

WONDERFUL WORDS OF LIFE

– *SEPTEMBER 23. – REVIEW –*

"And they were astonished at his doctrine, for his word was with power." – Luke 4:32.

THIS LESSON is set apart as a review for the past quarter. We leave it for each one to review as he may find opportunity, and here merely offer a few remarks respecting the Golden Text above. The text brings to our recollection the words of Oliver Wendell Holmes, illustrating the power of the Truth and its effect upon those who are not of the Truth – not of the light but of darkness. We quote: –

"THE TRUTH"

"Have you ever, when walking about out of doors, found some big flat stone that has lain no one knows how long, just where you found it, surrounded by grass that forms as it were a little fence around it – and have you not, obeying some sort of feeling, thought that it has been there long enough, put your stick or your finger or the foot under its edge and overturned it?

"What a scene, and what an unexpected and disagreeable surprise for a little colony, the very existence of which you did not imagine before you observed the sudden confusion and anguish of its inhabitants when overturning the stone! No sooner is the stone overturned, and the wholesome daylight entered to the compressed and light shy society of creeping things under it, than every one of them possessing legs – and many of them have a whole lot – run wildly about and push against each other and everything in their way, and it ends with a universal general rush for the subterranean hiding places from a circuit poisoned by the sunlight.

"Never imagine that you can overturn an old lie without causing a terrible confusion and alarm among the sickening little world living under it!

"Every real idea and every real subject bring one or another to gasp. And having regained the breath he will probably begin to misuse it for blasphemy. These are the best proofs you can get that you have expressed a truth for which the time was ripe."

LIGHT, TRUTH, MAKES MANIFEST

From time to time the Lord has allowed the world to follow its own wisdom into dense darkness, and then has suddenly turned on the light, producing very much the effect described in the foregoing illustration. It was thus in Elijah's day, and through many of the prophets God turned on the light and brought corresponding testings. But at our Lord's first advent, when the great light came into the world and was displayed in the midst of those who had claimed to be the people of God, the children of the light, it demonstrated that many of them were really children of darkness who loved not the light, loved not the truth. Similarly, in the days of the Reformation through Luther, Knox, Wesley and others, the light was turned on, and the accumulated errors and darkness were removed, to the advantage of those who loved the light, but to the disturbance of those who loved the darkness. And today conditions are very much the same: the light of Present Truth finds comparatively few even in enlightened Christendom to appreciate the riches of God's grace and take a fuller view of the love and mercy of God, manifested in the great redemptive work of Christ, to be accomplished in the "times of restitution [R3860 : page 295] of all things spoken by the mouth of all the holy prophets." – Acts 3:19-21.

In every case it has been the Word of God that has caused the disturbance, the commotion. Whether sent through the prophets of old or through the apostles and reformers of this age

it has been God speaking from heaven – and his Word is quick and powerful searching beyond any human message. It will separate, it will distinguish; it will find the Truth hungry, it will separate the others; it is the light of which the Apostle declared. Whatsoever doth make manifest is light. The attitude assumed by the people toward the light, the Truth, demonstrates better than all their professions would do whether they are of the light or of the darkness. In our imperfection of judgment we might suppose that some were children of light who really are not [R3861 : page 295] of the light, and we might presume some to be children of darkness who are really different at heart. The Lord knows them that are his, he demonstrates who is on his side and who on the side of darkness; let us be content and let the sickle of truth do the separating in the harvest work; and let us not be self-willed and self-opinionated, but waiting on the Lord. Let us wait patiently on him to bring about the separation with divine wisdom and love – we know that his plan is the best in the end.

"ASTONISHED AT HIS DOCTRINES"

It is an old adage that truth is stranger than fiction. The fallen condition of the human mind and heart seems to lead us to accept as more reasonable its own imaginings of others rather than the direct clear statement of the divine Word. Hence, whenever the Truth has been published the effect has been, as here stated, that the people were astonished at the doctrine, had never heard of such doctrines before, never had matters so clear. All the theories of men are confusing, blurred, inconsistent when compared with the wonderful divine plan of salvation. We are not surprised, therefore, indeed it becomes the evidence of the truthfulness of our position, that we find similar conditions today. Many, as they hear of the glorious plan of the ages, make just such a remark as our text, that they are astonished at the teaching, its beauty, its power, its reasonableness, the way it glorifies God, the way in which it explains circumstances and conditions in the present

time, birth, death, our hopes, our fears, the world's ignorance and the coming time of blessing and turning away of the curse and of darkness, and the shining in of the Sun of Righteousness with healing in its beams, bringing in "times of restitution." No less wonderful is the message respecting the high calling, the joint-heirship with Jesus in the heavenly things which eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man. (1 Cor. 2:9.) More and more we are convinced that the eyes of our understanding must be anointed in order that we may appreciate the lengths and breadths and heights and depths of the love of God, which passeth all understanding.
