

Sunday Reading.

The Jester's Prayer.

The royal feast was done. The king Sought some new sport to banish care, And to his jester cried, "Sir Fool, Kneel now, and make for us a prayer!"

Call to the Ministry.

"James," said a motherly woman to a young man whose first sermon she had just heard, "James, why did you enter the ministry?"

A singular incident occurred in connection with a revival service at Tunstall recently, in which an evangelist named Johnson, employed by Mr. W. S. Allen, M. P., was brought up before the magistrates and fined.

Sermon.

The Christian's Life and Death.

SERMON PREACHED AT THE FUNERAL SERVICES OF MRS. A. H. WEBBER. (Mrs. Webber was very extensively known and highly esteemed here before her marriage as Miss Aggie Ogilvie), AT THE FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF SANTA CRUZ, CALIFORNIA, FEB. 6TH, 1883, BY HER FATHER, REV. W. B. WINN.

"Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city."—Rev. xxii. 14.

I have stood at the entrance of a harbor, and have watched the ships, as with creamy sails curving to the wind, flags and streamers waving from the masts, they went joyfully forth to brave the dangers of old ocean.

Death is a stranger to none of us. As soon as we can distinguish joy from sorrow, appreciate the blessings of home and friends, the angel begins his visitations, and with a blow here and a thrust there, lays before us, silent and cold, now a father or mother, now husband, wife, or child, now relative or friend.

Do we ever become used to these visits of the angel? No. The oftener he comes the more grievous the loss. Blow after blow may stun us, we are dazed and calloused, our hearts stony within us, the fountains of our tears unable to flow, yet, as our grief intensifies itself, we burst into a torrent of relieving tears, and utter the heart-

broken cry, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me; yet thy will not mine be done."

Within less than a week the angel has struck several heavy blows in our midst, even in the circle of our church, and more than one home is saddened because a loved one has been taken.

The form which now lies so silent and cold before us is the form of one whom to know in life was but to admire, love, and respect. Two years ago I met Mrs. Webber at the yearly meeting of the Baptist Association at Boulder, Colorado.

Mrs. Webber's early home was in Musquodoboit, a pleasant village of Halifax Co., Nova Scotia. Her parents and sisters being members of the Baptist church, Mrs. Webber was surrounded by Christian influences, and the blameless, useful, loving life she lived testified to the careful training of a Christian mother, and to the exercised determination of the daughter to profit by her example and instruction.

Possessing a superior mind her ardent desire was to store it with useful knowledge. In humble circumstances, and deprived of the privileges of education enjoyed by many, she devoted almost unassisted in the mount of knowledge.

Asleep in Jesus, blessed sleep." Bidding her husband and friends "farewell," as her pastor offered a prayer for her departing spirit, she relapsed into unconsciousness, her last words being to one who bent close to her, "Meet me round the Throne."

About a year ago she married, and with her husband came to her California home. Modest and retiring she did not seek acquaintance, but her genuine worth could not be concealed, and like a magnet she drew to her circle kindred spirits who loved the same Redeemer.

A week ago last Sabbath morning with her husband she occupied her usual place in church, and her earnest, attentive face was an inspiration to me as I strove to uphold the blessed blood-stained banner of the cross. Confident in the unchangeable goodness of God, trusting in Him what'er might befall, she looked forward to the approaching crisis of her life without misgiving, believing that in life and in death Jesus doeth all things well.

The crisis came and passed. Congratulations poured in, and there was not a thought but that this noble woman and mother, buoyant in strength and ever looking upon the bright side, would soon be with us, and again mingle joyously in our religious and social life. Alas! our ways are not God's ways, His thoughts are not our thoughts.

Neuralgia, that treacherous underminer of strength and life, commenced its direful attacks. Night and day that strong frame was racked in agony. Yet there was no complaining, only a glorious example of patience and Christian fortitude.

Conscious to the last, she talked even rapturously of the home above, of the meeting with the Saviour, charging her husband to give his heart into the Saviour's keeping, that so they might again be united in the home above; and singing, eye SINGING, songs she had learned in childhood, songs of the Christian's hope, and a verse of that beautiful hymn,

"Asleep in Jesus, blessed sleep." Bidding her husband and friends "farewell," as her pastor offered a prayer for her departing spirit, she relapsed into unconsciousness, her last words being to one who bent close to her, "Meet me round the Throne."

You who are Christians here to-day gird your loins anew in the Master's service. Scenes such as these prove to you even stronger than the experiences of your inner lives, that there is a reality in the glorious gospel you profess.

And you who do not accept the religion of our Lord, how can you offset such a glorious experience as this? Would that some of you could have witnessed the heartrending scenes I have witnessed on the plains and among the wild mountains of Colorado, when at the approach of death's grim messenger men and God help them, women too, have tried to flee in terror, and have entered the swellings of Jordan with fearful struggles and dreadful cries of terror.

"It is appointed unto men to die," and "the times and the seasons no man knoweth." The dread messenger is calling here and there. Who is next on his roll call? It may be I, and it may be you, and are you prepared? If not, make haste while yet there is time; make Mrs. Webber's Saviour your Saviour too, and be prepared when the summons comes to answer, and answer with joy, "Yea, Lord, I come, I come."

In closing let me present the glorious and comforting thought that those who die possessed of the Christian's hope have opened unto them a life of conscious activity, which in joy, peace, happiness, and contentment transcends all that human thought can desire or even comprehend. Says the Apostle Paul after years of toil: "For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain; but if I live in the flesh, this is the fruit of my labor: yet what I shall choose I wot not. For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart and to be

with Christ, which is far better: nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful to you." The Apostle here clearly affirms, and how the affirmation illumines the tomb, not only that his death would be to him a gain, and the better alternative, but that his continuing to live and labor for the Philippians was a detention from the immediate presence of Christ, the attraction of that presence being so strong as to put him in a great strait whether he should desire to live and labor, or to die and go home to his reward.

Unto you, husband and mourners, we extend the hand of sympathy and helpfulness. There is not one of us but who has laid away some one dearer than life itself. We know your agony and anguish, and gladly would we help you bear your load of grief, and give you the consolation you so crave. But she you mourn to-day requires not your grief. Could she come among us in her spirit form, and talk with us as was her wont, she would say to her husband: "Husband, weep not for me, weep rather for yourself." For me there is no more pain, nor tears, nor sorrow.

Happy as my life with you in the consciousness of your love, yet the life which awaited me was far better. For me to die was gain." Think you, friends, she has forgotten us or our welfare? No. As her spirit took its flight from out the darkness into the realms of endless day, she bore us and our condition with her. To-day she bids you as you think of her to rejoice. Rejoice for her, but weep for yourselves. The jewel you so fondly prized here on earth God has taken to himself above, and shines a bright diadem in his crown of love.

How, and how long, had he been afflicted? What did Peter say? Vs. 31 and 32.—What did all the disciples constitute? Who dwelt in this one church? Who were its chief rulers and teachers? What was the peculiarity of the church in Israel? What did the Lord at that time give to the church? Vs. 31. What was the result? How did the members live and act? What comfort had they? What of their numbers? What seems to have been the custom of the apostles? Vs. 33-35.—Was Eneas a disciple? How, and how long, had he been afflicted? What did Peter say? Vs. 36-43.—What is said of Dorcas? How is she an example to Christian women? How did her character show the work of the Holy Spirit? What took place? Who was sent for? How did Peter proceed? With what result? Scripture Searchings.—Find passages which speak of Christians as "ascites." How many miracles of raising the dead are recorded in the Bible?

AMONG the many anecdotes crediting Mr. Gladstone with kind words and Christian acts, perhaps there are few more touching than the following in relation to a young Lancashire lady, under circumstances which might well appeal to the grand old man's tenderest emotions. It so happens that the young lady's birthday occurs on the same day of the year as his own, and she has for many years wished to make him a present on the anniversary, but has heretofore been deterred by delicacy of feeling from doing so. Last year, however, finding her life precarious from consumption, she worked a bookmark in silk with the motto, "The Bible our Guide," and sent it to Mr. Gladstone on the 28th of December, with an explanatory note. Mr. Gladstone's reply consisted of a box containing a choice selection of camellias and ferns, with some fine English grapes, accompanied by the following letter:—

"HAWARDEN CASTLE, JAN. 1, 1883. "Dear Madam,—I am greatly touched by your kindness in having worked a book-mark for me under the circumstances at which you glance in such feeling and simple terms. "May the guidance which you are good enough to desire on my behalf avail you fully on every step of that journey in which, if I do not precede, I cannot but shortly follow you.—I remain, dear Madam, faithfully yours, W. E. Gladstone.

The Christian Messenger.

Bible Lessons for 1883.

SECOND QUARTER.

Lesson V.—APRIL 29, 1883.

PETER WORKING MIRACLES. Acts ix. 32-43.

COMMIT TO MEMORY: Vs. 32-35.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"Jesus Christ maketh thee whole."—Acts ix. 34.

DAILY HOME READINGS.

- M. The Lesson, Acts ix. 32-43. T. Christian Living, Rom., ch. xii. W. Fellowship of the Spirit, Phil., ch. ii. T. Elijah Raising the Dead, 1 Kings xvii. 17-24. F. Elisha Raising the Dead, 2 Kings iv. 18-37. S. Christ Raising Lazarus, John xi. 34-54. S. Unchanging Gifts, 1 Cor., ch. xiii.

THE CHURCH IN THE MIDST OF UNBELIEVING ISRAEL.

LESSON OUTLINE.—I. State of the Church, Vs. 31, 32. II. Eneas Cured, Vs. 33-35. III. Dorcas Restored to Life, Vs. 36-43.

QUESTIONS.—What had become of the chief persecutor? Where was the church located? In what regions? Vs. 31.

Vs. 31 and 32.—What did all the disciples constitute? Who dwelt in this one church? Who were its chief rulers and teachers? What was the peculiarity of the church in Israel? What did the Lord at that time give to the church? Vs. 31. What was the result? How did the members live and act? What comfort had they? What of their numbers? What seems to have been the custom of the apostles?

Vs. 33-35.—Was Eneas a disciple? How, and how long, had he been afflicted? What did Peter say?

Vs. 36-43.—What is said of Dorcas? How is she an example to Christian women? How did her character show the work of the Holy Spirit? What took place? Who was sent for? How did Peter proceed? With what result?

Scripture Searchings.—Find passages which speak of Christians as "ascites." How many miracles of raising the dead are recorded in the Bible?

NOTES.—I. Eneas Healed, (Vs. 32-35.) Paul having departed to Tarsus, Peter also left Jerusalem, to improve this time of peace by visiting and encouraging the churches. In his tour he went to Lydda, the modern Lud, northwest of Jerusalem, about two-thirds of the way to Joppa. The lesson says he came to the saints dwelling at Lydda. A title often given to Christians in the New Testament. A certain man, one of the saints, named Eneas. His name indicates that he was a Grecian Jew. Sick of the palsy. This disease was a paralysis of one side, or of the body below the neck, or of the whole body. He had been bed-ridden for eight years, and he was one of the incurables. To him Peter said, Eneas, Jesus Christ maketh thee whole. Peter did not pretend to cure by his own power. The work is complete. The paralytic is made whole. Arise, and make thy bed. Something for Eneas to do to show he was cured by spreading his bed for himself. He arose immediately, he obeyed with alacrity, and was perfectly healed. All that dwell in Lydda and Saron (Sharon). The latter was the district in which Lydda was situated. Saw him and turned to the Lord. Eneas became a witness for Christ, by only walking about; so widely was his case known, that there was a general movement to receive the gospel.

II. Dorcas Raised to Life, (Vs. 36-43.) Vs. 36.—While Lydda was full of rejoicing, Joppa, a few miles off, on the Mediterranean, was the scene of a great sorrow. Tabitha. This was her name in the Aramaic, the common language of the people; but in Greek it was Dorcas, which signifies gazelle. She showed her saintship, not by retiring from the world as a nun; but by being full of good works and almsdeeds. Nothing is said of her husband, or of her being a widow; and it is likely that she was unmarried, and gave herself to the care of the poor. She had learned that a disciple must be "careful to maintain good works." Springing from a heart full of Christ's love.

Vs. 37, 38.—In an upper chamber. Delaying burial till they could communicate with Peter. They sent unto him. The deputation, consisting of two men, entreated him not to delay to come to them. In warm countries, speedy burials are the custom, and if he would do anything there must be haste.

Vs. 39.—Peter went at once with them. There, an affecting sight met his eyes. They took him into the upper chamber where the body lay, where he saw, not professional mourners making an ado, but the widows whom Dorcas

APRIL... had befriended their benevolent manner the or inner of or outer p which Dor them. So have been were then tributed. Vs. 40. As our Lor (Mark except as be br of Christ's ter. He yet he ma will in the received a and in ead and said quiet con her eyes, poor for w still great "The gra parts to t reality." her alite the churc which ca joy. Vs. 42 as well as believed. was a pe many day year; for to Cesare field of la the peopl truth. E tanner. for his go his Jewis way to so could loe who follo Jews as h reputable dead anin Help f Teach LESSON less. Tauru disease, or perfe Jesus Ch a true lif How (8 year (Palsy) less? T gone. I him, wh Then he man. E (Read), though a one. It whom t and Dor If only you thin ally me Herein full of g she did her, lov sick an hearing for him he coul the stor Jesus of it that beautiful be FULL life was went at our live of how respect—Abriec The slave t the foll York, a comm the co weeping married wife was as any had lat and h home, everyth could in drink him an imany imony, if she and go with st till I d sorrow the wi ing an break, for the terrib drink