

LIGHT AND DARKNESS.

The "Word of God" is the encyclopedia of heaven. No volume ever written discloses to the human intellect such wondrous truths. One of the greatest wonders of the "Word of God" is, that it reveals to human intelligence such ideas that the finite mind could never have conceived, but yet can comprehend. It is the aperture through which "Christ the light of the world shines." If we had no Bible we would be destitute of light. As the eye to the body, so is the "Word of God" to the human intellect. With this divine lamp in our possession we can travel the path that otherwise would have been impossible. The dense darkness that intercepted human intercourse with God (by a violation of the laws of life and light) is penetrated by the light of divine revelation. It does not annihilate the darkness, but simply throws its rays across the dark valley, or, in other words, turns darkness into light. But we ask the question: Where lies the valley of darkness? It is important to know how to locate this, the greatest of obstacles. Some people are inclined to think that the darkness that prevents the immediate shining in of the light of God is something of a remote nature—an abstract influence. But if those who view the matter in this way will visit the . . . temple of their own hearts, open its chamber door and take an introspective view, they will soon be able to locate the difficulty. It is the temple of the human heart and mind where the darkness of sin dwells. The man whose eyes are blind realizes that the darkness is within him. "If the eye be darkness thy whole body is full of darkness," says Jesus. The spiritual eye of the mind and heart has been blinded by sin, therefore the darkness that intercepts the shining in of the light of God is within the heart and mind. The "Word of God" provides the remedy to heal the blindness of sin, or in other words to disperse the darkness. The "Word of God," *per se*, is the light of the world to-day. Its author is the "Holy Spirit," through it shines the "Christ, the Sun of Righteousness." I have met persons who affirm that they enjoy the light of God, but admit that they know but little about the Bible. This kind of argument is obsolete, he who argues so vilifies the assertion of Jesus, Paul, Peter, James and John. Jesus came to earth as a teacher. The Holy Spirit came as a teacher. The Apostles were commissioned and sent as teachers. The object was to teach the world the wisdom and design of God in the wonderful scheme of redemption. To reveal the light of God. The "Word of God" contains these precious lessons; these lessons contain the light of God, or, in other words, the knowledge of God. The terms, light and knowledge, are used interchangeably in the Bible, therefore to intellectually understand God's wondrous means of grace is to have the light of God and a clear knowledge of God, and His Christ is eternal life. (John xvii. 3). The "Word of God" contains upon its pages the prescription for the blindness of sin, or the light that will dispel the darkness from the heart and mind. In order to produce this effect the means prescribed must be attended to according to the directions of Christ—the great physician—or the scales will never fall or light shine in. The great prescription is given by Jesus, found in (Mark xvi. 15, 16), "Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel; he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." Some people think it difficult to follow or comply with this prescription; but this does not suffice, the restoration of the soul to immortal health and life depends upon this vital demand: *obedience to Christ in all things*. "Though He were a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered, and being made perfect He became the author of eternal salvation to all them that obey Him." (Heb. v. 8, 9). I suppose if my remarks happen

to come in contact with some prejudiced mind the voice will be raised at once. It is all right to admonish those of Christ, to render to Him their hearts, "which is their reasonable service." But why not stop talking about this baptism? The answer is, I dare not do it, for God will not receive the offerings of any one who will not obey Christ. Jesus died that He might give to a sin-sick world this prescription found in Matt. xxviii. 19, 20, and again in Mark xvi. 15, 16. Every word of them has been written to the world by His authority, and who dare attempt to modify the decree of heaven. Christ's death, His blood, His burial, His resurrection and ascension stand out to-day before the world in attestation of the truth of them. To those who obey them and live to please God they are words of "life eternal." But to those who trample upon the blood of the new institution and insult the spirit of favor by refusing to obey them puts Christ to open shame and condemns his own soul. Let us come to the "light of God's Word" that our works may be made manifest and that we might have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us.

H. E. COKER.

LABOR.

Read before the meeting for Bible reading and social exercises at Church street, Cornwallis.

One of the meanings that Worcester gives for labor is "hard work," either mentally or physically. But we generally labor for ourselves, or for the benefit of ourselves in this world. This is not the kind of labor we have under consideration to-night. The kind of labor that we want is that which works for the cause of God, and that in the great day will be a lasting benefit to those who have labored to build up the cause of their Master in this His vineyard.

Then, we say, if we do not labor for our Master, "we labor in vain," for Christ says in John vi. 27, "labor not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of Man shall give unto you; for Him hath God the Father sealed." In order to bring this subject intelligibly before you, I will briefly discuss it under the following heads: 1st. What labor? 2nd. For whom? 3rd. When done?

1st. What labor? Now every one who has accepted Christ's invitation has come into His vineyard as a laborer. "Go work in My vineyard" is the Master's command. Now what we want to know is, what are we called to do?

The first work is the preaching of the Gospel, for "it pleased God, by the foolishness of preaching, to save them that believe." I. Cor. i. 21. Then there is the Sunday-school work. Now we all know what an important work this is to the church; for while all are not able to stand up and preach the Gospel to men, they can do a great amount of good by teaching in the Sunday-school. Then there is the visiting the sick and bringing to them the blessed news of salvation. Then there are the poor who should be looked after; and again there are our own homes. We should labor that they may be homes where Christ would not be ashamed to dwell. This is all what we call home labor. But where is the Christian who does not want to see the word of God spread throughout all the world? This brings us to what is called foreign labor. Christ says in Mark xvi. 15, 16: "Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned." Therefore, knowing the state of the heathen, it is our duty, as Christians, to see that the word of God is taken to them; and although everyone cannot go as missionaries, we can and ought to help support those who do go.

But what demands our most earnest labor is to make ourselves what we ought to be, and strive to

make our own light so shine that others, by seeing our good works, may be led to glorify our Father which is in heaven. This can only be done by guarding our passions and watching our words and by following the example of Christ as nearly as possible. In this way we will show our faith by our works.

For whom are we to labor? First, we are laboring for the Lord, or doing that work for which He has called us. Whether it be preaching the Gospel, or caring for the poor, or visiting the sick, or teaching and exhorting by the way; all of these are duties required of us by Him who called us into His service. But in whose interest is all this labor done? Christ came to labor for fallen man and has provided salvation for him in His Gospel and has committed the work of carrying this Gospel of salvation to the world, to His church. Hence, the work of God's people is on behalf of His fellow-men. The very fact that God has committed so important a work into our hands should stimulate us to earnest labor, knowing that we shall be called to give an account of our stewardship by-and-by.

Not only do we labor for the salvation of others, but for our own; for the Apostle says: "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling;" and again, "Let us labor, therefore, to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief." Heb. iv. 11.

Now, when shall we labor? Paul says in II. Cor. vi. 2, "Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation." And in Heb. iii. 7, "To-day if you will hear his voice, harden not your hearts." The Saviour says in John ix. 4, "I must work the works of Him that sent me while it is day, the night cometh when no man can work." There is no such thing as putting off for some more convenient season taught in the word of God. Life is too uncertain, and that which we have at stake, the salvation of our own souls and of others, too important to risk uncertainties. From all of which, and much more that might be said, we conclude that the labor that the Lord has given us to perform should be done now.

In conclusion, let us look at the result of all this. The work being the Lord's, He is honored and glorified among men when it is well done; and being done on behalf of man many will be saved with an everlasting salvation, who otherwise would have died without God and without hope. And lastly, the individual laborer, will have it said to him in that great day, when God shall judge the world in righteousness, "Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

"Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord." FRANK C. FORD.
Port Williams.

LIGHT.

Perhaps the most wonderful manifestation of the power of God is found in the divine fiat, Let there be light. How expressive a term is that one word, Light. Light in the physical world is opposed to darkness. Light in the moral or intellectual is opposed to ignorance. Light in the spiritual world is opposed to death. There is no other agent so pregnant with divine power as that represented by the one word, *Light*. In the beginning, when the earth rolled through space, a gaseous mass "without form and void," when "chaos and old night" ruled supreme 'twas then that the divine fiat went forth, "Let there be light," and the great work of creation had begun. Light was the first agent used by the Creator in lifting the veil of darkness and confusion from the incongruous elements, and when light appeared that nameless mass became "sphered in a radiant cloud, for yet the sun was not."