

HOME PREACHER OR CHURCH IN THE HOUSE.

TWENTY-EIGHTH WEEK.

MORNING WORSHIP.

O LORD, who hast given us cause of perpetual joy by the coming of Thy Son our Saviour among us, we pray Thee, to possess us with a mighty sense of Thy wonderful love; that whereas through the cares of this life we are sorely hindered in running the race that is set before us, we may be careful for nothing, but thankfully commending ourselves in every thing to Thy bountiful grace and mercy, the peace of Thee our God, which passeth all understanding, may keep our hearts and minds, through our Lord Jesus Christ, to whom, with Thee and the Holy Ghost, be blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, world without end. Amen.

HYMN, *or Psalm civ.* 1-6.

MY soul, thy great Creator praise:
When clothed in his celestial rays,
He in full majesty appears,
And, like a robe, his glory wears.

The heavens are for his curtain spread,
The unfathomed deep He makes his bed;
Clouds are his chariot when He flies
On winged storms across the skies.

Angels whom his own breath inspires,
His ministers, are flaming fires;
And swift as thought their armies move
To bear his vengeance or his love.

The swelling billows know their bound,
And in their channels walk their round;
He bids the crystal fountains flow,
And cheer the valleys as they go.

God from his cloudy cistern pours
On the parched earth enriching showers;
The grove, the garden and the field,
A thousand joyful blessings yield.

PSALM VIII.

O LORD our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth! Who hast set thy glory above the heavens. 2. Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained strength because of thine enemies, that thou mightest still the enemy and the avenger. 3. When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained; 4. What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him? 5. For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour. 6. Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet; 7. All sheep and oxen, yea, and the beasts of the field; 8. The fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea, and whatsoever passeth through the paths of the seas. 9. O Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth!

PSALM XIX.

THE heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handy-work. 2. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge. 3. There is no

speech nor language where their voice is not heard. 4. Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. In them hath he set a tabernacle for the sun; 5. Which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, and rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race. 6. His going forth is from the end of the heaven, and his circuit unto the ends of it: and there is nothing hid from the heat thereof. 7. The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple: 8. The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes: 9. The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether. 10. More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold; sweeter also than honey, and the honey-comb. 11. Moreover, by them is thy servant warned: and in keeping of them there is great reward. 12. Who can understand his errors? cleanse thou me from secret faults. 13. Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me: then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression. 14. Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength, and my redeemer.

PSALM XXIV.

THE earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein: 2. For he hath founded it upon the seas, and established it upon the floods. 3. Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? and who shall stand in his holy place? 4. He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully. 5. He shall receive the blessing from the Lord, and righteousness from the God of his salvation. 6. This is the generation of them that seek him, that seek thy face, O Jacob. 7. Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in. 8. Who is this King of glory? The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle. 9. Lift up your heads, O ye gates: even lift them up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in. Who is this King of glory? The Lord of hosts, he is the King of glory.

Prayer.

DAY and night, O Lord, are Thine, and they bring with them much to remind us of Thy care and goodness. We bless Thee especially for the sabbath day; for the holy rest which it gave to Thine ancient church; and for the great events of which this first day of the week is commemorative. We rejoice in its light, as it brings to our thought the Great One who was delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification.

May the Holy Spirit dwell with our spirits this day. May His light come upon us, helping us to discern spiritual things. May His living power come into our hearts that we may be convinced of sin; that we may know how to make humble and penitent confession of sin, and that everything Christian within us may be matured and made strong.

We bow before the cross, and pray for pardon through the one offering there presented to take away sin. May the blood there shed speak all to our consciences, that it has been designed to speak to the consciences of Thy people. May the grace which comes to the souls of Thy children through the mediation of Jesus Christ, come largely to us this day.

We commend to Thy favour and blessing all Christian people, all Christian ministers, and all Christian agencies. May it please thee to comfort the mourning, to succour the tempted, to strengthen the weak, to guide the perplexed, to

arrest the careless, to reclaim the wanderer, to save the lost. May the praise and adoration ascending to Thee from the assemblies of Thy people this day find acceptance with Thee; and may the day soon come when from the rising of the sun to his going down Thy praise shall be heard among men, and no praise but Thine. Hear and answer, we beseech Thee, for the Redeemer's sake. *Amen.*

THE CHURCH IN THE HOUSE.

O GOD, who hast brought life and immortality to light by the gospel, and hast begotten us again to a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, make us steadfast and immovable in this faith, always abounding in the work of the Lord, who died for our sins, and now liveth and reigneth for ever. *Amen.*

HYMN, *or Psalm* xvi. 7-11.

JESUS lives! no longer now
Can thy terrors, Death, appal us;
Jesus lives! by this we know
Thou, O Grave, canst not enthrall us.

Alleluia.

Jesus lives! henceforth is death
But the gate of life immortal;
This shall calm our trembling breath,
When we pass its gloomy portal.

Alleluia.

Jesus lives! for us He died:
Then, alone to Jesus living,
Pure in heart may we abide,
Glory to our Saviour giving.

Alleluia.

Jesus lives! our hearts know well
Nought from us his love shall sever:

Life, nor death, nor powers of hell
Tear us from his keeping ever.

Alleluia.

REVELATION I. 12-18.

AND I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And, being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks; 13. And in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt from about the paps with a golden girdle. 14. His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire; 15. And his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters. 16. And he had in his right hand seven stars; and out of his mouth went a sharp two-edged sword; and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength. 17. And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last: 18. I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death.

SERMON XXVIII.

“SAID I NOT UNTO THEE, THAT, IF THOU WoulDEST BELIEVE, THOU SHOULDEST SEE THE GLORY OF GOD?” -- John xi. 40.

THESE words are part of the narrative relating to the sickness, death, and resurrection of Lazarus. In the verse preceding that above cited, we reach the point where our Lord gave command to those who stood about him to remove the gravestone. Martha, the sister of Lazarus, could expect much from Jesus, but the thought of a restoration of life to the dead had no place in her mind; and anticipating an exposure of the corpse, after it had been for some days in the grave, her sisterly feeling drew back from the anticipated spectacle, and she prayed, in effect, that no such scene should be permitted. Then came the words of our Lord -- “Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God?”

I. It is hardly possible to read this scripture with observing *the importance it attaches to the exercise of faith*. Not that such language rarely came from the lips of the Saviour. The fact was far otherwise. His expressions

concerning faith are uniformly of this nature. When the afflicted came to him seeking the exercise of his healing power, the province of faith, ever in such cases, is distinctly marked. “Believe ye that I am able to do this?” “All things are possible to him that believeth.” “O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt” (Matt. ix. 28; ix. 23; xv. 28). This was our Lord’s manner of utterance on such occasions. Those who would be restored to their natural health must believe in his power to impart it.

It was well that it should be so. For this connection between faith and natural healing was to be illustrative of the divinely-established connection between faith and spiritual healing--that healing which was the special object of the Saviour’s mission. Sin is to the soul what disease is to the body; and it was natural that the Redeemer’s exercise of his healing power should be on the same conditions in the one case and in the other. To believe, in some sense, in his divine mission, was exacted from the sick if they would be made whole; and to believe in him as the promised Deliverer was exacted from sinners if they would be saved. We read of places where our Lord could do no miracle because the people believed not: and that great miracle, spiritual enlightenment and spiritual regeneration, never comes where there is not faith. “God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever *believeth* in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (John iii. 16).

1. From these facts we are bound to conclude that faith in Jesus Christ must be *a reasonable service*. To know that men are commanded to believe in the Saviour, is to know that such belief must be a duty. We cannot be innocent, in any case, in withholding from God the thing which he demands. But it must be at the same time be remembered, that nothing can be duty which is not in its own nature reasonable. Right and wrong are not determined by authority. That distinction comes from the Divine nature, and from the general constitution of things as proceeding from that nature. In all moral obligations, what God commands is not right because it is commanded -- it is commanded because it is right. Hence, we repeat, to know that God has commanded men to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, is to know that such belief must be dutiful, reasonable.

Men naturally desire to see the reasonableness of duty when it is enjoined upon them. Nor is their solicitude in this respect forbidden. We all see the reasonableness of the divine precepts, more or less, or may see it. But it is not in the condition of creatures that they should see the whole reason of anything, in this world or in any other. Our finite reason is not the measure of the Infinite -- never can be. It is enough if we see sufficient evidence to make obedience a duty, and to make trust for the rest a duty. And such evidence, we are assured, is before us. "This is the

condemnation, that light has come into the world, and men have loved darkness rather than light” (John iii. 19). The light has come. The disposition to follow it has been wanting. “If a man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God” (John vi. 17). The future of men is determined, not by the much or little of their intelligence, but by the much or little of their sound moral feeling, their honesty. “Keep thine *heart* with all diligence: for out of it are the issues of life” (Prov. iv. 23). The evidence which makes faith a duty is large and varied. It is partly historical and external; it is partly ethical and internal. It appeals to the whole nature of man. We do not attempt to deal with it at present. The Scriptures affirm its sufficiency, and the reasonableness of faith as the consequence.

Nor is there anything in the fact that the Scriptures which thus settle this question have come to us from very remote times. Nearly everything that has made us what we are, as civilized men, has come from the past. It is not more true that the boy is father to the man, than that the past is father to the present. Science, learning, art--all the things which have contributed to give enjoyment and embellishment to life -- have become ours mainly by inheritance. Other men have laboured, and we have entered into their labours. We do not begin at the beginning in anything. We adopt results, and we may endeavour to

improve upon them; but in respect to secular matters we are never guilty of the folly of assuming that our predecessors have done nothing, and left everything to be done by us. Why should religion be an exception to this rule? From our general relation to the past, the presumption is strong that our relation to it in regard to religion must be real and momentous. Past ages have done nearly everything for us in relation to other things: have they done nothing for us in relation to this thing? All analogy is against such a conclusion. Nothing, accordingly, is more natural than that the world's oldest book should be eminently its great religious book -- the Bible. We have not been left to turn to our metaphysics, and to begin these with this subject. Men have been busy with it from the beginning, and it has come to us rich with the hoarded experiences of ancient generations. If we are in possession of any measure of religious truth, we have it mainly from history. It is not ours as the fruit of our independent speculation. The Incarnate One, who challenges our faith over bygone centuries, does so reasonably, justly.

2. Further, it is clear from the place assigned to faith in the teaching of the Saviour, that it must be in itself *a highly spiritual act*. The future of men is said to hinge upon it. Our condition, hereafter and for ever, is said to be determined by our having or not having faith. Without it we are condemned already, unpardoned, unenlightened,

unregenerated -- lost. Possessing it, men come to know what the scripture means which says of the Redeemer, that to "as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name" (John i. 12). The world is subdued by faith. The sting of death is taken away by faith. Heaven is realized by faith. Can anything be more irrational or unworthy than to suppose, that the action of the soul of which all this may be said is wholly devoid in itself of either good or evil?

Faith in some things may be of that nature. Faith in Christ cannot so be. Where the conclusions assented to have no moral quality, the assent given to them may be like them, having no such quality. We need no virtue to prepare us for believing that two and two make four, or that the half of a thing must be less than the whole of it. But where the truths to be received are moral and spiritual, they are not even to be apprehended without an intelligence partaking of those qualities, and certainly will not be embraced without sympathies in harmony with them. Now, what is it to believe in Christ? It is to assent to truths of the highest spiritual significance, and to be drawn towards them by feeling in affinity with them. It is to apprehend his doctrine -- his doctrine concerning sin and human depravity: concerning the incarnation, the atonement, the grace of the holy Spirit, and the life to come. But the natural man does not even see the truth which lies in these facts. It is

spiritual truth, and can only be spiritually discerned. Faith knows this truth, appreciates it, confides in it.

Sin is the great impediment to faith. All sin tends in that direction. Hence the admonition, "Cast not your pearls before swine." Hence the assertion, "Men love darkness, because their deeds are evil." The Pharisees could not believe because they were vain. The worldly multitude made light of the gospel because they were worldly. Must not faith, which supposes a superiority, more or less, to all these impediments, be a high spiritual force? To accept the doctrine of Christ concerning sin and guilt, is to be humbled, alarmed, to be ready to cry, What must I do to be saved? To believe in the atonement is to pass from a sense of danger to a sense of security. To believe in the grace of the Holy Spirit, is to feel that human weakness can lean upon the divine strength; and no motive to purity can be so strong as that which is supplied by the hope of a pure immortality. Well might faith be said to be the gift of God. It is not only good, it is the root of all goodness; and every increase of goodness is dependent on its increase. Apart from God it would not be; apart from Him it will not grow.

II. All that we have said concerning the place assigned to faith in the teaching of the Saviour, will be confirmed by the second idea suggested in the passage under consideration, viz.: *The connection which subsists in the scheme of redemption between believing and seeing the glory*

of God. “Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God?”

By the glory of God we understand his nature. Whatever manifests that nature, manifests his glory; makes it visible to us, or presents it so that we can apprehend it. God is in all his works, but He is in some more than in others. The work in which there is most of Himself, most of his perfections, are the works which reveal most of his glory. The heavens declare his glory. The earth is full of his riches -- is opulent in manifestations of his attributes. But the glory brought near to us by revelation is “the glory that excelleth.” There are traces of the moral perfections of God in nature and providence; but it is in the gospel that this aspect of the divine nature comes before us in its fullest development. In the work of redemption we have the great work of God. It is so as being especially concerned with the most profound mysteries of good and evil.

When our Lord spoke to Martha, reminding her of his having said that, believing, she should see the glory of God, his reference no doubt was to the glory of the divine power as it would be seen in the raising of Lazarus from the dead. But that fact may be taken as illustrating a law. Not only in this instance, but every where, the law of grace is, that to believe is to see the glory of God; and the more vigorous the faith, the more the soul passes on its realization of divine things from glory to glory. It is in this larger measure of its

teaching that we shall consider the passage before us. Faith is the vision power of the soul; and as this becomes strong, the prospect expands, stretches far away, and becomes every where brighter and more beautiful. We shall now glance at a few phases of the Christian life as indicated by this law.

1. A man may become sensible to the action of this law as his mind passes *from a state of doubt in regard to religious truth into a state of certainty*. Truth, said Pilate -- what is truth? Yes, that is a grave question. It has been asked by many who have had to wait long for an answer. We do not here speak of frivolous sceptics, men whose levity betrays their wilfulness in taking the wrong road. Men there are who are not sceptics from choice, but who seem doomed for a while to walk in darkness. No doubt, darkness may be a teacher. To have felt our way in that region, and as it seemed, to little purpose, may not have been lost time. Men who have known what that darkness means, may have learnt how best to minister to the aid of those who are still passing through it, and how best to appreciate the light. To the earnest seeker light is sure to come, though the time through which it sends forth no harbinger may seem long.

Religious doubt has its historical difficulties, its scientific, ethical and theological difficulties. But these may all gradually pass away. Historical evidence may assume

new clearness and force. It may be felt that to assent to it is far more easy, and more natural, than to reject it. So the seeker becomes faithful in little, and to him that hath shall be given. Science, divested of its arrogance, may come by degrees to be perplexing. In the direction of ethics and theology, the inquirer has possibly discovered that there is necessarily very much which the mind of man must not hope to comprehend more than in part. So perhaps it becomes increasingly evident that the only condition of faith possible to man is, that what is known should be such as to warrant trust in the unknown, and that a test of loyalty in this way must be inseparable from the condition of created natures. So the clouds by degrees drift away. What should be left is left. What should be embraced is embraced. Hitherto the universe has been to the soul as sculptural life, beautiful to look upon, and which often seemed about to speak, but it never spoke. With the new oracle it is not so. It speaks, and its words are answers to pressing questions. It does not content itself with proclaiming the doctrine of human depravity. It shows the origin of the disease, and it provides a remedy. In common with nature, the God whom it reveals is the God who has permitted sin. But He is more than that. He saves sinners. He brings good out of evil. Humanity redeemed is not only humanity of repossessed of life, it is made to possess that gift more abundantly. God, as a Redeemer, is not simply the God of nature and

providence. It is God in a far higher manifestation of Himself. As these thoughts possess the soul, its conscious transition from darkness into this marvellous light fills it with gratitude, and as the glad heart turns towards the source whence all this has come, a voice may be heard to say -- "Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldst believe, thou shouldst see the glory of God?"

2. But there are minds which find their heaviest burden in *a sense of guilt*, and in their solicitude to realize divine forgiveness. With some men conscience slumbers, can hardly be said to live. The habit of resisting all remonstrance from that quarter has become so settled that remonstrance has ceased to be made; or, in the case of others, the passions may not be of an ardent temperment, so that there is no marked tendency towards irregularity or excess to be kept in check, the sole idea of duty being to guard against the charge of perpetrating any social wrong. In the former case conscience has been subdued; in the latter it is inert, because untaught and unawakened.

But minds which have a happy future before them are made to be naturally and spiritually sensitive. It is given to them to see something of the grounds of duty in its higher relations, and something of the wide compass of things which it embraces. To them the commandments of God are exceeding broad. They are seen as taking the soul under their cognizance, with all its deep capabilities of good and

evil; and such persons look back on the life they have lived as placed face to face with these obligations. They see that to an extent not a little alarming, they have failed to be what they might and ought to have been, and to do what they might and ought to have done. Their positive offences, too, are seen to have been manifold; many of them, it may be, of such a nature as to fill them with remorse and apprehension. Seasons as they recur bring up the memory of many a long-past transgression. Many scenes, as they are visited anew, are peopled with sights which the sinner only can see, and give forth voices which the sinner only can hear.

Must it be thus for ever? Must this feeling in relation to good and evil exist only to be a source of dread and torture? No. The thing to be especially feared concerning men is lest they should know nothing of this susceptibility, or knowing something of it, should sin it away. So long as the soul is possessed of this sensibility there is hope. The measure in which this feeling disposes the sinner to covet forgiveness, in which it prompts him to seek it, and to pray for it, is the measure in which a blessed future may be predicted.

But it is possible that even the faith which looks to the cross may have its season of trial. It may be well that the offender should be made to feel, for a while, how evil and bitter a thing it is to have forsaken the Lord his God. But

this discipline from delay will have its limits. The atonement will come to be seen, not as a bribe offered to stay the hand of an avenger, but as a fitting homage done to the majesty of right, and as designed to insure pardon to the guilty, and happiness to the miserable, in consonance with rectitude. Penitence is loyalty. It confesses the justice of law, and the evil of sin. Its solicitude is to escape, not merely from penalty, but from sin; and as the atonement is seen in its relation to the divine love as its origin, and to purity and blessedness as its end, the heart of the penitent learns to confide in it. So often, after a night of darkness and storm, day dawns upon the soul. To gaze upon the cross, then, is to feel the burden which has long oppressed it pass away; and as the relieved heart does its homage to the majesty and goodness of God, and is prepared to express its joy and gratitude in a hymn of wonder and praise, a voice may seem to utter the words, "Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God?" his glory as able and willing to forgive.

3. But pardon, and a sense of pardon, are not everything. The evidence of spiritual safety in that form, though valuable, is comparatively little, and in many cases the feeling so regarded is not wholly free from the danger of illusion. Evidence as to the *reality of the mind's renovation*, when obtained, is evidence of a more certain and stable description.

Concerning this change it matters little whether it shall have come imperceptibly, beginning it may be with our earliest years, or more suddenly, originating strong moral and spiritual landmarks, separating conspicuously between a former portion of life and a later. Our concern is with the change itself, not with any specialities in its history. Has it come? The influences which have contributed to give it existence may be various, but in itself it is everywhere the same. It consists in fidelity to principle, to right in all things -- in devotion to goodness, in sympathy with spiritual aspirations, and with all things heavenly. But this habit of soul is a growth. It is nowhere perfect. It is everywhere blended with elements of antagonism. Hence the Christian life is described as a warfare. Even good men find a law in their members opposed to the law in their mind; and many find passions in their soul hard to be brought into the obedience of faith.

But seasons come in which Christians can compare past with present, so as to be sensible to a great change -- a change in the direction of larger knowledge; of more rooted principles; of a more thorough incapacity for looking upon this world so as to say it is enough; of a more positive and habitual interest in divine things; and of a wiser candour and charity in judging of other men. The man has striven that he might thus grow, has prayed that divine help might be extended to him to insure such growth. He feels that no

conception of natural causes is sufficient to account for this difference between his present and former self, or between what is, and what many about him, from whom better things might have been expected, continue to be. "Yes," he might be heard to say, "imperfect as I am, and unworthy as I am, I feel bound to believe that the divine goodness has been my helper, has made me feel that heavenly and not merely earthly acquisition is life and peace. Only influences from heaven could have given my soul these affinities with heaven, these breathings after the godlike." So the future brightens; so hope and gladness come into the soul, and a voice may be heard to say -- "Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God?" the glory not only of his pardoning mercy, but of his renovating grace.

4. In old age *long experience of the divine patience and goodness* deepens this motive to gratitude and this ground of trust. As the voyage of life reaches towards its close, the retrospect is such as age only knows. All the way the eye of the imagination, as it looks back, can rest on signs of disaster and wreck. Some, indeed, have finished their course bravely and happily; but others, and alas! too many, have drifted on the rocks or foundered utterly. The grey-headed man, if he be a thoughtful Christian man, dwells much in that past. His dead men live again. Their history often passes anew before him, and its lessons are

not lost upon him. To feel that he has been safe where so many have perished; that if he has unhappily been disturbed at times in his course, he has been able to regain it, while others have failed to do so; and that with the land whither he would be in sight he has the fair prospect of reaching it -- all this is a matter of memory and of consciousness that might well awaken gratitude and deep feeling. He has a vivid remembrance of his many failures, his many sins, his deep unworthiness; but all that only serves to make the divine long-suffering more wonderful: and as tears drop from the eye, and emotion makes it difficult to speak of all that the heart feels, another speaks, and his words are -- "Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God?" the glory of that tender love and constancy which pitied thee in thy youth, and will not forsake thee in thine old age.

5. But it is in the *final stage of human experience* that these words may be supposed to be uttered with their deepest significance. We know that the soul will be called to put off "this earthly house," the present body, preparatory to its being clothed anew with its "house from heaven," that is, with another body of a more ethereal order, and better adapted to pure world into which flesh and blood cannot enter. The account of the heavenly state given us in Scripture warrants us in saying, that in that world souls are fully conscious -- conscious of what is within them

and of what is around them. It is a social world. The angels live there in conscious fellowship. Saints live there in such fellowship. The human spirit entering that state must know that it has come to be sinless, and that all around is sinless. Hence there is no more pain, no more sorrow, no more decay, no more death. But we are left to imagine the feeling with which the stranger spirit, led by some friendly hand into that state, comes to be conscious for the first time of the nameless rest and harmony of perfect being; gazes for the first time on all the marvels of that marvellous region; and bows for the first time before the ineffable brightness of the divine throne, and offers there its first spotless homage to the Infinite. There eminently we may suppose that the voice which the happy spirit has heard before may be heard again, and its words be -- "Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God?" Faith has many visions here, but that its final and great vision. -- ROBERT VAUGHAN, D.D.

THE CHILDREN'S SERVICE.

OF A LION WHICH KILLED, BUT DID NOT EAT, HIS PREY.

THERE was another good king of Judah, who, like Hezekiah, proved a great reformer, and held at Jerusalem the grandest passover-feast that had ever been seen from the days of Solomon. He lived still later than Hezekiah; but there was strange thing about him, that long, long, before he was born, he was spoken of by name by a prophet of God, and it was foretold that he would do a special work, which he actually did perform. The way in which this foretelling happened is very curious to tell. I will relate it in the present story.

The first king of the ten tribes, when they rebelled against Solomon's son, and threw off the house of David, was by name Jeroboam. He was an able, though a wicked, prince. Soon after he came to the throne, he began to see that if the people should continue to go up to Jerusalem to worship God, and should meet with their brethren there, it would likely end in their getting reconciled to Judah, and going back to their former allegiance. So he thought he must fall on some plan to prevent their going to Jerusalem

at the feasts. He made, therefore, two golden calves, and he put one of them in Bethel, and the other in Dan, and said to the people, It is far too much toil and trouble for you to go with your sacrifices to the temple on Mount Zion; see, there are the gods that brought your fathers out of Egypt, go and offer before them. That was a cunning but a very sinful plan of his. It is often spoken of in the Bible as a very wicked thing; it was leading a whole people away from the true God. Accordingly, King Jeroboam has often this black mark added to his name, “who made Israel to sin.”

One day the king was standing by the altar which he had built in Bethel, and was going to offer incense before the idol, when a prophet came to the place out of the land of Judah. God had sent him to speak against the sinful worship that had been set up, and he did his duty bravely and faithfully. Although the king was there, he called with a loud voice, speaking to the altar, and saying, O altar, altar, thus saith the Lord; There shall be born in the royal family of David a prince whose name will be Josiah, and he shall come and slay thy priests, and burn on thee the bones of dead men. Then he gave those who heard a sign, and told them that the altar would that day be rent before their eyes, and the ashes on the top of it be poured on the earth. All this was said in the ears of the king, and put him into a rage. So he cried to those that were near to lay hold on the prophet, and in his eagerness he stretched out his own arm

to catch him. But what do you think happened? His arm dried up, and became stiff, and lost all power, so that he could not pull it back, but stood holding it out like a withered branch of a tree. At the same time the altar was rent in pieces, and here was a rush of ashes to the ground. The king was struck with fear, and he said to the prophet, Do pray to the Lord thy God to heal me, and give me again the use of my arm. So the man of God prayed, and the withered hand was restored, just as it had been before. One would think that surely, after that, the king would give up his idol-worship, and serve the Lord. But that was not the case. He went on in his evil course; he wanted, however, to take the prophet home with him, and give him a reward. But the man of God would not go: for he said the Lord had told him not to stop, or eat bread, or drink water in the place, nor go back by the same road he came by. Accordingly he left to go home, but went by a different way.

Now there happened to be living in Bethel an old prophet, who heard what had been done. His sons had been abroad, and when they came home, they told their father the strange news. It is likely, indeed, that they were on the spot at the time when the altar was rent, and the king's hand was withered and healed again; for they had seen the way the prophet took as he turned to go home, and could tell their father this when he asked them. The old prophet had a design in his mind when he put the question to his sons,

Which way did he go? for as soon as he was told, he said, Get the ass saddled for me, I must go after him. His sons brought the ass saddled, and the old man rode away after the man of God that had come out of Judah. By and by he overtook him, as he sat resting himself under an oak tree. So he said, Are you the prophet from Judah? And when the other said yes, he asked him to turn back and have some refreshment. But the Jewish prophet said, just as he had told the king, that he must not do that, for God had forbidden him to eat or drink in the place. But, in order to prevail with him, the old prophet of Bethel pretended to have a message from God, telling him to go after the other, and bring him back. It was all a lie, and it was very sinful indeed. The man of God from Judah believed him, and went back; he should have remembered God's own certain word to himself, and kept fast by that. He fell before the temptation; but the other was first and, as the tempter, deepest in the sin.

After the two had come back and were sitting at the table together, God was pleased to give to the old prophet a true message, and to make him speak it. So, addressing the man of God from Judah, he said, You have disobeyed God; you have come back, and against his express command given to yourself, you have eaten bread and drunk water in this place, and now God bids me to say to you that you will not be buried in the grave of your fathers. I should think

the prophet from Judah must have heard that with a heavy heart, and perhaps the old prophet was himself startled. Perhaps he did not mean or think of anything so sad as that. Tempters often see consequences arise from their conduct which they did not count on, but that does not lessen their sin.

When the man of God left again to go home, the other gave him the ass to ride on, and he went on his way. But he had not gone far, when a lion met him, and sprung on him, and killed him. His body, falling from the saddle, lay on the road, and the ass stood beside it. But the strange thing was that the lion also stood still, not eating the man's body, nor killing the ass. Some people that were passing saw the two animals standing peaceably side by side, and the corpse of the man lying near. You may be sure they were very much struck with the sight, and would be eager to tell it when they got into the town. When the old prophet heard the news, he got up at once, and rode to the place. He found everything as it had been reported. There was the dead man; and there were the lion and the ass standing together. The lion had not torn the ass, nor eaten the body of the man. God who sent him to slay the disobedient prophet, would not let him do any more hurt, and kept him standing there to show that God had sent him to do what was done. The old prophet went near; and without being touched by the lion, which I suppose would now go away, he took the

dead body, and laid it on the ass, and brought it home, and had it buried in his own grave. Then he said to his sons, When I am dead lay me here beside him, for he was a true prophet, and all he said against the altar will come to pass; put my bones where his are lying. How his words did come to pass, exactly as he spoke them, will be told in the story of the good Josiah.

QUESTIONS ON THE BIBLE STORY.

1. Can you find an instance in the Old Testament in which another king was named by a prophet before he was born.
2. What two instances are there, in the New Testament, of children named by angels before their birth?
3. Where is it said in the Gospels that people from the northern parts of Palestine went to the feasts in Jerusalem?
4. Who first made a golden calf for Israel, and said, like Jeroboam, These are thy gods which brought thee from Egypt?
5. Who is it that in the New Testament has a black mark added frequently to his name?
6. Where do we read of a man, in a place of worship, who arm was withered?

7. Can you find passages where the heavens and the earth are spoken to, as the man of God spoke to the altar in Bethel?

8. Who was it that got the state of his own hand as a sign which he might show to others?

9. Where was it that persons coming to arrest a great prophet were made powerless?

10. What other king entreated a prophet to pray to God to take away calamities?

11. What was the first lie we read of, told by one who wished to lead another into sin?

12. Where else do we read of God sending wild beasts to kill persons that had sinned?

13. Where else do we read of God's power keeping lions from hurting a living person who was near them?

14. To what wicked king did announcement of his doom come while he was feasting?

15. What great prophet was told by God that he would not die where he had wished to end his days, because he had sinned on a great occasion?

ANSWERS to the foregoing questions will be found by consulting the chapters here noted: -- Isa. xlv.; Luke i.; John iv.; Exod. xxxii.; Matt. x. and John xviii.; Matt. xii.; Deut. xxxii. and Isa. i.; Exod. ix. and x.; Gen. iii.; 2 Kings ii.; Dan. vi.; Dan. v.; Deut. xxxii.

Prayer.

O LORD our God, when we have Thy word plainly telling us what we ought to do, let us not hearken to the voice of any who would persuade us not to do it. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. Let us never tempt others to sin. When we have a hard duty to do, let us trust in Thee for strength, and go forward to do it. O Lord, bless all whose office it is to preach Thy truth. Let them be bold and faithful to tell men of their sins, and to call them back to God. Let them preach Jesus fully, and let their words be with power. When Thou speakest to us by any of them, may we listen and obey. O God, to Thee in Jesus Christ be glory and praise. *Amen.*

EVENING WORSHIP.

O GOD, whose blessed Son was manifested that He might destroy the works of the devil, and make us the sons of God and heirs of eternal life, grant us, we beseech Thee, that

having this hope, we may purify ourselves, even as He is pure, that when He shall appear again with power and great glory, we may be made like unto Him in His eternal kingdom, where He ever liveth and reigneth, world without end. *Amen.*

HYMN, *or Psalm* cxxxix, 7-12.

SAVIOUR, breath an evening blessing
Ere repose our spirits seal,
Sin and want we come confessing:
Thou canst save and Thou canst heal.

Though destruction walk around us,
Though the arrows past us fly,
Angel-guards from Thee surround us;
We are safe for Thou art nigh.

Though the night be dark and dreary,
Darkness cannot hide from Thee
Thou art He who, never weary,
Watchest where thy people be.

Should swift death this night o'ertake us,
And our couch become our tomb,

May the morn in heaven awake us,
Clad in light, and deathless bloom.

MATTHEW XXIV. 43-51.

KNOW this, that if the goodman of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up. 44. Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh. 45. Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season? 46. Blessed is that servant whom his lord, when he cometh, shall find so doing. 47. Verily I say unto you, that he shall make him ruler over all his goods. 48. But and if that evil servant shall say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming; 49. And shall begin to smite his fellow-servants, and to eat and drink with the drunken; 50. The Lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of, 51. And shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

MATTHEW XXV. 1-29.

THEN shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom. 2. And five of them were wise, and five were foolish. 3. They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them: 4. But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. 5. While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept. 6. And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him. 7. Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps. 8. And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out. 9. But the wise answered, saying, Not so; lest there be not enough for us and you; but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves. 10. And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage; and the door was shut. 11. Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. 12. But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not. 13. Watch therefore: for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh. 14. For the kingdom of heaven is as a man traveling into a far country, who called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods. 15. And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; to every man according to his several ability; and straightway took his journey. 16. Then he that had received

the five talents went and traded with the same, and made them other five talents. 17. And likewise he that had received two, he also gained other two. 18. But he that had received one went and digged in the earth, and hid his lord's money. 19. After a long time the lord of those servants cometh, and reckoneth with them. 20. And so he that had received five talents came and brought other five talents, saying, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me five talents: behold, I have gained besides them five talents more. 21. His lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord. 22. He also that had received two talents came and said, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me two talents: behold, I have gained two other talents besides them. 23. His Lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord. 24. Then he which had received the one talent came up and said, Lord, I knew thee that thou art an hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strawed: 25. And I was afraid, and went and hid thy talent in the earth: lo, there thou hast that is thine. 26. His lord answered and said unto him, Thou wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I have not strawed: 27. Thou oughtest

therefore to have put my money to the exchangers, and then at my coming I should have received mine own with usury. 28. Take therefore the talent from him, and give it unto him which hath ten talents. 29. For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that hath not, shall be taken away even that which he hath.

Prayer.

O LORD, with the close of another day of privilege, we would approach Thee in the language of praise. We thank Thee for our home in this open land; we thank Thee for our open sanctuaries, and our freedom to access to Thee in the service of Thy house. Truly Thou hast prepared for us the green pastures, and hast led us beside the still waters.

Much hast Thou done for us; may we feel our responsibility. Pardon all Thou hast seen amiss in us in the services of this day. Accept, O Lord, our attempts to serve Thee; and may we go forth to the duties of another week invigorated for the discharge of them. Suffer us not to forget our dependence upon Thee. Suffer us not to be tempted above what we may be able to bear. O Lord, suffer us not to wound our own conscience, or to dishonour Thee,

by falling into sin. Prevent us, we beseech thee, in all things by Thy goodness.

May the works of mercy in which Thy churches have been this day engaged be rich in fruitfulness. May the word preached largely profit those who have heard it. May Thy universal church become daily wiser, more holy, and more equal to the work which thou hast given her to do.

Look, O Lord, in much mercy on the darkness of this world, on the sin abounding in it. Save mankind, we implore Thee, from the superstitions to which they are so prone; and from the unbelief and impiety by which they are alienated from Thee, and so often betray their enmity against Thee. All power is Thine, and all the goodness is Thine: hasten, O Lord, the promised reign of goodness, the coming of Thy kingdom. We bow before Thy sovereign will, but, O Lord, how long before we hear the wheels of Thy chariot? All worlds are Thine, all souls are Thine; take to thyself Thy great power, and reign in all hearts. So do we lift up our voice before Thee with Thy whole church, through Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

MORNING AND EVENING MEDITATIONS.

MONDAY.

Morning.

Having food and raiment let us be therewith content.

But they that will be rich fall into temptation, and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition.

For the love of money is the root of all evil; which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.

Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not high-minded.

That they do good, that they be rich in good works.

1 Tim. vi. 8, 9, 10, 17, 18.

Evening.

**I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot;
I would thou wert cold or hot.**

Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou

art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked:

I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eye-salve, that thou mayest see.

Rev. iii. 15, 17, 18.

TUESDAY.

Morning.

Then Peter began to say unto him, Lo, we have left all, and have followed thee.

And Jesus answered and said, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake, and the gospel's,

But he shall receive an hundred-fold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life.

But many that are first shall be last; and the last first.

Mark x. 28, 29, 30, 31.

Evening.

But Jesus called them to him, and saith unto them, Ye know that they which are accounted to rule over the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and their great ones exercise authority upon them.

But so shall it not be among you: but whosoever will be great among you, shall be your minister:

And whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be the servant of all.

For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.

Mark x. 42, 43, 44, 45.

WEDNESDAY.

Morning.

The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully:

And he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits?

I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods.

And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much good laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink and be merry.

But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be which thou hast provided?

So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.

Luke xii. 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21.

Evening.

And he said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.

And he said unto his disciple, Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat; neither for the body, what ye shall put on.

The life is more than meat, and the body is more than raiment.

Consider the ravens: for they neither sow nor reap; which neither have storehouse nor barn; and God feedeth them. How much more are ye better than the fowls?

Luke xii. 15, 22, 23, 24.

THURSDAY.

Morning.

Now in the morning, as he returned into the city, he hungered.

And when he saw a fig-tree in the way, he came to it, and found nothing thereon, but leaves only, and said unto it, Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward for ever. And presently the fig-tree withered away.

And when the disciples saw it, they marvelled, saying, How soon is the fig-tree withered away!

Jesus answered and said unto them, Verily I say unto you, If ye have faith, and doubt not, ye shall not only do this which is done to the fig-tree, but also, if ye shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; it shall be done.

And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive.

Matt. xxi. 18, 19, 20, 21, 22.

Evening.

Men ought always to pray, and not to faint;

There was in a city a judge, which feared not God, neither regarded man:

And there was a widow in that city; and she came unto him, saying, Avenge me of mine adversary.

And he would not for a while: but afterward he said within himself, Thought I fear not God, nor regard man;

Yet because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me.

And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them?

Luke xviii. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7.

FRIDAY.

Morning.

But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think they shall be heard for their much speaking.

Be not therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of before ye ask him.

After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father, which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.

Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread.

And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.

And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil.

Matt. vi. 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13.

Evening.

And Jesus answering saith unto them, Have faith in God.

Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.

And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any; that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses.

But if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses.

Take heed to yourselves: If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him.

And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent; thou shalt forgive him.

Mark xi. 22, 24, 25, 26. Luke xvii. 3, 4.

SATURDAY.

Morning.

Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you:

For every one that asketh, receiveth; and he that seeketh, findeth; and to him that knocketh, it shall be opened.

Or what man is there of you, whom, if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone?

Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent?

If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?

Matt. vii. 7, 8, 9, 10, 11.

Evening.

Consider the lilies how they grow: they toil not, they spin not; and yet I say unto you, that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.

If then God so clothe the grass, which is to-day in the field, and to-morrow is cast into the oven; how much more will he clothe you, O ye of little faith?

And seek not ye what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink, neither be ye of doubtful mind.

But rather seek ye the kingdom of God; and all these things shall be added unto you.

Luke xii. 27, 28, 29, 31.

