

OBEDIENCE

By T. W. Murray

Henry Drummond calls obedience the organ of spiritual knowledge. It would seem more proper to say that it was the condition of spiritual knowledge, as obedience is not an organ of anything, but rather a means of bringing into action the spiritual faculties. To obey is to know. The highest authority emphasized the same thought when He said, "He that doeth the will of my father shall know the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself."

Obedience is somewhat analogous to concentration in the mental realm. The power of concentration is characteristic of the genius—the power to exclude all else but the object being investigated. It is said of Dante, the Italian poet, that with others he stood on a street-corner in the City of Rome, waiting for a circus procession which was to pass that way. In the meantime he picked up a book from a stand which a vender of books had for sale, and began to peruse its contents. He became oblivious to all else. The circus passed with its elephants, camels, a bunch of clowns with their nonsensical jests, the multitude of horses, the many caravans containing exposed animals, and Dante was the only one in the crowd on the street who was ignorant of its passing. His mind was concentrated elsewhere. So obedience to God adjusts the soul to unsearchable riches of which the world knows practically nothing. As it is written, "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them which love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit."

We read of one amid an antagonistic council whose face was as the face of an angel. He testified, "I see heaven opened, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God;" and when his mind reverted again to the earth it was to pray for those by whom he was being stoned.

How often has the mind been exercised almost to the point of exhaustion on a difficult proposition in algebra, geometry, trigonometry or some other subject, when unexpectedly, in a moment, the solution burst in on you as clear as light, and you wonder you did not see it before. We usually call it a discovery. The brilliant Joseph Parker, who was not only brilliant but saintly, would call it a revelation. But in things which pertain to the divine, it is written, "Ye shall seek me, and ye shall find me in the day that thou searchest for me with all thine heart."

Nothing can be substituted for obedience. It is the obedience of faith of which we speak. It begins in the spirit, continues in the spirit, ends in the spirit. It always brings results. It could not be otherwise, unless heaven's resources failed. If not always what we expect, it will be somewhat better, and will glorify God and bring the highest good to the individual. The thorn in the flesh may not always be removed, but its continuance will be a blessing in disguise. It is only in the attitude of obedience that we are capable of hearing the still small voice in the soul. Otherwise we may be conscious of unheeded checks, rebukes, warnings, threatenings. But faith assimilates truth, and it brings peace, purity, strength, etc., to the hearer and expresses itself in conduct.

The obedience of faith always implies the divine supply, otherwise the command would

be unreasonable, as man is helpless. It is toward evening. The vast multitude had been with Christ all day, being instructed in the things of God, and being healed of their diseases. To the suggestion of the disciples to send them away that they might purchase victuals for themselves in the villages, Jesus replied, "They need not depart. Give ye them to eat." And the result was that many more than five thousand people were abundantly fed from the donation to Christ of a boy's lunch, five barley loaves and two small fishes.

To a blind man He said, "Go wash in the pool of Siloam. He went and washed, and came seeing." To the man with the withered arm He commanded, "Stretch forth thine hand. And, lo, it was restored whole as the other." To the ten lepers, "Go show yourselves unto the priests. * * * And it came to pass, that as they went they were cleansed." Peter, clothed with divine authority, to the beggar at the beautiful gate said, "Such as I have I give unto thee. In the name of Jesus of Nazareth, rise up and walk." And he did, and much more. To the man at the pool who had an infirmity thirty and eight years, Jesus said, "Arise, take up thy bed and walk." And he did. The word of Jesus was more efficacious than the water of the pool at Bethesda, or any other water. Elisha, the servant of the most High, to Naaman, the leper, said, "Go wash in Jordan seven times, and thy flesh shall come again, and thou shalt be clean." The magnate finally humbled himself, did as he was instructed, and health followed. But examples are multitudinous.

"If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin." Which is but another way of saying, If we obey Him these results will follow.—Free Methodist.

THE QUESTION OF QUESTIONS

By Rev. Roy W. Howell

One of the most striking analogies descriptive of the nature of sin is that of leprosy. Of all human diseases it is the most typical, being the most loathsome and unclean, and curable only by the power of God. It is contagious, ever tending to increase, and is hereditary, as it may be transmitted from parent to offspring. Thomson (in "The Land and the Book") says, "New-born babes of leprous parents are often as pretty and healthy in appearance as any; but by and by its presence and workings become visible in some of the signs described in the thirteenth chapter of Leviticus." As to this point, we can not better express the thought than to quote from that writer of sacred hymns, Isaac Watts:

"Lord, we are vile, conceived in sin,
And born unholy and unclean;
Sprung from the man whose guilty fall
Corrupts his race, and taints us all.

"Soon as we draw our infant breath
The seeds of sin grow up for death;
Thy law demands a perfect heart,
But we're defiled in every part."

Leprosy, to become outwardly manifest, must first be in the bloodstream (life) of the individual; thus with sin. The act is but an external appearance of the corruption within; therefore, if we would eliminate the scabs and blotches in our lives, we must get at the seat of the disease. Salves and ointments will not bring lasting relief. It requires the supernat-

ural, miracle-working power of God. This is what Charles Wesley had in mind when he sang:

"Jesus, a word, a look from Thee
Can turn my heart and make it clean;
Purge out the inbred leprosy,
And save me from my bosom sin."

Sin is real. Its appearance brings many questions and problems. Some of these are so prominent that we have given them special attention, such as the tobacco question, the liquor question, the amusement question, the dress question, the question of Sabbath desecration, etc. But the question of questions, the problem of problems, is that of carnality—the inherent depravity of the human heart. How many homes, churches, communities and even nations have gone down under its devastating influence! Reform is good so far as it goes, in that it diminishes the danger of infection through contact with sin. Likewise with suppression of the carnal nature, for the same reason. But God has provided a better remedy.

Too many there are who live half-defeated lives because they do not open their hearts to the mighty, cleansing, purifying power of the Holy Ghost, with the result that the "bent to sinning" and "proneness to wander" is still there, bringing questionings until their minds are divided as to the line of duty for them. Why live with a soul condition which makes us exposed to sin with its vile contagion when full salvation has been provided by the Christ of Calvary and its appropriation made possible by the Holy Spirit of Pentecost.

The Christ who said to the leper, "I will; be thou clean," will say the same today, providing we come in a like spirit of humility, confessing our uncleanness in simple faith, pleading His mercy as did that needy one when he prayed the Great Physician, "If thou wilt, thou canst make me clean."—Free Methodist.

A TIMELY WARNING

In days of old it was a common custom to inscribe on the face of clocks made by the old masters of hand craft an appropriate sentiment. Having completed his work on one occasion one of these old craftsmen of Europe was waiting for the town officers to furnish the motto, but they put him off and on one of these occasions said to him, "Mind your business." Thinking perhaps this was their selection, or at least that it would serve the purpose the clock appeared in due time with this reminder inscribed on the dial, "Mind your business." Most of us need a frequent spurring on to renewed diligence in the performing of life's duties, especially the duties that demand perseverance. This is often true of the servants of God, pastors and Christian workers. We are so prone to let down, to take things easy and to let priceless opportunities slip by us unheeded. May God help us to "Mind this business" of serving the Lord while we have day and its light!—Wesleyan Methodist.

Hasten in the morning so that by evening thy work for the day be accomplished.

Faith is to believe, on the word of God, what we do not see, and its reward is to see and enjoy what we believe.—Augustine.

Man is to live forever, and it is his business here to shape and fashion himself into a life that is fit for eternity.—Religious Telescope.