

DUTY.

"I slept, and dreamed that life was beauty— I woke and found that life was duty." There is no pleasure half so sweet As duty nobly done; Tho' storms may pierce my bleeding feet, I yet therefore will run. At times, my heart is faint and weak, And I almost despair— The pathway to the goal I seek Is never smoother fall.

THE TIMES OF DANIEL.

(WRITTEN FEB. 1875.)

Reader, we have at length arrived at an interesting stage, in the pursuit of our investigations. The Messiah when among men said, "And shall not God avenge his elect, who cry day and night to him, though he bear long with them? I tell you that he will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless when the Son of man comes, shall he find faith on the earth?" Luke 18:7. Shall he find "this belief" or confidence in the earth, that he will avenge them? We think he will not. People dread the subject and shun the investigation of it. If the Lord is coming to work the wonders mentioned in the foregoing pages, how important that we know the period, if indeed it can be known with any degree of assurance, of the grand and thrilling change. Now reader, we are by no means inclined to pursue the course of some, thirty years ago, with respect to appointing a specific time for the ending of the old, or the commencement of the new age; as this would be unwise and injurious. The fanaticism, excesses, and hasty calculations of the past forty years, we shall with special care, strive to avoid. The judicious reader will have observed, ere now, that the object we have in view, differs from that held forth, by those alarmists of former years. Their subject was the physical renewing of the earth by fire; after which the Lord would in person, reign amid his saints upon the renovated kosmos or earth; while our subject is the moral renovation of, not the kosmos but the aionos—not the earth, but the age, by cleansing it from all the accumulated pollutions, and abominations of the last thousand years or more; and by substituting the new age, close at hand, in which goodness, peace, fidelity, and righteousness shall cover the earth, as the waters cover the sea. Is not our design a laudable one? Or reader, will the "mad dog" cry, the scare of adventism, setting a time etc. drive you into a non-investigating mood? If so, you are not a full grown man or woman, and perhaps never will be. Rest assured friend, we are no alarmist; and the great excitement of 1843, caused within us naught but pity for those mistaken men. We are not in sympathy with their sentiments, and never was, but long before that exciting period—even as early as 1835, we felt certain, from reading prophets and apostles, that something extraordinary to effect a great change, would be done. Reader, rest assured that something will be done. Some are shocked at setting an exact time for this superb change—so are we; but, are we forbidden to observe the passing signs, by which we may approach to a certain distance of that most interesting period? We think not. We

set not specific time as some have done. This, the Messiah condemns that, he approves. Are we mistaken? Let us examine Mark 13 chapter. "But of that day and hour knows no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father." v. 32. Well, this seems pointed indeed. The Messiah says the day and hour no man can know; and this we affirm is certainly true—indeed we go further and say that even the particular year cannot with certainty be known; still, we may possibly with some assurance, approach within a few years, this side or beyond the true period. Here is no room for dogmatism; and modesty should in this matter reign supreme. But do you say the subject should not be approached at all? Then you contradict the Messiah, who commands us in positive terms to set our hearts upon it. "Take ye heed, watch, and pray; for ye know not when the time is"—"thoday nor hour"—the exact time. Who will now assert, that we should not touch the most sublime, and soul-absorbing theme? The Son of God declares that we must take heed, watch and pray; and this requires a lively and thorough examination. The Messiah says, "Now learn a parable of the figtree; when her branch is yet tender, and puts forth leaves, ye know that summer is near; so ye in like manner when ye shall see these things come to pass, know that it is nigh, even at the doors." What a beautiful and appropriate similitude! Do we wish to know, in a hard winter, how close at hand summer is? Observe the tender branch shooting out its leaves. Reader, do you see them? If so, how far distant is summer! Your answer is that you can tell nothing! Why tell nothing? Is this treating the Christ of God with that respect due to his paramount dignity he holds in the celestial states? But you reply, I will not "learn this parable," nor anything else on this subject. Ah, you are now understood—prejudice reigns! But, though we know not the day nor the hour when summer may be upon us, yet we may quite lawfully form a period sufficiently broad to satisfy the inquiring mind. If it is useless to observe this sign of the approach of summer, why advise us to do so? Now, a thrilling event is promised—that of the Messiah coming on the clouds of heaven, in order to institute a new age, state, or condition of things—the signs of the near approach of which, are quite minutely given by him as may be seen in Matthew, Mark, and Luke; and of these signs or tokens, the Lord impressively say, "So ye in like manner, when ye shall see these things come to pass"—what things but those tokens, signs, or preludes spoken of in this chapter under consideration? Now, as you look at the sign or thing showing summer near, so you should observe the signs, tokens, or things showing that the coming of the Son of man is near—how near! Reader, will you answer? Here it is; "know that it is nigh, even at the doors." Is not that pretty close at hand? A little too close we fear for some! Who will now say that it is improper to look for the time? He says, when you see the signs, it is even at the doors, which is indeed near at hand. Take another example. The Son of man coming in the clouds, resembles a man who, leaving his house, and taking a long journey gave authority to his servants, and also gave to every man his work. Of course, those servants had some encouragement or con-

ception as to the time of their Lord's return; although the exact period might be to them unknown. The Lord chose his special servants, the apostles, to whom he gave authority to manage his house, (church or kingdom), and point out to men and women their proper work. The Master has already been absent more than eighteen hundred years; and still we are commended to watch! How are we to watch? Just as in the parable, by observing the signs of the Master's return, and by doing his work; for, in the parable, the Master gave to every man his work to perform; it was therefore his Lord's work, not his own; so in this case, we should perform the work given us by his apostles, not the schemes of our own invention or those suggested by ideal views of expediency. The strong incentive to action, with those servants in the similitude, was their Lord's return: so with us; the great inspiring motive to constant, untiring service in heaven's cause ought to be the glorious, triumphant return of our long absent Messiah, whom we delight to honor, love and adore. Why, in the similitude, would their Lord return! Most certainly to see what the servants had been doing, also, to behold the present condition of his house. Had they become insolent, drunken, and riotous, injuring his building or defacing his premises, he would cast them out, and devote them to utter destruction. Well, how stands the matter with us to-day? If the Lord should come, how would he find us? faithful, devoted, pure, and true, or grasping, dishonest, drunken, riotous, filthy, and rebellious? Would he find us in the unity of the Spirit, or divided into parties each working after its own pattern? Are we gentle, peaceable, harmonious; abounding in deeds of benevolence to the suffering, or are we boisterous, covetous, treacherous, drunken, and revengeful? Oct. 20, 1883. AMOR.

OUR PLEA AND MISSION.

AN ADDRESS BY R. DUNGAN.

(Continued.)

I do not mean to say by this that we are wholly unlike all other religious people in the manner of our spiritual convictions. It would be unreasonable to suppose that we have none among us that trust in appearances and not in heart. Outside of our brotherhood, I have no doubt that a large majority of church members have made choice among the churches, not from doctrinal or practical preferences, but from other and less worthy considerations. Convenience, the circle of acquaintance, the popularity of the pastor, the wealth, influence, and respectability of the membership are, in the estimation of multiplied thousands, questions of greater spiritual import than those that would lead to any scriptural investigation of faith and conduct. And I have no reason to doubt that there are some among us who have no exalted ideas of our work. They are with us because they are with us! They look upon our effort about as they do upon the other movements of the times. They would gladly remove all the distinctive features, that we might sink down into the "sisterhood of churches." They would hew off the positiveness of divine law and tone down the gospel of the Son of God to suit the depraved tastes of an unregenerate age, that we might give "none offence" to the disobedient. But we are happy in the thought that the number is very limited. Such persons have yet to learn that it

is not our purpose merely to maintain the existence of a party in religion, but to return to the primitive order of things: to the appointments of Christ and the teaching of his apostles. And I want to repeat it now, with all the emphasis of which I am capable: If our work is not of God; if it is not to do that which Christ appointed, and that too, which was not being accomplished without us, then we are a sect in the full import of the term; heretics, the whole of us, and the sooner we disband the better. The Lord of hosts has never recognized but one law and one people at a time. If we are not that people, and governed by that law which he gave, then we are only perpetuating divisions, and the divine anathema is resting upon us. Whether we are serving the Lord or not by carrying forward his appointments, can be determined by a careful examination of the following questions: 1. What is the Church of Christ? 2. Did that organization, established by the authority of Christ through the ministry of the apostles, exist at the beginning of this century? 3. Are we the Church of Christ and are we doing the work for which it was established? 4. Is our continued existence a necessity? Before we can proceed in the investigation of these questions we must settle a few preliminary matters of importance. For the want of an understanding of these, the whole subject is generally misapprehended. 1. Is the Church of Christ a new organization, or is it only the Jewish Commonwealth reformed? Paul says it is a new man—church—Eph. 2: 14, 15. It was not yet in existence when the Saviour was upon the earth; far he said, "upon this rock I will build my church." Matt. 16: 18. He announced that it should be established by the apostles when the Holy Spirit should have come upon them. Luke 24: 46-49; Acts 1: 8. To this agree the words of the prophets. Isa. 2: 2, 3; Mich. 4: 1, 2. These predictions were fulfilled on the first pentecost after Christ rose from the dead. See Acts 2: 33; 11: 15. Thus the church began, not at Sinai, nor with John the Baptist, but at Jerusalem. 2. We must realize that it is Christ's Church. It does not belong to Moses, Elijah, or John the Baptist. Christ is the head of the church, Christ is his body. Eph. 1: 22, 23; Col. 1: 18. He purchased it with his own blood—Acts 20: 28—giving himself for it that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word. Eph. 5: 25, 26. 3. Christ is, and of divine right ought to be, the only ruler and law-giver in his church. Neither councils nor synods, traditions nor popish edicts, can have any voice in determining the law by which the sinner shall be saved or the saint governed. The gospel of Christ contains the only divine law in these respects, and neither saint nor angel is permitted to preach any other. Gal. 1: 6-10. (To be Continued.)

Do I REMEMBER.—Dear Brothers Law & Whitelaw.—Please find one Dollar inclosed. Kindly send me two numbers of the WORKER for the next year. I want one to give to some of my friends to read. Address, Stayner P. O. Ont. Yours in love, JONV DOWNER. Oct. 22nd [The above is a sample of letters received. Many more should do the same. You cannot make your friend a more useful present. L. & W.]

FAMILY PRAYERS.

We are far from thinking that the good old custom of having family prayers is being dropped from Christian households. It is a custom held in honor wherever there is real Christian life, and it is the one thing which, more than any other, knits together the loose threads of a home and unites its various members before God. The short religious service in which parents, children and friends daily join in praise and prayer, is at once an acknowledgment of dependence on the heavenly Father and a renewal of consecration to his work in the world. The bible is read, the hymn is sung, the petition is offered, and unless all has been done as a mere formality and without hearty assent, those who have gathered at the family altar leave it helped, soothed, strengthened, and armoured, as they were not before they met there. The sick and the absent are remembered. The tempted and the tried are commended to God, and, as the Israelites in the desert were attended by the pillar and the cloud, so in life's wilderness the family who inquire of the Lord are constantly overshadowed by his presence and love. There are many reasons which are allowed to interfere with and thrust aside the privilege of family prayer in homes where father and mother mean to have it daily. Whatever comes in the way of a plain duty ought, however, to

be set aside. If there be any among our readers who recognize the need there is in their house to have a daily open worship of God, let them begin it at once. They must find the time, choose the place, and appoint the way. The actual time spent in worship may be a few minutes only. A brief service which cannot tire the youngest child, if held unvaryingly as the sun, in the morning when the day begins, and in the evening when its active labors close, is far more useful and edifying than a long one which fatigues attention. It is possible to have a daily worship which shall be earnest, vivifying, tender and reverential, and yet a weariness to nobody. Only let the one who conducts it mean to adore the Father the sweet obedience of the grateful child, and maintain the attitude of one who goes about earthly affairs with a soul looking beyond and above them to the rest that remaineth in heaven. It is not every one who is able to pray in the hearing of others with ease. The timid tongue falters, and the thoughts struggle in vain for utterance. But who is there who cannot read a psalm, or a chapter, or a cluster of verses, and kneeling, repeat in accents of tender trust a short prayer? When you think of it, that includes everything.—Christian at Work.

OBITUARY.—Died on the 27th ult., Daniel Laws, of Jordan Ho

belonged to the Baptist Church, was highly respected, and had many friends. He was sick some 7 months. His father losteekly the loss. Every thing was done that a father could do to prevent the sad event. A little child and a sorrowing wife are left. O. J. L. Jordan Oct. 15

VALUABLE PUBLICATION FOR SALE BY Law & Whitelaw, Publishers Christian Worker.

Table listing various publications for sale, including commentaries on Matthew and Mark, biographies of Elder John Smith, and various sermons and tracts.