

Home Preacher, or Church in the House.

Eighth Week.

Morning Worship.

O THOU who didst love us when we were enemies, forgive us when we were debtors, recover us when we were dead, relieve us when we were poor, and naked, and wandering, and full of misery, shed abroad Thy love in our hearts, that we may be pitiful and compassionate to our suffering and erring brethren, following the Lord Jesus as our example, obeying His precepts as our rule, and possessing His Spirit as our guide, that so we may finally receive His eternal mercy in the complete salvation of our souls.

HYMN, or *Ps. xxvii. 4, 5.*

NEARER, my God, to Thee,
Nearer to Thee!
E'en though it be a cross
That raiseth me;
Still all my song shall be,
Nearer, my God, to Thee
Nearer to Thee!

Though like a wanderer,
The sun gone down,
Darkness comes over me,
My rest a stone;
Yet in my dreams I'd be
Nearer, my God to Thee,
Nearer to Thee!

Then, with my waking thoughts
Bright with Thy praise,
Out of my stony griefs
Bethels I'll raise;
So by my woes to be
Nearer, my God, to Thee
Nearer to Thee!

And when on joyful wing
Cleaving the sky,
Sun, moon, and stars forgot,
Upwards I fly,
Still all my song shall be,
Nearer, my God, to Thee,
Nearer to Thee!

GENESIS XXIV. 1-8.

AND Abraham was old, and well stricken in age; and the Lord had blessed Abraham in all things. 2. And Abraham said unto his eldest servant of his house, that ruled over all that he had, Put, I pray thee, thy hand under my thigh; 3. And I will make thee swear by the Lord, the God of heaven, and the God of earth, that thou shalt not take a wife unto my son of the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I dwell: 4. But thou shalt go unto my country, and to my kindred, and take a wife unto my son Isaac. 5. And the servant said unto him, Peradventure the woman will not be willing to follow me unto this land: must I needs bring thy son again unto the land from whence thou camest? 6. And Abraham said unto him, Beware thou that thou bring not my son thither again. 7. The Lord God of heaven, which took me from my father's house, and from the land of my kindred, and which spake unto me, and that sware unto me, saying, Unto thy seed will I give this land; and he shall send his angel before thee, and thou shalt take a wife unto my son from thence. 8. And if the woman will not be willing to follow thee, then thou shalt be clear from this my oath: only bring not my son thither again.

[The rest of the deeply interesting narrative of the marriage of Isaac and Rebekah, so characteristic of eastern manners and customs, is too long to be inserted here, but immediately follows these verses.]

GENESIS XXV. 7-11, 19-27.

AND these are the days of the years of Abraham's life which he lived, an hundred threescore and fifteen years. 8. Then Abraham gave up the ghost, and died in a good old age, an old man, and full of years; and was gathered to his people. 9. And his sons Isaac and Ishmael buried him in the cave of Machpelah, in the field of Ephron the son of Zohar the Hittite, which is before Mamre; 10. The field which Abraham purchased of the sons of Heth: there was Abraham buried, and Sarah his wife. 11. And it came to pass after the death of Abraham, that God blessed his son Isaac; and Isaac dwelt by the well Lahai-roi.

Prayer.

O LORD, our God, we would bow before thee with reverence and godly fear. We would render unto thee the homage of body, soul, and spirit. We would worship thee in the beauty of holiness. Grant us the aid that we require. Impart to us the necessary grace. Induce the dispositions which it becometh us to cherish, and bring us into sacred fellowship with the ordinations of thy own mercy for our access to the throne of grace. Blessed be thy name for

Jesus Christ the righteous, our advocate with the Father. Blessed be thy name for the Holy Ghost, the helper of our infirmities in prayer. Blessed be thy name for thy willingness to do for us even exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think. We will rejoice because thou waitest to be gracious. Thy former loving-kindnesses are waiting to be renewed. Lord, we believe it: help thou our unbelief. We enquire of thee, according to thy will. We ask that we may receive. We plead with thee, and put in remembrance, that we and others may be blessed. Let all who assemble themselves together on this holy day be remembered by thee, in order to their growth in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. In their exercises of devotion and of instruction may they be strengthened with might by the Spirit in the inner man. Send them help from the sanctuary, and bless them out of Zion. Clothe every minister with salvation, and cause all thy people to shout aloud for joy. And, O Lord God, who art merciful and gracious, have mercy upon the multitudes who obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. Bear yet further with their ungodliness. Compassionate their folly. Enlighten their ignorance. Counteract their prejudices. Deal gently with their difficulties. Subdue and subordinate their will to thine; so that, made willing in the day of thy power, they may exercise repentance towards God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. This day may salvation come to their houses,

and to themselves. May every work of Sabbath-day benevolence enjoy thy smile and obtain thy cooperation. Let thy kingdom come, and thy will be done in earth, even as it is done in heaven. And where, O heavenly Father, thy children are prevented by affliction from the assembling themselves together, be pleased to alleviate their affliction kindly. Speak comfortably unto them. Lay not more upon them than they are able to bear. Stay thy rough wind in the day of thine east wind. Make all their beds in their sickness. Give them the assurance and the pledge that thou art chastening them for their profit, that they may be partakers of thy holiness. In the multitude of their thoughts within them, may thy comforts delight their souls. Upon ourselves, gracious Lord, command a blessing. In this household may we know that the sabbath was made for man. In resting from the labours of the life that now is, may we all be led to the practical consideration of the life that is to come. May our hours which we spend at home be spent in personal fellowship with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ. May our hours which we spend in the sanctuary be spent in the communion of saints, and in the comforts of the Holy Ghost. Deliver us from all indolence and from all indifference, and from all formalism and from all self-sufficiency, and from all dependence on the arm of flesh. Give us to remember, whilst we are gratefully enjoying the means of grace that our sufficiency is of God

alone. We beseech thee to bless our Queen and our country. Through the various services of this day, may pure and undefiled religion be increased in our land, and our neighbours be brought to love one another as they love themselves. Hasten the time, O Lord, when at home and abroad there shall be the universal prevalence of the godliness which is profitable for all things, and which hath the promise both of the life that now is, and of the life that is to come. Forgive us once more our manifold offences. We confess them. We deplore them. We renounce them. Have mercy upon us through our great High Priest; and where our sins have abounded may thy grace and much more abound. And now, unto the Father, unto the son, and unto the Holy Ghost, be all honour and glory, even for ever and ever. *Amen.*

THE CHURCH IN THE HOUSE.

INCLINE our hearts, O Lord, to calm and Christ-like contemplation. Cause us to approach unto thee, and then show unto us thy covenant. Bring us into thy banqueting house, and let thy banner over us be love. Deal bountifully

with thy servants according to thy word, that of the peace which is like a river we may personally participate, even of the very peace which passeth understanding -- peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

HYMN, or *Psalm lxxii. 5-8.*

THROUGH all the changing scenes of life,
In trouble and in joy,
The praises of my God shall still
My heart and tongue employ.

Of his deliver'rance I will boast,
Till all who are distress'd
From my example comfort take,
And charm their griefs to rest.

The host of God encamp around
The dwellings of the just;
Protection He affords to all
Who make his name their trust.

O! make but trial of his love;
Experience will decide
How blest they are, and only they,

Who in his truth confide.
Fear Him, ye saints and you will then
Have nothing else to fear;
Make *you* his service your delight,
Your wants He'll make his care.

LUKE XII. 15-32.

And he said unto them, take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth. 16. And he spake a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully: 17. And he thought within himself, saying what shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits? 18. And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods. 19. And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much good laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry. 20. But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee; then whose shall those things be which thou hast provided? 21. So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich towards God. 22. And he said unto his disciples, Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for

your life, what ye shall eat; neither for the body, what ye shall put on. 24. Consider the ravens: for they neither sow, nor reap; which neither have storehouse nor barn; and God feedeth them. How much more are ye better than the fowls? 25. And which of you, with taking thought, can add to his stature one cubit? 16. If ye then be not able to do that thing which is least, why take ye thought for the rest? 27. Consider the lilies, how they grow: they toil not, they spin not; and yet I say unto you, that Solomon, in all his glory, was not arrayed like one of these. 28. If then God so clothe the grass, which is to-day in the field, and to-morrow is cast into the oven; how much more will he clothe you, O ye of little faith? 29. And seek ye not what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink, neither be ye of doubtful mind. 30. For all these things do the nations of the world seek after: and your Father knoweth that ye have need of these things. 31. But rather seek ye the kingdom of God; and all these things shall be added unto you. 32. Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.

HEBREWS XIII. 5, 6.

Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will

never leave thee, nor forsake thee. 6. So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.

SERMON VIII.

“TAKE THEREFORE NO THOUGHT FOR THE MORROW: FOR THE MORROW SHALL TAKE THOUGHT FOR THE THINGS OF ITSELF.”

-- Matt. vi. 34.

WEAK faith may be genuine faith. A man may be a feeble and a faltering believer; but he may be a real believer. Confidence in God may lack consistency and steadfastness and force: it may, nevertheless, be confidence of the right kind.

A consolatory assurance this for some of us who belong to Christ. We rejoice, as we infer from the history of the first disciples, that, our timidity and trepidation notwithstanding, we may deem ourselves the children of God.

With our timidity and trepidation, however, we ought never to be content. By their exercise our Saviour is

dishonoured. By their exercise, moreover, he is sore displeased. It is not a right thing, but a wrong thing, to question the divine promises. It is a habit, not for admiration, but for reproof, the habit of mistrusting the divine word. Christians we may be, no doubt, while slow of heart to believe: but we are Christians in that case, we must remember, of whom Christ utters deplorable complaints. Although he bears with us generously, he declares himself aggrieved.

Witness the whole passage of which this exhortation is a part. Christ was dealing with his disciples pitifully. They were evidently the objects of his compassionate and considerate regard. *Albeit*, he is constrained to administer significant rebuke. They were apprehensive: why were they apprehensive? They were dismayed: why were they dismayed? They were in bondage to the fear which hath torment: why were they in bondage to it, even for an hour? With instructions such as they had been receiving, they ought to have known better. Let them hearken to the instruction once more: and then, let the instruction do its blessed work of tranquillity and peace. "Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself."

Of the same habit with these first disciples -- as, to our discredit, alas! we are -- let us listen as they were listening, that we may learn.

IN THE FIRST PLACE, LET THE LESSON OF OUR SAVIOUR BE ASCERTAINED. Christian men are to take no thought. You ask for an explanation, and you press for an explanation. It occurs to you that we are exhorted to “provide things honest in the sight of all men;” that we are required to take care, each of us severally, of his own house. Holy Scripture, as you remember, looks complacently on the boy at school amidst his solicitude; on the virtuous woman amidst her solicitude; on the professional man, on the mercantile man, on the literary man, on the working man, amidst his solicitude; on the faithful minister of Jesus Christ amidst of his solicitude. The highest authority of all may be quoted for earnest and continuous and profound thought, in respect to the relationships and the occupations of our daily life. Worse than an infidel is that man declared to be, who does not forecast and prearrange for the household which has been committed to his care.

How then is our Lord to be understood when he bids us to dispense with all thought -- when he deprecates all solicitude about to-morrow -- if, indeed, he does not deprecate, besides, all solicitude about to-day?

The fact is, that he does not deprecate *all* solicitude: that he does not forbid *all* thought. What he does is to prohibit a certain kind of solicitude and thought. His object is to guard us against the idea that every thing is within our own power -- that we are answerable for every thing -- that

we must see to the outworking of all processes and to the accomplishment of all results. Incessant uneasiness, morbid apprehensiveness, perpetual interference, irrepressible misgiving, obtrusive meddlesomeness with the future, are things which are proscribed: things all of them which leave out of sight the presence and the providence of God.

Know you not, brethren, what it is to become incessantly uneasy, morbidly apprehensive, perpetually interfering, irrepressibly tremulous, obtrusively meddlesome with the future: anticipating and fore-appointing and preparing, in practical unmindfulness of God, both for that which is near at hand, and for that which is further off?

Yes, you know; and you confess that you know it all. It is too often as if every thing about yourselves and others with whom you have to do, were left ultimately in your own hands: as if, should your wisdom and your vigilance and your capabilities fail, disaster and ruin must of course ensue. What shall you eat? What shall you drink? Wherewithal shall you be clothed?

You must find out *how* necessities are to be provided for, and *how* emergencies are to be met. To you it appertains to devise, and to you it also appertains to execute the best possible, the best imaginable plans: plans for the transactions of your business, plans for the settlement of your children, plans for the well-being of the commonwealth, plans for the improvement of humanity,

plans for your own selves in particular, as you are nearing step after step your latter end.

To devise such plans, however, involves you in sad embarrassment. In the attempted execution of your plans you are counteracted and defied. Vexation is a necessary consequence. Irritability is presently induced. You find yourselves the miserable victims of mortification and chagrin. To fight with the vexation is to make it worse. To be annoyed at the irritability is to aggravate the irritation. To conceal the mortification and chagrin is desolation: to evince them is disgrace.

It is this kind of thoughtfulness which our Saviour has forbidden: the thoughtfulness which makes a man his own lawgiver, his own guardian, his own guide. “Have none of it,” is the Lord’s command. Have none of it, in respect to the time that now is. Have none of it, in respect to the time that is to come. Be prudent, by all means. Be watchful, by all means. Be diligent, by all means. Be patient, by all means. Leave nothing whatever undone which a devout sagacity deemeth to be expedient. Leave nothing unattempted which looketh like an opening in the providence of God. Of every suggestion that may come down from heaven be receptive. To every direction that may come down from heaven be responsive. For every ministry that may come down from heaven be expectant. With all and every thing that has been sent down from

heaven in regard to you be in fellowship: and then, then leave the rest with God. 'Tis yours to obey: 'tis his to provide.

That surrounding circumstances are calamitous may be true: that approaching circumstances threaten to be calamitous may also be true. If you survive the adversities of to-day there may come the adversities of to-morrow. To escape from one sorrow may be to get immersed in another sorrow. Though there may be sunshine for the passing hour, the sunshine may be overclouded and swallowed up in gloom.

All this is granted without the slightest reservation; and then the lesson of our Saviour is -- take things as they occur. Live for the time being, according to the characteristics of the time being. Make the best of your existing condition. Rest and repose yourselves; and rest and repose yourselves now in the Lord your God. *But*, that occasion of sorrow which is impending! Never mind that, as though you must personally avert it; as though you must personally counterwork it; as though you must personally turn it to some good account; the alternative being, that the sorrow will be an unmitigated evil; that there will be no alleviation nor relief.

Brethren, there is another alternative than that. Say that the sorrow happens -- although it may not happen after all. Many a cloud has threatened which has quietly

dispersed. But let the sorrow come, if it must be so, and with it there will come, besides, the presence of him who comforteth those who are cast down: the sympathy of him who knoweth how to speak a word in season to them who are weary: the succour of him whose strength is made perfect in our weakness: the generous, loving, fatherly, all-sufficient interposition of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will.

Your own carefulness! Have done with it. Your own forecasting! Discard it. Your own wisdom! Let it be unmentioned. Your own plans, your own provisions, your own preparation! Mistrust them at their best estate; and, mistrusting them, subordinate them all to the sovereignty which hath made with you an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure. Take no thought for the morrow, for the morrow will take thought for the things of itself. So your day, so shall your strength be.

THE SAVIOUR'S LESSON, HAVING THUS BEEN ASCERTAINED, LET IT, IN THE SECOND PLACE, BE JUSTIFIED AND ENFORCED. The word "therefore" at the commencement of our text is a notable and instructive word. It indicates, indeed, the reasons why you are not to become engrossed with self-sufficient activity: why, moreover, you are not to become enshrouded in self-consuming gloom. To any charge of folly and fanaticism there is the amplest answer, and the answer is immediately at hand.

You are to be contented, not uneasy: hopeful, not despondent: cheerful, not sad. Why? *Expediency suggests that you should be so.* That is the answer first. Thus the teaching runs: “Which of you, by taking thought, can add one cubit unto his stature?” or, to adopt a better translation -- “one cubit unto his lifetime?”

Assuming now any amount of restlessness under existing circumstances: any measure of vehemence in corresponding action: any quantity of force in the operations of the will: to what does the whole of it conduce? We have known men who have said that they would have, at any hazard and at any cost, their own way. “Not do it!” We are mistaken in our men. They will do it, as we shall see. “Not avoid it!” Have we never heard of them before? Upon the avoidance they are determined; and one way or another the determination shall be triumphantly be carried out.

Presumption, we know, can attempt a great deal: presumption can even effect a great deal. But take it at its proudest, and its strongest, and its wisest, can it prolong life for a single hour? The simple interrogation is enough. The matter rests supremely with God. If it pleaseth him, we live: if it pleaseth him, we die. Hear the Lord’s own challenge to the presumptuous -- “See now that I, even I am here, and there is no God with me. I kill and I make alive; I wound and I heal: neither is there any that can deliver out of my hand.” Fretfulness, therefore, is unavailing;

rebelliousness is useless; resistance takes no effect. Not in one department only of his government, but in every department, whatsoever God purposeth, he accomplisheth: whatsoever God desireth, he brings to pass. The counsel of the Lord, that must stand.

Obviously, our business is to acquiesce: cheerfully and complacently to acquiesce. We should take nothing by our resentfulness. We should find no benefit in opposition. After the stoutest maintenance of what might haughtily be denominated independent action and independent thought, we should have unresistingly to submit.

Submit consequently without any pretension to independence. Fall in with the divine purposes, as with congenial and gracious purposes. Consent to a government of your affairs, and to a guidance of your steps, over which you have no ultimate control. Find your blessedness in your necessity: and to the sublime oracle of inspiration -- "Of him are all things, and through him are all things, and to him are all things" -- say outloud, Amen: even so, Father, not my will, but thine, be done.

You are to be contented, not uneasy: hopeful, not despondent: cheerful, not sad. Why? *Intelligence expects that you should be so.* That is the answer secondly. Thus the teaching runs: "Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them." Thus in continuance the

teaching runs: “Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; thy toil not, neither do they spin: and yet I say unto you that Solomon, in all his glory, was not arrayed like one of these.”

Giving heed to this teaching, you remember what Solomon was, as the queen of Sheba looked upon him with her irrepressible and admiring awe. Persia and Egypt and Damascus and Dedan and Tarshish had supplied artificers and material: and thus he was right gorgeously and magnificently arrayed. His gorgeous and magnificent array, however, paled and sank into the shade before the lily. One flower was enough. Against all the glory, its exquisiteness prevailed.

You admit the fact, and you admit, of course, that the clothing of the lily is to be ascribed to God. What does intelligence expect from the admission? This, and nothing less -- “I will confide in God. I will refer all my solicitude to God. I will assure myself of the watchfulness and the loving-kindness of the providence of God. The flowers of the field are of temporary duration: nevertheless, they are cared for by the Almighty. I am to live for ever, wherefore I shall not be uncared for. They are destined for the oven: yet God ordains and works for the splendour of their colours and the symmetry of their forms. I am destined for immortality, wherefore God will ordain and work for me whatever I may need. According to their nature the lilies

commit themselves to him: according to my nature I will commit myself to him as well. They leave to-morrow to itself: to itself I will leave it, too. I am of more importance than a lily, and according to my importance our heavenly Father will provide. So much the more shall I partake the communications of his love.”

Still giving heed to the Saviour’s teaching, you remember the superabundance of the supply for the fowls of the air. Immediately do you acknowledge that they have enough and to spare. Without hesitation you acknowledge that they receive their meat from God. What does intelligence expect from the acknowledgment? This, and nothing less -- “I will relinquish my apprehensiveness. I will cease from my trepidation. I will discourage my impatience. I will keep my tendency to intermeddle with the future under some goodly measure of restraint. I will trust and not be so querulously and so mistrustfully afraid. The fowls are not what I am in the scale of being. What is a sparrow to a man, to a man made in the image of God, to a man capable of enjoying God, to a man who is called to be an imitator of God? What is a raven to a ransomed and a regenerated man, who has been reconciled to God, adopted by God, assimilated with God: his iniquities all forgiven, his body the temple of the Holy Ghost: his title and his meetness inalienable to the inheritance of the saints in light?” The comparison startles and half discomferts you. What

comparison can there be between a sparrow, whose value is to be estimated at the fraction of a farthing, and yourself, whose value is to be estimated by the precious blood of Christ! Exactly: you are demonstrably much better than all the sparrows. But you are, therefore, bound not to murmur, but to agree: not to be self-willed but self-submissive: not to tremble, but to trust. God's government of the inferior things is an index of his government of your own self. He has constituted every fowl and every flower a monitor to you: and the message of the monitor is the echo of his own word, "Be not afraid, only believe." He cannot protect them, and neglect you. He cannot supply them, and abandon you. He cannot remember them, and forget you. By as much as the new creature in Christ Jesus transcends the beasts that perish, by just so much are you guaranteed of all things whatever which are essential both to the life that now is and to the life that is to come. Expedience and intelligence combine to justify and to enforce the lesson of the text.

You are to be contented, not uneasy: hopeful, not despondent: cheerful, not sad. Why? *Consistency requires that you should be so.* This is the answer lastly. Thus runs the teaching: "After all these do the Gentiles seek: but your heavenly Father knoweth that you have need of all these things." Heathen men, whose gods are recognized by themselves as being local in their influence, changeful in

their purposes, and limited in their resources, may properly give way to perturbation. No wonder at all if they alternate unhappily between presumption and despair. They may well seek, and seek; now in one direction, and then in another; now at some irrational impulse within, and then, at some unauthorized indication without: daring enough to-day to attempt anything; abject enough to-morrow to lick the dust; desolate enough withal to lie down and die. Their religion accounts for every thing. No man being better than his gods, they are desperate or they are cowardly of course.

What have you, by contrast, to say of your God? Is he local in his influence? “Withdraw the interrogation,” is your rejoinder; “for he doeth his pleasure in the armies of heaven and amongst the inhabitants of the earth: Is he changeful in his purposes? “Never repeat the inquiry,” is your reproof; “for he cannot deny himself; it is impossible that he should lie.” Is he limited in his resources? “Shame upon the question,” is your reply: “for he speaks, and it is done; he commandeth, and it stands fast. None can stay his hand or say to him, What doest thou? He is and he was and he is to come -- the Almighty and the Sovereign Lord.”

And so you go on: and most rightly and warrantably you go on, until you have set before us one whom of necessity we must reverently and gratefully adore. It is so that there is no compassion like unto his compassion. It is so that there is no wisdom like unto his wisdom. It is so

that there is no faithfulness like unto his faithfulness. It is so that there is no mercy like unto his mercy. How much the exceeding great and precious promises express! How much the appointment and mission of the only begotten Son express? How much the offices and operations of the Holy Ghost express! How much fulness of joy and pleasures for evermore express! There is no God like unto your God! The worshipper of Jupiter might legitimately tremble: the worshipper of Jehovah may legitimately rejoice.

All unanswerable is your case: but then, having such a case, you have nothing left but the obligation to submit, to consent, to confide, to hope, to expect. In proportion to your persuasion of the greatness and the goodness and the grace of your heavenly Father, you are committed to resign yourselves to his hands, to sympathize with his arrangements, to comply with his commandments, to assure yourselves of his interposition, to repose serenely in his love. Heathen men may take thought. Christian men should do no such thing. Expediency suggests: intelligence expects: consistency requires -- that you act as the text directs.

“Be careful then for nothing: but in every thing by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.” -- William Brock, D.D.

THE CHILDREN'S SERVICE.

OF TWO BROTHERS CALLED SONS OF THUNDER.

IF you look at a map of Palestine, and trace the course of the river Jordan, you will find that it falls into one lake, and flows through another. The first is the Dead Sea. The other is the Sea of Tiberias, or of Galilee. This has also other names. It is called the Sea of Chinnereth in the Old Testament, and the Lake of Gennesareth in the New. It is not very large, but travellers tell us it is very pretty. The Jordan runs into it at the north end, and flows out of it quite at the south. Some say its course can be traced all through the lake. On the east and west sides are picturesque hills, down the hollows of which streamlets pour. Very often, too, sudden squalls blow from these heights and lash the sea into stormy billows. The waters of the lake are clear and sweet, and are stored with different kinds of fish. The country round about is now very desolate, but long ago there were a number of thriving little towns on the different shores.

To one of those towns the brothers I am now to tell you about belonged. They were fishermen by occupation. Their father, whose name was Zebedee, was a fisher, and had brought up his boys to help him in his craft. I do not know anything about their childhood or their childish days. But

after they were men they used to go out on to the lake with their father, and cast in their nets to catch fish. It was an exposed, hardy sort of life they were obliged to live, attended with dangers, and needing much watchfulness, patience and skill. But they have little dreamed that before long they would have to enter on an employment which would expose them to worse dangers, and require far greater toils. Let me tell you how this came about.

At the time when these two brothers had grown up to help their father in his work, there was a great excitement through all the land of Judea. A very bold and strange preacher had appeared, and the whole country was ringing with his fame. Everybody was talking about the man that had come up from the desert, clothed with rough camlet, calling on men to repent, and prepare for the coming of the King. Everybody that could go, went to hear him. And so powerful was his preaching, that crowds were led to confess their sins and receive baptism at his hands, as a sign that they were turning from their sins, and waiting for the Christ, who, the preacher said, was at hand. Even the people in Galilee had heard of this singular man, and when they were south at the feasts in Jerusalem, had flocked to see him. Many of them believed his message, and were ready to receive the Messiah when he should appear. Zebedee and his sons were of the number. They became disciples of this great preacher, whose name was John. One

of the brothers had the same name. Now, one day a thing happened to him that gave him great thought. He was in Judea at the time. He had been spending some days learning from his master, the great preacher spoken of. In the forenoon of one of them he was standing beside him, along with another disciple, who was also from Galilee, when John the Baptist, as he was called, lifted his hand, and pointing towards a man who was walking at some distance, said, "Behold the lamb of God!" On hearing his, the two followers went after the person pointed out to them, and on his inviting them to do so, they accompanied him to his lodgings, and spent the day with him. It was a great day for them; for they were convinced fully that this person, who was no other than Jesus of Nazareth, was indeed the Sent of God. They said so to others, and when they came back to Galilee, and went to their work again, they often talked about the man they had found, the person of whom their Bibles had told them that he should appear to save his people. They hoped he would soon show himself to all the nation as the great Messiah promised to their fathers.

In this state of mind John the son of Zebedee, along with his brother James, and their father, were sitting in their little fishing smack, mending their nets, that had got torn with the work of the night before. The other disciple that had spent a day with Jesus, along with John, was at a little distance with a brother of his, throwing their net into

the sea. As they were doing so, Jesus came along the shore, and called them to come after him, and they left their nets and went at once. He told them he wanted to teach them how to fish men. Then James and John saw him coming towards their ship, and when he had come up to the place, he called out to them also to follow him. At once they left their father in the ship, and followed Jesus. Their father made no objection. If he lived for a number of years after, he must have been very glad that he did not oppose or complain. He lent his sons to the Lord, and they became preachers of the gospel, and their names are now held in loving esteem in all the churches. Every person knows now about James, and John his brother.

I cannot tell you all that happened to them after they became followers of Jesus. I cannot tell you particularly how he chose them to be with him on several occasions, when there was only one other apostle allowed to be present. But I must mention one thing, which showed their quick disposition. Jesus and his disciples were once travelling from Galilee to Jerusalem, and were passing through a part of Samaria. They were coming near to a village, and wished to rest there. But when some of the disciples went forward to ask for lodgings, the people would not take them in. James and John were very angry at this, and asked Jesus if he would allow them to bring fire from heaven and burn the villages up. Jesus reproved them, and

told them they did not know what spirit they were of. Some have thought that he called them Boanerges, “sons of thunder,” on this occasion, as if to say, You are like lightning, and to keep them in mind of their rashness in wishing fire from heaven. But the name was rather to show that Jesus would use their quick, fervid spirit to do great work for him when they should come to preach the gospel.

They did perform great work for Jesus. One of them, James, was the first of the apostles that died for his Lord. The other, whom Jesus very much love, lived to be an old man, and was known as the apostle that was always preaching about love. He did not ask for fire afterwards to destroy men, but to melt and win them. He was chosen to see great visions, and to write a deep, sweet life of Jesus. There was a curious story which went about him for a while. It was thought that he should not die, from something Christ said about him. But he only lived to a great age, and fell asleep. They say that his last public word, spoken from a litter on which they carried him into the church, was, “Little children, love one another.”

QUESTIONS ON THE BIBLE STORY.

1. Where is the Lake of Tiberias called the Sea of Chinnereth?
2. What examples have we in scripture of sudden storms on the Sea of Galilee?
3. Can you name three towns that stood on the west side of the Sea of Tiberias?
4. What was the name of the mother of James and John?
5. Who was the disciple that, along with John, heard the Baptist say, “Behold the Lamb of God?”
6. Who were the two brothers that were casting their nets into the sea when Jesus called them?
7. Where are we told that Jesus called James and John, Boanerges, and also what the word meant?
8. What other famous surname did Jesus give to one of his disciples?
9. Who put James, the brother of John, to death?
10. What was the saying of Christ which led to the idea that John was not to die?
11. How many books of Scripture have been written by Boanerges?

By consulting the passages here noted, answers to the foregoing questions will be easily found. Josh. xiii. (Matt. ix., John vi.); Matt. xiv. (Matt. xxvii., Mark xv.); John i.; Matt. iv.; Mark iii. (John i., Mark iii.); Acts xii.; John xxi. (John’s Gospel, Epistles, and Revelation).

QUESTIONS ON THE BIBLE LESSONS.

1. From among what people was Abraham anxious to obtain a wife for his son Isaac? Gen. xxiv. 3, 4.
2. Where and by whom was Abraham buried? Gen. xxv. 9, 10.
3. What were the names of the sons of Isaac? Gen. xxv. 27.
4. Whose birth is recorded in the passage read from the gospel of St. Luke?
5. What were the names of John the Baptist's parents, and their character?
6. Narrate the circumstances attending the birth of John.

Prayer.

O THOU who didst by the Sea of Galilee call on fishermen busy at their work to follow Thee, and didst by Thy word draw them after Thee, to make them apostles of thy gospel,

wilt Thou call us also to the work Thou willest us to do? Give us grace in our places, however humble, to follow Thee; to go after Thee, through duty and through trial, till Thou bring us home. Do not allow us to turn aside from Thy paths. Make us to go in Thy steps, imitating Thy holy example. Even as sheep go after the shepherd, may we follow Thee. And when we come to the dark valley of the shadow of death, through which, when it was very dark, Thou didst go, may we see Thee still going before us, and find that Thy rod and Thy staff are our guardian and our comfort. To Thee be glory, world without end. *Amen.*

EVENING WORSHIP.

FATHER of Peace; vouchsafe in Thy great love so to strengthen our trust in Thee, that peace and holiness may for ever adorn, support, and enrich us as a family. May Thy peace reign also in every church, that with one heart, mind, and voice, they may evermore praise Thy name. May the Gospel of Peace be advanced, so that the Prince of Peace may be known and obeyed, and his name magnified throughout all the earth. *Amen.*

HYMN, *or Psalm cxxi.*

NOW it belongs not to my care
Whether I die or live;
To love and serve Thee is my share
And this Thy grace must give.

Come, Lord, when grace hath made me meet
Thy blessed face to see;
For if Thy work on earth be sweet,
What will Thy glory be?

Then I shall end my sad complaints,
And weary sinful days,
And join with the triumphant saints
That sing Jehovah's praise.

My knowledge of that life is small;
The eye of faith is dim;
But it's enough that Christ knows all,
And I shall be with Him.

LUKE I. 1-25.

FORASMUCH as many have taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us, 2. Even as they delivered them unto us, which from the beginning were eye-witnesses, and ministers of the word: 3. It seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write unto thee in order, most excellent Theophilus, 4. That thou mightest know the certainty of those things wherein thou hast been instructed. 5. There was, in the days of Herod the king of Judea, a certain priest named Zacharias, of the course of Abia: and his wife was of the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elisabeth. 6. And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless. 7. And they had no child, because that Elisabeth was barren; and they both were now well stricken in years. 8. And it came to pass, that, while he executed the priest's office before God in the order of his course, 9. According to the custom of the priest's office, his lot was to burn incense when he went into the temple of the Lord. 10. And the whole multitude of the people were praying without at the

time of incense. 11. And there appeared unto him an angel of the Lord standing on the right side of the altar of incense. 12. And when Zacharias saw him, he was troubled, and fear fell upon him. 13. But the angel said unto him, Fear not, Zacharias,; for thy prayer is heard; and thy wife Elisabeth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John. 14. And thou shalt have joy and gladness; and many shall rejoice at his birth. 15. For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink; and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb. 16. And many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God. 17. And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord, &c.

Prayer.

O LORD, our heavenly Father, we are gathered at Thy footstool amidst great mercy. As Thy holy day has passed over us, it has scattered blessing after blessing upon our neighbours and upon ourselves. We have tasted and seen

that the Lord is good. We have drawn water out of the wells of salvation. We have set our seal unto thine adorable faithfulness, and we know in ourselves to-night that it is not a vain thing to draw near unto the Lord. Thou hast done great things for us, whereof we are very glad. Accept our thanksgiving, for unto thee assuredly it belongs. Thou makest us to differ whereinsoever to our advantage and our comfort we do differ from our fellow men. Neither in our condition, nor our character -- neither in possession, nor in reversion -- have we anything we have not received. By thy grace we are what we are, and where we are. Work within us to will and to do of thy good pleasure, that we may live, not unto ourselves, but unto thee. Cause our thankfulness to be fruitful of good works. Throughout all this week may it be apparent unto all with whom we have to do, that we are indeed a living sacrifice to God. Out of a good conversation may we make it evident, that we have truly sanctified and kept holy this Sabbath day. Send down, we beseech thee, blessing upon the preaching of thy word, wherever in simplicity and godly sincerity it has been made known. Guard it against the baneful influences of superstition, self-righteousness, of worldly-mindedness, of procrastination, and of sheer indifference. Deepen and perpetuate all sound evangelical impressions. May the one thing needful take hold, and keep hold, of human understandings and of human hearts. Repel the wicked one

in his attempt to catch away that which has been sown. Let the day which declares all things declare that no Christian labour has been in vain: that no good man's strength has been spent for naught. Save now, O Lord, we beseech thee: O Lord, send prosperity. As thy faithful servants are reviewing that which they have wrought, make them to rejoice that the excellency of the power is of God, and not of themselves. We bear upon our hearts, merciful Father, thy sorrowing and troubled ones. Vouchsafe unto them thy stronger consolations. Empower them to rejoice in their tribulations. Fill their hearts full of the persuasion that their light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for them a far more exceeding and an eternal weight of glory. God of patience! hear our cry on their behalf, that patience may have its perfect work. Throughout the coming night may their weariness be relieved, and their sleeplessness be cheered, by the precious ministries of thy new covenant love. Give this family some Sabbath evening token for good. Deal bountifully with the younger ones and the older ones together. Unite us all by a living faith unto Christ. Give us light and strength and grace for the several relationships which we sustain. May residence here conduce to residence in heaven. When thou makest up thy jewels at the last great day, grant, O Lord our God, that every one bowing before thee now be recognized as a jewel. God forbid that either of us should be found then amongst

the reprobate silver, to be cast away. O Lord, hear. O Lord, forgive. O Lord, hearken and do, for the sake of thine only Son our Saviour, to whom, with thee and the Holy Ghost, be glory for ever and ever. *Amen.*

MORNING AND EVENING MEDITATIONS.

MONDAY.

Morning.

Better is little with the fear of the Lord than great treasure and trouble therewith.

If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.

Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.

For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.

Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed.

Prov. xv. 16. Col. iii. 1,2,3. John vi. 27.

Evening.

For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.

Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him?

Be careful for nothing: but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God.

And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

2 Cor. viii. 9. James ii. 5. Phil. iv. 6, 7.

TUESDAY.

Morning.

Ye shall serve the Lord your God, and he shall bless thy bread, and thy water; and I will take sickness away from the midst of thee.

He hath given meat unto them that fear him: he will ever be mindful of his covenant.

Remove far from me vanity and lies; give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with food convenient for me:

Lest I be full, and deny thee, and say, Who is the Lord? Or lest I be poor, and steal, and take the name of my God in vain.

Exod. xxiii. 25. Ps. cxi. 5. Matt. iv. 4. Prov. xxx. 8, 9.

Evening.

For whatsoever is born of God, overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.

My kingdom is not of this world.

Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?

Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are yet not much better than they?

1 John v. 4. John xviii. 36. Matt. vi. 25, 26.

WEDNESDAY.

Morning.

For he satisfieth the longing soul, and filleth the hungry soul with goodness.

Such as sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, being bound in affliction and iron;

Because they rebelled against the words of God, and contemned the counsel of the most High:

Therefore he brought down their heart with labour: they fell down, and there was none to help.

Then they cried unto the Lord in the trouble, and he saved them out of their distresses.

He brought them out of darkness and the shadow of death, and brake their bands in sunder.

Ps. cvii. 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14.

Evening.

The Lord knoweth the days of the upright: and their inheritance shall be forever.

Although the fig-tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls:

Yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation.

The Lord God is my strength, and he will make my feet like hinds' feet, and he will make me to walk upon mine high places.

Ps. xxxvii. 18. Hab. iii. 17, 18, 19.

THURSDAY.

Morning.

Exercise thyself unto godliness.

For bodily exercise profiteth little; but godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.

For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world, and more abundantly to you-ward.

But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness.

Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life.

1 Tim. iv. 7,8.

2 Cor. i. 12.

1 Tim. vi. 11, 12.

Evening.

The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations.

Behold, these are the ungodly, who prosper in the world; they increase in riches.

As a dream when one awaketh: so, O Lord, when thou awakest, thou shalt despise their image.

Seek ye the Lord, all ye meek of the earth, which have wrought his judgment; seek righteousness, seek meekness: it may be ye shall be hid in the day of the Lord's anger.

Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.

2 Pet. ii. 9 Ps. lxxiii. 12, 20. Zeph. ii. 3. Rom. vi. 13.

FRIDAY.

Morning.

There came one running, and kneeled to him, and asked, Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?

And Jesus said unto him Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God.

Thou knowest the commandments, Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Defraud not, Honour thy father and mother.

And he answered and said unto him, Master, all these have I observed from my youth.

Then Jesus, beholding him, loved him, and said unto him, One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up the cross, and follow me.

Mark x. 17, 18, 19, 20, 21.

Evening.

And Jesus looked round about, and saith unto his disciples, How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God!

And the disciples were astonished at his words. But Jesus answereth again, and saith unto them, Children, how hard is it for them that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God!

It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.

And they were astonished out of measure, saying among themselves, who then can be saved?

And Jesus, looking upon them, saith, With men it is impossible, but not with God: for with God all things are possible.

Mark x. 23, 24, 25, 26, 27.

SATURDAY.

Morning.

The wicked flee when no man pursueth: but the righteous are bold as a lion.

The wicked is driven away in his wickedness: but the righteous hath hope in his death.

The light of the righteous rejoiceth: but the lamp of the wicked shall be put out.

For the Lord God is a sun and shield; the Lord will give grace and glory: no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly.

O Lord of hosts, blessed is the man that trusteth in thee.

Prov. xxviii. 1. Prov. xiv. 32. Prov. xiii. 9. Ps. lxxxiv. 11, 12.

Evening.

The upright shall have good things in possession.

Whoso walketh uprightly shall be saved: but he that is perverse in his ways shall fall at once.

A faithful man shall abound with blessings.

The Lord knoweth the days of the upright; and their inheritance shall be for ever.

Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.

Prov. xxviii. 10, 18, 20. Ps. xxxvii. 18. Matt. xiii. 43.