

GOD'S WORD OR MEN'S OPINIONS

A group of tourists bound for a certain ancient city, were in conversation with some men in their compartment, also going there, and who appeared to be citizens of that place. Many questions were asked. As they approached their destination, they saw a great castle, in an extensive park surrounded by the waters of a beautiful river. "Who lives there?" asked the visitors. With a wide sweep of his hands, one citizen answered, "The Lord who owns all this country." "Can we visit the castle?" "O yes," replied the same man. "It is open to every one." "Not at all," contradicted another citizen, and went on, "At the entrance to the bridge is a warning, 'Trespassers will be prosecuted', and at the entrance to the castle, another, 'Beware of Dogs'." The first citizen asked mockingly, "Have you seen these warning boards yourself?" "No, but the king's servants say so, and the guide book tells the same." The first citizen spoke laughingly, "I don't believe the servants, and I don't believe the guide book either Reason tells me that all people should be free to see the castle and walk in the park." The second citizen retorted, "In case the servants and the guide book tell the truth, it will go bad with us." The first citizen answered, "Who has seen the king? Who knows that those servants are really his? Does the guidebook truly show his instructions? Anyway, we believe the king is kind. Will such a ruler really punish so terribly those who break his rules?" A third citizen spoke, "I feel the servants are either knaves or idiots. Our ideals are equality, and possessing all things in common. In accordance with human rights we need no permission to see the castle or its grounds." The second citizen said again, "What's there in applying for permission to the king's son, his only son and heir, who is managing everything for his father? We need not run any risk!" The first citizen said in a bantering tone, "Yes. And, it seems, if we keep close to the prince he will protect us from the fangs of those bloodhounds. Is it not sheer nonsense? Nobody speaks about a queen, the lady of the castle. Whence comes this prince then? Whoever that young man may be, he can be no more son to the king than you or I." They talked on in that strain.

When they arrived at the city, the tourists went aside to discuss what they had heard. Each bought a guidebook. "This is a mystery," said they. "This guide book clearly confirms what the second citizen said." One tourist spoke: "But the fact remains, that not one of those fellows has been anywhere near the bridge, to be sure of what he says. Those who warn us seem to take for granted, whatever the servants or this guide book says." A second tourist answered, "What need for personal experience? Does not reason say, that in this 20th century, no king or prince can claim an exclusive right to his property? This is the age of democracy. The people's voice is the voice of God. The subjects should be consulted for making rules." The citizens had not really dispersed. These came up, and offered to conduct the visitors to the castle. The tourists were extremely pleased. "Throwaway those books. They are not a guide really. Trust us," they said. The first tourist clutched his guidebook to his bosom, and refused to follow the citizens. One or two more of them did the same. "Poor fools," thought their companions, and told them before they set out, that they would soon rejoin them at the hotel where they had booked their rooms. A few of the citizens also refused to make the venture saying, that they were not so sure that the guidebooks were wrong, after all.

The party which had so rashly set out, decided to do the castle first, and then to saunter in the park, and lunch in the restaurant -if there was one there. Then, as if doing the visitors an honor, the citizens asked the tourists to enter the gate first. But as soon as the unfortunate men stepped in, with hellish howls a pack

of bloodhounds fell on them. Seeing this, the citizens took to their heels the guards who had been shadowing them all the way, 'arrested those and hand-cuffed them immediately. The sentinels at the gate drew back the dogs before they tore the intruders into pieces, and handed over the bleeding tourists also to be handcuffed. They were all hauled up before the prince who sat on his judgment seat. The wounded strangers were asked whether they had not read their guidebooks. "But our friends who are very learned and respectable citizens and experts, were of the opinion that all people were free to visit here," they answered. "But what does the guide book issued under my seal, in my father's name, say? Don't you know that this is my father's property and he can make what rules he likes about it; and that I go by my own published word, and not according to the opinions of your learned men? The word that I have spoken, the same shall judge; and not those who reject me and receive not my words. Had you contacted me, I would have done all the needful, and you would have been my father's guests. Now you have to pay the utmost penalty for ignoring my commandments." The guard took the whole party and threw them into a dark and deep dungeon from which they could never, never escape.

This is only a parable. But it illustrates the truth about the Kingdom of God. It is God's own domain, and we can enter it only on His own terms and conditions. Our own ideas, imaginations and plans will not work there. God has declared and proclaimed in His Word, the Holy Bible, the conditions for admission into His Kingdom, and has put up clear warnings of the doom of those who reject or ignore His commandments. He will go by His Word on the Judgment Day, and the Bible will be the witness against unbelievers who will with crooked teachings keep people from recognizing their sins, from repenting for their sins, and from going to the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation.

Paul says, "But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed" (Gal. 1:8). The Son of God, our Savior the Lord Jesus says, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (John 14:6). Now, DEATH is going to carry you off some day, sure and certain. Then you will find yourself in ETERNITY. Is it safer for you to trust your Creator, Who knows what He says, and is anxious to save you from everlasting damnation, or to put your trust in the miserable theories and opinions of men like yourself, who can neither save you, nor themselves from the just wrath of God? "For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh...If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed"(2John7,10).

H.K.