

THE LORD REIGNETH

Theodore L. Cuyler

What a magnificent outburst of loyalty opens the ninety-third psalm! "The Lord reigneth. He is clothed with majesty; the Lord is clothed with strength, wherewith He hath girded Himself. Thy throne is established of old: Thou art from everlasting." Here we have the empire of love, the royal robe, the girdle of omnipotence, and the immovable throne. The psalmist would seem to have been thinking of the problems of life, its dark things and its mysteries. So many things seemed irreconcilable with the Divine goodness that he admits that "clouds and darkness are round about Him." But this truth flashes out through the clouds,—the Lord reigns. That is enough. He does not try to pry into the council-chamber. He cannot get behind the cloud. But love reigns there, and justice and righteousness are the foundations of that throne.

Not one of us has any trouble in accepting this doctrine of God's sovereignty as long as things go to our liking. We are perfectly satisfied to let God have His way as long as He does not cross us. We all believe in His administration, and are ready (as Dr. Finney use to say) to "vote God in as our governor" as long as business thrives and crops are plentiful and every one around our own table is hearty and happy. As long as His mercies are poured out in wine, we drink of them gladly; but as soon as the same cup begins to taste of wormwood, we push it away in disgust, or cry out piteously, "Let this cup pass from me." Any other cup we could have swallowed, but not this one. If God had only tried us with the loss of our property and spared us our health, we could have borne it; or if He had sent the sickness at some other time, we would not murmur so; or if His blow had struck us somewhere else but in our very tenderest spot, we should not cry out so bitterly. In short, if God had only consulted us as to the medicine we should take and as to the branch His pruning-knife should lop off, we would have been perfectly submissive. Every pastor encounters this kind of faith in God's sovereignty wherever he goes. If the Lord governed so as to please everybody, there would not be a rebel in all His universe.

As some of our readers may just now be smarting under God's strokes of discipline or letting their hearts fester into rebellion, let us whisper a few truths into their ears. The first is that our Heavenly Father never afflicts one of His children but for a wise purpose. He never strikes at random or deals one blow in cruelty. Sometimes His chastisements are punitive. Christians deserve punishment as truly as ungodly blasphemers do when they violate God's laws. A lazy Christian will come to want as soon as a lazy profligate. If as holy a man as Dr. Payson breaks some of God's sanitary regulations by overworking his nervous system and allowing himself no recreations, he must expect shattered nerves and early paralysis. One of the excellences of God's government is that He never alters His laws to suit special cases. They are unchangeable. And I have heard of a great many "mysterious providences" that had in them no mystery at all. They were simply righteous retributions. There is no mystery when a bad manager, even though he be a Christian, fails in business, or when a Christian merchant that has robbed himself of indispensable rest is stricken with

softening of the brain. A thousand so-called "providences" might have been prevented by the exercise of a little common sense and conscience. If we break God's commandments, we must pay the penalty.

Sometimes our Sovereign sends afflictions that are preventive. They save us from something worse. As the headache and the self-loathing that follow a first bottle are intended to warn us against touching another, so God often puts a chastisement at the entrance to a path of danger. There is even a conserving influence in some severe trials, just as the early snows that are now falling on our northern hills will conserve the winter wheat. I can recall more than one chilling providence which came in to keep me from losing what I could not afford to spare.

Still other afflictions are sent to purify character. God sits as a refiner beside His furnace. He heats it until the metal melts and the dross runs away. He keepeth His silver in the furnace until He can see His own face reflected in the clear metal of the heart as in a mirror. Then the affliction has done its work. God has made the vessel "unto His own honor." There is such a wretched amount of selfwill and pride and covetousness and unbelief even in undoubted Christians, that they require the fining-pot very often. Many a man and woman has been the worse for want of this kind of discipline.

It is a wholesome process to be "taken down" occasionally. The grass in every lawn requires to be taken down by a mower. The oftener it is mowed the richer and the thicker is the growth. The lawn never looks so beautiful as after the keen-edged cutter has gone over it. I have observed that some Christians in my charge have never appeared so attractive in their humility and heavenly-mindedness as when God's mowing-machine has been passed over them. The great Apostle's career, as I read it in the masterly consecutive narrative of Canon Farrar, showed in almost every page the effects of the scythe. There was prodigious growth from the roots. Yet no man exalted God's sovereignty more heartily than Paul. He gloried even in the tribulations which God permitted him to suffer, knowing that tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience, and experience hope. This too he knew, that in all this process the love of God was shed abroad in his heart by the Holy Ghost given unto him.

We have discussed in this short paper just one aspect of God's government, namely, His personal rule of our own personal lives and lot. His sovereignty on the grander scale of the natural world and of His vast spiritual kingdom we leave out of sight. It is a blessed thought that the Lord reigneth over little short-lived me as truly as over the whole Church or the whole universe. He numbereth the hairs of my head, and ordereth my steps. Let it be my daily and devoutest aim to lay the plan of my life on God's plan. If His immovable laws push me back and hedge me in from sin, then all the better. If His sharp knife prunes me, then I am only the more sure that He loves me. Afflictions are like the cactus plant of His making, very unsightly and full of thorns, but they bear marvellous flowers in their time. God's government is the sodidest ground of my confidence and joy. It underlies all my theology, and is the very rock-bed on which I rest my salvation. While Jehovah reigns let me rejoice to obey Him. To oppose Him is to invite His retributions, and that

means—Hell! To submit to Him is to win His favor and to secure His love, and that means—Heaven! The nearer we get to the throne the more loudly shall we sing, "The Lord God omnipotent reigneth!"

THE JUDGMENTS OF JUDE

J. B. Chapman

The little Book of Jude comes just before the Great Judgment book—the Book of Revelation, and it puts into forceful prose the same truths that Revelation gives in apocalyptic form. Jude warns of coming judgment, John describes these judgments as they actually appear to him in panorama. With Jude the gulf that separates sinners from saints is still passable. With John in Revelation the gulf is fixed, so that "He that is holy let him be holy still; and he that is filthy, let him be filthy still."

Jude recalls the judgments God sent upon Israel for unbelief, upon the fallen angels for disobedience, and upon the corrupt Sodomites for all their ungodliness that he may show what impenitent sinners may expect in the age-end period of correction and retribution yet ahead. Depraved teachers of false doctrines come in for odious description, and upon them stinging woe is pronounced.

Jude gives Enoch and the apostles of the Lord as examples of judgment prophets who have preceded him. Enoch came to foretell the doom of the ungodly. The apostles condemned the mockers whose appearance was harbinger of the last days and the final collapse. Wicked, impenitent sinners and conniving, bestial, selfish teachers of heretical doctrines are warned with all solemnity and condemned without mitigation.

God's true people are solemnly exhorted to withdraw so fully from every evil deed and unholy thought as to hate even the garments that have been spotted by the leprosy of sin (the equivalent of Paul's "Abstain from all appearance of evil"), hoping for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life. Administrators of discipline are asked to have compassion on the penitent, and to seek to save souls, even those who are already scorched by the close approaching fires of a hopeless hell. Mercy for those whose feet have well-nigh slipped!

Our fathers used to turn from the reading of Jude to pray, "O Lord, show the lost how even now they hang suspended by the brittle and slender thread of life over a bottomless pit that burns with fire and brimstone. And grant unto us also, that we may be more serious than we have ever been in fleeing from the wrath to come." And may that prayer be answered for our generation too.

OBITUARY

Mrs. Alex Hayes

Our Church at Head of Millstream, N. B., and the denomination has lost one of its fine and faithful members in the sudden passing of **Mrs. Alex Hayes**, who died at Kings County Memorial Hospital June 20th, following a serious operation. A report of the funeral will appear in a later issue of The Highway.

We report the passing of **Harry W. McNally**, of East Saint John, N. B., on May 31st. Funeral services were conducted by Rev. P. H. Greene at Brennan's Funeral Home at Saint John on June 2nd. To his daughter and two sons, as well as other relatives, we extend our sympathy.