

HOME PREACHER OR CHURCH IN THE HOUSE.

THIRTY-FIRST WEEK.

MORNING WORSHIP.

ALMIGHTY God, the former of our bodies and father of our spirits, illuminate our minds, we beseech Thee, and shed abroad in our hearts Thy love, to the intent that we may know and love Thee, and enjoying the comfort of Thy heavenly grace, seek first the righteousness of Thy heavenly kingdom, and live evermore to Thy praise, through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

HYMN, or *Psalm lxxi.* 15-19.

O GOD of Bethel! By whose hand
Thy people still are fed;
Who through this weary pilgrimage
Hast all our fathers led:

Our vows, our pray'rs, we now present
Before the throne of grace:
God of our fathers! be the God
Of their succeeding race.

Through each perplexing path of life
Our wand'ring footsteps guide;
Give us each day our daily bread,
And raiment fit provide.

O spread thy cov'ring wings around,
Till all our wand'rings cease,
And at our Father's lov'd abode
Our souls arrive in peace.

Such blessings from thy gracious hand
Our humble pray'rs implore;
And thou shalt be our chosen God,
And portion evermore.

EXODUS III. 1-12.

NOW Moses kept the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian: and he led the flock to the back-side of the desert, and came to the mountain God, even to Horeb. 2.

And the Angel of the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush; and he looked, and, behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed. 3.

And Moses said, I will now turn aside, and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt. 4. And when the Lord saw that he turned aside to see, God called unto him out of the midst of the bush, and said, Moses, Moses. And he said, Here am I. 5. And he said, Draw not nigh hither: put off thy shoes from off thy feet; for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground, &c.

Prayer.

OUR voice do Thou hear in the morning, O Lord; in the morning we direct our prayer to Thee, and look up. For sleep and safety in the night we thank Thee. We have awaked, for Thou hast sustained us. Let us awake to righteousness, and not sin. May our hands be clean and our

hearts pure this day. We beseech thee to form within us a lowly spirit, a tender conscience, and an upright mind.

O God, who art light, and in whom is no darkness at all, deliver us from all the power of darkness, and shine with grace and truth into our hearts. We need light more clearly, and life more abundantly; and there is none that can bestow these gifts but only Thou, O Lord.

Our sins have hid Thy face from us. We would not deny or even extenuate them, but would judge ourselves on account of them, and confess to Thee our faults of negligence and wilfulness, our evil thoughts, and selfish schemes, and idle words, and unruly tempers, our hardness of heart, our pride and unbelief. When we confess our sins, Thou art faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. Be it unto us according to Thy word.

With pardon and cleansing, grant us renewal of mind and recovery of spiritual health, that we may attend to Thy word and vigorously address ourselves to new obedience. Deliver us from indolence, vain glory, and self-deceit; and make us, by grace, doers of the word, and not hearers only.

O let Thy hand be upon the Man of Thy right hand the Son of Man whom Thou madest strong for Thyself. We would see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, now crowned with glory and honour. Let the whole earth be filled with His glory,

and let all the nations sing His praise. Make our hearts to beat with love to Him who loved us and gave Himself for us. May we recognize in Him the foundation of our peace, the rock of our safety, the prince of our life, the star of our hope, the spring of our joy, and the author and finisher of our faith. Father of glory! give us the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, the eyes of our hearts being enlightened. May we know how to give glory to Him, and receive grace from Him, for the wants of every day and every hour. In time of trouble may we find Him our burden bearer, and in times of obstruction and perplexity may He be the breaker up of our way. As the sheep of His hand, let us know His voice, and follow Him.

Deliver thou us from the deceit of our hearts, from a double mind, and feigned lips. O let integrity and uprightness preserve us. Let us not be ignorant of Satan's devices; but knowing his craft and malice, may we resist him with vigilance and quench his fiery darts on our shield of faith. Take possession of us by Thy Holy Spirit; and let there be brought forth plenteously in our characters the manifold fruit of the Spirit -- love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance.

Suffer us not to lack the proof of having passed from death to life, in love to the brethren. Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity! Keep them in

the unity of the faith, and the knowledge of the Son of God. Let there be maintained in Thy church, order without tyranny, liberty without confusion, reverence without superstition, and holy boldness without glorying in the flesh. And let the church, walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, be multiplied.

Our queen and country we humbly commend to Thee. Oh for that righteousness by which a nation is exalted. All institutions of education and benevolence we entreat Thee to bless for the public weal and Thy glory. Ourselves, and all whom we love, we cast at Thy feet. Heal us by Thy grace, and lead us in Thy truth, and teach us.

These and all needed blessings we ask that we may receive through Jesus Christ our Lord. And, as we receive, we offer to Thee no money or price of our attainment or desert, but own ourselves debtors to grace, and render thanks and glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost. *Amen.*

THE CHURCH IN THE HOUSE.

O GOD, from whom all blessings flow, grant us through Jesus Christ the remission of all our sins, the knowledge of Thy truth, and a heart to obey Thy holy word; preserve us ever in the unity of Thy faithful church, in integrity of Christian faith and uprightness of Christian life, in love of Thee and our neighbours, and in the hope of the life everlasting. *Amen.*

HYMN, *or Psalm* lxxxviii. 19-24.

O HOLY Saviour, Friend unseen!
Since on thine arm Thou bid'st me lean
Help me throughout life's varying scene
By faith to cling to Thee.

Blest with this fellowship divine,
Take what Thou wilt, I'll ne'er repine;
Ev'n as the branches to the vine
My soul would cling to Thee.

Without a murmur I dismiss
My former dreams of earthly bliss,
My joy, my consolation this,
Each hour to cling to Thee.

What though the world unfaithful prove,
And earthly friends and joys remove --
With sure and certain hope of love
Still would I cling to Thee.

PSALM CXXXII.

LORD, remember David, and all his afflictions: 2. How he swore unto the Lord, and vowed unto the mighty God of Jacob; 3. Surely I will not come into the tabernacle of my house, nor go up into my bed; 4. I will not give sleep to mine eyes, or slumber to mine eyelids, 5. Until I find out a place for the Lord, an habitation for the mighty God of Jacob. 6. Lo, we heard of it at Ephratah; we found it in the fields of the wood. 7. We will go into his tabernacles; we will worship at his footstool, &c.

SERMON XXXI.

“AND ITTAI ANSWERED THE KING, AND SAID: AS THE LORD LIVETH, AND AS MY LORD THE KING LIVETH, SURELY IN WHAT PLACE MY LORD THE KING SHALL BE, WHETHER IN DEATH OR LIFE, EVEN THERE ALSO WILL THY SERVANT BE.”

-- 2 Sam. xv. 21.

THE poets and moralists have had much to say of the sweets of friendship; but the best things ever said on the subject are in Holy Writ. Listen to the Hebrew poet and moralist: “A friend loveth at all times, and a brother is born for adversity:” “Ointment and perfume rejoice the heart; so doth the sweetness of a man’s friend by hearty counsel.” These words of Solomon’s may be abundantly illustrated from the life of his father David. It would be difficult to name any one in history so gifted as the son of Jesse with the power of attracting and retaining enthusiastic friends. Jonathan loved him as his own soul. His warriors were so devoted to him, that he had but to say, “O that one would give me a drink of the water of the well of Bethlehem, which is by the gate!” and three heroes broke through the host of the Philistines, drew water from the well, and brought it to their king.

The friend, whose fidelity our text records, was no Israelite, but of Gath, and so a Philistine. How strange the

history of David in relation to Gath! The first enemy whom he faced in a battle-field, and slew, was Goliath, a Gittite. Yet it was a Gittite, and the very king of Gath, who proved to him a friend and kind protector, when the king of Israel pursued him to take away his life. David was captain of the body-guard to Achish, and in his turn had Gittites for his own body-guard in Jerusalem. There can be no doubt that some of the young men of Gath, being under David's command when he served Achish, were so drawn and bound to him in admiration and affection, that they resolved to cast in their lot with his. So they left the land of the Philistines, and settled in that of Judah. We read of Obed-edom the Gittite, a man of such approved character, that the king left the ark under his care for three months, and thereby brought the blessing of the Lord upon the Gittite's household. Ittai was another Gittite, and so trusty and competent an officer, that King David assigned to him the command of one of the three grand divisions of the loyal army, in the decisive battle which ended at once the revolt and the life of Absalom, in the wood of Ephraim.

It has been a common thing for monarchs to maintain a corps of foreign troops in immediate attendance on their own persons; and history has told more than once how such mercenaries have proved faithful to death, when the native army played false. But the loyal Gittites can hardly have been at any time mere mercenaries. They followed David

from Gath, when he was without a crown; and having loved, not his crown or kingdom, but himself, they were proof against all the blandishments of Absalom, and, cleaving to David in adversity as well as in prosperity, they passed on, six hundred men, before the king.

Least of all was Ittai, the commanding officer of those Gittites, a mercenary, or soldier of fortune. Not only was he proof against the wiles of Absalom, but he could resist the generously meant proposal of the king, that he should look to his own interest: -- "Wherefore goest thou also with us? Return to thy place, and abide with the king; for thou art a stranger, and also an exile. Whereas thou camest but yesterday, should I this day make thee go up and down with us? seeing I go whither I may, return thou, and take back thy brethren: mercy and truth be with thee." So he had an opportunity to return, but refused to consult his own safety or advantage. It is plain, that the charm of David's character had won his enthusiastic attachment; and reverence for David's God had given a firm religious tone to his mind. Ittai, in his answer, acknowledged Jehovah; and to Jehovah's servant he clave in time of reproach quite as closely as ever he had done in days of bright prosperity. It was not David's pay, or David's court, that the good man loved, so much as David himself, the anointed of Jehovah; so he would not turn back, or accept any other king-- an Anti-David. Better far, he held, to be with the true king in

the wilderness, or even in the grave, than to be with Absalom and his traitor host, with corn and wine abounding. Oh, noble Ittai! true heart, friend indeed! “As Jehovah liveth, and as my lord the king liveth, surely in what place my lord the king shall be, whether in death or life, even there also will thy servant be.”

See what a follower and friend of Jesus Christ should be. He is the Son of David, God’s anointed, and our king. Whatever takes away our homage from him, though it be fair and plausible as Absalom was, is a deceiver and an antichrist.

Let Attai’s coming after David out of the land of the Philistines stand for the conversion of a sinner to God, the drawing of a soul to Christ. It is as the coming of Ruth out of the land of Moab, to dwell under the wings of Jehovah, God of Israel. It is as the coming of Simon Peter and Andrew, when they left their nets straightway; and of the sons of Zebedee, when they immediately left their boat and their father, to follow the Saviour. It is as the coming of Saul of Tarsus, when he first counted the things which were gain to him loss for Christ.

But one such act of choice is not enough. He who has been converted will be proved, whether he adheres to his first love, and continues by grace resolved to choose the reproach of Christ, and bear it, if need be, without the camp. Thus Ittai is proved, whether he will still adhere to David in

peril and reproach. Ruth was proved in her first days of poverty in Bethlehem, whether she would indeed cleave to Naomi, and Naomi's people, and Naomi's God, or was still a Moabite at heart, merely seeking bread. The twelve apostles were proved at Capernaum. Our Lord saw the people and the disciples disposed to honour him, and he searched them by his word; but the Jews murmured at him, and strove among themselves. Then, when his discourse was ended, "many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him." There still remained the inner circle of apostles. "Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away?" Are you offended at my word, or weary of me and my cause? Then Peter's noble reply evinced a man of like spirit with Ittai: "Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life; and we believe, and are sure, that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God." Yet Jesus searched the company of the apostles, too. "Jesus answered them, Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil?" In like manner, the apostle Paul was often and severely tested. Reproaches and persecutions for the Saviour's name seemed to say to him, O Paul! dost thou still count all things loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Jesus Christ, thy Lord? And he answered without hesitation, "Yes, doubtless, I do so count." The longer I live, the more I am confirmed in that mind. Paul indeed spoke like another Ittai: "I am ready, not to be bound only,

but also to die at Jerusalem, for the name of the Lord Jesus.”

Depend on it, that to some test the Lord will bring all of us who have confessed his name. Have we only assumed a form of godliness, or have we felt the power thereof? Have we followed Christ for reputation and advantage, or do we love him for himself, and are our hearts bound up with him? Do we take up our cross daily and follow him? Is it our joy to be with him in the face of a world that knows him not? and is it our prayer unfeigned, that we may not go back, or turn from him at all?

There are times of reproach that try men’s souls. Just as there was a day when Absalom seemed to triumph, and all the time-servers went over to his side, because they thought him sure to win the kingdom; so there have been, and will be again, days in which the antichrists seem to prevail, and religion itself becomes showy and flesh-pleasing, and the tide of opinion runs strongly against the meekness and lowliness of Christ. Many fail at such a time, and turn back, or fall in with the current religious fashion; but the day of trial brings out to view the true and honest heart. If there be defection of others from Christ, so much the more that heart adheres to him. Or if there be trouble to bear as a Christian, so much the dearer is Christ. Samuel Rutherford wrote to Lady Kenmure: It is a mercy that the saints have His cross laid to their hand for nothing;

for I know no sweeter way to heaven than through free grace and hard trials together; and one of these cannot well want another.”

When our Lord Jesus tries his own, and even puts it to them again and again, whether they will abide with him or go away, he is by no means indifferent to the result, for he loves to have them remain as the companions of his tribulation and bearers of his cross. Pass over with Christ, if so be ye suffer with him, that you may also be glorified together. “And David said to Ittai, Go and pass over. And Ittai the Gittite passed over, and all his men, and all the little ones that were with him.”

O sweet procession of “the little ones,” marching on in the reproach of David, rather than stay in the city to choose that traitor Absalom! Be admonished, ye followers of Christ, to take your little ones with you. The earlier, the better. Before they are of an age to make choice for themselves, or to apprehend all that the Bible tells of Christ and antichrist, choose Christ for yourselves and for them too, and train them to go on with Christ; let their earliest impressions be of his love and his authority. As the Gittites kept their children, as well as themselves, out of Absalom’s way, so keep your children, as well as yourselves, out of the way of every antichrist, and bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

The conduct of Ittai, at the head of those loyal Gittites, there is no need that we any further eulogize. We cannot read the narrative without giving our approval and applause to Ittai, and Hushai, and Barzillai; while we reprobate the treason of Ahithophel, and the rude malice of Shimei. We have touched lightly on the reason of Ittai's noble conduct. Let us ponder it well.

What kept the Gittite officer firm and true, when so many born Hebrews forsook their king? Not political shrewdness, foreseeing Absalom's early fall; for Ahithophel was the most astute statesman in the land at the period, and political shrewdness sent him over to Absalom's side. Not the instinct of a soldier of fortune, for, as we have pointed out already, Ittai had the king's sanction to march his men back to Jerusalem, and accept service under the usurper. The key to his fidelity, is his love unfeigned: "Surely in what place my lord the king shall be, whether in life or death, there also will thy servant be."

Be instructed, ye who name the name of the Lord, that the only thing which will keep you faithful to him when others turn back, is unfeigned love to him who first loved you, and drew you from your state of ignorance and sin, your Gath of the Philistines, to fellowship with himself. From the day that Ittai first was drawn to the son of Jesse, a new life opened upon him. He felt the beauty of David's character, and the excellence of David's faith in the eternal,

invisible God of Israel. Thereafter, year by year, as he enjoyed the king's confidence, and came into sympathy with his mind, and entered fully into the devout confidence in Jehovah so characteristic of the psalmist-king, the Gittite became less and less a Gittite, more and more an Israelite indeed, a lover of God and the king. Should it not be so with you also, O follower of Christ? That was a mournful day, when first you saw yourself a sinner, far off, as in some city of the Philistines. Yet it was a happy day, when the Son of David revealed himself to you, and drew you, and you "followed on." In that very hour, love to Jesus sprung up in your heart. But, surely, you love him more to-day, than then. Perhaps you have not the same freshness of feeling, the same surprise or impulse in your love; but you now have more knowledge of Christ, and of what he has done for you and others like you, and surely you have a deeper, and firmer, and more intelligent attachment to him, than you had when you first knew the Lord. Jesus Christ has not only drawn you out of Gath, but has kept you with himself in Jerusalem, treated you as a friend, employed you as a servant, and supplied all your wants. He has given you every opportunity to increase your knowledge of him -- the holy beauties of his character, the meekness of his heart, the tenderness of his love, and all the glory of God in him. Is not the effect of this, under the grace of the Holy Spirit, to make the thought of forsaking

Christ hateful -- the thought of being separated from Christ terrible, to you? Surely, in what place so ever our Lord the King may be found, there also would you his servant be: --

“Whom have we in the heaven above,
Whom on the earth, save Thee, to love?”

After all, it is due to grace, and not to us, that we do not turn back from Christ. It was David who kept Ittai, at the very time when he proposed to him to depart; held him fast by that wonderful charm of personal loveliness which made for David such enthusiastic friends, and which was at this period increased, in the eyes of the honest Gittite, by the sorrow through which his lord the king was made to pass. So it was Jesus Christ who by his beauty of holiness, and by the drawing of his secret grace, kept the apostles, even when he said to them, “Will ye also go away?” And it is Jesus Christ who holds us now by the cord of his love, the force of truth, and the confirming energy of the Holy Ghost. Let no flesh glory in his presence. It is because we are apprehended of Christ, and led by his Spirit, that we, or any of us, play the part of Ittai rather than that of Shimei. And such is our Lord’s grace, that whether we live or die, we are his. We can say with the Gittite, “Whether in death or life.” “Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or

nakedness, or peril, or sword? --- I am persuaded, that neither death nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

Beloved! follow the king, the Lord’s Anointed; follow hard after him. Let there be no ambiguity in your allegiance, no halting between two opinions. Absalom had no part in Ittai the Gittite; David possessed him all. So let Antichrist, in whatever form he beguiles unstable souls, have nothing in you. Let Christ have all. Throw yourselves without reserve into his humiliation and his battle; and joy awaits you when the king comes back again. See that you are his without guile, at the brook Kedron, and in the wilderness, and in the wood of Ephraim; so shall you share his triumph, and be with him in Jerusalem at his appearing and his kingdom.

“He comes with his reward: ’tis just at hand;
He comes in glory to his promised throne.
My soul rejoice: ere long thy feet shall stand
Within the city of the Blessed One;
Thy perils past, thy heritage secure,
Thy tears all wiped away, thy joy for ever sure.”

-- D. FRASER, M. A.

THE CHILDREN'S SERVICE.

HOW A LITTLE GIRL DIED, AND WAS BROUGHT BACK TO LIFE
AGAIN.

THE story about this little girl has, as it is told in the Bible, another remarkable story in the midst of it, like the reading of a parenthesis in a sentence. It will be best to tell both in the same connected way.

In one of the synagogues that stood, in the time of our Lord, near the western shore of the lake of Tiberias, perhaps in the town of Capernaum -- there was a ruler of the name of Jairus, who had a little daughter of whom he was very fond. We know this from the way he spoke of her, and from what he did for her. One day this child (who was not, however, a mere child, but a grown girl twelve years old, though her father called her his little daughter) -- one day, I have said, this child fell sick, and was very ill indeed. Everything, we be sure, was done that could be thought of to cure her; but she grew worse and worse till she appeared just about to die. The father and mother were greatly distressed. There was only one thing more that they could do, to save the life of the child. If they could get to Jesus, of whom they had heard and perhaps seen much, and in whose power to heal disease they firmly believed,

they would ask him to come and keep her from dying. So Jairus, learning that he had come back from beyond the lake where he had lately been, and was now not very far off, set out in haste to seek him, and pray to him to come and heal his child. He had some distance to go; but he went fast, and came to Jesus at a place where he was teaching, and a great crowd were standing round about him. Jairus pressed eagerly through them all, and said to Jesus, O come and help me; my little daughter is at the point of death; indeed, I fear, she must be dead by this time: but come and lay thy hands on her, and she shall live. Jesus at once rose to go, and the people hearing what Jairus had said followed him close, and pressed upon him in a thick throng.

As he passed along the road, with his disciples and Jairus and the multitude, there was another person who thought that her time for seeking Christ's help had come. This was a woman, who had been ill for just as many years as Jairus little daughter had lived. The lines of those two lives for all that time had been stretching on under God's eye -- one in sorrow and pain, one probably in child-joy till now. They were to meet to-day in the help of Jesus, and to be twined together in the page of the Bible till the end of time. The illness of the woman was a very painful and wasting one, and one, also, which made her unclean according to the law, so that she could not mingle with her neighbours, or go to the house of God, like others. She had tried a great many

doctors, and had been subjected by them to a great deal of painful treatment, but had never been bettered by anything, but grew, on the whole, always worse. There was no help of hope for her, except she could go to Jesus, and get him to cure her. But from all she had heard of him she felt very sure, that if she could only get his help, all would be well. Nay, she was sure that so full was he of power, if she could only touch the fringe of his coat, she would be perfectly whole. But she said to herself, How can I go to him, such as I am, and ask him to heal me? But when she saw a great crowd passing along after him, she said, I will try now, and steal behind, and touch his clothes. So she mingled with the throng, and pressed till she got near him, and stooping down, touched the tassel that hung on the edge of his upper coat, and in one moment felt that she was quite healed. She had got health at once, although it looked as if she had stolen it.

But though at first she felt happy, as I suppose that nobody had taken notice when she touched Jesus, it soon appeared that he knew all about it, and would not allow it to be hidden. He would not allow it, for her sake; it was not that he wanted to bring it out for his own fame, except, indeed, to teach us all to the latest day that there is none good as he is. So, turning around in the press, Jesus said, Who touched my clothes? He knew, of course, quite well; but he wished to bring the woman out, that he might show

how much pleased he was with her great faith, and yet teach her that she was not right in thinking she could get good from him without his being aware of it, and without his will giving it. The disciples were a good deal surprised to hear their Master say in the midst of a crowd, Who touched me? For they thought that it could not but happen in the throng that many must from time to time touch him. They could not help but showing their surprise by saying that they thought so. But Jesus let them know that he meant a special kind of touch; he asked about the touch of faith, for he knew that he had answered it by sending forth healing power. The woman soon perceived that he knew all, and came, and knelt down before him, and told him the whole truth. He heard her, well pleased, and said to her, Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace, and be whole of thy plague. She felt already that she was healed; but Jesus meant that she was to continue well, and she never was ill again of that disease all her life. Perhaps he mean more; perhaps he meant that she was not only healed of her bodily disease, but of the sin on account of which God had afflicted her. No doubt she went away home with fuller views of the character of Jesus than she had before, even when she said, If I may but touch his clothes I shall be whole.

I dare say that Jairus was at first sorry that anything should happen to keep Jesus a moment longer on the road than could be helped. He was perhaps thinking all the while

of his child, and wishing that the woman had taken another time to come and be healed. But then his faith would be helped by seeing how full of grace and power Jesus was, when even through his garment he could give healing to a touch. Almost immediately after, however, his faith met with a sore shock. For messengers came to Jairus, saying, It is of no use troubling the Master any further; your daughter is dead. Now he had spoken before as if that was not unlikely; but it was another thing to hear that it had actually taken place. So his faith shook greatly, like a tower or a tree in a storm. Jesus saw this, and came to his help, saying to him, Don't be afraid: only believe. And so they went on together.

By and by they reached the house, and when they came near to it, it was easy to see that the child was dead. For there were the hired mourners, with musical instruments, according to the custom of the East in those days, making a great noise of weeping and playing. But Jesus, wishing perhaps to show them that where there is the hope of resurrection such noisy sorrow is not right, said to them, Why are you making such ado? the damsel is not dead; she is only asleep. He knew what he was going to do; but I think he meant also what may make us sure that the daughter of Jairus was a good girl. Even if he had not come to wake her then, he would come to wake her at the last day. The people did not understand him; and knowing that

the child's life was really gone, they laughed at Jesus scornfully, as if to say, we know better than that; go in and see. He did go in, and saw. But he would not let the noisy people go with him. He put them all out. He took only the child's father and mother, and three of his disciples -- Peter, and James, and John. He was about to do a great work, and only those who are prepared by faith and love to see it, and only as many as were needful to witness it, were to be beside him when Life was to waken death.

The six went in -- One and five. There, on the bed, lay the child dead -- already getting cold. Jesus stepped to the side of the couch; put forth his warm living hand; took the dead hand of the child's body, and said, Maiden, rise! The very syllables he used have been kept fresh for us -- Talitha-cumi -- in the native tongue of the Jews at that time. As he spoke, the damsel, just as if waking from a sweet sleep, rose up, and walked across the room. The parents and the disciples could not tell what to think for wonder.

Jesus stood by, calm and glorious. Then to prove that her restoration to life was real, and showing how kind and thoughtful he was, and also wishing to teach how this resurrection was only to an earthly life, and not so good as the resurrection to which he will raise all his own at last, he said, Give her something to eat.

QUESTIONS ON THE BIBLE STORY.

1. Where are we told of a little boy-child, who when grown was taken ill, and died on his mother's knees?

2. Who was it that, in a sinful way, did not think of God when he consulted the physicians?

3. Can you find a psalm where the writer says he turned to God when all refuge failed him?

4. In what respect are tribes of Israel, apostles of Jesus, and hours of the day alike? And why should this question be suggested by the story?

5. Where do we read of persons who were obliged to live outside the gates of the city, because they were unclean?

6. Who was it that did something which Jesus said should be told of her wherever the gospel went; his prophesy being fulfilled by the very book which tells us it was made?

7. What question, early in the Bible, was put, not for information, but to bring people out, to be taught?

8. On what memorable occasion did Jesus, when he saw the faith of one of his disciples shaken, stretch his hand to help?

9. What great funeral mourning was it that drew the attention of people that were not themselves acquainted with the dead person?

ANSWERS to the foregoing may be found by consulting the following chapters: -- 2 Kings iv.; 2 Chron. xvi.; Psalm cxlii.; James i.; Matt. x. and John xi.; 2 Kings vii.; Matt. xxvi; Gen. iii; Matt. xiv.; Gen. 1.

Prayer.

O GOD, Thou gavest us life. We have lived these years of our lives by Thy goodness. Thou hast given us food to eat. We thank and praise Thee for all. Thou knowest how long we have to live. May we, by Thy grace, so live that when we come to die, people who know Christ's love may say, They are not dead, but sleep. So, at last, may we all hear Him say, Rise, and wake to immortal life. *Amen.*

EVENING WORSHIP.

O GOD of our life, who hast compassed us this day with Thy faithfulness, cover us at eventide with the shadow of Thy wings, and teach us with a calm spirit, an humble mind, and a believing heart, to present our evening sacrifice, through Jesus Christ our Saviour. *Amen.*

HYMN, *or Psalm iv.* 4-8.

THAT kind eye, which cannot sleep,
These defenceless hours shall keep:
By my heavenly Father blest,
Thus I give my powers to rest: --

Heavenly Father, gracious name;
Night and day his love the same:
Thou, my ever-bounteous God,
Crown'st my days with various good.

What if death my sleep invade,
Should I be of death afraid?
Whilst encircled by thine arm,
Death may strike but cannot harm.

With thy heavenly presence blest,
Death is life, and labour rest.
Welcome sleep or death to me,
Still secure, for still with thee.

MATTHEW III. 1-17.

IN those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judea, 2. And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. 3. For this is he that was spoken of by the prophet Esaias, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness. Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. 4. And the same John had his raiment of camel's hair and a leathern girdle about his loins; and his meat was locusts and wild honey. 5. Then went out to him Jerusalem, and all Judea, and all the region round about Jordan, 6. And were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins. 7. But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? 8. Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance: 9. And think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham. 10. And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. 11. I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost,

and with fire: 12. Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire. 13. Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him. 14. But John forbade him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me? 15. And Jesus, answering, said unto him, Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered him. 16. And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: 17. And low, a voice from heaven, saying, this is my beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased.

Prayer.

O GOD of peace, who didst bring again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make us perfect in every good work to do Thy will, working in us that which is well-pleasing in thy sight through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever. *Amen.*

We thank Thee for this Lord's day, as a witness to us that the Lord liveth, and was dead, and is alive for evermore. And as on the first day of the week, when He had risen, He showed Himself to the disciples at evening, speaking peace, and breathing the Holy Ghost, so may our Lord reveal Himself to us at eventide, and make our waiting spirits glad. Him, having not seen, may we love; in Him, though now we see Him not, believing may we rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory.

Alas! for our sluggish minds, and wandering thoughts, forgetful hearing, and formal lifeless worship! For Thine own name's sake, cast Thou our sins and provocations behind Thy back.

So far as we have received it, enable us to hold forth the word of life. May our garments be kept unspotted from the world, our lights kept shining in the world, and our hearts be kept in thought and desire above the world. Sanctify us, O Father, through the truth: Thy word is truth.

Wherever and by whomsoever the gospel has been preached to-day, let it be attended by signs following, in the pricking of men's hearts, and their conversion to God. Comfort the mourners with thy word of promise. Bind up the broken in heart, and heal all their wounds. Hear the cries of men in jeopardy on land or sea. Watch over lawful travellers, and teach them the way to the heavenly city. Deal gently with sick folk, and raise their faith and love to

thyself. Accept the service of little companies that have not been able to join the great congregation. And let such as have been alone to-day know that they are not alone, that thou art with them.

Cause the hallowed influence of the Lord's day, and the sweet savour of Christ, the Lord of the sabbath, to abide with us throughout the week. Withdraw not thy Holy Spirit from us, but let His solemn stamp and seal be on us with increasing clearness. Deliver us from the power of indwelling sin, by the Almighty power of Thine indwelling Spirit. Let us accomplish our warfare in the strength of grace, that we may obtain our rest and reward in the Christian's home in glory.

Cover us with Thy wings in the watches of this night. We are weary, but thou faintest not, neither art weary. We must sleep, but Thou, O keeper of Israel, dost not slumber. So Thou watchest over them that sleep in Jesus; and when they awake they shall be satisfied with Thy likeness. Prepare us for the duties of this life, the falling on sleep when our work is done, and the blessed awaking in the resurrection of the just. Now to God, only wise, be glory through Jesus Christ for ever. *Amen.*

MORNING AND EVENING MEDITATIONS.

MONDAY.

Morning.

O Lord thou art my God; I will exalt thee, I will praise thy name; for thou hast done wonderful things; thy counsels of old are faithfulness and truth.

For thou hast been a strength to the poor, a strength to the needy in his distress, a refuge from the storm, a shadow from the heat, when the blast of the terrible ones is as a storm against the wall.

Thou shalt bring down the noise of strangers, as the heat in a dry place; even the heat with the shadow of a cloud: the branch of the terrible ones shall be brought low.

Isa. xxv. 1, 4, 5.

Evening.

The Lord also will be a refuge for the oppressed, a refuge in times of trouble.

And they that know thy name will put their trust in thee; for thou, Lord, hast not forsaken them that seek thee: for thou, Lord, hast not forsaken them that seek thee.

For he hath looked down from the height of his sanctuary; from heaven did the Lord behold the earth;

To hear the groaning of the prisoner; to loose those that are appointed to death.

For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him.

As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us.

Ps. ix. 9, 10.

Ps. cii. 19, 20.

Ps. ciii. 11, 12.

TUESDAY.

Morning.

Then drew near unto him all the publicans and sinners for to hear him.

And the Pharisees and scribes murmured, saying, This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them.

For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.

I am sought of them that asked not for me; I am found of them that sought me not: I said, Behold me, behold me, unto a nation that was not called by my name.

I have spread out my hands all the day unto a rebellious people, which walketh in a way that was not good, after their own thoughts.

Luke xv. 1, 2.

Luke xix. 10.

Isa. lxv. 1, 2.

Evening.

But what think ye? A certain man had two sons; and he came to the first, and said, Son, go work to day in my vineyard.

He answered and said, I will not; but afterward he repented, and went.

And he came to the second, and said likewise. And he answered and said, I go, sir; and went not.

Whether of them twain did the will of his father? They say unto him, The first. Jesus saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, That the publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you.

Matt. xxi. 28, 29, 30, 31.

WEDNESDAY.

Morning.

And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people.

But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd.

Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few:

Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest.

Matt. ix. 35, 36. 37. 38.

Evening.

Teach me thy way, O Lord; I will walk in thy truth:
unite my heart to fear thy name.

I will praise thee, O Lord, my God, with all my heart;
and I will glorify thy name for evermore.

Thou O Lord, are a God full of compassion, and
gracious, long-suffering, and plenteous in mercy and truth.

O turn unto me, and have mercy upon me: give thy
strength unto thy servant, and save the son of thine
handmaid.

Shew me a token for good; that they which hate me
may see it, and be ashamed; because thou, Lord, hast holpen
me, and comforted me.

Ps. lxxxvi. 11, 12, 15, 16, 17.

THURSDAY.

Morning.

Thou art my servant; I have chosen thee, and not cast
thee away.

Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for
I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee;
yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my
righteousness.

Behold, all they that were incensed against thee shall be ashamed and confounded: they shall be as nothing; and they that strive with thee shall perish.

For I the Lord thy God will hold thy right hand, saying unto thee, Fear not; I will help thee.

Fear not, thou worm Jacob, and ye men of Israel: I will help thee, saith the Lord, and thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel.

Isa. xli. 9, 10, 11, 13, 14.

Evening.

Thus saith the Lord, In an acceptable time have I heard thee, and in a day of salvation have I helped thee; and I will preserve thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people --

That thou mayest say to the prisoners, Go forth; to them that are in darkness Shew yourselves: they shall feed in the ways, and their pastures shall be in all high places.

They shall not hunger nor thirst; neither shall the heat nor sun smite them: for he that hath mercy on them shall lead them, even by the springs of water shall he guide them.

Isa. xlix. 8, 9, 10.

FRIDAY.

Morning.

Woe is me for my hurt! my wound is grievous: but I said, truly this is a grief, and I must bear it.

My tabernacle is spoiled, and all my cords are broken: my children are gone forth of me, and they are not: there is none to stretch forth my tent anymore, and to set up my curtains.

O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps.

O Lord, correct me, but with judgment; not in thine anger, lest thou bring me to nothing.

Therefore thus saith the Lord, If thou return, then will I bring thee again, and thou shalt stand before me.

Jer. x. 19, 20, 23, 24. Jer. xv. 19.

Evening.

Let mine eyes run down with tears night and day, and let them not cease: for the virgin daughter of my people is broken with a great breach, with a very grievous blow.

Hast thou utterly rejected Judah? hath thy soul loathed Zion? why hast thou smitten us, and there is no healing for us? we looked for peace, and there is no good; and for the time of healing, and behold trouble.

We acknowledge, O Lord, our wickedness, and the iniquity of our fathers; for we have sinned against thee.

Do not abhor us, for thy name's sake; do not disgrace the throne of thy glory: remember, break not thy covenant with us.

Jer. xiv. 17, 19, 20, 21.

SATURDAY.

Morning.

See, O Lord, and consider; for I am become vile.

Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by? Behold, and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow, which is done unto me, wherewith the Lord hath afflicted me in the day of his fierce anger.

From above hath he sent fire into my bones, and it prevaieth against them: he hath spread a net for my feet; he hath turned me back; he hath made me desolate and faint all the day.

The yoke of my transgressions is bound by his hand; they are wreathed, and come up upon my neck: he hath made my strength to fall;

Lam. i. 11, 12, 13, 14.

Evening.

Yet saith the house of Israel, The way of the Lord is not equal. O house of Israel, are not my ways equal? are not your ways unequal?

Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, every one according to his ways, saith the Lord God.

Cast away from you all your transgressions, whereby ye have transgressed; and make you a new heart and a new spirit: for why will ye die, O house of Israel?

For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord God: wherefore turn yourselves, and live ye.

Eze. xviii. 29, 30, 31, 32.