Sunday Reading.

For the Christian Messenger.

The Aged Pilgrim's Song.*

"For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand."

I am just at the close of my journey,
I stand at the end of the way,
Voices call me wherever I turn me,
To be ready to go "any day."

The journey has been rough and dreary,
Often filling my heart with dismay,
And desolate lonely and weary,
I was ready to faint "any day."

But thine arm, O Jehovah, was round me,
Thou has been both my Strength and my Stay,
Neither sorrow nor sin could confound me,
I could count on thy help "any day."

In the days of my youth thou didst call me,
And thy love and compassion display,
And though oft Satan's power would appal me,
I could triumph through grace "any day."

As I look back upon the dark mazes,
Through which I have threaded my way,
My soul gushes forth in loud praises,
And I'm ready to go "any day."

Oft the waves of affliction rolled o'er me,
And death called my loved-ones away,
But the angel of light stood before me—
I may meet them again "any day."

I have sought neither riches nor pleasure,
Since so brief would on earth be my stay;
But I strove to serve Thee in my measure,
And be ready to leave "any day."

Alas! I have failed, Oh how sadly;
E'en striving to *work*, *watch*, and *pray*:
I will cast away all my works gladly,
Rest on Thee, and depart "any day."

While earth has been dark and unsightly,
And storm-clouds have shrouded the way,
The Sun above all has shone brightly,
To break forth in light "any day."

Now calm on the bank of the river,
I gaze at the bright shining way,
I wait without shudder or shiver,
For the word to pass on "any day."

O blessed Redeemer, my Saviour,
Thou hast led me and fed, all the way;
I weep o'er my own sad behaviour,
But call me, I'll come "any day."

On earth a poor pilgrim and stranger,
I have been, and I ask not to stay;
By thy grace I've escaped every danger.
And wait to depart "any day.

Sweet voices of those gone before me,
Are calling from "over the way,"
Blest Saviour, I love, I adore Thee,
O Come: take me home, "any day."

*Written at the request of an aged Christian friend, who feels that his work is about done, and that he is ready to depart "any day." It was his particular desire that the words — *any day* — might conclude each stanza. S. T. R.

The Rival Choirs.

BY J. HUNT COOKE.

Once, in the Temple of Glory, two white robed golden harped choirs were selected for a contest as to which should sing the sweetest songs. The one was gathered from souls whose lives on earth had been unusually prosperous and smooth—men and women who had known few losses and but little sorrow. The other choir was of souls who had come out of great tribulation, some whose lives had passed from sorrow to sorrow, poor, tried, and afflicted all the way through. The one choir praised God in jubilant strains for a happy earthly course, that they had been saved from temptation to murmuring, that they had been able all the way along to praise God with joyfulness and gladness of heart, and they were sure that to the Divine ear the voice of gratitude was sweet and good. The other choir told of delivering grace, they asserted that pleasure was sweeter after pain, that the memories of a bitter life imparted an indescribable sweetness to the bliss of heaven, for it is ever to the weary that rest is most precious. As they sang alternately they drew nearer to each other, till at length they blended. And then a fuller and far sweeter new song arose, as they agreed that to each one God had given just that position most needful for the life of their souls, that He in wisdom infinite, and in love if possible still more infinite, had led each one by the right way to bring them to the City of Habitation.

Faith in God should lead not only to resignation, but to acquiescence. His ways are always right—right in darkness as well as in light, right in shadow as well as in sunshine, right in disappointment as well as in joy, right in sickness as well as in health, right when He takes away as well as when He gives, right in life, right in death, right for eternity. The believer's highest praise is that given in affliction. Like the lark, he sings in the sunshine soaring heavenward, but his sweetest song is like that of the nightingale after the sun has set and darkness is creeping over the prospect.

Jesus Enthroned.

BY J. HUNT COOKE.

In the New Testament the chief theme of the Gospels is a suffering Christ; of the Epistles, a risen Christ; and of the Apocalypse an enthroned Christ. The last words seem to be that He who suffered and died has not only risen but entered into His glory. It is the crowning thought of the Christian that Jesus is now seated on His Divine eternal throne.

It is the crowning thought of faith. The belief that brings salvation is not the acceptance of a creed, the apprehension of an opinion, or dependence on an election. It is reliance on a person. Redemption comes through faith on the Lord Jesus Christ. And when He is thought of as seated on a throne of infinite power, with all might and dominion under his control, questioning and doubts are dispersed. His will is evidenced in His promise, His power in His position. The occupant of the throne of heaven can neither deceive nor fail.

It is the crowning thought of holiness. The Holy Spirit convicts of righteousness, said the Saviour, "Because I go unto My Father." The life that obtains the greatest reward must be the noblest. Jesus Christ is highest in heavenly glory, therefore He must have been highest in earthly righteousness. The truest conception of holiness, then, is found in the imitation of Jesus—His life the pattern, His love the power, and His glory the impulse.

It is the crowning thought of love. Love has reference to another, not to self. Affection for Christ has regard to His condition, not our own. Not alone from what benefit we receive, but for His sake there should be joy at the happiness of Christ. True love delights in the well-being of others. True love for Christ calls forth emotions of pleasure that He has passed away for ever from the Cross and the shame. He is at rest, and has entered into eternal bliss. "If ye loved Me;" said He, "ye would rejoice, because I said I go unto My Father."

It is the crowning thought of peace. "In the world," said the Lord, "ye shall have tribulation; in Me ye have peace." The vexation of disappointment, the sting of anxiety, the burden of affliction, the irritation of the course of events, are all removed when the thought is once fully grasped that Christ rules over all. However apparent the confusion, there must be a wise plan; however great the tribulation, it is lovingly sent; however triumphant the forces of evil, all must be working together for good. The loving Lord knows well what He is about, and ever from the throne comes the still small voice, "What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter."

It is the crowning thought of hope. It opens before the mind a vista of eternal blessedness inconceivable. Language could not utter the wealth of anticipation when it is remembered that He who said, "I go to prepare a place for you," went to a throne of infinite glory, even if thought could attain unto it. The silence of Scripture as to the future condition of the blessed gives birth to wondrous hope. The provision for eternal desires, the supply of new streams of joy, the removal of all sorrow is to be the work of an enthroned Friend. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them into living fountains of waters, and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.

It is the crowning thought of decision. The invitation of a monarch cancels all other engagements, and demands immediate attention. If the King speaks, every other consideration should be laid aside and the precept be at once obeyed. That He has spoken in words of loving entreaty rather than of severe authority increases the importance of unhesitating obedience. When He commands He gives power to obey. He calls for absolute and loving submission, not only as a crucified Saviour, not only as a wise teacher, not only as a loving friend, but as an enthroned king, whose authority none, but at fearful peril, may dare to question

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The benign influence of a hallowed Sabbath will diffuse itself along the week, will sweeten the atmosphere of your home, and tell its tale of blessing in domestic harmony and growing indoor comfort. It will send you with elastic step and a clear calm head, with peaceful conscience and unruffled temper, to your Monday morning's employ. It will keep a sharp thorn out of your dying pillow; and if it lead you to the tomb of a risen Saviour, will more than reconcile you to your own.—*James Hamilton, D. D.*

Whatever our social or business relations may be, we have other and higher interests. We may be gaining the whole world, or all that may be desirable in the world, but if we are neglecting our souls, what shall it profit us? *Bishop Huntington.*

For the Christian Messenger.

Fundamental Truths of Christianity.

LUTHARDT'S APOLOGETICAL DISCOURSES.

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

TENTH DISCOURSE.

THE PERSON OF JESUS CHRIST.

IV.

(Continued.)

We need not lament that we know so little of the youth of Jesus and of his inner developement. We know enough. And what we know of the period of his silence, is in one word the meekness which specially comes before us in the picture which the few words of the historic narration place before us.

And this is also the most remarkable feature of his picture in the time of his public working.

He comes to the Baptizer, to be baptized of him like every one else, at the opening of the kingdom of heaven, although he knew that he was the introducer of that kingdom. The Baptizer declines to perform the act and desires rather baptism from Him as the greatest and Highest, whose sandals he was not worthy to unlose; but Jesus bids him perform the rite: suffer it to be so, for it becomes us to fulfil all righteousness. A wonderful attestation, it is related, the Father gives the Son at his baptism. Jesus ascends silently from the water and goes into the solitary wilderness. There he underwent mysterious temptations, and after he therein proves his unselfish obedience to his calling, he returns to the neighborhood of the baptizer going silently on his way. Certain disciples of John follow him. "Come and see!" is his entire word. But the impression of his personality upon them bound them to him for life. He returns to his home, he attends the marriage in Cana—in all that he does and says we see the humble reserve which proceeds step by step on the way on which God bids him go, and he patiently expects that his active working would more and more unfold and widen—till the growing commotion which his words and deeds, which his entire manifestation created, should lead to him multitudes from ever greater distances, and so gradually produce a religious awakening, which should fill the bounds of Israel. but soon also should more and more call out and increase the enmity of his foes.

His life was a wandering one full of unrest and privation, a life of labor full of wearing activity.

So it appears to us immediately at the beginning of his Galilean ministry. He departed from Nazareth to Capernaum, which he made the central point of his labors. He had taught by the way; attended by crowds of the people he comes to the shore of the Galilean sea; he enters a boat to withdraw from the crowd and from this also to teach; he summons disciples to his following, he goes into the synagogue, teaches and heals amid great excitement of the people; he enters the house of Peter's mother-in-law and frees her from her fever; in the evening, after the Sabbath was over, they bring to him from all parts the sick and the possessed of devils, and he is busy far into the night in delivering them; before the break of day he retires to a solitary place to pray; but even there also they seek him. Thus began he his ministry in Capernaum, thus it was continued in other places, and more than once the evangelist informs us, they allowed him not even time to eat, and he appeared so occupied with labor, that it was felt he would have to be restrained, for it was feared he was beside himself. (Mark iii, 21).

Such was the beginning of his Galilean ministry. And such was it weeks and months together for more than a year. The gospels furnish us with sufficient divisional points to enable us to construct a picture of his Galilean work. It was outwardly and inwardly a busy and wearing activity which he exercised. But if we inquire as to the soul of this authority, we shall be obliged to say: it is a Saviour's life that is portrayed to us, a life devoted to the poor and sick, the forsaken and despised, a life of devotion to the unhappy, that he might take from them the sorrow of life and above all the anguish of their souls. Sinners and publicans, the mourning and weeping ones—these are they whose society he sought. To the afflicted he brings his comfort, and he calls the weary and heavy to him that he might give them rest. It is the spirit of compassionate love and of benevolent gentleness which constitutes the soul of his doing and living. The Old Testament relates to us a revelation which the prophet Elijah had (2 Kings xix. 11 sq.): "And behold the Lord passed by, and there was a mighty wind which rent the mountains and broke the rocks in pieces before the Lord; but the Lord was not in the wind. After the wind came an earthquake; but the Lord was not in the earthquake. And after the earthquake came a fire; but the Lord was not in the fire. And after the fire came a still small voice. When Elijah heard this he covered his face." This was God in Christ.

If ever love was seen on earth it was in Jesus Christ, in the form of gentleness and meekness. But over this gentle form of the sinner's Saviour there was yet poured a lustre of majesty which involuntarily brings us on our knees before him. Who can consider him in his quiet course without discerning in him the secret of veiled majesty which gave luminousness to all he said and did? And especially in his deep humiliation.

And his love was rewarded with the death of a criminal on the cross. After he had done good to all in his life, he goes out of life with the crown of thorns upon his head. Three and thirty years old was he when he died—and what a death! Whatever human hatred could invent to produce woe was here brought into requisition. And Jesus was not an unfeeling Stoic who could look down with proud contempt upon suffering and upon the men who inflicted it. He felt it all in his deepest soul. The greater his love, so much more did he feel it, that his people whom he came to redeem, ungratefully rejected him. We can read nothing more easily comprehended than the plain, simple, unadorned accounts of the evangelists of the last hours of Jesus. Almost indifferently they relate successive events, without a remark which betrays the emotion of their souls. Yet no account is more deeply affecting.

It is not they who speak to us in this account, but only the fact. And how does the fact speak! It is not an ordinary human sorrow that we here behold. What we see and hear in Gethsemane and on the cross, that summons us to discern a deeper mystery. It is an inner struggle of his soul with God that we believe we see, it is a matter of the invisible world that shines through the veil of the visible transaction. We feel it: here a great and deeply mysterious fact of history is accomplished. It is the expiatory offering that we behold.

Amid all these sorrows, which break over him, he remains the same. The meek composure with which he receives what malice had invented, and the forgiving love with which he repays hatred meet us here as in his life. That made the traitor tremble, this converted the thief. And from all there shone such a mighty lustre of quiet greatness and majesty, that even the heathen officer broke forth in the confession: truly this was the Son of God! And indeed we are compelled to say: here is more than a philosopher, here is more than a martyr here is more than a man. The mystery of his sorrow and death is opened to us through the mystery of his Person.

His Person is a marvel. We should be obliged to say this if we knew only the life of his active service and nothing of his origin. That union of meekness and majesty, which gives an incomparable impress to his whole manner, the quiet power of his love, which makes his life a revelation of the heart of God—all this is only the phenomenon of the sanctity which gives moral character to his Person and to his being. Of this sacred purity of his being we all get the strongest, most irresistible impression. If every thing else be denied him, this must be admitted. The question of Jesus: Which of you convinceth me of sin?—it remains through all times and is to day still without answer.

The portrait of Jesus is that of the highest and purest harmony both of natural and moral being.

In all other men there is a disharmony of the inner life. The two poles of the intellectual life, knowledge and feeling, head and heart; the two powers of the moral life, thought and will—in whom are they in harmony? On the contrary in Jesus we all have this living impression: here reigns the complete harmony of the inner intellectual life. His soul is the home of absolute peace. As we could not think of him as having some single faculty of the mind predominant and another on the contrary deficient, but must regard him in his inner mental capacity and constitution as completely symmetrical, so must we also think as regards the complete mental and spiritual activity of his life. It is one completely rounded, harmonious human life. He is all love, all heart, all feeling, and still again is he all spirit, all purity and loftiness of spirit. Feeling and thought are inseparably united in him. And in all there reigns the greatest vivacity—of feeling and sensibility, of thought and action of the will; and still the vivacity of his inner life is never a passionate excitement; it is all quiet greatness, peaceful simplicity, lofty harmony.

This is the picture which we all behold in the description given of him in the Gospels, and of which we are all compelled to say: indeed, such was he, he could not have been otherwise. But herein is reflected the moral harmony of his being. It was only because in Jesus there was nothing of the moral disharmony which pervades the inner world of us all, that his mental and spiritual life was so harmonious and full of peace. Jesus stood in complete harmony with himself, because he stood in complete harmony with God.

There was also his continually present consciousness. He knew himself to be in absolute fellowship with the Father. In all others, in the most pious and holy men the consciousness of fellowship with God had always and everywhere a consciousness of sin in the background; and in the supposition of the consciousness even of expiated and forgiven sin there was still the consciousness of sin. With Jesus this was not the case. His was a pure, unconditioned consciousness of communion with God. Jesus stood in continual intercourse by prayer with his Father, his whole life was a life of prayer; but he never prayed for the forgiveness of sin. He taught us thus to pray: Forgive us our trespasses;—He did not thus pray himself, it was not necessary for him to do so—and of all those born of women, of him only could this be said. He knew of no partition-wall between himself and his Father. His soul, his thought and will were continually and completely in that in which his Father's were. But how is it possible for a man, descended from sinful men, to be so free from the general moral law of all mortals? But the law does not stand related to him as to other men. His origin was altogether different from that of the remaining children of men. His being transcends the bounds of the merely human. His entire moral manifestation demands this.

His miracles teach the same lesson. The gospels relate to us many of his miracles. They exceed every ordinary measure of might and dominion which the human mind might exercise in other respects over nature. We need not be familiar with the whole circle of the hidden laws and forces of nature in order to know that what we here read about are miracles. Through no natural power can man turn water into wine, or by a simple word give sight to the blind, hearing to the deaf, speech to the dumb, cleansing to the leper, or life to the dead. But Jesus wrought these miracles as if they were natural to him. They are not the works of strained exertion, but of free might. An attempt has been made to put them beyond his life, to remove them by ingenious, so called natural explanations. In vain! One might as well strike out the warlike deeds or battle days from the life of Alexander the Great or Cesar. What would then remain? His history would then be inexplicable. It was his miracles which drew the people to him in such crowds, so that the jealousy of his adversaries was hereby more and more violently stirred up, which furnished the subject of the many discussions with his enemies, which they ventured not wholly to deny, but ascribed them to demoniacal power. To these deeds the apostles also afterwards appealed as to known acts of which there were many witnesses (*e. g.* Acts x. 37). And still after the days of the apostles the apologist Quadratus speaks of such as were healed by the Lord or awakened from death, who were alive when he wrote (at the beginning of the 2nd century). In short the historic character of the miracles which Jesus performed is undeniable.

But we all perceive that in the last analysis it is Jesus not simply to work miracles. He performs them not in order to be a miracle-worker. His heart urges him, his pity moves him to receive the wretched, and to help them. But it is not bodily wretchedness that he has in view. No one can entertain the thought that he would be simply a physician. His aim is much higher. His working has reference to the welfare of the soul. He comes to assist the weakness of faith with his miracles. His miracles are natural to him, he has the consciousness of abiding wonder-working power, the angels of God always stand by him as ministering spirits to serve him; but he uses his might in the service of his vocation—of his redeeming work. His miracles shall glorify him, but only by working and furthering faith in him, which is the salvation of the soul. And this salvation, which he is appointed to bring, he portrays in his miraculous works. They are purely deeds of succor. For he came not to destroy men's souls, but to save them. They are not arbitrary acts, but morally grounded and conditioned; they are not simply deeds of power, but of delivering love; they are a real commentary on his Person and Word. as it were, the picture-writing of his word. At the same time they show that he himself must be a miracle; that he far transcends the measure of what is common to man.

Correspondence.

For the Christian Messenger.

To the Rockies and back.

II.

"Egypt! earth's own eldest daughter,
Colorado, silver bride!
One mountain-born and one of water,
Eldest—youngest—side by side.
By one star more Centennial given,
Colorado's Silver State,
Has re-inforced the mimic heaven,
And the flag strikes Thirty-eight."

After the pleasant associations of eight days in Nebraska we take an early train on Saturn's day on the Burlington and Missouri River Road for the capital of the Silver State. Few towns are passed and the few are small, for we are rushing over territory awaiting settlers from the old world and the new. The monotonous prairie continues. By noon we put our watches back one hour, for we have gone almost a thousand miles since the last change was made. It is in the west that an idea of "vast extent" is gained. There can be no pent-up-Utica feeling here. Room remains for millions. Great herds of horses and cattle appear along the way. It is rounding-up" day, and the scenes are interesting to an eastern man. Cowboys with "chapparels," white, wide-brimmed felts, whips, spurs, and pistols ride over the plains on fleet horses: They live a wild and reckless life upon the saddle and in the "dug-outs." When cattle thieves, who are not few, come within their range, they fail to deal death only when their purpose is defeated. A thief will watch his chance to take a few from this, a few from that, and a few from the other herd, and driving them a way a hundred miles or more will have a herd he calls his own. But woe betide him if overtaken by the herder. The latter turns police, judge, jury, and executioner all in a moment's time, and the career of the scalawag is ended.

When within three hour's ride of Denver a news boy comes on board and we get a *Rocky Mountain News*. From this we receive our first impressions of how the Sabbath is observed in this city a mile above the sea. A number of pleasure parties are advertized to leave Denver on the following day for suburban parks. The large type catches the eye. "Excursion and Pic-nic of St. Patrick's Benevolent Society at Morrison, Sunday, Aug. 10th, affording an opportunity to aid a worthy institution, and at the same time enjoy the beautiful scenery, &c. Music, dancing, games, and other amusements will characterize the day." "Clow-Morrison prize fight on Sunday afternoon. A train of fifteen cars will leave at one o'clock over the D. N. and O. Ry. for the scene of the fight, and a dozen deputy sheriffs will accompany it to preserve order. Round trip $2.00." These are two out of six. Plenty of chance for the pleasure (?)-seeker. Now let us see what chance the city will afford the stranger who wishes to keep Holy Day. Page one—two—three—four—five—six—seven—eight. No religious services advertized. The devil monopolizes the press, it seems. Truly "the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light." Early on Sunday morning my slumbers are broken by the news boys' cries: "*News, Tribune, Republican.* Pictures of Cleveland and Hendricks."

But there is a brighter side. Through the clear air the glad sound of church bells falls upon the ear. We make our way to the First Baptist Church. It is a substantial brick edifice, whose audience-room would do credit to a large eastern city. The seating capacity is 1200. The membership is 700, twice as great as four years ago. Dr. Wayland Hoyt of Philadelphia is in Dr. Jeffery's place. His sermon was one of those which makes the hearer dissatisfied with self, drives him to prayer, and awakens in him thankfulness for such a Gospel.