

Sunday Reading.

THE BOYHOOD OF CHRIST.

"Can any Good Thing Come out of Nazareth? . . . Come and See."

On Sabbath evenings, the bells of Christian churches ring out, clear and sweet, in Nazareth, the city of the Saviour's boyhood. Next to Bethlehem and Jerusalem, no spot in Palestine holds more attractions for the tourist. Its streets are clean and inviting, its people—more than four-fifths of them Christians—are celebrated for their hospitality to strangers and its woman are among the fairest in the East. Throned among the hills which extend between the plains of Esdraelon on the north and Esdraelon on the south, Nazareth bursts upon the sight of the traveller like a welcome and refreshing vision. One of the first sights seen in Nazareth is a carpenter shop in full operation. It was in just such a place and amid similar surroundings that the boy Jesus must have passed many hours in the intervals of school, watching his father Joseph as the latter drove the plane or the saw at the long wooden bench.

Nestling among the hills, a three day's journey from Jerusalem, Nazareth is most favorably and picturesquely situated. So far as we know, the Saviour spent nearly thirty years in this mountain home. As a child, he probably roamed the hillsides, listening to the strains of the native birds—the hoopoe, the snubird and the lark—or gleefully running after the richly-colored butterflies that abound there. In white tunic, and with head and feet bared to the soft sunshine, he may have roved, with other little mountaineers of the village, where the flowers and berries grow in the verdurous spots along the hillsides, or down by the brook in the valley, where women and maidens went to fetch water in tall jars for use in the house. Then, as now, flocks of sheep dotted the plains below, and these may have produced an impression upon the mind of the divine child that made itself felt in after years, as did all else that he saw and knew during these youthful days at Nazareth.

As Jesus grew older, he doubtless went with other children to the village school and listened heedfully to the admonitions of the hazan or teacher. Imagination pictures him going with his parents to the synagogue, where on Mondays, Thursdays and the Sabbath, the Law was expounded. We can see him listening, with fixed and serious attention, to the recital of the wonderful stories of David and Solomon, Isaac and Samuel. Anon, we see him wandering thoughtfully among the rocky eminences, blooming in summer and gray and bleak in the winter season, with a vast and magnificent panorama spread out below. But his youth was not spent in ignoble idleness or dependence; for while he was a deep student of the Word and of the works of his Father above, as seen in nature, he was also industrious. While he learned, as we may well believe, the Hebrew, the Greek and the Aramaic tongues at the schools, he was also acquiring the trade of a carpenter in Joseph's workshop. We can see him as a young man following this humble occupation and going, as occasion demanded, into the homes of the village, whenever such labor was needed. In all parts of Syria today there are to be seen carpenter shops such as that of Joseph might have been and probably was. There are several in Nazareth, and it was in just such a place that the Divine Workman—the Lord of Life and Glory—forever sealed the dignity of labor by toiling with his own hands.

Concerning the child-life and youth of Jesus in Nazareth, the Rev. Alfred Edersheim, D. D., one of the most celebrated commentators of the present day, writes: "Of the many years he spent there from infancy to manhood, the evangelic narrative has left but the briefest notice. Of his childhood, that he grew and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was upon him; of his youth (besides the account of questioning the Rabbis in the temple), that he was subject to his parents and that he grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man." But these years spent in Nazareth brought the Master nearer to the daily life and experience of his people on earth. They were an essential part of his great mission, a preparation for its fuller development. From these years, Nazareth derives all its importance, its history, its fame and its attractiveness to the Christian world.

At the time of Christ's earthly sojourn, Nazareth was a small village, and its people rude and uncultured. It was regarded as a place of little significance; yet it was superior to many villages in the country round about. Its men, with their sheepskin coats or their short abbas (coats) were energetic and industrious, and its women were exceedingly comely, in their long, blue garments, tied at the waist, and with rows of glittering coins decorating forehead and neck—a trace of old Egypt. Its houses were white and flat-roofed, with vine-shaded walls; the floors covered with mats, and here and there an inviting cushion. Even the plainest home had hospitable provision for a guest, for Nazareth, then as now, was famed for kindness to strangers. A shell for dishes, large clay jars for the drinking water, a low, round, wooden stool, around which the family sat to eat meals, square rooms with thick walls—these were among the characteristics of the homes of this village of stony streets and hilly paths. Here Jesus' young manhood was passed in comparative seclusion, in the society of his elders and teachers, in the study of the scriptures and in prayers and meditation.

Our illustration on the first page shows the Nazareth of today. The rude, primitive, Judean village has grown into a considerable city of some 8,000 inhabitants, one-half Moslem the remainder about equally divided among various sects of Christians. There are several conflicting claims as to the actual scene of the Annunciation. The Gospels do not indicate the precise spot, and the Latin and Greek churches have assumed to be so for themselves. The Latin Convent seen in the foreground is claimed to be erected over the site of the house of Mary and the Grotto of the Annunciation, while the Greek church, at

some distance off, is declared to be immediately over the fountain beside which the Virgin stood when visited by the angel Gabriel. The Latin church originally built by the Franciscan monks has been several times reconstructed; its interior is covered with fine tapestries and rare paintings representing scenes in the life of the Saviour. A marble altar and slab is said to mark the spot on which the Virgin stood when she received the memorable message.

There are many kinds of traditions connected with the boyhood of Jesus in Nazareth, that are still related to travellers, but very few of which can be regarded as authentic. One monkish claim is that the house of Joseph, the carpenter, which stood midway between the Latin and Greek churches, and on whose site a Christian chapel now stands, was carried bodily away by angels and deposited in the church of Loretto, Italy. The building shown at Loretto, is of dark sandstone, utterly unlike anything to be found in Judea.

THE SCRIPTURE QUILT.

A Pathetic Little Story of the American Civil War.

The following incident of the civil war was related by a member of the Christian Commission: "In one of the boxes sent to us by the Sanitary Commission was a patchwork quilt of unusual softness and lightness. When we opened it we found a note pinned to it. It read as follows: I have made this scripture-quilt for one of the hospital beds, for I thought that while it would be a comfort to the poor body, it might speak a word of good to the precious soul—the words are so beautiful and blessed, and full of balm and healing! May it be blessed to the dear boys in the army, among whom I have a son."

It was made of blocks of calico alternated with blocks of white muslin, and on every white block was written some precious scripture text. On the central block, in letters so large as to catch the careless eye, was that faithful saying in which is all our hope and strength—"Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." And below it the prayer we all used to pray: "God be merciful to me a sinner." The head border, which should be nearest the sick man's eye, and oftentimes read, had the sweetest texts of promise, love, and comfort.

"It was not long before a man sick with pneumonia was brought in, and we put our new quilt on his bed. He noticed nothing at first, he was too ill; but when he grew better, I saw him intent on the texts. 'Handy to have 'em here!' he said, pointing to them as I stood near him. 'You know how to value them, then?' I said, 'I do,' he answered, with heartiness."

"After that I saw many studying the quilt—almost all who lay beneath it. 'At last came the boy who had best right to the comfort of our Scripture-quilt—the son of whom the good woman who made it spoke in the note attached. It was a strange circumstance that he should have come to lie beneath it, but so it was.

"He had lain there senseless for more than a week, when I saw him kiss the patchwork. I thought he might be wandering, or, if not, had found a text of hope or consolation that seemed to suit his need, and marked with my eye the place he had kissed, to see what it was."

"It was no text, but a calico block, the pattern a little crimson leaf on the dark ground. He kept looking at it, tears in his eyes, and was almost sure his mind was wandering. Nay, he was most truly in his right mind, and his thoughts were at home with his mother. A bit of the gown he had so often seen her wear, had carried him back to her. He kissed it again. I approached him. He looked up, and smiled through his tears."

"Do you know where this quilt came from?" he asked. "Some good woman sent it to us through the Sanitary Commission." "You don't know her name nor where it came from?" "No; but I saved a note that was pinned to the quilt." "Would you be willing to let me see it sometime when it is convenient?" "Oh, yes. I'll get it now."

"I got it for him; his hand trembled and his lips grew white as he opened it and saw the writing. 'Please read it to me quite slowly,' he said, returning it. It is from my mother; shall you keep it?' 'Yes,' I answered, 'I value it very much, as also the quilt.' He put his hands over his eyes. I thought he wished to be alone, and left him. As I stood by his bed the next day, I was wondering if he had not seen his mother's texts, as well as the bit of her gown. He had, and pointed one out to me. It was, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son.' 'I am no more worthy,' he whispered. I put my finger on the next white block, and read aloud, 'When he was yet a great way off,' his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him."

"A few days after, when he had grown much stronger, he held up to me the text I had shown him; 'I was a great way off,' he said, 'but he met me, and had compassion on me.'"

"Shall I not write to your mother and tell her that her son who was dead is alive again; who was lost, is found? 'Will it not be too much trouble?' 'Oh, no; a pleasure instead.'"

"I wrote the blessed tidings, making the mother's heart rejoice. And now our scripture quilt was even dearer and more sacred than before."

A Wonder of Authorship.

The authorship of the bible is wonderful. Here are words written by kings, by emperors, by poets, by sages, by philosophers, by fishermen, by statesmen; by men learned in the wisdom of Egypt, educated in the schools of Babylon, trained up at the feet of rabbis in Jerusalem. It was written by men in exile, in the desert, in shepherd's tents, in "green pastures" and beside "still waters." Among its authors we find the tax-gatherer, the herdsman, the gatherer of sycamore fruit; we find poor men, rich men, statesmen, preachers, exiles, captains, legislators, judges; men of every grade and class are represented in this wonderful volume.

THE MOUNT OF OLIVES.

What a Traveller Told of that Historic and Beautiful Spot.

"At the present time," the traveller began by way of explanation, "all Palestine is at rest. Fields long untilled are being cultivated, railroads are being built, although very slowly, as things always go in Oriental lands; and the people—though they can never be happy under Moslem oppression—are enjoying some degree of prosperity. To the traveller in the Holy Land, the general aspect is that of a country where peace has long folded her wings. Yet no land on the wide earth has so many battlefields, or has been so often drenched with blood. And though all be quiet and eventful now, a time must come when war shall again ravage and desolate that beautiful country."

"That is the time foretold in the Bible, is it not?" interrupted Tom.

"Yes," was the reply. "You know that the prophet Ezekiel (chap. 38:) foretells a great war, which is to be followed by the return of the exiled Hebrews from distant lands where they are now scattered, to the home of their fathers. There are evidences at hand, even now, showing that these events cannot be very far off. In a most interesting article by the Rev. W. H. Daniels, who has just returned to England from Jerusalem, the writer calls the attention of the Christian world to the fact that, on the very summit of the Mount of Olives, which is to the scene of the second coming of Christ, a great stone tower 220 feet in height, has been erected by the Russian authorities. Mr. Daniels has inspected this singular structure (here is a picture of it which you can examine), and has come to the conclusion that it is too large for use as a church and was evidently designed to be a fortress and signal station in the event of a military campaign. It is visible from a great distance, and could therefore be used in directing the movements of land troops. The tower is built of stone, and has an iron stairway inside, with successive floors or platforms, at each of which the walls are pierced with slender windows. These windows might be used in war for rocket or torpedo service, or even for offensive operations. In any event, the tower would be a most effective point from which to direct military movements on a large scale. It overlooks the Valley of Jehoshaphat where, as revelation affirms, the great battle of Armageddon will be fought. From its lofty height, the sacred city can be seen spread out like a panorama."

"Is Russia a greater power in Palestine than other nations, except the Turks?" asked one of the group.

"I will answer you by giving what Mr. Daniels says about it. He writes: 'The prevailing impression in protestant missionary circles in the east, is that the Great Northern Bear (that's the Czar, you know), very much desires to put his huge paw upon this portion of Asia, for strategic as well as religious reasons. Palestine may be said to reach to the Suez canal, so, of course, England could not consent to a Russian protectorate over that country; and in the event of an effort on the part of Russia to capture it, of which there appears to be a plain prophecy, it may readily be believed that the Roman church would make common cause with Britain, and that all papal countries would unite to prevent the Holy places from falling into Muscovite hands. As between Russia and the Moslems, while the former is a Christian nation, its love of war and lust for power made it almost as much to be dreaded in Palestine as the latter. You remember that I once told you of the famous saying about Mohammed's armies, which passed into a proverb: 'Where the Moslem swept, grass never grew.' Russian supremacy in the East would be just as terrible in its effects. This tower, as Mr. Daniels points out, is erected on the summit of the Mount of Olives, and at the supposed spot of the ascension of our Lord to heaven. It has within it a monster bell, or tocsin, weighing twenty tons, cast in Russia, and dragged upon a strong carriage, brought for the purpose, by 3,000 or 4,000 Russians, principally women, all the way to the base of the tower. It is now fixed in the tower, together with a peal of seven smaller bells above it. Higher still is an electric chamber, with wires to all the monasteries and convents in the Holy Land. On its summit is an electric light, and it is said that when this great bell is tolled, it will be heard at Jaffa, Jericho, and Mount Lebanon. It is also said that the convents and monasteries are well supplied with arms, and that quantities of arms have recently been purchased around them."

"There are not only 40,000 Jews in Jerusalem," said Uncle John, in conclusion, "and I would think that the time of their general return cannot be very far off. Whether the great tocsin of the Tower on Mount Olivet will be then sound its war-peace or whether it will be a note of peace and good-will, time alone can show. We must wait patiently for the fulfilment of God's promises and the completion of his purpose."

Mr. Always-to-be-Depended-Upon.

He sets the blood running faster; he inspires one with his faith; he makes it so easy for one to do his duty; he gives services in Christ's vineyard about him meaning. There is an air of loyalty about him and that reminds you of our country and her flag. He is always on time, yet never in a hurry. He makes you feel that his word is better than his bond. He has such a good humor, a twinkle in his eye that says a merry heart doeth good like medicine. Nobody ever thinks of his failing to appear when announced. He fills so many gaps where others fail. Everybody votes him a success, and yet he is only a one-talent man.

Distracted Prayers.

We are all troubled with wandering thoughts in prayer-time, and how we have to struggle against them. A brother rises in prayer-meeting to lead in supplication. After he has begun the door slams, and you peep through your fingers to see who is coming in. You say to yourself, "What a blundering specimen!" But how long he keeps on! Wish he would stop! He prays for the world's conversion. I wonder how much he gives for it? There! I don't think I turned the gas down in the parlor. Wonder if Bridget has got home yet. Wonder if they have thought to take the cake out of the oven? or, "What a fool I

was to put my name on the back of that note! Ought to have sold those goods for cash, and not on credit!" and so you go on thinking over one thing after another until the gentleman says "Amen!" and you lift up your head, saying, "There! I haven't prayed a bit. I am not a Christian." Yes, you are, if you have resisted the tendency. Christ knows how much you have resisted, and how thoroughly you are diseased in sin, and he will pick out the one earnest petition from the rubbish, and answer it. To the very depth of his nature he sympathizes with the infirmity of distracted prayer-makers.

Messages of Help for the Week.

"Oh that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men! Let them exalt him also in the congregation of the people, and praise him in the assembly of the elders."

"I will arise and go to my father and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants." Luke 15: 18, 19.

"They shall prosper that love thee." Psalm, 122: 6.

"To them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not . . . he will come and save you." Isaiah, 35: 4.

"Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I." Matt., 18: 20.

"Many are called, but few are chosen." Matt., 22: 14.

"Let not the sun go down upon your wrath." Ephesians 4: 26.

The Art of Christian Living.

"Do you know," said a good old lady to Progress, "there is a little verse that has done more for me in the way of christian living than almost anything else. If you wait a minute I'll give it to you to give to your readers, for it can't but help others."

Here is the poem that helped the good old lady:

When you think, when you speak,
When you read, when you write,
When you sing, when you walk,
When you seek for delight,
To be kept from all evil at home and abroad
Live always as under the eye of the Lord.

Whatever you think, both in joy and in woe,
Think nothing you would not like Jesus to know;
Whatever you say, in a whisper or clear,
Say nothing you would not like Jesus to hear.

Whatever you write, in haste or with heed,
Write nothing you would not like Jesus to read;
Whatever you sing, in the midst of your grief,
Sing nothing that God's listening ear could displease.

Wherever you go, never go where you'd fear
God's question, if asked you, "What dost thou
here?"
Whatever the pasture in which you engage,
For the cheering of youth, or the solace of age,
Turn away from each pleasure you'd shrink from
pursuing,
Were God to look down and say, "What art thou
doing?"

In His Image.

We who are not of the earth need not be earthly;
God made our nature like His own—divine;
Nothing but selfishness can be unworthy
Of His pure image, meant to touch us to shine.
The death of death is, ourselves to smother
In our own pleasing sin; you'd shrink from
pursuing,
And live—eternal life to love each other;
Our souls with Christ in sacrifice to lit.

This is the beauty of our new-born morning;
In Him humanity may now arise
Out of the grave of self, all baseness scorning;
The holy radiance of his glorious eyes
Illumines every where uplifted faces;
Touches the earthly with a heavenly glow;
And in that blessed light all human graces
Unto divine beatitudes must grow.
—Lucy Larcom.

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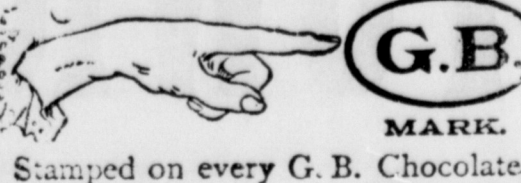
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A recent case is that as told by Mrs. M. A. Joy, of West Toronto Junction, whose little daughter Annie, aged 15 years, had been a sufferer from severe nervous depression for about two years. As with all mothers, no trouble and expense was spared in the effort to bring relief to the child. The little one suffered extreme pains in the head, so

distressing at times as to render her completely helpless, sapping all her strength. The best skill of the most skilled physicians was called into request, but little Annie steadily grew worse. Becoming more hopeless and discouraged as the weeks went by, Mrs. Joy decided on trying South American Nervine as almost a last resort. Employing her own words she said: "I determined to give it a trial, although I felt it was useless."

To-day it is all happiness around that home, for before one bottle of the medicine had been taken, the mother tells us Annie commenced to show decided signs of improvement. The child has taken three bottles and has practically regained her natural health and vigor. There is nothing surprising in the fact that Mrs. Joy cannot speak too highly of South American Nervine.

Much was at stake, but this wonderful discovery proved equal to the emergency, and so it does in every case. Thousands of letters on file from well-known citizens prove this. For nervous diseases of young or old, from whatever cause, it is an absolutely infallible cure.

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