

the temple. That of the Double Gate, for example, is 41 feet or 28 cubits, while the original width of the interior passages was twice 12 cubits. The same exact equation is seen in the single passage at Barclay's Gate, which is 19 feet or 13 cubits in width. The gate which led to the Valley of Hinnom we have seen to be exactly 6 cubits in width. It is surely unnecessary to multiply instances in proof of the contention that

*the builder's cubit of six handbreadths, from the later monarchy to the second century A.D., measured 17.6 inches, neither less nor more.* That this was the cubit of the third temple, and, by inference, of its predecessors, will be evident as our inquiry advances. The first of the problems with which we set out to deal has thus been solved.

(To be continued.)

## The Great Text Commentary.

### THE GREAT TEXTS OF DEUTERONOMY.

#### DEUTERONOMY XXIX. 29.

'The secret things belong unto the Lord our God: but the things that are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law.'

#### EXPOSITION.

'The secret things belong unto the Lord our God.'—The immediate connexion of these words with the context is not clear. Rashi connects the 'secret things' with the 'imagination of the evil heart of the secret idolater' of v. 18. His note runs thus: 'It is not that I shall punish you for those secrets; they belong to the Lord our God, and He will exact them from the individual sinner; but the things that are *disclosed* belong to us and to our children, to 'put away the evil from the midst of us.' And if judgment is not executed among them, the many will be punished. But it is impossible not to feel that there is more behind the words of this passage than this. May not this be one of the occasions concerning which the apostle says of the prophets, that they 'searched *what or what manner of time* the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify'? All those curses were to come upon Israel; and yet, after that, there was still a covenant with them, embracing every generation to the world's end. Must not Moses have longed to know what would befall his people in the latter days? and if we ourselves, 'upon whom the ends of the world are come,' do not yet see the future of Israel distinctly, are not the words appropriate still? To the very end, what better way is there than this? 'Lord, I have hoped for Thy salvation, and done Thy commandments.'—WALLER.

'But the things that are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever.'—Probably this verse is a general reflexion added by Moses by way of admonition to his previous discourse. The scribes may have had this in their mind when they distinguished the words, *unto us and to our children*, by placing over them extraordinary points, in order to emphasize them, though by many this is regarded as a mere critical notation, indicating a various reading.—ALEXANDER.

'That we may do all the words of this law.'—The hidden future is Yahweh's; the known past, with its lesson of obedience to the law, is ours. Revelation is here regarded as historical rather than canonical.—ROBINSON.

#### THE SERMON.

##### 'On Duty' in the Dark.

By the Rev. T. A. Jefferies, Huddersfield.

The soldier's position when on duty at night is not an enviable one. He cannot see the movements of the enemy, and sometimes his comrades are equally out of sight. Perhaps he is sentry, and through the darkness must pace a certain track and guard that way. Even in broad daylight his position is often little better; he knows nothing of the general's plans, and must frequently be tempted to think he is rushing to death for no purpose. Yet he has no alternative. Orders must be obeyed. The secret things belong unto the general, but to the soldiers belong the words of command that they may accomplish the leader's design. And so it is in life. We are often burdened with the sense of the darkness and mystery around us, but to every man is given the commandment of God. The explanation is with Him, and with us the call to obey. We are in the dark, but something is required of us. Let us not forget that we are on duty.

I. There is the mystery of existence, the riddle of the universe. Why were we made so ignorant of nature and ourselves? Look, for instance, at this age-long quarrel over miracles. It would never have been but for our ignorance of nature. Did we know nature, did we know but Tennyson's 'flower in the crannied wall,' that controversy

would be at an end. But while Nature has given up many of her secrets, what she tells us does not go to the roots of things. She keeps the great secret to herself. And so the battles of the theologian, philosopher, and scientist roll on; and the stars and seasons, sense and soul hang round us, provoking our curiosity and challenging our powers, like clouds of mist through which we vainly seek to peer. Perhaps this effect is also the final cause. Perhaps God has put us into this atmosphere of mystery that our minds may be stirred to effort. Certainly in actual life the mystery of existence is a huge storehouse from which the earnest and patient are continually bringing forth wonders that astonish and delight. The secret things remain with God, but enough is revealed to sustain hope and effort.

II. Then there is the mystery of the Kingdom. This wondrous gospel, so simple in its saving power,—what questions confront us when we try to fathom it! What is man? What is sin? How came sin into God's world? What is the meaning of this great fact of atonement? Is God's Kingdom growing, and will it win? What is the destiny of humanity and of the universal life? These are some of the mysteries we keep trying to solve, but 'our eyes see dimly.' Here also some things have been revealed, but only so as to put the question further back. Christ told us plainly, for example, that the Kingdom will win its way and triumph. But *how* is still a mystery. We believe it, but because we believe Him, not because we see.

And yet in the midst of these mysteries of the Kingdom the voice of the King is neither faint nor uncertain. 'It is not for you to know times or seasons,' He cries; 'but ye shall receive power when the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be my witnesses both in Jerusalem . . . and unto the uttermost parts of the earth.' We are in the dark, but we are on duty. It is hard to understand why we should have selfish desires and base tendencies, but, having them, the duty of conquering them is obvious. We cannot see why wrongs should exist, but the call to right them admits no question. God has revealed enough to make the path of His servants plain and to inspire them with enthusiasm. For the rest we must wait. We walk by faith. Great victories await the men who will go forward, as they awaited Joshua and the Israelites. If we halt till the cloud lifts we shall stand still for ever. Had Columbus'

sailors prevailed when their fears prompted them to go back, Columbus would have been unknown to history, and Spain could scarcely have reached the fulness of her power. But Columbus kept them at their posts, and presently, out of the mystery of the Western ocean, arose the New World. Let us keep at our posts, brethren. The ocean of the future may seem nothing but a weary waste of seething waters, and yet the Commander of this gospel ship is more sure of finding a new world than was Columbus.

We shall have to face seasons, perhaps, when the darkness will deepen yet more, but still duty lies before us. Things were dark in England while Cromwell waited for his first Parliament to do something. All over the country royalists were plotting, and a thousand blades were ready to take his life. How much easier for him to have left it to them, and slipped away into privacy! But 'I brought not myself into this position,' he says, and 'the wilful throwing away of this Government, such as it is, is what I can sooner be willing to be rolled into my grave and buried with infamy, than I can consent unto!' True soldier of the Kingdom this, doing his duty in times of great darkness, faithful to the few things revealed to him.

III. Then, deepest of all while it touches us, there is the mystery of personal experience: the broken hopes, the dark sorrows, the blinding bereavements,—all that makes up the tragedy of life. How dark the night becomes for some, and how great the temptation to abandon all effort and let things take their course! In such an hour Self-Pity is a Judas within our hearts, and our salvation is Duty. Well is it for us if we have learned obedience to the things God has revealed. To set our teeth firmly and fight bravely on, doing the duty that lies nearest, is the one clear course that remains. It is a hard course doubtless, but this much can be said for it: it leads with the kindly help of time to a recovery free from regrets. Mazzini wrote, in that noble letter to Jane Carlyle, 'It is only you who can teach yourself that, whatever the *present* may be, you must front it with dignity, with a clear perception of all your duties, with a due reverence to your immortal soul, with a religious faith in times yet to come, that are to dawn under the approach of other cloudless suns. . . . It is the feeling of those duties that saves me from the atheism of despair, and leads me through a life every day more barren and

burdensome, in a sort of calm, composed manner.' That is the path that leads from conflict to calm. Recovery comes in a measure to all who suffer, but not to all does it bring peace. That depends on whether or not they did their duty in the dark.

#### ILLUSTRATIONS.

IN optics, if you make a hole in the shutter at noon, or stick a square bit of blackness on the pane, and make the rays from the hole or around the square to pass through a prism; then we have, if we let them fall on whiteness and catch them right, those colours we all know and rejoice in.

The white light of heaven—*lumen siccum*—opens itself out as it were, tells its secret, and lies like a glorious border on the 'edge o' dark' (as imaginative Lancashire calls the twilight, as we Scotsmen call it 'the gloamin'), making the boundaries between light and darkness a border of flowers, made out by each. Is there not something to think of in 'the Father of Lights' thus beautifying the limits of His light and of His darkness, which to Him alone is light, so that here burns a sort of 'dim, religious light'—a sacred glory—where we may take off our shoes and rest and worship? Is not our light rounded with darkness, as our life is with a dream? and the greater the area of our light, of our truth, 'won from the vast and formless Infinite,' the ampler, too, is the outer ring—the iridescent edge lying upon the unknown—making a rainbow round the central throne of the Eternal. And is not the light of knowledge, after all, the more lovely, the more full of colour, and the more pleasant to the eye, when lying on and indicating what is beyond, and past all finding out, making glorious the skirts of 'the majesty of darkness'? It is at his rising out of, and his returning into, 'old night' that the sun is in the full flush of his plighted clouds, and swims in the depths of his 'daffodil sky,' making the outgoings of the evening and of the morning to rejoice before Him and us.—*Horæ Subsecivæ*, vol. iii. pp. 272, 273. Sent by Rev. J. WADDELL, Bangor.

**Limited hearing.**—Religious silences are simply the limitations of our present spiritual development. Science tells of a world of sound perpetually rolling round us, but which is at once above and beneath our hearing capacity. Our auditory nerve answers only to a certain range of vibration. So it is in our spiritual culture. When we speak of the awful silences of the unseen world it is only another way of saying that most of us are deaf. That elect souls here and there have heard a 'thus saith the Lord,' which when uttered has been called 'revelation,' means simply that our race produces from time to time a certain number of open ears. Religious silence is, after all, a relative term. When our spirits are attuned, the 'silence' changes into a still, small, but always recognizable, Divine voice.—*Problems of Living*, by J. BRIERLEY, B.A.

**Limited vision.**—The ideas which I have been dwelling on to-day were suggested to me by a story told me by my late friend Professor Haughton, not long before he died. He had had with Professor Huxley a friendship the warmth of which was not affected by their wide differences in religious

opinion. Huxley one day said to him, 'There are those who profess to believe what I consider to be false; but I do not regard their opinions, because I doubt the sincerity of some and the intellectual capacity of others; but I respect you, and I know how sincerely you believe what you hold so strongly, and should like very much to know how it is that you believe what I can't believe.' 'May I speak frankly?' said Haughton. 'Certainly,' said he. 'Then,' he said, 'I don't know how it is, except that you are colour-blind.' Huxley was much struck. He said, 'Well, it may be so. Of course, if I were colour-blind, I should not know it myself.'—*Cathedral and University Sermons*, by GEORGE SALMON, D.D., F.R.S.

THE secret things are withheld and others revealed in order 'that we may do all the words of this law' (cf. Jn 16<sup>22, 23</sup>). Progressive knowledge is the key to the mysteries of God and life. Froebel only followed God's methods with man when he introduced the kindergarten system. In order to teach man and enable him to profit by the teaching in practice, knowledge is revealed by stages. It takes decades, generations, centuries, millenniums for great truths to be gradually unfolded, and this is of necessity. Had Galileo proclaimed to his countrymen that words and pictures could be sent along wires and recorded a thousand miles away, what would have happened? His countrymen would have considered him insane and taken steps to prevent his working bodily harm to his fellows. Suppose Oliver Cromwell had claimed that it was possible to talk along a wire from London with a friend of his in Newcastle, what would have happened? Why, men would have regarded him as an idiot, and it would have been impossible for him to retain the Lord Protectorate. If God revealed the secret things before we were made ready to receive them, it would arrest our faithful obedience to God in things already revealed.

Man is educated through successive standards in the school of life. 'Do, and you shall know' (cf. Jn 7<sup>17</sup>) is the principle on which man passes from standard to standard. F. J. MILES.

BUT that which is revealed is ours—the Life  
For us made manifest in mortal flesh,  
That sometime dwelt among us, aye, and still,  
Unseen, except by faith, with us abides—  
A Righteousness by which we come to God—  
A Power to work in us the Father's will—  
A Guide to tread with us life's tangled maze—  
A Comforter to all who rest in Him.

E. H. DIVALL, *A Believer's Songs*.

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