

Sunday Reading.

The Face of Christ.

A SERMON IN SONG.

They tell of one who humbly followed Christ, And day by day fulfilled his youthful trust;

When morning came and touched his sleeping eyes That vision claimed his new-born energies;

Then, as he joined his loved ones at their meal, Its holy influence still his soul did feel,

When at his desk he sat him down to pen, Wise words of comfort to his fellow-men,

With thoughtful mien as he came through the street, And children gathered round with naked feet,

He saw the picture in his own bright room, Then called the lambs and took them to his home.

Through muddy lanes, up creaking stairs he went, To cheer the sad, to save the lost intent;

When jealous souls aspired to rob his fame, And wreath his brow with diadem of shame,

When he'er to preach within the church he stood, To win the wicked to the love of good,

Thus stayed the vision through the gleaming light, Nor vanished in the darkness of the night;

Death came at last in fair and friendly guise, Upon that Face he looked with vast surprise;

O Face of Christ! I see thee dimly too Break through the shadows into fuller view;

O Face of Christ! beam on me as I write, Fill every thought with Thy most holy light,

O Face of Christ! shine on me evermore, That I may work and worship, and adore;

WALTER J. MATHIAS.

The Delectable Mountains.

RAY PALMER, D. D.

Beyond all doubt, then, there may be in the healthfully progressive Christian life "Delectable Mountains," regions of clearer vision, of calmer and sweeter faith and hope and more divine enjoyments than are ordinarily known in the earlier and less advanced stages of that life.

It seems, however, to be the fact in relation to many, if not most who begin a religious life, that this matter is but partially apprehended. Persons of

ordinary intelligence have very early a sufficiently clear notion of what is naturally to be the law of progress and the successive stages of the natural life from infancy to age. Childhood, with its dreams and sunshine; youth, with its waking hopes and high ambitions, manhood, with its brave endeavors and conscious strength; age, with its moderated ardour, its calmer passions, its wiser judgements, and more restful moods—these are anticipated as to succeed each other, with their proper characteristics and in their well-known order.

Let it be settled, then, in the mind of every believer, when he is beginning the Christian life, that Christ's conception of that life is not that it is to be fitful, spasmodic, determined in its character by shifting circumstances or unconnected single impulses and acts; but that, like a vegetable growth—such as the corn of wheat, for instance—it is indivisible, vitally continuous and progressive. Let the romantic idea of reaching its highest and best forms without passing through the fitly preceding stages be altogether abandoned.

Many earnest Christians have been greatly and needlessly embarrassed by the various theories in which it has been attempted to get the full corn in the ear by some summary process, without the unity and progress of natural growth, just as many serious-minded persons have been puzzled and perplexed by theories about conversion, when it has been sought to fix one precise line of thought and feeling in accordance with which, in all cases, it should occur; but, as Bunyan's Pilgrim only reached the Delectable Mountains through the various experiences signified by the overhanging Sinai, the Wicket Gate, the Hill Difficulty, the Interpreter's House, the Valley of Humiliation, the Fight with Apollyon, the Valley of the Shadow of Death, and Doubting Castle, with the other pains and perils of the way, so, ordinarily, it must be with each disciple. The tears of contrition, the pangs of self-crucifixion, the conflicts with temptation and with spiritual foes, the days of darkness and sorrow, that sorely try the strength of faith—in a word the diverse disciplines of God's providence and grace are the necessary means of producing Christian character in its maturity and beauty.

The Reasonableness of Prayer.

A naturalist should be the last man in the world to object to the efficacy of prayer, since prayer itself is one of the most potent of natural forces. The cry of the young raven brings its food from afar without any exertion on its part, for that cry has power to move the emotions and the muscles of the parent bird and to overcome her own selfish appetite. The bleat of the lamb not only brings its dam to its side, but causes the secretion of milk in her udder. The cry of distress nerves men to all exertions, and to brave all dangers, and to struggle against all or any of the laws of nature that may be causing suffering or death. Nor in the case of prayer are the objects attained at all mechanically commensurate with the activities set in motion.

Managing a Bible-Class. If everybody is invited to attend, and all are urged to take part, how is the class to be protected from infidel "cranks," who are ever on the lookout for an opportunity to air their godless notions; from the professional wranglers, who are always on the alert for an "argument;" and from the sincere people who read "lost tribes," or something of the sort, into almost every passage of the Scripture? There are representatives of these classes in almost every community, and they will be among the first to attend a Bible-class. How are they to be met? The teacher should be master of the situation. He should assume the same relation to his class that a moderator assumes to a deliberative assembly, and insist on the parliamentary rule, that every one who speaks shall address him. All questions should be addressed to him; and if they are relevant, he gives them to his class; or, if for any reason it is best, answers them himself; if they are not, he can quietly pass them by in a pleasant way.

Bearing Injuries. A heathen poet says, "That man has arrived at a heroic degree of goodness who is instructed to bear great injuries in a dispassionate manner." A fine sentiment truly! but it is immeasurably lower in moral beauty than that requirement of our Lord which bids His disciples to forgive their enemies and pardon penitent offenders seventy times seven. The same incomparable

degree of heroic goodness is also embalmed in the apostolic precept, "Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good." Did the church universal wear this Christly disposition as her every-day robe, she would compel the wondering world to ask, "Who is she who looketh forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners?"

STATUARY CHRISTIANS.—When Oliver Cromwell visited the cathedral in York, England, he saw in one of the apartments, statues of the twelve apostles in silver. "Who are those fellows there?" he asked, as he approached them. On being told, he answered: "Take them down, and let them go about doing good." They were taken down and melted, and put into his treasury. I have also read that there are too many persons, who, like these silver apostles, are too stiff for service in much that the Lord's work requires. Some are too nice, some are disinclined. They stand or sit stiff and state by in their dignity, and sinners may go unsaved, and believers un comforted, for all the effort they will make to lift a hand to save them. They need melting down, and to be sent about doing good. Statuary Christians, however burnished and elegant, are of little real service in the kingdom of Jesus.—Watchword.

The beauty in the Bible.

God opens to us the temple of Truth through the Gate Beautiful. The grace and beauty of the Bible are a means of moral culture. There are not only noble thoughts but richest imagery and felicitous diction. Trail well says that this great "sun of the intellectual firmament moves in two orbits, a higher and a lower. In one it moves the reason and the conscience, in the other it warms the imagination and enriches the taste." As God wrought on these distinct faculties of the sacred writers He would have us use ours. The naturalist studies, microscope in hand, the venations of a fern, and the lineations of a shell. Shall we not study the paths, beauty, and sublimity of this the oldest and best of books, peerless and unique in rhetorical excellence as it is divine and authoritative as a religious guide? Those sceptics who have called the Scriptures dull, heavy, inelegant, only proclaim their ignorance and blindness. Here is a fountain filled by God. "Other bards have borrowed, but the Bible creates and lends. Homer had his teachers, but who taught Moses?" Hebrew song was no exotic, no echo of olden minstrelsy, but self-developed in minds illuminated from above. The fishermen of Galilee had never seen a Greek or Latin poet; never, perhaps, seen a piece of classic art; yet they have written a narrative that has gone down the ages to stimulate art as well as to redeem humanity. As nature gathers the aroma of many flowers and drops on the wind, mixing a perfume which the chemist can neither analyze nor imitate; as the statuary chisels a marble bust, zoned by marble cincture, which we can easily distinguish yet can never separate, so the inspired penmen have mingled sublimity of thought with a sweetness, purity, freshness and flavour of style that clearly reveal the celestial source from which it came. There is no attempt at fine writing, no stilted, strained, and showy periods; no tawdry tinsel, and no artful guile. Simplicity, spontaneity, and naturalness everywhere attend the utterance of these holy seers. They toiled not for fame, as did Socrates, who spent fifteen years working up his immortal panegyric, or as did Montesquieu, who said of one of his works, "You will read it in a few hours, but the labour expended on it whitened my hair." No; they wrote to elucidate truth and enforce duty. For their fame they made no provision. The authorship of some books of the Bible is yet unknown. Nowhere is seen such condensation united with pomp and terror of imagery. Moses paints in thirty words an image of chaos that haunts the memory like a midnight alarm. The eighteenth and seventy-seventh Psalms are grand beyond description. Webster considered the last chapter of Habakkuk the noblest composition of the language. The Gate Beautiful is itself an alluring object and opens into a temple of matchless glory.—Thwing.

What sculpture is to a block of marble, education is to a human soul. The philosopher, the saint and the hero, the wise, the good, and the great man, very often lie hid and concealed in a plebeian, which a proper education might have disinterred and brought to light.—Addison.

The Christian Messenger.

Bible Lessons for 1882.

FOURTH QUARTER.

Lesson IV.—OCTOBER 22, 1882.

THE AGONY IN THE GARDEN.

Mark xiv. 32-42.

COMMIT TO MEMORY: Vss. 33-36.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows."—Isaiah liii. 4.

DAILY HOME READINGS.

M. The Lesson, Mark xiv. 32-42.

T. Comfort and the Comforter, John xiv. 1-18.

W. The Vine and the Branches, John xv. 1-16.

T. Sorrow and Joy, John xvi. 12-23.

F. The Closing Prayer, John, chap. xvii.

S. Bloody Sweat, Luke xxii. 40-46.

S. Strong Crying and Tears, Heb. iv. 14-10.

THE CONFLICT IN GETHSEMANE.

LESSON OUTLINE.—I. The Agony, Vss. 32-34. II. The Prayer, Vss. 35, 36, 39. III. Sleeping Disciples, Vss. 37-42.

QUESTIONS.—Where did Jesus and his disciples go? What sort of a place? Vss. 32-34.—Where did Jesus leave the eight? What came upon Jesus? What did he say of himself? What did he ask of the three? How much can we understand of his agony?

Vss. 35, 36, 39.—What did Jesus do? For what did he pray? In what words? How many times? (Vs. 41.) What did he mean by the "hour" and the "cup"? What by if it were possible? Did he waver in his purpose to finish his work of redemption? How does this prayer show that he was a real man? How that he was a perfect man? What does this conflict show of the nature of sin?

Vss. 37-42.—What did the three disciples do? How many times? How did Jesus reprove and warn them? What apology did he make for them? (Vs. 38.)

Special Subjects.—The garden and its location. The Saviour's craving for human sympathy. Proofs of his real humanity. Nature of this conflict. Are we required to have "no will of our own"? Difference between this agony and submission. Satanic and angelic agency in Gethsemane.

NOTES.—I. His Agony, (Vss. 32-34). Vss. 32, 33.—Gethsemane. Oil-press. This place (or piece of land, field) was on the slope of the Mount of Olives, eastward from the city, though the locality cannot now be precisely determined. Originally, in connection with olive trees, there must have been an olive oil-press from which it derives its name. At the entrance, he left eight of his disciples, as a kind of outer guard, saying to them, Sit ye here, while he went further on, (Luke, "about a stone's cast") to pray. With him, he took the favored three of the Mount of Transfiguration, Peter, James, and John,—the former scene of glory being a preparation for this latter scene of humiliation—and began to be sore amazed. The word is a strong one, denoting a stunning, almost stupefying effect from the new and overwhelming sorrow which here came upon him. It was a strange and startling experience, as he entered the immediate circle of sin's expiation. Very heavy. Sore troubled, as in New Version. In deep anguish.

Vs. 34.—My soul. Jesus made no moan over physical sufferings. Not the nails driven in his hands extorted lamentations; but the sin of the world settling on his soul. Exceeding sorrowful. Literally, Envroned with sorrow, or sorrowful all around. Mountains and seas of grief hemmed in his soul. Unto death. The weight of anguish was literally crushing out his life. No fear of death could thus move the Saviour, nor terror of his enemies. How inadequate all explanations of this wonderful scene that do not see him as here meeting sin. Tarry ye here, and watch. Not even the favored three must look upon the interview between him and the Father, in this sacred hour of sorrow. Yet he felt the need of human sympathy, and would have the three near and wakeful.

II. His Prayer, (Vss. 35, 36). Fell on the ground. Luke "kneeling down." First the kneeling; but the anguish became so great that he fell forward "on his face" (Matt. xxvi. 39.) If it were possible. If the purpose of his coming could be accomplished without this hour, or season of special conflict, which may also have embraced all the heart rending details of betrayal, desertion, etc., before the consummation on the cross. Did our Lord pray that the hour of atoning sacrifice might pass by? Here is a great mystery. How terrible the agony of soul which caused him to offer a prayer which may be construed into a request to undo the great object of his mission. He said. Mark loves to treasure up the very words of

Jesus. Take away this cup. Cup is used either to represent joy or sorrow. Here, of course, it is the latter. But what is the extent of its meaning? Was it the cup of an atoning sacrifice, which he came purposely to drink? Or was it such a cup, into which men had put unessential ingredients, such as treason, denial, desertion, mockery, etc., from which he shrank! Nevertheless not what I will, etc. Whatever it was, there is no antagonism of his will to the Father. He committed the question of the cup, with all its ingredients, divine and human, to the Father. His work was not to dictate concerning one drop, but simply to drink it.

III. Sleeping Disciples, (Vss. 37-42.) Vss. 37, 38.—Sleeping. Luke gives an explanation. See xxii. 45. Saith to Peter. The self confident one, who had boasted of his superior faithfulness. Simon. The old and weaker name; not now the "man of rock." One hour. So short a period to watch, so long a time to suffer. Yet how gentle the reproof! Watch and pray. Our Lord is ever ready with spiritual lessons. From literal, he turns to spiritual watching, and couples it with prayer; for his disciples were about to encounter a great temptation; i. e., to deny and lose confidence in him. They needed special vigilance and strength. The spirit truly is ready. Better, willing, as in New Version. The Saviour, most likely, refers to Peter's eager protestations of faithfulness, and shows that he appreciated the desire; although only failure came of it, because the flesh is weak.

Vss. 39-42.—A second and a third time Jesus went away to pray, speaking the same words. On each return, he found the disciples sleeping; and so confused when he awoke them, that they wist not what to answer him. The third time he said: Sleep on now, and take your rest; i. e., for the little time that remained before the need of going. The hour is come. Foreseen and desired. See Luke xii. 50; from which, nevertheless, his nature shrank. Rise up. The time for repose is over. Let us go. Back to the other disciples. As a mother caring for her children, Jesus would gather the eleven together, and thus confront the traitor and his band.

SUGGESTED LESSONS. Though wicked men and adverse circumstances seem to mix our cup with bitter ingredients, it is our Father's hand that presents the cup to our lips; and he knows every drop.

What a tender Saviour is that who, in the hour of his greatest need, makes excuses for the failings of boastful disciples!

We need to heed our Lord's exhortation: "Watch ye and pray."

Keep closely to the Scripture text, read it over even to the youngest and question. Many of the children cannot give an accurate account of our Saviour's sufferings.

Picture the company of twelve men walking quietly along at midnight, lighted by the full moon, which was shining during this Passover week. They reach the garden—the Garden of Gethsemane. A place near the foot of the Mount of Olives, in which many olive trees grow.

Three of Jesus' disciples who seemed to be more with him than the others. Which three went up on the mountain with Jesus when he was transfigured? Read vs. 33, 34. Jesus took them a little further on into Gethsemane, where it was darker and quieter.

What made him so sad? He was thinking of the sins of all the world; of the great suffering on the cross, which was now so soon to come. What did Jesus ask Peter, James and John to do? Where did Jesus go? He went on still further into Gethsemane, to be alone. Read vs. 35, 36.

Was not Jesus willing then to bear the sorrow? Yes, if it was his Father's will. After Jesus had prayed this once, he back to Peter, James and John. Read vs. 37, 38. What did Jesus tell the disciples to do? What had they done? What did Jesus say might happen if they did not pray? What is it that will keep Satan away? Let us all remember that—

Satan trembles when he sees The weakest saint upon his knees. Read vs. 39. What words did Jesus pray the second time? Read vs. 40, 41. How many times did Jesus go alone to pray? Once while he was praying, his Father sent an angel from heaven, to strengthen him. But his sorrow was so great, that "his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground."

Judas and the soldiers were even now very near Gethsemane, and Jesus knew it. He was grown now to meet them. How had he grown strong? Christians can say with thankful hearts: "Surely he hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows." How we should love and obey such a Saviour! He says to you:

I bore, I bore it all for thee, Hast thou borne ought for me? —Abridged from the Baptist Teacher.

Help for Parents, or for the Teacher of the Primary Class. Keep closely to the Scripture text, read it over even to the youngest and question. Many of the children cannot give an accurate account of our Saviour's sufferings.

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