

Sabbath School Department.

[From the Christian Helper.]

International Bible Lessons.

Lesson XII. March 23.

THE ALL-SEEING GOD.

Psalm 139: 1-12.

GOLDEN TEXT.—Thou God seest me.—Gen. 16: 13.

Exposition.

V. 1. O God, thou hast searched me and known me. Under the clear and ceaseless scrutiny of His eye, everything in us is perfectly seen and known.

V. 2. Down-sitting . . . up-rising. Whether at rest or in motion; in every state, every posture, we are not forgotten, but God still observes us.

V. 3. Compassion, or, winnowest, that is, distinguished most exactly, separating, in the judgment of my actions, right from wrong, most accurately.

V. 4. Not a word. Thoughts, deeds, words all are known to God. Could we always remember the listening ear into which enters our every word, we would, perhaps, not utter so many rash, uncharitable, or foolish words.

V. 5. Be not afraid. "enclosed" or "shut me in, so that whichever way I turn, whether this or that, I can only go where and so far as Thou dost permit."

V. 6. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me. This is the language of admiring awe, not of fear. The psalmist is lost in rapturous wonder in contemplating the omni-science of God.

V. 7. Whither shall I go. Not only does the eye of God penetrate all things, but all things are forever in His presence. The psalmist is not seeking a place of escape.

V. 8. Hell, that is, the grave, sheol. The idea is that of antithesis to heaven in the matter of locality—heaven, in the heights above; hell, sheol, in the bowels of the earth.

V. 9. The wings of the morning. Could I travel with the swiftness of light, and fly farther than the limits of the habitable earth, the Creator of light would meet me wheresoever my journey might end.

V. 10. Thy hand lead me. The psalmist derives comfort, not dread, from the thought of God's continual presence with him.

V. 11. Darkness shall cover me. The darkness of night hides many things from the eye of man. When it descends like a thick pall over the land, it is welcomed by many a one, whose deeds are more fit to be covered up and forgotten, than to be brought out in the daylight.

in the book of God's remembrance clearly and luminously. And when darkness descends on the earth, many a timorous child lies in fear, as though isolated from all who could help or protect.

V. 12. Both alike. God has created the light. His omniscience is independent of it. He does not require the sun to shine as a torch to show Him His path.

Remarks.

1. To the Christian the omniscience of God is a source of comfort and delight. If it were possible for the Christian to wander into a place, where the loving and protecting eye of God could not follow, he would find that a dark and dreadful place.

2. We like to preserve outward decorum and have a good reputation with our friends and neighbours; but, what the Christian should desire, is that purity of heart, that integrity of character, which will please his Master.

3. The presence of this Great Witness of all things adds solemnity to the merest trifles of life. It exalts all our deeds above the realm of littleness to consider that One is beside us, who is grieved or pleased, according to the spirit in which we do our duties.

4. Let us cultivate the sense of God's presence. Let us try to maintain that relation to God which will make His presence a great joy and support to us. We shall not then feel that He is an oppressive taskmaster always goading us on to distasteful duty.

The Governor in the Cell.

The following incident is related by Mr. Moody: "When Mr. Pollock was Governor of Pennsylvania, there was a man whose death-warrant he had signed. He felt that he could not let him die, being a Christian man himself, without going down to tell him of a Saviour's love."

"Sinner, I bring you good news to-night. There is one greater than any Governor. He is here to-night, and he is here for a purpose. He is here to save sinners. He is here to pardon you; He does not want you to perish and be lost. He came to give you a pardon. Do you want a pardon? Take it. It is for every one."

Bishop Simpson in his recent Yale lecture said: "Last summer I passed over the great mountains and plains which lie between us and the Pacific Ocean. I frequently watched the shepherds, with their immense flocks, and marked their constant diligence and care. I saw the herders, with their numerous herds of cattle, and was surprised to observe the constant vigilance which they exercised. The herder was always in the saddle, his eyes were continually on the cattle. If one wandered toward a precipice or became separated from the herd, it was immediately followed and brought back in safety."

A Methodist minister in the midst of a Union meeting during the Week of Prayer, where ministers and people of all denominations were present said: "I hear much about getting up a revival, and our people want to set about it. I do not believe in it at all. God is a sovereign. His Spirit must revive us. It must come down from Him who is the giver of all good. We must get the revival down, not up, and that is the feeling with which we must approach the subject when we are pleading with a sovereign God, who has the issues of time and eternity in His hands."

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