

THE HOME PREACHER, OR CHURCH IN THE HOUSE.

SECOND WEEK.

MORNING WORSHIP.

O God, who has caused Thy Holy Word to be written for our learning, open our understanding, that we may understand the Scriptures; dispose our hearts to receive Thy truth in the love of it; and so order our steps that we may walk evermore in the light, and rejoice in it; that so, when this life is ended, we may at last attain to the light of a cloudless day, and have the fruition for ever of Thy glorious Godhead, through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

HYMN, or *Psalms lxxiii.*

O God of Bethel! By whose hand
Thy people still are fed;
Who through this weary pilgrimage
Hast all our fathers led:
Our vows, our pray'rs, we now present
Before thy throne of grace:
God of our fathers! Be the God
Of their succeeding race.

Through each perplexing path of life
Our wand'ring footsteps guide;
Give us each day our daily bread,
And raiment fit provide.
O spread thy cov'ring wings around,
Till all our wand'rings cease,
And at our Father's love'd abode
Our souls arrive in peace.

Such blessings from thy gracious hand
Our humble pray'rs implore;
And Thou shalt be our chosen God,
And portion evermore.

GENESIS III.

Now the serpent was more subtile than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden? 2. And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: 3. But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die. 4. And the serpent said unto the woman, ye shall not

surely die: 5. For God doth know, that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened; and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil. 6. And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat; and gave also unto her husband with her, and he did eat. 7. And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig-leaves together, and made themselves aprons. 8. And they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God amongst the trees of the garden. 9. And the Lord called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou? 10. And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself. 11. And he said, Who told thee that thou wast naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat? 12. And the man said, The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat. 13. And the Lord God said unto the woman, What is this that thou hast done? And the woman said, The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat. 14. And the Lord God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field: upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life.

17. And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life: 18. Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field. 19. In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken; for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return. 20. And Adam called his wife's name Eve; because she was the mother of all living. 21. Unto Adam also, and to his wife, did the Lord God make coats of skins, and clothed them.

Prayer.

Almighty Father, who hast of Thy great goodness cared for our souls, and when Thou hadst redeemed us by the gift of Thy Son, didst also provide us with opportunities of seeking and communing with Thee through Thy Holy Spirit; we bless Thee for having raised us from sleep this morning in peace and safety, and for bringing us together before Thee, as one family, desiring to know Thee, and to serve Thee, and to worship Thee, in the way which Thou has opened to us through Jesus Christ.

O God, we are not worthy thus to approach Thee: for our own hearts testify against us that we have sinned greatly against Thee; and Thou art greater than our hearts, and knowest all things. Not in ourselves, O Lord, not in ourselves, but in Thy manifold and great mercies, would we place all our hope. Wash us from the stain of all our guilt in the blood of that immaculate Lamb which was slain to take away the sin of the world. Accept us, not for what we are, but for what He is; and enable us to offer to Thee an acceptable worship, on this Thy holy day, through the merits and mediation of our blessed Saviour.

O God, the sins of the past week, and of all the years of our life, lie heavy upon us; and when we look to the future, we can promise nothing for ourselves; for we are altogether weak and helpless, and compassed with sin. O Lord, we are oppressed: undertake for us. Give us day by day, and this day especially, Thy Holy Spirit; that we may be raised from the death of sin to the life of righteousness, and enabled to show forth, in word and act, the praises of Him who hath called us out of darkness into His marvellous light.

O Father of mercies who hast given us Thy holy Sabbath to be the rest of wayfaring men in their pilgrimage through this world, and has consecrated it to such an excellent mystery, that in it is represented to us the rest and felicity of a world not yet manifested; grant us grace so to use and so to improve its sacred hours, that it may bring us

nearer to Thee, and advance us on our journey towards Thine eternal home. Be with us in our worship this day, both in private, in the family, and in the congregation; make Thy Word real to us, and seasonable, and comforting; and may we so call upon Thee, and so praise and magnify Thy holy name, that we may be accepted as living members of that Communion of Saints, which is the blessed company of all faithful people.

Thou seest, O God, the secrets of all hearts. Thou understandest, as man cannot, the condition, and the disposition, and the need of each one of us; even before we ask, Thou, our Father, knowest what we have need of. Do for each one of us that which Thou, in Thy wisdom and grace, shalt judge best. Correct all that is evil in us; strengthen and confirm that which Thou hast been pleased to communicate of good. Take away the spirit of carelessness, and the spirit of indolence, and the spirit of dis-obedience and unbelief; and grant to us more and more that Holy Spirit who is purity, and peace and strength, and love.

Into Thy hands, O God, we would commend ourselves, and all who are dear to us, for this day, and for the days to come. Leave us not, neither forsake us, O God of our salvation. In Thy light alone can we see light. O give us grace so to seek and to find Thee in this life, that in the end we may see Thee as Thou art, know Thee even as we are

known, and rejoice for ever in the light of Thy countenance, through Jesus Christ, our only Mediator and Redeemer.

Amen.

THE CHURCH IN THE HOUSE.

O God, infuse into our hearts Thy heavenly light and blessed love, that we may love Thee above all things, and so abhor our own selfish and sinful souls. O let us find Thee more in our own hearts, and believe in Thee as being with us more than any one else; that so we may be more circumspect how we think, resolve, and act in the presence of our holy Lord and most loving Father in Christ. *Amen.*

HYMN, or *Psalms xliv.*

Come, Holy Ghost, Eternal God,
Proceeding from above,
Both from the Father and the Son,
The God of peace and love.

Visit our minds, into our hearts
Thy heavenly grace inspire;

That truth and godliness we may
Receive with full desire.

Thou art the very Comforter
In grief and all distress;
The heavenly gift of God most High,
No tongue can it express;

The fountain and the living spring,
Of joy celestial;
The fire so bright, the love so sweet
And unction spiritual.

O Holy Ghost! Into our minds
Send down thy heavenly lights;
Kindle our hearts with fervent zeal,
To serve God day and night.

Such measures of thy powerful grace,
Grant, Lord to us, we pray;
That thou mayst be our Comforter
At the last dreadful day.

MICAH VI.

Hear ye now what the Lord saith; Arise, contend thou before the mountains, and let the hills hear thy voice. 2. Hear, ye, O mountains, the Lord's controversy, and ye strong foundations of the earth: for the Lord hath a controversy with his people, and he will plead with Israel. 3. O my people, what have I done unto thee? And wherein have I wearied thee? Testify against me. 4. For I brought thee up out of the land of Egypt, and redeemed thee out of the house of servants; and I sent before thee Moses, Aaron and Miriam. 5. O my people, remember now what Balak king of Moab consulted, and what Balaam the son of Beor answered him from Shittim unto Gilgal; that ye may know the righteousness of the Lord. 6. Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the high God? Shall I come before him with burnt-offerings, with calves of a year old? 7. Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my first-born for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? 8. He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?

LUKE XIII. 1-9; 23-30.

There were present at that season some that told him of the Galileans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. 2. And Jesus, answering, said unto them, Suppose ye that these Galileans were sinners above all the Galileans, because they suffered such things? 3. I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish. 4. Or those eighteen, upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, and slew them, think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem? 5. I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish. 6. He spake also this parable: A certain man had a fig planted in his vineyard: and he came and sought fruit thereon, and found none. 7. Then said he unto the dresser of his vineyard, Behold, these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig-tree, and find none: cut it down, why cumbereth it the ground? 8. And he, answering, said unto him, Lord, let it alone this year also, til I shall dig about it and dung it: 9. And if it bear fruit, well; and if not, then after that thou shalt cut it down. 23. Then said one unto him, Lord, are there few that be saved? And he said unto them, 24. Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able. 25. When once the Master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand

without, and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us; and he shall answer and say unto you, I know not whence ye are: 26. Then shall ye begin to say, We have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets. 27. But he shall say, I tell you, I know you not whence ye are: depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity. 28. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and you your-selves thrust out. 29. And they shall come from the east, and from the west, and from the north, and from the south, and shall sit down in the kingdom of God. 30. And, behold, there are last which shall be first, and there are first which shall be last.

SERMON II.

“PURE RELIGION, AND UNDEFILED, BEFORE GOD AND THE FATHER, IS THIS, TO VISIT THE FATHERLESS AND WIDOWS IN THEIR AFFLICTION, AND TO KEEP HIMSELF UNSPOTTED FROM THE WORLD.”

-- St. James i. 27.

Most men have some religion. They do something, or they intend to do something -- they feel something, or they hope some day to feel something -- which may recommend them to God's favour, or (as it is often expressed) which may make their peace with God. It may not be much -- it may amount to little in appearance, and less, far less, when it is weighted in God's balance -- but most men, I repeat it, have some religion. The heathen man, the barbarian, the very savage, is not destitute of some religion: how much less, surely the most ignorant, or the most thoughtless, of the members of a nominally Christian family!

St. James appears to have had a strong sense of the importance of making men reflect upon the nature of that religion to which they are trusting for safety. He knew well the deceitfulness of man's heart; how prone it is to accept the easier instead of the truer service, the softer and more indulgent rather than the straiter and thornier way to life: and therefore he devotes a large portion of his brief Epistle to cautions against deception and self-deception; against walking through this world with a false hope, and awakening in the next with "a lie in the right hand." That is the subject of the portion from which the test is taken. Take heed, he says, lest thou be only hearers of God's Word, and not doers. It is an easy thing to sit in the congregation, and let the sound come to us: it is an easy thing to say, "I like to hear the Gospel; it does me good; it

comforts and reassures me; it refreshes my weariness, and sends me on my way rejoicing:” and it is *not* an easy thing to carry it into one’s life; to do things, and refuse to do things, because of what we have heard; to say tomorrow to your favourite sin, “I will not yield to this, because God has forbidden it; “ to say tomorrow to some difficult, some long-neglected duty, “Cost me what it may, I will go through with this, because I heard yesterday that Christ my Saviour commanded it -- that thus I can show my love to Him who for me died and rose again.” That is the difference between a hearer of the word and a doer: and St James goes on to say, that there is as little good in hearing without doing, as in looking at our own faces in a glass. We behold ourselves, and go our way; the image vanishes with our departure, and the whole thing is obliterated alike from the mirror and from the memory. What we ought to do is to “look into the perfect law of liberty”, into that blessed Gospel which tells us what our privilege is, and what our work is, as God’s free men, “and to continue therein;” not to pass on, after one glance, but to stay and ponder it well, and then to go forth with it stamped upon our hearts.

After this general precept about hearing and doing, St. James mentions one particular danger of the Christian hearer. Nothing seems to have been so strongly present to him, as the dread of an unbridled tongue. He has almost a whole chapter upon that one subject. Here he speaks of it

as one of the most fruitful forms of self-deceit. A man may “seem to be religious;” he may attend the house of God with regularity; he may have prayer, and family prayer, at home; he may talk as if he believed in Christ, and regarded Him as his Master; and yet all may be in vain, because he “bridles not his tongue.” That man, he says, “deceives his own heart.” “that man’s religion is vain.” A very serious warning for all of us! It leads the apostle just to express briefly, before he passes on, what is, and what is not, true religion. “Pure religion, and undefiled, before God and the Father, is this; to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.”

St. James is not speaking here of the root and spring of all religion, in a penitent and believing heart. He is speaking of the outward action of religion. The word he uses here for “religion” is not the word for piety or devotion within, but the word which expresses God’s outward and visible service. It is as though he would say, “You think much of ceremonies and acts of worship; you think yourself safe, because you frequent church, because you are attentive to forms of devotion, or because you can talk well of duty and of the Gospel: let me tell you, What God looks for, as the manifestation of faith and acceptance, is something different from any or all of these things; God’s outward service now is not punctuality of attendance on the ordinances of religion -- though that attendance is right, and

want of it a bad, a fatal sign; but it is a life marked by two signs -- by the sign of a self-denying charity, and by the sign of a self-denying unworldliness.” 1. “To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction.” 2. “To keep one’s self unspotted from the world.”

1. To some, the notion of visiting any one out of mere kindness may possibly be a new thought.

We all go visit our *friends*: some of our pleasantest hours have been spent in that occupation. Those who can receive us at their tables, amuse us with their conversation, or charm us by their kindness -- it needs no word of God to bid us visit *them*: do not even sinners do the same?

But even our friends are not so attractive to us in *sorrow*. When they are sick, and have no wish for merriment; when they have lost a relation, and their windows are darkened, and we feel that any subject but one will be distasteful to them, and for that one subject we ourselves have but little inclination; then who has not known the difficulty of forcing himself to the home of suffering? Who has not again and again postponed the exertion, and made it at last rather to avoid reproach, than out of a spontaneous loving choice?

And yet even such an exertion as this is less than what the text demands of us. It evidently bids us to go not only to *friends though* they are in trouble, but to *strangers because* they are in trouble.

There are many subjects upon which we might profitably meditate at this time; but few could come more home to us all than that which is suggested by this brief maxim of St. James. God grant that it be not lost upon us! It ought to make us ask ourselves, "If this which he says is indeed religion, what do I know of it? Did I ever visit an orphan or a widow in their affliction? Did I ever enter a house of mourning, not on business, not for my own ends, not out of friendship, but in the simplest sense of all, for charity? Out of mere kindness? In the hope of carrying comfort there? In the desire to help and to cheer, to say a kind word, and to relieve the monotony of sadness? Sometimes, in my worst moments, I have even scoffed or mocked at sorrow: I have even turned widowhood into a jest, or trifled with the defencelessness of the orphan: it may be that I have even carried my boisterous mirth into the home of misery and made mourning doubly mournful by the presence of a godless and a sinful merriment. But when did I ever do what St James here speaks of -- visit the fatherless or widow in their affliction, out of mere sympathy, kindness, and charity? If I have not done this, St James says, I am not religious. I may have had moments of serious impression; in my own sicknesses I may have thought upon God; in my own sorrows I may even have listened for a gospel: but tried by this test, which is God's

test, I have not yet begun to practise that kind of religion which is pure and undefiled before God and the Father.”

It is not only rough, boisterous, riotous men, who are open to the charge of wanting this pure religion. Alas! Too many of us, too many of the more constant and hopeful worshippers, have done nothing yet in this work of Christian, of Christ-like charity. But it must be done -- done, not only by the minister, but by his people also, if they would be a people fearing God, honouring Christ, and working righteousness. Gospel “faith worketh by love.”

2. There is a second mark of pure religion. “To keep himself unspotted from the world.” How expressive is this language! “Unspotted from the world.”

What is the world? The world, in this sense, is whatever is not heaven; not God-like, not holy, not spiritual, not eternal. It includes many things which are sometimes distinguished from it. All that is seen and temporal, first of all, as opposed to that which is unseen and eternal. Then, all that is attractive to the eye, all that draws out that vanity, that desire for admiration, which is in all of us: whatever tempts us to pride and self-conceit and earthly ambition: whatever thirsts in us for wealth or luxury or self-satisfied indolence: whatever finds its enjoyment in appetite and passion, in pleasures of sin. Yes, the world is a large place, and full of various lures and snares. It is the opposite of heaven: the charge in the text is as wide as this

-- “to keep himself unspotted from everything which is not of God, which is not of heaven.”

If our souls were laid open to view, as our bodies are, how ashamed should we all be of these “spots” upon them of which St. James speaks! Every sin, if it be but in thought, leaves its spot behind upon the soul. Some of us, if seen as God sees us, are no better than lepers; covered all over, in soul (as a prophet says), “with wounds and bruises and putrifying sores,” that cannot be “closed, nor bound up, nor mollified with ointment.” It is of mercy that we are *not* seen quite as we are. It would make us loathe one another, and it would make us desperate for ourselves. God alone can both *know all, and yet love*. Which of us has not sometimes felt, as he prayed to God, the comfort of this universal knowledge? The comfort of being with One from whom nothing is hid; with whom there can be no hypocrisy; who sees our exact condition, and yet is willing to take us into his own Almighty hands for healing?

In itself it is a dreadful thing to have upon us these spots of defilement from sins old and recent. Every falsehood we have ever told; every passionate word we have ever spoken; every profane oath ever sworn; every lust of the flesh cherished in thought or indulged in act -- is a “spot” from the world: what have we done, what are we doing, to get it washed out? There is but one application strong enough and pure enough to effect that cleansing; and

that is what Holy Scripture calls “the *blood* of sprinkling:” “the *blood* of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin.” O that all of us may from this day forth try to get our spots of sin washed out, washed off from our souls in that blood, that precious blood! It is very near to us: it is always and everywhere accessible: humble, earnest, simple, believing prayer is the hand that receives it for the souls’s cleansing.

Is there any one here for whom it is not too late to “*keep* himself unspotted from the world?” any one whose soul is not yet defiled, in the way spoken of, with the spot and stain of sin? Well, let us hope it; and let him, if such there be amongst us, give all diligence to use the only sure means of this *keeping*; prayer -- prayer again -- the same humble, earnest, simple prayer, which we have recommended as the medium of the *cleansing*.

We see every day in our streets too many proofs of the need of St. James’s warning; too many examples of men *not* unspotted, but readily and eagerly staining themselves with the world in its grossest and vilest forms. O that these might brought to shame and self-reproach, and then to true and deep repentance! If it is too late for them to *keep* themselves *unspotted*, at least it is not too late for them to *get* themselves *washed* from their stains. The fountain for sin and for uncleanness is still open; and blessed is he who in faith and penitence steps down into it.

And this we know, the time is short. Before another new year comes round, some of us now strong and well may be in the coffin and in the grave; gone to our account -- *gone to our account*. And what does that mean? Where shall we *be*? Where shall we, we ourselves, the real, living, immortal self, be then? Surely it is nothing visionary, nothing enthusiastic, to ask ourselves such a question. Surely common sense, right reason, no less than conscience and the Bible, should stir each of us to ask it. The world is ever with us -- close to us, too close -- probably not one in a million is at this moment "unspotted" by it; and how many shall we dare to say are earnestly and faithfully cleansing themselves from its spots? We know not; God knoweth. But remember, this work, whether of keeping or of cleansing, can only be wrought in the individual man; and in him not unconsciously, not by chance, not by some arbitrary, over-mastering, overpowering work of grace, but by his own personal prayers and struggles after forgiveness through a Saviour's merits, after holiness through the Spirit's power.

What is it which keeps us back, day after day and year after year, from Christ and his salvation? Is it that we count it too soon to begin our preparations for a day of reckoning and for an eternity of blessedness? Is it that we are secure of lengthened life? Secure, too, of that power to turn, which sometimes (Scripture and experience seem alike

to tell us) fails a man before breath fails him? Or is it, once again, that we count ourselves *unworthy* of so high an honour? that we know that against ourselves which vitiates the invitation, and constrains us to disregard it? O, if there be such a thing in us, let us not defer to get rid of it! Let us count it our enemy, if it is Christ's enemy; let us make the great struggle, and cast it out; let us call in his aid, who is "stronger than the strong man armed," and can "take away his armour." Nothing will ever make us happy which displeases and dishonours our Saviour -- which constrains us to refuse his summons and to forego his salvation. Let one hearty prayer go up to Him before we retire; and let it be repeated morning and night, night and morning, from this day forward till we find it answered - "Lord, wash me from my sin in Thy precious blood! O God, whose nature and property is always to have mercy and to forgive, receive my humble petition; and though I be tied and bound with the chain of my sin, yet let the pitifulness of Thy great mercy loose me, for the honour of Jesus Christ, my Mediator and my Advocate." *Amen.* -- C. J. Vaughn, D. D.

THE CHILDREN'S SERVICE.

THE CHILD SAMUEL.

In these days God speaks to us in His Word. The lessons of his book are so full and plain, that we do not need any other guide. But in the times of old God spoke to men raised up for this end, and sent them to tell the people what God had bid them speak. Many of their words have been written down in the Bible for our use. God took different ways of speaking to the prophets -- ways we cannot quite explain; but we may be sure that always they were made to know that it was God that spoke to them, and what his message was. Yet I am now going to tell you of a prophet, who, the first time God spake to him, did not know the Lord's voice. That was when he was a little child, and I am almost sure you have seen a picture of him on his knees, with his little hands folded, looking up to God. As I am writing this, I look round, and see a little image of him in this posture. I ask a little girl by my side who that is, and she tells me it is Samuel.

Now, to give a little change to a story that is, perhaps, better known to young children than a good many other Bible stories, I will ask you to suppose Samuel when an old man taking a little boy on his knee, and telling him what happened to himself. This might be the way he would give the story: --

“I had a good mother. She gave me my name because she asked God to give her a child to love and watch over,

and I was born to her. My name means, 'asked of God.' I am an answer to a prayer. You may be sure my mother loved me very much, yet she did not let me live with her after I was three years old. You will wonder at that; but the reason was that my mother had said to God that if he would give her a boy to be dear to her, she would lend him all his days back to God. So, when I was very young, she brought me to Shiloh. That was the place where the ark of God then dwelt under its tent. God's house was there at that time. The priest, at the time I was brought to Shiloh, was an old man. His name was Eli. He was a good man, but he had sons who did much sin in the sight of the Lord, and their aged father was not firm enough in telling them of it, and rebuking them. I tell you this, because the first time God spoke to me he gave me a sad and terrible message about them, which all has come, or will yet come, to pass. I was still a child when this took place. I served at the house of God, and I was very happy. My mother came to see me once a year along with my father, and she brought me, when she did so, a new coat. You cannot doubt that I was glad to see them, and to get their blessing. I liked the new coat made by my mother's hands. But I liked for other reasons a linen ephod that I wore, for it was a sign of my being a servant of God. I loved the good old Eli, and he loved me much, and kept me near himself night and day. I

used to sleep in a room not far from his chamber. So if he wanted me, and called me, I would be ready to hear.

“Now, one night I had gone to my couch as usual, and was laid down to sleep. Eli had gone to his place also; but the lamp was still burning in the holy tent. It was then that I heard a voice calling me, clearly but gently, by my name. I said, ‘Here am I,’ and rising up, ran to where the good old priest was, and asked him what he wished me for. He said, “My son, I did not call; lie down again.” So I went back to my bed and lay down. But a second time I heard the voice, saying, ‘Samuel!’ and quite sure that I had made no mistake this time, I started up and ran again to Eli, asking why he called me, for I had heard my name distinctly. He said, ‘No, my child, I did not call you, I do not need you; lie down to sleep again.’ I did as he bade me, but ere long the voice spoke again. For the third time I ran to Eli and said, ‘You must have called me; I heard my name once more, and I am sure I could not be mistaken.’ Then the old man paused as if he were thinking deeply, and finding something in all this that he had not supposed before. I knew afterwards what he now thought the voice to be. Indeed, his answer showed his thoughts; for he told me to go and lie down, and if the voice should come again and call my name, I was to say, ‘Speak, Lord, for thy servant hears.’ The voice did come again, and said, ‘Samuel! Samuel!’ I felt now that someone was near me, that it was God, and I said, ‘Speak, Lord, for

thy servant hears.’ He then gave me an awful message, how he was going to punish the house of Eli for their wickedness. It was very solemn to hear it, and I felt that it would be very dreadful to tell it to the old priest. However, I could not help telling it. I lay still till the morning, and then got up and opened the doors of the sanctuary. As I was coming back from doing this, Eli called me very tenderly, and when I went to him, he said, ‘Now, my son, tell me all that God said to you last night.’ So I told him the very words. I watched his face as I was speaking, and it grew very grave and sad; but when I had finished saying what awful judgments God was to bring upon his house, he only bowed his head, and said meekly, ‘It is the Lord, let him do what seems good to him, he can do no wrong.’ A while after that when God was pleased to give me many messages for the people, there broke out war between Israel and the Philistines, and Eli’s sons would take the ark of God into the battle. The battle went against them; they were killed, and the ark was taken; and when a runner brought the news to Eli, as he sat in the gate, he fell back at the mention of the ark, and died.

“Such was the way in which I heard the voice of God first; I have heard it often since. I expect soon to hear it in another way, calling me to his presence above. My child, God calls you by his word. Will you hear Him? Will you be

his servant? I never was sorry that I was taught to serve Him when young.”

QUESTIONS ON THE BIBLE STORY.

1. Can you name a child that well knew God's voice in the Holy Scriptures?
2. Can you name a man who gave his blessing to two boys when he was very old?
3. What was the name of Samuel's mother?
4. Where did she pray the prayer that God answered by giving her Samuel?
5. Who took the ark of God away from Shiloh, and where was its resting-place?
6. Who took it to Jerusalem?
7. Which of the sons of Aaron was the forefather of Eli?
8. Which of Eli's descendants was the last priest of his house?
9. Do you remember any cases in Scripture in which God called persons by their name, speaking out of heaven?
10. Can you name persons besides Samuel who said to God, "Here am I."

11. Do you know what things without life are finely represented in scripture as saying to God, "Here are we."

12. Where are we told of Samuels death?

ANSWERS to the foregoing questions will be easily found by consulting 2 Tim. iii; Gen. xlviii.; 1 Sam. i. vi., vii.; Ps. cxxxii. (2 Sam. vi., 1 Chron. xvi.); 1 Kings ii. (Gen. xxii., Acts ix.); (Gen. xxii., Isa. vi.) Job xxxviii.; 1 Sam. xxv.

QUESTIONS ON THE BIBLE LESSONS.

1. Who tempted Adam and Eve?
2. What was the punishment threatened to our first parents for transgression? Gen iii. 3.
3. How did the devil, the liar and the murderer, contradict God? Gen. iii. 4.
4. State some of the consequences of the fall? Gen. iii. 17, 18, 19.
5. Who tempted Jesus Christ?
6. What were his replies to the first, second, and third temptations?
7. Is temptation itself sin in us?
8. Is the yielding to it alone the sin?
9. What is the real source of the evil and its dangers in temptation? James i. 14.

10. What has God promised to those who are tempted, and who resolve to do his will? 1 Cor. x. 13.

11. In what power are we to resist and overcome temptation? Eph. vi. 10, 11.

Prayer.

O God, who givest answer to prayer, hear us now. Open our hearts to attend to thy Word. Make us thy servants, swift to hear Thee, and obey thy voice. Cause us to know well the voice of the good Shepherd, and to hearken to it always. Let us fear to offend Thee. Let us love to please Thee. Make us gentle, true and holy, like thy servant of whom we have been reading -- like the blessed Jesus. We ask it for Christ's sake. *Amen.*

EVENING WORSHIP.

O God, whose inspiration giveth to man understanding, and who didst bestow upon thy servants of old gifts of wisdom and knowledge and utterance, vouchsafe thy grace to us who are here assembled before thee, that our meditation may be unto edification and profit, to the increase of our knowledge and faith and obedience, to our comfort and growth in grace; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

HYMN, or *Psalm xci.*

Ere another Sabbath's close,
Ere again we seek repose,
Lord! Our song ascends to Thee;
At thy feet we bow the knee.

For the mercies of the day,
For this rest upon our way,
Thanks to Thee alone be given,
Lord of earth, and King of heaven!

Cold our services have been;
Mingled every prayer with sin;
But Thou canst and wilt forgive;
By thy grace alone we live!

Whilst this thorny path we tread,
May thy love our footsteps lead!
When our journey here is past,
May we rest with Thee at last!

Let these earthly Sabbaths prove
Foretastes of our joys above;
While their steps thy pilgrims bend
To the rest which knows no end!

MATTHEW IV. 1-11.

Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness, to be tempted of the devil. 2. And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterward an hungered. 3. And when the tempter came to him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread. 4. But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. 5. Then the devil taketh him up into the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple, 6. And saith unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee; and in their hands they shall bear thee up,

lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone. 7. Jesus said unto him, It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God. 8. Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the of them; 9. And saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me. 10. Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God and him only shalt thou serve.

1 CORINTHIANS X. 11-13.

Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come. 12. Wherefore, let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall. 13. There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.

2 CORINTHIANS XI. 3.

But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.

JAMES I. 12-17.

Blessed is the man that endureth temptation; for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him. 13. Let no man say, when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: 14. But every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. 15. Then, when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin; and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death. 16. Do not err, my beloved brethren. 17. Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.

EPHESIANS VI. 10-13.

Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. 11. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. 12. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against

principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. 13. Wherefore, take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

Prayer.

O FATHER of mercies, and God of all comfort! Who didst give for us Thy Son Jesus Christ to be the sacrifice for our sins, and the author of everlasting life; look down in compassion upon us Thy servants, here gathered before Thee at the close of Thy holy day.

Thou, O God, hast done great things for us; we would give Thee thanks and praise for Thine inestimable love in our redemption by Christ Jesus, for all the means of grace, and for the blessed hope of glory.

But, O Father, we have dealt thanklessly with Thee, and have not honoured Thee, nor served Thee, nor obeyed Thee, as we ought to do. This very day has seen us wanderers from Thee; our worship has been lukewarm and

lifeless; our very prayers might justly have been punished by Thee as sins.

We come to Thee, in the remembrance of these things, ashamed and self-accused; and we trust not in ourselves, but only in the merits and mediation of Him whom Thou in Thy mercy hast made to be sin for us, and in whom even the most sinful may find forgiveness and acceptance before Thee. Forgive us, Almighty God, the sins of this day and of our former life; lay them not to our charge, deal not with us in judgment, but of Thy great goodness wash us in the blood of Thy Son Jesus Christ, and renew us with the life-giving grace of Thy Holy Spirit.

Accept, we pray Thee, the prayers this day offered before Thee in all the congregations of Thy militant church. Grant that Thy Name may be known upon earth, Thy saving health among all nations. Grant that we who know the truth may evermore be watchful to keep and do it, that the light may shine before men, to the glory of Thee our Father in heaven.

And now, O Lord, we commend ourselves, our souls and bodies, to Thy gracious keeping through the darkness and silence of the approaching night. Let the thoughts of our hearts, in seclusion and solitude, be evermore pleasing in Thy sight, who seest in secret. Grant that no dangers may approach us, whether in body or spirit. May our last thoughts be of Thee; and if it should please Thee to call us

this night to meet the Lord, whether in death or at His advent, grant that we may be ready for that last summons, and be enabled to say, “Even so, come, Lord Jesus.”

These things, and whatsoever else Thou seest to be needful for us, we humbly ask in the name and for the sake of our blessed Saviour; to whom, with Thee and the Holy Ghost, be honour and glory, world without end. *Amen.*

MORNING AND EVENING MEDITATIONS.

MONDAY.

Morning.

And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM.

The Lord is known by the judgment which he executeth: the wicked is snared in the work of his own hands. Higgaion. Selah.

The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork.

Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge.

Know that the Lord he is God: it is he that hath made us.

Now he which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God.

Exod. iii. 14.

Ps. ix. 16

Ps. xix. 1, 2.

Ps. c. 3.

2 Cor. i. 21.

Evening.

Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.

God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.

Hear, O Israel; the Lord our God is one Lord.

One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.

Thou, whose name alone is JEHOVAH, art the most High over all the earth.

Know therefore this day, and consider it in thine heart, that the Lord he is God in heaven above, and upon the earth beneath: there is none else.

Matt. v. 48.

1 John i. 5.

Deut. vi. 4.

Eph. iv. 6.

Ps. lxxxiii. 18.

Deut. iv. 39.

TUESDAY.

Morning.

I am the Lord thy God from the land of Egypt, and thou shalt know no god but me.

Before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me.

I, even I, am the Lord; and besides me there is no saviour.

Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage he retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy.

Lord God of Israel, there is no God like thee, in heaven above, or on earth beneath, who keepest covenant and mercy with thy servants that walk before thee with all their heart.

Hos. xiii. 4. Isa. xliii. 10, 11. Mic. vii. 18. 2 Chron. vi. 14.

Evening.

He is the living God, and steadfast for ever, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed, and his dominion shall be even unto the end.

Him that liveth for ever, whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom is from generation to generation.

God is a Spirit; and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.

Ye should turn from those vanities unto the living God, which made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all things that are therein.

For they themselves shew of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye turned to God from idols, to serve the living and true God.

It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

Dan. vi. 26. Dan. iv. 34. John iv. 24. Acts xiv. 15. 1 Thess. i. 9. Heb. x. 31.

WEDNESDAY.

Morning.

No man hath seen God at any time.

There shall no man see me, and live.

Ye have neither heard his voice at any time, nor seen his shape.

And he made darkness pavilions round about him, dark waters, and thick clouds of the skies.

Verily thou art a God that hidest thyself, O God of Israel, the Saviour.

Thy way is in the sea, and thy path in the great waters, and thy footsteps are not known.

John i. 18. Exod. xxxiii. 20. John v. 37. 2 Sam. xxii. 12 Isa. xlv. 15. Ps. lxxvii. 19.

Evening.

Canst thou by searching find out God? Canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection?

His greatness is unsearchable.

Touching the Almighty, we cannot find him out.

Which doeth great things and unsearchable; marvellous things without number.

How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!

Thy judgments are a great deep.

Job ix. 7. Ps. cxlv. 3. Job xxxvii.23. Job v. 9. Rom. ix. 33. Ps. xxxvi. 6.

THURSDAY.

Morning.

For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity.

The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms.

Hast thou not known, hast thou not heard that the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? There is no searching of his understanding.

Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God.

Thy kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and thy dominion endureth throughout all generations.

But the Lord shall endure for ever.

Isa. lvii. 15. Deut. xxxiii. 27. Isa. xl. 28. Ps. xc. 2. Psalm cxlv 13. Ps. ix. 7.

Evening.

For a thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday when it is past, and as a watch in the night.

My days are like a shadow that declineth; and I am withered like grass.

But thou, O Lord, shalt endure for ever, and thy remembrance unto all generations.

I said, O my God, take me not away in the midst of my days; thy years are throughout all generations.

But thou art the same, and thy years shall have no end.

Behold, God is great, and we know him not, neither can the number of his years be searched out.

Ps. xc. 4.

Ps. cii. 11, 12, 24, 27.

Job xxxvi. 26.

FRIDAY

Morning.

For I am the Lord, I change not.

The Father of lights, with whom is no variableness,
neither shadow of turning.

God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of
man, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do
it? Or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?

Trust ye in the Lord for ever.

In the Lord put I my trust: how say ye to my soul, Flee
as a bird to your mountain?

For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance.

Mal. iii. 6. James i. 17. Numb. xxiii. 19. Isa. xxvi. 4. Ps. xi. 1. Rom. xi. 29.

Evening.

**Am I a God at hand, saith the Lord, and not a God
afar off?**

Whither shall I go from thy Spirit? Or whither shall I
flee from thy presence?

If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there; if I make my
bed in hell, behold, thou art there.

If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the
uttermost parts of the sea;

Even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand
shall hold me.

If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me; even the
night shall be light about me.

Jer. xxiii. 2, 3.

Ps. cxxxix. 7,8,9, 10, 11.

SATURDAY

Morning.

For the Lord your God is God of gods, and Lord of lords, a great God, a mighty, and a terrible, which regardeth not person, nor taketh reward.

Because I will publish the name of the lord; ascribe ye greatness unto our God.

He is the Rock, his work is perfect; for all his ways are judgment: a God of truth, and without iniquity; just and right is he.

Behold, the Lord our God hath shewed us his glory, and his greatness, and we have heard his voice out of the midst of the fire: we have seen this day that God doth talk with man, and he liveth.

Praise him for his mighty acts: praise him according to his excellent greatness.

For when God made promise to Abraham, because he could swear by no greater, he sware by himself.

Deut. x. 17.

Deut. xxxii. 3, 4.

Deut. v. 24.

Ps. cl. 2.

Heb. vi. 13.

Evening.

Shall not his excellency make you afraid? And his dread fall upon you.

With God is terrible majesty.

Thine, O Lord, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty: for all that is in the heaven and in the earth is thine; thine is the kingdom, O Lord, and thou art exalted as head above all.

His work is honourable and glorious: and his righteousness endureth for ever.

He hath made his wonderful works to be remembered: the Lord is gracious, and full of compassion.

I will sing unto the Lord, for he hath triumphed gloriously.

Job xiii. 11. Job xxxvii. 22. 1 Chron. xxix. 11 Ps. cxi. 3, 4. Exod. xv. 1.