

# HOME PREACHER, OR CHURCH IN THE HOUSE.

ELEVENTH WEEK.

MORNING WORSHIP.

Have mercy on us, O God, for we are miserable offenders. Forgive our enmity to Thee; our irreverent sense of Thy presence; our unbelief in Thy love, Thy will, and Thy word; our contempt for Thine authority; our breach of all Thy commandments; our envy, malice, and uncharitableness; the innumerable sins of our tongue; our covetousness, pride, and vanity; our sinful procrastination, idleness, and neglect of many talents; our sins of temper and of speech, in private and in public; the evil we have done and the good left undone to those who are living and to those who have gone to their account. Father, forgive us for the sake of Him who was a propitiation for the sins of the world. *Amen.*

HYMN, or *Psalm cxlvii. 1-7.*

Ye humble souls, approach your God  
With songs of sacred praise;  
For He is good, supremely good,  
And kind are all his ways.

All nature owns his guardian care;  
In Him we live and move:  
But nobler benefits declare  
The wonders of his love.

He gave his Son, his only Son,  
To ransom rebel worms;  
'Tis here he makes his goodness known  
In its diviner forms.

To this sure refuge, Lord, we come,  
'Tis here our hope relies;  
A safe defence, a peaceful home,  
When storms and troubles rise.

Thine eye beholds, with kind regard,  
The souls who trust in Thee;  
Their humble hope Thou wilt reward  
With bliss divinely free.

Great God, to Thy unchanging love  
What honours shall we raise?  
Not all the raptured songs above  
Can render equal praise.

## EXODUS II. 1-10.

And there went a man of the house of Levi, and took to wife a daughter of Levi. 2 And the woman conceived, and bare a son: and when she saw him that he was a goodly child, she hid him three months. 3. And when she could no longer hide him, she took for him an ark of bulrushes, and daubed it with slime and pitch, and put the child therein; and she laid it in the flags by the river's brink. 4. And his sister stood afar off, to wit what would be done to him. 5. And the daughter of Pharaoh came down to wash herself at the river; and her maidens walked along by the river's side: and when she saw the ark among the flags, she sent her maid to fetch it. 6. And when she had opened it, she saw the child: and, behold, the babe wept. And she had compassion on him, and said, This is one of the Hebrews' children. 7. Then said his sister to Pharaoh's daughter, Shall I go and call to thee a nurse of the Hebrew women, that she may nurse the child for thee? 8. And Pharaoh's daughter said to her, go. And the maid went and called the child's mother. 9. And Pharaoh's daughter said unto her, Take this child away, and nurse it for me, and I will give thee thy wages. And the woman took the child and nursed it. 10. And the child grew, and she brought him unto Pharaoh's daughter, and he became her son. And she called

his name Moses: and she said, Because I drew him out of the water.

### HEBREWS XI. 23-29.

By faith, Moses, when he was born, was hid three months of his parents, because they saw he was a proper child; and they were not afraid of the king's commandment. 24. By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; 25. Choosing rather to suffer afflictions with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; 26. Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward. 27. By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible. 28. Through faith he kept the passover, and the sprinkling of blood, lest he that destroyed the first-born should touch them. 29. By faith they passed through the Red Sea as by dry land; which the Egyptians assaying to do were drowned.

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*Prayer.*

GREAT art Thou, O Lord, and greatly to be revered. Good art Thou also, and much to be loved and trusted. We bless Thee for bringing us to the light of a new day, even a new day of the Son of Man. In everything we would give thanks. We praise Thee for thy goodness to us the whole of our past lives. The blessings received have been altogether unmerited on our part: and as to any crosses and disappointments with which we have been visited, we acknowledge that they are less than we deserve--in the midst of deserved wrath the Lord hath remembered mercy. We thank Thee specially for thy mercies towards us during the past week. Every week, every day, has been bringing us new tokens of thy love: O that it were adding to our gratitude and affection. Every week, every day, that passes away is bringing us so much nearer to that awful moment when we must leave this world: O that we were growing in grace as we grow in days and in years. We would remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy: may it be a day of spiritual improvement, and of rest to our souls. Draw nigh to us while we draw nigh to Thee. Meet with us as now gathered around the family altar; meet with us in our private devotions and meditations; meet with us in the worshipping assembly of thy people; and bless the word,

read and heard, to us and to others. Keep us from worldly thoughts; turn away our eyes from beholding vanity, and quicken Thou us in thy way. Fill our hearts with love to Thee and love to all mankind. We acknowledge that we ought to love Thee. We confess our past sins and present unworthiness, and we mourn over the alienation of our minds from Thee. O Lord, let us not remain at a distance from Thee. Draw us nigh, and keep us nigh, by the peace-speaking blood of Thine own Son. May thy Spirit be dealing with our spirits so as to draw and incline our hearts to Thee and thy statutes. Give us a view of the King in his beauty to allure and ravish and fix our hearts, so that we may be enabled to say, “My heart is fixed, my heart is fixed;” “whom have I in heaven but Thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides Thee.” O that we could love Thee as we ought to love Thee. O that we could love Thee in some measure corresponding to thy love to us. O that we could love Thee with all our hearts. Thou art Light and the Fountain of Lights: may the light that is in Thee shine upon us. Wherein we are in darkness do Thou enlighten us; wherein we err do Thou show us the truth; wherein we are backsliding do Thou rebuke us; wherein we have sinned in time past we would do so no more. All that we ask is for Christ’s sake. *Amen.*

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## THE CHURCH IN THE HOUSE.

O THOU whose power is omnipotent, whose grace never faileth, and who hast compassion upon all who seek Thee, grant in Thine infinite mercy that we who are by nature children of disobedience and wrath may never presume on Thy goodness, nor distrust Thy love, nor rely on ourselves, nor grieve Thy Spirit, but by holy resolution, believing prayer, and constant endeavour, make our calling and election sure, and that, living to the Spirit, we may in bliss reap perfect holiness and everlasting life, through Jesus Christ, our only Saviour. *Amen.*

### HYMN, or *Psalm cxlvi. 1-6.*

JOIN, all who love the Saviour's name,  
To sing his everlasting fame:  
Great God! Prepare each heart and voice,  
In Him for ever to rejoice.

What wondrous things of him are told!  
In him what glories I behold!  
All things for him I gladly leave;  
To him, my soul, for ever cleave.

In him my treasure's all contain'd;  
By him my feeble soul's sustain'd;  
From him what favours I receive!  
Through him I shall for ever live.

Bless him, my soul, from day to day;  
Trust him to lead thee on thy way;  
Take him for strength and righteousness,  
Make him thy refuge in distress.

To him commit thy every care,  
All anxious doubting thoughts forbear;  
Love him above all earthly bliss,  
And him in all thy ways confess.

To him your highest praise belongs,  
Praise him in cheerful grateful songs:  
Thus for the work of heaven prepare;  
For Him you'll sing for ever there.

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## LUKE XVIII. 9-14.

And he spake this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others. 10. Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. 11. 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. 12. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess. 13. 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. 14. I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.

## ACTS IX. 1-20.

AND Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest, 2. And desired of him letters to Damascus to the synagogue, that if he found any of this way, whether they

were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem. 3. And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus: and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven: 4. And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? 5. And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus, whom thou persecutest. It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks. 6. And he, trembling and astonished, said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do. 7. And the men which journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing a voice, but seeing no man. 8. And Saul arose from the earth; and when his eyes were opened, he saw no man: but they led him by the hand, and brought him into Damascus. 9. And he was three days without sight, and neither did eat nor drink. 10. And there was a certain disciple at Damascus, named Ananias; and to him said the Lord in a vision, Ananias. And he said, Behold, I am here, Lord. 11. And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the street which is called Straight, and enquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul of Tarsus: for behold, he prayeth, 12. And hath seen in a vision a man named Ananias coming, and putting his hand on him, that he might receive his sight. 13. Then Ananias answered, Lord, I have heard by many of this man, how much evil he hath done to thy saints at Jerusalem; 14. And

here he hath authority from the chief priests to bind all that call on thy name. 15. But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel. 16. For I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake. 17. And Ananias went his way, and entered into the house; and putting his hands on him, said, Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost. 18. And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales; and he received sight forthwith, and arose and was baptized. 19. And when he had received meat, he was strengthened. Then was Saul certain days with the disciples which were at Damascus. 20. And straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God.

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## SERMON XI.

“UNTO ME WHO AM LESS THAN THE LEAST OF ALL SAINTS.”

-- Eph. iii. 8.

PAUL is acknowledged on all hands to be one of the greatest of all saints. How then does he come to speak of himself -- "I am the least of the apostles, and not worthy to be called an apostle," and "I am less than the least of all saints?" The inquiry is worthy of being prosecuted, with the view not only of exhibiting the character of the apostle, but more especially of illustrating some of the lowest, and yet the highest graces, of the Christian character. We must take into account --

I. *The Apostle remembered his past sin.* -- Wherever there is a quickened conscience it will prompt the possessor to think of his past sins, and this even when he has reason to believe that they have been forgiven. The apostle continued to remember the natural and deeply seated pride and self-righteousness which he had so long cherished. Allusion is made to the circumstances of his once having been an enemy of the cross of Christ and a persecutor, in every one of his public apologies, and a number of his Epistles. In a letter to Timothy, written thirty years after his conversion, he speaks of his acts of enmity against the cause of God, as if they had been committed the day before, so fresh are they in his memory: "I thank Jesus Christ our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting into the ministry, who was before a blasphemer, a persecutor, and injurious."

Let us try ourselves by this test. When our minds wander back among the scenes and incidents of our past life, what are the recollections which we seek to bring up and delight to cherish? Do we think on our ingratitude for favours conferred by God, on our selfishness and ungodliness? Or do we rather call up our imagined virtues, our supposed achievements? Do we fondly dwell on the compliments which have been paid us, and the honours which have been heaped upon us, and all to enable us to feed our self-esteem, and to raise a hymn of praise to our own virtues? If such be our spirit and habit, it is all too certain that we have not acquired the temper to which Paul was brought when his pride was cast down on the road to Damascus, and which he ever afterwards entertained.

It is for the benefit of the believer to remember his past sinfulness. The recollection of his infirmities, may enable him to guard against their recurrence. Our sins, even when past and forgiven, are apt to leave a prejudicial influence behind. The habits that have been formed will be apt to impel us in our old ways. Passions and lusts which have been fondled will seek to regain their former ascendancy. Even when these effects do not follow, there is the scandal of the offence in the eyes of man. Our sins are like wounds, which even when cured and closed, leave a scar behind. It is most meet and becoming, and in every respect for his own profit and the advantage of the church and world, that the

sinner, and more particularly the man whose sin has been known, should walk humbly before God and his fellow-man all the days of his life.

Nor let it be forgotten that the remembrance of past sin is one of the motives impelling the Christian to be “zealously affected in a good thing.” “Simon,” said our Lord to a Pharisee, “I have somewhat to say unto thee. And he saith, Master, say on. There was a certain creditor which had two debtors; the one owed five hundred pence and the other fifty. And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both. Tell me therefore which of them will love him most? Simon answered and said, I suppose he to whom he forgave most. And he said unto him, thou hast rightly judged.” Now the principle which our Lord thus drew from the mouth of the unconverted Pharisee, was one on which Paul had acted since his conversion. He loved much, since much had been forgiven him. The remembrance of the injury he had done to the church, stimulated him to make greater endeavours to benefit it; the persecutions which he had inflicted on others made him more steadfast in bearing the sufferings to which he was now exposed. According to the account handed down from the early church, the apostle had to suffer a violent death in the reign of Nero, when Christians were covered with pitch and burned as torches, or clothed with the skin of wild beasts, and dogs let loose upon them. We can conceive that

as he saw the terrible preparations for putting him to death, his memory would go back a period of thirty years, and he would remember how he himself had stood by and consented to the death of the holy martyr Stephen; and he would feel himself thereby the more strengthened to endure what the Lord was now pleased to lay upon him.

II. *The Apostle mourned over the sin yet cleaving to him.* -- He had not only a recollection of past sin, he had a sense of present sin: "I see another law in my members warring against the law of sin, which is in my members. O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"

The discovery of remaining sin is a mark of the true believer. The statement may sound paradoxical, but the believer grieves far more over his lesser infirmities than others do over their greater. Nor is it difficult to account for this. The Spirit of God in renewing the soul has quickened the conscience, which more clearly discovers the remaining evil in the heart and conduct, and is more disposed to tremble at God's word. Thus sin is far more frequently observed, and is immeasurably more abhorred, by one who is striving after holiness, than by the man who is allowing himself in iniquity; the hatred of sin, and the power of discerning sin, increase with the Christian's spiritual excellence; and thus it is that in growing in other graces he grows in the grace of humility also, resembling

the tree which, in proportion as it shoots out branches and leaves towards heaven, sends down deeper roots into the soil to keep it stable in the midst of the storms that beat upon it. While the man of this world is commonly disposed to justify and commend himself, the genuine disciple is prepared to acknowledge that he is less than the least of all saints.

This sense of indwelling sin is one of the elements that conduce to the onward progress of the believer. Why is it that so many professing Christians, ay and too many true Christians, are not advancing in the spiritual life? are the same this sabbath as they were the previous sabbath, the same this year as they were the last year? and to all appearance and unless God arouse them, will be the same next year as they are this? It is because they are contented with themselves and with their condition; they have reached a state of self-complacency -- they have "settled on their lees," and they do not wish to be disturbed by so much as an allusion to their sin. Very difficult was the temper of the apostle. Conscious of the sin that still adhered to him, he longed to have it completely exterminated, and sought the heavenly aid which might enable him to reach that after which he was always striving -- "unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ."

III. *The Apostle acknowledged God to be the author of all the gifts and graces possessed by him.* Paul on more



than one occasion found it necessary to speak of his gifts. He felt himself called to do so, in a special maner, in writing the second Epistle to the Corinthians. There were individuals in that church who had disparaged the office of the apostle; and he found it proper in these circumstances to vindicate the powers which had been committed to him. But in doing so he feels as if he were going out of his usual way, and as if he had to proffer an excuse -- "Would to God," says he, "ye could bear with me a little in my folly" (2 Cor. xi. 1). And when he follows his train of reflection, he arrests himself to explain that his faults are his own, and to ascribe the glory of his gifts to God -- "If I must needs glory, I will glory of the things which concern mine infirmities:" "He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord."

There may be circumstances requiring us to speak of our attainments in the spiritual life; but there can be no excuse for our thinking of them, or alluding to them, in a spirit of complacency. Of all pride, spiritual pride is the most hateful, and the most lamentably inconsistent. It is absurd enough to be proud of the rank, or wealth, or abilities, which God has given; but it is still more foolish and sinful to boast of spiritual gifts which God bestowed at first, and which would instantly vanish if God did not sustain them. As pride rises, the grace of God departs. The two cannot dwell in one heart, any more than Dagon the god of the Philistines and the ark of the covenant could have a

place in one temple. When we have become proud of them, the graces have already vanished. The graces are no longer graces when they are boasted of. They are so delicate in their nature, that if we but look upon them with an eye of vanity they instantly disappear.

How often does it happen that when persons are suddenly raised to places of honour, they see nothing but their own merits, their own talent, skill, or good management. Elevation of rank thus leads, in too many cases, to an increase of pride and vanity. This is painfully illustrated in the history of Saul, the son of Kish. Setting out in search of his father's asses, he received before he returned a kingdom, for the discharge of the offices of which he had many qualifications. But his rise seems to have fostered the morbid vanity of his mind; and when this was not fed by constant incense -- when the Israelites cried, Saul hath slain his thousands and David his tens of thousands -- it led to envy and revenge which goaded him onto deeds of utter infatuation. How different with Saul of Tarsus! At every step of his elevation in the church he saw the finger of God, and was the more impressed with his own unworthiness. He recognized in every talent possessed by him the gift of God. Does he speak of his apostleship? He explains, that he is called "through the will of God:" Of his labours? "Not I, but the grace of God which was with me:" Of his perseverance? "I can do all things through Christ

who strengtheneth me:” Of his success? “God gave the increase:” Of his general character? “By the grace of God I am what I am.”

IV. *The Apostle took a high standard of excellence.* He took as his model the law of God, and the character of Jesus.

Others take a lower standard, and hence their inferiority. They are contented with themselves when they give to God the mere outward obeisance of the body, or because they pay a general respect to one of the tables of the law, to the neglect of the other. Or they are satisfied with themselves, because they are as reputable as other professing Christians, or as this particular individual who stands high in the church or in the world. “They, measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise.” Having taken some low standard, and having reached it, they regard themselves with the most perfect satisfaction. Some seem to be positively afraid, lest they should appear to be more concerned about the salvation of their souls or devoted to Christ than their neighbours O! How sad to think that believers, when they look to one another, should do so, with the view of discovering something which may allow them to continue in their present low state of attainment, and that they should join hand in hand not to raise each other, but

rather -- like drowning men -- to drag each other down to even a lower level.

All actual excellence, whether earthly or spiritual, has been attained by the mind keeping before it, and dwelling upon the ideas of the great, the good, the beautiful, the grand, the perfect. The tradesman and the mechanic reach the highest eminence by never allowing themselves to rest till they can produce the most finished specimens of their particular craft. The painter and sculptor travel to distant lands, that they may see, and, as it were, fill their eye and mind with the sight of, the most beautiful models of their arts. Poets have had their yet undiscovered genius wakened into life as they contemplated some of the grandest of nature's scenes; or as they listened to the strains of other poets, the spirit of poetry has descended upon them -- as the spirit of inspiration came upon Elisha while the minstrel played before him. The soldier's spirit has been aroused, more than even by the stirring sound of the war trumpet, by the record of the heroism of other warriors. The fervour of one patriot has been created as he listened to the burning words of another patriot, and many a martyr's zeal has been kindled at the funeral pile of other martyrs. In this way fathers have handed down their virtues to their children, and those who could leave their offspring no other, have in their example left them the very richest legacy; and the deeds of those who perform great achievements live far

longer than those who do them, and go down from one generation to another.

Now the believer has such a model set before him in the law of the Lord, which is “perfect,” which is “holy, just, and good:” and lest he should complain that the law is rather fitted to dazzle him by its excessive rightness, he has a model set before him in the character of Jesus, which, as it were, embodies the law, and exhibits it in the most attractive and encouraging light. “Be ye followers of me,” says Paul, but adds this most important qualification, “even as I also am of Christ.” We may copy others in some things -- we should copy Christ in all. It is pleasant to see the path in which we walk trodden by the footsteps of the flock, but we are to follow the flock only so far as they follow the Shepherd. It is when the believer is looking to Jesus, that by grace he becomes assimilated to Him. It is when looking full into the face of Jesus, that His likeness is impressed unto the soul, as we have seen the image of heaven reflected on the bosom of a tranquil lake spread out beneath it. “We all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.”

Learn (1) *The nature of true humility.* -- We are not to understand by it the bashfulness so becoming in youth, which blushes at the recital of its own praise, and wins our confidence when a bolder and more presuming address could

not command it. We are not even to understand by it that modesty which shrinks from the very appearance of what is unseemly, and would rather be deprived of its rights than give occasion of offence or disturb the peace of any. These are lovely natural graces which may adorn other and higher principles -- as leaves do the fruit -- or conceal the absence of them. But they do not, severally nor together, amount to the spiritual grace of humility. Underneath the bashful look and the modest demeanour, there may be the intensest carnal enmity to God. True humility is a Christian grace and one of the fruits of the Spirit, originating in a deep consciousness of sin past and present, and leading us to discover our nothingness in the view of God, our insufficiency for any thing that is good, and prompting us, as we feel our infirmities, to strive after higher and yet higher attainments.

Learn (2) *The advantages of humility.* -- How much nobler and more exalted than pride, though pride is often recommended by the men of the world as the grand means of prompting to great and noble deeds. Pride looks down on that which is beneath, and being contented, reckons all further exertion unnecessary. Humility, on the other hand, looks up to that which is above, and discovering how far it falls beneath, strives to reach up to it. Pride looks back upon its past deeds, and calculating with nicety what it has done, it commits itself to rest; whereas humility looks to

that which is before, and discovering how much ground remains to be trodden, it is active and vigilant. When pride stops, humility proceeds. Having gained one height, pride looks down with complacency on that which is beneath it; humility looks up to a higher and yet higher elevation. The one keeps us on this earth, which is congenial to its nature; the other directs our eye, and tends to lift us up, to heaven.  
-- James M'Cosh, D.D.

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## THE CHILDREN'S SERVICE.

OF A KING'S DREAMS, AND HOW JOSEPH'S CAME TRUE AT LAST.

FOR two years after the chief butler had been taken back to his situation in the house of Pharaoh, he allowed Joseph to remain in prison, without speaking a word for him. That was a long time, and you will be ready to think that Joseph must have been very unhappy. But people can be happy even in jail, when they have a good conscience with them, like Paul or Silas, or when, like old Mannasseh, they repent, and find God there. For this reason I do not think that Joseph was unhappy, after all. He had a clear conscience, he had also duties to do, and busy hands make the heart light. Then God was with him, and many a time, when

Joseph was ready to get weary, he would speak to God and be comforted. And though the chief butler forgot him, his heavenly Father was remembering him, and preparing his deliverance.

So when God's hour was come, King Pharaoh had, in one night, two very curious dreams. In the first, he thought he was standing on the bank of the river Nile -- on the river, on the overflowing of which, yearly, depended the harvests of Egypt; for no rain falls in Egypt, and the fields can only be watered by the swelling and spreading of the river. Standing, then, in his dream by the brink of the Nile, King Pharaoh thought he saw seven cows come up out of the water, fat, sleek, and well to do, and they went into a meadow near by, and began to feed on the grass. Then there came up out of the river as many cattle more; but this last seven were lean, ugly, starved creatures, and following the first fat drove into the meadow, they ate them up. But what seemed strangest of all, after the lean cattle had swallowed the fat ones, they looked as thin, and lank, and miserable as ever. Wondering at this, Pharaoh awoke. Then he fell asleep again, and had another dream. This time he thought he saw a stalk of corn grow up, with seven ears of grain on it, plump and ripe, and heavy. After that another stalk, with the same number of ears, grew up -- but such ears! So thin, withered, and chaff-like, as if the east winds had been pinching them all their life. Then, just like



the lean cattle in the first dream, the thin ears gobbled up the full ones. Whereupon the king awoke.

You cannot wonder that having had two such peculiar dreams, Pharaoh was troubled in the morning. Now in Egypt, in those times, there were persons who professed to be very wise, and to be able to explain dreams and strange occurrences, and to tell what was to happen from them. So the king sent for all of them that were about the city, where the court was; and having told them his dreams, he asked them to tell him what they meant. But not a man of them all was able to say a word about them. One is apt to wonder that they did not trump up some interpretation or other, but, I suppose, the hand of God was on them for his own wise end, and they were not allowed to frame any lies on the matter. When all, therefore, were at a loss, and the whole court was in commotion, the chief butler stepped forward and said to the king, I am brought in mind of my faults this day. Then he went on to tell how when he and the chief baker were in prison, they dreamed each a dream in one night, and how a good Hebrew youth that was there told them the meaning in the morning, and how, just as he said, everything came to pass. Send for him at once, said the king; and in a very little space of time Joseph was brought from the dungeon, and when he had shaved and changed his dress, he came in before the court.

I think this Pharaoh must have been a just, kind, sensible man. For he did not despise Joseph because he was but a slave, and a foreigner, and a prisoner as well. He spoke quite respectfully to him, as one that had great knowledge and skill. He said, I have dreamed a dream, and nobody can tell me what it means, and I have heard that you are wise in such matters. And Joseph said, It is not in me; it is from God: God shall give the king a happy answer. So the king told his dreams and Joseph said to him, that the double dream meant one thing, only it was double to show that it was both sure and near. The meaning was this: -- There seven years of great plenty, of rich full harvests and hand. But after these would come seven years of drought and scarcity, and a very grievous famine would spread over all the land, so that all the previous abundance would be forgotten. Then Joseph gave the king wise advice, to appoint officers to go through all the country in the plentiful years, and buy up and store all the corn that was not needed, and keep it for the years of dearth. The king was greatly pleased, and all the courtiers agreed with him in thinking the counsel very wise. And Pharaoh said, Who can be so fit as Joseph himself to manage the business? So he at once set Joseph over all his house, and over the whole country, and bade him rule everything as he liked best. In sign of all this he took the ring from his finger, and put it on Joseph's, and clothed him grandly, and put a gold chain

round his neck, and gave him his second best coach to ride in; and runners went before him, crying to the people, “Bow the knee!” And this was the youth sold by his brothers, put in prison by his master, and only that very day taken from the dungeon; and now there was no one in all Egypt greater than himself, except the king. How strangely had God wrought!

I need not stay to tell you how wisely Joseph managed in gathering and storing the corn of the rich harvests, nor how he dealt with the people when the dearth came. It is enough to say, that his wise measures saved a great many lives, and that both king and people safely trusted in him. But I must tell you particularly how, through this famine, and Joseph’s appointment to be the king’s prime minister in Egypt, the dreams which gave such offence to Jacob’s other sons came true at last.

The way it happened was this. The famine was not confined to Egypt, but spread into all the countries round. Now, as there had not been raised up in those lands a wise man like Joseph to foretell the dearth, and to store corn for the people’s wants, there soon began to great distress everywhere. Among other places, the famine was sore where Jacob and his family were living. They had heard, however, that there was plenty of grain in Egypt, and the father sent his ten sons down to buy for the food of the household. So they came into the city where Joseph the

governor was, and went to him to ask him to sell them some corn. They did not know about what had happened to their brother in Egypt, and when they saw him they did not know him. He would be very much changed of course; and then they could have no expectation of seeing him in so grand a situation. It soon came out, however, that they had not altogether forgotten that they had sold their brother to go into Egypt, and I believe they would rather had gone to some other country, because a place connected with past sin is painful to visit. But see how exactly Joseph's dream was made good. His ten brethren, when they came into his presence, bowed themselves down to the ground before him, as to the greatest man in Egypt next the king. Joseph knew them at once, and resolved to try them, and somewhat correct them. He put on a severe look, used a harsh voice, professed to take them for spies, and threw them into prison for three days. After that he brought them out, and said, One of you must be kept here till you come back again, but let the rest go home, and take food for your families. It was at this time that it appeared their consciences had not forgotten their cruel behaviour to their younger brother. For standing a little off, they said in their own speech, This has happened to us because we would not hearken to our brother when he cried to us to spare him, and let him go home to his father. Joseph heard them, and understood them, though he did not talk Hebrew with them, but used

an interpreter; and he was so touched that he had to go away, to keep them from seeing his tears. When he came in again, he took Simeon from the rest, and had him bound, and then sent them away very kindly. He put their money all back into the mouth of their corn sacks, and gave them bread and other provisions for their journey. So, when they got home, they were very full of the story, and made their father wonder, as well as themselves, when they told him all that happened to them. But how they went back a second time to Egypt, and what then occurred, must be told in another story. I have told enough to show that Joseph's dreams were from God. And surely you admire the wise, strange way in which God brought the meaning about. God has not given up working in wonderful ways, though he may send no prophetic dreams. He is bringing strange and beautiful things about constantly. Watch, and see if he does not so in your own lives. Trust him, ask him to guide you, and mark with care how strikingly he will answer your prayers. There is no one who plans, and works, and leads like God.

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## QUESTIONS ON THE BIBLE STORY.

1. There were twice seven cows in Pharaoh's dream; where do we read else where of fourteen cattle?
2. Do you remember a remarkable story about two cows?
3. Where do we read of wise men, not Egyptians, that gave proof of God being their teacher?
4. Can you name some other very famous occasions when there was famine in Canaan?

ANSWERS to the foregoing will be found by turning to Gen. vii.; 1 Sam. vi.; Matt. ii; 2 Sam. xxi.; 1 Kings xviii., and 2 Kings vi.

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*Prayer.*

O THOU only wise God, we adore Thee in the deep, strange, but glorious working of Thy providence. Thou dost indeed lead the blind in ways they know not. Thou dost wonderfully make darkness light before Thy people. Thou art now near to lead us, and show us wonders of mercy in our lives. We desire to have our hearts brought steadfastly to trust in Thee, that when things look dark we may wait for Thy light. O keep us from going away from Thee, and from doing things which will come up to sting us in after years. Lead us, Lord, and make us to follow. Draw

us, and we will run after Thee. This we ask for Christ's sake. *Amen.*

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### EVENING WORSHIP.

O GOD most wise and loving, who hath made us, soul and body, for Thy service and our own well-being, so let Thy holy Spirit govern all our desires and actions that, whether we eat or drink, or whatever we do, all may be to Thy glory. May our affections be pure, our conscience well informed, our understanding enlarged, the sins of the flesh mortified, and all our powers and faculties to be regulated according to the beautiful and graceful order of Thy holy, wise, and loving laws. *Amen.*

HYMN, *or Psalm lxxi. 14-17.*

COME, weary souls, with sins distress'd,  
Come, and accept the promised rest;  
The Saviour's gracious call obey,  
And cast your gloomy fears away.

Oppress'd with guilt, a painful load,  
O come, and spread your woes abroad;  
Divine compassion, mighty love,  
Will all the painful load remove.

Here mercy's boundless ocean flows,  
To cleanse your guilt, and heal your woes,  
Pardon, and life, and endless peace;  
How rich the gift, how free the grace!

Lord, we accept, with thankful heart,  
The hope Thy gracious words impart;  
We come: believing, we rejoice,  
And bless the kind inviting voice.

Dear Saviour! let Thy powerful love  
Confirm our faith, our fears remove;  
And sweetly influence every breast,  
And guide us to eternal rest.

EXODUS XII. 21-33.



THEN Moses called for all the elders of Israel, and said unto them, Draw out, and take you a lamb, according to your families, and kill the passover. 22. And ye shall take a bunch of hyssop, and dip it in the blood that is in the bason, and strike the lintel and the two side-posts with the blood that is in the bason; and none of you shall go out at the door of his house until the morning. 23. For the Lord will pass through to smite the Egyptians; and when he seeth the blood upon the lintel, and on the two side-posts, the Lord will pass over the door, and will not suffer the destroyer to come in unto your houses to smite you. 24. And ye shall observe this thing for an ordinance to thee and to thy sons for ever. 25. And it shall come to pass, when ye be come to the land which the Lord will give you, according as he hath promised, and ye shall keep this service. 26. And it shall come to pass, when your children shall say unto you, What mean ye by this service? 27. That ye shall say, It is the sacrifice of the Lord's passover, who passed over the houses of children of Israel in Egypt, when he smote the Egyptians, and delivered our houses. And the people bowed the head, and worshipped. 28. And the children of Israel went away, and did as the Lord had commanded Moses and Aaron, so did they. 29. And it came to pass, that at midnight the Lord smote all the first-born in the land of Egypt, from the first-born of Pharaoh that sat on his throne, unto the

first-born of the captive that was in the dungeon, and all the first-born of cattle. 30. And Pharaoh rose up in the night, he, and all his servants, and all the Egyptians; and there was a great cry in Egypt: for there was not a house where there was not one dead. 31. And he called for Moses and Aaron by night, and said, Rise up, and get you forth from among my people, both ye and the children of Israel; and go serve the Lord, as ye have said. 32. Also take your flocks and your herds, as ye have said, and be gone: and bless me also. 33. And the Egyptians were urgent upon the people, that they might send them out of the land in haste; for they said, we be all dead men.

#### LUKE XXII. 14-20.

**AND** when the hour was come, he sat down, and the twelve apostles with him. 15. And he said unto them, With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer: 16. For I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God. 17. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, Take this, and divide it among yourselves: 18. For I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come, &c.

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*Prayer.*

O LORD, our sins would come between us and Thee like a cloud, looking up and beholding thy face: do Thou blot out our sins like a cloud, and then we will look up and see thy countenance smiling upon us. We confess the sins of the past day, the sins which have mingled with the services which we have been paying to Thee. We feel that we need to come anew and anew, once and again, to the precious blood of Christ, that it may be sprinkled on our consciences and our hearts, and that we may anew have peace with God in the blood of his Son. We confess the sins of our past lives; the sins of our youth, and the sins of our riper years; the sins of our thoughts and the sins of our tempers; the sins of our conversation and the sins of our conduct; the sins of which we have been guilty in solitude and in secrecy; the guilt we have contracted in the discharge of the business of life and in the intercourse with our fellow-men; the sins that have intruded into our religious exercises -- for the sins of our holy things are sufficient to condemn us. We would lay all these our sins on Jesus, as the Lamb of God which taketh away the sins of the world, that He may remove them from us; and far as the east is distant from the west,

so far will He remove all our transgressions from us. O Lord, we have nothing of our own to plead: we plead thine everlasting mercies, we plead thy promises, we plead the gift of thy Son. We plead his righteousness, and we plead his sufferings; we plead his death, and we plead his resurrection; we plead the atonement which He made on earth, and we plead his all-prevailing intercession in heaven; and as we plead these, we look and wait for blessings. Lord, how much precious seed has this day been scattered in the families and in the worshipping assemblies of thy people, and in the Sunday schools! O let it not return unto Thee void. May we enjoy refreshing sleep this night; let no evil come nigh us or our dwelling; and when we awake may we be satisfied with thy likeness, and still be with Thee. The Lord knoweth what we have been in time past, what we now are, and what is before us in the future. What Thou seest that we need, in our present circumstances, and to prepare us for what is in the riches of thy grace, and by the power of thy Spirit. O Lord, we know not what is before us, as we pass through this world of change and of death: we know not what may be awaiting us, whether prosperity or adversity, whether lengthened life or a speedy death. The future is to us dark and unknown. But with Thee as our friend we will fear no evil. Go where we go, abide where we abide, lodge where we lodge. In the time of health and prosperity give us grateful as well as

joyful hearts; and when our sorrows abound, grant that our joys may much more abound. Be with us now, henceforth, and for ever more. *Amen.*

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## MORNING AND EVENING MEDITATIONS.

### MONDAY.

*Morning.*

**Lord, we have sinned: do thou unto us whatsoever seemeth good unto thee; deliver us only, we pray thee, this day.**

The will of the Lord be done.

Howbeit thou art just in all that is brought upon us; for thou hast done right, but we have done wickedly.

The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.

Out of the mouth of the most High proceedeth not evil and good?

Wherefore doth a living man complain, a man for the punishment of his sins?

Judges x. 15. Acts xxi. 14. Neh. ix. 33. Job i. 30. Lam. iii. 38, 39.

*Evening.*

**Submit yourselves therefore to God.**

I was dumb, I opened not my mouth, because thou didst it.

Remove thy stroke away from me: I am consumed by the blow of thine hand.

When thou with rebukes dost correct man for iniquity, thou makest his beauty to consume away like a moth: surely every man is vanity.

Hear my prayer, O Lord, and give ear unto my cry; hold not thy peace at my tears: for I am a stranger with thee, and a sojourner, as all my fathers were.

O spare me, that I may recover strength, before I go hence, and be no more.

James iv. 7. Ps. xxxix. 9, 10, 11, 12, 13.

**TUESDAY.**

*Morning.*

**Woe unto him that striveth with his Maker!**

Behold, this evil is of the Lord; what should I wait for the Lord any longer?

They soon forgat his works; they waited not for his counsel;

But lusted exceedingly in the wilderness, and tempted God in the desert.

And he gave them their request; but sent leanness into their soul.

Who is he that saith, and it cometh to pass, when the Lord commandeth it not?

Isa. xlv. 9. 2 Kings vi. 33. Ps. cvi. 13, 14, 15. Lam. iii. 37.

*Evening.*

**Let us search and try our ways, and turn again to the Lord.**

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

We have transgressed, and have rebelled: thou has not pardoned.

Thou hast covered with anger, and persecuted us: thou hast slain, and hast not pitied.

Thou hast covered thyself with a cloud, that our prayer should not pass through.

Mine eye trickleth down, and ceaseth not, without any intermission,

Till the Lord look down, and behold from heaven.

Lam. iii. 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 49, 50.

## WEDNESDAY.

*Morning.*

**Help us, O Lord our God; for we rest on thee.**

Thus saith the Lord, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls.

Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and he shall sustain thee: he shall never suffer the righteous to be moved.

But thou, O God, shalt bring them down into the pit of destruction: bloody and deceitful men shall not live out half their days; but I will trust in thee.

Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time:

Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.

2 Chron. xiv. 11. Jer. vi. 16. Ps. lv. 22, 23. 1 Peter v. 6, 7.

*Evening.*

**I have waited for thy salvation, O Lord.**

Say not thou, I will recompense evil: but wait on the Lord, and he shall save thee.

And I will wait upon the Lord, that hideth his face from the house of Jacob, and I will look for him.

Make us glad according to the days wherein thou hast afflicted us, and the years wherein we have seen evil.



Let thy work appear unto thy servants, and thy glory unto their children.

And let the beauty of the Lord or God be upon us; and establish thou the work of our hands upon us; yea, the work of our hands establish thou it.

Gen. xlix. 18.      Prov. xx. 22.      Isa. viii. 17.      Ps. xc. 15, 16, 17.

## THURSDAY.

*Morning.*

**I am the man that hath seen affliction by the rod of his wrath.**

He hath led me, and brought me into darkness, but not into light.

Surely against me is he turned; he turneth his hand against me all the day.

My flesh and my skin hath he made old; he hath broken my bones.

He hath builded against me, and compassed me with gall and travail.

He hath set me in dark places, as they that be dead of old.

Lam. iii. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6.

*Evening.*

**This I recall to my mind, therefore have I hope.**

It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not.

They are new every morning; great is thy faithfulness.

The Lord is my portion, saith my soul; therefore will I hope in him.

The Lord is good unto them that wait for him, to the soul that seeketh him.

It is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth.

Lam. iii. 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 27.

## FRIDAY.

*Morning.*

**For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now.**

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.

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.

And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.

Rom. viii. 22, 23, 26, 27.

*Evening.*

**And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.**

Ye have not resisted unto blood, striving against sin.

And ye have forgotten the exhortation, which speaketh unto you as children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him.

Furthermore, we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live?

Rom. viii. 28.      Heb. xii. 4, 5, 9.

## SATURDAY.

*Morning.*

**O Lord, be gracious unto us; we have waited for thee: be thou their arm every morning, our salvation also in the time of trouble.**

He that walketh righteously, and speaketh uprightly;  
he that despiseth the gain of oppressions, that shaketh his  
hands from holding of bribes, that stoppeth his ears from  
hearing of blood, and shutteth his eyes from seeing evil;

He shall dwell on high; his place of defence shall be the  
munitions of rocks; bread shall be given him, his waters  
shall be sure.

Thine eyes shall see the king in his beauty: they shall  
behold the land that is very far off.

Isa. xxxiii. 2, 15, 16, 17.

*Evening.*

**For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed  
upon with our house which is from heaven:**

If so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked.

Now he that hath wrought us for the self-same thing is  
God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit.

Therefore we are always confident, knowing that,  
whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the  
Lord:

(For we walk by faith, not by sight:)

We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent  
from the body, and to be present with the Lord.

2 Cor. v. 2, 3, 5, 6, 7.