

Home Preacher, or Church in the House.

Seventh Week.

Morning Worship.

JESUS CHRIST, our Saviour, Prophet, and example; help us to see the glory of Thy holy subjection to the righteous and loving will of our Father, that so we may loathe our own rebellious self-will, and acknowledge with our hearts that we are nothing, and can do nothing without Thee, and ought to desire nothing but to be like Thee. *Amen.*

HYMN, or *Psalm cxix. 33-37.*

LORD, teach me to adore Thy hand,
From whence my comforts flow,
And let me in this desert land
A glimpse of Canaan know.

And O! whate'er of earthly bliss
Thy sovereign hand denies,
Accepted at Thy throne of grace
Let this petition rise:

Give me a calm, a thankful heart,
From every murmur free;
The blessings of Thy grace impart,
And let me live to Thee.

Let the sweet hope, that Thou art mine,
My path of life attend,
Thy presence through my journey shine,
And bless its happy end!

GENESIS XV. 1-5.

AFTER those things the word of the Lord came unto Abram in a vision, saying, Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward. 2. And Abram said, Lord God, what wilt thou give me, seeing I go childless, and the steward of my house is this Eliezer of Damascus? 3. And Abram said, Behold to me thou has given no seed: and, lo, one born in my house is mine heir. 4. And, behold, the word of the Lord came unto him, saying, This shall not be thine heir, but he that shall come forth out of thine own bowels shall be thine heir. 5. And he brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the

stars, if thou be able to number them. And he said unto him, So shall thy seed be.

GENESIS XXI. 1-5.

AND the Lord visited Sarah as he had said, and the Lord did unto Sarah as he had spoken. 2. For Sarah conceived, and bare Abraham a son in his old age, at the set time of which God had spoken to him. 3. And Abraham called the name of his son that was born unto him, who Sarah bare to him, Isaac. 4. And Abraham circumcised his son Isaac, being eight days old, as God had commanded him. 5. And Abraham was an hundred years old when his son Isaac was born unto him.

GENESIS XXII. 1-18.

AND it came to pass after these things, that God did tempt Abraham, and said unto him, Abraham. And he said, Behold, here I am. 2. And he said, Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt-offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of. 3. And Abraham rose up early in the morning, and saddled his ass, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son, and clave

the wood for the burnt-offering, and rose up, and went unto the place of which God had told him. 4. Then on the third day Abraham lifted up his eyes, and saw the place afar off. 5. And Abraham said unto his young men, Abide ye here with the ass; and I and the lad will go yonder and worship, and come again unto you. 6. And Abraham took the wood of the burnt-offering, and laid it upon Isaac his son; and he took the fire in his hand, and a knife, and they went both of them together. 7. And Isaac spake unto Abraham his father, and said, My father: and he said, Here am I, my son. And he said, Behold the fire and the wood; but where is the lamb for a burnt-offering? 8. And Abraham said, My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt-offering: so they went both of them together. 9. And they came to the place which God had told him of; and Abraham built an altar there, and laid the wood in order, and bound Isaac his son, and laid him on the altar upon the wood. 10. And Abraham stretched forth his hand, and took the knife to slay his son. 11. And the angel of the Lord called unto him out of heaven, and said, Abraham, Abraham. And he said, Here am I. 12. And he said, Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou anything unto him: for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, from me. 13. And Abraham lifted up his eyes, and looked and, behold, behind him a ram caught in a thicket by his horns: and Abraham went and took the ram

and offered him up for a burnt offering in the stead of his son. 14. And Abraham called the name of that place Jehovah-jireh: as it is said to this day, In the mount of the Lord it shall be seen, &c.

Prayer.

O LORD, to Thee, the King eternal, immortal, and invisible, we, thy feeble, dependent, and sinful creatures, draw nigh. Once more hast Thou opened the eye-lids of the morning, and caused the dayspring to know its place. We approach Thee with thanksgiving for the preservation of the night, and for the mercies of the returning day; and it is our heart's desire and prayer, O our Father, that this fresh period of our appointed time, as it speaks to us of Thy forbearance and unwearied love, may speak also of our gratitude, of our repentance, and of our Christian obedience to Thy most holy laws. O teach us daily to renew the exercise of our penitence and of our faith in Thy Son, our only Hope and Saviour; and may the continual supplies of Thy grace arm us against the sin that doth so easily beset us, and enable us to run with patience the race that is set before us.

While we seek defence against all temptation, we implore of Thee the fortitude needful to bear affliction, and the wisdom to profit by it as we ought. In every cup has thou mingled the waters of bitterness; and if Thine hand is not upon us now, its strokes have fallen in the past, and shall fall again in the future. Teach us, most gracious God, neither to despise Thy chastening, nor to faint when rebuked of Thee. Make us thankful that we enjoy so much, and suffer so little. Incline our hearts to walk in the footsteps of Him who, though a Son, yet learned obedience by the things which He suffered; and may our language, even in the hottest fires of affliction, be His, "Father, if it be possible let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine be done." what we ask for ourselves we ask for all Thy suffering children, and especially for any that may be near and dear to us; and our desire is, that we may one and all be joyful in hope and patient in tribulation, and that we may continue instant in prayer.

Bring us all, O our God, to the saving knowledge of thyself by Christ Jesus, granting us forgiveness of sins and inheritance among the sanctified. Then shall we return as Thy ransomed ones, with songs and everlasting joy upon our heads; and having been tried by the endurance of temptation, we shall receive the crown of life which the Lord hath promised to them that love Him. This blessing of sanctified affliction, with all the other benefits of Thy

covenant, we humbly ask through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom, with Thee, O Father, and the Holy Ghost, be glory for ever. *Amen.*

O GOD, who art the author of peace and lover of concord, in knowledge of whom standeth our eternal life, whose service is perfect freedom; defend us thy humble servants in all assaults of our enemies; that we, surely trusting in the thy defence, may not fear the power of any adversaries, through the might of Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

HYMN, or *Psalm xciv. 11-15.*

'TIS my happiness below
Not to live without the cross,
But the Saviour's power to know,
Sanctifying ev'ry loss;
Trials must and will befall;
But with humble faith to see
Love inscribed'd upon them all,
This is happiness to me.

God, in Israel, sows the seeds
Of affliction, pain and toil;

These spring up, and choke the weeds
Which would else o'er spread the soil:
Trials make the promise sweet,
Trials give new life to pray'r;
Trials bring me to his feet,
Lay me low, and keep me there.

Did I meet no trials here,
No chastisement by the way;
Might I not, with reason fear
I should prove a castaway:
Bastards may escape the rod,
Sunk in earthly, vain delight;
But the true-born child of God
Must not, will not, if he might.

LAMENTATIONS, III. 22-40.

IT is because of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. 23. They are new every morning: great is thy faithfulness. 24. The Lord is my portion, saith my soul; therefore will I hope in him. 25. The Lord is good unto them that wait for him, to the soul that seeketh him. 26. It is good that a man should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the Lord. 27. It is

good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth. 28. He sitteth alone, and keepeth silence, because he hath borne it upon him. 29. He putteth his mouth in the dust, if so be there may be hope. 30. He giveth his cheek to him that smiteth him: he is filled full with reproach. 31. For the Lord will not cast off for ever: 32. But though he cause grief, yet will he have compassion according to the multitude of his mercies. 33. For he doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men. 34. To crush under his feet all the prisoners of the earth, 35. To turn aside the right of a man before the face of the Most High, 36. To subvert a man in his cause, the Lord approveth not. 37. Who is he that saith, and it cometh to pass, when the Lord commandeth it not? 38. Out of the mouth of the most High proceedeth not evil and good? 39. Wherefore doth a living man complain, a man for the punishment of his sins? 40. Let us search and try our ways, and turn again to the Lord.

ROMANS VIII. 14-26.

FOR as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. 15. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. 16. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the

children of God: 17. And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ: if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together. 18. For I reckon, that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. 19. For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. 20. For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope; 21. Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. 22. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now: 23. And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the first-fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body. 24. For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? 25. But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it. 26. Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought; but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.

SERMON VII.

“WHOM THE LORD LOVETH HE CHASTENETH.”

-- Heb. xii. 6.

THE Hebrew Christians were assailed on two sides at once. “Without were fightings: within were fears.” They stood in doubt of the truth of the gospel; they suffered severely as its disciples. To suffer with a convinced mind is easy; to suffer with a wavering, is hard and trying. The apostle has sought first to cure their doubts, and to re-establish their attachment to Christianity, as better than Judaism; and now in the second half of his letter he deals with their trials and suffering for righteousness’ sake. He shows in the glorious chapter before that in which the text is found, how suffering had belonged to the law not less than to the gospel; how all the patriarchs had needed faith, as well as the apostles; and how the whole company of the faithful and their divine Leader gathered around the present set of runners in this martyr-race, with their example, their sympathy, and the assurance of reward. He applies the lesson with warmth, as well as tenderness, and in his tones of sympathy and exhortation there mingles something of complaint and of reproof. “Ye have forgotten the exhortation that speaketh unto you as unto children, My

son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him; for whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.”

Selecting the saying -- “Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth” -- as the subject of our meditation, and fixing attention on some of its properties: --

1. We observe, *first*, that this saying is an *old* saying. It was not Paul who first used it, even by inspiration of God. It goes back to an earlier day, and to an older book. It is a saying of Solomon, found in the third chapter of the Proverbs, “My son, despise not the chastening of the Lord, neither be weary of his correction; for whom the Lord loveth he correcteth, even as a father the son in whom he delighteth.” It is possible even that the saying goes back as far as the beginning of the Jewish history, for many of the proverbs of Solomon may have been current before in another form, and only received a new setting in his inspired collection. Still, if this saying had no existence before, it was of great antiquity now in Paul’s days. It had been in the hands of the faithful as they read their Bibles, and also in their mouths, amid the changes and chances of a thousand years. Solomon in his own afflictions had remembered it: the faithful, also, amidst the turmoil and confusion of the later days of the kingdom and the desolations of the captivity; and still farther down, those who amidst great depression “waited for the consolation of

Israel.” We can fancy many a generation of sufferers repeating to one another this time-hallowed saying, “Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth.” It is a great disadvantage to us, as we read the Old Testament, that we cannot tell what texts were favourite texts of the Old Testament church. We have no materials; no sermons preached on them; no religious diaries or correspondence, or other records, in which they frequently appeared. We know what are the favourite texts in our own country; and we have some means of knowing this also in regard to the early Christian church, which has left large commentaries and sermons on scripture. But in regard to the Jewish church, we cannot well say what verses and passages they read most frequently and quoted most constantly; and this knowledge can never now be recovered. But it can hardly be regarded as going too far to say, that his text in Proverbs about affliction was likely to be a favourite one, and to be often on the lips in days of trial. We know how we are evermore quoting some texts ourselves -- “All things work together for good to them that love God” -- “our light affliction worketh out a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory” -- “Not my will, but thine, be done.” And it may be presumed that the pious of old must have exalted this precious saying to the same rank. If so, we see how similar, after all, are the consolations of the Old Testament and the New. We know far more of the love of God; but the

saints then were not ignorant of it. We are comforted by thinking on it in our troubles; but they had it also to think on, and to trace their troubles up to this bright source.

They walked in the twilight: but they knew their road; and on all their rough and thorny paths they could see written, "Love:" "this is the right way to the city of habitation."

2. We observe, secondly, that this saying is an *unlikely* saying. When it first repeated we are all apt to say, "This is an hard saying, who can hear it?" It seems contrary to reason. How can love inflict suffering? How can the fountain send forth sweet waters and bitter? And it seems also contrary to faith; for is it not promised that God's children shall inherit all things, and that the ways of wisdom are pleasantness and her paths peace? If God has all resources, why should they so often be destitute, afflicted, and tormented? In short, this is a great disappointment to those who wish to join God's household, and to have their portion in the present life; for they are like the mixed multitude that came out of Egypt, and then complained of God's cruelty to them in the wilderness. And even to God's genuine children the adversities that gather around them are a great trial of faith; and they are sorely tempted to say, "If we be the Lord's, why are we thus?" "All these things are against me." We cannot greatly wonder then, if when heavy distresses and sorrows come upon us, it should be difficult to see love inscribed upon

them all. Thus, the saints of God have been exercised before us. They have forgotten this saying, and found it hard to recall it to mind. We are not singular in our doubts, our misgivings, our secret questions and murmurings, when the hand of God is laid upon us. This, however, is not said to excuse or justify us, but only to save us from concluding that our weak faith is no faith at all, or that we are not God's children, because we find it hard to flesh and blood to accept always and to welcome the saying, that "whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth."

3. We observe thirdly, that this saying is a true saying. Here is many an unlikely saying true, and none more so than this. It would not be true, if our suffering were not chastening. A holy angel suffering at God's hand would not be consistent with love. But our suffering is all corrective; and we may well say, "Wherefore should a living man complain, a man for the punishment of his sins?" Again, it would not be true, if there were any mixture of malice or vindictiveness in our sufferings, if they were the inflictions of an executioner, and not the remedies of a physician, or the stripes of a father, which indeed they are. And further it would not be true, if God afflicted us beyond what were able to bear, or beyond what was absolutely necessary for our highest welfare; in regard to both of which suppositions, however, the direct opposite is the case. There is a need-be

for our heaviness through manifold temptations or trials; and the love of God appears in His carrying out the needful design, not only in spite of our suffering, but even by means of our suffering. This use or design of suffering must be thoroughly learned, in order to see and understand the loving-kindness of the Lord. If there are evils that cannot be averted save by suffering, and blessings that cannot be gained save by suffering, then it is plain that the principle which chooses suffering to avert those evils otherwise inevitable, and to gain those blessings otherwise unattainable, can be nothing but love. The greatest of all evils is eternal wandering from God. This is hell; and anything that will save men from it is the dictate of love. Now, who has ever been saved from it without suffering and much suffering? When the prodigal son came to himself and said, "I perish with hunger!" I will wander no more; "I will arise and go to my father" -- can we think he would have come to himself and returned had he still sat in riot and plenty, devouring his father's living with harlots? Was not his correction, his coming down even to the husks that the swine do eat, the means of his salvation? And could his father have done a more loving thing towards him, had he been able, than to bring him earlier to this repentance by drying up all the springs of his guilty pleasure? Thus God our Father deals with us, and his dealing is in pure love and pity. Weary and sore-broken,

we return to our Father's house. We rise, from the broken cisterns which can hold no water, to the eternal fountain; and all that we have suffered we then bless God for, and say, "It is good for me that I have been afflicted. Before I was afflicted I went astray; but now I have kept thy word." To a meditative eye there is nothing that so softens the aspect of the misery that is in this world. It is well that it should be there. Here is the prodigal starving and tasting of the bitterness of sin that he may be brought back to his Father! Yes. When we are out of employment; when our schemes miscarry; when the world turns its back on us; when our strength is brought down by sore disease, and our heart darts with remorse and fear; when our home is covered with sackcloth, and wife or child is consigned to the gloomy grave; then is the turning point, the blessed hour of repentance; and the soul is rescued from the wrath to come! Nor is it only once that this sore discipline is needed. Our life is a perpetual wandering from God; and therefore again love hedges up our way with thorns, blights our earthly joys, shatters our dearest hopes, wastes our dearest treasures, that God may be our portion, and that in him we may have all things and abound. But this is only one-half of the uses of adversity. This is like the correction that reclaims the schoolboy from fatal vices; but there is another correction that secures the learning of the needful tasks and lessons. So we must learn on earth the lessons that fit for

heaven, else heaven will be no heaven to us; and nowhere can we learn them save in the school of affliction. Can we learn patience, can we learn humility, can we learn obedience, can we learn entire submission to the will of God, anywhere else but amidst afflictions, necessities, distresses? Or, if we can, could others do it before us? Or could Christ himself, who learned obedience by the things he suffered, and was made perfect through sufferings? Would it then be love in God to leave us bound over by sin to hell, or even to leave us unprepared by holiness for heaven? And must he not use the rod, if he is to save the child? Those who neither believe in hell nor in heaven, whose only hope is to eat and drink and indulge animal sensations for a few fleeting years, whose god is their belly, and who mind earthly things, may be contented to be left alone; but every true child of God will prefer the correction that recalls from going down to the pit, and sweetens for the inheritance of the skies. Thus reason and faith alike declare this saying true. The experience of the greatest saints declares it true; for have not the greatest endured the hardest flight of affliction? The experience of all saints on earth declares it true; for is there one that will not attest that tribulation worketh patience? Yea, the experience of all saints in glory declares it true; for how is it save through much tribulation that they have entered into the kingdom!

4. We observe, *fourthly*, that this is a *comfortable* saying. Paul brings it forward to comfort the Hebrew Christians. “My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord; nor faint when thou art rebuked of him; *for* whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth.” There are still those who despise the chastening of the Lord, who harden themselves against its loving tendency, and refuse to receive correction and return. But there are still more who faint when God rebukes them, and give way when the loving hand of God touches them. Paul here chiefly concerned himself with those who faint in the day of adversity, and to such he still says, “Faint not, for whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth!” Is not this a truly comfortable doctrine? If we believed that God was afflicting us more than others for our sins, this would depress; or if we believed that no superior advantage would accrue to us from our sufferings, this might lead us to complain; or if we had no security one way or other, but regarded ourselves as the sport of blind chance or fate, this might tantalize us and hold us in continual doubt! But here we have God’s word for it, that our chastening is the fruit of his own love--the exercise of his fatherly prerogative to consult our good in the best and wisest manner; and can we, in the face of such an assurance, repel comfort, and sink in dejection and despondency? It is impossible, if only we believe. Nothing can hinder such a doctrine from being most comfortable but unbelief; and that, of course, will turn

the most comfortable truths into gloom and darkness and the shadow of death. When the disciples saw Jesus walking on the sea, and thought it was a spirit, they were affrighted, and cried out for fear. Here was the effect of ignorance or unbelief: but no sooner did they recognize their loving Lord, and receive him into the ship, than all was peace and joy! So let us, as we behold Jesus walking at midnight on the waves of our afflictions, no longer yield to the temptation to think it a spirit and a stranger, but open our ears to the voice of our own gracious Lord, "It is I, be not afraid!" and then we will come with gladness to our desired haven!

5. We observe, *fifthly* and lastly, that it is an *ever to be remembered* saying. The Hebrews had forgotten it, and many forget it still. Which of us has not, at some time or other, forgotten this saying, and exclaimed with Job, "Let me alone, for my days are vanity;" or with Jacob "I shall go down to the grave mourning;" or with Hezekiah, "I shall go softly all my years in the bitterness of my soul?" Our memory is exceedingly short both for the lessons of God's word and the deliverances of his providence. We lose sight of the blessing of past afflictions; and when God's hand is again upon us, "We are not!" But we ought to bear in remembrance, that so long as we are in the world we shall have tribulation, for the trial of our faith is not yet perfect, and Christ is not yet fully formed in us the hope of glory! Our path will lie to the end through scenes of grief and

sorrow, by the sickbed and the deathbed, and the grave's mouth; and no fiery trial that is to try us should be accounted strange. Job's messengers will come to our habitation, announcing the wreck of property and the loss of children. We shall sit in the dust and lament our sores; and where comforters are looked for, there may be tormentors and messengers of Satan to buffet us. Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but never too many; and the end makes all good, for the Lord delivereth him out of them all. Happy is the man that in the midst of all, and in the face of all, can say, "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him!" "This also cometh forth from the Lord of hosts, who is wonderful in counsel and excellent in working!" "Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us!" O let us remember the saying of the text amidst the afflictions of time; and then we shall never forget it amidst the beatitudes of eternity. Then shall the wondrous love of God in Christ Jesus, that made us go through fire and through water to the wealthy place, excite everlasting praises, and the sorrow and sighing that have ended so blissfully shall for ever flee away!

In conclusion, let it be deeply impressed on all of us, that the blessing of affliction depends upon conversion. Many suffer, and suffer acutely, whose afflictions are wholly lost. Cain was grievously depressed; but he went out from the presence of the Lord. Saul suffered

unspeakable dejection and gloom; but as he did not humble himself before God, no light rises upon his darkness. There is nothing more truly mournful, nothing more heart-rending, than unsanctified sorrow. Scenes of almost intolerable grief have been seen in the families of the pious, where the limit of human agony seemed nearly to be reached, and a pang more would have been destruction. But rather would the thoughtful man witness this over again which has yielded the peaceable fruit of righteousness, than stand amid apparently lighter affliction, that is succeeded by the song and the dance and the round of worldly gaiety, and the entire closing up of every avenue that God had sought to tear open for the entrance of his truth! From such hardening of heart, and searing of conscience, and sleep of the soul, amidst the false enchantments of a sorceress-world, may God deliver all whom we love; and may affliction when it comes, come effectually, come benignantly, to rouse from the torpor of hopeless death, and to send home, though in thunder tones, the needful cry, "Prepare to meet thy God." *Amen.* --JOHN CAIRNS, D.D.

THE CHILDREN'S SERVICE.

OF TWO BROTHERS THAT DIED ON MOUNTAINS.

NOT a few persons, in different circumstances, have died on mountains. I suppose, when God sent the great flood on a wicked world, there were many who fled from the rising waters up to the hills, only to be followed by the devouring seas. In days of persecution, mountains have been refuges for the oppressed, and when Jesus comes to judgment numbers of his children will be found sleeping there. In peaceful and ordinary times, shepherds have perished in snow-storms on the heights when caring for their flocks, and wanderers losing their track have left their bones among the rocks. We have heard of late of various deaths on the Alpine steeps -- some very sad. But my present story is to tell of two deaths on mountains, in very different circumstances from any of these, which happened to two brothers, one after the other. Both of them walked up the slopes of the hills, knowing that at the top they were to lie down and die, at the word of the Lord.

These two brothers were Aaron and Moses. I have told you already about the last of these, when he was a little babe. You will now hear of him when he was an old man, and his brother Aaron was a little older than he; and the two had been employed together by God to bring his people

out of Egypt, and lead them through the wilderness. Moses was sent by God as a great prophet and ruler; and Aaron was made the high priest of Israel. In these offices thy had been among the people for nearly forty years, all which time they had been going with their great charge from place to place in the desert, where many strange events happened. God had caused the people to stay so long in the wilderness because they had refused, from unbelief and fear, to go in to the land of promise when he first led them to it, and he “sware in his wrath” that every person then more than twenty years old should die in the desert. There were two exceptions -- but these were not Moses and Aaron. The shutting out of these two great men, however, came about from another and special cause, which I must now try to explain.

The people of Israel, as already said, had been a long time in the wilderness. But at last they were near the borders of inhabited countries, through some of which they were to pass into the land of Canaan. In the place, however, where their camp was, there was no water. Now that was a great want where were so many people, and it is not wonderful that should have felt sorely tried and troubled. But they did what was very wrong: they became angry with Moses and Aaron, and after all that God had done for them, they said, We wish that we had died of the plague, and not have been brought into a strait like this.

The two brothers were much moved and vexed by these rash words, and fell on their faces to the ground, while the glory that showed God's presence appeared to them. For God had heard the murmurings of the people, and was displeased. Yet he dealt with them in mercy, and told Moses to take the rod of the Lord, and along with Aaron to gather the people together before a rock that was near, and to speak to the rock in their presence, when water would flow forth in abundance. Once before, Moses at God's command had brought water from a rock by smiting it, and that water had been a stream to supply the people for many a day, as they went through the desert. This time God bade Moses to speak to the rock; instead of doing which, he spoke hot words to the people, called them rebels, and said, Must we fetch you water out of this rock? Then, like one in a rage, he struck the rock twice. The water on that gushed out, and the people and their cattle drank. It was a great miracle of mercy.

But it was on account of the behaviour of Moses and Aaron at this time, that God said he would not allow them to bring the people into the land of promise. He told them that they had not believed him, had not trusted him to send the water from the rock on their calmly speaking to it, but had become angry and struck it twice, or perhaps, as I have heard it explained, had not in their heat of feeling intended or expected it to bring water from the rock at all, but had

smitten it in blind anger, and therefore they must die before crossing the Jordan. For God takes notice of sin in his own people, and will correct it. Moses and Aaron were very sorry not to go with the people into their goodly heritage, and Moses prayed very earnestly that God would allow him to go and see it, but God would not grant his wish, and said to him not to pray more about it.

It was not long after this that the people made a journey, and came to the bottom of a mountain called Hor, near the coasts of Edom. Here a solemn thing took place. God told Moses that Aaron, his brother, must go up to the top of the mount and die, and showed him what to do. So in clear daylight, and before all the people, Moses took Aaron and his son Eleazar, Aaron being dressed in his priestly robes; and they three went away from the camp, and began to climb the sides of the mountain, the whole nation watching them as they went up. How strangely must all the three have felt! At last they reached the top; and there Moses took the priest's robes from off Aaron, and clothed his son with them, and then the father lay down and breathed his last. The touch of God loosed the bonds of life, and his spirit went away to join the just that had gone before him. The people that saw three go up, saw only two come down; knew that Aaron had departed from earth, and mourned a whole month for him.

It was after this a good while that Moses was taken away. The people had journeyed still nearer to the land which God had given to Abraham their father, and had come close to a range of mountains called Abarim. One lofty mountain of this range was called Nebo, and its loftiest point was Pisgah. So one day God told Moses to go up to that high peak, and look from it all to the north and west, and he would see the goodly country of promise, although he could not be allowed to enter it. Moses, therefore, set out alone, and went up to the top of the mountain, and feasted his eyes with the fair sight. He had bidden farewell to those below, and had left his successor Joshua with a charge to do rightly and bravely, for he knew he was not to come down from the mountain again. Nor did he return -- for after he had gazed on the land God had given to his people, God closed his eyes to the light of earth, where he then lay, and the great leader of Israel was no more. No one but God saw him die; but the people knew he was dead because he had foretold his death, and did not come back. Nor were they allowed to get his body and bury it. Perhaps they would have made a wrong use of his tomb, if they had been permitted to prepare it. They did not even know where he was laid. No person knows where to this day. For God himself buried him. But Christ knows the spot, and at the last day the lonely grave in the mountains of Moab will yield up its dead.

Dear children, you have one day to die. I do not know in what circumstances, at what age, in what place you are to meet with death, but you have to meet it. Do you think you will be able to meet it as calmly as these two brothers, who walked up to the mountain-tops to lay down their lives? You may, you will, if Jesus be with you. With him you need not fear dying all alone. Without him, you would not be safe from fear, though all your friends were round about you. Pray to have Jesus near you, helping you, when you are called to die; and though it should be far in a desert, or on the lonely sea, or upon a great mountain all alone, you shall fear no evil.

QUESTIONS ON THE BIBLE STORY.

1. How do we know that Aaron was older than Moses?
2. How old was Moses when he died?
3. Where do we read about Aaron's being made a high priest?
4. Where was water first brought from a rock, for supplying Israel in the desert?
5. Can you find a text which makes it likely that this first water followed the people in a stream?

THE questions may be readily answered by consulting Exod. vi.;
Deut. xxxiv.; Exod. xxviii.; Exod. xvii.; 1 Cor. x. 4.

QUESTIONS ON THE BIBLE LESSONS.

1. How did Abraham manifest his trust in God and belief in his promises? Heb. xi. 17-19; Rom. iv. 20, 21.

2. How was Abraham justified? By the Grace of God in whom he trusted? Or by the merits of his own works? Rom. iv. 3-5.

3. Who are the seed of Abraham according to the spirit? Rom. iv. 16.

4. For whom might some die? Rom. v. 7.

5. For whom did Christ die? Rom. v. 8.

6. What is the pledge of every promise relating to those who have confidence in God? Rom. viii. 32.

Prayer.

O GOD, Thou hast appointed unto all men once to die. We know that Thou wilt bring us to death, and to the house appointed for all living. We do not know the time nor manner of our death, but Thou knowest. The number of our months is with Thee. We would not have it

otherwise. Our times are best in thy hand. Blessed by thy name, that thou hast revealed to us One who can save us from all harm, and fear in dying. We praise Thee for Jesus; for his death which is past, and for his life which is for evermore. Through his death may the sting of death be taken away from us. May He prepare us for the hour of dying, and be close beside us when it comes. May He then say to us, Fear not, and stay our weak hearts by his Holy Spirit! May our dust sleep in Jesus, wherever it may lie, and our spirit go to be with Him, which is far better, till He come again to raise our bodies and receive us wholly to Himself, that where He is there we may be also. All this we ask for his sake only. *Amen.*

EVENING WORSHIP.

O GOD, whose knowledge is unlimited, whose power is infinite, and whose grace is all-sufficient; we beseech Thee to deliver us from all the temptations of the devil, the world, and the flesh. We acknowledge our own weakness, but glory in Thy strength. O Lord! In mercy never try us beyond our strength, not afflict us beyond our patience nor correct us but with a father's rod. Rescue us from the evils

we have done, and preserve us from those which we have deserved, that we, living here before thee by Thy grace, in purity of mind and body, may, at the day of judgment, be presented pure and spotless by the blood of the Lamb.

Amen.

HYMN, or Psalm xcii. 12-15.

BLEST be Thy love, dear Lord,
That taught us this sweet way,
Only to love thee for Thyself,
And for that love obey.

O Thou, our souls' chief hope!
We to Thy mercy fly;
Where'er we are, thou canst protect,
Whate'er we need, supply.

Whether we sleep or wake,
To Thee we both resign;
By night we see, as well as day,
If Thy light on us shine.

Whether we live or die,
Both we submit to Thee;
In death we live, as well as life,

If Thine in death we be.

HEBREWS XI. 11-19.

THROUGH faith also Sara herself received strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child when she was past age, because she judged him faithful who had promised. 12. Therefore sprang there even of one, and him as good as dead, so many as the stars of the sky in multitude, and as the sand which is by the sea-shore innumerable. 13. These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. 14. For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country. 15. And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned. 16. But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God; for he hath prepared for them a city. 17. By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, 18. Of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called: 19. Accounting that

God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure.

ROMANS IV. 1-5, 13-25.

WHAT shall we say then that Abraham, our father as pertaining to the flesh, hath found? 2. For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory; but not before God. 3. For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness. 4. Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. 5. But to him that worketh not, but believeth in him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness. 13. For the promise, that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith. 14. For if they which are of the law be heirs, faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect. 15. Because the law worketh wrath: for where no law is, there is no transgression. 16. Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed: not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all, 17. (As it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations,) before him whom he believed, even God, who

quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were: 18. Who against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations, according to that which was spoken, so shall thy seed be. 19. And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sarah's womb: 20. He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; 21. And being fully persuaded, that what he had promised, he was able also to perform. 22. And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness. 23. Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it as imputed to him; 24. But for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; 25. Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.

ROMANS V. 6-8.

FOR when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. 7. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. 8. But God commendeth his love

toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

ROMANS VIII. 31-32.

WHAT shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? 32. He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?

Prayer.

O LORD, another day is gone; and our work, finished or unfinished, must be laid aside. Soon that night will come in which no man can work; and all our knowledge, device, and wisdom shall be swallowed up in the darkness of the grave. May the prospect fill our minds with solemn awe and godly fear, and may we now prepare to give an account of our stewardship with joy, and not with grief!

O Lord, Thou knowest what wicked and slothful servants we have been, how shamefully we have wasted Thy goods, how wantonly we have trampled on Thine

instructions, how frowardly we have said in our hearts, “My Lord delayeth His coming!” Enter not into judgment with us, O Lord, and let the sins of an unfaithful stewardship be all blotted out of Thy book by the blood of Christ!

Henceforth may we redeem the time, because the days are evil! May we give all diligence to make our calling and election sure! May we not sleep as do others, but may we watch and be sober! And as the night is far spent and the day is at hand, may we cast off the works of darkness, and put on the armour of light! For this end, grant us, O Father, the effectual aids of the blessed Spirit of Christ; and then we shall so number our days as to apply our hearts unto wisdom!

Watch over us, we implore Thee, with all this household, and all dear to us, during the silence of the night. May our bed comfort us, and our couch ease our complaint. May the peace of God, which passeth understanding, be reflected in our sleep, and even in our dreams. And when, as having awaked out of many a slumber, we at length awake no more, may it be because we have fallen asleep in Jesus, and are for ever with the Lord. *Amen.*

MORNING AND EVENING MEDITATIONS.

MONDAY.

Morning.

Hear me when I call, O God of my righteousness: thou hast enlarged me when I was in distress; have mercy upon me, and hear my prayer.

I will wash mine hands in innocency: so will I compass thine altar, O Lord.

The righteous cry, and the Lord heareth, and delivereth them out of all their troubles.

The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit.

Many are the afflictions of the righteous: but the Lord delivereth them all.

Ps. iv. 1. Ps. xxvi. 6. Ps xxxiv. 17, 18, 19.

Evening.

The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord: but the prayer of the upright is his delight.

The Lord is far from the wicked; but he heareth the prayer of the righteous.

I will therefore that men pray every where, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting.

And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins they shall be forgiven him.

Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.

Prov. xv. 8, 29. 1 Tim. ii. 8. James v. 15, 16.

TUESDAY.

Morning.

Lord, Thou hast heard the desire of the humble: thou wilt prepare their heart, thou wilt cause thine ear to hear.

Turn us again, O Lord God of hosts, cause thy face to shine; and we shall be saved.

I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications.

And I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried: they shall call on my name, and I will hear

them: I will say, It is my people; and they shall say, The Lord is my God.

Ps. x. 17. Ps. lxxx. 19. Zech. xii.10. Zech. xiii. 9.

Evening.

Ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.

Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints.

If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.

But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering: for he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed.

For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord.

Rom. viii. 15. Eph. vi. 18. James i. 5, 6, 7.

WEDNESDAY.

Morning.

Hear the right, O Lord, attend unto my cry, give ear unto my prayer that goeth not out of feigned lips.

Thou hast proven mine heart; thou hast visited me in the night; thou hast tried me, and shalt find nothing: I am purposed that my mouth shall not transgress.

I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end.

Ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart.

Ps. xvii. 1, 3.

Jer. xxix. 11, 13.

Evening.

Let us lift up our heart with our hands unto God in the heavens.

If thou prepare thine heart, and stretch out thine hands toward him;

Thou shalt forget thy misery, and remember it as waters that pass away:

And thine age shall be clearer than the noon-day; thou shalt shine forth, thou shalt be as the morning.

And thou shalt be secure, because there is hope; yea, thou shalt dig about thee, and thou shalt take thy rest in safety.

Also thou shalt lie down, and none shall make thee afraid.

Lam. iii. 41.

Job xi. 13, 16, 17, 18. 19.

THURSDAY.

Morning.

Now we know that God heareth not sinners: but if any man be a worshipper of God, and doeth his will, him he heareth.

Also the sons of the stranger, that join themselves to the Lord, to serve him and to love the name of the Lord, to be his servants, every one that keepeth the sabbath from polluting it, and taketh hold of my covenant;

Even them will I bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer: their burnt-offerings and their sacrifices shall be accepted upon mine altar; for mine house shall be called an house of prayer for all people.

John ix. 31. Isa. lvi. 6, 7.

Evening.

He forgetteth not the cry of the humble.

Lord, thou hast heard the desire of the humble: thou wilt prepare their heart, thou wilt cause thine ear to hear;

To judge the fatherless and the oppressed, that the man of the earth may no more oppress.

This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles.

The Lord redeemeth the soul of his servants; and none of them that trust in him shall be desolate.

Evening, and morning, and at noon, will I pray, and cry aloud; and he shall hear my voice.

Ps. ix. 12.

Ps. x. 17, 18.

Ps. xxxiv. 6, 22.

Ps. lv. 17.

FRIDAY.

Morning.

Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican.

The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican.

I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess.

And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner.

I tell you this man went down to his house justified rather than the other.

Luke xviii. 10, 11, 12, 13, 14.

Evening.

Bow down thine ear, O Lord, hear me: for I am poor and needy.

Be merciful unto me, O Lord: for I cry unto thee daily.

Rejoice the soul of thy servant: for unto thee, O Lord, do I lift up my soul.

For thou, Lord, art good, and ready to forgive; and plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon thee.

Give ear, O Lord, unto my prayer; and attend to the voice of my supplications.

In the day of my trouble I will call upon thee: for thou wilt answer me.

Ps. lxxxvi. 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7.

SATURDAY.

Morning.

My voice shalt thou hear in the morning, O Lord; in the morning will I direct my prayer unto thee, and will look up.

Take away all iniquity, and receive us graciously: so will we render the calves of our lips.

So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.

Hide not thy face from me in the day when I am in trouble; incline thine ear unto me: in the day when I call, answer me speedily.

O that my ways were directed to keep thy statutes!

Then shall I not be ashamed, when I have respect unto all thy commandments.

Ps. v. 3. Hos. xiv. 2. Ps. xc. 12. Ps. cii. 2. Ps. cxix. 5, 6.

Evening.

O Lord God of my salvation, I have cried day and night before thee;

Let my prayer come before thee, incline thine ear unto my cry;

For my soul is full of troubles, and my life draweth nigh unto the grave.

I am counted with them that go down into the pit; I am as a man that hath no strength.

I prevented the dawning of the morning, and cried: I hoped in thy word.

Mine eyes prevent the night watches, that I might meditate in thy word.

Hear my voice, according unto thy loving-kindness; O Lord, quicken me according to thy judgment.

Ps. lxxxviii. 1, 2, 3, 4.

Ps. cxix. 147, 148, 149.