

Sunday Reading.

For the Christian Messenger.

Sudden Glory.

BY THE REV. J. CLARK.

We see but the worn-out garment, Which the warrior cast aside, As he passed through the shining gateway, Redeemed and glorified.

Ere men could tell in the darkness, How thorough was death's defeat, The sound of the victor's footsteps, Was heard in the golden street.

At morn, at noon, and at midnight, We wearily toil for breath, And long for the closing triumph— Life's victory over death.

We think of the beautiful Home-land, Where our inheritance is; But hush! we are one with Jesus, And life and death are His.

At times in the midst of the battle, A smile from the king of grace, Like a sudden gleam of glory, Lights up each war-worn face.

Perchance without a warning, The storm and the strife may cease; And we may enter the kingdom, With a song of joy and peace.

Flash out, ye stars of promise! Fly fast, ye slow-winged years! For great is the bliss that awaits us, Beyond the valley of tears. Niclaus.

Face to Face.

Our eyes shall see the Master, Upon the great white throne, And all His acts of kindness Will then be fully known; The beauty of His patience, The grandeur of His grace. Will be to us unfolded When we behold His face.

The marks upon His forehead Of the deep-piercing thorn Will tell us in sweet language What He for us hath borne! His feet and hands nail-printed Will show what path He trod, When his rough cross He carried To bring us back to God.

The greatness of the mercy He brought to Calvary We shall perceive with wonder And holy ecstasy; That miracle of goodness Will then be clearly seen, When no dark cloud of evil Can rise and intervene.

O blessed, blessed vision, When all shall be made plain, The secrets of redemption, The mystery of pain; When all perplexing questions Shall fully answered be, In that most sacred moment When our Lord shall see.

O Christ, that time is coming Upon us very fast, And every day that passes Foretelleth of our last. Prepare us for the meeting, With all its bliss divine, That we may see Thy glory, And with its brightness shine. WALTER JAMES MATHEWS.

A Full Heart.

BY C. H. SPURGEON.

You have seen the great reservoirs provided by our water companies, in which water for the supply of thousands of houses is kept. Now, the heart is the reservoir of man, from which the streams of his life flow.

That life may flow through different pipes—the mouth, the hand, the eye; but still all the issues of hand, of eye, of lip, derive their source from the great fountain and central reservoir, the heart; and hence there is not difficulty in showing the great necessity that exists for keeping this reservoir in a proper state and condition, since otherwise that which flows through the pipes must be tainted and corrupt. Not only must the heart be kept pure, but it must also be kept full. However pure the water may be in the central reservoir, it will not be possible for us to have an abundant supply, unless the reservoir itself be full. An empty fountain will most assuredly beget empty pipes; let the machinery be never so accurate, let everything else be well ordered, yet if that reservoir be dry, we may wait in vain for water. See, then, the necessity of keeping the

heart full; and let the necessity make you ask this question: "But how can I keep my heart full? How can my emotions be strong? How can I keep my desires burning and my zeal inflamed?" Christian! there is one text which will explain all this: "All my springs are in Thee," said David. If thou hast all thy springs in God, thy heart will be full enough. If thou goest to the foot of Calvary, there will thy heart be bathed in love and gratitude. If thou art often in the vale of retirement, talking with thy God, thy heart shall be full of calm resolve. If thou goest with thy Master to the hill of Olivet, with Him to weep over Jerusalem, then will thy heart be full of love for never-dying souls. If thou art continually drawing thine impulse, thy life, the whole of thy being from the Holy Spirit, without whom thou canst do nothing, and if thou art living in close communion with Christ, there will be no fear of thy having a dry heart. He who lives without prayer—he who lives with little prayer—he who seldom reads the Word—he who seldom looks up to heaven for a fresh influence from on high—he will be the men whose heart will become dry and barren; but he who calls in secret on his God—who spends much time in holy retirement—who delights to meditate on the words of the Most High—whose soul is given up to Christ—who delights in His fulness, rejoices in His all-sufficiency, prays for his second coming, and delights in the thought of his glorious advent—such a man must have an overflowing heart; and as his heart is, such will his life be. It will be a full life; it will be a life that will speak from the sepulchre, and wake the echoes of the future. "Keep thine heart with all diligence," and entreat the Holy Spirit to keep it full; for otherwise, the issues of thy life will be feeble, shallow, and superficial; and thou mayest as well not have lived at all.

O for a heart thus full, and deep, and broad! Find the man that hath such a heart, and he is the man from whom living waters shall flow, to make the world glad with their refreshing streams.

Healing Waters.

A few years ago I had occasion to visit Schwabach in Germany, whose mineral waters are well known for their health-giving qualities. Situated in a narrow valley, they rise at various points in clear bubbling springs; and attract many visitors from lands far and near. Among the various groups which surround the wells or walks in the pretty gardens, you hear many languages spoken—German, French, English, and sometimes, it may be, Russian. One motive alone has drawn all hither, and one occupation engages them, the recovery of health by drinking these waters. Some pale faces and wasted forms tell too surely that no waters of earth can restore the hue of health, whilst the returning strength of others shows that the waters have not lost their power.

Mingling in this interesting crowd, thoughts of the sin-diseased soul within and the precious healing fountain of salvation, cannot fail to arise in the mind. Disease and death reign in all lands, because sin is everywhere. Go where you will on the face of the earth you find no city without its cemetery and its funerals. Sin is a deadly thing, and it is so because God's holy law must punish it with death. That law condemns all men to death, whilst the sin-destroyed soul within, and the decayed body without, are hastening on together to the second death in hell for ever. But if the pale faces of these health-seekers remind of sin—that deep root of all suffering—these bubbling and healing springs of which they drink have also their tale of sin's great remedy. The soldier's spear, when it pierced the Saviour's side, opened a fountain of atoning blood which can cleanse away sin's deepest stains. The death which we should have endured in hell for ever, our great Substitute bore instead in His own body on the tree. The death-curse was spent in slaying Him, and so He rose again on the third day, the Well-spring of eternal life. With the blood flowed water also from His side, emblem of His Spirit, who cleanses the soul from sin's love and power by the word; and thenceforth

there springs up in the believer's heart a pure fountain of water into everlasting life.

"Let the water and the blood From Thy riven side which flow'd Be of sin the double cure; Cleanse me from its guilt and power."

"I have no refuge but His Side," said the other day a dying believer on a bed of much suffering. "I can't think as I expected to be able to do on a death-bed, and glad am I that I did not put off seeking Him till a rainy day. 'Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil.' Now, my only wish is that my whole family may be with me in heaven. They brought me some water from the little fountain in the yard, and it was very refreshing to my face; but Oh! it was nothing to the water which gushes down into my soul from the great Fountain. Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly." And in three hours her prayer was answered.

Sad that the streams of salvation should be so little visited, when men will thus flock from the ends of the earth in search of health for this poor perishing body. Most do not believe that they need such a Saviour as this, or they are unwilling to give up the pleasures of sin for His sake. Like Schwabach's waters, healing those of every land, Christ saves all who come, be they little sinners or great; but, unlike these springs, He sends none uncured away. The fame of these waters brings strangers from their distant homes; and shall not God's true record of His Son, echoed by ten thousand healed ones, draw you also to this Fountain of eternal life? No long and costly journey lies between you and Christ. He now stands knocking at the door of your heart, Himself the Fountain of salvation. Refuse not His love. Receive Him now, and He will abide in your heart till the end; and soon, in glory, the Lamb shall lead you to living fountains of waters, and you shall drink at its source of the pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb.

Children of the King.

BY A. E. WILSON.

"Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God." 1 John 3: 1.

The preacher's words in clear undoubting tones fell upon many a tired heart that day, awakening within it a glad response, a triumphant thrill seldom felt before.

In the end of a pew far up in front, sat a homely, plainly-clad little woman wholly unnoticed and unnoticeable, unless some kindly-heart should observe the weary, dispirited look in her eyes.

It was not that she was suffering under any great affliction, or led an unhappy life, only to-day the burden seemed heavy. There were some, even in her small school, who, because she was poor, and a teacher, rudely trampled upon her keen sensitiveness. So, hurt and utterly disheartened, she needed just the comfort that was coming to her now.

'Sons of God,' and it doth not yet appear what we shall be. A daughter of the King. I a daughter of the King? Then why should I mind anything? And the King my Father knows it all, and he will not let them go one step further than is good for me. Ah those who treat me with contempt, do not know the honor conferred upon me, of the crown awaiting my poor unworthy brow. How should they? But I! I may hold up my head among the proudest of them. What is wealth or beauty compared to this? I am a daughter of the King, and my Father's sustaining arms are ever about me." And she lifted her pale face with a new courage for life's battles, and eagerly drank in again and again the blessed assurance.

In the far-off modest corner, another, a pitiful, meagre-looking man, a Tom Pinch to some merciless employer, caught the cheery notes, and straightening his bent figure listened for more. "Sons of God." "Joint heirs with Christ." Why then, should I ever feel, as I sometimes do, that I have scarcely a right to live? I will try hereafter to live more up to my privileges, and for the honor of my Heavenly Father to be a man among men."

And so God's glorious truth found a lodgement here and there, just where it was needed, accomplishing that for which it was sent; and a chorus of gladdened hearts joined in the closing hymn.— "Children of the heavenly King. As ye journey, sweetly sing."

Put more Christ into the Sermons.

Ministers should study, most of all, to preach Christ. The most successful preachers have always been pre-eminently preachers of Christ. This is reasonable, because Christ is, above everything else in the universe, what all men most need. There comes a period in the history of every man when he realizes this fact. A clergyman was one day visiting a dying man. He read a chapter to him about heaven and then sang two verses of the hymn commencing,

"There is a land of pure delight," when he was interrupted by the sick man, with the request that he should sing the hymn beginning with,

"There is a fountain filled with blood."

He who knows Christ, knows everything else. It is Christ, and not heaven, the dying need. He who receives Christ, gets heaven. He who has no Christ would be miserable in Paradise. The blood of Christ cleanses from all sin. It is the preacher's great and chief duty to preach that truth in every sermon. He is to make known, in every possible manner, the great and the only remedy found for man's sin. If we fail, as preachers in this one-particular, no matter in how many others we succeed, our ministry shall be a miserable failure.—The Preacher and Homiletic Monthly.

Push and Prayer.

The importance of these two words in conjunction is thus briefly emphasized by The Christian at Work.

This is the season for starting up the wheels of church work that went so feebly, or absolutely halted, in hot weather. It should be push, push, push in every direction. The Sunday-school needs pushing, the mission work of the church, all its spiritual and social activities. Be sure also and add another p—prayer. Push and prayer will work wonders. It would seem as if some souls were afraid of either. They tremble at the exercise of a little energy, as if it would bring down the whole ecclesiastical establishment upon their heads in confusion. But soberly, can we appreciate what might happen if some souls went to work vigorously, heartily. And then, what if they fell to praying most enthusiastically, actually believing that their prayers would be heard? Try it this year, let it have a faithful trial; push and pray.

The Majesty of Bible Precepts.

There is no weakness in them. No one of them is emasculated by the modern prefix, 'try.' The Bible says 'Cleanse your hands, ye sinners, and purify your hearts, ye double-minded.' 'Cease to do evil, learn to do well.' 'Depart from evil and do good.' And thus through the whole Book, from Genesis to Revelation, a moral precept is never prefixed with the enfeebling 'try,' now so universally common.

Just think of the Bible saying, Try to depart from evil! Try to cleanse your hands, ye sinners! Try to speak the truth to one another! Or even, 'Let us try to pray!' And instead of 'Do not kill,' 'Do not steal,' 'Do not commit adultery,' suppose we had, 'Do try not to kill!' 'Do try not to steal!' 'Do try not to commit adultery!' It is time to stop experimenting in morals. None of it is from above. It is all from beneath, a device from the devil to break down the force and majesty of the precepts of the Bible.

That glorious Book never uses the word 'Try' in any such connection. It knows nothing of experimental morals. 'Try' is never properly used except where a failure may be justifiable. A failure in morals never was and never can be justified.

Never despair, though the world forsake thee. God is ever ready to take your heart, though broken, and to give you more in return for it than the world can ever promise.

The Christian Messenger.

Bible Lessons for 1883.

FIRST QUARTER.

Lesson V.—FEBRUARY 4, 1883.

THE PRINCE OF LIFE.

Acts iii. 12-21.

COMMIT TO MEMORY: Verses 13-16.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"In him was life; and the life was the light of men."—John i. 4.

DAILY HOME READINGS.

V. The Lesson, Act iii. 12-21.

T. Two Words of Peter, Act iii. 22-26; 1 Pet. i. 10-16.

W. Treatment of Christ, Mark xii. 1-12.

T. Hope for Great Sinners, Isa. i. 10-20.

F. Sins Blotted Out, Isa. xl. 14-28.

G. The Goal of Prophecy, Isa. lxxv. 17-25; lxxvi. [22-24].

R. Restoration of all Things, Rev. xxi. 1-8.

THE HOLY SPIRIT'S WORK IN OFFERING MERCY TO THE JEWS.

LESSON OUTLINE.—I. Awful Guilt, Vs. 12-18. II. Call to Repentance, Vs. 19. III. Hope in the Future, Vs. 19-21.

QUESTIONS.—Vs. 12-18.—What did Peter earnestly disclaim? What lesson here for those whose efforts to do good are blessed? What did Peter declare concerning Jesus? What fearful sin had the Jews committed? What great aggravations of their guilt are named? What had God done? Vs. 15. Who were witnesses of this? How did Peter account for the miracle? Was the cure perfect? What part had faith in the cure?

Vs. 19.—What exhortation did Peter give? From what and to what was it the duty of the Jews to turn? What immediate blessing would they receive? From what would they be saved? Can great sinners be forgiven? How? From what will repentance save men? What blessings will it secure?

Vs. 19-21.—What would be the first result if the nation should repent and be forgiven? What would be the second? Where was Jesus then? Did the nation repent? Did they generally escape punishment? What blessings did individuals gain by repentance? What blessing can we gain in the same way? To what, in the future, should we look forward? Are these events certain? What exhortation did Peter address to Christians? 2 Pet. iii. 11-13.

Scripture Searchings.—Can you find any other instances of wicked men blindly fulfilling the divine purposes? Is the Second Coming of Christ mentioned in the New Testament often or seldom? What parable in Luke bears on the Lord's absence and return?

The miracle in the last Lesson prepared the way for Peter's preaching. The place and circumstances gave his words the character of an address to the nation as well as to individuals. God's mercy in still offering grace to his ancient people, after the murder and rejection of Christ, was wonderful indeed.

The Jews, from the teaching of their sacred writings, expected the RESTORATION OF ALL THINGS, though they generally had crude and carnal notions, looking not much higher than for the religious and political supremacy of Israel. They expected (except the Sadducees) a resurrection of the dead at that time; but their ideas of this seem generally to have been gross, not rising much above the idea of return to life as it now is.

NOTES.—Vs. 12.—Marvel: wonder. All personal merit or power disclaimed. If Christians accomplish anything for Christ, it is not of themselves, but through the Holy Spirit; and they should give all the glory to God.

Vs. 13.—The power is from Christ, whom the God of our fathers [ancestors] hath glorified—viz., at the ascension. This was the first step toward the restoration of all things. (Vs. 21; cf. ch. ii. 36.) His Son: properly, his servant, the one who does his will and work in redemption. (Cf. Isa. xlii. 1; Phil. ii. 7.) Delivered up: to the heathen. Denied: disowned their King. Was determined: had decided.

Vs. 14.—Further aggravation in the spotless holiness of Christ and villainousness of Barabbas. Prince of Life: they had killed the very Author of life!

Vs. 16.—His name: himself, as known and trusted in, working through the Holy Spirit. Through faith: faith in the apostles (and possibly in the man) was the condition. Faith that is by him: even this faith was wrought in their hearts by him, through the Holy Spirit.

Vs. 17.—I wot: I know. Did it: acted. Ignorance: willful, in spite of amplest evidence, very-guilty. But not the diabolical wickedness of doing what they did with a distinct conviction that he was the Son of God.

Vs. 18.—By their sin (no thanks to them!) God had fulfilled his purpose of grace in the atonement; this might

encourage them to hope for mercy. God's sovereign control of all things is an encouragement to the penitent and believing.

Vs. 19, 20.—He now urges to present duty. The right translation is: Repent therefore and turn [i. e., from rejection of Christ to submission to him] that your sins may be blotted out, in order that the times [epochs or occasions] of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, [i. e., from God in heaven], and that he may send forth [i. e., from heaven, as promised in ch. i. 11] Jesus Christ before appointed for you [i. e., as Israel's King and Saviour].

Vs. 21.—The heaven must receive: Christ, rejected by the covenant people, must, according to God's wise plan, return to heaven, while a new people, the Church, should be gathered from among men; and he must remain there until the times [eras]; a wider word than in vs. 19.] of restitution [restoration] of all things. This restoration was the burden of prophecy from the earliest ages. Not "universal salvation," but restoration of the earth and its inhabitants to a state of order, holiness, and happiness in the kingdom of God; in which the righteous of all ages will have a part.—The Holy Spirit thus offered the kingdom once more to Israel. It seems to be plainly taught that if the nation would obey and come into the church, not only forgiveness and seasons of blessing would be the result, but also the return of their King and the fulfillment of the glorious prophecies.—The nation did not repent; but individual Jews, who did, secured forgiveness, safety, and a part in the hopes of the future, even as we may. The return of Christ to the earth and the "restoration of all things" are sure, though we know not when they will occur. (Acts i. 7.) The "times [eras] of restoration" may include a long series of events. This restoration is always represented in the Bible as the final result of Redemption. If we fail of a part in this, we lose everything, forever.

Help for Parents, or for the Teacher of the Primary Class.

The Jews thought that if a man arrived at a high degree of holiness, he would be able to work miracles. So, if Peter had chosen to take the praise for himself, he might have gained great power over them in that way. But he gave all the glory where it belonged. He told them that it would indeed have been a wonderful thing, if John and himself had cured the man by their own skill, or as a reward for their own piety. But as it was, there was nothing to wonder at; for the miracle had been done by Jesus Christ, whom God had raised up and glorified, after he had been denied and delivered up to Pilate, and killed by them. He was indeed the Holy One and the Just, the Prince of Life, the servant of Jehovah, and yet the Son of God. And it was because they had believed that he could give not only life, but health, that he had given this perfect soundness to the lame man which they had all seen.

Peter was very plain with the people. He said boldly: "Ye delivered him up; ye denied him; ye killed the Prince of Life, instead of a murderer who took life." Now that this miracle had shown that he whom they had put to death was now alive, and at the right hand of God, as the Prince of Life, what would become of them?

Then, having pricked their consciences, he applied the healing balm. He showed them that there was mercy even for them. He said that he knew that they were ignorant of what they were really doing, and that if they changed their minds about the Saviour, and turned away from sinning against him, and instead of that, turned round in heart and life and followed his teachings, that then their past sins would all be blotted out, and that they would enjoy such times of refreshing as only the presence of the Lord could give.

Every fifty years, the Jews had a grand time of "restitution," or restoration, when slaves were restored to their homes and sons to their fathers, and houses and lands to their old owners. Their prophets all through the Bible had taught them to look forward to a much grander time of restoration, when all who had wandered away from God should turn back to him, and the whole world be restored to the beauty and holiness in which God made it. Jesus himself only can so restore things; and until the time comes, he must remain in heaven.

But the good time begins in us when we turn back to God like a lost sheep restored to its fold, and our sins all blotted out, begin a new life in Jesus.

There is not a moment without some duty.—Cicero.