

PAUL STEPHANAS

Mechanic and Teacher
A Twentieth Century
Disciple of Christ

The Narrative Of
His Experiences in
An American Village

BY

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*"At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee,
O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast
hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast
revealed them unto babes . . ."* (Matt. II, 25-26).

PREACHING THE TRUTH

THE EXPERIENCES OF A DISCIPLE OF CHRIST IN THE 20th CENTURY

THE little town of Drearyville was aroused from its usual comatose state some time ago by the introduction of a new family into its quiet domain. This was an unusual occurrence in Drearyville where the only changes in population were such as were caused by the births and deaths in the community.

The new family consisted of Paul Stephanas, his wife, Mary, and their three children, two boys and a girl.

Mr. Stephanas had come to Drearyville to take the place of the village mechanic who had been removed by death. Little did the townspeople realise the effect that the introduction of this Stephanas family into their midst, was to have upon their social and religious equanimity.

For a few days the newcomers were busy getting "settled" in their new home and adjusting themselves to their new surroundings.

The position of village mechanic was one that brought Mr. Stephanas into daily contact with many of the villagers, who manifested that inquisitiveness which is the proverbial heritage of "country folk."

They found Paul Stephanas to be a sober-minded man with a definite aim in life and with deep-seated, clean-cut convictions on matters of morality and religion.

One of the first things noticed by those who frequented his shop was that he neither smoked nor chewed tobacco. This was so different from his predecessor, who had been an inveterate smoker. Some of them ventured to ask him why he did not use tobacco. The answer which they

received was based upon the exhortation of the Apostle in 2 Cor. 7, 1. It gave them much food for reflection and set them talking among themselves about the peculiarities of the new mechanic.

This kind of talk had a strange sound to these men whose sole ambition was to enjoy life, keep up a good appearance, and increase their possessions.

They were not accustomed to hearing talk about God, the Bible and the Commandments from the man who shod their horses and repaired their wagons and implements. They had always associated such things with an unpleasant hour which established custom compelled them to spend at the village Church on Sunday. But here was a man who associated it with his daily life, who used his religion to regulate his habits and actions and who intermingled talk about God, and Christ and the Bible with the ring of the anvil and the roar of the bellows. To say they were surprised is to put it mildly. Greater surprises, however, were in store for them, for they were about to learn that the Bible was not merely a text book from which the parson could obtain texts for sermons, but that it was a book that could enter into the lives and mould the characters of men in the humblest walks of life. They were also about to learn that Gospel preaching is not confined to the wearers of the surplice and ecclesiastical vestments.

One evening a short time after their removal to Drearyville Paul Stephanas sat by the open fireplace at home in a deeply thoughtful mood; the family "Bible reading" which was a daily

part of their life, had been finished. Mrs. Stephanas had just put the children to bed and resumed her place at the fireside to enjoy their usual evening chat, which could only be enjoyed when slumber had silenced the voices and stopped the pattering feet of the children.

When they were comfortably settled before the blazing log in the grate, Paul opened the conversation.

"You know, Mary," he said, "ever since we came here I have been trying to think of some good way to enlighten the people around us with a knowledge of the Truth. I feel my responsibility in this matter keenly, not only from the standpoint of duty, but also from a feeling of love for my fellow men."

"I feel the same way about it," interrupted Mary, "and I often think of that hymn which has one verse in which these words occur—

"'You who have the Truth received,
By God's grace to you revealed,
Should you dare to keep it back
You the rich reward may lack.'"

"That's the idea exactly," said Paul. "We dare not, nor do we desire to keep it back, and so I have arranged to have the school house on Saturday nights for a few weeks to preach the gospel. I suppose they will consider me presumptuous and conceited, but I cannot help that; the Master knows it is not so. I have arranged to have some cards printed inviting the people to come and hear. The cards will be here to-morrow morning. I shall be glad if you will take them to the school house and give them to the children as they leave school, asking them to take them home to their parents."

"All right, Paul," said Mary. "I will be only too glad to have a share in the good work."

Next morning the cards arrived, neatly printed and bearing an invitation to a lecture in the school house on Saturday night. They were worded as follows:—

**A GOOD TIME COMING
ON THE EARTH.**

LECTURE BY PAUL STEPHANAS
**At the School House on Saturday
Night.**

ADMISSION FREE. NO COLLECTION.
ALL WELCOME.

Mrs. Stephanas took the cards and went down to the school house in the afternoon and waited until the children freed from their tasks for the day, with gleeful voices came bounding out into the pleasant spring atmosphere. The cards were delivered with a kindly admonition to be sure and take them home to their parents.

The cards created that interest and curiosity which is usually manifested in a country town toward any new departure from established custom. It was indeed something new to the townspeople to be invited to a lecture to be delivered by an ordinary mechanic. The subject also puzzled them and became the subject of discussion at the village grocery, which was a kind of forum for the discussion of the village news or any question that arose in the town. This matter was discussed also at the mothers' meeting and the sewing circle, and needless to say, before the end of the week there was not a soul in the village who had not heard about the lecture to be given by the village blacksmith. Saturday night, therefore, found the little school house filled to its capacity. No doubt many, perhaps the great majority, were there out of mere curiosity. But what of that? Curiosity often leads to investigation; and investigation you know is "the right arm of knowledge."

When the time to commence had arrived Paul Stephanas stepped upon the platform and asked the audience to rise while he invoked a blessing from the Giver of good and acceptable gifts. He then opened his well-worn Bible and read the seventy-second Psalm, after which he proceeded to the delivery of his lecture.

It was characterized by simplicity of language and plainness of speech. Evidently the man was not there to show off any ability he might possess. He attempted no flights of oratory; he used words as he used his tools in the shop, for utility rather than for ornaments. He had a story to tell and he told it in a straightforward, simple manner, and yet there was a kindness of tone, a fervent earnestness and an evident humility that made the audience feel that they were being addressed by a friend rather than a teacher. The lecture in part was as follows:

PAUL STEPHANAS' LECTURE.

"Friends and neighbours: I am afraid you may think me conceited for presuming to stand before you to deliver a lecture. But I want you to know before I begin that I do not come before you as an orator to deliver a learned discourse, nor to pose as a teacher to instruct you. But I have called you together to invite you to a greater gathering which is to take place in the earth in the not far distant future, when the greatest personage the world has ever known is going to gather his friends together to a royal feast and is going to present them with gifts such as he alone can give. I have been invited to this feast and have been asked to pass the invitation along. The lecture, as we have called it, will simply be a brief description of what this great gathering is, where it is, when it is to take place, and who the Great Personage is who is to be at the head of it. The little cards by which you were invited here indicate broadly where it is to be. We have called it 'A good time coming on the earth.' And truly it will be the greatest time this old earth has ever experienced. Pardon me, friends, for asking the question, but are you aware that each one of you has in your homes a full description and a personal invitation to take part in this grand good time? Well, you have. You will find it in your family Bible,

"Friends and neighbours, please don't get offended, but you know just as well as I do that the Bible is read but very little and that it is regarded chiefly as a book of golden texts by which we are supposed to prepare ourselves for the time when we are supposed to leave this vale of tears for realms above, and that by and by God is going to make a great bonfire out of this old earth. But, oh, what a different story this dear old book tells for itself, if we will only listen to it. Now I am going to ask you to listen while it speaks to you, or rather, while God speaks to you through it.

"Away back 3,500 years ago, God began to tell us about this good time to come on the earth. On one occasion, when speaking to Moses, he said; 'As truly as I live all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord,' (Numbers 14: 21). Now you know that has never taken place as yet. If the earth was filled with God's glory we would not see around us the sorrow, the suffering, the crime and the sin that now exists. None of these things have yet come to pass; but as all God's promises are sure to be fulfilled we know that it is coming and that the whole earth will be filled with His glory. But let us get down to more practical things and see just what these things mean. In order to see just what this good time will mean we must look around us at the condition that now prevails in the earth. If you could go to one of our large cities you could see in one part of the city the magnificent residences, and all the pomp and grandeur of those who have all that the heart can desire; while in another part of the city you may see the hovels, the alleyways, the cellars and the attics which form the homes of poverty. And if you were to look into these places you would see the pinched and drawn faces of those who barely succeed in the struggle for existence. There is a great cry arising from the groaning millions who feed upon the

crumbs that fall from the bountiful tables of the rich. Do you think God hears this cry? Listen—'Go to now ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you. Your riches are corrupted and your garments are moth eaten. Your gold and silver is cankered; and the rust of them shall be a witness against you and shall eat your flesh as it were fire. Ye have heaped treasure together for the last days. Behold, the hire of the labourers who have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth; and the cries of them that reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth' (Jas. 5: 1-4). These are the words of God recorded in His book. He heareth the cry of the poor. How will He answer? Why that is part of the good time coming on the earth, the poor are to be taken care of, the oppressor is to cease. Turn with me to that Psalm read to you to-night (72nd Psalm). Let us read those opening verses. 'Give the King thy judgments, O God, and thy righteousness unto the King's son.' Now this King is the Great Personage who is to be Master of Ceremonies in that great day. Well, what will He do when God hands over His judgments to Him? Listen! 'He shall judge thy people with righteousness and thy poor with judgment.' Fourth verse—'He shall judge the poor of the people, he shall save the children of the needy and shall break in pieces the oppressor.' Verse twelve—'For He shall deliver the needy when he crieth, the poor also and him that hath no helper.'

"We can see then that the good time which is coming on the earth is to be characterized by a kindly regard for the poor and him that hath no helper on the part of the King, who will reign at that time.

"This is the time spoken of in the 113th Psalm where we read: 'He (God) raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth the needy out of the dunghill; that He may

set him with princes even the princes of His people.'

"Mary, the Mother of Jesus, speaking prophetically of this good time, says: 'He hath put down the mighty from their seats, and exalted them of low degree. He hath filled the hungry with good things; and the rich He hath sent empty away.'

"Now these statements and a good many more that might be brought forward all help to prove beyond the shadow of a doubt that there is a good time coming when the curse of oppression and abject poverty will be removed from the groaning masses of the poor; and when they will be able to turn their attention from the struggle for existence and lift their heads to the source and giver of all good and say with the Psalmist—'It is a good thing to give thanks unto the Lord, and to sing praises unto thy name, O most high; to show forth thy loving kindness in the morning, and thy faithfulness every night, for thou, Lord, hast made me glad through thy work: I will triumph in the works of thy hands.'

"One of the greatest pleasures to be enjoyed in that day of good things is the worship of God under circumstances that will make it a real pleasure because it will be free from the distractions and evil conditions that attend it at present. Zechariah tells us 'it shall come to pass that every one that is left of the nations which came against Jerusalem shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the Lord of Hosts and to keep the Feast of Tabernacles.' This means that the people of every nation on earth from Greenland's icy mountains to India's coral strand will make a yearly pilgrimage to Jerusalem to worship the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. Think what a glorious time this will be, when men shall leave their farms and daily employment and with their wives and families will go off together on a grand holiday and journey over land and seas to the city of the great King. The Prophet Ezekiel tells us of the most magnificent temple

the world has ever seen which is to be erected at Jerusalem to accommodate the worshippers who will flow unto it from every part of the world.

"In that day there will be only one religion because men will be taught by those whom God has appointed. The spirit that will animate the people throughout the world in that day is beautifully expressed by the Prophet Micah in his fourth chapter in the following words—'Many nations shall come, and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob, and He will teach us of his ways and we will walk in his paths, for the law shall go forth from Zion and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.' You see there is a note of real pleasure in this. It is not the expression of people compelled to do a thing against their will. They do not say 'O well, I suppose I will have to go.' O no! it is 'Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord.' It is a joyous, spontaneous suggestion arising from the hearts of people who anticipate the doing of it with sincere pleasure. Zechariah speaks of this same spirit among the people. He says, 'And the inhabitants of one city shall go to another saying, Let us go speedily to pray before the Lord'—Zech. 8 : 21.

"So you see this is to be a real good time; a time when men will no longer spend their lives in the headlong rush after money and pleasure or in the mere struggle for existence, but will take time to think of the Creator, and their sweetest pleasure will be found in His worship and service.

"Then there are conditions that exist to-day that will be abolished under that glorious order of things. For instance, war will be abolished; for we are told 'nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more'—Isa 2 : 4; Micah 4 : 3. Surely this will add to the peace and happiness of the earth's inhabitants and be conducive of that quietness and assurance which are to characterize that glorious day.

"Then again the tenure of mortal life will be lengthened, for we are told that 'There shall be no more thence an infant of days nor an old man that hath not filled his days, for the child shall die an hundred years old, but the sinner being an hundred years old shall be accursed'—Isa. 65 : 20. We can easily see how this can be, for the 'wise man' tells us that, as righteousness tendeth to life so he that pursueth evil pursueth it to his own death.—Prov. 11 : 19.

"Now concerning this good time that is coming the Prophet says—'When thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants will learn righteousness'—Isa. 26 : 9. When men walk in the paths of righteousness they will not only be likely to have a longer tenure of existence, but their lives will be sweeter and better and more enjoyable.

"Another feature of this good time that is coming on the earth is the fruitfulness of the earth. Now you who work on the farms know the labour there is to get your ground to yield a crop that will pay expenses, but in this great and blessed day that is coming we are told by the prophet—'Behold the days come saith the Lord that the ploughman will overtake the reaper and the treader of grapes him that soweth seed'—Amos 9 : 13. And we are told that the earth is to yield her increase and the curse which is now upon the ground causing thorns and thistles to grow everywhere is to be removed and instead of the thorn shall come up the fir tree and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle tree.—Ezekiel 34 : 27; Isa. 55 : 13. These things are spoken particularly concerning Palestine; but there seems every indication that similar conditions are to exist all over the earth.

"It is the anticipation of these things that causes the Psalmist to say—'O let the nations be glad and sing for joy.'—Psalm 67 : 4. 'Make a joyful noise unto God all ye lands; sing forth the honor of his name; make his

praise glorious.' . . . Psalm 66 : 1-2. But we cannot tell you at this time all that is to take place, nor the many blessings that are to fill the cup of the happy people who shall form the earth's population in that glorious day. We have said enough to show that the dark cloud of sin and sorrow that now hangs over our earth's groaning millions will be replaced one of these days by the sunshine of God's blessing which shall cause sorrow and sighing to flee away.

"These things of which we have been speaking to-night are not the greatest or most important things that are to characterize that happy time : they are in fact the least important ; but they are the things we first see, that first appeal to us when we look into the matter, and they are glorious facts that must be taken into consideration. These good things to which we have called your attention are mostly things that are to be enjoyed by the inhabitants of the earth who are alive at the time these things take place. But suppose we should die before these things come to pass ; what then ? Will we have no part in this glorious time that is coming on the earth ? Well, whether we will or not depends upon our present attitude toward God and His word. We have reserved this part of our subject for another discourse and, if the Lord wills, next Saturday night we will tell you how all these things are to be brought about and how you and I may so arrange our lives at the present that when that glorious time arrives we shall be among those who will share in its blessings."

The lecturer then invited those present to come again on the following Saturday and stated that he would be glad to talk with any who might be interested at the close of the meeting ; also that his home was open at any time to receive and talk with those who wished to look into these matters. The meeting was then closed with a few appropriate words of prayer. The lecturer hastened to the back of the room to shake hands and talk with

as many as possible before they left the room.

There was the usual variety of expression and lack of expression from those who made up the audience. There were those who watched for the opportunity to pass out while the lecturer was busy talking with some one. Then there was the inanimate handshake which was performed entirely by the lecturer. Who has not experienced this lifeless handshake ; in which the one whom you greet graciously consents to permit you to lift the dead weight of their arms up and down once or twice while they wait patiently until you are through.

There were, however, some real living beings present and their hearty vigorous handshake was accompanied by their expression of approval or disapproval as the case might be. On the whole the audience was at a loss to know how to express themselves appropriately because it was an entirely new experience to them.

There was one young man in the audience, however, who seemed to be more deeply interested than all the rest. His name was Timothy Berea ; he waited until all the others had gone and then, Bible in hand, he talked with Paul Stephanas until the extinguishing of the lights brought their interview to a close.

PAUL STEPHANAS' LECTURE.

Discussed at Timothy Berea's Home.

When Timothy Berea reached home he found his parents and his sister in the sitting room discussing the lecture. The arrival of Timothy temporarily interrupted the discussion. When he was seated Mrs. Berea re-opened the conversaton. Addressing Timothy, she said, "Well, what did you think of the lecture ?"

"Extremely interesting ; I was surprised at the man's knowledge of the Scriptures and his ability to turn to the passages to support his arguments," was the answer.

"I am quite ready to admit his familiarity with the Scriptures and I do not doubt but that he is sincere, but of course he is quite mistaken in some of his views," said Mrs. Berea.

"What views in particular do you think he is mistaken about?" asked Timothy.

"Well, of course you will recollect that he kept continually referring to the earth instead of heaven and to material things instead of those grand immortal abiding places beyond the present material habitations."

"That is quite true, mother, but were not his statements supported by Scripture testimony?"

"Well, yes, he quoted Scripture, but I cannot help but feel that it was wrongly applied. Even infidels sometimes quote the Scriptures to support their contentions. Why, my son, did you not notice that he attacked our dear old orthodox faith which has come down to us as a priceless heritage? In part of his lecture he referred to our belief that we will one day leave this vale of tears and ascend to realms above, and then he said that the Bible had an altogether different story to tell: in other words, that our most cherished belief of a home in heaven to which we look forward and which cheers us through life and comforts us at the hour of death,—according to this man is all imagination. I tell you it is nothing short of infidelity and it was all I could do to sit still and listen to it."

"Now, mother, don't get excited, I know just how you feel. I noticed these things you speak of too, and that is why I stayed behind to talk with him."

"Oh! then you have shown him his error, I am glad of that."

"Not so quick, mother; I am rather afraid I made a miserable failure of it. I wish you could have been there to help me, I feel sure it would have been quite different then. As it was, the man completely silenced me."

"Why, Timothy, How could he?"

"Oh, it was quite easy for him' mother, I never realized how little I knew about the Bible until I talked with that blacksmith preacher. Why, I could not seem to answer the simplest questions and could not seem to recall passages of Holy Writ to support our dear old faith. For instance, when I opened the discussion by asking him the question: 'If we do not go to realms above at death as you seemed to imply in your address, what becomes of our immortal souls? He answered, 'The Scriptures never speak of immortal souls or their transition to realms above and therefore I do not believe in either.' 'What!' I said, 'do you mean to imply that we have no immortal souls? Why, the Bible is full of it; where else could the belief come from?'

"Before answering me he placed a hand on each of my shoulders and looking me straight in the face, he said in a sympathetic tone: 'Friend, I feel sure we both want to be guided by the Word of God. If it is full of immortal-soulism, then you should be able to tell me where to find it. I have read the Bible through several times and have never been able to find it. However, if you will show me one passage of Scripture that speaks of an immortal soul, I am ready to bow to the Divine Word and stand corrected.'

"He waited a few moments for me to answer, and do you know, mother, I could not think of a single passage; I never was so much embarrassed in my life, and I was glad that the janitor turned out the lights at that moment. Mr. Stephanas saw my embarrassment and said, 'Well, never mind, we will talk it over quietly at some other time. I thereupon invited him to come up here on Wednesday night; that will give you a chance to talk to him and make amends for my insufficiency, and if it is necessary in your opinion, mother, we will get our pastor, Mr. Hamilton, to come over and help us to defend our faith. Mr. Stephanas thanked me for the invitation and assured me he would be on hand.'"

Mrs. Berea was about to answer Timothy, but noticing the dejected look upon his countenance, she refrained from further discussion of the subject and simply said, "Well, we will talk it over in the morning; it is nearly twelve o'clock and we have to be up early to-morrow morning to attend to the stock before we go to church. Mr. Hamilton is going to preach on 'The Reward of the Righteous,' and I think it will strengthen and help both of us to hear him. I am half sorry we went to hear that blacksmith preach. It seems to have upset you somewhat, but never mind, take it to the Lord in prayer and you will find a solace for your troubled soul. Good-night, son."

"Good-night, mother."

Mrs. Berea listened until she heard the door of Timothy's room close behind him and then to her daughter she said with a sigh, "Poor Tim, I never saw him so troubled before. That man Stephanas is responsible for it, and we must do all we can to keep Timothy from coming too much in contact with him."

"Why, mother! What makes you think it necessary to take such precautions with regard to Timothy? You always gave him credit for having good common sense, and you know his deep reverence for the Bible. I am confident no one could make him believe anything that was contrary to the teachings of the Scriptures. I think you are unduly alarmed."

"Well," replied Mrs. Berea, "perhaps you are right, but nevertheless an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure, and so I intend to get father to attend to any repairs or other business that may require dealings with the village mechanic. My fears may be foolish, Dorcas, but somehow, the voice of a mother's intuition seems to whisper to me that danger is near. Good-night, Dorcas, we must retire."

The conversation thus abruptly ended, the mother and daughter parted and retired to their respective rooms.

SUNDAY AT THE STEPHANAS' HOME.

Sunday morning dawned, a bright, beautiful spring morning. Paul Stephanas, usually an early riser awoke to find the sun streaming in through the crevices in the old-fashioned shutters that protected the windows of his humble country home. The mental exertion required in the delivery of a lecture after his regular day's labor had fatigued him more than he usually felt when called upon to spend several extra hours at the shop. He arose at once, and after thanking the Father for the night of rest and asking His guidance and blessing during the day, he dressed and went downstairs, where he found Mrs. Stephanas in the kitchen preparing the morning meal. After greeting his wife he went into the dining room and was greeted with a chorus of "good mornings" by the children who were up and dressed and were looking over their Sunday School lessons while they awaited breakfast.

Picking up his Bible he settled himself in his easy chair to read his "daily readings," but was interrupted by a knock at the front door, which he hastened to answer.

TIMOTHY VISITS MR. STEPHANAS.

Upon opening the door he was surprised to see Timothy Berea. The young man was asked to come in, but declined with thanks, explaining that he had come away without telling the folks that he was going, and that he wanted to get back if possible before they missed him.

"I have come to invite you, Mr. Stephanas to our morning church service. Mr. Hamilton, our pastor, is going to speak on the subject, 'The Reward of the Righteous,' and I would like you to hear what can be said on behalf of our old orthodox faith. You will come, won't you?"

"Well, I don't know about that; you see I used to belong to church and am pretty well acquainted with its teachings, and I long ago stopped

attending the church because I found that its teachings were not in harmony with the Scriptures."

"Don't you think, Mr. Stephanas, that is a rather narrow view of the matter? If we adopted the same attitude toward attendance at your lectures then no one would attend them."

"Why not? Mr. Berea, if they adopted my attitude toward the church they would all attend the lectures. You see I was a regular attendant at the orthodox church until I was convinced it was not teaching the Truth. Now if the people of Drearyville adopt the same attitude toward my lectures they will continue to attend until they are convinced that we are not teaching the truth as it is found in God's infallible word. We only ask to be given a hearing and then let God's test be applied. 'To the law and the testimony; if they speak not according to this word it is because there is no light in them' (Isa. 8:20). Now isn't that reasonable?"

"Well, yes, when you look at it that way. I am disappointed to think you will not come to hear Mr. Hamilton. You see I have just been down there to see him, and I told him of the conversation we had last night and he told me he would bring forward proof conclusive of the Scriptural foundation of our faith, and of course he can do it better than a layman like me."

"Oh, well, that makes a difference. If Mr. Hamilton's remarks are designed for my special benefit and I am to be permitted to answer in private conversation with you afterward, then common courtesy as well as a desire for the advancement of truth call upon me to agree to the arrangement. When does your meeting commence?" "10.30 a.m."

"Well, I guess I can arrange it. Our meeting will be over by that time."

"Your meeting? Do you have a meeting?"

"Oh, yes. We try to follow the Commandments and example of Christ and the Apostles as closely as possible. Now we find that the Apostles and early believers met every first day of the week to break bread in remembrance of Christ, and though there is only my wife and I here, yet we feel it incumbent upon us to keep the commandment and follow the example of the Apostles, and so we have our "breaking of bread" at 9 o'clock every Sunday morning; and then we gather around the table and have a Sunday School lesson for the children."

"Well, I must hurry home now," said Timothy, "the folks will wonder what has become of me. I will look for you at the service this morning."

"All right, Mr. Berea; God willing, I will be on hand."

Timothy then hastened across the meadow to his home, where he found his mother anxiously looking for him. She was not a little displeased when she discovered that he had been at the home of Paul Stephanas.

THE CHURCH AT DREARYVILLE.

The church bell had just sounded forth its final call to the inhabitants of Drearyville when Paul Stephanas stepped inside the little church and found a seat near the door. The service commenced almost immediately after he was seated.

Mr. Hamilton was somewhat of an evangelist in the conventional sense of that term. He was an emotional speaker and worked upon the feelings of his audience by telling touching and pathetic stories that often brought tears to the eyes of his hearers.

The opening ceremonies being over, the pastor arose and announced his subject, "The Reward of the Righteous," and stated that he had been particularly requested this morning to show that this part of our orthodox faith is founded upon Scripture truth.

MR. HAMILTON'S SERMON.

"This," said he, "I consider to be a great honor, and I will now proceed to give you a little of the great mass of evidence that can be produced. First of all, there comes to my mind that time when the Lord was about to leave this earth and ascend to heaven, you will no doubt remember how He comforted his disciples upon that occasion. He said to them; 'Let not your heart be troubled, ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you; I go to prepare a place for you that where I am, there ye may be also' (John 14:1-3).

"This," said the pastor, "is enough to settle the question once and for all. It proves conclusively," said he, "that the righteous go to the Father's house in heaven to be with Him. It would not be necessary to quote any other passages to prove this, for one statement of the Lord is as good as a dozen, as He never contradicts Himself. However, just to show how strong our position is, I ask you to look at the Master's words again. He is addressing the multitude, and among other things he says, 'Blessed are ye when men shall revile you and persecute you and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely for my sake. Rejoice and be exceeding glad for great is your reward in heaven, for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you' (Matt. 5: 11, 12).

"This shows beyond the shadow of a doubt," said the pastor, "that heaven is the reward of the righteous. There is no use in our taking up your time quoting Scripture any further than these statements of the Master himself."

However, he said he would be glad to give to any of the congregation a list of other passages which he had prepared and which included the words of the thief on the cross, the parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus, etc.

Mr. Hamilton then went on to picture the glory of Heaven and the happy reunions that would take place there, and finally brought the services to a close by the singing of the hymn,

"That Will Be Glory for Me."

AFTER THE SERMON.

At the close of the service, Paul Stephanas arose from his seat with mixed feelings of sadness and vexation. He started toward the door, but had advanced only a few steps when he was accosted by Mrs. Berea, who after shaking hands with him, asked him how he liked the sermon.

"Well," said Paul, "since you ask me, I must say that it was a pitiable exhibition of wresting the Scriptures."

"Why, Mr. Stephanas, how can you say such a thing? I thought it was splendid and absolutely conclusive."

"But, Mrs. Berea, did you not notice anything wrong with the quotation from John 14?"

"Why, no! We all know that by heart: 'In my Father's house are many mansions; I go to prepare a place for you *that where I am, ye may be also.*' He has gone to heaven to prepare a place for us so that we can be where He is."

"Mrs. Berea, you astonish me. Will you kindly read the passage from the Bible? Here it is." Whereupon he handed her a Bible opened at the fourteenth chapter of John.

Mrs. Berea confidently taking the book, read as follows: "In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also."

"Why, how strange; I never noticed those words, 'I will come again,' before," said Mrs. Berea.

"Your pastor evidently has not noticed them either. But now I would like to ask you a question or two. First — When Christ comes again, where will He be?"

"Why, on the earth of course."

"Now please look at the text again, and tell me why He says He is coming again."

Mrs. Berea looked at the book again and read the answer, "That where I am there ye may be also."

"Then what this passage really teaches is that Christ is going away for awhile and then he is coming again to the earth in order that his disciples may be with him on the earth."

Mrs. Berea looked embarrassed and confused. Paul, not wishing to humiliate her in the presence of those who had gathered around during the conversation, closed the discussion with a suggestion that she should look the matter up a little further and reminded her of the engagement at her home for Wednesday night when they could talk things over quietly.

After shaking hands with Timothy and a few others who had gathered around, he bade them good-day and left for home.

Mrs. Berea waited until the last of the congregation had left the church and then had a long and earnest talk with Mr. Hamilton, after which she left for home fully reassured and confident, and with a strong determination to defend her faith against the encroachments of this "new idea," as she called it.

SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES.

Although the Berea family were lovers of the Bible and read it quite often, their interest had never been so keen or sustained as it was during the time that intervened between Sunday morning and Wednesday evening when Paul Stephanas was to pay them a visit. On Monday and

Tuesday evening Mrs. Berea, Timothy and Dorcas pored over their Bibles until far into the night, and as a result Wednesday evening found them fully confident and prepared to defend their faith if called upon to do so.

When Paul Stephanas arrived at the appointed hour he found them seated at the table with open Bibles. In addition to the Berea family there was present a young woman toward whom, in his acts and speech Timothy showed great tenderness. One could not help but see in the attitude and demeanor of these two towards each other, something more than simple friendship. The young woman was introduced as Miss Hamilton, the daughter of the pastor of the village church. After the usual exchange of greetings and when all were seated around the table, Mrs. Berea opened the conversation.

"I was somewhat non-plussed," she said, addressing Mr. Stephanas, "when you called my attention on Sunday morning to the fact that we were in the habit of misquoting the passage in John 14:2, 3; but after mature consideration I do not feel so bad about it, because I find that the leading thought in the passage is not, in my judgment, affected by the omission of the words 'and if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself.' The leading thought in the passage is found in the words, 'In my Father's house are many mansions, I go to prepare a place for you. The Master was about to leave His disciples and by way of comforting them He tells them he is going to prepare a place for them in His Father's house; now when he says 'I will come again and receive you unto myself,' He must mean by that, that He will come at death and call them to Himself; for why would He go to heaven to His Father's house to prepare a place for them if they were never to go there to occupy the place after it was prepared? I

don't see how you can escape this conclusion."

"I have no doubt, Mrs. Berea, that this seems quite conclusive to you; at one time in my life I believed it just as firmly as you do, but since I have come to know the truth of the matter, I often wondered how I could ever believe it. Have you ever noticed in the preceding chapter, the thirteenth of John at the thirty-third verse, the following words of Christ: 'Little children, yet a little while I am with you. Ye shall seek me; and as I said unto the Jews, whither I go ye cannot come; so now I say to you'?"

"Yes, I have noticed that statement of the Master's" answered Mrs. Berea. "But I have also noticed the statement in the fourteenth chapter and the fourth verse, 'And whither I go ye know and the way ye know.' Have you noticed this, Mr. Stephanas?"

"I have," replied Mr. Stephanas.

"Well, then, how do you explain it in harmony with the belief that they were not to go to heaven?" asked Mrs. Berea.

"The passage does not say anything about heaven."

"But that was where He was going," insisted Mrs. Berea.

"Quite true, but He is not speaking of that particular fact in this discourse. He is not speaking of the place to which He was going, but of the great personage to whom He was going. In the 12th verse He says 'I go unto my Father.' It is to this He refers when he says, 'Whither I go ye know and the way ye know.' It was just as if he said, 'You know that I am going to the Father, and you know the way by which you can come to the Father too, but you cannot follow me literally into His presence; but there is way by which you can come to Him by communication. That this is what is meant is shown conclusively by

Christ's answer to Thomas. 'Thomas said unto Him, Lord, we know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way? Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth and the life, no man cometh unto the Father but by me.' You will readily see that the Master is not speaking here about how they can reach heaven when they die, but rather how they can reach the Father through prayer during their lives. We see this plainly stated in verse thirteen, 'And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.' This was the great comfort which He left them. Paul refers to it in his epistle to the Ephesians, 2: 18, where, speaking of the Jews and Gentiles he says, 'For through Him we both have access by one spirit unto the Father.' When Christ said, 'The way ye know'; He meant the way of access unto the Father."

"Well, that may be so," said Mrs. Berea, "but the great fact at the beginning of the chapter stands unaltered. 'In my Father's house are many mansions, I go to prepare a place for you.' Surely you will not deny that the Master here informed His disciples that He was going to prepare a place for them in His Father's house? Now, what else could that mean for the disciples but that they were to go to heaven to occupy the place prepared for them?"

"But, Mrs. Berea, there is no mention of heaven in the passage."

"No, the word 'heaven' is not mentioned, but it says 'My Father's house.'"

"Is that in heaven?"

"Where else could it be?"

"On earth. It was never spoken of as being in heaven; just look at Micah 4: 1-2, where we have this prophecy: 'But in the last days it shall come to pass, that the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be established in the top of the moun-

tains, and it shall be exalted above the hills; and people shall flow unto it. And many nations shall come and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and He will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in his paths: for the law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.' Here you see is a house of God to be established on the earth at the time called the last days. Now the house of God in which Christ promised to prepare a place for His disciples is not a house of inanimate wood and stone, but composed of men and women, Christ himself being head of the house. This is plainly taught by Peter who was one of those to whom Christ spoke when He said, 'In my Father's house are many mansions,' etc. In 1st Peter 2: 3-5, we have the following words, 'If so be that ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious, to whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God and precious, ye also as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.' Then the Apostle Paul in his letter to the Ephesians speaks of this house of God in which the apostles were promised a place. How beautifully he explains it. He shows the house of God in the process of formation and designates the place of the apostles in it. Listen, 'Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and of the household of God; and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone; in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: in whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the spirit' (Eph. 2: 1-22). You will see from this that the place prepared for the apostles in this house of God is in the foundation, while all the other children like living stones are builded together on this

foundation and at last become a habitation of God through the spirit. The work of fitly framing together this building or house of God has been given to Christ; while it is the Father's house it is Christ's as well because he has been appointed head over it. That is why He is able to prepare a place for us in it. The writer of the Hebrews refers to this in chapter 3:4-6, as follows: 'For every house is builded by some man, but he that built all things is God. . . But Christ as a Son over His own house, whose house are we if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end.' This is the house of God that is to be established on the mountains of Israel unto which the nations are to flow to be taught God's ways and learn to walk in His paths; for the law is to go forth from Zion and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. When Christ returns to the earth, as He assuredly will, He will gather this house together and make it a royal house; for the individuals who will compose it will be members of the household of the King of Kings, and Lord of Lords. But there, I must stop or you will think I want to do all the talking.'

"I have been much interested in your remarks," said Mrs. Berea, "and I must confess it takes some of the force out of our argument on the words of Christ in John 14. But then there are other passages that cannot be disposed of so easily and which prove to my mind conclusively that heaven is the reward of the righteous. For instance, there is the statement of Christ in His sermon on the mount, Matt. 5: 11, 12, 'Blessed are ye when men shall revile you and persecute you and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake: Rejoice and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in heaven; for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.' Now here is a plain statement which settles the matter conclusively: 'Great is your reward in heaven.'

Don't you believe this, Mr. Stephanas?"

"I do, Mrs. Berea; I believe it with all my heart, and every other statement of this good old book. But I fear you read into the passage more than it contains. Do you understand this passage to teach that the righteous go to heaven to be rewarded?" asked Mr. Stephanas.

"Undoubtedly I do," Mrs. Berea replied.

"But that is not stated in the passage."

"No, not in so many words, but it is clearly implied; if the reward is in heaven surely they must go there to enjoy it."

"Oh, no; that does not follow. That would be a perfectly reasonable deduction if we had no other information on the subject; but we are not left in doubt upon the subject; we are told plainly that the reward is to be brought to us. In the last book of the Bible, which contains a message from Christ, and in bringing His message to a close, the Master says in the last chapter, Rev. 22, 12: 'Behold I come quickly; and my reward is with me to give every man according as his work shall be. The Apostle Peter speaks of this reward or inheritance being reserved in heaven for us and declares it is to be revealed in the last time and that it is to be brought unto us at the revelation of Jesus Christ; read 1st Peter 1: 3, 4, 5, 13. When the Apostle Paul was about to die he did not indulge in rhapsodies about mansions in the skies, but you will remember no doubt that he said, 'there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness which the Lord the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing' (2 Tim. 4: 8). The Apostle Peter gives us a clue to what is meant by 'that day.' In 1st Peter 5: 4, he says, 'And when the chief shepherd shall appear ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.'"

"You see, Mrs. Berea," said Paul Stephanas, "that the Apostles, Paul and Peter, both looked for the appearing of Christ as the time when they would be rewarded. They never expected to go to heaven. They were always looking for Christ to come, and continually exhorted the believer to wait and watch and be ready for the coming of the Lord. You can read the accounts of all the death records in the Bible and you will not find any references to any having gone to heaven or to their reward. But we have the statement made in John 3: 13: that *no man hath ascended to heaven, but the son of man that came down from heaven*. Then we have the statement in Acts 2: 34 that David *is not ascended into the heavens*. Now you know that David is spoken of as a man after God's own heart; surely then if heaven was appointed by God as the place where the righteous should go at death to receive their reward, David would surely go there, and yet here is a statement of the inspired apostle to the effect that he did not go there. No, Mrs. Berea, the Bible never speaks of heaven as the reward of the righteous. Can you think of one passage of Scripture that states plainly that heaven is the place where the righteous receive their reward?"

"Well, no; not in so many words," replied Mrs. Berea. "There are however, some statements which to my mind are difficult to construe in any other way: for instance, there is the parable of the rich man and Lazarus; the request of the thief on the cross and Stephen's dying prayer. These passages have always seemed to me to be conclusive proof of the doctrine we believe concerning the reward of the righteous; they seem at least to strongly imply that good men and women go to heaven to receive their reward. It may be, however, that you can explain them away as you appear to have succeeded in doing with all the other passages I have quoted."

"I can assure you, Mrs. Berea,"

said Paul, "that these passages do not support the doctrine you advocate any more than the other passages you have quoted, and are just as easily explained. The fact is, Mrs. Berea, that it is not a Bible doctrine at all; it is found in the Church Hymnal, and the Confession of Faith, but not in the Bible. The teaching of the Bible is entirely different and it is stated in simple language, such as a child might readily understand. Suppose we go to the Bible to find an answer to the question, 'Where are the righteous to be recompensed or rewarded?' What answer do we find? Listen: The righteous shall be recompensed in the earth, much more the wicked and the sinner (Prov. 11: 31). Now here is a plain simple, straightforward statement which cannot be gainsaid or denied: it tells us that the righteous are to be rewarded here on earth, (not in heaven). The Lord speaks to us again through Solomon and he tells us (Prov. 10: 30) that 'the righteous shall *never be removed*: but the wicked shall not inhabit the earth.' You see, Mrs. Berea, the righteous are not simply to receive their reward on the earth and then depart to some other sphere of existence; they are not to be taken to heaven after they have received their reward at the judgment seat, but according to this inspired statement they are *never to be removed from the earth.*"

"I have heard that passage interpreted quite differently," said Mrs. Berea.

"You have? I would like to hear what your interpretation is," said Mr. Stephanas.

"Well, I have always heard it explained to mean that in every land and in every generation God would root out the wicked and allow only the righteous to dwell in peace in the land."

"But surely, Mrs. Berea, you cannot accept such an interpretation. The facts are so manifestly against it that I don't see how any one could

believe it. Is it not a fact testified to by all history that since the days of our first parents, the wicked have been in the ascendancy in the earth and the righteous have been few and feeble and oppressed and their consolation has always been that God would some day interfere in the affairs of men and take the earth out of the hands of the wicked. But He has not done so yet as we can see by looking at the condition that exists in the earth to-day. Surely, Mrs. Berea, you will not contend that the wicked do not inhabit the earth to-day, and that only the righteous dwell in it?"

"Well, no, Mr. Stephanas, I can see that the interpretation I have advanced does not harmonize with the facts; in fact, as you were speaking, there occurred to my mind some instances in which the very opposite condition existed on the earth; for instance in the first century after Christ, the righteous were destroyed and removed by being thrown to the wild beasts; burned at the stake; hewn to pieces, and in many other ways tortured and destroyed; those who escaped the tortures and deaths did so only by concealing themselves in dens and caves and wild places of the earth. In those days the righteous were removed and the wicked did inhabit the earth, and I am free to admit it has been so to a certain degree in every age and in fact it is easy to see there has never been a time when this statement of Solomon has been fulfilled."

"Well, I am pleased to hear you say so, Mrs. Berea, because it will help you to accept the truth of the matter when it is brought to your notice. You will remember, Mrs. Berea, that it is recorded of the disciples of Christ that they asked Him on one occasion to teach them how to pray and He taught them that prayer which has come to be known as 'The Lord's Prayer,' and among other things in that prayer He instructed them to pray, 'Thy Kingdom come; Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven.' Mrs. Berea, to

what extent do you think God's will is done in heaven?"

"Why, perfectly, absolutely," said Mrs. Berea.

"Well, do you think this prayer will ever be answered and that God's will be done in earth as it is now done in heaven?" asked Mr. Stephanas.

"I suppose it must be so, for Christ would not teach his disciples to pray for something which it was not God's will to grant," Mrs. Berea replied.

"Then you are ready to accept the fact that there is a time coming when God's will is to be done on earth, perfectly, absolutely."

"It must be so, there seems no escape from that conclusion."

"Well, then, when this takes place, as it assuredly will, what will be the character of the earth's inhabitants?"

"Why, I suppose they will be righteous, other wise God's will could not be done perfectly," replied Mrs. Berea.

"Exactly so: before this petition in the Lord's prayer can be fulfilled the earth must be filled with a purely righteous population and the wicked must be eradicated. God's will could not be done on earth as it is in heaven if there was one wicked person on the earth; so that a time must come when the wicked will not inhabit the earth; and as Solomon says concerning that time, and the righteous population, *"The Righteous shall never be removed."*

"I must confess, Mr. Stephanas, your argument is very strong. It seems impossible to escape the conclusion you have arrived at."

"I have only presented a little of the evidence which the Scriptures contain. Listen to the words of the Psalmist 'For evil doers shall be cut off, but those that wait on the Lord shall inherit the earth' (Psalm 37: 9). How long are they to continue in their inheritance of the earth? Listen: 'The Lord knoweth the days of the upright and their inheritance *shall be*

forever' (Psalm 37: 18). Again: 'The righteous shall inherit the land and *dwell therein forever'* (Psalm 37: 29); and again: '*Wait on the Lord and keep His way and He shall exalt thee to inherit the land; when the wicked are cut off thou shalt see it.'* (Psalm 37: 34).

"The fact is, Mrs. Berea," continued Paul, "that the whole purpose of God as it is revealed in the Bible, is the filling of the earth with the glory of God, (Numbers 14: 21). Now when we—"

"Pardon me, Mr. Stephanas," interrupted Miss Hamilton, "but I am deeply interested in the statement you have just made. Some time ago in the course of my reading, I came across the passage you have just quoted, the exact words are: 'But as truly as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the Glory of the Lord.' I suppose I must have read it many times before, but it had never impressed me as it did on the occasion of which I am speaking. This was, perhaps, because on this occasion I happened to be in a meditative mood, and after reading stopped to reflect and ask the question: How? When? I thought it over a great deal and I remember one night after retiring that I could not sleep for thinking about it but I could not find an answer to the question, 'How is the earth to be filled with the Glory of God?' In the morning I asked father about it, and was reproved by him for troubling myself about such unprofitable questions. I have been trying to forget about it ever since, but your remark a moment ago brought it all back to me again. I hope you will not consider me rude for interrupting you in the midst of your remarks. Really I couldn't resist the impulse that came to me the moment you mentioned that matter, and now, if Mrs. Berea won't mind, and you are willing, I would like to hear your theory of the matter."

Mrs. Berea nodded assent, and all turned their eyes in the direction of Paul Stephanas and waited his answer.

There was no hesitancy on his part. "I wish to say first of all," said he, "that I have no personal theory of the matter."

A look of disappointment came into the face of Doris Hamilton.

"I'm so sorry," she said, "I thought you could explain it to me."

"And so I can, I am thankful to say, but not by any theory of my own," replied Paul. "I sincerely hope that none of you will think me so foolish as to sit here and waste your time and my own relating my own theories and opinions. Human opinions and theories on matters of religion are worthless. I have long since cast mine away and any knowledge I now have of the subject is not original with me, but is copied direct from God's book of explanations, the Bible. I will be very much pleased, Miss Hamilton, to direct your attention to God's own answer to the question, 'How is the earth to be filled with the glory of the Lord?'"

"The question is very simple when you permit the Scriptures to speak for themselves. The Psalmist, or rather God through the Psalmist, gives us a key to the answer. He says, 'Whoso offereth praise glorifieth me; and to him that ordereth his conversation aright will I shew the salvation of God'" (Psalm 50 : 23). According to this passage, glory to God is generated by the offering of acceptable praise to Him. Now we have already noticed that Christ taught his disciples to pray, 'Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth as it is done in heaven.' When this prayer is answered, we will have in the earth a righteous population which by praising God continually will fill the earth with His glory. We have a prophetic forecast by the spirit of that great day in the 96th Psalm. Here are some of the expressions in the Psalm: 'O sing unto the Lord a new song; sing unto the Lord, bless His name; shew forth His salvation from day to day. Declare His glory among the heathen (i.e., nations) His wonders among all

people. Give unto the Lord, O ye kindreds of the people, give unto the Lord *Glory* and strength. Give unto the Lord the *Glory* due unto His name; bring an offering and come into His courts.' When this great day arrives, the prophetic song which the angels sang at the birth of Christ will then be fulfilled: 'Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.'

"Then you think it is to be a mental rather than a physical glory," said Miss Hamilton.

"It is both mental and physical," replied Paul. "There is not only the glory that comes from the ascription of praise and thanksgiving, but there is also the effulgence of glory that will radiate from a multitude of glorified beings."

"What do you mean by 'glorified beings,' Mr. Stephanas?" asked Miss Hamilton.

"I mean beings, men and women who have been made immortal, equal to the angels so that they cannot die any more (Luke 20 : 36): who have been made partakers of the divine nature (2nd Peter 1 : 4) and who have been raised to splendid honour in that glorious age (Psalm 149). You will remember, no doubt, that when Paul went down to Damascus to persecute the saints, that Christ appeared to him on the way and the light that shone round about him was so great that he was struck to the ground by it and was blind for several days; the glory of that light was too much for Paul's mortal eyes, but the Apostle John tells us that in the great day that is to come we shall see Him as He is; for we shall be like Him (1st John 3 : 2) that is, we shall be immortal, of the divine nature, the same as He is now, and therefore able to behold His glory. Paul tells us plainly that Christ is coming 'to change our vile body and fashion it like unto His glorious body,' (Phil. 3 : 21). Then you will remember, no doubt, that when Moses went up into the Mount to talk with God, that when he returned to the Israelites, his face

shone with such an effulgence of glory that the people could not look at him until he put a veil over his face to subdue the glory. Now this was merely a slight reflection of the Divine Glory, and yet it was more than mortal people could stand. Peter tells us that we are to be made partakers of the Divine Nature. It will then be not a mere reflection of God's glory that we will have, but it will be in us a part of our nature; we will be filled with it. Think, then, of the glory that will fill the earth when it is filled with a population that will be full of the glory of God, because partakers of His nature. I suppose the Apostle Paul must have had this in mind when he said, "For I am persuaded that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us" (Romans 8:18). The Psalmist also refers to it when he says, 'Let the saints be joyful in glory' etc, (Psalm 149). I consider this outward glory, however, the least important."

"Why do you consider it the least important?" queried Miss Hamilton.

"Because," answered Paul, "it is but the outward manifestation of God's pleasure toward us, because of that other glory which we possess and which is, in reality, God's greatest achievement with the human race, namely, a God-like character. God can at any time send forth a great burst of glittering light that would be more than humanity could bear. This He could do in a moment, but it has taken ages to produce the refined, beautiful and godly characters, who will be the permanent possessors of the earth and God's adopted children. They are like the precious stones, they have been dug out of the rough quarry of sinful flesh. You will remember, perhaps, that the ark of the covenant was covered within and without with pure gold. This teaches us the order of God's work with us: we must first be made glorious within, like the King's daughter in the 45th Psalm, and then we will be made glorious without by God in that great day soon to come.

The glory then that is to fill the earth is a glorious people who will make its hills and valleys ring with acclamation of His praise, saying, 'Thou art worthy O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power: for Thou hast created all things, and for Thy pleasure they are and were created.' But now I must go, I see I have stayed much later than I had expected to," said Paul, arising to go.

"We have been so deeply interested that we did not notice the time," said Miss Hamilton, "And I want to thank you for explaining that passage to me, which has puzzled me so."

"I sincerely hope, Miss Hamilton, that you will see your way clear to accept this scriptural explanation of how the earth is to be filled with the glory of God," said Paul. "You see," he continued, "if the modern idea is true that the righteous at death go to heaven and the earth is to be destroyed, then these things so fully elaborated in the Scriptures cannot be true, and God is made to be the author of confusion. I think, though, that none of you would take the stand that the Bible is false; therefore, you are bound to accept its plain statement that the meek shall inherit the earth and dwell therein forever.' Well, good-night, Mrs. Berea."

"Good-night, Mr. Stephanas, and come again."

Timothy accompanied Paul to the door and when he shook hands with him, as he was leaving, he said, Mr. Stephanas, I wish I had your knowledge of the Scriptures. It was most edifying to listen to you to-night."

"Well, I am sure the Scriptures are no special possession of mine, Mr. Berea," answered Paul; "you can, if you will, obtain a soul-satisfying knowledge of the Divine Word."

"Well, I don't know," said Timothy. "I have been reading my Bible all my life and yet I don't seem to know very much of what it really contains."

"That is because you have been

studying it without the key," said Paul.

"I was not aware that there was a key," answered Timothy.

"Well, there is a key," said Paul, and without its possession, the Scriptures remain locked to the enquirer. Sometime when we get an opportunity I will show you what I consider to be the key to unlock the Scriptures. I must not keep you standing out here any longer. Good-night, Mr. Berea, I hope I shall see you again in the near future."

When Timothy returned to the sitting room he found Doris Hamilton ready to start for home. "What! You ready to go so soon? What is your hurry, Doris?" inquired Timothy.

"Why, Timothy, look at the clock, it is past eleven," replied Doris.

"So it is," said Timothy, glancing at the clock. "I will go right out and harness Dick; I will be ready in five minutes."

"No, don't do that, Timothy, let's walk to-night; it is a beautiful moonlight night and just ideal for a walk," said Doris.

"That suits me perfectly," said Timothy, "I love a moonlight walk; especially when I have good company; and besides it takes a little longer on foot and gives us more time for conversation."

The young people were soon out on the country road wending their way toward Doris's home. The road to the Hamilton residence took them along the side of one of the hills among which the village nestled. The road commanded a splendid view of the valley in which every tree and field and housetop was now covered by the clear, soft, silvery moonlight, by which also the hills across the valley were clearly outlined. It was one of those nights that makes one regret the demands of nature that call us from the enjoyment of its enchanting and soothing influence, to spend the remainder of the night within the walls of our

bed-chamber. About half a mile from Timothy's home, the road descended to a lower level, and was cut by a stream, over which a bridge was built.

The scenery here was entrancing. As one stood upon the bridge and let his vision follow in the direction of the stream, he could see far down its course the moonlight gleaming upon the water with here and there the shadow of a tree thrown across the stream.

The scene is one of tranquility and peace. The stillness is broken only by the rippling laughter of the brook. As one contemplates the scene, he is impressed as never before with the force of the prophetic statement concerning Jerusalem: 'Behold I will extend peace to her like a river' (Isa. 66: 12).

The bridge was a favorite spot with Timothy and Doris; many a pleasant hour they had spent together there, but to-night they were strangely absorbed with other matters. Doris had received an answer to the question which for some time had troubled her. She could not deny the Scriptural truth of the answer, and yet her equanimity was deeply disturbed by the fact that to accept it involved the sacrifice of her most cherished belief. She had purposely asked Timothy to walk home with her so that they could discuss the matter along the way.

Timothy opened the discussion. "Well, Doris, you have had an opportunity to hear Mr. Stephanas to-night," he said, "What do you think of his arguments?"

"Well, to be candid, Timothy, I was deeply impressed by what he said; I searched my memory in vain for an answer to his reasoning. He seemed to leave no ground for one to stand upon. Do you think it possible that these cherished tenets of our faith, which the heritage handed down to us from past generations and for which our forefathers shed their blood, do you really think, Timothy, that they are false?"

"I don't like the thought of it, Doris," replied Timothy, "but like you, I have been unable to find solid ground to stand upon, and as far as our forefathers are concerned, you know, Doris, if we follow our ancestry back far enough, we find them steeped in ignorance and superstition. I also was deeply impressed with the thought you have just expressed, and have been trying to find an answer to it. I find that the Christians to whom the apostle Peter spoke had a similar experience; for he reminds them that they had been redeemed from a vain conversation *received by tradition from their fathers* (1st Peter 1: 18). So it is evident that they had to set aside the traditions of their fathers when they accepted the gospel as preached by Peter."

"That is not the only point," replied Doris; "look at the intelligent people who study and preach our faith and who love and revere the Bible: if what this man has been telling us to-night be true, their intelligence has profited them nothing and they are deceived and deluded; do you think such a thing possible, Timothy?"

"What has happened in the past can easily happen again," replied Timothy. "In fact, we find history repeating itself. Look at the Apostle Paul before his conversion to Christ, brought up at the feet of Gamaliel, educated in a manner second to none in his day, fully conversant with the Scriptures and yet absolutely deceived and deluded as to their true teaching, full of zeal in his false belief and persecuting those who really knew 'the Truth' and who were for the most part poor, illiterate and despised. You will remember how he was brought to see that his learning and intelligence had profited him nothing, as far as finding the Truth was concerned; and after his conversion he remarked on a certain occasion that it is written, 'I will destroy the wisdom of the wise and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent,' and also that

'the world by wisdom knew not God' (I. Cor. 1: 19, 21). Speaking of his own countrymen on another occasion he said, 'I bear them witness that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge.' (Romans 10: 2). So you can see, Doris, that it is not a question of intelligence or worldly wisdom or even zeal, but a question of having a proper understanding of what the Scriptures teach."

"Why, Timothy, one would almost think you were a disciple of Mr. Stephanas," said Doris.

"No danger of that, Doris," said Timothy. "Mr. Stephanas does not want disciples to follow him, he would be highly indignant at the suggestion. I would not be surprised though if he were to succeed in materially changing my views as to what the Scriptures teach concerning salvation."

"Do you think it possible that you could ever leave the old church?" asked Doris in a serious tone.

"I think I could, Doris, if I was fully convinced that it was wrong," replied Timothy.

"I am afraid, Timothy, Mr. Stephanas has had an evil influence over you; I feel sure his arguments can be met; I am going to speak to father and ask him to meet this man who is disturbing our religious equanimity and see if he cannot put him to silence once and for all." Doris spoke with great earnestness, and determination was clearly read in the expression of her face. By this time they had reached Doris's home and they bid each other good-night.

Doris retired with a troubled mind; she seemed to have a premonition of approaching evil. The events of the evening had at first pleased and then alarmed her and now, try as she might, she could not succeed in dismissing the matter from her mind, and not until far into the night did sleep at last put an end to her troubled cogitations.

DISCUSSING THE BLACKSMITH'S PREACHING.

Next morning Doris appeared at the breakfast table looking a trifle pale. Her mother and brother noticing the pallor inquired anxiously as to how she felt. Doris assured them that there was no cause for alarm as she felt quite well.

"You were rather late in getting home last night, were you not, Doris?" inquired her father.

"Yes, father. Mr. Stephanas, the blacksmith preacher, was visiting the Berea's and we had a discussion in which we became so deeply absorbed that we never noticed how time was flying," replied Doris.

"Oh, yes, I remember now; Mrs. Berea told me she expected a visit from this man Stephanas. I went over some of the disputed points with her and pointed out to her some of the weak points in his arguments. I have no doubt he found her well prepared to answer his sophistries," said Mr. Hamilton.

"Well, the fact is," replied Doris, "that neither Mrs. Berea nor any of us could answer his arguments; in fact, they seemed unanswerable; they were composed almost entirely of plain simple statements from the Bible and to deny them would mean the rejection of the Bible, at least so it seemed to us. At any rate, we were like children in his hands, we could only listen while he quoted and explained the Scriptures to us."

"Why, Doris! You surprise me, I thought you at least could give a good and sufficient reason for the hope that is within you," said Mr. Hamilton.

"I thought so, too," said Doris, "but this illiterate blacksmith seemed to knock the whole foundation from under us. He overwhelmed us with Scripture testimony, that seemed plainly to teach just the opposite of what we have always been taught to believe. Mrs. Berea and myself were much troubled over the matter."

"Where was Timothy during this discussion?" inquired Arthur Hamilton, Doris's brother.

"Timothy was there listening with the rest of us," replied Doris.

"Listening, eh! Did he not attempt to answer this man's sophistries?" asked Mr. Hamilton.

"No, father, he made no attempt to answer, and in fact, he seemed to be deeply impressed and pleased with the things which he heard," said Doris.

"Nonsense! Doris," said Mr. Hamilton, "how could a man of Timothy's intelligence and standing in the community, be impressed with the dogmatism of an illiterate blacksmith?"

"It was not his assertions, father," said Doris, "but the testimony of the Scriptures, which he brought forward to support his assertions, which seemed to impress Timothy. You know the Berea family are noted for their love of the Scriptures, and they have been searching the Scriptures to see if these things are so, and the result has been a deep impression that they are true. Timothy told me last night that he would not be surprised if he had to modify his views as to what salvation is and how it is to be obtained. It was a shock to me to hear Timothy talk in that way, and I could not go to sleep for a long time after I retired last night. I made up my mind that I would ask you, father, to come to our rescue and show the fallacy of this man's arguments, for I feel sure he must be wrong and that his arguments can be met, and you are the only one we can turn to, with the hope of stemming the tide of this heresy."

The pallor had now disappeared from Doris's face, and in its place was the flush of excitement upon her cheeks; she spoke earnestly, almost appealingly to her father, and she was quite successful in communicating her fervid interest in the subject to him and the others at the table.

"I shall be glad and shall consider it my duty to do all that I can in the matter. What would you suggest? Shall I give a special course of sermons, or do you think it would be better if I were to talk privately with Timothy?" said Mr. Hamilton.

"I would suggest, father, that you arrange a debate with Mr. Stephanas and invite the villagers to be present," said Doris.

"What! I debate with an ordinary layman, an illiterate blacksmith? Surely, Doris, you would not desire to have me lower the dignity of my high office by such a procedure," exclaimed the clergyman.

"I would not desire it, father, if I could see any other way to save Timothy and others from contamination with these heretical doctrines. You see they meet him daily at the shop, where he lays his arguments before them with no one to answer for them, and as they are for the most part unlearned in the Scriptures, the result is an impression is made upon them which they are apt to retain unless something is done to counteract it. Now my suggestion is, that if you meet him in public debate and answer his arguments before the townspeople, the people will be fortified against his reasonings and his influence will cease.

"Don't you think, father, you could do this for the sake of our old faith and to save some of our people from spiritual destruction?" pleaded Doris.

The old clergyman felt the force of his daughter's logic, and after remaining silent for a moment or two, he said, "Well, Doris, it is a great sacrifice to one's dignity to even consider such a thing, but I want to do all I can for my fellow men. I will consider the matter and let you know later." With this remark he rose and retired to his study.

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On the evening following the day on which Doris Hamilton and her

father had the conversation at the breakfast table, Paul Stephanas after a hard day's work at the shop, was busily engaged preparing notes for his talk at the school-house Saturday night.

A knock at the door brought Mrs. Stephanas from the kitchen; on opening the door she was surprised to see Timothy Berea, who inquired if Mr. Stephanas was home. Mrs. Stephanas assured him that her husband was home and would be glad to see him. Timothy was ushered into the sitting room where the blacksmith was seated with his Bible open before him, and after the usual salutations, Timothy began at once to state the object of his visit.

"You will be surprised," he said, "when I tell you what I have come to see you about; you may not be aware of the fact, but your preaching and your conversations at the forge with those who come into your shop have become a source of alarm to some of the leading church members. They seem to fear that your doctrines will cause some of the weaker members to leave the church and believe the things you teach."

"I sincerely hope," said Paul, "that not only some of the weaker members, but some of those who are considered 'pillars' will have their eyes opened to God's everlasting Truth, and will have the courage to face any opposition that may come as a result of their acceptance of that Truth."

"From your point of view that is quite right," said Timothy, "but still from their point of view, you can hardly blame them for being somewhat alarmed when they see indications of an undermining influence at work."

"Yes, but all my efforts have been open and above board, I have spoken openly and have invited discussion and have always stood ready to answer questions as far as I was able to do so," said Paul.

ARRANGING THE DEBATE WITH MR. STEPHANAS.

"I quite agree with you, Mr. Stephanas," said Timothy, "you have struck out from the shoulder, and I can personally testify that I have felt the force of some of your blows; but what I wish to speak about is this: the religious equanimity of this community has been disturbed by your preaching of what you call 'The Truth,' and a plan has been evolved by which your teaching can be put to the test to see whether it really is 'The Truth,' and I have come to-night to see whether you will agree to the arrangement. To come directly to the point, Mr. Stephanas, it becomes my duty to ask you to engage in a debate upon the doctrinal points you have raised with Mr. Hamilton, the pastor of our village church. What do you say?"

Paul Stephanas was so much surprised that he could not for a moment find words to answer; recovering from his surprise, however, he said, "Well, I don't know, Mr. Berea; you see I am only a poor mechanic with very little education, while Mr. Hamilton is a learned man, and therefore has a great advantage over me. Would it not be better for me to send for one of our brethren who is better educated and who could meet Mr. Hamilton on more equal ground?"

"I don't think that would do at all," said Timothy. "You are the one concerned in this controversy, and I think it devolves upon you to support the position you have taken and for you to show that it is Scriptural."

"Well," said Paul, "I have no desire to run away, but I believe in giving the truth the best possible chance by putting its best exponent to the front: however, if it must devolve upon me to defend it I will with God's help do my best, and I can assure you I am ready in my own humble and unlearned way to give to every man that asketh, a reason for the hope that is within me, with meekness and fear."

"Past experience," said Timothy, "has led me to believe that you will give a good account of your stewardship. It has been suggested that the debate take place in the schoolhouse next week, beginning Tuesday evening and to continue as many evenings as may be necessary. However, if you wish more time to prepare, we can arrange it for a later date."

"It makes no difference to me," said Paul, "I am ready at any time. What is to be the subject of the discussion?"

"It has been suggested," said Timothy, "that the first night be taken up with the subject of the reward of the righteous. The proposition would read thus:

"Resolved: that the Righteous are Rewarded by being taken to Heaven at Death: Mr. Hamilton affirms; Mr. Stephanas denies."

"That will suit me very well," said Paul.

"Well, I must hurry over to Mr. Hamilton's and tell him of your acceptance of the arrangement," said Timothy, rising to go. "Have you any suggestion as to a chairman for the evening?" he continued as they walked to the door together.

"I can think of no one but yourself, Mr. Berea. You know I have no friends here," said Paul.

"Well, we will see about that later," said Timothy. "Good-night, and don't forget Tuesday night! The whole village will be there."

Timothy went directly to the Hamilton residence and reported his success in getting Mr. Stephanas to agree to a debate. It was Doris who had requested him to see the blacksmith and make arrangements with him, after her father had reluctantly consented to engage in a public discussion.

That evening arrangements were made to have Timothy preside throughout the debate.

Mr. Hamilton was far from being enthusiastic about it; he acted like a man who was about to go through an unpleasant experience, which he could find no way to evade. Nevertheless, he was determined to do his duty as he saw it plainly before him.

The debate was announced at the schoolhouse on Saturday night, at the close of Paul Stephanas's lecture which was well attended.

It was also announced on Sunday morning at the village church, after which it became the one great subject of conversation throughout the village.

THE GREAT DEBATE.

Never in the history of the village, at least not within the memory of any of the villagers, had such a crowd assembled as that which was found trying to crowd into the little schoolhouse on Tuesday night, the first night of the debate.

The schoolhouse was inadequate to accommodate them; many who could not find standing room were forced to go away disappointed.

When the hour arrived for opening the debate, Timothy Berea arose and made a few remarks, stating the cause and object of the debate, the form and rules of the discussion, with a word of counsel to the debaters and to the audience to be calm and to preserve strict order: he said, "Mr. Hamilton will speak on the affirmative twenty minutes, after which Mr. Stephanas will speak twenty minutes on the negative; Mr. Hamilton can then occupy fifteen minutes in questioning Mr. Stephanas or in a speech, after which Mr. Stephanas can occupy fifteen minutes in questioning Mr. Hamilton or in speaking."

It was to be decided at the close of each meeting whether the subject was to be discussed further at another meeting or not.

The subject was then announced—"RESOLVED: THAT THE RIGHTEOUS ARE REWARDED BY BEING TAKEN TO HEAVEN AT DEATH."

The chairman called upon Mr. Hamilton to open the discussion with a speech of twenty minutes on the affirmative.

MR. HAMILTON'S SPEECH.

"Beloved parishioners, it is with feelings of regret and humiliation that I stand before you at this time, under these circumstances. Regret, that a discussion of this kind should be made necessary, or at least considered necessary by those who have urged me to take part in it. Humiliation, because the dignity of the high and holy office to which I have been called in the ministry, should suffer by its occupant taking part in a public argument with a layman who, well meaning though he may be, is nevertheless illiterate and unlearned in all those holy studies that are necessary to the proper understanding and correct interpretation of the Divine Word.

"You may think this an uncharitable and irrelevant statement, but I can assure you I mean no unkindness, and the statement is quite relevant because it forms an important part of my argument to-night. The point is this: being unlearned in theological studies my opponent is unqualified to give an interpretation that will withstand the onslaughts of adverse criticism and which can be depended upon to be in harmony with the whole system of Scriptural theology. You will see how strong this argument is as I proceed and show you the great amount of study and labor that has been necessary to obtain the knowledge we now have.

"Do you see that pile of books over there on the table? Don't be alarmed, I am not going to read them to you to-night. I have brought them to give you some idea of the great amount of labour and study a clergyman must undergo before he is qualified

for the ministry and fit to expound the Scriptures and preach the Gospel. In that pile the following sciences are contained in their respective volumes: '*Bible Criticism*,' to ascertain the exact text of certain works claiming to be inspired, and if possible their time, place and human authorship; '*Apologetics*,' to establish and defend the claim of the Scriptures to inspiration; '*Hermeneutics*,' to investigate the principles of interpretation; '*Exegesis*,' to carry those principles into practice by actual interpretation. And so I might continue and speak of other volumes on '*Dogmatic Theology*,' '*Polemic Theology*,' '*Practical Theology*,' and '*Pastoral Theology*,' etc., and with all this we are none too well equipped for the great work of defending and expounding the Scriptures. How, then, can an ordinary blacksmith who has not had access to those studies, be depended upon to preach the truth of God. I say it is an unthinkable absurdity.

"But let me proceed to the Scriptures themselves and show how clearly they teach what our proposition affirms. I will not repeat the arguments I presented in my sermon last week upon this subject; it is not necessary to do so for there is plenty of evidence to choose from. For instance, the Master, in that grand and eloquent sermon on the Mount said, 'Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God' (Matt. 5: 8). Now I ask, how can they see God unless they are taken up to Him? They cannot see Him with mortal eyes and in this fleshly tabernacle. When can they see Him? Certainly not during this life. It must be at death when they receive their reward in heaven. Oh! But my opponent says they are not going to heaven. Well, I am glad we don't have to take his word for it. The Master did not leave us in doubt about it; He not only told us that the pure in heart would see God, but He indicates how and when, in both this and other discourses recorded in the New Testament.

"In the same chapter at the twelfth verse He says—'Rejoice and be exceeding glad; for *great is your reward in heaven*: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.'

"When will the pure in heart see God, then? The obvious answer is, when they receive their great reward in heaven.

"Well, when do they go to heaven? Answer—'At death.'

"How do we know this? Christ has said so. Turn with me to the 16th chapter of Luke, verse 20. Here the Master is relating the incident of the rich man and Lazarus, the poor beggar. Let us read from the 20th verse: 'And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus which was laid at his gate full of sores, and desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table; moreover, the dogs came and licked his sores. And it came to pass that the beggar died and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom; the rich man also died and was buried.' In the dialogue which follows between Abraham and the rich man who finds himself after death in torment, the following words are addressed to the rich man in verse 25: 'But Abraham said, son, remember that thou in thy life-time receivedst thy good things and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted and thou art tormented.'... Could anything be more conclusive than this? A righteous man dies and is carried by the Angels to Abraham's bosom and is comforted,—

"I see my time is nearly expired and I want to give my opponent some questions to answer before I close. I want him to tell me why Paul said—'For me to live is Christ and to die is gain,' and that he had 'a desire to depart and to be with Christ which is far better,' if he did not expect to be with Christ when he departed? (Phil. 1: 21-23). Why did the faithful ones look for a city that hath foundations whose maker and builder is God if they didn't expect to go to heaven? (Heb.

11:10). And if it is argued that this is a city on earth, then why does the apostle in speaking of it in the same chapter at the 16th verse say, 'but now they desire a better country, that is an *heavenly*: wherefore God hath prepared for them a city.'—Time called.

When the Clergyman took his seat there was a burst of applause from the audience which was interrupted by the chairman, who asked the audience to desist from noisy demonstrations. "Let us be calm," he said, "and weigh well the arguments that are set forth and let our judgment of the debate be based not upon partizan feelings but upon reason, common sense, and above all, the testimony of the Word of God." He then called upon Mr. Stephanas to speak for 20 minutes on the negative side of the question. Paul Stephanas thereupon arose and addressed the audience.

THE BLACKSMITH'S REPLY.

"Mr. Chairman, Ladies & Gentlemen":

"I am called upon for the first time in my life to take part in a public debate; and while to all appearances I am at great disadvantage, both as to training and natural fitness, yet I do not share the feelings of my opponent, who said at the beginning of his speech, 'It is with feelings of regret and humiliation that I stand before you at this time under these circumstances.' I confess that I feel neither regret nor humiliation, but on the contrary I believe I feel somewhat as the Apostle Paul did who, when he was called to answer before Agrippa, said: 'I think myself happy, King Agrippa, because I shall answer for myself this day before thee.' I consider it an honor and a privilege to be permitted to defend and present God's Truth to an audience such as is gathered here to-night.

"I will now take up the arguments of my opponent and answer them as far as my time will permit. The first argument he has presented and which occupied the greater part of his speech is this: 'Mr. Stephanas is a layman, he is illiterate, unlearned and ignorant

of all those holy theological studies which clergyman are required to understand before they can get a license to preach.' As he was directing your attention to the pile of books, the contents of which he had successfully stored away in the inner recesses of his expansive mind, and was endeavouring with all his power to impress you with his wonderful knowledge, I could not help but think of that story in the Bible about the great giant named Goliath who terrified Israel by the greatness of his stature. This giant, as you will no doubt remember, used to exhibit himself daily between the camps of Israel and the Philistines, and it seems that Israel was overawed by his mighty presence. But one day a little shepherd boy came along and without spear or shield or armour, slew the giant with a stone and a sling and stood upon his dead body and with his own sword cut off his head. Now since Mr. Hamilton has been pleased to place himself before you as the giant in this discussion, the only position left for me is that of the shepherd boy, and I have a few stones picked out of the river of the water of life (the Word of God), which I intend to sling at this intellectual giant to bring him to the ground. Now I am quite prepared to plead guilty to the charge of being only a poor, illiterate blacksmith, without theological training, but then the disciples of Christ were only illiterate fishermen, and the Master himself was a carpenter, the Apostle Paul a tentmaker, etc. No, dear friends God has not left us to the mercy of learned theologians, but, on the contrary, He has invited us to come each one for himself and drink of the water of life freely (the Word of God). If it is necessary for us to fill our minds with the sciences in that pile of books over there, before we can understand God's truth, then there is no hope for any of us here, for the circumstances of life in which we are placed will never permit us to accomplish such a feat. For my own part, I do not care to try, for I consider my limited mental space too valuable to be filled with anything but the incorruptible Word of God,

which Paul says 'is able to make us wise unto salvation (2nd Tim, 3 : 15 ; and is able to build us up and give us an inheritance among all them which are sanctified' (Acts 20 : 32).

"My opponent quotes Matt. 5 : 8. 'Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God,' and asks the question, 'How can they see God unless they are taken up to Him ?' Well, I must say that is a remarkable question for a man with so much education as he seems to have, to ask. Ask that question of any schoolboy and he will tell you that if the pure in heart are to see God then they must either go to God or God must come to them. But my opponent can see only one way and that is the way which agrees best with his theology. But we must answer the question, When and where will the pure in heart see God in fulfilment of the promise of Christ? Well, we can be certain of one thing and that is that the pure in heart will not see God by being taken to heaven at death for there is not a passage of Scripture between the covers of the Bible that either teaches or implies that men go to heaven at death. On the contrary there is abundance of evidence that no such thing occurs. In fact, we are told plainly that '*No man hath ascended to heaven*' (John 3 : 13): There is no need of our being perplexed over a simple question like this for it has been answered for us thousands of years ago, long before theological seminaries were invented. The Patriarch Job gives us a direct answer to the question. In the 19th chapter of his book at the 25th to 27th verses, he makes this statement . . . 'For I know that my redeemer liveth and that *he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth*; and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet *in my flesh shall I see God* : Whom I shall see for myself and mine eyes shall behold, and not another ; though my reins be consumed within me.' In whatever sense, then, that we are to be permitted to see God is to be at the *latter day upon the earth*. The Apostle John said on one occasion, speaking of Christ, 'But we know that when He shall

appear we shall be like Him ; for we shall see Him as He is' (I John 3 : 2). Now to see Christ is equivalent to seeing the likeness or manifestation of God ; for Christ said on one occasion 'he that hath seen Me hath seen the Father' (John 14 : 9). This will be true in a still larger sense in that great day when He returns to the earth in great power and glory, to be glorified in His saints and to be admired in all them that believe' (2 Thess. 1 : 10). But Mr. Hamilton says the righteous do go to heaven at death because Christ in his sermon on the mount said, concerning those who were persecuted for righteousness sake, 'Rejoice and be exceeding glad : for *great is your reward in heaven*: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.' Now the trouble with my opponent is that he reads into this passage something it does not contain. It does not say a word about going to heaven. True, it says the reward is in heaven. That is because God is there and He has the reward with Him. Peter tells us it is *reserved in heaven for us* (I Peter 1 : 4), that is, it is laid away for us, kept for us, and then tells us that it is to be *brought unto us* at the revelation of Jesus Christ, that is, when Christ comes again (see I Peter 1 : 13). The Master himself settles the matter when He says in the message which He sent to John on the Isle of Patmos . . . 'And behold I come quickly, and my *reward is with me*, to give every man according as his work shall be.' . . . It is quite clear then that the reward is in heaven at present, but that when Christ comes again as He has promised to do, He will bring the reward along with Him and bestow it upon His faithful friends who have kept His commandments. My opponent next comes to the parable of the rich man and Lazarus. I knew he would quote this ; it is the ancient and time honoured argument of all heaven-going theorists. He has not told us whether he believes it to be a parable or a literal account of an incident that really happened. It makes no difference which view he takes, it is full of difficulties which he will find do more harm to his theory than any argument

an opponent can bring against it. In the first place, if he considers it not a parable, but a true story, then it upsets his whole theory.

“What is it that takes place at death according to the teaching of Mr. Hamilton? Does the body of the deceased go to heaven or to hell, as the case may be? Why, no! We know that the body is taken out to the cemetery and lowered down into the earth and covered with the sod. No! Mr. Hamilton does not believe that the body goes to heaven or hell, but his idea is, that there is an immaterial, immortal soul in the man concerning which Isaac Watts says:—

“ ‘Up to the courts where angels dwell,
It mounts triumphant there,
Or devils plunge it down to hell
In infinite despair.’

“Now this soul is supposed to be immaterial, that is, it has no substance; you can't see it or feel it. It is this soul which my opponent believes goes to heaven or hell at death. Now the story of the rich man and Lazarus will not help him to prove this for it does not speak of invisible souls, but rather of real substantial men with eyes, voice, finger tips, tongue, visible men who can see each other and talk to each other, so that if he considers this a true incident and not merely a parable, then it destroys, rather than supports, his theory.

“On the other hand, if he considers it a parable, which it undoubtedly is, then it is only a story told to point a moral or illustrate a point and does not necessarily have to be true or even possible.

“In the 9th chapter of Judges we have a story told of the trees going out to choose a king over them, and they ask first one tree and then another to be their king, and finally the bramble consents to be their king. Now you don't suppose that this parable teaches that the trees can talk and enter into political discussion, do you? Well, **neither** does the parable of the rich

man and Lazarus teach that dead men can talk, or that the righteous can enjoy themselves in glory while they look on and see the wicked in torture. No, the parable of the trees was intended to teach that Israel at that time had chosen the meanest of Israel's nobility to be their king, one who would be in comparison with the others in Israel as the bramble compares to the other trees of the field. And the parable of the rich man and Lazarus was intended to teach the Pharisees and those who had ears to hear that which he plainly stated in the 15th verse of this chapter (Luke 16). Just before he tells the story to illustrate it. His words are these, and this is what the parables teaches—speaking to the Pharisees—‘Ye are they which justify yourselves before men, but God knoweth your heart; for *that which is highly esteemed among men is an abomination in the sight of God.*’ The parable beautifully illustrates this by showing a highly esteemed but wicked rich man tormented and a righteous but despised poor man comforted. The parable does not teach the time, or place, but Christ tells us the time place and circumstances in the 13th chapter of Luke, where He says at the 28th verse, ‘There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth when ye shall see Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the Kingdom of God and ye yourselves thrust out.’ I see my time has expired so I will have to answer the other questions later.”

Whatever may have been the impression made upon the audience by the blacksmith's address, any one who observed the expression on Timothy Berea's face could not fail to see that he at least was pleased. He arose and announced a recess of five minutes, to allow the audience to relax somewhat before the second part of the debate was begun. When this time had elapsed he called the meeting to order and announced that Mr. Hamilton would now occupy fifteen minutes in questioning Mr. Stephanas, or in speaking, or divide his time between speaking and questioning.

MR. HAMILTON QUESTIONS
MR. STEPHANAS.

"Beloved parishioners, you will no doubt have noticed that my opponent has left untouched most of the questions which I propounded for his consideration. From his point of view this was wise, for he would find great difficulty in giving an answer that would square with his peculiar views. I do not propose, however, to permit him to avoid these difficulties by simply passing them by, and so I shall proceed to place them before him in such a manner that he will be compelled to answer or to confess that he cannot answer."

Turning to the blacksmith he began as follows :

Question by Mr. Hamilton : Where do you think the Apostle Paul expected to go at death ?

Answer by Mr. Stephanas : To the grave.

Mr. Hamilton : If he expected to go to the grave why did he say he had a desire to depart, and to be with Christ which is far better ? (Phil. 1 : 23).

Mr. Stephanas : Because both of these things would be acceptable to Paul.

Mr. Hamilton : What do you mean ?

Mr. Stephanas : I mean that the Apostle Paul would welcome death as a release—from his trials, and he would also be glad when Christ returned and he should be with Him, this he said was far better than life or death.

Mr. H. : Does not the language here imply that the Apostle expected to be with Christ as soon as he departed this life ?

Mr. S. : No, Paul would not teach even by implication, things that were not in harmony with the "Truth." There is a sense, however, in which it might be said he would be with Christ as soon as death overtook him.

Mr. H. : What sense is that ?

Mr. S. : Well, when a man dies he lapses into complete unconsciousness, and therefore, though thousands of

years pass over him, he knows nothing of it, and when he is brought to life again at the resurrection it will seem as if he had just closed his eyes a moment ago.

Mr. H. : What ! Do you mean to say that man dies and knows nothing, like a beast ?

Mr. S. : That is exactly what the Bible tells us.

Mr. H. : Where does the Bible teach such a horrible doctrine ?

Mr. S. : There is nothing horrible about it ; the Bible teaches it plainly in several places. For instance, in Ecclesiastes : 3 : 19 it says : "For that which befalleth the sons of men befalleth beasts ; even one thing befalleth them : *As the one dieth so dieth the other.*"

Mr. H. : That refers to the body not to the soul, which continues to live after the body dies.

Mr. S. : It says : "For that which befalleth the *sons of men* befalleth beasts. Therefore, if one of them continues to live after death so must the other, and if one of them passes into complete unconsciousness, so must the other.

Mr. H. : That brings us down to the level of the beasts, does it not ?

Mr. S. : No, only in the matter of death: they are both alike in that state.

Mr. H. : Then you think that when a man dies he becomes utterly unconscious like a beast and knows absolutely nothing ?

Mr. S. : I have already answered that question, but will give you another Bible answer. In Ecclesiastes 9 : 5 God distinctly says : "The living know that they shall die, but the *dead know not anything.*" Surely that ought to settle the question.

Mr. H. : What becomes of the soul when the body dies ?

Mr. S. : What do you mean by the soul ? The Life ?

Mr. H. : It is not necessary for me to define it to you ; I will give you a

passage which illustrates what I mean. In Gen. 35, 18, speaking of the death of Rachel, these words occur: "And it came to pass as her soul was in departing (for she died)," etc. This is the sense in which I use the word soul. What became of Rachel's soul and what becomes of the soul in every case at death?

Mr. S.: Rachel's soul was her life, and to say her soul was departing is the same as when we say concerning one who is dying, "his life is fast ebbing away."

Mr. H.: You have not answered my question. Where does the soul or the life, as you are pleased to call it, go when it departs?

Mr. S.: I can best answer your question and convey to the audience my meaning, by relating an incident of which I was a witness.

Mr. H.: Go on if it is not too long.

Mr. S.: One day, several years ago, while working on a heavy piece of red-hot iron, a shop-mate of mine was struck in the eye with a piece of the hot metal, which flew out from under his hammer. We made him as comfortable as we could while we called a doctor. After treating his injured eye the doctor departed, but as he was leaving the shop several of us who worked there approached him and in subdued tones, so that the injured man would not hear us, we asked: "Well, doctor, how is it with him?" To our horror the doctor answered: "*His sight is gone.*" We were exceedingly sorry for our fellow workman, yet not one of us ever thought to ask the doctor *where his sight had gone to.*

Mr. H.: Of course not; that would be a foolish question.

Mr. S.: Your question is of a similar character. You speak of life or soul as if it was something which might have a separate existence instead of being as it is dependent upon the action of the organs of the body. Sight, hearing, smell, taste, thought, are all manifestations of life; destroy the organ through

which they are produced, and the manifestations cease. When the heart stops, all the organs stop their work of producing manifestations of life, and therefore there is no life in relation to that particular being—the sight, hearing, thought, etc., which are the real life or soul of the individual, do not exist somewhere else.

Mr. H.: That's quite an oration for a blacksmith; you speak of man as if he were a mere machine.

Mr. S.: A wonderful machine, and yet very easily interrupted in its work. In this it is like my forge; you keep the bellows blowing and the fire continues to burn brightly, but when you stop the bellows the fire dies and goes out, but it does not go somewhere else. And so it is when the lungs, the human bellows, stop blowing, the fire of life goes out, but does not exist somewhere else any more than the fire of my forge.

Mr. H.: If the soul does not have a separate conscious existence after death, why did Paul say he was willing to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord? (2 Cor. 5: 8).

Mr. S.: Paul was not speaking about the soul, but about two different natures or bodies.

Mr. H.: Does not the Apostle say, "For we that are in this tabernacle do groan being burdened?"

Mr. S.: Yes.

Mr. H.: Is it not evident, then, that what the apostle wanted to do was to "shuffle off this mortal coil?"

Mr. S.: No, sir; Paul did not want to shuffle anything off; he distinctly says so in the very passage you quote; his words are: "Not for that we would be *unclothed but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life.*" Paul was thinking of putting something on, not of shuffling something off.

Mr. H.: What was it he desired to put on?

Mr. S.: His "house from heaven."

Mr. H. : What is his "house from heaven?"

Mr. S. : An immortal nature.

Mr. H. : Is it the body that puts this on?

Mr. S. : Certainly, the person.

Mr. H. : How can one body put on another? Does the one fit over the other?

Mr. S. : The Apostle Paul explains this clearly in I. Cor. 15 : 52-54. He tells us we are to be "changed" and that "this corruptible must *put on incorruption* and *this mortal must put on immortality*"; and in this very passage we have been considering the Apostle says that when this change takes place, "Mortality will be swallowed up of life." (2 Cor. 5 : 4). What is really conveyed by its language is that this mortal, dying body will be changed into a strong, incorruptible and imperishable body.

Mr. H. : I did not ask you to give an oration; you are taking up my time.

Mr. S. : I have answered as briefly as possible, but if I have taken too much of your time I am quite willing to allow you as much extra time as you need to finish the points you have in mind.

The Chairman : I think Mr. Hamilton is justified to some extent, although his questions were such that they could not be answered with "yes" or "no," but required some explanation. Under the circumstances Mr. Hamilton may have an extra five minutes.

Mr. Hamilton continued his questions: On one occasion Christ said to his disciples, "Fear not them which kill the body but cannot kill the soul." Does not this prove the soul's immortality and a separate conscious existence after death?

Mr. S. : No; for the very next sentence says, "Fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell" (i.e., Gehenna), Matt. 10 : 28. That which is destructible surely cannot be immortal.

Mr. H. : What does Christ mean by the soul in this passage?

Mr. S. : The word "soul" is used in a great variety of aspects in the Scriptures, and it is not always easy to decide definitely which of these aspects the writer had in mind. Personally I believe the word is used in this passage in the sense of "Individuality."

Mr. H. : and pray, tell me, what is individuality?

Mr. S. : That which distinguishes us from each other, which makes us distinct beings.

Mr. H. : Well, what is that?

Mr. S. : Principally our character and disposition.

Mr. H. : According to your materialistic theory when a man dies he is altogether non-existent; if that is the case, is not his character and disposition dead also?

Mr. S. : No, sir; his character and disposition are reserved in God's "book of remembrance" (Malachi 3 : 16), and at the resurrection that character and disposition, or individuality, or identity, is flashed upon the man again and he is the same identical person who existed before death overtook him.

Mr. H. : How can God destroy a man's character and disposition in hell; if a man's disposition is such that God finds it necessary to cast him into hell will he not continue to be wicked when he arrives there?

Mr. S. : The "hell" of the Bible is not a place where men are preserved in torture, as modern religion teaches. The word "hell" in this passage, as you know, is "Gehenna," which means "the valley of the son of Hinnom," a place outside the walls of Jerusalem where fires were kept continually burning to consume the garbage of the city, and into which were thrown the bodies of criminals and carcasses of beasts, refuse, etc. In the day of Christ, which is still future, it will be used again and the transgressors who are thrown into it will be destroyed both body, in-

dividuality, character and disposition and everything pertaining to them; they will be blotted completely out of existence; God will leave them neither root nor branch. (Isa. 66 : 23, 24 ; Mal. 4 : 1).

Mr. H. : That will do. Then turning to the audience he said : "My dear parishioners, I am exceedingly sorry that I have been to some extent responsible in bringing you here to listen to these heresies; this man's doctrines bring us down to the level of the lower animals. He does not believe in the blessed doctrine of the 'immortality of the soul,' a doctrine believed by all the world. Why, even the crude nations believed it, the Indians, the Hindus, the Chinese, the New Hollanders, the Laplanders, etc., all believed this blessed doctrine, to say nothing of such men as Socrates, Plato and other great philosophers and hundreds of thousands of Christians, and yet this man has the audacity to deny it."

Time was then called by the Chairman.

THE BLACKSMITH QUESTIONS MR. HAMILTON.

"Ladies and Gentlemen: Mr. Hamilton speaks of my contentions as 'heresies,' so I suppose I am, in his opinion, a heretic. Well, I find that history informs us that all who have contended faithfully for the 'Truth' in every age have been considered heretics by those who know not the Truth, and the doctrines they preached were called 'heresies' by the religious leaders of their day. Stephen was stoned to death for 'heresy' and the Apostle Paul confessed before the Roman governor 'that after the way which they call *heresy*, so worship I the God of my fathers, *believing all things written in the law and the prophets.*' If to believe all things that are written in the law and the prophets is 'heresy,' then I am glad to take my stand with Paul and plead guilty to the charge. Calling me a 'heretic,' however, does

not prove that the righteous go to heaven at death; and I want to call the attention of this audience to the fact that my opponent has utterly failed to produce a single passage of Scripture, which can reasonably be said to prove that the righteous go to heaven at death. Before I get through I intend to prove beyond the shadow of a doubt, that this doctrine is absolutely false, and that to accept it is to reject the Bible. I ask you also to notice that my opponent has departed from the subject, and has used a great deal of his time questioning me about the 'soul.' I am just as well satisfied, however, that he has done it, for the doctrine of 'the immortality of the soul' which he believes, is at the root of all religious misconception. This doctrine is the great dividing line between truth and error. You cannot enter the domain of religious truth until you cross this line and leave this doctrine behind you. My opponent, in his closing remarks, tells us it must be true, because so many believe it, and he mentions the Hindus, the Chinese, Mohammedans and even the Greek philosophers Socrates and Plato, etc. Well, all I can say about that is, that unless he can find some more reliable witnesses, his case is sure to be thrown out of the court of common reason. Who would care to have a question which involves eternity submitted to the vote of heathen idolators who bow down to the stock of a tree and worship the work of their own hands? What means had they of knowing the truth about immortality or the future reward? They had no revelation from God; and they could not of themselves penetrate beyond the boundary line of human experience. One by one they went down in death; also their fathers, mothers, sisters and brothers; they buried them or sacrificed them to their gods of wood and stone and then they saw them no more; none returned from the great abyss of death to tell them what was *merely human testimony on this matter. And so their testimony, like*

all is worthless. We thank God that He has given us a book which tells us whence we came, what we are, and whither we go. *To this book, the Bible, let us appeal.*"

Mr. Stephanas then proceeded to question Mr. Hamilton.

Mr. Stephanas : Mr. Hamilton, can you tell me of a single instance recorded in the Bible of one going to heaven at death ?

Mr. Hamilton : What about Enoch and Elijah ?

Mr. Stephanas : Did they die ?

Mr. Hamilton : No, they were translated, so the Bible says.

Mr. S. : Exactly, and the fact that they were taken from the earth alive and in full bodily form does not prove that those who die go to heaven. I repeat my question : Can you tell me of a single instance in the Bible of one going to heaven at death ?

Mr. H. : What about Christ ?

Mr. S. : Did Christ go to heaven *at death* ?

Mr. H. : No, he went there after he arose from the grave.

Mr. S. : Oh, then it was *after his resurrection* that he ascended to heaven ?

Mr. H. : Certainly, after his resurrection.

Mr. S. : Did he go to heaven in bodily form ?

Mr. H. : Yes, in bodily form ; his disciples saw him ascend.

Mr. S. : Is this the way you contend that men go to heaven at death ?

Mr. H. : Oh, no ; only their souls go there ; their bodies remain in the grave until the resurrection at the last day.

Mr. S. : Exactly. And what I want to know is this : there are a great many deaths recorded in the Scriptures—many of them righteous men and prophets—can you tell me of one single instance where one of those who died expressed the hope or expectation of going to heaven when he died,

or do you know of a single instance where the Bible speaks of them as being in heaven after they died ?

Mr. H. : Well, no. We are not told so, and in fact I do not think the "grand secret" is ever revealed to us until, as Lord Tennyson expresses it, "we have croosed the bar."

Mr. S. : Oh, then, it is a secret that is not revealed until after death ?

Mr. H. : I am inclined to think so.

Mr. S. : In view of the fact that you are still alive, how did you come to know this grand secret so well that you are willing to enter into a debate on the subject ?

Mr. H. : I have every confidence in the truth of the faith I hold. While there may not be any definite statements in the Scriptures which express our belief in so many words, yet there are guide posts along the way that point in the right direction and which indicate the course we should take and though now we see through a glass darkly, the time will come when we shall see face to face.

Mr. S. : That is a sad admission. It is equal to saying, I may be right but I am not sure. I would commend to you the exhortation of Peter, who said, "We have also a more *sure* word of prophecy, whereunto ye do well to take heed as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn and the day star arise in your heart" (2 Peter 1 : 19). Mr. Hamilton, what is your honest belief with regard to all the righteous dead of past ages and those also who have died in our day ?

Mr. H. : I believe they are in that happy state pictured in Rev. 14 : 1-3, in which it speaks of them as being in heaven playing upon harps, and singing the new song.

Mr. S. : Are you not aware that this is a picture illustrating scenes that are still future ?

Mr. H. : I prefer to consider it as a literal statement.

Mr. S. : You commit yourself to considerable absurdity. In the first place, you will remember that when

John saw this vision he was on the isle called Patmos (Rev. 1 : 9), an island in the Aegean Sea, and it says he saw a lamb with 144,000 on Mount Zion. Now, Mt. Zion is in Jerusalem which at this time was a heap of ruins in possession of the Romans. Now if you consider his statement in Rev. 14 : 1-3 as a literal statement, then you commit yourself to the belief that John from a remote island in the Aegean Sea, saw in Jerusalem, some hundreds of miles away, a lamb with 144,000 standing on a hill in that ruined city. Mr. Hamilton, do you believe this in its literal sense? And I would also like to know if you think the four beasts mentioned were literal beasts and if the harps of this multitude were atuned and their voices lifted in song to the brute creation?

Mr. H. : Well, you put it rather strongly. I had not considered it quite so literally as that.

Mr. S. : Just another point. If the righteous are in heaven playing on harps, they must have bodies, seeing that fingers are required to play a harp. Now you said a little while ago that it was only "the soul" that went to heaven, and by "the soul" you mean something that is "immaterial, without body or parts"; how do you explain this?

Mr. H. : Oh, that is easily explained. Paul says in 1 Cor. 15 : 38, "But God giveth it a body as it hath pleased Him."

Mr. S. : Oh, then you think the soul enters a new body when it gets to heaven?

Mr. H. : Yes.

Mr. S. : Do you believe in the resurrection and judgment to take place at the last day? (John 5 : 28 and 6 : 39, 40).

Mr. H. : I do.

Mr. S. : What is to be raised?

Mr. H. : The body.

Mr. S. : Can the body live without the soul?

Mr. H. : Certainly not.

Mr. S. : When this great day arrives

and the body is raised from the dead and the soul in heaven has already taken up its residence in another body you will have two bodies for one soul; how is this difficulty to be adjusted?

Mr. H. : I refuse to answer.

Mr. S. : Very well, we will not press you on that point, as we appreciate your difficulty. I would like to ask you, however, what the resurrection and judgment are for. What purpose do they serve in God's eternal plan?

Mr. H. : It is the time when God takes account of His servants to see how they have served Him and to divide the sheep from the goats and reward the righteous and punish the wicked.

Mr. S. : But this has already been done, if your theory be true. The righteous are in heaven and the wicked in hell. The "Westminster Confession of Faith," which is the statement of faith accepted by the Presbyterians, states that the souls of the righteous at death do immediately pass into glory and, on the other hand, the souls of the wicked go into a state of torment. Here, then, according to this theory, there are millions of souls in heaven enjoying its bliss and other millions of souls, suffering the tortures of hell for ages. Are these souls to be brought back from heaven and from hell to stand before the bar of justice and mercy?

Mr. H. : As far as I can see they must stand before the Judge at the last day.

Mr. S. : What for?

Mr. H. : To be judged.

Mr. S. : Judged! After they have been condemned or approved?

Mr. H. : I must admit it looks incongruous.

Mr. S. : It is worse than that; it is a reflection upon God's wisdom. It would appear as if God, after the righteous had been basking in pleasure for ages, and the wicked had been writhing in torture for an equal period, had become apprehensive: that a mistake might have been made, and that some

which were in hell should have been in heaven and vice versa, and so He brings them all together again for judgment. I say it is a reflection on an all-wise God, which no true believer would entertain for a moment. Mr. Hamilton, have you ever considered the case of Hezekiah?

Mr. H. : Yes, I am quite familiar with his history ; he was one of the best of Judah's kings.

Mr. S. : I want to read to you the recommendation which the Word of God gives him. It is found in 2 Chron. 31 : 21, as follows : "And in every work that he began in the service of the House of God, and in the Law and the Commandments, to seek His God, he *did it with all his heart and prospered.*".....Now if this heaven-going theory is true, don't you think that a man like Hezekiah would be sure to know it?

Mr. H. : No doubt he did.

Mr. S. : Why then, when he came to death's door, did he weep and lament and pray to the Lord ; and when the Lord answered his prayer and added fifteen years to his life, why did he bless and praise Him ? Was he glad because the Lord kept him out of heaven for fifteen years more ?

Mr. H. : Well, it does seem strange, but then we are all timid in the face of death.

Mr. S. : Have you ever noticed the reason Hezekiah gives for not wanting to die ?

Mr. H. : I don't know that I have.

Mr. S. : It was not timidity or uncertainty. On the contrary, he knew exactly where he would go at death and what state he would be in. He expresses it in the following words : "Behold, for peace I had great bitterness : but Thou hast in love for my soul delivered it from the *pit of corruption* : for thou hast cast all my sins behind Thy back. For the grave cannot praise thee, death cannot celebrate thee : they that go down into the pit *cannot hope for Thy truth.* The living, the living he shall praise Thee as I do **this day**" (Isa. 38 : 17-19). So you

see it was because he knew that death would place him in the pit of corruption and beyond the power to praise and serve the Lord that he lamented at the thought of death. Mr. Hamilton, do you still think that Hezekiah expected to go to heaven ?

Mr. H. : It does not appear so.

Mr. S. : There was another great king of Israel who is referred to in the Scriptures as a man after God's own heart (Acts 13 : 22). Have you considered his case ?

Mr. H. : You refer to David.

Mr. S. : Yes. What became of him at death ?

Mr. H. : I suppose he received the reward of the righteous

Mr. S. : Have you ever read Acts 2 : 34 ?

Mr. H. : I cannot recollect. I suppose I must have read it sometime.

Mr. S. : It states distinctly that *David did not ascend to heaven*, and the 29th verse tells us that "he is both dead and buried." Have you ever considered the 11th chapter of Hebrews ?

Mr. H. : Oh, yes ; many times.

Mr. S. : What do you find there with regard to the reward of the righteous ?

Mr. H. : I have not noticed so much about the reward but have always considered it a grand dissertation on faith.

Mr. S. : Are you aware that the 39th and 40th verses tell us plainly that they died in the faith and did not receive the promised reward, that they must wait until a future day when all will be rewarded together ?

Mr. H. : I had not noticed that.

Mr. S. : Have you ever read John 3 : 16 ?

Mr. H. : Oh, yes ; I have preached dozens of sermons from that text.

Mr. S. : What about John 3 : 13 ?

Mr. H. : Let me see, I don't seem to remember it.

Mr. S. : The next time you preach

from John 3 : 16, I would advise you to extend your vision just three verses above and read the context in the 13th verse. In conclusion, I have one or two questions on the soul. Do you really believe the soul is immortal ?

Mr. H. : With all my heart.

Mr. S. : What is an immortal soul ?

Mr. H. : An indestructible, imperishable, never-dying entity.

Mr. S. : Is your belief based upon the testimony of Scripture ?

Mr. H. : Oh, yes ; the Scriptures speak often about the soul.

Mr. S. : About an *immortal soul* ? Can you give me a single passage that speaks about an immortal soul ?

Mr. H. : Oh, well, I don't know that the words immortal soul are used, but still the soul must be immortal, otherwise man would disappear altogether.

Mr. S. : If I produce from the Word of God passages of Scripture which prove that the soul is destructible, perishable and subject to death, will you accept the fact that man is mortal and unconscious in death ?

Mr. H. : You would have great difficulty in proving that.

Mr. Stephanas then addressed the audience. "Ladies and Gentlemen : I have a few moments left, and I want to call your attention to the fact that my opponent has utterly failed to produce a single testimony from the Bible to show that the righteous go to heaven at death, or to prove that other point which has been brought up, that the soul is immortal. Now the following facts have been brought out in this discussion.

1. "There is no record of any of the righteous having gone to heaven at death.

2. "It is positively stated concerning one righteous man (David) that he did not go to heaven. And concerning the righteous of past ages that they did not receive their reward as yet.

3. "It is stated in the New Testament that *no man hath ascended to heaven.* John 3 : 13.

4. "There is, not a promise of heaven to the righteous in all the Bible.

5. "The only argument advanced, to support the doctrine of the immortality of the soul, is that the soul must be immortal; an assertion without proof.

"And now in closing I have the following facts for your consideration :

1. "*The soul is not immortal* because it is spoken of as *being destroyed* (Ezekiel 22 : 27, Acts 3 : 23). And of dying (Psa. 78 : 50, Job 7 : 15). *Of being saved from the grave* (Psa. 49 : 15, Isa. 38 : 17).

2. "*The righteous do not go to heaven at death* because, in the first place, there is no passage of Scripture which says so, and in the second place it is distinctly stated that *the righteous are to be recompensed in the earth* (Prov. 11 : 31). that *they are to inherit the earth* (Matt. 5 : 5), that *they are to dwell in the earth forever* (Psa. 37 : 22, 29), that they are to *reign on the earth* (Rev. 5 : 10).

"There is much more that might be said, but I think the subject has been sufficiently discussed, and I am sure that those who have eyes to see and ears to hear, will recognize the fact that the things we have contended for are the true teachings of the holy men of old who wrote the Scriptures by the power of God."

The chairman then arose and asked the audience not to leave until he had held a short conference with the debaters, after which he would make an announcement.

He then turned to Mr. Hamilton and the blacksmith and asked them if a new subject should be taken up for the next meeting or if they wished to continue the discussion of the same subject.

Mr. Hamilton at once replied that there would be no further discussion of any kind as far as he was concerned.

"Do you mean to say you will not go ahead with the debate ?" asked Timothy.

"That is exactly what I mean ; I am sorry, I entered into it at all ; I don't think any good purpose can be served by such a discussion. It does not affect our salvation either one way or another, whether we believe in Mr. Stephanas' interpretation of Scripture or mine. All a man has to know is 'that the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin,' and I am sure we all accept that."

"What have you to say about that, Mr. Stephanas ?" asked Timothy.

"Well, if the last statement is correct and that is all we have to know, I have been wondering why it was necessary for Mr. Hamilton to absorb all the information in that pile of books on the table and why the community pays him to preach, for I am sure Farmer Jones could tell the people 'that the Blood of Christ cleanseth us from all sin.' This idea that it makes no difference what we believe is absolutely wrong, for Christ said 'he that believeth the Gospel and is baptized, shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be condemned.' Now it is impossible to believe the gospel and believe the things which Mr. Hamilton teaches ; therefore, I say let us sift the matter to the bottom. I am ready to continue the discussion."

"What do you say ?" said Timothy turning to Mr. Hamilton.

"I have nothing further to say," said Mr. Hamilton, and turning away, he started toward the door.

THE END OF THE DEBATE.

Timothy and Mr. Stephanas talked together for a few minutes, and then Timothy called the audience to order and announced that Mr. Hamilton had refused to go any further with the debate. He also announced that the home of Mr. Stephanas was open to any who were interested to know the Truth of these important matters and that he would gladly spend his evenings with any who would call upon him for the discussion of Bible subjects. With some expressions of regret that

the debate could not be continued, Timothy brought the meeting to a close.

After closing the meeting Timothy congratulated the Blacksmith on the way he had handled the "Word," and assured him he would be among those who would take advantage of his help in the evenings at his home.

He then sought out Doris and escorted her home. There was a strange strained silence between them as they walked along the country road.

Doris's expression and demeanour seemed to say, "Please don't ask me any questions." Timothy was quick to interpret it, and so they walked along the way in silence until, arriving at the Hamilton home, they bid each other "good-night."

THE THORNY PATH.

There were few indeed who availed themselves of the offer of the blacksmith to spend his evenings with them in Bible study. A few came at first but soon dropped off until eventually the only visitor was Timothy Berea, who availed himself of every opportunity to visit the Stephanas' home.

Many a night this earnest young Bible student and the devout blacksmith sat facing each other across the table with their Bibles open before them until far into the night, seemingly oblivious to the passage of time so deeply engrossed did they become in their studies. Timothy soon began to see the truth expressed by the poet, that—"From childhood, most have been misled, So they believe because they were so bred ; The priest continues what the nurse began, And so the child imposes on the man."

He soon began to see through the shallowness and inconsistency of modern religion and longed to be connected with a religion that reflected the simplicity and truth of the teachings of the meek and lowly Jesus of Nazareth and His fishermen apostles.

The Sunday morning services became irksome to him, and the sermons,

many of which were preached for his particular benefit, were a trial of his forbearance.

There seemed to be so much human philosophy and so little of God's word, so much sentiment and so little reason, and a studied effort to please rather than to hold forth the faithful word. As he advanced in his Bible studies he became more and more alienated from the worldly church, and the time finally came when he announced his severance from it. He talked about his new belief, which he referred to as "the Truth" to every one who would listen, but he soon began to see the people shunned him, and that they would sometimes take a circuitous route to avoid meeting him, and being drawn into conversation with him. He was pointed out in the street as one who had become a religious fanatic and sometimes they said an infidel. In his own home, where fervent love was wont to reign, a coldness developed until there was a frigidity of atmosphere that seemed to freeze the fountains of the heavenly currents of love. His mother's attitude particularly troubled him; she had always been profuse in her manifestations of affection toward him, but now she was cold and formal and took little interest in anything he said or did. In addition to this almost unbearable condition, Doris had hidden herself from him for three weeks after he left the church.

Truly he had found the Pearl of great price and he was paying the price of all that he had to obtain it.

Timothy said nothing about these things for a time, but endeavoured to bear his own burden with all the fortitude he could command. He soon lost his light-hearted demeanour and began to go about his daily tasks with a heavy heart. Instead of improving, things went from bad to worse, until he determined to seek relief by unburdening himself to the one who now appeared to be his only human friend, Paul Stephanas.

And so, one evening, after a trying

day in the field, he went down to the blacksmith's home and told his story to a kind and sympathetic listener. Mr. Stephanas did not seem at all surprised, and when Timothy got through he remarked, "I have wondered why you have been so long in coming to tell me this; yours is no new experience. Full well do I remember my own trial; and there are hundreds of true believers to-day who can tell you of similar experiences at the time when they obeyed the Lord's command to come out and be separate" (2 Cor. 6: 17).

"But why should it be so," said Timothy, "in view of the fact that it is called the 'gospel of peace'? And when Christ was introduced to the world at His birth, the angels sang, 'Glory to God in the highest and on earth Peace, good will toward men.' How is it then, that instead of peace we have dissension and estrangement and enmity in our homes?"

"The gospel of peace," replied the blacksmith, "is the good news or glad tidings of something to come and not something that now exists: the song of the angels was prophetic and will not be realized until the world is brought under subjection to Christ. When the Master appeared 1900 years ago, it was not to *bring* peace, but to *preach* peace to come. You know, Timothy, when it will come, it is when the kingdom of God is set up on earth and then, as Isaiah tells us, 'The work of righteousness shall be peace and assurance forever.' (Isaiah 32:17). Have you ever noticed the Master's words concerning this? In Luke 12: 51 he says: 'Suppose ye that I am come to give peace on earth? I tell you nay, but rather division: for from henceforth there shall be five in one house divided, three against two, and two against three. The father shall be divided against the son and the son against the father and the mother against the daughter and daughter against the mother: the mother-in-law against the daughter-in-law; and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law,' and Matthew's account adds:

'And a man's foes shall be they of his own household.' So you see your position to-day accords perfectly with the predictions of the Lord some 1900 years ago."

"It is wonderful, and it makes me feel ashamed to think I should have complained at all; but, Mr. Stephanas, I have come more particularly to see you because I want to be baptized into the name of Christ. How can it be arranged?"

"Why, that can be arranged quite easily," replied Paul. "It is customary for us to examine the candidates for baptism in order to ascertain whether they fully understand the 'First Principles of the Truth' before they are baptized; this is as much for their sakes as it is for the keeping of the purity of the faith; for, you know, baptism which is not preceded by the acceptance of the true faith is of no avail."

"That is quite right and reasonable," said Timothy, "otherwise you would soon find yourself a mixed multitude such as we find in the modern church. Well, I am ready now to be examined. I don't want to lose another day for Christ may come at any moment, and I want to be ready when He comes."

"Very well," said Paul; "we will proceed at once."

A GOOD CONFESSION : TIMOTHY IS EXAMINED BY PAUL.

Question: Why do you want to be baptized?

Answer: Because I want to be saved.

Question: What do you mean by being "saved?"

Answer: To be saved in the Scriptural sense is, first, to have your sins forgiven and admitted into covenant relationship to God and Christ and afterward, at the day of judgment when Christ comes, to be made immortal. (1 Cor. 15: 53-58).

Question: And you think this cannot be done unless you are baptized?

Answer: Why no! Christ distinctly said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be condemned." (Mark 16: 15, 16).

Question: Do you think, then, that after you have been baptized that your salvation is assured and that you have only to wait the coming of Christ to receive the reward of eternal life?

Answer: Oh, no; I don't believe that. I understand that baptism admits me into the race for eternal life. When I am baptized I will become a candidate for the Kingdom of God and will be on probation for eternal life. Still, the conditions are such and the assistance rendered and the encouragement given by God and the Lord Jesus Christ is so great and so fully adequate to our needs, that I know that no sincere candidate need fail in this race for life.

"I am glad," said Paul Stephanas, "that you realize this fact, for it will save you from a sad awakening when the Master comes, and you will be more likely to be found among those who watch and pray that they enter not into temptation."

Question: Have you ever been baptized before?

Answer: They tell me I was sprinkled when I was a baby, but of course that was not baptism. "Baptism," is immersion in water, not the sprinkling of a few drops of water on one's face.

Paul Stephanas was pleased with Timothy's answers; he realized the Truth had found an abiding place in this honest heart. The questioning proceeded and Timothy was always ready with his answers.

THE ONE BAPTISM.

Question: What leads you to the conclusion that immersion in water is the proper form of baptism?

Answer: In the first place, this form is in harmony with the meaning of the original word, "Baptizo," to dip or plunge, to immerse. In the second place, immersion was the form

used by the apostles. (John 3:23, Acts 8:38, Mark 1:9, 10). In the third place, it is spoken of as a burial. "We are buried with Him by baptism into death" (Rom. 6:3, 5; Col. 2:12); so that it is beyond dispute that a complete burial in water or in other words, immersion, is the only true form of baptism.

Question: Suppose that instead of being sprinkled you had been immersed at the time you mention, would that have made baptism valid?

Answer: Certainly not; for the Commandment says believe and be baptized, and of course, being an infant, I was incapable of believing anything.

Question: Suppose you had been baptized a year ago, would that have made it unnecessary for you to be baptized now?

Answer: Oh, no; the things which I believed at that time were not the things which God requires us to believe prior to baptism.

Question: Then you think there are definite things to be believed to make baptism effective?

Answer: Undoubtedly there are; Christ tells us we cannot be saved unless we believe the gospel and be baptized (Mark 16:15, 16).

Question: Oh, then it is the gospel that must be believed? What do you understand the gospel to be?

Answer: The word "Gospel" means glad tidings or good news, and the gospel which we must believe before baptism is the gospel which Christ and the apostles preached, which was "the glad tidings of the Kingdom of God." (Mark 1:14, Matt. 4:23, Luke 9:2, Matt. 24:14).

Question: How many gospels are there?

THE ONE TRUE GOSPEL.

Answer: There are lots of gospels, but only one true gospel; the others are false. The Apostle Paul called to heaven for a curse upon either man or angel who should dare to preach

any other than the one true gospel (Gal. 1:6-9).

Question: You say this one true gospel is the glad tidings of the Kingdom of God; so that the next question which naturally arises, is, What is the Kingdom of God?

Answer: The Kingdom of God is just like any other Kingdom, as far as its form is concerned. It is a real, literal political kingdom to be set up on the earth at Christ's return.

Question: Who is to be king in this kingdom?

Answer: The Lord Jesus Christ. (Luke 1, 32, 33; Rev. 11:15).

Question: What territory is this kingdom to occupy?

Answer: Eventually the whole earth (Dan. 2:44 and 7:27).

Question: Who are to be the subjects of this kingdom?

Answer: All the inhabitants of the earth who are left after God's destroying judgments have been poured out upon the nations (Zech. 14:16).

Question: Then you think the Kingdom of God will not be established without bloodshed and destruction?

Answer: No; it is abundantly testified that great and terrible judgments will be poured out upon the nations before they are finally brought into complete subjection to Christ. (Dan. 2:44; Isa. 42:14; Zeph. 3:8; Joel 3:16, etc.).

Question: Is Christ to be alone in ruling the nations?

Answer: No; He is to be assisted by the saints.

Question: Who are the saints?

Answer: Those who have been called out by the gospel in every age. They are the faithful, and will be given places in the Kingdom of God as rulers. (Dan. 7:18, 22, 27; Matt. 25:34; Rev. 5:9; Rev. 2:26; Psa. 149:5-9). It is my great ambition to be among their number.

Question: Will this Kingdom have a capital city, like the kingdoms of to-day?

Answer : Oh, yes. Jerusalem is to be the capital city from which the laws will be sent forth. It will be the headquarters of the Great King. (Zech. 14 : 16 ; Matt. 5 : 35 ; Micah 4 : 2).

Question : What will be the effect of the laws to be enforced at that time ?

Answer : Oh, it would be impossible for me to express it. Joy, peace, knowledge of God, righteousness, the disappearing of poverty, oppression and crime, and a return to the worship of the true God. (Psa. 72 ; Isa. 32 ; Isa. 33 ; Isa. 51 : 11, and 65 : 19-25).

Question : How long are the saints to reign with Christ ?

Answer : One thousand years (Rev. 20 : 4-6).

Question : Has God ever had a Kingdom upon earth before ?

Answer : Yes, the Kingdom of Israel in the land of Palestine was the kingdom of the Lord, for it is so referred to in the Scriptures, and it could not be otherwise considered because God chose the land and the people and the original rulers, and gave them their laws and watched over their destinies, blessing them when they were obedient and punishing them when they were disobedient to Him (Joshua 24 : 13 ; 1 Chron. 28 : 5).

Question : What became of this Kingdom ?

Answer : The Lord overturned it because of its wickedness and scattered its people, the Jews, among all nations as we see them to-day. (Ezek. 21 : 25-27).

Question : Are the Kingdom and people ever to be restored again ?

Answer : Yes. In fact, the setting up of the Kingdom of God that we have just been talking about, is simply the Restoration of the Kingdom of Israel on a larger scale, with Christ as the king, and the dominion extending over the whole earth instead of being confined to Palestine.

Question : Then you think the Jewish people will be restored to their own land ?

Answer : Yes, that is abundantly

testified in the Scriptures, and I am very happy to say that the Jews are returning, and it is most likely these prophecies may be fulfilled before our very eyes. (Ezek. 11 : 17 ; Jer. 31 : 10).

GOD'S PROMISE TO ABRAHAM.

Question : What great promise was made to Abraham ?

Answer : Abraham was promised by God that he and his seed should possess the Land of Canaan forever, and that in him and his seed all families of the earth should be blessed. (Gen. 12 : 3, 7 ; 13 : 14, 15 ; 22 : 17, 18).

Question : Was this promise fulfilled ?

Answer : No.; Abraham never possessed a foot of the land (Acts 7 : 5), and besides, he is now dead and the land is in other hands.

Question : Who was the seed mentioned in the promise ?

Answer : Christ ; Paul plainly tells us so in Galatians 3 : 16.

Question : Are there no others included in it but Abraham and Christ ?

Answer : Oh, yes ; Paul also tells us that "if we be Christ's then are we Abraham's seed and heirs according to the promise" (Gal. 3 : 29).

Question : How do we become Christ's ?

Answer : The same Apostle in the same chapter tells us that it is by being baptized into Him (Gal. 3 : 27, 28).

Mr. Stephanas : The conclusion is, then, that Abraham and Christ and they that are Christ's are to possess the land for an everlasting inheritance, and are to bring a blessing to all the families of the earth.

Mr. Berea : Yes, that is the glorious theme of the Scriptures, the foundation of hope.

THE RESURRECTION.

Question : Where are Abraham and his seed at the present time ?

Answer : Abraham and a great multitude of the seed are asleep in the

dust, that is, the grave. Christ is in heaven at His father's right hand, while a few like yourself and those associated with you are alive and awaiting the return of Christ to fulfil the promise.

Question: What will have to take place in the case of Abraham and those who, like him, are now dead and silent in the dust, before the promise can be fulfilled to them?

Answer: A resurrection from the dead.

Question: When is this to take place?

Answer: At the return of Christ to the earth.

Question: Then you believe in the second coming of Christ?

Answer: The New Testament is full of the promise of His coming.

Question: After the resurrection what is the next great event?

Answer: The Judgment.

Question: What takes place there?

Answer: The righteous are rewarded with immortality, eternal life, and a place of power in the Kingdom of God, while those who have been unfaithful are punished and eventually destroyed. (Matt. 25: 46; 2 Thess. 1: 8, 9).

Question: You say that after the resurrection and judgment those of the seed of Abraham who are found worthy shall receive places of power in the Kingdom of God. Now you said a while ago that it was the saints who were to receive this authority. How is this?

Answer: The saints and the seed of Abraham are one and the same people.

Question: When and how do they receive the fulfilment of the promises made to Abraham?

Answer: When the Kingdom of God is set up and given into their hands, because then they come into possession of the land and of the whole earth, and by means of this divine political kingdom Christ and the saints,

who are the seed of Abraham, will dispense blessings before undreamed of, to all the families of the earth.

THE PROMISE TO DAVID.

Question: What great promise was made to David?

Answer: God promised that he would have a son in whose hands his Kingdom and throne would be established forever before him. (2 Sam. 7: 12-16).

Question: Who was the son?

Answer: The Lord Jesus Christ, without any doubt. (Luke 1: 31-33; Acts 2: 10-31).

Question: How and when will this be fulfilled?

Answer: At the same time and by the same great event by which all God's promised blessings are fulfilled; the establishment in the earth of the Kingdom of God which, as I have already stated, is the Kingdom of David restored on a larger scale in the hands of Christ and the saints.

CHRIST'S DEATH AND SACRIFICE.

Question: What was the purpose of Christ's appearing on earth 1900 years ago?

Answer: To put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. (Heb. 9: 26).

Question: How did He sacrifice Himself?

Answer: By a life of daily self-denial, in which He sacrificed His own comforts and pleasures and gave Himself up unreservedly to the doing of His Father's will, and by submitting to death on the cross according to the Scriptures.

Question: How did Christ "put away sin" by the sacrifice of Himself?

Answer: Jesus Christ was of our nature to accomplish what God had determined,—the destruction of sin and death, and the evil works thereof. By the life He lived, Christ overcame the evil impulses of this nature as well as the temptations from without, and showed men "the way of life." By the death He died, He, "by the

grace of God, did taste death for every man": that through death He might destroy sin, which has the power of death; and this He did, obtaining through a resurrection from the dead "eternal redemption": death hath no more dominion over him, and God hath set forth Christ as a mercy-seat, that we, through faith in His shed blood, as the divinely appointed system of means for salvation, may obtain the remission of sins that are past through the forbearance of God; and if we are Christ's at His coming, receive eternal life.

Question: Why was it necessary for Christ to undergo such a cruel death?

Answer: In order to emphasize the great lesson that God has been trying to impress upon the children of men since the world began, namely—the lesson of "Obedience" as the way into His favour.

Question: How did Christ's death on the Cross emphasize this lesson?

Answer: Christ's death on the Cross was an act of obedience. Although absolutely innocent of wrong-doing, yet He silently submitted to the indignities that were heaped upon Him; and because the Scriptures required that He be led as a lamb to the slaughter, therefore He opened not His mouth in His own defence, but as Paul says, "He humbled Himself and was obedient unto death, even the death of the cross" (Phil. 2: 8).

Question: What was the result of this "obedience unto death" as far as Christ Himself was concerned?

Answer: Paul says that by it He obtained eternal redemption (Heb. 9: 12) and that because He loved righteousness and hated iniquity God hath anointed Him with the oil of gladness above His fellows (Heb. 1: 9), and for the same reason we are told that God hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name that is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, etc. (Phil. 2: 9).

Question: Then His offering of Himself in obedience unto death was, to some extent, for Himself?

Answer: Yes, it was for Himself that he might be redeemed from death; and for us, that we also through Him might be redeemed from death. (Heb. 7: 27; 5: 7).

Question: In what way do we benefit by the sacrifice of Christ?

Answer: Through Christ's obedient sacrifice He has been raised to the right hand of God, where the apostle tells us, "He ever liveth to make intercession for us." (Heb. 7: 25).

Question: In what particular way do we need help?

Answer: To have our sins forgiven.

Question: When is this done?

Answer: First of all, at baptism our past sins are forgiven and we start a new life; the sins of the past are blotted out. And then after baptism, we often find ourselves overcome by sin, and at each of these occasions, if we confess and forsake our sins, we can obtain forgiveness.

FATHER, SON AND HOLY SPIRIT.

Question: Do you believe the doctrine of the Trinity?

Answer: No; I believe "there is but one true God, the Father, of whom are all things." (1 Cor. 8: 6; Deut. 6: 4).

Question: Do you consider Christ to be God, very God, equal with the Father?

Answer: No; Christ expressly stated that His Father was greater than He. (John 14: 28). Christ is the Son of God.

Question: Did Christ exist prior to his birth at Bethlehem?

Answer: No; except in the mind and purpose of the Father.

Question: In what way did He become the Son of God?

Answer: He was conceived by the Holy Spirit operating upon the virgin Mary; God was His Father and He was declared to be the Son of God with power (Rom. 1: 4).

Question: Was He different from us in nature?

Answer: No; He was made in all points like we are, mortal, of the same death stricken nature.

Question: What do you understand about the Holy Spirit?

Answer: It is God's spirit or power, which fills all space, when directed by His will to accomplish any *special* work, such as the Inspiration of the Apostles and Prophets.

Question: Is it not a person?

Answer: No, that could not be; for it is spoken of as being shed abroad in men's hearts. (Acts 2: 1-4; Rom. 5: 5).

THE NATURE OF MAN.

Question: What do you understand about the nature of man?

Answer: Man is mortal and sentenced to death and decay.

Question: Has man an immortal soul?

Answer: There is no mention made of such a thing in the Scriptures and no evidence anywhere of its existence.

Question: What is man's condition in death?

Answer: Complete unconsciousness. (Eccles. 9: 5, 6, 10; Psa. 146: 3, 4).

Question: What is the soul?

Answer: The word "soul" is used in the Scriptures to express a variety of aspects of life; sometimes it is applied to the lower animals, sometimes to man; it is used to express a person, a body, or simply life itself, but never expresses immortality.

Question: What do you understand by the spirit of man?

Answer: The word "spirit" as applied to man in the Scriptures expresses first the primary meaning of the word "wind" or breath, but is also used in the sense of mind, state of mind, disposition, understanding, natural strength, and in other ways. (Gen. 7, 22; Rom. 8: 16; 1 Cor. 2: 11; 1 Kings 10: 5; 1 Cor. 4: 21.).

Question: If the dead are unconscious are we to understand that death ends all?

Answer: No; there is to be a resurrection from the dead.

Question: Are all the dead that have ever lived to be raised again?

Answer: No; only the responsible dead.

Question: Who do you mean by the responsible dead?

Answer: All those who have known what God requires of them and have either obeyed or disobeyed the Commandments.

Question: Suppose they refuse or neglect to be baptized after they have learned the Truth?

Answer: Well, it is hard to imagine any one doing that; but if they did, it would be a clear act of rebellion, and I am sure no one can rebel against God with impunity: they would be raised and brought to judgment.

Question: What becomes of the irresponsible dead?

Answer: The irresponsible dead, or those who have never known God's truth, "will remain in the congregation of the dead, they shall never see light." (Prov. 21: 16; Psa. 49: 19).

HELL AND THE DEVIL.

Question: Do you believe in the eternal torment of the wicked?

Answer: No; that doctrine is a vile slander on the name of a just God.

Question: What do you understand by the word "Hell"?

Answer: In most cases where the word "Hell" occurs in the Scriptures, the word "grave" would much better express its meaning; but sometimes where the original word is "Gehenna" it means "the valley of the son of Hinnom," a place on the outskirts of Jerusalem where garbage was destroyed, and which was sometimes used by Christ to symbolize the complete destruction of the wicked: for the wicked will be destroyed and not preserved in torture (2 Thess. 1: 9; Malachi 4.).

Question: Do you believe in a personal devil or satan?

Answer: No; I am happy to say I have been delivered from that delusion. But there are lots of devils that are persons, but no such monster as an immortal personal Devil or Satan. The Devil is sin in the flesh; most of us see him in the form we have most to fear when we look in the mirror.

Question: Do you believe the Bible to be wholly inspired? I refer, of course, to the original writings, not to translations.

Answer: I believe the Scriptures are wholly inspired and infallible.

Question: What do you understand the position of the believer to be as regards association with the world?

Answer: While in the world, he is not to be of it. He is required to keep himself unspotted from the world. He must not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers.

Question: Do you consider marriage with an unbeliever an unequal yoking?

Answer: I certainly do, and it is therefore forbidden.

Question: What is the law by which a believer's life should be governed?

Answer: The Commandments of Christ.

"I would impress upon you, Mr. Berea," said Paul, "the necessity of remembering this and I ask you to particularly remember one of these Commandments, obedience to which will help you in the performance of all the rest. It is the command to break bread and drink wine at the Lord's table each first day of the week in remembrance of Him, until He come."

"I am sure that will be an honour and a pleasure," said Timothy.

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The blacksmith arose and reached his hand across the table and shook hands with Timothy, congratulating

him on having witnessed a good confession.

"The question now is," said Timothy, "when and where can I be baptized?"

"Before we consider that," said Paul, "I have something to tell you. How long is it since you saw Doris Hamilton?"

A dark shadow flitted across the young man's countenance at the mention of Doris's name, and there was a pained expression on his face as he replied: "I have not seen her for three weeks, and I suppose now that I have espoused the cause of the Truth, that Doris and I have reached the parting of the ways."

"Don't be unduly cast down," said Paul. "I saw Doris last night, and am happy to tell you that she, too, has witnessed a good confession, and is ready to be baptised as soon as arrangements can be made."

It would be useless to attempt to picture in cold type the expression on Timothy Berea's face at this announcement. He was speechless with astonishment. He tried to speak but could not, strong emotion choked his utterance, and for a moment he broke into half hysterical sobs.

When he had regained his self-control, he apologized for having made a spectacle of himself, and asked if Doris had made any reference to him.

The blacksmith assured him that she had, and that she had explained that her father had forbidden her to see you. She said she had determined, before taking any action either in obedience or disobedience to her father's command, that she would try to settle once and for all this question of religion. During the past three weeks she has read and re-read one of our books entitled, "Christendom Astray," and when she came here last night she was fully persuaded that Christendom, so called, is astray from the truth of God, and that the things we believe are in harmony with God's word, and I

must confess, I was astonished at her answers, and the best of it is, she is determined to embrace the truth in the face of her father's threat to disown her. As she expresses it, she loves her parents dearly, but then Christ has said "he that loveth father or mother better than Me is not worthy of Me." Now, Timothy, I would like you to arrange if possible to go with me to Jamestown Sunday morning, and Doris and you can both be baptized and received into fellowship by the believers there. I will write to-night and let the brethren know we are coming, and if it is satisfactory to you, we will meet at the railway station in time to catch the early morning train."

We will not occupy the readers with further details of these arrangements: that Sunday morning found all three on the train on their way to Jamestown, some twenty-five miles distant, where there was a meeting of the brethren of Christ (christadelphians). Both young people had a story to tell of a stormy time at home before they left for the station.

BAPTISM INTO CHRIST.

On arriving at the city, they were met by a number of the brethren who conducted them to a bathing place nearby where the swimming pool had been reserved for them for the occasion. Quite a number of believers had gathered to witness the baptism and to take part in the service.

When the candidates were prepared for the immersion one of the brethren made a few appropriate remarks and offered a prayer; they entered the water with one of the brethren, and the question was then asked of each of them:—"Do you believe the things concerning the Kingdom of God and the Name of Jesus Christ?" Each answered, "I do;" and the brother thereupon immersed them, saying, "On this public confession of your faith you are baptized into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the

Holy Spirit, for the remission of your sins."

When they had come out of the water and were again fully dressed, and were returning to where the brethren were assembled, they heard the brethren and sisters singing a hymn. As they listened to the words of the hymn they were deeply moved by it; for it contained an exhortation and encouragement intended particularly for them:

"O speed thee, brother, on thy way
And to thine armour cling;
With girded loins the call obey
That grace and mercy bring.

There is a battle to be fought,
An onward race to run,
A crown of glory to be sought,
A victory to be won."

The baptismal service over, they repaired to the hall where the brethren held their meetings, an upper room with simple furnishings. In fact the whole service and worship of these brethren had a sweet simplicity about it that made one think of the meetings which the apostles and early believers of the first century must have had, before pagan ritualism had made its encroachments upon, and corrupted the true Christian church.

When the meeting was over and they had been received into fellowship they were reminded of the fact that there was but one train back to Drearyville and that they would have to hurry to catch it. Doris said she wished there was none. Several of the brethren and sisters invited them to their homes, but they had reluctantly to refuse and, after a hearty handshake with everyone present, they hastened away to catch their train.

On the way back Paul left the young people to themselves, while he found a seat in another part of the coach. On arriving at the village they started on foot for the Stephanas home, where they were to have dinner.

On the way, after a somewhat embarrassing silence, Timothy turned to the blacksmith and said: "brother Stephanas, I have something to tell you. Since it has developed that Doris and I are no longer welcome at our parent's homes, we have concluded to solve the problem by making a home of our own, and not only so, but in starting our new life in the truth, we have come to the conclusion that it would be good for us to be where there is a meeting. We talked the matter over on the train and have decided to get married and live in Jamestown where we can attend the meeting. I feel sure I can find employment there that will enable us to live comfortably; and at any rate even if we have to economize, we will be happy together in our new found faith and will try to grow strong in it. What do you say, brother Stephanas?"

"Well, I don't know," replied Paul, "that there is much to be said; the matter seems to be pretty well settled, and all I can say is, that I wish you every happiness and shall pray that God's blessing may rest upon you."

On arriving at the Stephanas home they sat down to a substantial meal prepared by Mrs. Stephanas, after which they spent the afternoon in pleasant conversation. The young couple seemed to throw off all their former reserve and reticence and to feel quite at home with the blacksmith and his family.

Just before they left, Paul took Timothy aside and said to him: "Well, Timothy, I also am leaving Drearyville next week to return to the city."

"You are!" exclaimed Timothy in surprise. "What is the trouble?"

"Oh, it is simply a question of providing for my family," said Paul.

"I am surprised," said Timothy, "for I always understood that there was a good business here."

"And so there was," said Paul, "until I began to preach the Truth;— then I discovered that first one and then another stopped bringing their work to me. I did not mind it so long as I was able to make ends meet and provide for my family, but since the debate with Mr. Hamilton, almost every member of his church has ceased bringing his work to me, and I find they are taking their work ten miles away to the next town, where the owner of the shop has had to employ extra help to meet the unexpected increase in his business; there is nothing left for me to do but seek employment elsewhere, so I am going back to my old position in the city. I do not regret this in the least, for I feel that my work here for Christ and the truth is ended. I cannot have the school house any longer and there is no other place for the public preaching of the gospel: and so the door of utterance being closed to me, like the apostles of old, I will shake the dust of the place off my feet and leave it to its idols."

"And you never said a word to me about it," said Timothy.

"No, I knew you had troubles of your own, and I did not wish to add my own to what you already had," said Paul.

"Well, I am glad at least that you are going to the city, for then we shall be near you," said Timothy, "for we never want to be far away from sister Stephanas and yourself."

About a week after this, Paul Stephanas, now back in the city, received a letter from Timothy, stating that after all Doris and he were not coming to the city to live. When he had told his mother of his determination to leave the village, she broke down and wept. She would not hear of their leaving, but said her home was their home and begged them to stay. She confessed, furthermore, that she had been reading the book **Christendom Astray*," until she was fully convinced that the

things it set forth were the truth, and now she wanted to be baptized into Christ in the true sense of the term and wanted to know how soon this could be done. Timothy also referred to Dorcas, his sister, having acquired a knowledge of the truth, and in closing his letter said that, God willing, they intended to visit the city every Sunday morning if possible.

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Thus ends this narrative of "Preaching the Truth," and we feel sure that the experience of all those engaged in this glorious, though arduous and discouraging work, will attest the fact, that it is no over-drawn picture, but truly represents some of the hardships encountered by those who sacrifice themselves from day to day in the service of the Lord, "Preaching the Truth."

ALL YOUR QUESTIONS CAN BE SATISFACTORILY
ANSWERED

"IT will be found upon investigation that the Bible propounds a system of doctrine compatible with all the evidences of sense as systematised in the material sciences of the age, and which at the same time commends itself to the moral instincts of every fully developed mind, as supplying those links in the absence of which the human understanding is baffled in its attempts to fathom the mysteries of existence."

Paul Stephanas exemplifies the faith of Christadelphians (or brethren of Christ) who are a community of men and women in which all are equal and without any paid ministry.

From any of the addresses below you may receive:-

- 1 A Bible Companion set of tables by which the whole Bible can be read in a year.
- 2 A Declaration of the Truth Revealed in the Bible: in which the teaching of the Bible is set forth in a series of propositions.
- 3 Christendom Astray from the Bible: a book which has changed the religious convictions of many people.

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