

# Home Preacher, or Church in the House.

## Twentieth Week.

### Morning Worship.

OUR heavenly Father, who didst not spare Thine own Son, but didst give Him up for us all, and with Him freely givest us all things; grant us at this time, we beseech Thee, the illumination of Thy Holy Spirit, that we may find Thee in Thy word, worthily worship Thee by our service, and by faith embrace Jesus Christ our only Lord and Saviour.

*Amen.*

### HYMN, *or Psalm* cxviii. 24-29.

THIS is the day the Lord hath made,  
He calls the hours his own;  
Let heaven rejoice, let earth be glad,  
And praise surround the throne.

To-day he rose and left the dead  
And Satan's empire fell;  
To-day the saints his triumphs spread,  
And all his wonders tell.

Hosanna to the anointed King,  
To David's holy Son!  
Help us, O Lord! descend and bring  
Salvation from Thy throne.

Blest be the Lord who comes to men  
With messages of grace  
Who comes, in God his Father's name.  
To save our sinful race.

Hosanna in the highest strains,  
The church on earth can raise;  
The highest heavens, in which he reigns,  
Shall give him nobler praise.

## PSALM LI.

**H**AVE mercy upon me, O God, according to thy  
lovingkindness: according unto the multitude of thy tender

mercies blot out my transgressions. 2. Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. 3. For I acknowledge my transgression: and my sin is ever before me. 4. Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight: that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest. 5. Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me. 6. Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts: and in the hidden part thou shalt make me to know wisdom. 7. Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean, wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. 8. Make me to hear joy and gladness; that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice. 9. Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities. 10. Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me. 11. Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy Holy Spirit from me. Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free Spirit. 13. Then will I teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto thee. 14. Deliver me from blood guiltiness, O God, thou God of my salvation: and my tongue shall sing aloud of thy righteousness. 15. O Lord, open thou my lips; and my mouth shall shew forth thy praise. 16. For thou desirest not sacrifice, else would I give it; thou delightest not in burnt offering. 17. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise. 18. Do good in thy good pleasure unto

Zion: build thou the walls of Jerusalem. 19. Then shalt thou be pleased with the sacrifices of righteousness, with burnt offering and whole burnt offering: then shall they offer bullocks upon thine altar.

## PSALM XXXII.

**BLESSED** is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. 2. Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile. 3. When I kept silence, my bones waxed old through my roaring all day long: 4. For day and night thy hand was heavy upon me: my moisture is turned into the drought of summer. 5. I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin. 6. For this shall every one that is godly pray unto thee in a time when thou mayest be found: surely in the floods of great waters they shall not come nigh unto him. 7. Thou art my hiding-place; thou shalt preserve me from trouble; thou shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance. 8. I will instruct thee, and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye. 9. Be ye not as the horse, or as the mule, which have no

understanding; whose mouth must be held in with bit and bridle, lest they come near unto thee. 10. Many sorrows shall be to the wicked but he that trusteth in the Lord, mercy shall compass him about. 11. Be glad in the Lord, and rejoice, ye righteous: and shout for joy, all ye that are upright in heart.

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*Prayer.*

ALMIGHTY and most merciful God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ and our Father, we give Thee our most hearty thanks for all Thy love and goodness; and we praise Thee and worship Thee the Father everlasting. Though thou dwellest in the light that is inaccessible and full of glory, we know Thou carest for us, and that thy thoughts are to us-ward. We know Thy holiness and Thy power and Thy goodness, and that to Thee all angels cry aloud, the heavens and all the powers therein; but we know Thee through Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent, and that Thou art not far from any one of us, but like as a father Thou dost pity us, and knowest our frame, and rememberest that we are dust. We beseech Thee, who dwellest in the heaven of heavens, to hear us when we pray.

We thank Thee for this day of Thine, its peace, worship, and blessings; and that there is now, and remaineth, a rest for the people of God. May we rest from our sins in Thy forgiveness, from our works to do Thine, from our weariness and care in Thy love, and may the peace which passeth all understanding keep our hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. We thank Thee for Thy word and sacraments, and that Thou dost not only give us our daily bread, but the living bread of heaven for our souls. Grant that Thy word may abide in our hearts, that thereby we, Thine unworthy servants, may be comforted, edified, and built up in our most holy faith. We thank Thee for the church on earth, for all pastors and teachers, for the communion of saints, and for the presence of Jesus. Mercifully grant us to abide in the Lord, rooted and grounded in love, and abounding in charity to the whole body of Christ; and that the word preached may profit, being mixed with faith in them that hear it. We thank thee for the light that shineth in our darkness, for the life Thou hast quickened in our death, for the joy that gladdens us in sorrow, for the means of grace and for the hope of glory. We thank Thee for the care of our bodies, for our food and raiment, for health and happiness, for our home and our friends, for relief in sickness, and succour in adversity, and for all the blessings of this life. We thank Thee above all for Thy dear Son, that Thou didst not spare him, but didst

freely give Him up for us, that He is the propitiation for our sins, and for the sins of the whole world, and that He ever liveth to make intercession for us.

We beseech Thee O Father, for His sake who is our merciful and patient Saviour, that Thou wilt forgive us our wrong-doing and wrong-thinking, our negligence and ignorance, and all our faults. If Thou wert only strict to mark iniquity, we could not come before Thee; for our iniquities are countless and grievous, and Thou abhorrest and punishest sin, and we know Thou art just. We come to Thee for pardon. Have mercy upon us, O God, according to the multitude of Thy tender mercies blot out our transgressions. Remember not the sins of our youth; according to Thy mercy remember Thou us, for Thy goodness' sake, O Lord. Wash us thoroughly from our iniquity, and cleanse us from our sin. Help us to believe in the great sacrifice of Christ our passover, and that we have redemption through his blood. Help us to conceive Thy holiness. May Thy grace strengthen us against temptation and an evil heart of unbelief; may we fight down the world, the flesh, and the devil; may we be full of faith and the Holy Ghost. Keep us in communion with Thee, that by the Spirit of adoption we may receive witness we are Thy children, that we may approach Thee with open hearts, and trust Thee and love Thee as our Father.

We carry Thy treasure in earthen vessels, O Lord; sanctify us, and preserve it from the soil of sin. We are weak and helpless, and our trials and infirmities are many: we look with all confidence to Thee that it may please Thee to give us the victory over ourselves. Support us here by Thy grace, and hereafter reveal to us Thy glory. Send us Thy light and Thy truth, that they may guide us to Thy holy hill.

We pray for the good estate of Thy church, that it may please Thee daily to call into it such as shall be saved; to preserve it from false doctrine, heresy, and schism; to lead back to Thee those that have erred or are deceived, and to grant that all Christians may live in unity, peace, and concord. We pray that Thy will may be done in earth, as it is in heaven, that the gospel may be preached unto all nations, that the ends of the earth may see the salvation of our God, that it may please Thee to further all good, and to make Thy people fruitful in works of faith and labours of love.

We pray Thee, whose throne is above all thrones, that thou wilt preserve to us righteous and Christian government, and wilt grant peace in our day; that as Thou wast with our fathers, Thou wilt be with us, and wilt bless our country with pure religion, wise administration, and prosperous commerce. Bless, O Lord, the Queen, that she may be crowned with Thy favour, supported by Thy grace,



and trust in the King of kings and Lord of lords. And grant, O most merciful Father, that we may live in Thy fear, die in Thy peace, be raised at the last day by Thy power, and may thereafter inherit Thy kingdom, where, with the angels and Thy holy elect, we shall worship and magnify Thee through all eternity in the name of Thy dear Son, Jesus Christ, our Saviour. *Amen.*

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## THE CHURCH IN THE HOUSE.

**ALMIGHTY** and everlasting God, who hast called us to be Thy children, and to walk in the footsteps of Thy dear Son, our Saviour; grant us child-like, faithful, and obedient hearts, that we may truly follow Him, and may walk before Thee in love, and in the communion of the Holy Ghost, who, with Thee and our Lord Jesus Christ, ever abideth one God, unto whom be glory for ever. Our Father, who art in Heaven, &c.

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

WHEN along life's thorny road  
Faints the soul beneath its load,  
By its care and sin opprest,  
Finds on earth no peace or rest;  
When the wily tempter's near,  
Filling us with doubt and fear;  
Jesus, to thy feet we flee,  
Jesus, we will look to Thee.

Thou, our Saviour, from thy throne  
Listenest to thy people's moan,  
Thou, the living Head, dost share  
Every pang thy members bear:  
Full of tenderness Thou art,  
Thou wilt heal the broken heart;  
Full of power, thine arm shall quell  
All the rage and might of hell.

By thy tears o'er Lazarus shed,  
By thy power to raise the dead  
By thy meekness under scorn,  
By thy stripes and crown of thorns,

By that rich and precious blood,  
That hath made our peace with God,  
Jesus, to thy feet we flee,  
Jesus, we will cling to Thee.

Mighty to redeem and save,  
Thou hast overcome the grave;  
Thou the bars of death hast riven,  
Opened wide the gates of heaven.  
Soon in glory Thou shalt come  
Taking thy poor pilgrims home;  
Jesus then we all shall be,  
Ever, ever, Lord, with Thee.

## GENESIS XVIII.

AND the Lord appeared unto him in the plains of Mamre: and he sat in the tent-door in the heat of the day; 2. And he lifted up his eyes and looked, and, lo, three men stood by him: and, when he saw them, he ran to meet them from the tent-door, and bowed himself toward the ground, 3. And said, My Lord, if now I have found favour in thy sight, pass not away, I pray thee, from thy servant. 4. Let a little water, I pray you, be fetched, and wash your feet, and rest

yourselves under the tree: 5. And I will fetch a morsel of bread, and comfort ye your hearts; after that ye shall pass on: for therefore are ye come to your servant. And they said, So do as thou hast said. 6. And Abraham hastened into the tent unto Sarah, and said, Make ready quickly three measures of fine meal, knead it, and make cakes upon the hearth. 7. And Abraham ran unto the heard, and fetched a calf tender and good, and gave it unto a young man; and he hasted to dress it. 8. And he took butter and milk, and the calf which he had dressed, and set it before them; and he stood by them under the tree, and they did eat. 9. And they said unto him, Where is Sarah thy wife? And he said, Behold, in the tent. 10. And he said, I will certainly return unto thee according to the time of life; and, lo, Sarah thy wife shall have a son. And Sarah heard it in the tent-door, which was behind him. 11. Now Abraham and Sarah were old, and well stricken in age; and it ceased to be with Sarah after the manner of women. 12. Therefore Sarah laughed within herself, saying, After I am waxed old shall I have pleasure, my lord being old also? And the Lord said unto Abraham, wherefore did Sarah laugh, saying, Shall I of a surety bear a child, which am old? 14. Is any thing too hard for the Lord? At the time appointed I will return unto thee, according to the time of life, and Sarah shall have a son. 15. Then Sarah denied, saying, I laughed not: for she was afraid. And he said, Nay; but thou didst laugh. 16. And the

men rose up from thence and looked toward Sodom: and Abraham went with them, to bring them on the way. 17. And the Lord said, Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do; 18. Seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him? 19. For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment; that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him. 20. And the Lord said, Because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grievous, 21. I will go down now and see whether they have done altogether according to the cry of it, which is come unto me; and if not, I will know. 22. And the men turned their faces toward Sodom: but Abraham stood yet before the Lord. 23. And Abraham drew near, and said, Wilt thou also destroy the righteous with the wicked? 24. Peradventure there be fifty righteous within the city: wilt thou also destroy and not spare the place for the fifty righteous that are therein? 25. That be far from thee to do after this manner, to slay the righteous with the wicked: and that the righteous should be as the wicked, that be far from thee. Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right? 26. And the Lord said, If I find in Sodom fifty righteous within the city, then I will spare all the place for their sakes. 27. And Abraham answered and said, Behold now, I have taken

upon me to speak unto the Lord, which am but dust and ashes; 28. Peradventure there shall lack five of the fifty righteous: wilt thou destroy all the city for lack of five? And he said, If I find forty and five I will not destroy it. 29. And he spake unto him yet again, and said, Peradventure there shall be forty found there. And he said, I will not do it for forty's sake. 30. And he said unto him, Oh let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak: Peradventure there shall thirty be found there. And he said, I will not do it if I find thirty there. 31. And he said, Behold now, I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord: Peradventure there shall be twenty found there. And he said, I will not destroy it for twenty's sake. 32. And he said, Oh let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak yet but this once: Peradventure ten shall be found there. And he said, I will not destroy it for ten's sake. 33. And the Lord went his way, as soon as he had left communing with Abraham: and Abraham returned to his place.

#### PHILIPPIANS IV. 1-13.

**T**HEREFORE, my brethren, dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, my dearly beloved. 2. I beseech Euodias, and beseech Syntyche, that they be of the same mind in the Lord. 3. And I entreat thee

also, true yoke-fellow, help those women that laboured with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and with other my fellow-labourers, whose names are in the book of life. 4. Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say, Rejoice. 5. Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand. Be careful for nothing: but in every thing by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God. 7. And the peace which passeth understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. 8. Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise think on these things. 9. Those things, which ye have both learned and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you. 10. But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, and now at the last your care of me hath flourished again; wherein ye were also careful, but ye lacked opportunity. 11. Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. 12. I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where, and in all things, I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. 13. I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.

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## SERMON XX.

“AND HE WENT ON HIS JOURNEYS FROM THE SOUTH EVEN TO BETH-EL, UNTO THE PLACE WHERE HIS TENT HAD BEEN AT THE BEGINNING, BETWEEN BETH-EL AND HAI; UNTO THE PLACE OF THE ALTAR, WHICH HE HAD MADE THERE AT THE FIRST: AND THERE ABRAM CALLED ON THE NAME OF THE LORD.”  
— Gen. xiii. 3, 4.

IN the early chapters of the story of Abraham we read of him wandering from pasture to pasture, living a roving shepherd's life, guided only by fresher herbage or a wider range. It was an unsettled, desultory existence, just of the kind to tempt a man into vacant, desultory thought. Sitting in his tent and watching the lazy browsing of the herds, the languor of the warm air stealing in upon him, and round him the silence and repose of an oriental landscape; one day like another, and the careless foot of a wanderer straying through each — there was a great danger that life would become an idle monotony of change, without purpose, seriousness, or connection. It is in those very chapters that we are struck by the repetition of a simple phrase, Abraham



built an altar, called upon the name of the Lord. On the plain of Moreh, on the hillside between Beth-el and Hai, at Mamre and Beersheba, there was the sacrifice and the prayer. No link of life might bind him to the spot, there could be no great variety of incident to mark his sojourn, the growth of the young grass would hide all trace of his encampment: but the altars remained; he found them standing years after they were built; they linked his wanderings together; and they told him that God's eye was upon him, clear and unchanging; that his presence was with him, that he was there by God's calling, that this vague roving life had a very distinct and sacred meaning. And long after, when the stones had been pushed out of their places by the wind, and lay soiled and weather-beaten in the rank weeds, they declared to other generations that Abraham felt the land was God's — His whom Melchizedek confessed as the possessor of heaven and earth.

To us also they speak, revealing the secret of Abraham's inner life, its strength and consecration. Where the flock halted, his worship began. It was at the altar he knelt down, and opened his heart to God. The common picture of him left upon our minds is of a calm and gentle serenity. Reading of him as he grew rich in cattle and silver and gold, sat in his tent door, or came out by night to gaze upon the stars, we recall such notions as we have of shepherd life, and blend them all together with the natural

repose of age. Yet Abraham's life was rugged, harsh, and painful; his character was full of fire, energy, and passion. When the restlessness and buoyancy of youth were over, when he was old enough to feel not only the pain and isolation of removal, but reluctance, God called him from his home to a strange country. He became the pilgrim that God meant him to be, wandered up and down among the foreign Canaanites, was driven as far as Egypt by famine, parted by a servants' quarrel from the only kinsman that had followed him, twice cruelly separated from his wife, tried by jealousies and strife in his house, forced to cast one of his sons with his mother out upon the desert, on the point of slaying the other with his own hand, and obliged at last to beg for a grave among strangers. Trials fell thick upon him, and not as they might fall upon dull, passionless natures. His rapid impetuous march upon Lot's captors, the passionate tenderness of his love for Sarai, the ardour of his hospitality at Mamre, even when stricken in years, flash through the evenness of every day the clearest light into his character. Sensitive, eager, high-spirited, he was exposed to that keenness of trial that blunter tempers may escape. It would descend on him with crushing blows; it would wound, perplex and humble him. And if we are to account for the dominant impression of calm with which we rise from the reading of his life, is it not by the altar where he called upon the name of the Lord? Is it not that it was there

he brought the occupations and the little incidents of life, his cares and annoyances, his impatience and rebelliousness? Was it not there that his temper lost its sharpness, and trouble ceased to vex him; that he won rest, and grace, and holier faith, and the peace that brooded over his later days?

The hint that these words throw out, the solution that they offer, is one of wide and daily interest. Most lives may seem to run in worn and common grooves, yet what is common is trouble, disappointment and care. Most days may seem so like that they blend into a hazy memory, yet it is the likeness of duty done and not done, of circumstances each of which is fashioning the conduct, thoughts that are pure or impure, temptations weak or strong. To each of us this daily life is a matter of supreme importance. To each of us it is our own, of no great account possibly in the sum of lives, “common as the commonplace,” but concerning us more nearly than aught else in the world, with issues of immortality and eternity hung upon it. How it may be beautified, purified, and consecrated, how the burden and pain of it may best be borne, how its bitter may become sweet and its rough places plain, how it may win the strength, dignity, and repose of Abraham’s are questions we must often ask, to which this calling upon the name of the Lord returns an intelligible answer. What we learn here

seems to be, The influence of daily prayer on daily life; and to understand that, we must consider —

I. *The Character of Abraham's Prayer.* — There is but one prayer of Abraham on record. While the sky over Sodom and Gomorrhas was already charged with the fires that destroyed them, he begged the Judge of all the earth to forbear. The narrative is one of the most tragically vivid in the Bible, and the tragedy is woven with miracle, cut off, it might seem, from the sphere of everyday. The prayer rises to a height as lofty as the occasion: an unparalleled sublimity. And yet at his altar Abraham must have prayed in the same spirit, out of the same heart to God, as on the brow of the hills of Hebron. If this one prayer rise higher, we may believe it only shows the characteristics of all his prayers in bolder relief: —

1. *Frankness*, for example. With an open heart, like the man who was the “Friend of God.” Abraham told out his thoughts. He was puzzled. God was the righteous one: justice and judgment were the habitation of his throne. But right and wrong get sadly mixed in the world. Upright men would sometimes be unjust, and the truest men be false. And from this confusion he could look up to the heavens and feel that there was an infinite Justice there. It was the one clear fixed point. Unclouded by human passions, untouched by prejudice and infirmity, unmoved by

praise and blame, unerring and unalterable, God dwells apart in his own high heaven. But would He destroy the innocent with the guilty? Must righteous Lot suffer for the filthy conversation of the wicked? He was perplexed with new and troubled thoughts; and he bore them frankly to God. He might have pressed them back. Did they not seem to cast a slur upon God's providence? was it not presumptuous to measure and weigh God's ways? was he not afraid to hint that there was such a difficulty in his soul? There are hundreds who reason in that spirit: for there are times when we do question God's ways very earnestly and bitterly, grappling with the mysteries of his dealings, and striving to deny the justice of his judgments; times when the heart is quivering to some fine torture, and we look up for clue to it in vain. The hasty, rebel thought is thrust down with the whole force of our reverence for God, and our terror of sin. And yet it will come up again. The unsatisfied murmuring spirit remains; and the wound is only hidden, not healed. We meet with a thousand perplexities: dealings of God in the world that seem to deny his justice; strokes of pain that seem to deny his mercy; cries for help that seem to strike against a heaven of brass; a tolerance and honour and security of evil that seem to conflict with his hatred of sin; good men perishing before their prime; some single voice upheld for truth, and drowned at last in the clamour of the wrong. Shall we press them back upon

our hearts, to remain a burden and a snare and an engine of temptation? Shall we not lift them up before God as a weight too heavy for his children to carry? Let these thoughts and murmurings be put down, but let God put them down. Does He not know our frame, and remember that we are dust? To whom may we bring our puzzles if not to Him? Frankly, honestly, let us bring them, if not for light, yet for strength and faith to bear them a little longer.

2. *Confidence* is another mark of Abraham's prayers: it comes out in each thought, in the shaping of every petition. He is confident that God will do right. Whatever may seem to contradict that can make no real change. He rests on what he knows to be true: bewilderment and doubt could only drive him to take refuge there. He is confident God will be merciful. He is as sure of it as that He must be just. Neither the notorious wickedness of Sodom, nor the announcement of judgment shake him in that conviction. He is confident that God will hear him. It is by this thought that the prayer rises to its height. The hoariest sinners in Canaan were to be smitten--men that had sunk to be as low as their own beasts. Sentence was to be executed speedily--the very next day. He that talked with Abraham had declared that this judgement was his own work; that He was about to fulfil it; that He was the Judge of all the earth. Little room, one might say, for pleading there. Yet Abraham pleads as if there was no discouragement, with a

firm, unwavering petition--a request that is sublime in its apparent hopelessness, its absolute trust. We have all that right of prayer; the knowledge that He heareth us; that we may go to Him when we will. Our prayer is not a formal didactic lesson, to be said only when it can be well said; we may be able to plead no precedent for it: if we can only rest it on the ground of what God is, let us pray it with all our might. Are we satisfied that God is just, let us pray Him by his justice; that He is our Father, let us pray Him by his love; that He has redeemed us, let us pray Him by his Son; that He cares for all his creatures, let us pray Him by his goodness; nay, if we feel no more than the awfulness and mystery of his Being, let us pray Him even by that to reveal Himself that we may know Him.

3. There is another feature of Abraham's prayer that is preserved with the happiest fidelity--its *childlikeness*. No one would care to miss that singular *naivete* with which he reduces the numbers by five to as low a point as he may venture. His simple credence, his ease in the midst of supernatural wonders, his intense realism, his fearlessness, belong to the spirit of the child. No doubt he is a man of a great and childlike heart; and such are our greatest men, whose hearts keep fresh when lesser men's have withered into worliness. But a child's heart is the gift God offers with his Spirit, which any Christian may claim and hope for, with which, in its completeness, the saint shall be finally

endowed; for the vision of heaven is the clearest sight into our Father's heart. To Him we should come as his children, as we would have our children come to us. Through files of guards, and courtly vesture, and the symbols of a king, the king's little son will press to his father upon the very throne. Through angel files and pomp of of heaven, up to the light that is full of glory and the throne that is above every throne, we may press to our God. Notice the child's easy ways without embarrassment, his instincts of love, his wondering but reverent eyes, his faith that solves all later puzzles, his light step through the same life where men move slowly, weighing of its mysteries: and gather from them the secret and very heart of prayer. You, too, are a child: by no means easy to remember. For there is your wider knowledge of the forces of nature and the principles of life, of the cunning and wisdom stored up in the world, the order evolved out of confusion, vastness of conception and elaborate detail; and as this knowledge grows, so does God seem to remove from sphere to sphere into far off and ever deepening awe. And there is your power of estimating moral qualities and measuring their worth, sifting men's conduct for them, placing them one by one and noting their relative brilliance, marking what hinders or detracts from them, and how much the real falls short of the ideal; and with this larger power there grows up unconsciously a larger reverence for the perfect attributes of God, a feeling



of his awful and unapproachable grandeur, of a justice, righteousness, firmness, a purity, love, and truth, that are dazzling and bewildering--a revelation of His glory that seems to surround Him with inaccessible light. And there is that consciousness and knowledge of sin that comes of longer contact with men, of its soil upon your heart and its curse upon life, the darkness and dismal doom of it; while the holiness of God builds itself up before you, like some peak of snow, into infinite distance of blue. To recognize all these thoughts, yet feel towards God as our Father, is not the same as to come to Him in the freshness and singleness of childhood. But let that thought of his Fatherhood be displaced, and let us, though it be in reverence, conceive God only by his majesty, and we drop the comfort and serenity of prayer, if not the very key to it. His Fatherhood, our Childhood, are the noblest part of the reconciliation effected by his Son. To hold them may cost us a struggle, but it must be one of the victories of our faith. We are his children if we believe in the death of Jesus Christ for us. We are to worship Him, speak to Him, think of Him as our Father. It is not a dream, nor a hope for the future, nor a privilege of rare souls. Here on earth, joyful or sorrowful; as near our conversion as the jailer at Philippi when he believed; as far past it as Paul when he said, "I am ready to depart"--we can look up through veil after veil of

splendours, and pray, saying, *Our Father, who art in heaven.*

There are no doubt other characteristics of Abraham's prayer than these, some common to all prayer, some peculiar to this--faith, directness, earnestness, importunity. But these three are the most notable and pertinent. They help us to understand how Abraham prayed at his altar--how we should pray at ours. They help to explain the great change that was wrought in his character, temper, and life; to make us realize—

II. *The Influence of Prayer upon Daily Life.*--The tendency of culture and of a high civilization is to multiply our wants and pleasures. Society becomes more and more complex, its machinery more intricate and delicate. We require to take more into account: there seem to be more force at work; their direction and power are modified by more varied conditions. And, with this change, the old simplicity wears out of life. It is inevitable. We cannot stay this growth of knowledge and skill by which the world advances to higher destinies.

Even were this not so, life would often be a puzzle to us — a tangle of broken threads. Our most matured plans will fall into confusion. So easy an accident may defeat our wisdom, may befall us from so many quarters, that we cannot absolutely guard against it. Yet it may completely derange our calculations, and to bring back some order may

be a tedious and discouraging task. Every year, and almost every day, has its embarrassments, when we pause perplexed about the next step. Every act in the past is connected with indefinite consequences in the future. Our duty may not be always plain; it may need more than a sensitive conscience and a clear head to determine it. When it is plain, it may involve us so seriously that our anxiety to do it is less than our anxiety when it is done. Moreover, there are knotty questions that we find unexpectedly, questions of casuistry in morals, apparent contradictions between physical and theological science, problems about the relations of good and evil in this world, and these lay on many minds a greater burden than weightier and more personal cares. In such puzzle and embarrassment of life it is easy to conceive the influence of prayer. For this business that you cannot unravel you give over to God and his wisdom and love for you, and there is no tangle nor perplexity to Him. Most of us know the relief of carrying our confusion to some friend of clear judgment and experience, and even if he could give us no immediate clue, how lightened we felt to know that he sought for it, and kept our position before him. We have felt as if already we might dismiss much of our uneasiness, and by that very feeling we have been so helped that we could see our own way through. We have relief in the best form by prayer, by counsel with the Counsellor, laying our position before Him,

begging his help. He has never refused it to His people: as a Father He will not. When He has taken up the tangled threads, we may be sure of finding the lost clue. And if we trust Him for direction beforehand, and let our plans and all our conduct originate in prayer, we have greater gain: for steps that it would have cost us infinite pains to venture, and that after pains we might have taken in darkness and misgivings, we now take with the fearless faith and readiness of a child. Thus referring everything to God, the most involved life may become simple.

And as life gains in simplicity, it gains in power. Time and thought are not spent in searching passages that lead to nothing. With plainer landmarks of right and wrong, the habit of waiting to be guided by an unerring hand, and a readier and bolder decision, we are better able to work and have more leisure. A stream may waste its strength over its own rough bed with roar and foam, and chafe against the walls of rock that fling its eddies back; but, led by the wit and hand of man into another channel, it will not only flow smoothly past its ancient barriers, but find force to turn the dry mill-wheel. And instead of much noise and many rash and hasty words, our life through prayer will flow quietly, and spend its force in labours of charity and love: for we want time to think of others, and spread the holy kingdom; and instead of being tied by our perplexities, our hands should be free for working with God. And this life will be

the simplest, and the happiest, and the life of faith, and faith is fed through prayer.

2. *It will calm our daily life.* — Abraham's calm is beautiful and soothing; sometimes rising to a noble dignity. It is beautiful in his straits between Sarah, Ishmael, and Hagar: solemn and stately in his journey up to Mount Moriah. We can imagine with what pains he reached it; how much this self-command had cost him; how he must have fought against himself till the battle was won. Nor is it self-command only, but a deep serenity, of which, surely, most of us have felt the need. Many a good deed has been spoilt by haste; many a good advice by irritation; many a wordy arrow has pierced through our impatience that would have glanced off our calm. We have been sufferers, and others have not been gainers. We may have wished that some angel, seated at the springs of life, could touch our thoughts and temper with his wand. Now God has provided for this wish by prayer. Those who kneel at the altar, before the infinite calm of God, pass to their work with a calmer mind. Our communion with his peace leaves peace with us. What has vexed and fretted us, the petty cares and troubles of the day, the hurt feelings, the fancied slights, sink into their true littleness, beside this holy everlasting alm. On a mountain summit, in the hush of autumn woods, or when the dawn reveals the silent spotless sky and the silent dewy earth, the natural calm may have

stolen into our minds. But these are rare moments, not in the common track of life; and that calm is little better than a yearning for it. It does not help us through the day it probably makes us dissatisfied that the day is so unlike it; it imparts no strength. From prayer we carry a peace and restfulness that remain; that are wrought into our souls; and we carry them everywhere, into pleasures and duties, business, study, household work, in the dusty common high road, where we bear with all others the burden and heat of the day.

The world is feverish, and we cannot withdraw from its contagion. We go into it every morning, and we may feel the emptiness and vanity of it but we are also likely to feel its fever, to be carried away by its haste, and eagerness, and selfishness, to be ruffled and excited by its competition. If we are to resist it, to watch it sweep past with its pomp, and glitter, and rewards, and have no care to join it, let us pray. Let us overcome in prayer the worldliness and fever of our own hearts. Realizing that God plans for us, that we are of a kingdom that God plans for us, that we are of a kingdom infinitely wider and nobler than the world, we shall learn to wait quietly with our times in God's hand.

We must expect to hear false estimates of our conduct; to be credited with unworthy motives; to meet slander, and deceit, and ingratitude; to have our sense of duty aspersed, ridiculed, isolated; to be deserted by friends, and pained by

busy tongues. It is galling to bear: it kindles a man's resentment; provokes him to recrimination; leads him into heat. Yet we gain nothing by angry retort; and if such hurts as these prey upon us, they must weaken our energy and influence for good. If we submit them all to God we do wisely. When we have poured them into his ear, our minds are relieved. He should be the first to know them. Perhaps there is some truth in what we hear. Let us weigh it over in prayer: we shall be the wiser and calmer for it. We shall have felt that the truest love we have has not changed, we shall have gained strength and time to take one more look at the Man of sorrows: the next time the wound will not be so deep.

There may happen great losses and reverses--trials like death, that threaten the very foundation of our life; or like incurable pain, that make the future look dark and interminable. Even these may be borne with calmness: neither passively nor stoically, for then it were only the semblance of calm; but sensitively, yet with the firmest faith in God's goodness. Under the daily calm of prayer, patience and fortitude grow up like tender flowers beneath a peaceful sky; and when the hour of sorrow comes the heart by its own wont will turn to God, and from prayer we shall go back among men chastened, and not killed.

And in the household there may be asperities of temper, prominences or defects of character, that are

equally unpleasant, causes for discontent and blame, roots of bitterness that spring up. A child's fault, a servant's misconduct, a hasty spirit, a quick cutting word, a sharp answer, may do much mischief. We may give pain without intending it. It is in prayer that the fittest temper will be won, that we shall earn forbearance. Such calm souls we have all known: whose sweetness penetrated every member of the home, who bore themselves unruffled —

“Whom by the softest step and gentlest tone  
Enfeebled spirits own.”

By such calmness we may be known ourselves, though none but God shall know how dear it cost us.

3. *It will hallow our daily life.* — We cannot detach our common life from our spiritual. We cannot live to God with one nature, and to man with another. The common life is so common, so much taken up with food and raiment, profit and loss, that we would fain cultivate our spiritual faculties by themselves. We fancy it would make our devotion pure if we could keep it from the soil and lowness of common things; that it would wear out its sanctity if we brought it own to our every day routine. But history and experience teach us that if the body be not kept for God there will be little sanctification of the spirit; and the Scriptures assert that both are redeemed by the blood of



Christ, and that both are to be wrought on by the Holy Ghost. It is not so much the difficulty of conceiving this, as the difficulty of realizing it, that makes us shrink from it as if it could not be. For if God's help and blessing are withheld from all but distinctly spiritual acts, the greater part of men's lives, and that which is the most fertile of temptation, is left without control. Nor is there anything evil in this toil that fills up our days. It is necessary to the existence of the world, to the happiness of families, and to health of mind.

The difficulty is one of practice. We sometimes see that the lower wants swamp the higher; that the weariness of work, the strain of either body or mind is made excuse for neglecting spiritual truth; that the cares of this world choke the word and it becometh unfruitful. We feel that our daily duties absorb our attention, that business to be done must be well done, that many of our occupations are petty in comparison with eternity; but since they are to be done we take refuge in the cultivation of a separate religious life, of feelings and duties distinct from the common day. Yet to connect our daily acts of whatever kind with God's will, must surely elevate them, and will not make us less spiritual, but more. If we can feel that it is of God's order men are artisans or ploughmen, merchants or lawyers, it must help us to look reverently up to Him from the bench, or the plough, or the counting-house. And if we feel that

the pettiest circumstance is not beneath God's thought, it must be to the gain of our piety.

It is these thoughts that are brought up by daily prayer. Its whole drift is to connect the day with God, to lead us to believe that no part of it is indifferent to Him, that Paul was as much following out His plan when he wrought with his own hands as when he preached the gospel. The tendency of most work is to absorb us at the time. We must throw ourselves into it heartily, if we are to succeed. If we have every worked abstractedly, with minds preoccupied, and drifting along currents of thought that carry us from our immediate business, we have worked badly; and because we are best to keep the one thought, we pray our Father to remember us in it. The sanctity of life may consist as well in the righteousness, honour, and fidelity of our duty, as in the hallowed hours of meditation.

If the work is to be done, let it be well done. If it is not a properly religious act, let it be acted in the spirit of devout man. Buying in the funds, cutting a railway, sailing a ship, serving a household, are not religious acts; but they are not therefore irreligious. They are of a kind that all men must do, that human life requires, although, compared with worship, they belong to an outer world. And God's guidance is as true to us in one world of thought or action as another. If the conditions are such as He has imposed, we can claim and assuredly we shall need his help: not

necessarily to give us divided thoughts, but to keep our motives pure, our standard of duty that we are his children, our conduct honourable.

The effect of committing life thus to God will be to prevent what all Christians bewail, the deadening of their piety, the loss of the keen edge of religious feeling, the flagging of interest in God's kingdom, the lowering of their Christian tone, the gradual hiding and forgetting of the invisible behind the visible. For they learn to feel how God watches all life, week-day and sabbath-day; how they never cease to be disciples of Christ; how, at any time, God's hand may sweep away their difficulties; how, in business even, they walk by faith, believing in a wisdom, support, and integrity that come from above. Convinced that their business is under God's care, they are not disturbed by sudden revulsions of feeling from secular to sacred, but work with a peace and satisfaction unknown to others. The risks, disappointments, irritations, perplexities that they meet are borne with greater strength, for the possibility of them has been foreseen in prayer. The sense of God's presence is with them, calms them, keeps them from extremes. And by all this their work is hallowed, and connected with god's plan, and with those great issues of life that flow out into eternity.

Such will be the effect of prayer upon daily life — Simplicity, Calm, and Sanctity; yet not as if these exhausted

its influence. It will be felt in other directions as well — in other blessings, of which these may be taken only as examples. I have regarded it apart from all special petitions. We have the widest latitude to ask, in the name of the Lord Jesus, and we have confidence that our asking will be followed by a giving. If the special petitions we might bring were included, the result would be more singular. What result there is will follow even from the habit of prayer alone. Habit it must be. It was connected with Abraham's wanderings, the increase of his flocks, every new settlement, his daily thoughts. It must be as much connected with ourselves. It will produce nothing if it be irregular, spasmodic, maintained for a time and allowed to drop. Emergencies will often draw spiritual thoughts out of their obscurity, as they draw great men. Sodom and Moriah must have opened depths in Abraham's heart of which he was not conscious. But when the power that touches these secret springs is withdrawn, like fountains opened by an earthquake, they close. A life may be marked by epochs, but it will be moulded by every day. Our prayer must be constant; our altar builded every where. As we shift from youth to age, from town to town, through narrow circumstances upwards to success, or by reverses down to poverty, let every spot and change be marked by the altar, and the days of every resting -place by calling upon the name of the Lord. Amen. — W. FLEMING STEVENSON.

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## THE CHILDREN'S SERVICE.

OF GOD'S APPEARING TO ELIJAH IN HOREB.

ONE would think that Elijah must have been quite drenched, running before Ahab's chariot in the great rain all the way from Carmel to Jezreel. But I am sure he did not mind that much: he was so glad to think that the heart of the people had been turned back again to seek the true God. I think as he ran he would be calling up in his mind the grandness of the scene when the fire of God fell from heaven, and would seem as if he heard over again the great shout that rose from the crowd as they fell on their faces, crying, The Lord, he is the God; the Lord, he is the God. But perhaps after he got home and the excitement had gone down, he became really unwell with fatigue and cold, so as to be more easily daunted with a message which came next day to him from the queen. For the great prophet was a man subject to 'like passions,' as James says, with ourselves, and in him weariness of body would help, as in us, to make the spirit weak, too. Be that as it may, we are now to see Elijah a very different man from what he was on Carmel. The change came about in this way. When

Jezebel, the king's wife, heard that Elijah had ordered all the priests of Baal to be killed, she was filled with fierce rage; so angry was she, that, after swearing by her gods that she would take Elijah's life as he had taken the priests', she sent to tell him that she had done so, and would kill him the very next day; not thinking how she was going him warning that he might escape. People in hot rage often do things which go against their own ends. Now what would you expect the bold Elijah to do when the queen's message came to him? I think you would be ready to say, He will trust in God, and have no fear of her threat. He will, at least, ask God what he should do. But no; he rose up and fled for his life. God had some great lessons to teach him far away, and he left him to his own fear and weakness. So, as I have said, without staying to pray to God about it, or waiting at least, for an answer, he took a servant with him and fled. Away to the south he went, through the kingdom of Judah, till he came to Beer-sheba, its very farthest town on the edge of the desert. Here he left his servant, but himself, as if he did not feel yet quite safe, travelled a whole day further into the wilderness. He found there a juniper tree and lay down under its shade, and began to pray to God to let him die. He said, O Lord, take away my life, for I am not better than my fathers.

Here, you may say, is a strange thing; Elijah fled for his life, and now he is weary of it. But such things are

common in men's moods of mind. Besides, it was both for the prophet himself and the people, to die by the will of God answering his prayer. It is well to notice, too, his complaint that he was no better than the prophets that went before him. He does not mean that he was as sinful as they, but that he had proved as weak to do good as they had been. After hearing the people shout on Carmel, he thought they would worship idols no more; but after the queen's message, he saw how soon the power of a bad court would draw them back again to Baal. He began to think all that had happened on Carmel had happened in vain and his spirit sunk as low as his hopes had been high. He said to himself, I may as well give up trying to do any good, and he prayed to God to take him from the earth.

He asked for death, but God sent him sleep. Then, as he lay sleeping, God bade an angel go serve him. So, the angel came down and baked a cake for him, and placed it with a cup of water close beside where his head was lying. Then he touched him, and said, Wake up and eat. Elijah woke at the angel's touch, and seeing the bread and water, he ate and drank. No doubt he felt refreshed, but he was still weary, and lay down to sleep again. After a while, the angel touched and woke him a second time, and bade him eat, for he was to take a long journey, and would need all the strength he could get. So getting up, he did eat and drink, and then set out on his way. For forty days he did

not eat again, going on as God led him and held him up, till he came to Mount Horeb, far in the desert. That was the mountain, you know, on which God came down from heaven to give his law to his people Israel, when he had brought them out of Egypt. Here Elijah found a cave, and went in and lodged in it; still, I suppose, fasting. For the journey probably did not last all the forty days, as the distance to be travelled was only one hundred and fifty miles. Perhaps Elijah's fast continued till God brought him back from the desert to the land of Israel again.

While Elijah was staying in the cave, he heard God speaking to him, and asking him what he did there? This question was to bring out the state of the prophet's mind, and to prepare him for what God was going to show him. He was quite ready with his answer; he said that he had been very earnest, leading for God with the people, but all to no purpose: they had killed all the prophets but himself, and now they were seeking his life, and he had been obliged to flee out of the way. That was what had brought him to the desert. God then told Elijah to come out of the cave and stand on the mountain, and watch what was to follow. So he went out and stood in the open air. While he was standing here, a great strong wind swept over Horeb, and cast down rocks and dashed them to pieces, and Elijah knew that God had sent it, but he did not come himself in the wind. After the storm had passed the mountain began to



shake and tremble, and the prophet felt that God had sent another agent of his great power, an earthquake; but neither in this did he come himself. When the ground had got settled after the earthquake, another scene opened. The mountain was wrapt in fire, and the flames moved and gleamed all around, terrible to see. The prophet knew it was God's fire, but neither did he show himself in that. Then behind all these fearful things, when the fire had ceased to burn and all was calm, Elijah heard a soft still voice, and knew that God was near him now, and he hid his face in his mantle. Again God asked him what he was doing there, and getting the same answer, he went on to show that the prophet was mistaken in thinking that no good people were left in Israel, for there were seven thousand who had never bowed a knee to idols. Then he told him to go back from the wilderness, for there was work for him still to do. He was to anoint a person named to be king of Syria, another to be king of Israel, and Elisha to be prophet in his own room. All this Elijah went away to do.

But what could be the meaning of the strange and striking vision which the prophet had at Horeb? It taught a lesson to Elijah, and it was a grand prophecy of things far away. You must have noticed that Elijah's great works in Israel were works of judgment--bringing famine, slaying the idol-priests, burning up the wicked captains with their fifties. Now God wanted to teach Elijah that although such

works were needed, yet he must not be surprised that they did not win the people's hearts back to their God. That was to come by gentler means. So the Lord did not show himself in the storm, or the earthquake, or the fire, but came in the still small voice. Elijah's ministry was to prepare for another, which would show more of mercy than of judgment. So almost all the great works wrought by Elisha, who came after him, were miracles of kindness and grace. But beyond that, immediate explanation of the vision, it went to prophesy what would happen long after. It said that the law given at Horeb, amid fire and shaking of the mount and black storm, was not meant and not fitted to win the world for God; that it was to make ready for the coming of love; and this came when Jesus, meek and lowly, gentle and kind, came into the world, to see and to save that which was lost, by giving his life for them, and drawing them to himself.

In this age of love, this time of the still small voice, you, dear young readers, live. Have you felt the love draw you? Have you heard the soft sweet voice speak to your hearts? Here is something of what it says, hush! listen! --Come to me, come to me, I will give you rest.

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## QUESTIONS ON THE BIBLE STORY.

1. Do you remember an eminent servant of Jesus Christ, that once stood wet and cold before a fire?
2. Can you name a person who changed very soon from great boldness to cowardice?
3. Do you recollect another great prophet who fled into the desert from fear that his life would be taken?
4. Who was it that would not flee when a message was brought him that there was a plot against his life?
5. What other still greater person once received tidings that his life was sought for by a wicked king, and bade those who advised him to flee, to carry a bold message back to him?
6. What incident gave Beer-sheba its name? and what is the meaning of it?
7. What other prophet wanted God to take away his life?
8. To whom did angels bring food after a fast of forty days and nights in the desert?
9. Where and how often did Moses fast for forty days?
10. What prophets lodged and were fed in caves; and what good men were driven to such haunts by cruel persecution?
11. Can you find a prophecy which foretold that Jesus would speak with a gentle and winning voice?

12. Who was it that by a ministry like Elijah's prepared for another full of mercy?

13. What scene in Christ's life showed that Horeb, as Moses and Elijah saw it, was to yield to Calvary in the conquest of the world?

ANSWERS to the foregoing can be found by consulting Acts xxviii.; John xviii.; Exod. ii., Acts vii.; Neh. vi.; Luke xiii.; Gen. xxi.; Jonah iv.; Matt. iv.; Deut. ix.; 1 Kings xviii.; Heb. xi.; Heb. xi.; Isa. xli., Isa. xlii.; Luke i. and iii.; Luke ix.

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### QUESTIONS ON THE BIBLE LESSONS.

1. Are all believers freed from condemnation?
2. Does the death of Christ secure that believers shall be delivered from the power as well as from the punishment of sin?
3. Was this the design of God in giving his Son to die for sinners? Rom. viii. 3, 4.
4. Will all the children of God be glorified together with Christ at last? Rom. viii. 17.

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*Prayer.*

O LORD God, the bravest and the boldest cannot stand without Thee. Do not allow us to think at any time that we can stand in our own strength. When we feel weak, let us lean on Thy help. We bless Thee that Thou dost promise to give power to the faint, and when Thou dost strengthen Thy people are made able to do and bear all things. Thou dost not cast off Thy servants that trust in Thee, and even when they fall Thou raisest them up again. O Lord, we praise Thy name that Jesus has come to make all this plainer to us than before. We thank Thee for His great service of love on the earth. We rejoice to think how gentle and meek he was, and how he is not changed now. May his kindness win and hold us, and may we listen always to His voice, doing what he bids, and going where he leads. May we hear it speak sweetly to us when we come to die, and can hear no voice but His. All this we ask for His mercies' sake. Amen.

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## EVENING WORSHIP.

OUR God and Father, who in Thy love hast given Jesus Christ to die for the sins of the world, and hast raised Him up that our faith and hope might be in Thee, grant that we, dying unto sin by the power of His cross, may also know the power of His resurrection, so that we may daily rise to newness of life in Him, and with Him enter even here into perfect rest in Thee.

HYMN, *or Psalm lvii.* 1, 2, 11.

NOW, gracious Lord, thine arm reveal,  
And make thy glory known;  
Now let us all thy presence feel,  
And soften hearts of stone!

Help us to venture near thy throne,  
And plead a Saviour's name:  
For all that we can call our own  
Is vanity and shame.

Send down thy Spirit from above,  
That saints may love thee more;

And sinners now may learn to love,  
Who never loved before.

And when before Thee we appear,  
In our eternal home,  
May growing numbers worship here,  
And praise Thee in our room!

### ROMANS VIII. 1-27.

THERE is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. 2. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. 3. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: 4. That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. 5. For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. 6. For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. 7. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed

can be. 8. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God, &c.

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*Prayer.*

We bless Thee, O God, the God of Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, that with Thee there is no variableness, neither shadow of turning; that as Thou wast so Thou art; that as we come to Thee in prayer, we find in Thee what all our fathers found. We bless Thee that through the changes of our life, and the changes of the world, and the fleeting and perishing of all we see on earth, Thou abidest our God and Father in heaven. We beg of Thee now for Thy grace, and that it may please thee to strengthen our faith and encourage us to pray. Give us childlike confidence in Thee. Help us to remember that we are Thy children, and that to be Thy children Thou hast redeemed us by the precious blood of our Redeemer. May we trust thee, O God, without a doubt, and trust to Thee all our interests and all our life, our cares, anxieties, and troubles, our kindred and friends, Let us be drawn ever nearer to Thee by Thy good and holy Spirit, whom Thou hast sent to dwell in our hearts. May



He sustain us in unbroken fellowship with Thee. May He bear daily witness to us that we have boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, that to them that are in Jesus there is no condemnation. May we be preserved from all estrangement; and when our sins cloud over Thy face, Father, may we confess our sins, since, for Christ's sake, thou art faithful and just to forgive them to us.

We raise our prayers to Thee at this altar of our household. Blessed be Thy name that Thou hearest us; be that we can bring all our burdens to Thee here; that though Thou knowest our inmost thoughts, our secret faults, our infirmities, and all the corruption of our hearts, Thou dost not turn us away from Thee, but dost bid us ask that we may receive, and that our joy may be full. And here, O God, we thank Thee for the strength and merciful comfort of Thy word, for the blessings of Thy holy day, for Thy church and its living witness to Thee, and for the grace of all Thy means of grace. May the strength, and peace, and heavenly thoughts they have given us be daily renewed, so that we may go on from strength to strength until in Zion we appear before God. We feel we might have used Thy gifts to more good; that evil and ungenerous thoughts, and secret lusts, and an unsteady mind, and our self-will, have hindered many of this day's blessings. Our peace and quiet have been broken by the distractions of the world, by our foolish troubles and misgivings, by our judging of others,

and by our want of faith. We come to Thee with a penitent, contrite, and humble heart, for these and all our other sins. Cleanse our hearts from them, O God; and do Thou, Lord Jesus Christ, conquer our hearts entirely for Thyself, and confirm Thy kingdom within us, and spread it without. May the gospel have many triumphs this day, and the light and truth which Thou hast sent forth lead many to Thee. May there be many broken hearts that Thy word has bound up, may sad lives that it has made happy, many lost and prodigals whom it has led back to their Father's house, many closed lips that it has opened, and bitter lots that it has comforted. May Thy ministers, O Christ, preach Thee, and Thy people see Thee. May there be a higher, and holier, and more faithful life throughout Thy church; and may errors and divisions disappear before the mighty power of Thy Holy Spirit.

O God, who hast led us all our life, lead us still, and vouchsafe to us Thy grace that wherever Thou leadest we may follow; and that we may not make our rest on earth, but remember that whilst here we are strangers and pilgrims seeking a better and heavenly country. Lead us to look forward to Thy rest, Thee, and calm the fear of our life in Thy divine love. We commit to Thee our household and all our dear ones: we commit to Thee body, soul, and spirit, that by Thy keeping, O Father, we may sleep at last in sure

and certain hope of a joyful resurrection. Our Father, &c .  
*Amen.*

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## MORNING AND EVENING MEDITATIONS.

### MONDAY.

*Morning.*

**The righteous shall flourish like the palm-tree: he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon.**

These that be planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in the courts of our God.

They shall still bring forth fruit in old age; they shall be fat and flourishing; ;

To show that the Lord is upright; he is my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in him.

But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.

The way of the wicked is as darkness; they know not at what they stumble.

Ps. xcii. 12, 13, 14, 15.

Prov. iv. 18, 19.

*Evening.*

**For the Lord hath redeemed Jacob, and ransomed him from the hand of him that was stronger than he.**

Therefore they shall come together to the goodness of the Lord, for wheat, and for wine, and for oil, and for the young of the flock and of the herd; and their soul shall be as an watered garden; and they shall not sorrow any more at all.

Then shall the virgin rejoice in the dance, both young men and old together: for I will turn their mourning into joy, and will comfort them, and make them rejoice from their sorrow.

Jer. xxxi. 11, 12, 13.

## TUESDAY.

*Morning.*

**I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely: for mine anger is turned away from him.**

I will be as the dew unto Israel: he shall grow as the lily, and cast forth his roots as Lebanon.

His branches shall spread, and his beauty shall be as the olive-tree, and his smell as Lebanon.

They that dwell under his shadow shall return; they shall revive as the corn, and grow as the vine: the scent thereof shall be as the wine of Lebanon.

But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings; and ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall.

Hos. xiv. 4, 5, 6, 7. Mal. iv. 2.

*Evening.*

**I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman.**

Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away; and every branch that beareth fruit he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit.

Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you.

Abide in me and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me.

Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring out fruit, and that your fruit should remain; that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.

John xv. 1, 2, 3, 4, 16.

**WEDNESDAY.**

*Morning.*

**What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things is death.**

But now, being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.

For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God.

And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment.

Rom. vi. 21, 22, 23.      Rom. vii. 4.      Phil. i. 9.

*Evening.*

**For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light;**

(For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, and righteousness, and truth;)

Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord.

And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.

That ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offence, till the day of Christ;

Being filled with the fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God.

Eph. v. 8, 9, 10, 11.      Phil. i. 10, 11.

## THURSDAY.

*Morning.*

**Walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God.**

As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him:

Rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with faith, with thanksgiving.

Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ:

For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.

Col. i. 10.      Col. ii. 6, 7, 8, 9.

*Evening.*

**For where envying and strife is, there is confusion, and every evil work.**

But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.

And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace.

Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness:

But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

James iii. 16, 17, 18.

2. Peter iii. 17, 18.

## FRIDAY.

*Morning.*

**Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.**

For by it the elders obtained a good report:

Who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions;

(Of whom the world was not worthy:) they wandered in the deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth.

And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise:

God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect.

Heb. xi. 1, 2, 33, 38, 39, 40.



*Evening.*

**Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.**

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.

Acts xvi. 31.      John iii. 16, 18.      John v. 24.

## SATURDAY.

*Morning.*

**Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and long-suffering with joyfulness;**

Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light:

Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son;

In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins.

Col. i. 11, 12, 13, 14.

*Evening.*

**And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among them which are sanctified.**

We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is meet, because that your faith groweth exceedingly, and the charity of every one of you all toward each other aboundeth;

So that we ourselves glory in you in the churches of God, for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that ye endure.

Acts xx. 32.

2 Thess. i. 3, 4.