

Sunday Reading.

"To each one his work."

BY MARIANNE PARNINGHAM.

The Master has gone away From the earth where a while He wrought, And the shadows about Him lay, To the glorious land of day, And we follow Him in our thought...

God's Garden.

BY THE REV. W. WHALE.

Before the Apostles wrote their letters, or Jesus said 'Suffer the children to come unto Me,' before the prophets wrote and spoke, or the Psalmist sang, or the priests offered sacrifice; before Joseph was sold into Egypt, or Isaac saw the wondrous ladder, or Isaac was laid on the altar, or Abraham left Ur of the Chaldees; before Noah built the ark, or Cain became angry with his brother Abel!

'God is always working.—Jesus said, 'My Father worketh hitherto, and I work.' In the 1st chapter of Genesis we read that 'God created,' and 'God said,' 'God divided,' and so on all through the work. Since then, God has been at work in His great world about us, in His good providence over us, and in His wonderful love towards us.

'The heavens are a point from the pen of His perfection; The world is a rosebud from the bower of His beauty; The sun is a spark from the light of His wisdom; And the sky a bubble on the sea of His power.'

'He works every moment in every part of this vast world; moves every atom, expands every leaf, finishes every blade of grass, erects every tree, condenses every particle of vapour, every drop of rain, and every flake of snow; guides every ray of light, breathes in every wind, thunders in every storm, wings the lightning, pours the streams and rivers, empties the volcanoes, heaves the ocean, and shakes the globe.'

Everywhere, always, and in all things, God shows forth His energy. He is inexhaustible and irresistible in His power to create, sustain, and use whatever may be according to His wisdom.

2. God must surely love that which is beautiful.—The beautiful must always be in harmony with the divine. That

which is out of harmony and proportion is symbolical of sin and disease. God has not made the world like a poorhouse for paupers, but like a home for children, a palace for princes, a temple for worshippers. The floor is carpeted with green, pleasant to the eye, and bestudded with forms and colours of infinite variety and hue. The air is vocal with the songs of birds all carolling forth their praises towards Heaven.

3. God chose a pleasant place for His garden.—Eden was probably in some part of Mesopotamia, and that was eastward of the place where the Book of Genesis was written. But the word means pleasantness, and the idea is that God planted a garden in a lovely spot. You must know that the pleasure and prosperity of a garden depend greatly on the selection of situation, of soil, also of moisture. The Garden of Eden was well situated then and had the fount of four rivers from which to obtain moisture. God is very loving and wise in choice of positions for His purposes. We read in Isaiah, 'My well-beloved hath a vineyard in a very fruitful hill; so if it did not bring forth fruit the situation was not to blame. So also Mount Zion was 'beautiful for situation.' He wishes us all to know that His ways are ways of pleasantness. It is always an Eden where God has a garden—

4. God selected the plants for His garden.—They would be brought in from the wider world or wilderness into the selected spot. Plants suited to the spot; plants that would beautify the scene. Trees for foliage, form, and fruit. All brought by Divine wisdom, care, and power. What a variety would be required to stock so large and beautiful a place. All good for food or for contemplation except one; and our first parents were to be at liberty to partake of all that were good for them, and to be told of the one which it was not good for them to eat of. The Great Husbandman knew how to do this important work of transplanting, and so He does now, for He transplants out of the world into the church a great variety of plants. Some are weak, like the hyssop that springeth out of the wall; and some are strong, like the cedars that grow on Lebanon; but if they are planted by the Lord's own right hand, they will be sure to take root and bring forth flowers and fruits. Then He is constantly transplanting from earth to heaven. Some are spared to bear the storms and bask in the sunshine of this life for a longer period, but it is soon over, and they are transplanted. Enoch was translated after having walked with God here on earth. Oh! it is a glorious place to which these plants of God's grace are removed.

5. God puts the first man in the first garden.—He made the man for the garden; not for the wilderness. He made the garden for the man that he might have special tokens of favour. Why did God put man in the garden? To keep it in order and beauty for the visits of the Divine Father. To keep it from all assaults and evil powers that might assault. He was not to keep the garden for his own purposes, but for the Divine pleasure. Adam was to live in Eden as in a suburb of heaven. It was living with God. The garden was intended to find healthy occupation for his powers, for faith in Divine goodness and truth, for work in harmony with Nature's law, for hope in looking forward to new beauties and higher progress of all under his eye, for patience in waiting the growth and development of those things which were his happy care, for love of the beautiful, love for the creatures and for the Creator. All these, in obedience which

would perpetuate his happiness and intensify his joy. God's garden was man's training school in all the virtues, and nothing but sin could cause it to become sad or sorrowful. God's garden was man's heaven on earth, and who can tell how peacefully and blessedly he would have glided into the heaven beyond, without a pain, or a sorrow, or a tear, had he not sinned against the love and the law to which he owed all his blessings. You know how he disobeyed God through listening to the voice of temptation, and how sin brought shame and condemnation. Eden ceased to be a happy place when Adam ceased to be a good man. He was cast out of Eden because he cast off God's law as his guide. His life became one of toils, and trials, and tears, the world a wilderness, and God a judge. Let me tell you that our blessed Saviour can turn life's wilderness into an Eden again and restore us all to the love and fellowship of God. In Adam Paradise was lost, in Jesus we have Paradise regained. God desires you should live in a garden, in the enclosure of His grace, among the flowers of His promise, and under the fruitful boughs of His loving kindness. Let me invite you, then, to come up out of the wilderness where the roaring lion seeks to devour. Come into the fold of Jesus the Good Shepherd and be safe. Come out of darkness into light; out of sin into obedience; out of self-will into full surrender to God; out of bondage into liberty; out of ugliness into beauty; out of ruin into redemption.

For the Christian Messenger. Fundamental Truths of Christianity.

LUTHERD'S APOLOGICAL DISCOURSES.

Translated from the German, by Prof. D. M. Welton.

TENTH DISCOURSE.

THE PERSON OF JESUS CHRIST.

VI.

The utterance of the Divine Ruler and Judge of the World must be truth. For here there is no middle ground between truth and madness. No rationalistic ideal of virtue helps us here, the simple prototype and pattern of humanity does not suffice, but we must leave the bounds of humanity, and seek the roots of his existence and the home of his being and life in God himself, in order to understand the possibility of this utterance. This utterance would be an insoluble psychological riddle if Jesus were not more than man. This utterance would be an impossibility, if Jesus fell under the same laws of endless existence as ourselves. Judged by his nature he must be removed from the sphere of simple endless existence and made to belong to that of the eternal and divine life. His absolute relation to the world, which he claims, demands an absolute relation to God. This necessarily presupposes that. On this principle only is that explained, but it is explained truly. It is only because he stands related to God as he does, that he stands related to us as he says. He is the Son of Man, Lord of the world, and Judge of the world, only because he is the Son of God.

Thus he designates himself throughout. When he speaks of the highest, most interior, most hidden, of the unique and eternal in his nature, then does he call himself the Son of God. This is not a thought or an invention of later times; it is the testimony of Jesus himself. It comes thus before us; none can deny it. The first gospels contain it as well as the fourth. Although the fourth goes deeper down and discloses more of the hidden eternal grounds of the being and nature of Jesus than the first, although the first speak more of his relation to the world, while the fourth emphasizes more his relation to God which constitutes the hidden background and condition of his relation to the world—those contain the fact even as well as this, and in a direct and most unequivocal manner they declare in a characteristic utterance, that his absolute position in the world is founded on his absolute relation to God. 'All things are delivered to me of my father—says Matthew (xi. 27)—and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him.' He stands in an incomparable relation to the Father. As the being of the Father is hidden to the world, so is also that of the Son, but as the Son is known to the Father, so also is the Father to the Son. Between the two

is there the most fervent intimacy. Before the world they stand in the obscurity of the divine mystery which Christ only first unveiled, when he came forth from the bosom of God into the world of man. He separates himself from mankind and joins himself to God, as one who belongs to him more closely than he belongs to men, to whom still he appears most nearly to belong. This forms the continually returning theme in the four gospels. He calls himself Son of God in an absolute sense. Not as men may be called sons of God, by virtue of their creation, or by virtue of a moral resemblance to God, with Jesus it is a designation of his being; and life relations. Not gradually but essentially does he hereby separate himself from men. God is indeed his Father, but not as he is the Father of men. He commands us to say: our Father; he never himself thus calls God. His relation to God is unique. He stands in absolute fellowship with God (John x. 38, 38); he is plainly the presence and revelation of God (xiv. 9: xvii.); he carries the divine life in himself (v. 5), hence he will be honored even as the Father (v. 27); in short he allies himself completely to God as one who pertains to him, in contradistinction from the world and all mankind. But how can a man stand so related to God, that between the two the most intimate fellowship exists, and no barrier—neither the barrier of sinfulness nor that of a creature nature—exists between them, if he does not essentially pertain to God, and is not thus also eternal? And so in our reflection we are necessarily forced back to the demand of an eternal divine being, which Jesus announces many times in the fourth gospel, when he says of himself that he came forth from God and into the world, yea, when he transcends the objections of his Jewish adversaries in that remarkable declaration: verily, verily, I say unto you, before Abraham was I am (John viii. 58) and when he designates his original existence in fellowship with divine glory and love (xvii. 5, 24). Herein he thus places himself in the eternal being and life of God. In this high sense he calls himself Son of God.

That these evangelical statements have real historic weight, must be admitted by the most morbid criticism. Even Renan cannot help acknowledging that Jesus, although first only in the later portion of his life, designated himself the Son of God in a superhuman sense and made faith in him the first command of his kingdom. True, he sees therein only a gloomy fancy and a fanatical aberration of Jesus, which he may have, as it were, atoned for in his death. For—we are obliged to say—had Jesus deserved death, then the Jewish authorities would have rightly condemned him as a blasphemer, and he would have died, not on account of our sin, but on account of his own. But who, that has not lost every impression of the moral purity and grandeur of his character and of the tranquil clearness of his spirit, could seriously entertain such a thought? Who would venture to say that Jesus was degraded to such an abject condition of intellectual and moral aberration? We can allow ourselves to be lifted by him to his height, but we cannot draw him down to our depth, nor above all, into the company of disordered minds and characters whom we only regard with pity or contempt. Nay, for us this question is decided: has Jesus really in this superhuman sense called himself Son of God, then this must be the truth. Like Napoleon, of whom it is related that on the Isle of St. Helena he often spoke of the great men of preceding times—and compared himself with them, when, on a certain occasion he suddenly turned to one of his attendants with the question: Can you tell me who Jesus Christ was? And the man declared that as yet he had not had time to think upon the subject, when Napoleon continued: then I will tell you. And now he compared Jesus Christ with himself and with the greatest men who had preceded him and showed how Jesus stood above them all, and concluded with the words: "I think I understand something of men, and I declare to you, all these were men and I am a man, but—to that One no one is equal, Jesus Christ was more than man."

It must be that if Jesus is Lord of

the world, as he says, he is such only through his relation to God as he teaches. The historical person of Jesus Christ and his word are a fact. This fact can be incontrovertibly established. But this fact remains to us an inexplicable riddle, so long as we do not permit his own testimony to his sonship to God to solve it for us. Is he the Son of God in this sense, then all is clear and all that follows is necessary. But if this is not the case, then absolutely we know not what we are to do with him. But then what does all other knowledge that we consider valuable amount to, all knowledge of the human mind and its history, of human nature and its destiny, if we must let that which is the greatest fact in the history of mankind, and is the solution of all enigmas and the happiness of our whole life, if we must let that remain as the most inexplicable of all? And if we should thus dispose of this fact we could not proceed on our way; everywhere it would meet us; we must place ourselves in relation to it. But no other relation to it is possible, unless it is to be regarded as an absolute self-contradiction, than that which makes him unquestionably what his own testimony makes him: the eternal Son of the Father, of the divine nature itself.

This is also the impression we involuntarily get from his entire historical manifestation. It is a confession of overmastering feeling, when Thomas, overpowered by the appearance of the Risen One, exclaims: my Lord and my God. But this confession of feeling is also a confession of the mind, in which the stirring of thought is finally and of necessity reached.

We have two Institutions of Jesus. He did not appear on earth in order to make external arrangements for the religious life. In the depth of his spirit and heart, in the inner life of his soul he would lay the foundation of the structure which he has reared and which will stand when heaven and earth have passed away. But he has founded and left behind him two Institutions—they are the two acts of the church which constitute the highest external elevation of the religious and ecclesiastical life, the two acts which we, to distinguish from all others, designate Sacraments: Baptism and the Lord's Supper. Of their institution by Christ himself we need not speak. Both have something deeply mysterious in them, and both declare a mystery. While Jesus in baptism places himself between God the Father and the Holy Spirit, he hereby places himself in the circle of the eternal divine life and being and says of himself that he is the Son of God in the sense of fellowship with the divine nature. While in the Supper he speaks of his body and blood which he gives for the sins of the world, he permits us to discern the final object of his coming to earth, in which the eternal loving purpose of God comes to manifestation and accomplishment. The Baptism tells who appeared in Jesus upon earth, the Supper, why he appeared. It is the two mysteries of the Trinity and the atonement which in these two Institutions of Jesus are actually proclaimed and taught us. These are the two central truths of Christianity. But in them we enter the Holy of Holies of Christianity. I wished to lead you only to the threshold of this Holy of Holies, while I put before you the fundamental truths of Christianity and attempted to vindicate their truthfulness and necessity.

I am at the end of my task.

The way which we have travelled together, began with the enigmas of human life, with the questions of human existence. We saw that the enigma of being demands a God—the personal God. But God is not a dead force, but the life of love, and his love has not permitted him to remain a hidden mystery, but he has revealed himself to men. The goal of his revelation, however, is Jesus Christ. In him God himself has been revealed. Here the contradictions of our existence are solved. We confess that we still carry contradictions within us. They are the thorn that will not allow us to rest. Only in Jesus Christ do we find rest; in him the antitheses are explained. He is the unity of these antitheses—of God and man, of holiness and sin, of heaven and earth. He is the absolute propitiation. If we explore all places—we find him chiefly the God of power; if we

explore all times—we find him chiefly the God of righteousness. The God of grace we find only in Jesus Christ. But the God of grace is alone the reconciliation of the perplexities of the world and of our hearts. In Jesus Christ Christians of all times have found their peace and joy. The total life of the whole church is a confession to him. All its doing, its whole worship, its proclamations, its prayers and hymns and sacred festivals are nothing but a testimony to him, and all the art of speech and of figurative representation which from the beginning has been employed in its service is a glorification of Jesus. And so long as thankfulness remains on earth, he will not be forgotten; so long will his name live in the hearts of men and tremble on their lips. He who takes him from men, takes away the corner stone of the noblest structure of humanity. But it is not simply the memory of one that has passed away, which Christianity preserves, it is relation to a living One, a personal living relation. The heart beats for him, to him the knees bow. And continually will the image of Jesus, which comes before us in the gospels, exercise its mysterious power over the hearts of men, and the spirit that goes out from him will form into a band those that are united to him in faith and love, that they may be a living band of love among men. So long as Christians shall live upon earth, that is, to the end of days will they recognise each other by the mutual salvation. Let Jesus Christ be praised.

Herewith let me close. I have endeavored according to the measure of my ability to produce a justification of our faith. I have endeavored to show that our faith is not a fancy of our minds, but a truth—a truth justified by reason, by the conscience and by the heart.

THE END.

Correspondence.

For the Christian Messenger. Rochester, U. S., Re-visited.

"Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest a while," said Jesus to His wearied disciples. Here we also are indulging in a few days' rest after having completed nearly a thousand miles of our long journey westward. This is no desert place, however, but rather to be compared to the Elim of old where the tired Israelites were refreshed by the palm trees and wells of water. When one approaches the beating heart of the "Flower City" his ear is saluted with all those loud and confusing noises that always belong to manufacturing centres; but let him retire into the suburbs and he finds an atmosphere of repose and quaker-like restfulness peculiar to this city. Unlike many American towns, Rochester is a city of homes, and with delight have I once again sauntered along her broad streets shaded by overhanging foliage; once more have I surveyed the abodes of peace and plenty with well-kept lawns like a green carpet sloping down towards the avenues. High and unsightly stone walls, marks of a barbarous sentiment and selfish spirit have been discarded as unworthy of a free people, and the meaneast passer by may gaze without let or hindrance upon the refreshing loveliness of these residences.

The scorching heat of last Thursday led us to institute an old fashioned family picnic and to seek change of location in hope of altering our bodily temperature. With lunch-baskets in hand, we went aboard a river steamer and, accompanied by other sweltering mortals, started

DOWN THE GENESSEE RIVER.

This stream possesses varied attractions. The artist beholds in its dashing cascades, and huge boulders; its rocky chasms and overhanging trees, ample scope for his talents. The adventurer associates with it the name of Sam Patch who took his final fatal and foolhardy leap over its Falls. The worshipper of the mighty dollar sees here almost inexhaustible supplies of motive power to turn the huge wheels of factory and mill. While the geologist listens with awe and admiration to the voice of the rocky river bank, as strata upon strata of various colors and thickness tell him the wondrous story of creation. After an hour's pleasant ride we reached the mouth on the River and were soon inhaling the cooler air of Windsor Beach, on Lake Ontario. On this highland overlooking the Lake was an old orchard under whose shady trees were people different in age and condition, but having one object in common—keeping cool. Here were romping children; there was a family group, in another place was a large picnic which on inquiring of one of its members, I learned to be a "Christian" "Sunday School picnic. (Why should they monopolize this title?) And so, what with the cool breezes and Lake bathing, we managed to secure for ourselves a normal tem-