

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;
That on his walls his Master's Face he kept
In every room wherein he wrought and slept.

When morning came and touched his sleeping eyes
That vision claimed his new-born energies;
He rose at once, then calmly knelt and prayed,
For guidance as he toiled through sun and shade.

Then, as he joined his loved ones at their meal,
Its holy influence still his soul did feel,
And heard its message speaking silently,
"Disciple, love these hearts as I love thee."

When at his desk he sat him down to pen,
Wise words of comfort to his fellow-men,
That Face looked down with sweet approving joy,
And blessed him in his generous employ.

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;
And in their looks he quickly learnt to trace
The smiling features of his Master's Face.

When jealous souls aspired to rob his fame,
And wreath his brow with diadem of shame,
He looked on Him who died without offence,
Then met his foes with silent innocence.

When'er to preach within the church he stood,
To win the wicked to the love of good,
He saw that Face, he heard the voice exclaim,
"Speak well and boldly in thy Master's name."

Thus stayed the vision through the gleaming light,
Nor vanished in the darkness of the night;
Rays of pure glory from his beauty beamed,
And Christ was with him when he slept and dreamed.

Death came at last in fair and friendly guise,
Upon that Face he looked with vast surprise;
For in his need the vision proved to be
A bright, eternal, glad reality.

O Face of Christ! I see thee dimly too,
Break through the shadows into fuller view;
Inspire me with a nobleness like Thine,
And teach me how to live the life Divine.

O Face of Christ! beam on me as I write,
Fill every thought with Thy most holy light,
So guide my hand that Thou may'st never see
A single word or deed unworthy Thee.

O Face of Christ! shine on me evermore,
That I may work and worship, and adore;
Then, when my little course on earth is run,
Shine brighter still and say, "My child, well done."

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. Many, perhaps even a majority of all true disciples, have not yet reached them; but they certainly lie on before, and in due time shall be reached by earnest and faithful souls if life be prolonged. Such a state of spiritual exaltation, illumination, and abiding peace, even amid all the conflicts and sorrows of this troubled world, is no dream of a fond pietism. It is a sublime reality, promised in explicit words by Christ Himself and witnessed to by the most eminent saints of all the Christian ages. The testimony of the most profound Christian experience—such, for example, as that of Paul and John, and that of the fathers, confessors, and holy men in every condition through the succeeding centuries, as found embodied in their writings especially in the admirable hymns that have come down to us—very clearly demonstrates this. So in the Living Church of to-day it is not difficult to find Christian men and women whose characters and lives impressively exemplify the maturity and richness of spiritual attainment which Bunyan's charming imagery so felicitously describes.

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. The thoughts and aims of life, as a whole, take form accordingly in all not utterly reckless. But how comparatively few so comprehend and forecast, at the start, what should be looked for as regards the regularly progressive unfolding of the *spiritual life*, according to the teachings of Christ and its own proper law! Does it not happen, in the case of by far too great a number, that, instead of this, its course is to a great extent left to the drift of accidental currents or to be determined by the casual circumstances which may happen to surround it. Is it any wonder that one who, when he has entered Christ's service, has before him no definite conception of what he ought to hope for and should earnestly set himself to reach—no ideal which daily fixes the eye of his faith, kindles his imagination, and baunts his soul with longings—fails to ascend in his Christian experience above the region of inward conflict and trouble? Is it strange that he does not attain such a degree of self-mastery, of superiority to the world and its entanglements, and such spiritual illumination and vital contact with God as would afford him an exalted and stable peace? It would seem that these questions, if well considered, reveal in no small part the reason why there is so much of half-developed and mediocre piety among those who make up the Visible Church of God; so limited a number who look for or ever reach the Delectable Mountains of the half-inspired Dreamer.

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. It is through these that each for himself must reach the exalted region in which the life of the soul with Christ is habitually sweet and peaceful, and the practical duties of godly living are most steadily and happily performed. The process need not be a long one. Undoubtedly, those who are most earnest, most filled with spiritual longings, and in mind and heart most receptive of the Divine Spirit and the inflowing life of Christ will soonest and with least difficulty attain those highest measures of faith and hope and love which are at once the foretaste of Heaven and the condition and essence of the highest active power in the service of Christ on earth.

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. We have all seen how the prayer of a few captives, wrongfully held in durance by some barbarous potentate, may move mighty nations and cause them to pour out millions of their treasure to send men and material of war over land and sea, to sacrifice hundreds of lives in order that a just and proper prayer may be answered. In such a case we see how the higher law overrides the lower, and may cause even frightful suffering and loss of life, in order that a moral or spiritual end may be gained. Are we to suppose, then, that the only Being in the universe who cannot answer prayer is that One who alone has all power at His command? The weak theology which professes to believe that prayer has merely a subjective benefit is infinitely less scientific than the action of the child who confidently appeals to a Father in heaven.—*Principal Dawson.*

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. All answers should be addressed to him; if they show disagreement, he can call for the opinions and suggestions of the class, and seeing that the truth is brought out, pass on to something else whenever he thinks best. The teacher should never permit a question involving a doubt concerning the inspiration of the Scriptures, or the fundamental doctrines of Christianity. The fact should be clearly announced that such questions are not in order—that it is because its members believe in these things that the class is convened for the study of the Word of God. If, then, anyone should persist in raising such questions, he must be stopped. Generally a plain word will effect this; but not always. But it must be stopped. Many a good Bible-class has been ruined by wrangling; and more than one young man has had the seeds of infidelity sown in his mind by discussions in Bible-classes concerning topics upon which no question ought ever to have been allowed.—*Meredith.*

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 the 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 embodied 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 uncomfited, 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 pathos, 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 seventeenth 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 disinterfered 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-v. 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? (Vss. 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? (Vss. 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 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

favoured 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 hadboasted of his superior faithfulness. *Simon.* The old and weaker name; notnow the "man of rock." *One hour.* So

short a period to watch, so long a time to suffer. Yet how gentle the re-

proof! *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.* Thethird 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, never-

theless, 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."

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.

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 grew.

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 went 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 strong 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.