoubted sons and heirs.

Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.—Rom. 5 : 1, 2.

Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.—II Cor. 7 : 1.

"Having therefore these promises," and, of course, *knowing* that we have them; "being justified by faith," and, of course, *knowing* that we are, this is the necessary ground of all peace and all purity. Had these passages read differently, had the apostle begun by saying, "Therefore, feeling very doubtful as to whether we are justified or not," could he have gone on to say so triumphantly, "we have peace with God"? Would he not rather have found it necessary to continue in the same doubtful strain, and to say, "We are very hungry for peace with God, but we do not know whether it has been made for us or not"?

If we were to introduce into the Bible the spirit of uncertainty and doubt that fills the churches to-day, it would revolutionize the Book!

If you will look at the opening verses of each Epistle, you will see that they are all addressed to people of whom it was taken for granted that they *knew* without a shadow of doubt their standing as reconciled and forgiven children of God. I give only two samples.

To all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.—Rom. 1 : 7. Paul, called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God, and Sosthenes our brother, unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours: Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.—I Cor. 1 : 1-3.

Imagine the Epistles addressed to doubters, and how different their contents would have been!

Again, notice the present tense of assured possession throughout every Epistle. Take for instance as a sample the first seven verses of the Epistle to the Ephesians.—Eph. 1 : 1-7.

Notice "*hath* blessed," "*hath* chosen," "*having* predestinated us unto the adoption of children," "*hath* made us accepted in the Beloved," "*we have* redemption." And these are only samples. Every Epistle is full of similar tenses of present possession.

Again notice how invariably all the exhortations to holiness are based upon an assured knowledge of our position as the children of God.

Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God; therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.—I John 3 : 1-3.

Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children; and walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour.—Eph. 5 : 1, 2.

And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption. Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice; and be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.—Eph. 4 : 30-32.

We are not called upon to forgive one another in order to find out that Christ has forgiven us, but we are to forgive, because we first know that He has forgiven. We are not commanded to be followers of God in order to become His



children, but because we know we are His children.

Do all things without murmurings and disputings: that ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world; holding forth the word of life.—Phil. 2: 14-16.

We cannot act like the sons of God unless we know that we are His sons. In fact, the knowledge of our position and standing is the essential foundation of everything else in the Christian life.

How then can we come to know? Our foundation text tells us, "These things are written that we may know." We must believe the things that are written in the "record" God has given us of His Son. Then we will know; for believing is the same as knowing where the person we believe is absolutely trustworthy. There are human beings whose word is so absolutely trustworthy that we would believe them even almost against the testimony of our own senses; and surely God's word can be no less trustworthy. If I see therefore that He has unmistakably said anything, I may boldly say I know it, even though every sense I have should declare the contrary.—John 3: 31-34.

Contrast the expression used here, "hath set to his seal that God is true," with the expression we noticed a little while ago, "hath made God a liar." Which is it you do, dear reader?

The trouble with a great many is that they do not accept God's testimony as final, but look for some feeling or emotion in themselves to testify to its truth. Instead of saying, "I know such and such things are true, because God says so," they say, "Such and such things would be true if I could only feel them." In earthly matters we never are so foolish as to make facts depend upon our feelings, but in religious matters a great many seem to think this is the right way. How they ever came to think so, I cannot imagine; for a little exercise of common sense would tell us that facts can never in any region depend upon feelings, but feelings must always in all things depend upon facts. The divine order is always

first to get your facts, then to put faith in those facts, and then, as a natural result, will follow the feelings commensurate with the facts. This order is always followed in earthly things by every sane person. But curiously enough in religious matters a great many people, otherwise very sensible, reverse this order, and put feelings first, then faith in those feelings, and come to the facts last, looking upon them, I suppose, as the result of the feelings.

To show how foolish this course is, let us imagine a man intending to take a voyage to a distant country, who should go to the docks and get on board the first vessel that came to hand, and should then retire to his stateroom, and sit down with his eyes shut to try and "feel" whether he was on the right vessel or not! Such foolishness is inconceivable in any sane human being, and yet it is not so very different from the similar course of action pursued by many Christians.—I John 5: 9-12.

In the case of the vessel the "witness of men," or, in other words, the assurance from some one who knew, would be the only source of peace. And in the case of the Christian the "witness of God," or, in other words, God's assurance that He hath given to us eternal life in His Son cannot fail to bring perfect peace, if only we will believe it.

A great many, however, will say, "Ah, yes, I could easily believe if only I had the witness in myself, as the Bible says I am to have." *When* are you to have that witness in yourself, before you believe, or after? Does it say, "he that hath the witness in himself shall believe," or does it say, "he that believeth hath the witness"? It makes all the difference which way you read it, whether you put the believing first, or the witness first. The Bible puts the believing first; which do you?

At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you.—John 14: 20.


The day of knowledge will dawn for us when we come to the point of implicitly believing God!

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# BIBLE READING LEAFLET.

HANNAH WHITALL SMITH, EDITOR.

*Superintendent of the Bible Reading Department for the World's W. C. T. U.*

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## SUBJECT:—INVISIBLE THINGS SEEN BY VISIBLE THINGS.

*Foundation Text:*—Rom. 1 : 20.

For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse.

The outward world of sense is here declared to be a picture or type of the inward world of spirit. The "invisible things" of God are to be understood by the visible things of the outward creation. As one is, on the earthly plane, so is the other on the spiritual plane. We are therefore left "without excuse," as the Apostle says, if we complain that we cannot know or understand Divine things. We *can* know them and understand them, if we will only accept as true the illustrations by which God is trying in our everyday life to teach us. The earthly thing is simple and plain to read. If the heavenly thing is like it, then the heavenly thing must be simple and plain to read as well.

The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handiwork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge. There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard.—Psalm 19 : 1-3.

God "utters His speech" to us in everything we see around us. But we fail to understand Him, not because His speech is hard to comprehend, but because we simply do not believe it. When He tells us that "*as*" something is in nature, "*so*" is something in grace, we are tempted to look upon it as a form of words that express a beautiful poetic image, but that have no real or practical meaning whatever.

In this lesson I want us to consider a few of the illustrations by which the Bible tells us God is "uttering His speech" to teach us.

For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him.—Ps. 103 : 11.

Questions as to the greatness of the mercy of God, how far it reaches, what are its limitations, are troubling many souls in the present day. Here we have answer. As high as the heaven is above the earth, "so great" is His mercy. An immeasurable height! A distance that has no limitations! If then God's mercy is as great as this, it must be illimitable. Our finite comprehensions cannot measure the one any more than the other. When we can tell how high the heaven is above the earth, we shall then be able to give the limit of the mercy of God. And yet which one of us practically believes that God's mercy is as limitless as this?

As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us.—Psalm 103 : 12.

Here again an outward and visible thing is given us as a standard by which to measure the dimensions of an unseen spiritual thing. The removal of our transgressions from us is the unseen thing, and the seen thing to which it is compared is the distance of the East from the West. "As far" and "so far," who can fathom all these expressions mean? For it is not only the distance east and west on the earth that is meant here, but all the illimitable distance east and west in the vast universe that surrounds us. "As far" as this universe extends east and west, "so far" hath He removed our transgressions from us. Questionings and doubts as to the forgiveness of our God vanish into thin air in the face of such an assertion as this! Astronomers tell us that so great is this distance that light, which travels at the rate of 195,000



miles a minute, takes thousands of years to reach the limits of so much of the universe as comes under our ken; and how much there may be beyond we have no instruments to measure. There are stars known to astronomers which the light from this earth takes 6,000 years to reach, so that in those stars, had any one there eyes to see, the rays that were struck out from Adam in the first moments of his creation have only just arrived, and the scenes in the first chapter of Genesis are only now becoming visible! And "as far" as this inconceivable farness has God removed our transgressions from us! I wonder if any of us really believe it. Certainly the majority of Christians do not, or they could not possibly worry themselves as they do over the sins that have been removed to such an immeasurable distance. How I wish I dared hope that every doubter who reads these words would at once and forever give up their dishonoring doubts!

Again let us look at another of these illustrations.

As the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so the Lord is round about his people from henceforth even for ever.—Psalm 125: 2.

We pray continually that the Lord will be round about us, and we are tempted continually to question whether He is or not. This comparison with the absolutely immovable and unchangeable mountains tells us in language that cannot be misunderstood, if we only believed it, that the Lord *is* round about us continually, even without our consciousness of it; and that under no circumstances can He leave or forsake us. For how are the mountains round about Jerusalem? Are they there one day, and gone the next? Are they there in sunshine, but do they forsake Jerusalem when it storms? Are they there when all eyes see them, but gone when night makes them invisible?

You exclaim, "What foolish questions!" But if the "as" and "so" in this verse are true, and if the Lord really is round about His people *as* the mountains are round about Jerusalem, the things many Christians think and say are far more foolish.

Have none of you ever thought in times of darkness and trouble that the Lord had forsaken you?

Suppose the dwellers in Jerusalem had acted towards their mountains as some of you have acted towards your God, what

would we have thought of them? Suppose on sunshiny days, when the mountains were in full view, they had said triumphantly, "Ah, now we can believe the mountains are really round about us, for we see them plainly;" and then on cloudy days, when mists had hidden them from sight, suppose they had said despairingly, "Alas, our mountains must have forsaken us, for we can no longer see them!" What would we have thought of the sanity of such people?

It is an incontrovertible fact, and we know it, that the mountains are round about Jerusalem, whether any one sees them or not; and it is equally an incontrovertible fact, and we ought to know this also, that, whether we are conscious of it or not, God is always round about His people "now and from henceforth even for ever."

Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him. For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust.—Ps. 103: 13, 14.

As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you; and ye shall be comforted in Jerusalem.—Isa. 66: 13.

The "as" and "so" in these passages are very plain to be understood, for every human being knows about fatherhood and motherhood, either by experience or by instinctive impulses. Before each one of us there rises up at this moment our ideal of what a good father and mother ought to be. And *as* this is, *so* is God.

It seems to me the utmost folly, in the face of a parallel like this, for any one to question the love and care of our Heavenly Father. Such questioning is, to speak plainly, an implication that the Lord is like a bad parent who fails to perform a parent's duties. Oh, when will God's children realize that their Heavenly Father is at least as good a father as any human father could be; and more, that He is father and mother in one, and that no tenderness that ever filled the heart of the tenderest of mothers could possibly equal the tenderness of His heart towards the creatures He has made! To understand and believe the reality of the "Like as" and "so" in these passages means to the soul that does it the everlasting end of every doubt or fear. To some of us who have had good earthly fathers and mothers a doubt of their love would be an utter impossibility, and it is equally an impossibility to doubt the love of our Heavenly Father, whose love must be, in

the very nature of things, far greater than theirs.

For the Lord's portion is his people; Jacob is the lot of his inheritance. He found him in a desert land and in the waste howling wilderness: he led him about, he instructed him, he kept him as the apple of his eye.—Deut. 32: 9, 10.

"He kept him as the apple of His eye." How does a man keep the apple of his eye? He is more tender of it than of any other part of his body. When danger threatens, instinctively he puts up his arm to defend it. To all the utmost limits of his knowledge and capacity a man will protect the apple of his eye. If then God keeps us "as" the apple of His eye, how absolutely secure we must be. Also notice, it is in the "waste howling wilderness," He so protects us. Dreadful things seemed to happen to the children of Israel in the waste howling wilderness through which they were passing; that is, things that looked dreadful to the eye of sense; and one who did not know might have said, "It is impossible that God can be keeping them here." But it was even here, in this very wilderness, that He kept them as the apple of His eye. And so He is doing to us, little as it often looks like it. We have simply got to believe it blindly, where we have not light to see, and to say, "The Lord *is* my keeper," the most emphatically at the very moments when it seems the most untrue.

As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings: so the Lord alone did lead him, and there was no strange god with him.—Deut. 32: 11, 12.

I believe the whole explanation of trial lies hidden in this illustration. When the mother eagle wants to teach her little eaglets to fly, she is obliged to stir up their nest and make it so uncomfortable that they are forced from sheer discomfort to escape from it. And God, in teaching us to fly, is often obliged to do the same. He has to stir up our pleasant earthly nests and make them so uncomfortable that our souls in sheer discomfort are forced to spread their wings and escape into those spiritual regions of spiritual comfort that can be found only in the Lord.

The little eaglets do not know they have the power of flight, and they cannot see the invisible atmosphere that is to sustain them, and no doubt, they feel very rebellious in their little hearts, and would call their mothers cruel if they

knew how. And we are like them. We think nothing but utter destruction can await us outside of our comfortable nests. We would never leave them of our own free will, and therefore God must thrust us out. But just as the mother eagle hovers in the air under her little eaglets, with her wings outspread, and when one of them seems to be growing tired, sweeps up to it and stretches out a great broad wing for it to rest upon, so does God stretch out His everlasting arms underneath us, and sustains us in every faltering moment. The eagle God has made cannot be more tender and careful of her little ones than is the God who made her of His. Her wings cannot be outspread more lovingly than His; her eye cannot be more watchful, nor her ear more quick to catch the faintest cry of need. For *as* it is with her, *so* it is with Him, and "He alone doth lead us" in all that befalls.

As the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so shall thy God rejoice over thee.—Isa. 62: 5 (last half).

This illustration appeals to the universal instincts of humanity. Every one knows, either by experience or by imaginings, something of the joy of a bridegroom over his bride. Did we ever dream for a moment that the joy of the Lord in winning us to Himself was as great as this? What does He say Himself?

And he spake this parable unto them, saying, What man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it? And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing. And when he cometh home, he calleth together his friends and neighbours, saying unto them, Rejoice with me; for I have found my sheep which was lost. I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance.—Luke 15: 3-7.

Notice, it is not the lost sheep when it is found that rejoices here, but the shepherd who finds it. I am afraid we are too apt to think of the Lord as being only condescendingly willing to receive us when we have entreated Him with sufficient earnestness to do so. But that He is actually glad, "as" glad as a bridegroom over his bride, or as a shepherd when he finds his lost sheep, that He is even eagerly looking for us and seeking to win us, this has entered, I fear, into the minds of but few among us. And yet, if these illustrations are really true, His joy at receiving us must be far greater than even ours at being received.



The Lord is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust; my buckler, and the horn of my salvation, and my high tower.—Psalm 18: 2.

A rock, a fortress, a deliverer, a buckler, a high tower, all of these are seen things whose properties we know. What speech do they utter to us concerning the Lord? Have we been accustomed to look upon them as merely fine sayings that sound well but mean nothing? Or have we accepted them as true expressions of glorious facts? If the latter, if the Lord really is to us as a rock, and a fortress, and a deliverer, and a buckler, and a high tower, then what room is there for care, or anxiety, or fear?

As a shepherd seeketh out his flock in the day that he is among his sheep that are scattered: so will I seek out my sheep, and will deliver them out of all places, where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day.—Ezek. 34: 12.

Have we ever seen a shepherd seeking out his scattered sheep? Or, if we have not seen it, have we ever pictured to ourselves how a good shepherd would do it, with what eagerness, with what perseverance, "going after that which is lost until he find it?" And "as" the good earthly shepherd does, "so" does the Divine shepherd, who *must* be more faithful to His duties as a shepherd than ever any earthly shepherd could be.

For the Son of man is come to save that which was lost. How think ye? if a man have an hundred sheep, and one of them be gone astray, doth

he not leave the ninety and nine, and goeth into the mountains, and seeketh that which is gone astray? And if so be that he find it, verily I say unto you, he rejoiceth more of that sheep, than of the ninety and nine which went not astray. Even so it is not the will of your Father which is in heaven that one of these little ones should perish.—Matt. 18: 11-14.

"Even so," ah! dear friends, what an "even so" is this! Do you believe it? Or is it with you as with the people in Ezekiel's day, who listened to all the prophet spake to them in the name of the Lord, and thought of it only as a "lovely song of one that had a pleasant voice," hearing the words but doing them not?

And, lo, thou art unto them as a very lovely song of one that hath a pleasant voice, and can play well on an instrument: for they hear thy words, but they do them not. And when this cometh to pass, (lo, it will come,) then shall they know that a prophet hath been among them.—Ezek. 33: 32, 33.

May the Lord grant that none of us may be among these!


I have given only a few out of the numberless illustrations by which God "utters His speech" to us concerning Himself, and I can only say that if any soul will accept even these few illustrations as true, that soul will enter into a large place of rest and triumph. What it would be if we accepted and believed all the similar illustrations given us in the Bible, no words can express. Let us resolve to do it.

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# BIBLE READING LEAFLET.

HANNAH WHITALL SMITH, EDITOR.

*Superintendent of the Bible Reading Department for the World's W. C. T. U.*

LONDON, ENGLAND.

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## SUBJECT :— WHOLLY FOLLOWING.

*Foundation Text*.—Numbers 32: 11, 12.

Surely none of the men that came up out of Egypt, from twenty years old and upward, shall see the land which I swear unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob; because they have not wholly followed me: save Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenezite, and Joshua the son of Nun: for they have wholly followed the Lord.

However widely Christians may differ on other subjects, however divergent may be their "views" of truth or of doctrine, there is one point upon which all must necessarily agree, and that is, we are, every one of us, without reference to our "views" or "doctrines," called to a whole-hearted following of the Lord. We all know that we are predestinated to be conformed to the image of Christ, that the whole object of our salvation is to make us holy, and we must all realize that this end can only be reached by the pathway of entire harmony with the will of God. We cannot imagine any possibility of being conformed to the image of Christ except by "wholly following" Him. No one could enter the promised land save those who had wholly followed the Lord.

Because all those men which have seen my glory, and my miracles, which I did in Egypt and in the wilderness, and have tempted me now these ten times, and have not hearkened to my voice; surely they shall not see the land which I swear unto their fathers, neither shall any of them that provoked me see it: but my servant Caleb, because he had another spirit with him, and hath followed me fully, him will I bring into the land wherinto he went; and his seed shall possess it.—Num. 14: 22-24.

There is nothing arbitrary in this. God does not exact obedience because of any tyrannical determination to be obeyed, but only because in the very nature of things we cannot be in the kingdom of God unless we obey God. The very idea of a kingdom is that there is a king who makes laws, and subjects who obey those

laws. Even Christians are far too apt to look upon God's commands to us as arbitrary assertions of His authority and His power; whereas they are simply a statement of the absolutely essential conditions of oneness with Himself. It is as if a great artist should say to his pupil, "If you want to be an artist like me, you must walk in my footsteps and obey my commands." He would not say this from any arbitrary determination to be obeyed, but simply because it would be the only pathway by which the desired consummation could be reached.

And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple.—Luke 14: 27.

It is not said, "shall not" be my disciple, but "cannot"; cannot in the very nature of things. And it is this "cannot" that underlies every command of our God. To understand this entirely changes the aspect of obedience. I remember once in a lecture on art receiving a most valuable lesson in this direction. The lecturer said that true art could only be reached by obedience; that you might conquer a city by brute force, but you could only conquer the art of that city by obedience to its laws. When we once clearly see that this is why God calls upon us to follow Him wholly, all the hardness is taken out of the call. It is to our own advantage to obey it. Whenever we can get children to see that it is to their own advantage to obey, obedience becomes easy to them. Had the children of Israel in the time of Moses known the advantages that were to result from a whole-hearted following of the Lord, can we suppose for a moment that they would have allowed Caleb and Joshua to be the only ones who "wholly followed"? And likewise now, could we but know the



blessed results of "wholly following," every soul, I am sure, would be only too eager to do it.

Then the children of Judah came unto Joshua in Gilgal: and Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenezite said unto him, Thou knowest the thing that the Lord said unto Moses the man of God concerning me and thee in Kadesh-barnea. Forty years old was I when Moses the servant of the Lord sent me from Kadesh-barnea to espie out the land; and I brought him word again as it was in mine heart. Nevertheless my brethren that went up with me made the heart of the people melt: but I wholly followed the Lord my God. And Moses swore on that day, saying, Surely the land whereon thy feet have trodden shall be thine inheritance, and thy children's for ever, because thou hast wholly followed the Lord my God. And now, behold, the Lord hath kept me alive, as he said, these forty and five years, even since the Lord spake this word unto Moses, while the children of Israel wandered in the wilderness: and now, lo, I am this day fourscore and five years old. As yet I am as strong this day as I was in the day that Moses sent me: as my strength was then, even so is my strength now, for war, both to go out, and to come in. Now therefore give me this mountain, whereof the Lord spake in that day: for thou heardest in that day how the Anakims were there, and that the cities were great and fenced: if so be the Lord will be with me, then I shall be able to drive them out, as the Lord said.

And Joshua blessed him, and gave unto Caleb the son of Jephunneh Hebron for an inheritance. Hebron therefore became the inheritance of Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenezite unto this day, because that he wholly followed the Lord God of Israel. And the name of Hebron before was Kirjath-arba; which Arba was a great man among the Anakims. And the land had rest from war.—Joshua 14: 6-15.

It is striking to notice here that the man who "wholly followed" the Lord received for his inheritance the very mountain which had so alarmed the faithless spies, that mountain where the Anakims dwelt, and where were the cities great and walled up to Heaven. That is, the very places that are full of giants and frowning walls to those who do not follow wholly, become happy dwelling places to those who do. When our children are obedient, we can take them into places of enjoyment which otherwise would be full of danger for their willful little feet. And if we would know the highest joys of God's salvation, we can only come to them along the pathway of "wholly following."

And now, Israel, what doth the Lord thy God require of thee, but to fear the Lord thy God, to walk in all his ways, and to love him, and to serve the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul, to keep the commandments of the Lord, and his statutes, which I command thee this day for thy good?—Deut. 10: 12, 13.

"For thy good," this is the keynote always. Not for the convenience or pleasure of God, as I fear we too often

think, but purely and solely for our own good, are His commandments given. Surely, if we realized this, we should love His will; we should not merely be resigned to it, but we should delight in it; we should embrace it with eagerness.

Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart.—Ps. 40: 7, 8.

We delight to do God's will not because we are so good, but because we have discovered that His will is so good. The goodness is not in us, but in His will. People talk sometimes about its being such a great attainment to say, "Thy will be done," to God, and look upon it as the height of piety. But this is only because they have not yet discovered how good His will is. It is only common sense to want the best thing, and the moment we find out that God's will is the best, at once, of course, we want it. We do not have to make any effort then to want it, we do not have to work ourselves up into a very pious frame of mind in order to want it; we simply want it as a matter of course, because it is good and desirable. It does not force our acquiescence by its arbitrariness, but it wins our love by its sweetness and its beauty. I am sure this is the only true way of considering the will of God. His will is the will of an infinite unspeakable love, and therefore must necessarily be infinitely lovely. No most loving mother's will for her best beloved child was ever half so lovely as the will of God for us. And, when once we understand them, the beautiful words, "Thy will be done," become the dearest words our lips can utter. Some one says that God's will comes to us either a load to carry or a pillow to rest upon. It depends upon what we think of it, which it shall be for us. Our Lord, who knew what God's will is as none other could, has assured us in unmistakable language of its infinite blessedness.

And it came to pass, as he spake these things, a certain woman of the company lifted up her voice, and said unto him, Blessed is the womb that bare thee, and the paps which thou hast sucked. But he said, Yea rather, blessed are they that hear the word of God and keep it.—Luke 11: 27, 28.

We can all understand this comparison. The bliss of being the mother of our Lord appeals to all our hearts; and if, blessed as this is, the hearing and keeping of the will of God is more blessed, what a vista

of delight attainable to us all is opened out before us.

And he answered them, saying, Who is my mother, or my brethren? And he looked round about on them which sat about him, and said, Behold my mother and my brethren! For whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother, and my sister, and mother.—Mark 3: 33-35.

To stand to our Lord in these blessed relationships of brother and sister and mother is a joy beyond words to express; and into these relationships every soul that "wholly follows" Him is introduced. Who could possibly fear the will of God, when once they had caught a glimpse of such a blessedness as this?

Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine: and ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel.—Exod. 19: 5, 6.

To become God's "peculiar treasure" is worth an infinite surrender of all else. No wonder Paul could say that he counted all else but dross that he might win it.

He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him. Judas saith unto him, not Iscariot, Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world? Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.—John 14: 21-23.

We are apt to think sometimes that God's manifestations of Himself are capricious and arbitrary,—that He chooses to manifest Himself to one and not to another; and we are tempted to resent the fact that others in this respect are apparently more favored than we. Our Lord's words seem to show that there is a law in this as in all else, and that the Divine manifestations depend not upon God's exercise of His arbitrary will, but upon our wholly following of His commandments. With Judas we say, "How is it?" But the answer is close at hand, "If a man love me, he will keep my words, and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him." Notice, it is "we will," not "we may, if it seems best," but plainly and emphatically "we will." In other words, our Lord here says in effect, "The inevitable result of obedience is oneness, and if you obey me, you must, in the very nature of things, become one with me." This is a law.

We always become one with the power we obey.

As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love. If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love: even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love.—John 15: 9, 10.

If any are troubled as to how they can come to know the love of God, I would refer them to the simple receipt here given: "If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love." Nothing could be more explicit or more easily understood, and nothing could be more practical. Suppose you are all in the dark, dear reader, with no sense of the love of Christ, and no understanding of His salvation. Try acting on this receipt. Begin at once to follow Christ. Ask Him to show you what you ought to do, and day by day obey Him. Do at once the next right thing. Walk in the best light you have, and more light will come. Follow Christ in the first step, and He will show you the second; and, so following, you will surely come sooner or later to clearer light and knowledge, until at last the clouds will disperse and the shadows flee away, and you will be able to say from the standpoint of actual experience, "I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed to Him against that day."

What does our Lord Himself say on this matter?

Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity. Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock. And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it. And it came to pass, when Jesus had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at his doctrine.—Matt. 7: 21-28.

If we would have our house founded on the rock, where the floods and winds cannot move it, there is only one way. We must "wholly follow" the Master. It is not the man that saith, "Lord,



Lord," who enters into the kingdom, but the man that doeth the will. Feelings will not bring us in, doctrines will not do it, the following of Christ alone gives us entrance.

Therefore shall ye keep all the commandments which I command you this day, that ye may be strong, and go in and possess the land, whither you go to possess it; and that ye may prolong your days in the land, which the Lord sware unto your fathers to give unto them and to their seed, a land that floweth with milk and honey.—Deut. 11 : 8, 9.

If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will my Father honour.—John 14 : 26.

In order to be with Christ, we must follow Him in obedience to His will. There is absolutely no other way. "None of the men shall see the land, because they have not wholly followed me." This is the Divine law. If we follow Him, we must necessarily be with Him; if we do not follow, we cannot be, in the nature of things.

Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.—John 8 : 12.

Blessed result of following! We shall have the "light of life." In other words, we shall know divine things by living in them; and this is the only knowledge that is of any permanent value.

May we, each one, be among those of whom it can be said, as it was of Caleb and Joshua, "They have wholly followed the Lord."

## The Will of God.

Thou sweet, beloved Will of God,  
My anchor ground, my fortress hill,  
My spirit's silent, fair abode,  
In thee I hide me and am still.

O Will, that willest good alone,  
Lead thou the way, thou guidest best;  
A little child I follow on,  
And trusting, lean upon thy breast.

Thy beautiful, sweet Will, my God,  
Holds fast in its sublime embrace  
My captive will, a gladsome bird,  
Prisoned in such a realm of grace.

Within this place of certain good  
Love evermore expands her wings;  
Or, nestling in thy perfect choice,  
Abides content with what it brings.

Oh, sweetest burden, lightest yoke,  
It lifts, it bears my happy soul,  
It giveth wings to this poor heart,  
My freedom is thy grand control.

Upon God's will I lay me down,  
As child upon its mother's breast;  
No silken couch, nor softest bed  
Could ever give me such sweet rest.

Thy wonderful, grand Will, my God,  
With triumph now I make it mine,  
And Love shall cry a joyous *Yes*  
To every dear command of thine.


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# BIBLE READING LEAFLET.

HANNAH WHITALL SMITH, EDITOR.

*Superintendent of the Bible Reading Department for the World's W. C. T. U.*

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## SUBJECT:—GOD'S THOUGHTS VERSUS MAN'S THOUGHTS.

*Foundation Text.*—Isa. 55 : 8, 9.

For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.

God's thoughts are not as our thoughts because they belong to a different plane of being. They are "higher," that is, grander; they are heavenly thoughts as opposed to earthly ones. And this is why we so often fail to comprehend them. We look at the seen thing, while God looks at the unseen thing. It is as if a learned astronomer should try to tell out his abstruse mathematical problems to a wild savage in the heart of Africa. His thoughts would be incomprehensible to the untutored savage, because they would be too "high" for him. To the savage the earth seems to stand still and the sun to move around it, this is the seen thing. But the astronomer sees the unseen thing, and knows that it is just the other way. To the savage the astronomer would seem to talk in paradoxes, and yet, as he should grow able to understand them, these very paradoxes would reveal to him some of the deepest truths of astronomy.

God has revealed to us His deepest thoughts in some of these apparent absurdities. Let us see if we are sufficiently developed to understand them.

I. He tells us we are to see unseen things.

While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.—II. Cor. 4 : 18.

What a paradox this seems. How can it be possible to see unseen things? What secret can this apparently absurd statement teach us? It teaches us that there are other things to see than those which

appear on the surface, and other eyes to look through than those we generally use. The "things which are seen" are material and temporal, the "things which are not seen" are spiritual and eternal, and to see these unseen things one must have the interior eye opened that can see "below surfaces," that can pierce through the outer covering into the inner heart of things. An ox and a scientist may both look at the same field, but they will see very different things. I remember a story that used to make a profound impression on me as a child called "Eyes and No Eyes." It was about two brothers who took a walk together, one of whom came home declaring there had been nothing to see, while the other found every step of the way full of interest. How often we hear people say of religion, "I see nothing in it." It always makes me think of that old story!—Matt. 13 : 10-17.

II. We live by dying.

Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body. For we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh.—II. Cor. 4 : 10, 11; also Rom. 6 : 4.

God's thought of life is unspeakably higher than man's thought. What we call life He calls death, and what we look upon as death He declares to be life. When He speaks of life he means not the life of the body but the life of the soul, and He teaches us that this higher life can only be reached by dying to our lower life. The caterpillar can only enter into the butterfly life by dying to the caterpillar life. And we can only live in the spiritual life by dying to the self life. We must "put off the old man" if we would "put on the new man." That is, we



must reckon the "old man" to be dead, and must treat it as a dead and buried thing, and must reckon ourselves to be alive only in Christ, and must live and act as those "that are alive from the dead." We do this by faith; and we must do it practically also by mortifying, or, in other words, putting to death everything in us that belongs to the life of the "old man." We must lay aside our own notions, and plans, and ways, and thoughts, and accept in their stead God's ways, and plans, and thoughts. We must say an emphatic "No" to the claims of self, and must treat this "I" as a stranger. And over each hour and each event of life we must learn to say with Paul, "Not I, but Christ."—Gal. 2:20.

III. We conquer by yielding, and reign by serving.

This is an incomprehensible saying to the man who is unable to see unseen things. But to the "eyes that see" it is full of deepest teaching.

From the human standpoint that man alone conquers and reigns who is able to exercise lordship over the circumstances and the people around him. From the divine standpoint the soul that yields and the soul that serves are the souls that conquer and reign.

Earthly conquests are won by fighting; spiritual conquests are won by yielding. Not he who demands service, but he who gives service is the inward conqueror. The man who demands service may gain the outward semblance of victory but he never conquers the heart; while the man who gives service becomes a ruler over those whom he serves by the power of his faithful service. How surely that friend conquers my heart and reigns over it who serves me without thought of payment or reward!

This law of conquering by yielding and of reigning by serving is a universal law on the spiritual plane. "I conquered my trial by submitting to it," said a wise man, and his words contain an open secret. We conquer a science only by submission to its laws. We reign over art only by rendering it an obedient service. We conquer spiritual things only by yielding to their control. — Rom. 8:36, 37.

To be "killed all the day long" seems a strange way of being made "more than conquerors," and yet, if we understand it aright, we shall see it is the only way.

IV. We become free by becoming bound.

But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin ye became the servants of righteousness. I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh: for as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness. For when ye were the servants of sin ye were free from righteousness. What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things is death. But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.—Rom. 6:17-22.

This passage teaches us a deep spiritual lesson. The service of sin, which to man's thought seems on the surface to be freedom, God knows to be the worst sort of bondage; while the service of God, which seems like bondage, is our truest freedom. The eagle is made to soar, and therefore an eagle compelled to walk all its life would live in a perpetual bondage. Our spirits are made to serve God, and therefore any other service is slavery to them. We enter into our freedom then by becoming the bondsmen of God. We give up the liberty to sin that we may obtain the liberty to be righteous. We bind ourselves to God that we may be free from the bondage to men and devils. And what a freedom it is! No more necessity to get angry, nor to say sharp things with our tongues, nor to revenge our injuries, nor to stand up for our rights, nor to fear the opinion of men, nor to cringe for their favor. But instead, a liberty to walk in holiness, a liberty to be sweet, and meek, and gentle, and forbearing, and upright, and full of love. A freedom to stretch the wings of our spirits and soar into the "heavenly places in Christ Jesus," where earthly trammels can no longer hold or hamper us.—Rom. 8:2.

It is the freedom of life, as compared with the bondage of death.

V. We become great by being little, and are exalted by being humbled.

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As sorrowful, yet always rejoicing ; as poor, yet making many rich ; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things.—II. Cor. 6 : 10 ; also I. Cor. 3 : 21-23.

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# BIBLE READING LEAFLET.

HANNAH WHITALL SMITH, EDITOR.

*Superintendent of the Bible Reading Department for the World's W. C. T. U.*

LONDON, ENGLAND.

Vol. 10, No. 4.

AUGUST, 1891.

Published Monthly.

## SUBJECT:—GOD'S THOUGHTS VERSUS MAN'S THOUGHTS.

*Foundation Text.*—Isa. 55 : 8, 9.

For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.

God's thoughts are not as our thoughts because they belong to a different plane of being. They are "higher," that is, grander; they are heavenly thoughts as opposed to earthly ones. And this is why we so often fail to comprehend them. We look at the seen thing, while God looks at the unseen thing. It is as if a learned astronomer should try to tell out his abstruse mathematical problems to a wild savage in the heart of Africa. His thoughts would be incomprehensible to the untutored savage, because they would be too "high" for him. To the savage the earth seems to stand still and the sun to move around it, this is the seen thing. But the astronomer sees the unseen thing, and knows that it is just the other way. To the savage the astronomer would seem to talk in paradoxes, and yet, as he should grow able to understand them, these very paradoxes would reveal to him some of the deepest truths of astronomy.

God has revealed to us His deepest thoughts in some of these apparent absurdities. Let us see if we are sufficiently developed to understand them.

I. He tells us we are to see unseen things.

While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.—II. Cor. 4 : 18.

What a paradox this seems. How can it be possible to see unseen things? What secret can this apparently absurd statement teach us? It teaches us that there are other things to see than those which

appear on the surface, and other eyes to look through than those we generally use. The "things which are seen" are material and temporal, the "things which are not seen" are spiritual and eternal, and to see these unseen things one must have the interior eye opened that can see "below surfaces," that can pierce through the outer covering into the inner heart of things. An ox and a scientist may both look at the same field, but they will see very different things. I remember a story that used to make a profound impression on me as a child called "Eyes and No Eyes." It was about two brothers who took a walk together, one of whom came home declaring there had been nothing to see, while the other found every step of the way full of interest. How often we hear people say of religion, "I see nothing in it." It always makes me think of that old story!—Matt. 13 : 10-17.

II. We live by dying.

Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body. For we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh.—II. Cor. 4 : 10, 11; also Rom. 6 : 4.

God's thought of life is unspeakably higher than man's thought. What we call life He calls death, and what we look upon as death He declares to be life. When He speaks of life he means not the life of the body but the life of the soul, and He teaches us that this higher life can only be reached by dying to our lower life. The caterpillar can only enter into the butterfly life by dying to the caterpillar life. And we can only live in the spiritual life by dying to the self life. We must "put off the old man" if we would "put on the new man." That is, we



must reckon the "old man" to be dead, and must treat it as a dead and buried thing, and must reckon ourselves to be alive only in Christ, and must live and act as those "that are alive from the dead." We do this by faith; and we must do it practically also by mortifying, or, in other words, putting to death everything in us that belongs to the life of the "old man." We must lay aside our own notions, and plans, and ways, and thoughts, and accept in their stead God's ways, and plans, and thoughts. We must say an emphatic "No" to the claims of self, and must treat this "I" as a stranger. And over each hour and each event of life we must learn to say with Paul, "Not I, but Christ."—Gal. 2:20.

III. We conquer by yielding, and reign by serving.

This is an incomprehensible saying to the man who is unable to see unseen things. But to the "eyes that see" it is full of deepest teaching.

From the human standpoint that man alone conquers and reigns who is able to exercise lordship over the circumstances and the people around him. From the divine standpoint the soul that yields and the soul that serves are the souls that conquer and reign.

Earthly conquests are won by fighting; spiritual conquests are won by yielding. Not he who demands service, but he who gives service is the inward conqueror. The man who demands service may gain the outward semblance of victory but he never conquers the heart; while the man who gives service becomes a ruler over those whom he serves by the power of his faithful service. How surely that friend conquers my heart and reigns over it who serves me without thought of payment or reward!

This law of conquering by yielding and of reigning by serving is a universal law on the spiritual plane. "I conquered my trial by submitting to it," said a wise man, and his words contain an open secret. We conquer a science only by submission to its laws. We reign over art only by rendering it an obedient service. We conquer spiritual things only by yielding to their control.—Rom. 8:36, 37.

To be "killed all the day long" seems a strange way of being made "more than conquerors," and yet, if we understand it aright, we shall see it is the only way.

IV. We become free by becoming bound.

But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin ye became the servants of righteousness. I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh: for as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness. For when ye were the servants of sin ye were free from righteousness. What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things is death. But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.—Rom. 6:17-22.

This passage teaches us a deep spiritual lesson. The service of sin, which to man's thought seems on the surface to be freedom, God knows to be the worst sort of bondage; while the service of God, which seems like bondage, is our truest freedom. The eagle is made to soar, and therefore an eagle compelled to walk all its life would live in a perpetual bondage. Our spirits are made to serve God, and therefore any other service is slavery to them. We enter into our freedom then by becoming the bondsmen of God. We give up the liberty to sin that we may obtain the liberty to be righteous. We bind ourselves to God that we may be free from the bondage to men and devils. And what a freedom it is! No more necessity to get angry, nor to say sharp things with our tongues, nor to revenge our injuries, nor to stand up for our rights, nor to fear the opinion of men, nor to cringe for their favor. But instead, a liberty to walk in holiness, a liberty to be sweet, and meek, and gentle, and forbearing, and upright, and full of love. A freedom to stretch the wings of our spirits and soar into the "heavenly places in Christ Jesus," where earthly trammels can no longer hold or hamper us.—Rom. 8:2.

It is the freedom of life, as compared with the bondage of death.

V. We become great by being little, and are exalted by being humbled.

At the same time came the disciples unto Jesus, saying, Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven? And Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them, and said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven.—Matt. 18:1-4; also 23:10-12.

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# BIBLE READING LEAFLET.

HANNAH WHITALL SMITH, EDITOR.

Superintendent of the Bible Reading Department for the World's W. C. T. U.

LONDON, ENGLAND.

Vol. 10, No. 5.

SEPTEMBER, 1891.

Published Monthly.

## SUBJECT:—THE SECRET OF THE LILIES.

*"Ye flowerets of the fields," Siddartha said,*

*"Who turn your tender faces to the sun,  
What secret know ye, that ye grow content?"*

*Foundation Text:—Matt. 6: 28-30.*

And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin; and yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?—Matt. 6: 28-30

Our Lord here tells us what the secret of the lilies is, and commands us to consider it. It is the one secret of all others that we need to know, the secret of the love and care of God. For want of knowing it Christians get into endless trouble. Imagine the "lilies of the field" acting as so many Christians do, taking upon themselves the care and responsibility of their own growth and cultivation, straining and stretching to draw down the rain from heaven or the sunshine from the sun, toiling and spinning to array themselves in beautiful clothing; picture such a lily and see if it is not like many Christians you know, if it is not perhaps even like yourself?

I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. \* \* \* I am the vine, ye are the branches.—John 15: 1-5.

Two things are spoken of here, the vine with its branches, and the husbandman. Which of the two are we? You answer, we are the branches of the vine of course. You think so, do you? Then why is it that you are trying so hard to fill the husbandman's place, and do the husbandman's duty? Why do you so continually interfere between Him and

yourself? Why are you not content to be the branch, and let the Lord be the husbandman? Can you not see how fatally it confuses everything if you try to be at one moment the branch, fulfilling the branch's duties, and the next moment the husbandman, making vain efforts to fulfil the husbandman's duties? But perhaps you have never defined to yourself what these respective duties are. Our Lord tells us in this familiar passage in John:

I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away; and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit. Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you. Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch can not bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing. If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned. If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you. Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples.—John 15: 1-8.

We are taught here that the respective duties of the husbandman and the branches in the vine are exactly what nature herself also teaches. The one single duty of the branch is to "abide in the vine," the husbandman does all the rest. It is his duty to prune and purge and cultivate the vine, to see that it is watered sufficiently, and that it has all the needed sunshine. He must decide and regulate all the conditions of its growth, and upon His shoulders rests all the responsibility of its fruit-bearing. What I must do as a branch then, is to keep the place and act the part of a branch. I must not try



to usurp the husbandman's place nor try to act the husbandman's part. I must in short simply consent to *be* what I *am*.

Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.—John 15: 16.

Very few, even among Christians, understand this teaching of our Lord's. We are very apt to reverse the divine order in our thoughts, and think of ourselves as the husbandmen, and, strange as it may seem, practically, though no doubt unconsciously, think of the Lord as a vine chosen by us to be under our care, to be watched over and cultivated by us! You may cry out at this, but what else can be the meaning of all that toiling, and straining, and wrestling, and agonizing that fill up so much of your Christian life? "Consider the lilies how they grow; they toil not, they spin not." The husbandman toils and spins, but not the lily. The garden does not "keep" the gardener, but the gardener "keeps" the garden.

In that day sing ye unto her, A vineyard of red wine. I the Lord do keep it; I will water it every moment; lest any hurt it: I will keep it night and day.—Isa. 27: 2, 3.

He shall come down like rain upon the mown grass: as showers that water the earth.—Ps. 72: 6.

Just in this matter of "keeping" how much misunderstanding there is among Christians. For those words, "I the Lord do keep it," we in effect substitute, "I the man must keep it;" and we make endless resolutions, and lay endless plans, and work in all sorts of ways to keep and water the vineyard of our hearts, and then are amazed to find they are not better "kept." They never can be kept aright unless the Lord keeps them. The plants we tend ourselves always wither and die; the plants He tends always flourish and grow strong, and bring forth fruit abundantly.

But he answered and said, Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up.—Matt. 15: 13.

Because thou hast forgotten the God of thy salvation and hast not been mindful of the rock of thy strength, therefore shalt thou plant pleasant plants, and shalt set it with strange slips: in the day shalt thou make thy plant to grow, and in the morning shalt thou make thy seed to flourish: but the harvest shall be a heap in the day of grief and of desperate sorrow.—Isa. 17: 10, 11.

The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree: he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon. Those

that he planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in the courts of our God. They shall still bring forth fruit in old age; they shall be fat and flourishing.—Ps. 92: 12-14.

The contrast here between our own gardening and the gardening of the Lord is very significant. The one ends in a wasted heap, the other "brings forth fruit in old age." And does not our own experience teach us the same result? Do not our own efforts to cultivate and care for our interior gardens always end in failure, and are we not always compelled sooner or later to put ourselves into the hands of the Divine Husbandman, and leave the work of cultivation entirely to Him? What weed in our interior garden have we ever been able of ourselves to uproot, what grace to plant? Has our "taking thought" ever amounted to anything? Do we not know that until we learned the secret of the lilies, if we have as yet learned it, there was very little growth or fruit-bearing at all in our Christian experience?

But you may ask what that secret is. Let the Bible answer.

Thus saith the Lord: Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord. For he shall be like the heath in the desert, and shall not see when good cometh; but shall inhabit the parched places in the wilderness, in a salt land and not inhabited. Blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is. For he shall be as a tree planted by the waters, and that spreadeth out her roots by the river, and shall not see when heat cometh, but her leaf shall be green; and shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit.—Jer. 17: 5-8.

The secret of the lilies is entire abandonment to the Lord and absolute trust in Him. To "trust in man and make flesh our arm" means that we shall depend upon ourselves for our spiritual welfare, upon our own inward activities of various sorts, our "own willing and running," as the old mystics used to express it, our own resolvings and strivings, in short, upon our own strength and our own efforts of one kind or another. To trust in the Lord means to give up all self trust of every kind, and to abandon ourselves altogether to His working. We must be content, as an old writer has it, to be just what our God chooses to make us. We must be satisfied with the soil of our interior garden, with the sort of plants our Husbandman may plant, with the kind of fruits He may choose to cultivate, with the seasons He sends, with

the sunshine and rain He gives, with the rapidity or slowness of our growth, in short with all His dealings and processes, no matter how little we may comprehend them. We must grow a potato as gladly as a rose, if such be His will, or homely, every-day virtues as willingly as exalted fervors. We must be as content in winter as in spring, and must rejoice in the storm as well as in the sunshine.

But it may be objected that we are not inanimate flowers and gardens, but intelligent human beings with personal powers and responsibilities. This is true, and it makes an important difference in the two cases. What the flowers are by nature we must be by a free and intelligent surrender and trust. This is what consecration means, or as I prefer to call it, abandonment. Just as we abandon the care of a plant or of a garden into the hands of a skillful gardener, so must we abandon the care and keeping of the inward garden of our hearts to the Divine Husbandman, whose skill is equal to our every possible need.

When the poor and needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirst, I the Lord will hear them, I the God of Israel will not forsake them. I will open rivers in high places, and fountains in the midst of the valleys: I will make the wilderness a pool of water, and the dry land springs of water. I will plant in the wilderness the cedar, the shittah tree, and the myrtle, and the oil tree: I will set in the desert the fir tree, and the pine, and the box tree together: that they may see, and know, and consider, and understand together, that the hand of the Lord hath done this, and the Holy One of Israel hath created it.—Isa. 41: 17-20.

For the Lord shall comfort Zion: he will comfort all her waste places; and he will make her wilderness like Eden, and her desert like the garden of the Lord: joy and gladness shall be found therein, thanksgiving, and the voice of melody.—Isa. 51: 3.

No poorness of soil, no past growth of weeds, no ruin or desolation or "waste places" of any kind can baffle the Divine Husbandman or hinder His working, when once the interior garden has been thus abandoned to His care. Our waste places may baffle *us*, but they can not *Him*. He can even restore to us "the years that the locust hath eaten," and can cause the "land that was desolate to become like the garden of Eden."

Fear not, O land; be glad and rejoice: for the Lord will do great things. Be not afraid, ye beasts of the field: for the pastures of the wilderness do spring, for the tree beareth her fruit, the fig tree and the vine do yield their strength. Be glad then, ye children of Zion, and rejoice in the Lord your God: for he hath given you the former rain moderately, and he will cause to come down

for you the rain, the former rain, and the latter rain in the first month. And the floors shall be full of wheat, and the fats shall overflow with wine and oil. And I will restore to you the years that the locust hath eaten, the cankerworm, and the caterpillar, and the palmerworm, my great army which I sent among you.—Joel 2: 21-25.

Thus saith the Lord God; In the day that I shall have cleansed you from all your iniquities I will also cause you to dwell in the cities, and the wastes shall be builded. And the desolate land shall be tilled, whereas it lay desolate in the sight of all that passed by. And they shall say, This land that was desolate is become like the garden of Eden; and the waste and desolate and ruined cities are become fenced, and are inhabited. Then the heathen that are left round about you shall know that I the Lord build the ruined places, and plant that that was desolate: I the Lord have spoken it, and I will do it.—Ezek. 36: 33-36.

I say that the Divine Husbandman will do all this, but it will be asked whether we on our part have nothing to do. To this I would reply that our part is to "abide in Him," as our Lord Himself declares, "He that abideth in me and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit." To abide in Christ means simply to surrender ourselves to His care and to trust Him utterly. It means an interior abandonment of our whole selves, both actively and passively. Passive as regards self and its workings, active as regards attention and response to God. For as the elements in the ground of the garden respond to the working of the gardener, and bring forth flowers and fruit at his bidding, so must the elements of our nature respond to the working of God, and all within us must yield an implicit obedience to His will. We must give up all our own notions and plans, our prejudices, our choices. We must attend simply to God and His will, and must leave all else in His care. Since He is the Gardener, He alone can know what course of treatment will best suit our interior garden, and we must respond quickly and unhesitatingly to all His processes.

Our Lord tells us to "consider" the flowers of the field, and in thus considering, we learn the blessed fact that He who cares for them, will of course care for us who are of so much more value than they.

"I feel as weak as a violet  
Alone with the awful sky:  
Winds wander, and dews drop earthward,  
Rains fall, suns rise and set,  
Earth whirls, and all but to prosper  
A poor little violet."

There is infinite repose in this. As the violet rests in its little nook, receiving



Contentedly its daily portion, satisfied to let rains fall, and suns rise, and the earth to whirl, without one anxious pang, so must we repose in the present, as God gives it to us, accepting contentedly our daily portion, and with no anxiety as to all that may be whirling around us, in His great creative and redemptive plan.

I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely: for mine anger is turned away from him. I will be as the dew unto Israel: he shall grow as the lily, and cast forth his roots as Lebanon. His branches shall spread, and his beauty shall be as the olive tree, and his smell as Lebanon. They that dwell under his shadow shall return; they shall revive as the corn, and grow as the vine: the scent thereof shall be as the wine of Lebanon.—Hosea 14:4-7.

When God has His own way with us we shall "grow as the lily, and cast forth our roots as Lebanon, and our beauty shall be as the olive tree." But we can hinder. This lesson of inward abandonment is sometimes a hard lesson to learn. To drop down out of all our interior activities into inward stillness before the Lord, and a quiet waiting upon Him to work in us all the good pleasure of His will, is so contrary to the bustling activities of the natural man, that but few seem able to reach it. And yet without it we can never know much deep soul work accomplished, nor much fruit brought forth to God's glory.

Israel is an empty vine, he bringeth forth fruit unto himself: according to the multitude of his fruit he hath increased the altars: according to the goodness of his land they have made goodly images.—Hosea 10:1.

I hardly know anything more pitiful than for a child of God to "bring forth fruit unto himself." And yet unless we know the secret of the lilies we shall almost surely do it.

Now will I sing to my well beloved a song of my beloved touching his vineyard. My well beloved hath a vineyard in a very fruitful hill: and he fenced it, and gathered out the stones thereof, and planted it with the choicest vine, and built a tower in the midst of it, and also made a wine-press therein: and he looked that it should bring forth grapes, and it brought forth wild grapes. And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem, and men of Judah, judge, I pray you, betwixt me and my vineyard. What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it? wherefore, when I looked that it should bring

forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes. And now go to: I will tell you what I will do to my vineyard: I will take away the hedge thereof, and it shall be eaten up; and break down the wall thereof, and it shall be trodden down: and I will lay it waste: it shall not be pruned, nor digged; but there shall come up briers and thorns: I will also command the clouds that they rain no rain upon it. For the vineyard of the LORD of hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah his pleasant plant: and he looked for judgment, but beheld oppression; for righteousness, but beheld a cry.—Isa. 5:1-7.

If we fail to respond to the divine processes of our Divine Husbandman, or in other words if we do not obey His will, He cannot accomplish His blessed purposes in regard to us. It is not that He will not, but in the very nature of things He cannot. Imagine a plant, endowed with free will, that should say to the gardener, "I do not approve of your process, and am not willing to submit to your control. I intend to grow in my own way and cultivate myself after my own fashion." We can easily see that the gardener, with all his skill, could not make such a plant prosper.

It all comes to this therefore, as everything in religion always does, our part is to abandon ourselves utterly to the Divine Husbandman, trust Him perfectly, and obey Him implicitly. And then His part is to work; and, when we faithfully perform our part. He on His part never fails, but does for us exceedingly abundantly, even above all we could ask or think. For this is the secret of the lilies, and not even Solomon in all his glory was arrayed like one of these!

A garden inclosed is my sister, my spouse; a spring shut up, a fountain sealed. Thy plants are an orchard of pomegranates, with pleasant fruits; camphire, with spikenard, Spikenard and saffron; calamus and cinnamon, with all trees of frankincense; myrrh and aloes, with all the chief spices: A fountain of gardens, a well of living waters, and streams from Lebanon. Awake, O north wind; and come, thou South; blow upon my garden, that the spices thereof may flow out. Let my beloved come into his garden, and eat his pleasant fruits. I am come into my garden, my sister, my spouse: I have gathered my myrrh with my spice; I have eaten my honeycomb with my honey; I have drunk my wine with my milk: eat, O friends; drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved. Solomon's Song 4:12-16 and 5:1.


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# BIBLE READING LEAFLET.

HANNAH WHITALL SMITH, EDITOR.

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## SUBJECT: THE WILL IN RELIGION.

*Foundation Text:*—2 Cor. 8: 3, 12.

For to their power, I bear record, yea, and beyond their power they were willing of themselves. \* \* \* For if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath and not according to that he hath not.

Fenelon, in a book called "Spiritual Progress," gives us a deep insight into the place of the will in religion. He says, "True virtue and pure love reside in the will alone." And again, "The will to love God is the whole of religion." This, it seems to me, is the meaning of our foundation text, "If there be a willing mind" it is accepted of God.

And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, speak unto the children of Israel, that they bring me an offering: of every man that giveth it willingly with his heart ye shall take my offering.—Exod. 25: 1, 2.

Everything depends upon the state of the will. The will is the governing power in a man's nature. By the will I do not mean the *wish* of the man, nor his feelings, nor his longings, but his *choice*, his deciding power, the king within him to which all the rest of his nature must yield obedience. I mean, in short, the man himself, the "Ego," that personality in the depths of his being which he feels to be his real self. A great deal of trouble arises from the fact that so few seem to understand this secret of the will. The common thought is that religion resides, not in the will, but in the emotions, and the emotions are looked upon as the governing power in our nature; and consequently all the attention of the soul is directed towards its feelings; and, as these are satisfactory or otherwise, the soul rests or is troubled. But the moment we discover the fact that true religion resides in the will alone, we are raised above the domination of our feelings, and realize that, so long as our will is

steadfast towards God, the varying states of our emotions do not in the least affect the reality of the divine life in our souls. It is a great emancipation to make this discovery; and a little common sense applied to religion would soon, I think, reveal it to us all. For we must all know that there is something within us, behind our feelings and behind our wishes, an independent self, that after all decides everything and controls everything. The Bible calls this central self the "heart," and declares that out of it are the "issues of life."—Prov. 4: 23; also Luke 6: 45.

By whatever name philosophers may call this "heart" out of which are the "issues of life," to me it means nothing more nor less than the will; for to my consciousness the will is the governing force in my nature, and the spring of all my actions. It is out of the secret springs of our will that we bring forth the good or evil treasures of our lives. No one who will take a Concordance and run their eyes down the long list of passages concerning the "heart" can fail to see that when God speaks of the "heart" He means something far other than that bundle of emotions which we of the present day call our hearts. And even we often use the word heart in a far deeper sense. We speak for instance of getting "at the heart" of a matter, and we mean not its feelings, but the central idea that dominates it. And in the same way when God speaks of our "hearts" He means our true central self, that "Ego" within us which dominates our whole being. The word is used in the Bible over one thousand times, and it is made to express every form of thought or action that could be predicated of this central "Ego." The heart is said to understand, and to be



ignorant, to be wise, and to be silly, to exercise good judgment or bad, to be stupefied, to wax gross, to grow fat, to resist the light, to be discouraged, to fluctuate in doubt, to be of the same mind with another, to seek knowledge, to work wickedness, to devise wicked imaginations, to be set to do evil, to be set to do good, to be astonished, to tremble, to be glad; it is said, in short, to do and to be exactly what the man himself is said to do and to be. In numberless instances where the word "heart" is used, it would not make sense to translate it by the affections or the emotions.—Exod. 35: 31-35, and 36: 1, 2.

No one could for a moment suppose that to be "filled with wisdom of heart" or to be "wise hearted" meant that only the feelings or the emotions were acted on by God. The man's true inner self must necessarily be meant here. Similarly is the case of Solomon's prayer for wisdom. Solomon did not ask and God did not grant that merely his *feelings* should be made wise.—1 Kings 3: 5-12.

An "understanding heart to discern judgment" involves something far deeper than our feelings or our emotions, let them be ever so lively. It involves the will. Paul thus describes it in Philipians.

Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.—Phil. 2: 12, 13.

The will is the stronghold of our being. If God is to get complete possession of us He must possess our will. When He says to us, "My son, give me thy heart," it is equivalent to saying, "Surrender thy will to my control, that I may work in it to will and to do of my good pleasure." It is not the *feelings* of a man that God wants, but his will.—1 Pet. 3: 3, 4.

The "hidden man of the heart" is the Bible description of the will; and the one vital question in religion is what is the attitude of this hidden man of the heart. Our feelings belong, not to this inside man, but to the outside man, and are therefore of entirely secondary importance. If then our feelings rebel or are contrary let us not be perplexed nor discouraged, for what God desires is not fervent emotions but a pure intention of the will. The whole of His scrutiny falls upon this "hidden man of the heart,"

and where this is what it ought to be, He is content.—Prov. 3: 1-4.

My son, attend to my words; incline thine ear unto my sayings. Let them not depart from thine eyes; keep them in the midst of thine heart.—Prov. 4: 20, 21, and 23: 26.

It is very possible to give our emotions to a matter without really giving our hearts at all. We sometimes see people who are very lavish of their feelings but whose wills remain untouched. We call this sentimentality, and we mean that there is no reality in it. To get at reality the heart, or in other words, the will, must be reached. What the will does is real, and nothing else is.—Lev. 1: 3; also 1 Chron. 29: 9, 2 Cor. 9: 7.

"Of his own voluntary will," this is the keynote. For it is only things done by our own voluntary will that are done by our real selves. That which is done "grudgingly or of necessity" is simply an outward performance, that has no real meaning, and that can not be acceptable to the God who looks only at the heart. The true kingdom of God within us can only be set up in the region of our will. It is not a question of splendid talents, nor of great deeds, nor of fervent emotions, nor of wonderful illuminations; it is simply to will what God wills, always and in everything, and without reservation. We have nothing really under our own control but our wills. Our feelings are controlled by many other things, by the state of our health, or the state of the weather, or by the influence of other personalities upon us, but our will is our own. All that lies in our power is the direction of our will. The important question is not what we feel, or what are our experiences, but whether we will whatever God wills. This was the crowning glory of Christ, that His will was set to do the will of His Father.—Heb. 10: 5-9.

Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire; mine ears hast thou opened; burnt offering and sin offering hast thou not required. Then said I, Lo, I come; in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart.—Ps. 40: 6-8.

Fenelon says: "I do not ask from you a love that is tender and emotional, but only that your will should lean towards love. The purest of all loves is a will so filled with the will of God that there remains nothing else." We "delight" to do the will of God because His will and our will are one, and therefore what He wants we want also. And this

sort of delight, while it may not be as pleasing to ourselves, is far more pleasing to Him than any amount of delight in satisfactory emotions or gratifying illuminations.

But some one will ask whether we are not told to give up our wills. To this I answer, Yes; but in giving up our wills we are not meant to become empty of will power, and to be left poor, flabby, nerveless creatures who have no will. We are simply meant to substitute for our own foolish misdirected wills of ignorance and immaturity, the perfect and beautiful and wise will of God. It is not will power in the abstract we are to give up, but our misguided use of that will power. The will we are to give up is our will as it is misdirected and so parted off from God's will, not our will when it is one with God's will. For when our will is in harmony with His will, when it has the stamp of oneness with Him, it would be wrong for us to give it up.

The child is required to give up the misdirected will that belongs to it *as a child*, and we cannot let it say "I will" or "I will not," but when its will is in harmony with ours we want it to say "I will," or "I will not" with all the force of which it is capable.

Our will is a piece of splendid machinery, a sort of "governor," such as they have in steam engines to regulate the working of the steam; and everything depends upon the intelligence that guides its action, whether it is our ignorance or God's wisdom. As long as our own ignorance is the guide, the whole machinery is sure to go wrong, and it is dangerous for us to say "I will" or "I will not." But when we have surrendered the working of our wills to God, and are letting Him "work in us to will and to do of His good pleasure," we are then called upon to "Set our faces like a flint" to carry out His will, and to respond with an emphatic "I will" to every "Thou shalt" of His.—Heb. 13: 20, 21.

I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world; but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.—Rom. 12: 1, 2; also Eph. 6: 6.

"Doing the will of God from the heart," this is the only kind of doing His will that is of any value. The soul

that has surrendered its central will to Him is the only soul that can do His will "from the heart." It is for this reason that we say that the essence of true virtue consists, not in the state of our emotions, nor in the greatness of our illuminations, nor in the multitude of our good works, but simply and only in the attitude of the will.—Philemon 14.

The practical bearing of all this upon our religious experience is of vital importance. We are so accustomed to consider the state of our emotions as being the deciding test of our religious life, that we very often neglect to notice the state of our will at all; and we thus leave the stronghold of our nature utterly unguarded, while we attend only to the unimportant outposts. The moment, however, that we recognize the fact that the will is king, we shall begin to disregard the clamor of our emotions, and shall claim as real the decision of our will, however contrary it may be to the voice of our emotions.

I will take a familiar case as an illustration. A great trial falls upon a Christian. He knows he ought to say, "Thy will be done," in regard to it, and his will is to say it, but his feelings are all in rebellion, and it seems to him, when he tries to say it, as if he were a hypocrite, and would be telling an untruth should he persist. Now the real truth is that all this rebellion, being only in the emotions, is not worth the slightest attention. If in his will the sufferer really chooses the will of God, then he himself really chooses it, and he is no hypocrite when he says, "Thy will be done." The real thing in your experience is not the verdict of your emotions but the verdict of your will; and you are far more in danger of hypocrisy and untruth in yielding to the assertions of your feelings, than in holding fast to the decision of your will. If your will then at bottom is on God's side, you are no hypocrite at this moment in claiming your position as belonging altogether to Him, and as being entirely submitted to His control, even though your feelings may all declare the contrary.

A Christian lady of my acquaintance was at one time in her life an apparently hopeless victim of doubts and fears. She knew she ought to trust the Lord, and longed to do it, but she seemed utterly unable. After a long period of suffering



from this cause, she finally confided her difficulties to a friend, who, as it mercifully happened, understood this secret concerning the will, and who told her that if in her will she would decide to trust, and putting all her will power into trusting, would utterly ignore her feelings, she would sooner or later get the victory over all her doubts. The poor doubter listened in silence for a few minutes, and then, drawing a long breath, said with emphasis, "Yes, I see it. If I choose in my will to trust, I really am trusting, even though all my feelings say the contrary. I do choose to trust now. I WILL trust and I will not be afraid again." As she came to this decision, and thus deliberately put her will on the side of God's will, all the darkness vanished, and her soul was brought out into the glorious light of the gospel, a light which was never dimmed again, until her eyes were opened in the presence of the King.—Josh. 24: 15.

And Ruth said, Intreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God: where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried: the Lord do so to me, and more also, if I ought but death part thee and me. When she saw that she was stedfastly minded to go with her, then she left speaking unto her.—Ruth 1: 16-18.

The whole question lies in the choice of our will. What we are to do is to "choose" what attitude our soul shall take towards God, without any regard to the state of our emotions. We must recognize that our emotions are only the servants of our will (which is the real interior King in our being), and that it is the attitude, not of the servants, but of the master that is important. Is our choice deliberately made on God's side? Is our will given up to Him? Does our will decide to believe and obey Him? Are we "steadfastly minded" to serve Him and follow Him? If this is the case, then, no matter what our feelings may be, *we* are given up to Him, *we* decide to believe, *we* decide to obey, for my will is myself, and what my will chooses, I choose.

Your attitude towards God is as real where only the will acts, as when every emotion coincides. It does not *seem* as real to us, but in God's sight it is real, and often I think all the more real, because it is unencumbered with a lot of unmanageable feelings. When, therefore, this wretched feeling of unreality or hypocrisy comes, do not be troubled by it. It is only in the region of your emotions and means nothing except, perhaps, that your digestion is out of order, or that there is an east wind blowing. Simply see to it that your will is in God's hands; that your true inward personality or "Ego" is abandoned to His working; that your choice, your decision, is on His side, and there leave it. Your surging emotions, like a tossing vessel, which by degrees yields to the steady pull of the anchor, finding themselves attached to the mighty power of God by the choice of your will, must inevitably sooner or later come into captivity and give in their allegiance to Him. It is a psychological fact, not generally known, that our will can control our feelings, if only we are "steadfastly minded" so to do. Have you ever tried it in a case where you have got "turned around," as we call it, in regard to the direction in which you were going? Many times, when my *feelings* have declared unmistakably that I was going in a direction contrary to the facts, I have changed those feelings entirely by a steadfast assertion of their opposite. And similarly I have been able many times to control my rebellious *feelings* against the will of God by a steadfast assertion of my *choice* to accept and submit to His will. Sometimes it has seemed to drain to my lips all the will power I possessed, to say it, so contrary has it been to the evidence of my senses or of my emotions. But invariably sooner or later the victory has come. God has taken possession of the will thus surrendered to Him, and has worked in me to will and to do of His good pleasure.

May all my readers speedily learn this practical secret concerning the will!


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## SUBJECT: THE HIDDEN GOD.

*Foundation texts.*—Job 23 : 3-9.

Oh, that I knew where I might find him! that I might come even to his seat! I would order my cause before him, and fill my mouth with arguments.

\* \* \* \* \*  
Behold, I go forward, but he is not there; and backward, but I cannot perceive him: on the left hand, where he doth work, but I cannot behold him: he hideth himself on the right hand, that I cannot see him.

“Oh, that I knew where I might find Him!” This despairing cry was uttered fifteen centuries before Christ; and one can perhaps understand that in those dark days there might have seemed to be some cause for its utterance. But that it should ever be uttered now by any soul that possesses the Bible and has even the slightest faith in Christ, would seem impossible, did we not know, alas! that it is only too often the cry of even Christian hearts. In fact it seems to be almost one of the greatest difficulties in the lives of many Christians, that God seems so to hide Himself from their longing gaze, and that this hiding seems so often to be in anger or in neglect.—Psalms 44 : 23, 24, and 77 : 7-9.

The natural heart is continually asking such questions as these. We cannot see the hand of God in our affairs, and we rush to the conclusion that He has lost sight of them and of us. We look at the “seemings” of things instead of at the underlying facts, and declare that, because God is unseen, He must necessarily be absent or asleep. And especially is this the case if we are conscious of having ourselves wandered away from Him and forgotten Him. We judge Him by ourselves, and think that He must have also forgotten and forsaken us. We measure His truth by our falseness, and find it hard to believe He can be faithful

when we know ourselves to be so unfaithful. But the God revealed to us in the Bible is a far other God than this. He is shown to us there as a tender Shepherd who performs with the utmost fidelity all a shepherd's duties; who does not forsake His sheep in the cloudy and dark day, nor desert them when the wolf cometh, but who always draws nearer in every time of need, and goes after each sheep that wanders until He finds it. The hireling fleeth when danger appears because he is an hireling, but the good Shepherd only sticks closer than ever.—John 10 : 11-15.

It is impossible to imagine a *good* shepherd forgetting or forsaking his sheep. In fact, it is his *duty* to stick by them under all circumstances, and to watch over them and care for them every moment. And the God who is thus revealed to us as a “good Shepherd” must necessarily be as faithful to His responsibilities as an earthly shepherd is required to be. His care of us may be a hidden care, but it is none the less real, and all things in the daily events of our lives are made to work subservient to His gracious purposes towards us. He may seem to have forgotten us, or neglected us, but it can never be anything but a seeming, for it would be impossible for the God who is revealed to us in the face of Jesus Christ to do such a thing.—Isa. 49 : 14-16.

What an overwhelming answer to the cry of the heart that thinks God has forsaken and forgotten it! “Can a woman forget her suckling child?” Impossible, we say. And yet a woman might even do this incredible thing, but the Lord never. And to prove to us how impossible it would be, He tells us that He has graven us on the “palms of His hands;”



a place where, even should He try, He could not help continually seeing us.

And yet in spite of emphatic assertions such as this even Christians sometimes allow themselves to think that God has forgotten or neglected them! How can they; how can they?

I knew a Christian once who had been plunged into the depths of darkness and despair by the temptation to believe that God had forsaken and forgotten him. A trouble had come upon him in a distant land, through no agency of his own, in a matter which he had especially committed to the care of God, and he did not see how it could have happened unless the Lord had forsaken him. He poured out his anguish and his doubts to a friend, and asked in his despair if there was any help. This friend was one who knew God, and who was therefore as sure of His presence and loving care in the times when He seemed to be hidden from sight as in the times when He made Himself more manifest, and he said to his despairing friend, "Do you believe the Bible, my brother?" "Believe the Bible," replied the sufferer, "why, of course I do, but what has that to do with it?" "Everything," replied his friend, "for the Bible says the Lord never leaves us nor forsakes us, and that He is omnipresent everywhere. Now do you believe He was in Australia when this event took place?" "He must have been, I suppose," said the poor sufferer rather reluctantly, as though unwilling to admit the fact. "You say," continued the friend, "that you committed this matter to Him, and you are obliged to admit that He was in Australia at the time. Now I ask you, did the Lord attend to the matter you had committed to Him or did He neglect it?" To this there was no reply. After a solemn pause the friend spoke again, "You say God was in Australia, and you say you had committed this matter to Him. Now I ask you again, as in His presence, did He attend to it or did He neglect it?" "Oh!" answered the sufferer, with a sudden illumination of faith, "I see it all. God *was* there, and He did attend to it, of course, and it must be all right, though I cannot see how. The will of God be done! I can trust Him even about this, and can believe that He will make it all work together for good, in spite of all seemings to the contrary.—Heb. 11 : 27, and Heb. 13 : 5, 6.

This is the vital point, to see "Him who is invisible." Everything hinges on this; and the difference between a triumphant Christian and a despondent one generally arises from the fact that the former has his eyes opened to discern in all things the hidden God, while the latter catches no glimpse of His presence. But since He has Himself said, "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee," surely every one of us is bound to believe Him, and to assert "boldly," in spite of every seeming to the contrary, our unwavering confidence in the fact of His abiding presence and His unfailing care.—Isa. 43 : 1-3, and 41 : 17.

We may be perfectly sure of this, that the time of our need is the time of His closest and tenderest watchfulness. What would we think of a mother who should run away from her children the moment they got into trouble? And yet this hateful thing, which we would resent in any human mother, some of God's own children do not hesitate to ascribe to Him!—Isa. 42 : 16.

Even in our blindness and our ignorance of His presence He is watching over us.

A story I heard once from a friend, who was cognizant of all the circumstances concerning the watchful and overruling care of a hidden caretaker, will illustrate what I mean. A very feeble old lady was obliged to take a long and difficult journey alone. She was burdened with a large amount of troublesome luggage, and was supplied with but little money to make traveling easy. She was too reserved to permit any one to speak to her about the needs and dangers of her journey which her friends could not but foresee, and too proud to make it possible for any one to offer help. Her friends were at an utter loss to know what to do, when a noble young man, almost a stranger to her, who had heard of the circumstances, solved the difficulty by announcing that matters of business required him to take that identical journey at that identical time. He said nothing to the old lady of the plan he had formed to wait on and care for her, as he knew if he did her pride would take fright. He simply in secret arranged all his plans to fit in with hers. When it was time to start on the journey he had a cart at the door for his own luggage and a carriage to convey himself to the train, and then said to the old lady in an off-hand sort of way, "Oh, by the

by, as we are going by the same train, perhaps you might as well let your luggage go with mine, and you, yourself might as well take a seat in my carriage." It all looked so accidental that the old lady never dreamed of any prearrangement, and accepted his offer as naturally as he had made it, and was thus saved a weary walk to the train. He found her a seat near himself in the railway car, and kept on the alert all the time to give her comfort and save her fatigue. When he thought she needed refreshment he had some brought in for himself, and asked her as a kindness, to pity his loneliness and share it with him. When changes in trains had to be made he always said, as if casually, "I might as well see to your luggage when I see to my own." When they stopped at a station over night he took her to the hotel in the carriage ordered for himself. In short, he cared for her throughout as a tender son would have done, and never left her until he saw her safe at her destination; and yet, never once did she suspect that anything he did was more than accidental, or was not even quite natural in a young man, who was traveling the same way, and feeling lonely, had taken rather a fancy for her company. In fact, so entirely did he make it all seem like a favor done to himself, that she scarcely thanked him, and not for a moment did she realize that all the comfort and ease of her journey, of which she rather boasted afterward, were entirely owing to his care and attentions.—Isa. 46 : 3, 4, and Ps. 139 : 1-5.

All our lives long God has been caring for us, but how little we have appreciated His care! If the old lady in our story had ever found out what she owed to her young friend, would she not, think you, have been sorely grieved that she had not better appreciated his services, and had failed to thank him as he deserved? And shall we not one day have to feel the same grief towards our hidden God?—Jer. 51 : 5, and Isa. 44 : 21.

Even in the days of their sinfulness and backsliding, Israel was not forgotten nor forsaken. The Book of Esther is a striking exemplification of this. The name Esther means secret or hidden, and the whole book is a story of the hidden presence of God in the midst of His people, at a time when their backsliding had so blinded their eyes, that they could not see Him. Not once in

the whole book is the name of God mentioned, and yet His overruling care and guidance were never more manifest than in the events here recorded. The children of Israel seemed, as far as appears, to have forgotten God, and to have left Him out of all their thoughts; and to them no doubt it must have seemed as if He had likewise forgotten them. But behind all their neglect of Him, and His seeming forgetfulness of them, He held the reins of His providence, and by a series of apparently natural events, and by most unlikely means, using a drunken king, a deceiving woman, a sleepless night, an upstart servant, and a malicious enemy as links in the chain, He brought to pass His will concerning them, and saved them in the time of their need. And just so He does continually now for His people, watching over them the most tenderly at the very moments when He seems the most hidden. And this is the case even when the hiding has been caused by our own unfaithfulness or backsliding. We may forsake Him, but He never forsakes us, no matter how much it may seem as if He had.—Neh. 9 : 16-19.

It seems to me that it is the greatest infidelity to say of God, when He is hidden from our sight, that He has forsaken us. The simple truth is that He could no more forsake us than a loving mother could forsake her child. I remember once a theologian was arguing the matter out with me, and undertook to assert that there *were* sins for which even a mother would forsake her child; and I can feel to this day the tempest of mother love and indignation that tore my heart as I burst into tears, and with difficulty restrained myself from ordering him out of my presence at once! And if I, a poor failing human mother, could feel so, how much more must the Heavenly Father feel who made the mother-heart in me, and who is declared Himself to be a God of love!—Deut. 31:6, 8 and Matt. 28:18-20.

I do not see how any child of God can dare, in the face of statements such as these, even so much as suggest that God has forsaken him. It is simply an impossibility. And the only thing to do is to recognize that it is impossible, and never to admit the idea.

The story of Joseph gives us a very striking illustration of the hidden workings of God. Nothing could seem more like having been forsaken of God than



the long series of misfortunes that befell Joseph, beginning with the cruelty of his brethren, and ending with being forgotten in prison. There was no sign or token in it all of anything but the wickedness and malice of men. And yet when Joseph was trying in after years to comfort the hearts of his brethren upon whom remorse had seized, he could say, "Now, therefore, be not grieved nor angry with yourselves that ye sold me hither; for God did send me before you to preserve life." And again, "But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive." The Psalmist also, in recapitulating many years afterward the story of Israel, said concerning these events, "He sent a man before them, even Joseph, who was sold for a servant." It certainly looked to the eye of sense, as if the selling of Joseph into Egypt was man's wickedness only. But the hidden God was at work behind all the wickedness and malice of men, using as He so often does, the wrath of man to accomplish His purposes. Wicked men were, it is true, the actual agents, but God was the real sender. Moreover, in the very places where Joseph seemed to be the most forsaken, in the house of slavery and the prison of disgrace, right there, we are told, God was with him and blessed him.—Gen. 39, 1-3, and Gen. 39: 22, 23.

If ever any human being would seem to have been justified in thinking God had forsaken him, surely Joseph would. But from all that appears his faith throughout was steadfast, and no doubting thought seems ever to have entered his heart.

Not so with Jacob. In his times of darkness it is evident that his heart was filled with doubts.—Isa. 40: 27-29.

When we say with Jacob, "My way is hid from the Lord," it is because we do not know God. He is hidden, and we think He is absent; we do not see Him, and we think He does not see us. Like a child in delirium, that cannot see its mother, although she is holding it tenderly in

her arms, and calls out in despair, "Oh, mother, mother, come!" so we in the delirium of our unbelief, call out, "How long wilt thou forget me, Oh, Lord? Forever? How long wilt thou hide thy face from me?" while all the time His arms are underneath us, and His love envisions us on every side.—Psalms 139: 11, 12.


God may be hidden from us, but we can never be hidden from Him. There is a scene in the life of Elisha that illustrates this. The King of Syria was warring against Israel, but his designs were continually frustrated by Elisha. At last he determined to take Elisha captive, and sent an army to surround the prophet's own city. I will let the Bible tell the rest of the story.—II Kings 6: 14-17.

Now as then it often happens that the Lord is walking with His people, as He did with the two disciples on their way to Emmaus, and we do not know Him any more than they did. We need to have our eyes opened that we may see Him. These disciples saw with their bodily eyes, but we are to see with our spiritual eyes. Our seeing is to be by believing. Faith is the soul's eye-sight. The word "see" is used not only of the sense of vision by which we perceive external objects, but also of that inward perception which gives us a certain knowledge of spiritual things. We say, for instance, of a mathematical problem, "I see it," meaning, not that our outward eyes see it worked out on a blackboard, but that our inward perception grasps it as an ascertained fact. It is in this sense that we shall come to see Him who is invisible, not with our outward eyes, but with the inward eye of faith. In other words if we would discover the hidden God, we must simply believe, in spite of every "seeming" to the contrary, that He is with us and is watching over us and caring for us every minute of the time. Though we see Him not, we must believe He is there, and, so believing, we shall surely "rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory!"—I Peter 1: 8, 9.

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## SUBJECT: WHAT IS HIS NAME?

### *Foundation Text.*—Exodus 3:13.

And Moses said unto God, Behold, when I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say to me, What is his name? what shall I say unto them?

The vital question of all ages and of every human heart is here expressed, "What is his name?" The whole fate of humanity hangs on the answer to this question. If the God who created us and rules us is all right, then everything must be all right with and for us, but if He is wrong in even the slightest particular then we cannot be sure of anything being right. Everything depends on the sort of God we have. The condition of a country always depends upon the character of its rulers. The state of an army depends upon the sort of general that commands it. The more absolute the government the more is this the case. And since God is not only our absolute Ruler but our Creator as well, which neither kings nor generals can be, their subjects can never, in the very nature of things, be so utterly dependent upon them as God's creatures are and must necessarily be upon Him. In all that we read concerning Israel of old we find this constant refrain, that all they were and all they had depended upon the fact that their God was the Lord.

Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord; and the people whom he hath chosen for his own inheritance. —Psa. 33: 12.

O Lord, there is none like thee, neither is there any God besides thee, according to all that we have heard with our ears. And what one nation in the earth is like thy people Israel, whom God went to redeem to be his own people: to make thee a name of greatness and terribleness, by driving out nations from before thy people, whom thou hast redeemed out of Egypt? For thy people Israel didst thou make thine own people forever: and thou, Lord, becamest their God.—1 Chron. 17: 20-22; Deut. 33: 26-29.

Happy is that people, that is in such a case: yea, happy is that people, whose God is the Lord —Ps. 144: 15.

Blessed is that nation, happy is that people whose God is the Lord! All the blessing and happiness of Israel arose from the fact that their God was the Lord. Nothing else was of sufficient importance to be mentioned in the recapitulation of their advantages. The fact that their God was the Lord Jehovah was enough to account for every good thing they possessed. The question of all questions for each one of us therefore is this one, "What is his name?"

O Lord our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth! who hast set thy glory above the heavens.—Ps. 8: 1.

And they that know thy name will put their trust in thee: for thou, Lord, hast not forsaken them that seek thee.—Ps. 9: 10.

The name of the Lord is a strong tower, the righteous runneth into it and is safe.—Prov. 18: 10.

In Bible language "name" always means character. Cruden, in his Concordance, tells us that when the name of God is spoken of it means His attributes or qualities, and is used of anything whereby His nature and will are made known to us. We have a similar use of the word in common parlance. We say of a man, "He has got a great name for generosity or for selfishness," as the case may be; meaning that such is the general estimate of his character. The expression: "they that know thy name," therefore, means they that know thy character, the sort of being thou art; and the expression, "The name of the Lord is a strong tower; the righteous runneth into it and is safe," means that the righteous rely upon His character and trust themselves to His care.

Some trust in chariots and some in horses: but we will remember the name of the Lord our God.



They are brought down and fallen: but we are risen, and stand upright.—Ps. 20: 7, 8; 5: 11.

In order to "love his name" we must know what it is; and the great question for each one of us is how to know it. To this there is, it seems to me, but one answer, and that is the testimony given by John, "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him." Christ is the translation of God. If we would know the name of God we must read it in Christ.

If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also: and from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him. Philip saith unto him, Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us. Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father:—John 14: 7-9.

Thousands since Philip have repeated his eager cry, "Show us the Father and it sufficeth us," and to each one our Lord gives the same answer: "Look at me." He says, "he that hath seen me hath seen the Father. I and my Father are one."

For God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.—2 Cor. 4: 6.

Since it is God who declares that He has given us the knowledge of Himself "in the face of Jesus Christ," it is evident that we must refuse to accept any conception of God that is contrary to what we see in Christ, and must utterly reject any view of His relations to man, no matter how strongly upheld, that is at variance with those revealed by our Lord. If we have been accustomed to approach God with any mistrust of the kindness of His feelings toward us; if our religion has been poisoned by fear; if unworthy thoughts of His character and will have filled our hearts with suspicions of His goodness; if we have pictured Him as an unjust despot, or a self-seeking tyrant; if, in short, we have imagined Him in any way other than that which has been revealed to us in "the face of Jesus Christ," we must go back in all simplicity of heart to the records of that lovely life, lived in human guise amongst men, and must bring our conceptions of God into perfect accord with the character and ways of Him who is expressly declared to be the "image of the invisible God."

Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature.—Col. 1: 15.

God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds. Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.—Heb. 1: 1-3.

The things God has spoken unto the fathers at sundry times and in divers manners in times past seem some of them to be very contrary to the things He has spoken to us by His Son. But since the Son is the "express image of His person," we must listen to the Son's testimony, and must receive no apparent revelation that contradicts it. I mean that the Old Testament revelation of God seems sometimes to contradict the revelation in Christ, and in all such cases we must look upon the Old Testament revelation as partial and imperfect, and must accept as a true setting forth of God only that which we find in Christ. Christ alone tells us the real name of God.—John 17: 6-8.

For in him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.—Col. 2: 9.

In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ who is the image of God should shine unto them.—2 Cor. 4: 4.

Nothing in the whole life of Christ is plainer or more emphatic than the fact that He claimed to be a full and complete manifestation of God. Since then in Him "dwelt all the fullness of the Godhead bodily," we have only to become acquainted with Christ's character and Christ's ways, and the name, i. e., the character and ways of God is manifested to us. Other witnesses have told us of the outward aspects and visible acts of God, but from these we get often very wrong impressions of His true character. No other witness but Christ can tell us of the real secrets of God's bosom, for of none other can it be declared, as it is of Him, that "the only begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him."

All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him.—John 11: 27.

What, then, is the name that Christ has revealed to us as being the true name of God? Everywhere and under all circumstances He called Him by the lovely name of "Father." God had been called

throughout the ages by many other names, expressing many sides of His character, but Christ alone has revealed Him to us under the all-inclusive name of Father, a name that holds within itself all other names of love and goodness and wisdom, and that embodies for us a perfect supply for all our needs. Christ, who was "the only begotten Son in the bosom of the Father," was the only one who could reveal this name, for He alone knew the Father.

As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep.—John 10: 15.

Yet ye have not known him; but I know him: and if I should say, I know him not, I shall be a liar like unto you: but I know him, and keep his saying.—John 8: 55.

No one who believes in Christ, at all, can doubt that He knew God; and no one can question whether or not we ought to receive His testimony. He has assured us over and over again that He knew what He was talking about, and that what He said was to be received as the absolute truth, because He had come down from heaven, and, therefore, knew about heavenly things.

Verily, verily, I say unto thee, We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen; and ye receive not our witness. If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly things? And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven.—John 3: 11-13; 31-34.

The trouble is, that, in spite of the acknowledged trustworthiness of our divine Master, so few really "receive His testimony." And yet, if we can be sure of anything in the world, we can be absolutely sure that the name Christ gave to our God must be His real name, and the revelation He made of the character and ways of the Father must be perfectly in accordance with the facts of the case. Christ declares of Himself over and over that He was a living manifestation of the Father. In all He said and did He assures us that He was simply saying and doing that which the Father would have said and done, had He acted directly out of heaven, and from off his heavenly throne.

Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works. Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me: or else believe me for the very works' sake.—John 14: 10, 11.

Then cried Jesus in the temple as he taught, saying, Ye both know me, and ye know whence I am: and I am not come of myself, but he that

sent me is true, whom ye know not. But I know him: for I am from him, and he hath sent me.—John 7: 28, 29.

Then said they unto him, who art thou? And Jesus said unto them, Even the same that I said unto you from the beginning. I have many things to say and to judge of you: but he that sent me is true; and I speak to the world those things which I have heard of him. They understood not that he spake to them of the Father. Then said Jesus unto them, When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am he, and that I do nothing of myself; but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things. And he that sent me is with me: the Father hath not left me alone; for I do always those things that please him.—John 8: 25-29, and 5: 17-23.

In the face of such unqualified assertions as these, out of the lips of our Lord Himself, it becomes not only our privilege but our bounden duty to cast out of our conception of God every element that could in any way conflict with the blessed life and character and teaching of Christ. If we would know the real name of God, we must accept the name Christ has revealed to us, and must look upon every other name as only a partial revealing. The blessed name "Father" must underlie every other name by which He has ever been known. Has He been called a Judge? Yes, but He is a Father judge, one who judges as a loving father would. Is He a King? Yes, but He is a King who is at the same time the Father of His subjects, and who rules them with a father's tenderness. Is He a Law-giver? Yes, but He is a Law-giver who gives laws as a father would, remembering the weakness and ignorance of his helpless children.

Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him. For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust.—Ps. 103: 13, 14.

Never must we think of God in any other way than as "our Father." All other attributes with which we endow Him in our conceptions must be based upon, and bound by this one of "our Father."—Isa. 9: 6, 7.

The "everlasting Father" means that, by whatever other name He may be called under especial circumstances or at especial times, He is everlastingly back of all, and at the foundation of all, "our Father." When our Lord was teaching His disciples how to pray, the only name by which He taught them to address God was "Our Father."—Luke 11: 1, 2.

Millions upon millions of times, during all the centuries, since Christ declared it, has this name been uttered by the children of God everywhere, and yet how



many of them have at the very same time uttered in their hearts the despairing question, "what is His name?" Had it been universally accepted as a fact that the one all-embracing name of God is "our Father," it would have been impossible for the misrepresentations of His character, and the doubts of His love and care, that have so desolated the souls of His children throughout all the ages, to have crept in. Tyranny and unkindness and neglect might perhaps be attributed to a God whose name was only a king, or a judge, or a lawgiver, but of a God who is before all else a Father, and of necessity, since He is God, a good father, no such things could possibly be believed. Moreover, since He is an "everlasting Father" He must in the nature of things act always and under all circumstances as a good Father ought to act, and never in any other way. It is inconceivable that a good father could forget or neglect or be unfair to his children. A savage father might, or a wicked father, but a good father never! And in calling our God by the blessed name of Father, we must always recognize that if He is a father at all He must be the very best of fathers, and His fatherhood must be the highest ideal of fatherhood of which we can conceive. It is a fatherhood that combines both father and mother in one. We have only to study Christ's life to see what sort of fatherhood it is. Christ continually declared, as we have seen, that He did nothing of Himself, but that all He said and did was what He saw the Father do, "for what things soever He doeth," said Christ, "these also doeth the Son likewise." And again He said, "The words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself; but the Father that dwelleth in me, He doeth the works." And again "whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak." "For I came down from Heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of Him that sent me." We have therefore only to study the life of Christ and we shall know God as He really is,

apart from all the misconceptions of men — John 12: 44-50.

In reply then to the question, What is His Name? I have only this one thing to say, Ask Christ. He declares that whoever seeth Him seeth Him that sent Him; and He assures us that He has manifested to us the name of God. What can He mean but this, that in everything He said and did He was simply saying the words and doing the deeds of God. And He tells us that if we reject His revelation we shall be judged by it, for it is a direct manifestation of the Father. To know the Name therefore we have but to read the manifestation. That is, we have but to study the life, and words, and ways of Christ, and to say to ourselves, he that seeth Christ seeth God, and what Christ was on earth that God is in Heaven. All the darkness that enshrouds the character of God will vanish if we will but accept the light Christ has shed on the matter, and believe the "manifestation of His Name" that Christ has given us, and will utterly refuse to believe anything else. For many years now, ever since I saw the fact that Christ was God manifested in the flesh, I have adopted this plan, and the result has been a blessed discovery of the lovely fatherhood of God that has satisfied my every need. What more can any soul want than to have a God whose name is "our Father," and whose character and ways come up to the highest possibilities of His name? As Philip said, so we find it to be, "Shew us the Father and it sufficeth us." It does indeed suffice, beyond what words can express! And my farewell prayer for all the kind friends who have followed me through this series of leaflets is that, if they have not already done so, they may speedily come to know their God by the lovely name of Our Father!

O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee: but I have known thee, and these have known that thou hast sent me. And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it: that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them. — John 17: 25, 26.

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