



BLESSED IS THAT SERVANT, WHOM HIS LORD, WHEN HE COMETH, SHALL FIND SO DOING."

Present Truth.



Y what are men sanctified?

"Sanctify them *through thy truth* : thy word is truth." John 17 : 17.

2. Would God have all men come to the knowledge of the truth?

"Who will have *all men* to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth." 1 Tim. 2 : 4.

3. After receiving a knowledge of the truth, what must one do to be sanctified?

"God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and *belief of the truth*." 2 Thess. 2 : 13.

4. And what is necessary besides believing it?

"Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, *unto obedience*." 1 Peter 1 : 2.

5. What effect does obedience to the truth have?

"Seeing *ye have purified your souls* in obeying the truth through the Spirit." Verse 22.

6. How must worship be rendered to God, that it may be acceptable?

"God is a Spirit ; and they that worship him must worship him *in spirit and in truth*." John 4 : 24.

7. How should the truth ever be cherished?

"Buy the truth, and sell it not." Prov. 23 : 23. In other words, buy the truth at whatever cost, and sell it under no consideration whatever.

8. Is there in the Bible what may be called "present truth"?

"Wherefore I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though ye know them, and be *established in the present truth.*"
2 Peter 1 : 12.

NOTE. — There are some Bible truths that are applicable in all ages of the world, and are therefore *present* truth for every generation. There are, however, some truths in the Bible of a special character, and applicable only to one generation, to which the belief of them would be salvation. To believe the same truth a generation later, would not have the same effect. The case of the flood is to the point. It was a saving, present truth to Noah's generation. The following generation might believe in the flood, and yet be lost, simply because that particular point of faith had ceased to be a "present truth" in this special sense. It was a *past* truth, and had met its fulfillment. It would be just the same with reference to believing a certain point *before* it was due to the world. Had it been possible for the message proclaimed by John the Baptist to have been given by some one a generation before Christ appeared, it would have done the people no good to believe that message, simply because the time had not come for its fulfillment, and the people hearing it would never see it fulfilled. This is not so with the general truths of the Bible, — faith, repentance, etc. These are always in season, and of a saving nature at all times.

9. What was the special message to be proclaimed in Noah's day?

"And God said unto Noah, The end of all flesh is come before me ; for the earth is filled with violence through them ; and, behold, I will destroy them with the earth. *Make thee an ark of gopher wood.*" Gen. 6 : 13, 14.

10. Did Noah build the ark? and why?

"*By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark* to the saving of his house : by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith." Heb. 11 : 7.

11. How many were saved in the ark?

"The long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, *eight souls, were saved by water.*" 1 Peter 3 : 20. Probably many of those who were lost had the common faith of Noah and his family up to the time God gave him that special message. The difference then came, not because of their former belief, but because they did not, with those who were saved in the ark, accept the special, saving truth given for that time.

12. What special message was given to Jonah for the people of Nineveh?

"So Jonah arose, and went unto Nineveh, according to the word of the Lord. . . . And Jonah began to enter into the city a day's journey, and he cried, and said, Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown." Jonah 3 : 3, 4.

"This aged world is not far from its end," said Melancthon. Calvin bids Christians "not to hesitate, ardently desiring the day of Christ's coming as of all events most auspicious;" and declares that "the whole human family of the faithful will keep in view that day." "We must hunger after Christ, we must seek, contemplate," he says, "till the dawning of that great day, when our Lord will fully manifest the glory of his kingdom."

"Has not our Lord Jesus carried up our flesh into heaven?" said Knox, the Scotch reformer, "and shall he not return? We know that he shall return, and that with expedition." Ridley and Latimer, who laid down their lives for the truth, looked in faith for the Lord's coming. Ridley wrote: "The world without doubt—this I do believe, and therefore I say it—draws to an end. Let us with John, the servant of God, cry in our hearts unto our Saviour Christ, Come, Lord Jesus, come!"

"The thoughts of the coming of the Lord," said Baxter, "are most sweet and joyful to me. It is the work of faith and the character of his saints to love his appearing and to look for that blessed hope."

24. What will be the burden of that proclamation?

"Here is the patience of the saints; here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus." Rev. 14: 12.

25. How earnestly is this work to be prosecuted?

"And the lord said unto the servant, Go out into the highways and hedges, and *compel them to come in*, that my house may be filled." Luke 14: 23.

NOTE.—This work is now going on. In every part of the world the sound of the third angel's message is being heard, and measures are in progress everywhere to urge men to obey the truth. Many of these ambassadors feel as did the apostle: "Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we *persuade men*." 2 Cor. 5: 11.

YE servants of the Lord,
Each in his office wait;
Observant of his heavenly word,
And watchful at his gate.

Let all your lamps be bright,
And trim the golden flame;
Gird up your loins as in his sight;
His coming thus proclaim.

O, happy servant he,
In such a posture found!
He shall his Lord with rapture see,
And be with honor crowned.

PHILIP DODDRIDGE.



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JOHN THE BAPTIST PREACHING.

13. What saved the people from the predicted overthrow?

"So the people of Nineveh believed God, and proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them even to the least of them." "And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God repented of the evil that he had said that he would do unto them; and he did it not." Verses 5, 10.

14. What was the special mission of John the Baptist?

"There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe." John 1:6, 7.

15. What answer did he return to those who asked him about his mission?

"He said, I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Esaias." Verse 23.

16. John's baptism was something new and startling to his generation. What did those do for themselves who rejected his doctrine?

"But the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of God against themselves, being not baptized of him." Luke 7:30.

17. And what did those do who were baptized of John?

"And all the people that heard him, and the publicans, justified God, being baptized with the baptism of John." Verse 29. That is, they honored or glorified God by the step they took, which showed their faith in his truth.

18. Did the reputed people of God receive Christ when he came?

"He came unto his own, and his own received him not." John 1:11.

19. What reason did they give for not doing so?

"We know that God spake unto Moses: as for this fellow, we know not from whence he is." John 9:29.

NOTE.—That was the trouble,—they had no faith in anything new. They knew that God spoke by Moses: it required no faith to believe that, and they incurred no risk by accepting Moses, for everything had demonstrated that he was sent of God. All could see that; but here was one who, although he had come in fulfillment of the prophecies as their long-looked-for Messiah, yet there was a risk in accepting him because time had not worked out to a demonstration the truthfulness of his claims. In short, it required too much faith, as against their desire to walk by sight, to accept Christ, and so he was rejected. These people, however, believed in the flood that had saved Noah. They believed in Elijah and all the prophets; but when it came to this special truth for their time, they failed. It may be the same with the present generation concerning the second advent. They may cling to old theories, because they think these have not been questioned, and reject the truths pertaining to the coming of the Master.

20. What did the people say when Christ referred to how their fathers slew the prophets?

"If we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets." Matt. 23:30. While they professed to regret the action of their fathers in slaying the prophets for telling them new truths, they soon filled up the measure of their iniquity by putting to death the Son of God. This showed that they would have done the same as their fathers had they lived in their day. The Lord save this generation from regretting the work of the Jews in crucifying Christ, and then by unrighteous acts against his truth for this time, showing themselves worthy of being their successors.

21. What was the result of the Jews' not accepting Christ?

"And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it, saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes." Luke 19:41, 42.

22. Is there to be a special message and work for the last generation?

"Therefore be ye also ready; for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh. Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season?" Matt. 24:44, 45.

NOTE.—In view of the Lord's coming, a message will go forth, bearing "meat in due season" to the people. This must be the warning of the Lord's coming, and the preparation necessary to meet him. And because such a message was not always preached, is no evidence that it is not now to be proclaimed. Pastor John Robinson, in his farewell address to the Pilgrim Fathers on their departure from Holland for America, said: "The Lord knoweth whether I shall ever see your faces more; but whether the Lord hath appointed that or not, I charge you before God and his blessed angels to follow me no farther than I have followed Christ. If God should reveal anything to you by any other instrument of his, be as ready to receive it as you ever were to receive any truth by my ministry; for I am very confident that the Lord hath more truth and light yet to break forth out of his holy word. For my part, I cannot sufficiently bewail the condition of the reformed churches, who are come to a period in religion, and will go no farther than the instruments of their reformation. The Lutherans cannot be drawn to go any farther than what Luther saw; and the Calvinists, you see, stick fast where they were left by that great man of God, who yet saw not all things. This is a misery much to be lamented; for though they were burning and shining lights in their time, yet they penetrated not into the whole counsel of God, but were they now living, would be as willing to embrace further light as that which they first received."

23. What is pronounced upon those who are found doing such work?

"Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing." Verse 46.

NOTES.—Luther declared: "I persuade myself verily, that the day of judgment will not be absent full three hundred years. God will not, can not, suffer this wicked world much longer. The great day is drawing near, in which the kingdom of abominations shall be overthrown."