

# HOME PREACHER OR CHURCH IN THE HOUSE.

## THIRTY-NINTH WEEK.

### MORNING WORSHIP.

MOST holy and most merciful God, We bow before Thy throne with wonder and devout fear, with thankfulness and great joy. We bless Thee that, although we have sinned against Thee, Thou art near to us still. We are continually breaking Thy commandments, but Thy compassions fail not, and Thy mercy endureth for ever. Forgive all our transgressions. Purify our hearts by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost. While we are reading Thy word, may we have Thine own teaching. All the day may we abide in Thee, O God. Hear us for Christ's sake. *Amen.*

HYMN, *or Psalm xxv.* 9, 10--14, 15.

O HEIGHT that doth all height excel,  
Where the Almighty doth abide!  
O awful depth unsearchable,  
Wherein the Eternal One doth hide.

O dreadful glory that doth make  
Thick darkness round the heavenly throne,  
Through which no angel-eye may break,  
Wherein the Lord doth dwell alone!

Our fainting souls the quest give o'er,  
Their weary wings no longer try:  
His dwelling we may not explore,  
We may not on his glory pry.

Vain searchers! but we need not mourn:  
We need not stretch our weary wings;  
Thou meetest us where'er we turn;  
Thou beamest, Lord, from all bright things.

The glory no man may abide  
Doth visit us, a gracious guest;  
Thou, whom "excess of light" doth hide,  
Here shinest, sweetly manifest.

To us vain searchers after God,  
To us thy Holy Ghost doth come;  
From us thou hidest thine abode;  
But thou wilt make our souls thy home.

O glory that no eye may bear!  
O presence bright, our souls' sweet guest!  
O farthest off, O ever near!  
Most hidden and most manifest!

## I. SAMUEL XVII. 4-11, 32-51.

AND there went out a champion out of the camp of the Philistines, named Goliath, of Gath, whose height was six cubits and a span. 5. And he had an helmet of brass upon his head; and he was armed with a coat of mail; and the weight of the coat was five thousand shekels of brass. 6. And he had greaves of brass upon his legs, and a target of brass between his shoulders. 7. And the staff of his spear was like a weaver's beam; and his spear's head weighed six hundred shekels of iron: and one bearing a shield went before him. 8. And he stood and cried unto the armies of Israel, and said unto them, Why are ye come out to set your battle in array? Am not I a Philistine, and ye servants to Saul? choose you a man for you, and let him come down to me. 9. If he be able to fight with me, and to kill me, then will we be your servants: but if I prevail against him, and kill him, then shall ye be our servants, and serve us. 10. And the Philistine said, I defy the armies of Israel this day;

give me a man, that we may fight together. 11. When Saul and all Israel heard those words of the Philistine, they were dismayed, and greatly afraid. 32. And David said to Saul, Let no man's heart fail because of him; thy servant will go and fight with this Philistine. 33. And Saul said to David, Thou art not able to go against this Philistine to fight with him: for thou art but a youth, and he a man of war from his youth. 34. And David said unto Saul, Thy servant kept his father's sheep, and there came a lion and a bear, and took a lamb out of the flock; 35. And I went out after him, and smote him, and delivered it out of his mouth: and when he arose against me, I caught him by his beard, and smote him, and slew him. 36. Thy servant slew both the lion and the bear; and this uncircumcised Philistine shall be as one of them, seeing he hath defied the armies of the living God. 37. David said moreover, The Lord that delivered me out of the paw of the lion, and out of the paw of the bear, he will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine. And Saul said unto David, Go, and the Lord be with thee. 38. And Saul armed David with his armour, and he put an helmet of brass upon his head; also he armed him with a coat of mail. 39. And David girded his sword upon his armour, and he assayed to go; for he had not proved it. And David said unto Saul, I cannot go with these; for I have not proved them. And David put them off him. 40. And he took his staff in his hand, and chose him five smooth stones out of

the brook, and put them in a shepherd's bag which he had, even in a scrip; and his sling was in his hand: and he drew near to the Philistine. 41. And the Philistine came on and drew near unto David; and the man that bare the shield went before him. 42. And when the Philistine came on and drew near unto David, he disdained him: for he was but a youth, and ruddy, and of a fair countenance. 43. And the Philistine said unto David, Am I dog, that thou comest to me with staves? And the Philistine cursed David by his gods. 44. And the Philistine said to David, Come to me, and I will give thy flesh unto the fowls of the air, and to the beasts of the field, 45. Then said David to the Philistine, Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield: but I come to thee in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied. 46. This day will the Lord deliver thee into mine hand; and I will smite thee, and take thine head from thee; and I will give the carcasses of the host of the Philistine this day unto the fowls of the air, and to the wild beasts of the earth; that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel. 47. And all this assembly shall know that the Lord saveth not with the sword and spear: for the battle is the Lord's and he will give you into our hands. 48. And it came to pass, when the Philistine arose, and came and drew nigh to meet David, that David hasted, and ran toward the army to meet the Philistine. 49. And David put his hand in his

bag, and took thence a stone, and slang it, and smote the Philistine in his forehead, that the stone sunk into his forehead; and he fell upon his face to the earth. 50. So David prevailed over the Philistine with a sling and with a stone, and smote the Philistine, and slew him; but there was no sword in the hand of David. 51. Therefore David ran, and stood upon the Philistine, and took his sword, and drew it out of the sheath thereof, and slew him, and cut off his head therewith. And when the Philistines saw their champion was dead, they fled.

*Prayer.*

ALMIGHTY and everlasting God, we give Thee thanks for Thy great and wonderful goodness to us and to all men. We thank Thee for all the blessings with which Thy bountiful hand enriches our life in this present world -- for the joy of childhood, for the strength of manhood, and for the calmness and peace of old age. We thank Thee for the work of the week, and for the rest of this holy day. We thank Thee for the sleep of the night, and for the new vigour of the morning. We thank Thee for the quietness of our home, and for the friends who love us. We thank Thee that Thou hast not permitted the want, the shame, and the misery to come upon us, by which our hearts might have been broken, and our lives made desolate. Thou art good,

and Thou doest good. We thank Thee with heart and soul, and strength, for all Thy love.

And yet, O God, we have sinned against Thee. In Thy presence is fullness of joy, but we have not loved Thee well enough to stay there. It is in Thy heart to lead us into green pastures, and beside still waters but we have erred and strayed like lost sheep. Have mercy upon us, O Lord, according to Thy loving-kindness, and according to the multitude of Thy tender mercies, blot out all our transgressions. Forgive us all the harsh and hasty words we have spoken during the week which has gone by; and all our unkind and ungenerous and suspicious thoughts. Forgive us if we have been guilty of any injustice and untruthfulness -- if we have flattered the rich, and oppressed the poor. Forgive us if, through our coldness and selfishness, we have clouded the happiness, or increased the sorrow, of any of our relatives and friends. Forgive us if we have not wept with them that weep, and rejoiced with them that do rejoice. Forgive us if we have been envious of the prosperity of other men, or treated them hardly because of their misfortunes. Forgive us if we have so forgotten Thyself, that our chief anxiety has been to increase our wealth, and to win the good opinion of men. Forgive us that we are often so restless and impatient in times of trouble, and that in times of joy we are so ungrateful to Thee for Thy goodness. Forgive us that we do not hate sin

more, and love Thee better. Forgive us that we resist and grieve Thy Spirit. May we have redemption through the blood of Christ, even the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of Thy grace. From Thine own lips, O God, may we now receive absolution from all our sins.

We come to Thee, O God, to save us: we cannot save ourselves. Thou alone canst forgive us; forgive us for Christ's sake. Thou alone canst deliver us from the power of sin; for Christ's sake deliver us. How often have we resolved to keep Thy commandments, but our strongest resolutions have been soon broken. How often have we vowed to be for ever faithful to Thee, but our most solemn vows have been soon forgotten. We entreat Thee to reveal in us now the exceeding greatness of Thy power so shall we please Thee perfectly in all things.

Be with us all this day. The day is Thine, O God; we are free from common work and common care; come near to us, and may we behold Thy glory. Too often the day of rest has passed by, and we have had no bright and blessed vision of Thy face; nor have we come to know Thee better, whom to know is eternal life. In Thy great goodness, suffer not the hours of this day to remain unblest.

We entreat Thee to reveal Thyself to-day to all whom we love. If any of those who are dear to us are living far away from Thee, awaken within them, in answer to our present intercessions, very sad and troubled thoughts about



their guilt and their peril; and may they be cut to the heart by the remembrance of Thy love which they have forgotten. And to all our friends who are trying to keep Thy commandments, grant a deeper peace, and a richer joy, and a larger wisdom. May the glory of heaven shine round them; and may they find perfect blessedness in Thine infinite love.

Grant wisdom, and courage, and tenderness, and great zeal, to all Christian ministers this day, and to all good men and women who shall try to bring the world nearer to Christ. May He who died for the sins of the world have cause to rejoice to-day over great numbers of the penitent souls, who shall ask Him for the first time to grant them forgiveness and eternal life.

Hear us, O God, in all these our confessions, prayers, intercessions and thanksgivings, for Christ's sake. *Amen.*

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## THE CHURCH IN THE HOUSE.

ALMIGHTY God, we thank Thee for all that Thou hast revealed of Thyself to mankind in past ages, through prophets and apostles, and through Jesus Christ or Lord; but we, too, are Thy children, and we entreat Thee now to speak to us. May we be taught of the Holy Ghost; and may the truth that He shall reveal to us be hidden in our hearts, that we may not sin against Thee; for Christ's sake. *Amen.*

HYMN, *or Psalm* civ. 31-35.

MY God, I do not flee from thee  
Because thou awful art;  
Thy glories, Lord, oppress not me,  
Nor make afraid my heart.

Father, Redeemer, Quickener, mine,  
What joy they glories yield!  
That majesty, that might of thine,  
I count my sun and shield.

Who but thyself, all-glorious guest,  
Joy to my sad soul brings?  
And where may thy frail creatures rest  
But 'neath the Eternal wings?

I tremble, and thou make'st me bold  
I weep; smiles come from thee:  
I faint, and thy strong arms enfold:  
I die; thou quickenest me.

My weakness thy dear succour gains;  
That weakness, Lord, I love:  
Yes, sweet the frailty that constrains  
My soul to look above!

O if I find mine earthly rest  
In thee my glorious God,  
How will thy glory make me blest  
In thine own bright abode!

## II. THESSALONIANS I. 1-12.

PAUL, and Silvanus, and Timotheus, unto the church of the Thessalonians, in God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ: 2. Grace unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ. 3. We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is meet, because that your faith groweth exceedingly, and the charity of every one of you all toward each other aboundeth. 4. So that we ourselves glory in you in the churches of God, for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that you endure: 5. Which is a manifest token of the righteous judgment of God, that ye may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which ye also suffer: 6. Seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you; 7. And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, 8. In flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; 9. Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power; 10. When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed), in that day. 11. Wherefore also we pray always for you, that

our God would count you worthy of this calling, and fulfil all the good pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with power: 12. That the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and ye in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

### JOHN XVII. 17-23.

SANCTIFY them through thy truth; thy word is truth. 18. As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world. 19. And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth. 20. Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; 21. That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. 22. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: 23. I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them as thou hast loved me.

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## SERMON XXXIX.

“THAT THE NAME OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST  
MAY BE GLORIFIED IN YOU.”  
-- 2 Thess. i. 12.

THIS prayer rests upon a truth, the practical importance of which, in relation to the culture and growth of the Christian life, can hardly be exaggerated. In the verses immediately preceding the text, the apostle has been speaking of the final revelation of the majesty and power of our Lord, when he “shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.” He will come, not only to punish the wicked, “with everlasting destruction,” but “to be glorified in his saints.” In the holiness, the dignity, the strength, and the blessedness of all who have loved him and kept his commandments, Christ will then reveal the depth and fulness of his love for our race, and the true magnitude of his work, in effecting human redemption. In that day Christ is not to shine in solitary splendour, or to reign on a solitary throne. We are not to look upon him merely as Peter and James and John looked upon him in the moment of his transfiguration, with wonder and with joy, but having no share in the glory. We too are to be transfigured, and

seeing him as he is we are to be “like him.” He is to be a King among kings, and a Priest among priests. The meaning of those words in his last prayer will be made plain, “The glory which thou hast given me I have given them.” As the malignity of our sin was manifested in the suffering and shame it brought upon Christ, so the intensity and energy of his love will be manifested in the holiness and bliss to which it has exalted us. He will be “glorified in his saints.”

Earlier still in the chapter the apostle had said, “We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, because that your *faith* groweth exceedingly, and the *charity* of every one of you all toward each other aboundeth;” and now he prays that God would perfect both their faith and their love. We “*thank* God always,” for what you have already attained ; we “*pray* God always,” that our God would “fulfil every good pleasure of goodness and the work of faith in power;” that is, that he would make all their kindness and affection for each other more fervent and active still, and their faith in himself more vigorous. Christ will come to be “glorified in his saints;” therefore we pray that God will perfect your Christian love and perfect your Christian faith, “that the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may, in that day, “be glorified in you, and ye in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.” This prayer implies that the measure of our Christian excellence, in this world,

will determine the measure in which Christ will be glorified in us in the next. The greater our holiness now, the more fully will the glory of Christ be revealed in us hereafter.

This is the plain and direct meaning of the text. But we may be permitted to turn aside from the vast and sublime subject to which the text naturally directs us, to a humbler and quieter region of thought. What the text teaches us, is that our present life and character will determine the extent to which Christ will be glorified in us in the world to come, and especially in the last day; it is equally true, and indeed it is only an inferior exemplification of the same law, that our present life and character determine the extent to which Christ is glorified in us in this present world.

I. Nor is it our life and character merely by which Christ may be dishonored or disgraced. We know, said Nicodemus, that thou art a teacher sent from God; and while we believe that Christ was infinitely more than this, we too believe that he came to reveal to us the highest moral and spiritual truths. We are his disciples; that is, we are people who profess to accept his word as authoritative, and to regulate our religious thoughts by his teaching. We dishonour him if, through intellectual indolence, we permit ourselves to have only vague and indefinite conceptions of the truths he really taught, or if we hold our religious convictions with a weak and trembling hand. If Christ is a teacher and we are his scholars, it is plainly our duty to



learn all he has told us about God and ourselves, and to grasp it with a firm faith. In this age of restless doubt, when so many persons think that a strong and settled religious belief is impossible, it is for me to show by our quiet and resolute confidence, that we have conclusive evidence that Christ came from God, and that his teaching is clear enough to be understood.

I do not mean that if we have intellectual difficulties about Christian truth, we should profess a firmness of belief of which we are not conscious, and, closing our minds to all free inquiry, should cultivate a blind and unreasoning faith; what I mean is, that if we are Christians at all, we should honour Christ, not merely by living well, but by endeavouring to arrive at immovable and intelligent certainty on the great question of his divine commission. If his very disciples sluggishly permit themselves to be so far influenced by surrounding scepticism as to be themselves agitated by doubts and difficulties which they have not honestly solved, it is not likely that other men will come to believe in him.

Nor do I mean that we should determine to adhere to the precise form of Christian belief which we may have inherited from our predecessors, without trying to learn for ourselves what Christ taught while he was on earth, and what he revealed afterwards by his apostles. We do not glorify *him* by practically maintaining the infallibility of

mere human teachers; and so long as we are willing to listen only to *their* statements of Christian truth we may be doing him positive dishonour, by placing before the world their erroneous or uncertain theories as part of his authoritative revelation.

The intelligent study of Christian scriptures will lead almost any man of unbiassed mind, living in the light which now rests on Christendom, to the discovery of the great facts and doctrines which constitute the substance of the teaching of Christ and his apostles; these truths are so broadly stated, or so distinctly implied, that they can hardly be missed.

The name of Christ will be glorified in us, if it is plain to mankind that we as Christians, as the result of fair and thoughtful and honest inquiry, are fully satisfied that he revealed the Father, and that his teaching, instead of being dim, vague, and cloudy, has given us a clear and definite, creed concerning the relations between man and God. In a Christian man permanent religious doubt, permanent religious ignorance, is a dishonour to Christ; they imply that it is uncertain after all whether he was a teacher sent from God, or that what he revealed is so unimportant that we do not think it worth to master it, or so indistinct that, having tried to learn his meaning, we have been unsuccessful. To trust mere human teachers, however wise or great, instead

of listening to his own words and the words of his inspired apostles, is to offer him a still more grievous insult.

II. Our Lord Jesus came to atone for human sin, and so to accomplish, as well as make known, the purposes of the divine mercy in relation to mankind. The infinite moral value of his sufferings and death will be revealed in the eternal security and eternal blessedness of all who love him. The shame and contempt of the judgment hall and the cross will then be compensated by a transcendent reward. Every redeemed spirit will be an illustration of the efficacy and worth of Christ's obedience unto death. But the atonement he wrought out should be glorified in us now. And how can this be done? It can only be done, as it seems to me, by a far more tranquil rest in the love of God, a far profounder certainty that we have received his forgiveness, a richer, fuller joy in our reconciliation to him, that many Christian people profess. It is positively thought a presumptuous and a perilous thing to dismiss all fear, and to triumph in the height and depth, the length and breadth, of the divine mercy. Some reserve, some hesitation, some doubt, as to whether God has pardoned our sins or not, is thought to be reverential and humble and safe. It may be that in too many of us there are grave causes for questioning whether we have repented of sin and trusted in Christ; and then God forbid that there should be untroubled security. In that case, however, let it be remembered that there is, not only a

loss of personal peace, but a failure to honour Christ. If all Christian men were in that condition, this strange and miserable consequence would follow -- that after the Son of God had died for the sins of the world, no solitary soul was perfectly sure that its sins had been actually forgiven. It is our duty, not our interest merely, to reach at least such a measure of Christian vigour as shall leave us in no doubt that we have been renewed by the Holy Ghost, and that our disobedience has been pardoned.

It is one of the most frequent arguments for the necessity of a supernatural revelation, that apart from it sinful men could never have any rest of heart, could never be sure of the mercy of God; but what becomes of this argument if we who have received a supernatural revelation have no rest, and remain in uncertainty still? You maintain that nothing but the atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ can quiet the agitated conscience and inspire trust in God; but if your conscience is agitated still, though you believe in the atonement, and if you are still haunted with dreadful fears, you virtually declare that Christ is dead in vain.

You contend for the doctrine of justification by faith, and argue most conclusively, that if our justification depends upon the intensity and energy of our love for God and the perfection of our obedience, the soul must remain under the awful fear that its guilt is still uncanceled, and must be paralyzed by the terrible doubt.

But how can you reason this with a good conscience, and how can you expect men to accept your reasoning, if you who profess to believe in Christ have not escaped from your trouble, and are still unable to look up into the face of God with quiet and grateful trust? If the whole church were blessed with the peace which passeth all understanding -- could stand before the world and, with a radiant countenance and a voice of joy, say, Our sins have been pardoned, for Christ has died -- depend upon it millions of men, conscious of their guilt and weary of its burden, would come and bow with us before the throne of God, and ask for redemption through the blood of Christ according to the riches of his grace. The atonement of Christ would be glorified in your assurance of the divine mercy.

III. The Lord Jesus came to give us the victory over all the powers of evil. He came to do this -- not merely by the natural influence of a brighter example of holy living than the world had ever witnessed before, or by creating new and more pathetic and more powerful motives to resist temptation and to do the will of God -- but by direct and supernatural action on the human soul. This is a principal article in our creed. We assert the necessity and the reality of the new birth, and of the continual presence and mysterious power of the Holy Ghost in every Christian man. And yet it is the prevailing temper and habit of the church to speak -- what, I suppose, I must call -- very modestly of

the degree of excellence which we have a right to hope for, at any rate in this world. We tacitly take it for granted that there are stains upon us which Christ cannot remove. We seem to think it would be presumptuous to expect that the force of evil habits will ever be quite overmastered by a diviner power. For men to dream of obtaining any high and noble form of saintliness, is secretly regarded as a proof that they know nothing of their own weakness, and need to be taught humility. What do you think would be the influence of thoughts like these in a great hospital? Suppose that when a patient came in, full of confidence in the skill of the physician, the man in the next bed smiled at his simplicity, and told him that he would know better by and by: suppose that in every ward throughout the house it was the habit to say, "Well, something may be done here to alleviate our pains; our worst symptoms may be subdued; we may perhaps recover sufficiently to get about again: but as for regaining perfect health and strength, this is not to be expected." No science, or nursing, could master the mischievous influence of this universal despondency. If I were a physician in such an hospital, I should feel myself grievously insulted, and I should soon resign my post. The people that came to visit their sick friends would diffuse through all the neighbourhood the prevailing opinion of the patients; and no sick man, except from sheer despair, would ever ask for admission. The governors might issue

pamphlets to show that the house of clean, was well ventilated, and was in a healthy situation, that the nurses were exemplary, that the physicians and surgeons were kindly and accomplished men; and they might look up their old reports and produce cases in which the hospital was wonderfully successful, but if nobody in the house, now, expected to be cured, if it was hardly possible to find any living man who was willing to confess that he had been cured, all would go for nothing. An hospital is honoured by the confidence it inspires in its success in curing disease; and Christ is *glorified* by the confidence he inspires in *his* success in delivering from the power of sin.

I do not ask you to go about the world declaring that you have reached perfection; the world knows better, so far as most of us are concerned: but I do ask you to let the world know that Christ has promised to make men holy, and that you believe that he can do it. Putting aside altogether the controversy as to whether complete freedom from sin is attainable or not in this world, which is a speculative and a philosophical rather than a practical question, Do you believe that holiness such as St. Paul's or St. John's can be reached by Christian people in these times? Is God able to make every man the world over, that believes in Christ, as fervent in spiritual affection, as devout in prayer, as patient in suffering, as faithful in obedience, as these two apostles were? If not, why not? You must not talk of your having

been born in sin; if you were, they were too. You must not talk of the necessary imperfection of human nature; they too were men, not angels. You must not talk of the malignity of the devil; he was quite as anxious to ruin them as he can be to ruin any of us. It will be hardly safe to suggest that there was something in the men themselves that rendered it more possible for them than for you to become holy for this involves the heresy that their holiness is not an illustration of the exceeding greatness of the power that worketh in those that believe, but an illustration of what excellence may be reached with the help of God's grace by men who are *naturally*, and apart from God's grace, well disposed. You will not say that God is weary of his work, that the energy of Christ is exhausted. What then will you say?

Why, say this -- that there is not a human soul that may not obtain from the Lord Jesus the same baptism of fire, the same mastery over sin, the same intimacy of communion with God, as the apostles themselves obtained. Let Christ be glorified in your broad and generous confidence in his power to impress, upon the soul that steadfastly trusts in him, the very image of God's perfection.

I do not wonder that men are so careless about becoming Christians. It hardly seems worth while. There appears to be very little good possible to Christian men in *this* world, if we listen to the common testimony of



Christian people; and what is possible in the next world, may, it is supposed, be made sure within an hour of death. If it were clear that a deep and blessed peace could be had now, there would be a reason for believing in Christ at once; and if the prevailing temper of the church justified the hope that victory over sin could be had now, this would be an additional and most urgent motive for immediate trust in the divine mercy and power. The religious life is represented by us to men outside as a life of perpetual confession of sin, with no clear reason for confidence that sin has been pardoned; and a continual battle against temptation, in which nothing can be expected but almost uniform defeat. Thank God, even those of us who give men this impression know that our life is a far better and diviner thing than this; but we must give a very different representation of what Christian living really is, before the name of Christ is glorified, in us.

There is no need for me to insist on how greatly Christ would be glorified if every one of his servants actually reached the measure of perfection which some illustrious saints have shown to be possible -- if we were all as upright as St. James, as full of charity as St. John, as zealous as St. Paul, as fervent as St. Peter; if we were all as devout as John Howe or Jeremy Taylor; as energetic in Christian work as Richard Baxter; as philanthropic as John Howard; as pure, as gentle, as just, as some whom we ourselves have

known and in whom we saw the very law of Christ “writ out in living characters:” the fruits of the Spirit not hanging here and there -- half of them blighted, and hardly any of them fully ripened by the genial influences of heaven -- but in heavy clusters weighing down the tree, rich and beautiful as though they grew in Eden or in the very Paradise above. When that day comes men will say that they have seen the holy city, the new Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God; and they shall bring the glory and honour of the nations unto it, and the whole earth shall rejoice in the final victory of the love of God over the sin and miseries of all mankind. -- R.W. DALE, M.A.

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**THE CHILDREN'S SERVICE.**  
**OF A STRANGE HAND THAT WROTE WORDS ON THE WALL.**

NOT long after the time of the great Nebuchadnezzar one of his descendants came to reign in Babylon, whose name was Belshazzar. Those who are learned in the inscriptions which appear among the ruins of the old city, as they have been dug up of late, think that they have his name there, as having been joined with his father in the kingdom, and as being the last that reigned before Babylon was taken by the Medes and Persians. The Bible story I am going to tell you agrees with this, though it does not say anything about Belshazzar's reigning along with his father. It only tells how his city was taken, and himself slain.

War had been going on for some time between the Babylonians and the Medes and Persians, led by Cyrus, about whom Isaiah the prophet had spoken by name before he was born, as one to be raised by God to destroy the power of Babylon. A great battle had been fought in the plains, and Cyrus had gained it. He then marched against Babylon itself, and laid siege to it. He adopted wise plans in assailing it, and persevered for two years. But the place was very strong; its walls were one of the wonders of the world, and the king and the people thought themselves perfectly safe behind them. Indeed, they laughed outright

at what Cyrus and his army were doing, and had many a merry joke about it. They thought that their foes were sure to get weary soon, and would have to go away; but God's time was come to destroy the city. One night the king of Babylon, thinking that all was right, made a great feast in his palace. He was a bad man, proud and selfish. He had not taken warning from what happened to Nebuchadnezzar, nor did he fear the true God. So at this grand feast, to which a thousand high lords were asked, he made a show of his worship of idols, and did a daring thing to defy the God of Israel. He had been drinking wine freely, and was heated with it. Then, as he called for more he bade his servants bring out the sacred vessels of gold and silver that had been brought from the Lord's temple in Jerusalem, when that city was taken by Nebuchadnezzar, and told them to fill them for a carouse to the honour of the idol gods. So, you see, he profaned the holy cups in the service of stocks and stones. I hope he might say, These are the strong gods, lords, as the very spoils of the temple of the Jews in our hands may show: fill the bowls full and pass them round, and let us praise the gods of Babylon. Probably there were images of these in the hall; and as the king spoke, he would look round on them with pride, while his wives and courtiers quaffed their wine, and shouted applause. An awful answer came to their impious boasting.

In the midst of the mirth, which was loud in the hall, the lords whose eyes were on the king saw him get pale with terror in a moment, and his very knees were shaking where he sat. His look was fixed on a part of the wall straight before him, just where the great lamp cast its bright light on the plaster. The courtiers, following the direction of the king's eye, soon came to understand what had made him so quake for fear. There was the appearance of a man's hand, its fingers holding a pen, and writing on the smooth walls. Words could be distinctly seen, after the hand had written, left in the clear light. But you say, That was a strange thing to happen; yet why should it have frightened the king so terribly? Ah, the reason was, that his conscience was telling him that he had been doing a very wicked thing against the God of heaven, and his dread was lest the hand had come to write his doom. He could not make out the meaning of the words; but, as sin always makes people do when strange things startle them, he feared the worst. He cried out for his wise men to come and explain the words, and offered them great rewards, if they could do it. Poor man, he was soon to be unable to reward any one.

Just as it happened in the case of Nebuchadnezzar's dreams, so it came to pass in the case of this mysterious writing on the wall. Not one of all the wise men about the court could tell what it meant. They were obliged to say to

the king that they could not explain it. That made the trouble and fear of all in the hall greater than ever. The story ran through the whole palace, and there was nothing but consternation. The outcry was so great, that the queen-mother who had not been at the feast, hearing about it, came into the room, and told the king that there was one man in his kingdom that would interpret the writing. She reminded him how high that man had stood in his father's favour, and urged him to send for him. The person the queen spoke of was Daniel. Belshazzar was too bad a man to care to have one so good near him, and he had not been trusted and consulted, of late years, as in Nebuchadnezzar's time. He came, however, when now sent for, and soon showed the king that the writing had been sent from God to tell him of his punishment, near at hand. After he had said that he would have no reward from such a king's hands, and had reminded him what a lesson for the humbling of pride Nebuchadnezzar had received, and how yet Belshazzar had taken no warning, but had gone on in his wickedness, he proceeded to explain the writing. He said the words, were MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN, words which meant, Numbered, Numbered, Weighed, Divided. The explanation of the words was that the hours of Belshazzar were numbered by God, and his reign was at end; that God the great Judge had weighed him in the balance, and found him light and worthless; and that his dominion was divided, and

given to the Medes and Persians. It was a terrible explanation to hear, and it all came true that night.

For while Belshazzar and his lords had been in high feast and revel, the army of Cyrus had got entrance into the city. It happened in this way: The river, on which Babylon was built, flowed right through the place. But it was defended at the inflow and the outflow, and all along both banks, and with great gates and walls, and was itself a deep stream. Nobody thought that an army could get in by the course of the river. But Cyrus contrived to turn the waters aside into a great hollow marsh, into which the overflow in floods had been often turned, and so left the channel dry. He had stationed troops, both where the river flowed in and where it came out, and told them to dash in as soon as the waters were fordable. They did as they were commanded, and soon, in the carelessness and security that reigned everywhere, became masters of the city. Cyrus cleared the streets, posted guards, and swept on to the palace. Alarmed by the writing on the wall, the king and those around him soon heard the tramp and shout of their armed foes. They sallied forth, sword in hand, attempting to fight, or seeking to escape, and were cut to pieces. "In that night," the Bible says in a very few words, "was Belshazzar the king of the Chaldeans slain." And so always, "the triumphing of the wicked is short," and of such proud revels as were held in the hall of Babylon that night it may always be said, even

when visible punishment does not come so swiftly, “The end of these things is death.”

The king, Darius the Mede, who now took the throne of Babylon, held Daniel, as well he might, in great honour. When he arranged matters for the government of the empire, he made the prophet chief of all. There were to be a hundred and twenty governors under three presidents, of these three Daniel was the first. This favour to the Jews displeased the others, and led to a cunning plot against Daniel’s life, of which I will tell you in another story.

### QUESTIONS ON THE BIBLE STORY.

1. What two prophets specially foretell the fall of Babylon? And in what chapters of their books are the predictions to be found?
2. What psalm speaks of Babylon as doomed to destruction?
3. What book of scripture predicts the sudden and terrible ruin of another Babylon?
4. Where does Isaiah prophesy of Cyrus by name?
5. What two books of Scripture close and open, respectively, with a proclamation of Cyrus?



6. When were a great many people busy eating and drinking, and making merry, when a warning of destruction at hand had been long before their eyes?

7. How many vessels of gold and silver, taken from the temple in Jerusalem, did Cyrus send back with the restored captives?

8. Who was it that fell, in sudden change of mind from hate to awe, before a light brighter than the sun?

9. Can you give an example of the working of an evil conscience, on striking news being taken to a ruler?

10. What king was it that disliked a particular prophet because he told him the truth, loving only those who flattered him?

ANSWERS to the foregoing will be found by turning to the following chapters: -- Isa. xiii. and xiv., and Jer. li.; Ps. cxxxvii.; Rev. xviii.; Isa. xliv. and xlv.; Matt. xxiv.; Ezra i.; Acts xxvi.; Matt. xiv.; 1 Kings xxii.

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*Prayer.*

O GOD, give Thy grace to kings and princes, and rich and prosperous men, that in their greatness and their wealth they may not forget Thee. When Thou givest us health and comfort, and all things richly to enjoy, do not leave us to put created delights in Thy place. Let us not be proud or lifted up, or forgetful of coming death. Let our feasting be with Thy blessing, and without forgetting the poor that are in want. Thou seest, O Lord, the great cities of the earth, Thou knowest their sins and their sorrows; have mercy upon them. Bless all Thine own children dwelling in them, and prosper all their endeavours to remove the poverty and vice that are around them. Hasten the day when there will be no more sieges or wars. We bless Thee that there is a city that has walls and foundations which no one can overthrow or remove. May we have mansions there. May we go in through the gates into the golden city, of which Thou art the light, and eat of the tree of life growing there, and drink of the crystal river which flows from Thy throne. We ask it for the Lamb's sake. *Amen.*

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EVENING WORSHIP.

ALMIGHTY God, Creator of the heavens and of the earth, again we worship Thee. We thank Thee that Thou art slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy; that Thou art so patient with us in our folly and our sin; and Thou art ready to forgive; and that Thou dost rejoice to cleanse and to purify the souls of all who come to Thee in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. For His sake have mercy upon us. *Amen.*

HYMN, or Psalm xvi. 5-11.

LORD, if our dwelling-place thou art,  
With all thine own we dwell;  
They never from each other part  
Who love the Lord full well.

They mingle still their sons and prayers;  
Thy people, Lord, are one--  
Thy people in the vale of tears,  
Thy people near the throne.

Midst cherubim and seraphim

They mind their Lord's affairs;  
And if we bring our work to him,  
Our work is one with theirs.

Yet here their raptures may not burn,  
Their peace may not prevail;  
The household here doth sometimes mourn,  
Doth sometimes faint and fail.

O unmixed sweetness of their song!  
O fulness of their love!  
Lord! Hallow us to join ere long  
The family above.

LUKE VIII. 19-25, 41-56.

THEN came to him his mother and his brethren, and could not come at him for the press. 20. And it was told him by certain which said, Thy mother and thy brethren stand without, desiring to see thee. 21. And he answered and said unto them, My mother and my brethren are these which hear the word of God, and do it. 22. Now it came to pass on a certain day, that he went into a ship with his disciples: and he said unto them, Let us go over unto the other side of the lake. And they launched forth. 23. But as they sailed, he fell asleep: and there came down a storm of wind on the lake; and they were filled with water, and they were in jeopardy. 24. And they came to him, and awoke him, saying

Master, master, we perish! Then he arose, and rebuked the wind and the raging of the water: and they ceased, and there was a calm. 25. And he said unto them, Where is your faith? And they, being afraid, wondered, saying one to another, What manner of man is this! for he commandeth even the winds and water, and they obey him. 41. And, behold, there came a man named Jairus, and he was a ruler of the synagogue: and he fell down at Jesus' feet, and besought him that he would come into his house: 42. For he had only one daughter, about twelve years of age, and she lay a dying. But as he went the people thronged him. 42. And a woman, having an issue of blood twelve years, which had spent all her living upon physicians, neither could be healed of any. 44. Came behind him, and touched the border of his garment: and immediately her issue of blood stanch'd. 45. And Jesus said, Who touched me? When all denied, Peter and they that were with him said, Master, the multitude throng thee and press thee, and sayest thou, Who touched me? 46. And Jesus said, Somebody hath touched me; for I perceive that virtue is gone out of me. 47. And when the woman saw that she was not hid, she came trembling, and falling down before him, she declared unto him before all the people for what cause she had touched him, and how she was healed immediately. 48. And he said unto her, Daughter, be of good comfort: thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace. 49. While he yet spake, there cometh one from the ruler of the synagogue's house, saying to him, Thy daughter is dead; trouble not the Master. 50. But when Jesus heard it, he answered him, saying, Fear

not: believe only, and she shall be made whole. 51. And when he came into the house, he suffered no man to go in, save Peter, and James, and John, and the father and mother of the maiden. 52. And all wept, and bewailed her: but he said, Weep not; she is not dead, but sleepeth. 53. And they laughed him to scorn, knowing that she was dead. 54. And he put them all out, and took her by the hand, and called, saying, Maid arise. 55. And her spirit came again, and she arose straightway: and he commanded to give her meat. 56. And her parents were astonished: but he charged them that they should tell no man what was done.

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*Prayer.*

ALMIGHTY God, Thou art never weary of listening to our prayers and thanksgivings; and we entreat Thee, before this holy day has quite gone by, to listen to us once more, while we praise Thee for all Thy goodness and invoke Thy blessing. We thank Thee not only for the mercy Thou hast shown to ourselves to-day, but for all the grace Thou hast bestowed on a great multitude of souls that no man can number, scattered over many countries, and speaking many tongues. With Thine angels, we rejoice over every sinner that has been brought to repentance. We praise Thee for the larger wisdom, the firmer strength, and the deeper peace, Thou hast granted to those who have long known Thee. We praise Thee that Thou hast bound up the

broken-hearted, and enabled the weary and the sorrowful to forget their weariness and their trouble in Thy love. We praise Thee that Thou hast granted to the rich a nobler joy than all their wealth could purchase, and that the poor have been made rich with everlasting treasure. It is more blessed for Thee to give than it is for us to receive: we rejoice in Thy joy; we adore the love which causes Thee to find delight in the strength and gladness of Thy creatures.

We beseech Thee, in Thy great mercy, not to suffer any of the holy thoughts and right purposes which have been awakened in the hearts of the men to-day, to be swept away by the returning flood of their common life to-morrow. Let not the glow of devout affection be chilled before the day of rest shall come again. May those who have been filled with awe and wonder by the vision of things unseen and eternal, abide under their control all week through.

Give courage and constancy to any of Thy servants who are troubled and disheartened by the apparent failure of all their efforts to bring men home to Thyself. Help them to feel that what saddens them saddens Thee too. May they remember Him who was despised and rejected of men; but whose compassions failed not though they mocked and scourged Him, and put Him to a cruel death. By patient continuance in well-doing, whether men receive their word or not, may they seek for glory, honour, and immortality.

Let Thy blessing rest upon all whom we love. Especially we ask Thee, that if any of them are at this moment in great trouble, they may find consolation in

Thyself. If any are feeling after Thee in the darkness, if haply they may find Thee, may they this very night hear Thy voice and see Thy face. We unite our prayers with theirs. Have mercy upon them, O God, and grant them Thy salvation.

Forgive us now all the sins and follies of which we have been guilty this day, and grant us Thy peace, for Christ's sake. *Amen.*

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## MORNING AND EVENING MEDITATIONS.

### MONDAY.

#### *Morning.*

**Then said Jesus unto his disciples, Verily I say unto you, That a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven.**

And again I say unto you, It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.

When his disciples heard it, they were exceedingly amazed, saying, Who then can be saved?

But Jesus beheld them, and said unto them, With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible.

Matt. xix. 23, 24, 25, 26.

#### *Evening.*

**And he lifted up his eyes on his disciples, and said, Blessed by ye poor: for yours is the kingdom of God.**

Blessed are ye that hunger now: for ye shall be filled.  
Blessed are ye that weep now: for ye shall laugh.

Rejoice ye in that day, and leap for joy; for behold, your reward is great in heaven: for in the like manner did their fathers unto the prophets.

But woe unto you that are rich! for ye have received your consolation.

Woe unto you that are full! For ye shall hunger.

Luke vi. 20, 21, 23, 24, 25.

## TUESDAY.

*Morning.*

**And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved.**

Blessed are ye when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you from their company, and shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of man's sake.

Woe unto you, when all men shall speak well of you! For so did their fathers to the false prophets.

But I say unto you which hear, Love your enemies, do good to them which hate you,

Bless them that curse you, and pray for them which despitefully use you.

And unto him that smiteth thee on the one cheek, offer also the other.

Matt. x. 22.

Luke vi. 22, 26, 27, 28, 29.

*Evening.*

**How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!**

And I will satiate the soul of the priests with fatness, and my people shall be satisfied with my goodness, saith the Lord.

I will seek that which was lost, and bring again that which was driven away, and will bind up that which was broken, and will strengthen that which was sick: but I will destroy the fat and the strong; I will feed them with judgment.

Isa. lii. 7.

Jer. xxx.i. 14.

Eze. xxxiv. 16.

## WEDNESDAY.

*Morning.*

**I will praise thee with my whole heart: before the gods will I sing praise unto thee.**

I will worship toward thy holy temple, and praise thy name for thy loving-kindness, and for thy truth: for thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name.

In the day when I cried thou answeredst me, and strengthenedst me with strength in my soul.

Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me; that by me the preaching might be fully known, and that all the Gentiles might hear: and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion.

Ps. cxxxviii. 1, 2, 3.      2 Tim. iv. 17.

*Evening.*

**Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort;**

Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.

For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ.

And whether we be afflicted, it is for your consolation and salvation, which is effectual in the enduring of the same sufferings which we also suffer: or whether we be comforted, it is for your consolation and salvation.

2 Cor. i. 3, 4, 5, 6.

**THURSDAY.**

*Morning.*

**Verily I say unto you, All these things shall come upon this generation.**

O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets,  
and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would  
I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen  
gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!  
Behold, your house is left unto you desolate.

For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till  
ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the  
Lord.

Matt. xxiii. 36, 37, 38, 39.

*Evening.*

**And I will raise up for them a plant of renown, and  
they shall be no more consumed with hunger in the land,  
neither bear the shame of the heathen any more.**

Thus shall they know that I the Lord their God am  
with them, and that they, even the house of Israel, are my  
people, saith the Lord God.

Therefore the redeemed of the Lord shall return, and  
come up with singing unto Zion; and everlasting joy shall be  
upon their head: they shall obtain gladness and joy; and  
sorrow and mourning shall flee away.

Eze. xxxiv. 29, 30.      Isa. li. 11.

**FRIDAY.**

*Morning.*

**Did not I weep for him that was in trouble? Was not my soul grieved for the poor?**

And if thy brother be waxen poor, and fallen in decay with thee, then thou shalt relieve him; yea though he be a stranger, or a sojourner: that he may live with thee.

Then said he also to him that bade him, When thou makest a dinner or a supper, call not thy friends, nor thy brethren, neither thy kinsmen, nor thy rich neighbours; lest they also bid thee again, and a recompence be made thee.

But when thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind.

Job iii. 25.    Lev. xxv. 35.    Matt. xiv. 12, 13.

*Evening.*

**And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.**

Then the master of the house, being angry, said to his servant, Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor, and the maimed, and the halt and the blind.

And the servant said, Lord, it is done as thou hast commanded, and yet there is room.

And the lord said unto the servant, Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in that my house may be filled.

Matt. xxv. 40.      Luke xiv. 21, 22, 23.

## SATURDAY.

*Morning.*

**For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.**

Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men: but we are made manifest unto God; and I trust also are made manifest in your consciences.

Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.

2 Cor. v. 10, 11.      Acts. ii. 38.      1 Cor. xv. 53.

*Evening.*

**And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain.**

And he came and took the book out of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne.

And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb, for ever and ever.

Even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come.

Rev. v. 6, 7, 13, 14.      1 Thess. i. 10.