

Sunday Reading.

He will Come.

"Therefore be ye also ready; for in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of Man cometh."—Matt. xxiv. 44.

"He will come, perhaps, at morning,
When to simply live is sweet;
When the arm is strong, unwearied
By the noonday toil and heat;
When the undimmed eye looks tearless
Up the shining heights of life,
And the eager soul is panting,
Yearning for some noble strife.

"He will come, perhaps, at noontide,
When the pulse of life throbs high,
When the fruits of toil are ripening,
And the harvest time is nigh,
Then through all the full-orbed splendor
Of the sun's meridian blaze,
There may shine the strange new beauty
Of the Lord's transfigured face.

"Or it may be in the evening—
Grave and sombre is the sky,
Clouds around the sunset gather,
Far and dark the shadows lie.
When we long for rest and slumber
And some tender thoughts of home
Fill the heart with vague, sad yearning,
Then, perhaps, the Lord will come.

"If he only finds us ready
In the morning's happy light,
In the strong and fiery noontide,
Or the coming of the night—
If he only finds us waiting,
Listening for his sudden call,
Then his coming when we think not
Is the sweetest hope of all."
—Bible Banner.

For My Sake.

BY THEODORE L. CUYLER, D. D.

"For my sake." These three little words are the touchstone of love. The application of this touchstone begins with infancy, and ends only with the end of life. If that baby in the mother's arms could speak intelligibly, it would say:

"It is for my sake that a mother's eye watches unsleeping through the midnight hours, and her arms hold me until they are ready to drop off for weariness."

"For my sake" many a successful man acknowledges gratefully that his parents toiled and economized in order to buy books and pay college bills. "For my sake" provides the sheltering roof and the arm-chair for dear old grandma at the fire-side. Take these three words out of our language, and you would rob home of its sweetness, and human life of some of its noblest inspirations.

Our divine Master made these words the text of several of his most impressive injunctions. "Whoever shall lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it." To newly converted Saul of Tarsus the first message is: "I will show him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake." Again and again the early disciples were exhorted to bear crosses bravely for Jesus' sake. Christ came into this world to save us from our sins, and chiefly to save us from the abominable and damning sin of selfishness. The one motive that has the power to lift us out of self, and to exalt life to its highest and holiest phase, is heart-love for a crucified Saviour. "Love Me more than houses or lands, or wife or children," is the first condition of discipleship. No soul is truly converted until it cuts loose from self-righteousness and accepts Jesus Christ as the only ground of salvation. Conversion signifies that self has grounded its arms in its very citadel, and has surrendered the keys of the heart to the conquering Saviour. Henceforth it inscribes, "for Christ's sake" on its banner. The shortest and most comprehensive confession of faith that any Christian can phrase is about in these words: "It is Christ's business to save me; it is my business to serve Christ."

"Saviour, teach me day by day
Love's sweet lesson to obey;
Sweeter lesson cannot be,
Loving him who first loved me."

The Master never allowed the supreme test of loyalty to himself to be a mere emotion, however fervid. It was a practical test. "If ye love me, keep my commandments." Write these decisive words upon the walls of every prayer-room, to rebuke the rant and the rhapsodies in which too many windy professors indulge, while their honest debts remain unpaid, and their own children sneer at the pious sham. It is not how many promises we make, but how many commandments we obey; it is not how many tears we shed, but how many sins we renounce; it is not how many sacra-

ments we observe, but how many deeds we do for the Master's sake that decides the genuineness of our Christianity. Evermore is the eye of our loving Saviour upon us, and evermore is that voice saying unto us: "Live for Me. Take up this cross for my sake." When we are sore tempted to an act of retaliation, or to some sharp scheme that selfishness has varnished over with falsehood, that rebuking voice accosts us: "Would me not in the house of my friends." Sometimes a suffering servant of Jesus comes to us for a proof of sympathy that costs more than smooth words. Selfishness begins to mutter about "impostors" and "no end to these calls of Charity." But He who died for both of us whispers gently: "Do it unto Me. He is one of my suffering children. Help him for my sake." There is not a negro freedman who solicits aid for his struggling church or a hungry stranger who knocks at our door for bread; there is not a poor widow that asks for a dollar to pay her rent, or a neglected child running in rags and recklessness to ruin for want of a friend, but ever the same voice is saying to us: "Give to them for My sake. Inasmuch as ye do it unto one of the least of these ye do it unto Me."

One of the little orphan boys in John Falk's German Charity School repeated at the supper table their usual grace: "Come, Lord Jesus, be our guest, and bless the food thou hast provided." A lad looked up, and said: "Tell us, teacher, why the Lord Jesus never comes."

"Dear child, only believe, and you may be sure that He will come to us some of these times, for he always hears us." "Then," replied the bright lad, "I'll set a chair for Him," and he put one by the table. By and by a knock was heard at the door. A poor travelling apprentice was admitted, and asked for food and lodging. The little fellow looked at the stranger a few moments, and then piped out: "Ah I see! Jesus could not come to-night, and so he sent this poor young man in his place. Is that the way, teacher?" "Yes, my boy that is just it. Every cup of water or bit of bread we give to the poor and hungry for Jesus' sake, we give to Him. Inasmuch as we do it to the least of our brethren, we do it unto our Saviour."

There are a thousand applications of this principle of self-denial for Christ's sake. Grand old Paul had it in his mind when he wrote: "It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine or anything whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is made weak." It is not easy for a true Christian to keep a bottle on his table. They do not harmonize. The bottle means temptation. The text means that things which are not always sinful, *per se*, should be cheerfully given up for the sake of others; and the legal liberty of the man or woman whose heart is in the right place will never be exercised when a moral evil may flow from such exercise. We have no right to put a stumbling-block in the path of others. As a Christian I am bound to surrender every self-indulgence which works directly against the best interests of my fellow-men, especially if it endangers precious souls for whom Jesus died. This principle gives to the doctrine of total abstinence from intoxicants a broad Bible basis as solid as the Hudson 'Palisades' on which I am now writing.

The two unanswerable arguments against the drinking usages are these: An alcoholic beverage endangers me if I tamper with it; it endangers my fellow-man if I offer it to him. My Bible teaches me to let it alone for the sake of the 'weak' and those who stumble. Ah, those stumblers! How many wrecks the word reveals! How many tombs it opens, whose charitable turf hides out of sight what surviving kindred would love to hide from memory! For Jesus' sake, and for the sake of the easily tempted, who will hide behind our example, let us who call ourselves Christians put away this bottled devil, which conceals damnation under its ruby glow. This subject of self-surrender for Jesus' sake is as wide as the domain of Christian duty. To live for Christ is the sweetest and holiest life we can live; to live for self is the most wretched. Every burden becomes a blessing, every sacrifice becomes sacred and sublime, the moment that our Lord and Redeemer writes on it, "For my sake."—*The Independent*.

The Christian Minister as a Pastor.

By R. S. MACARTHUR, D. D., CALVARY BAPTIST CHURCH, N. Y.

The pastor must also be spiritual. This is first, second and third. This characteristic of the pastor must never be absent. The man is more than the sermon, more than the pastor. Christ must speak through His lips, and look through His eyes. This life must be hid with Christ in God. He may not always talk directly on religious subjects; in our modern time boarding house, or because of some family reason, it may be impossible to have prayer in the family. But a gentle, loving word can be spoken for Christ. The child may be kindly remembered; a passage of Scripture may be repeated which shall come like the benediction of heaven upon weary and troubled hearts. If Christ, the Rose of Sharon, be in the heart, the perfume of His presence will fill all the atmosphere in which we move.

The office which has been filled by the laborious Peter, the majestic Paul, and the seraphic John, and by scores of the noblest men who have ever blessed the world with their presence; the office which to-day is filled by some of the best men beneath God's stars, needs no vindication from me. God honors us let us be true to our calling and to our Lord. There is no nobler motto than this: "Whosoever saveth his life shall lose it; and whosoever shall lose his life for My sake shall find it."—*Pulpit Treasury*.

Heavenly Welcome.

BY J. HUNT COOKE.

'Twas on a Sunday evening, when the day's services were over, that once a Christian man who thought he had attained, dreamed a dream which yet was more than a dream. It seemed to him that his last hour on earth had come, and as he felt the world was gliding from him, he called on Christ for help. Full earnestly, though not for the first time, he put forth the prayer, "Lord, remember me when Thou comest in Thy kingdom." Unnoticed by his friends around, save by the heavenly light that seemed to play upon his dying countenance, he heard the words, "This day thou shalt be with me in Paradise." And on a sudden he found himself just entering within the mighty gates of pearl. An angel standing there in full, clear tones announced his name, so that all throughout the city might know another one of Christ's redeemed ones had arrived safely. Before him was a golden pathway, like that seen on a summer's evening on a calm sea, towards the setting sun. It led on towards the throne, and there in the distance he saw Christ at the central point of glory and hastened to his Lord. Through the same gate many from earth were entering, and continuously their names were sounded forth. In response to the angelic voices, numbers came from out the many mansions to greet their friends from earth; especially those who had been called to seek the holy city by the messages of those who had at length reached home. A mother entered, and some much-loved children who had gone before came in all their heavenly beauty and prosperity to meet her at the gate, eager to thank her for a mother's love and mother's prayers, and to lead her to the throne. A minister of Christ came in, and some of many ranks in all their fulness of joy came forward to hail his arrival and recall his earnest words and show their effect. Then he saw one who had been a feeble young girl, and whom he had often checked for her zeal in collecting for the Lord in times that were passed, but as she entered souls from several climes came forward to bid her welcome, and informed her that in celestial insight it was to her that the agency for their salvation was traced, as she had gained the money which supplied the means by which they had received the Gospel. An aged saint came in, who had deemed her life useless for Christ, but one very bright and glorious spirit came, with deep, strong gratitude, and reminded her how her example, and her kind invitation, on a Sabbath-day long ago, had induced him to attend the sanctuary where he had found the Lord. Then came a

Sunday-school teacher, and round him gathered a troop of bright young spirits, who spoke of earnest patience, and loving teaching, which became the seeds of holy lives, and glory was the fruit; and so they clung around him, and led him onwards with joyous songs as together they advanced to the throne. As the dreamer beheld this he looked right and left for some souls to bid him welcome, but there were none. Alone he walked the golden pavement, for his Lord was waiting to receive him, although he was about to stand in His presence, without the added unselfish joy of having led others to Jesus Christ. In his dream the thought was sad, so sad that it dimmed the glory and he awoke. And then on bended knee, with humbled heart, he earnestly prayed that since the Lord had done all that was necessary to present him faultless before the presence of His glory, he might devote some of the energy thus freed from considerations of self to considerations of the salvation of others; and made a firm resolve that in some way he would so live as to point others to the Saviour, if haply he might be the agency, through Divine grace, of directing some in the path that leads to eternal glory that they might welcome him there.

Victory and Defeat.

Despair is the devil's best ally, and discouragement is the traitor who oftenest opens the door to it. A disheartened man is always a weak man; he has not only lost courage for the moment, but he has begun to doubt the possibility of victory; he is ready to accept defeat as a foregone conclusion. Instead of searching out the sources of his weakness in his own character, he is beginning to discover them in his inheritance; to feel that he was doomed to defeat before he came upon the field of struggle, and that he can do nothing to avert a fate already decreed for him.

This is the hour of supreme peril; this is of all temptations the most insidious and dangerous; it is a veritable whisper from the devil, and should be put aside with the same horror with which a healthy mind would thrust aside the thought of suicide. The universe is a universe of hope for all who do right; the condition to-day is as simple and as imperative as in the days when Moses and Joshua declared it to the people whom they led—if obedient, to certain victory; if disobedient, to inevitable defeat. A good man may have heavy burdens laid upon him and many calamities to sadden him; his path may be hedged about with difficulties and beset with dangers; but if he stands true to the line of right-living it will surely lead him to the conquest of himself and his surroundings. There is no promise that fidelity will secure exemption from sorrow, release from care, rest from trial; but these things have in them no root of despair if they are rightly borne; on the contrary, they bring forth in due season the fruits of the Spirit. Calamity, burdens, cares, are healing medicines to a heart willing to be helped by them; despair is a poison which consumes vitality, destroys hope, saps the strength, and finally brings on the paralysis of moral death.

If you are beginning to despair of ever emerging from the clouds that overshadow you, search your life for the sin that is devouring that immortal assurance of victory given to every soul that will serve God by obedience to His law; look for the causes of your defeat not in your inheritance, nor in your surroundings, but in yourself. Victory lies within reach of every true life; at all costs set yourself to win it.

Doing nothing Wrong.

Mr. Spurgeon once said to his people, "Many church members think that if they do nothing wrong and make no trouble, they are all right. Not at all, sir; not at all. Here is a chariot and we are all engaged to drag it. Some of you do not put out your hands to pull; well, then, the rest of us have to labor so much the more, and the worst of it is, we have to draw you also. While you do not add to the strength which draws, you increase the weight that is to be drawn. It is all very well for you to say, 'I do not hinder.' You do hinder, and you cannot help hindering.

If a man's leg does not help him in walking, it certainly hinders him. Oh, I cannot bear to think of it. That I should be a hindrance to my own soul's growth is bad indeed; but that I should stand in the way of the people of God and cool their courage and dampen their ardor—my Master, let it never be! Sooner let me sleep among the clouds of the valley than be a hindrance to the meaneast work that is done for thy name."

Direct Prayers.

The late Dr. James Hamilton had a capital illustration of how general prayers and 'oblique sermons' fail to satisfy the soul in the emergencies of life. A Scotchman who had but one prayer, was asked by his wife to pray by the bedside of their dying child. The goodman struck out on the old track, and soon came to the usual petition for the Jews. As he went on with the time-honored quotation, "Lord, turn again the captivity of Zion," his wife broke in, saying, "Eh! mon, you're aye drawn out for the Jews; but it's our bairn that's deirin." Then clasping her hands, she cried, "Lord, help us, or give us back our darling, if it be thy holy will; and if he is to be taken, oh, take him to thyself." That woman knew how to pray, which was more than her husband did. An 'oblique sermon' is not a prayer. If persons who lead in prayer had as vivid a conception of what they want, and as earnest a desire to get it as this poor woman, would there be so many complaints about long prayers as we hear?—*Observer*.

A Summer Evening Prayer-meeting; or, count them all.

It did look like a small prayer-meeting, dear discouraged pastor, but did you count them all that Wednesday evening? Perhaps there were more present than you thought. Not more than a dozen, do you say, while you could count several dozens, who ought to have been there? Yes, and it was a great pity about those absent ones who could have come as well as not, or by making some smaller or greater effort, or even sacrifice. They lost a great deal. It must be they would have made greater exertion to get there had they known we were having so great and good a meeting.

Oh, yes, there were more than a dozen there, good pastor. You are forgetting some. You noticed Deacon Z. and his wife, and Deacon X., and Mr. Y. and his small boy, and old Aunt W., and Widow V., and little May, who played the organ, and that big boy Tom who loves to sing so well, and those two young ladies who sang a little and giggled a little, and the two young gentlemen who came because the ladies did. To be sure, just a baker's dozen. You looked correctly through your spectacles.

But sister U. was there, i. e., all herself, was there, although her body was reclining at home in her invalid chair, with a broken limb; and she looked so happy all the time, and said with a beaming smile, "How aimable are Thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts." And sister T., half paralyzed who long ago forgot that she had neighbours and friends, heard the singing, and started with recognition, saying in her broken way, "Blessed are the people that know the joyful sound; they shall walk, O Lord, in the light of Thy countenance." She couldn't stay long; I suppose you didn't notice her. Then Mr. S. and his wife, both suffering from rheumatism, went in heart, the dear woman saying gently, "A day in Thy courts is better than a thousand"; while the old gentleman exclaimed earnestly "I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than to dwell in the tents of wickedness." And young sister R. who has the spinal complaint, sent her yearning, prayerful spirit, which was more at home in the prayer-room than anywhere else, and she said, "Blessed are they that dwell in Thy house, they will be still praising Thee." And sister Q. who has the care of a sick parent, whom she lifted and turned fourteen times that evening, dropped in a few minutes with the longing refrain, "Thine altars, Thine altars, O Lord of hosts, my King and my God."

Many more came in spirit, among whom were groups of the aged and the weakly, saying as they entered, "We

took sweet counsel together, we walked to the house of God in company." A host of mothers taking care of their little children at home, thought over who would be at the meeting. "As well the singers as the players on instruments, shall be there;" and after their babies had said "Now I lay me, those tired Christians stole in spirit to the meeting for a brief minute, repeating, "My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth; for the courts of the Lord."

And did not those blessed ones who used to gather gladly to that place of prayer, who now walk in white on the heavenly heights, come to that Wednesday meeting? What more natural and reasonable? That was the time that "heaven came down our souls to greet;" and—really, dear minister, didn't you count those visitors? They sung old "Coronation" in a way we never heard it sung by earthly voices, and said, "We serve Him day and night in His temple," adding for our comfort—"Though sundered far, by faith we meet Around one common Mercy seat. Yes, they must have been near, because near to our Saviour. We thought we had kissed them that 'good night,' but we met them that eve at the feet of Jesus."

Certainly, Jesus was there. You knew it, pastor, and we saw that you recognised Him by the glance of your eye, the thrill of your voice, and the tenderness of your prayer. We wish you had just mentioned His presence for the benefit of some of those who appeared not to think of it, nor count Him in. And it would do us all good to be reminded at every meeting of that loving, sure Presence, and be bidden to listen to his greeting. "Verily, where two or three are met in My name, there am I in the midst." He always goes, and that is a full meeting where He is, for He is a host in Himself. We will try and never be discouraged again, even if the number looks small, but begin to make our count and get our comfort. "Lo, I am with you all the days," He said as we went out. We wish now we had spoken more of Him and to Him, and laid before Him more of our souls' needs. Next time we will welcome Him with beatitudes. "Let My beloved come into His garden and eat His pleasant fruits." "Blessed is the man whose strength is in Thee." "O Lord of hosts, blessed is the man that trusteth in Thee."—*Freeman*.

Keep up, Christians.

As I was riding along in the south of France, one day, I saw a pair of fine birds overhead. The driver called out in the French tongue, "Eagles!" Yes; and there was a man below with a gun, who was wishing to get a nearer acquaintance with the eagles; but they did not come down to oblige him. He pointed his rifle at them, but his shots did not reach half way, for the royal birds kept above. The higher air is the fit dominion for eagles. Up there is the eagle's playground, where he plays with the lightnings. Up above the smoke and clouds he dwells. Keep there, eagles, keep there. If men can get within range they mean no good to you. Keep up, Christians! Keep up in the higher element, resting in Jesus Christ, and do not come down to find a perch for yourself among the trees of philosophy.—*Rev. C. H. Spurgeon*.

LYMAN BEECHER'S ILLUSTRATION.—"Young gentlemen," said Dr. Beecher, pausing in the midst of a lecture on the Divine Decrees, and raising his spectacles over his forehead in a way he had when some extemporaneous thought struck him. "Theology is a mighty deep. It has its calms and its storms, its joys and its dangers. And many weak souls and some strong ones are wrecked because they venture too far without taking the proper bearings. I go out myself, sometimes, but I try to be careful. I walk along the shore and pick out some sturdy old stump of a doctrine, which has stood there firmly for a thousand of years and never pulled out. I make fast to that, and so, when I miss my footing I haul on the line. I don't know where I am, but I know where that stump is. I settled that point before I started." (Extracts from Student's Note-Book, Lane Seminary, 1842.)—*C.E.L. in Observer*.

Bishop Keener said to the ladies of a church in Tennessee, who had raised missionary money by a supper, "If you can't give money to save the soul of a heathen, without eating oysters and ice-cream, keep your money." And he said truly—there was no sacrifice in all that, but a pleasure to see how much they could make out of the worldly men.

Count the drops of water in the ocean and then multiply them into each other by all the grains of sand upon the seashore, and then, O man, thou hast not a measure of Eternity!