

Home Preacher, or Church in the House.

FIFTH WEEK.

MORNING WORSHIP.

O THOU Shepherd of Israel, who slumberest not nor sleepest; we thank Thee for our rest and sleep during the past night, and we desire to glorify Thee all this day; to walk by Thy laws; to be blessed by Thy providence; to be defended by thine Almighty hand, so that our lives may be holy and peaceable. O may Thy Spirit dwell in us as the spirit of holiness and peace, to be the guide of our way and the defender of our souls and bodies. *Amen.*

HYMN, or *Psalm lxxx.17-19.*

Strive, when thou art call'd of God,
When He draws thee by his grace,
Strive to cast away the load
That would clog thee in the race!

Fight, though it may cost thy life;
Storm the kingdom, but prevail;

Let not Satan's fiercest strife
Make thee, warrior, faint or quail.

Wrestle with strong prayers and cries,
Think no time too much to spend,
Though the night be pass'd in sighs,
Though all day thy voice ascend.

Soldiers of the Cross, be strong,
Watch and war 'mid fear and pain,
Daily conquering woe and wrong,
Til our King o'er earth shall reign.

GENESIS, III. 13-15.

AND the Lord 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. 15. And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed: it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.

ISAIAH LIII. 1-6, 10-12.

WHO hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed? 2. For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him. 3. He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and we hid as it were our faces from him: he was despised and we esteemed him not. 4. Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. 5. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. 6. All we, like sheep, have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. 10. Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, and he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand. 11. He shall see the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities. 12. Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong;

because he hath poured out his soul unto death; and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.

PSALM CXXX.

OUT of the depths have I cried unto thee, O Lord. 2. Lord, hear my voice; let thine ears be attentive to the voice of my supplications. 3. If thou, Lord, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand? 4. But there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared. 5. I wait for the Lord, my soul doth wait, and in his word do I hope. 6. My soul waiteth for the Lord more than they that watch for the morning; I say, more than they that watch for the morning. 7. Let Israel hope in the Lord: for with the Lord there is mercy, and with him is plenteous redemption. 8. And he shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities.

Prayer.

WE praise Thee, O Lord! Praise be to Thy holy name throughout the earth. Trusting to Thy mercy, compassion, and all-sufficient grace, we begin the week, with its duties its trials, temptations, joys and sorrows, and, it may be,

with its death to us, and our entrance into the world that is unseen. But, Father of mercies, our hope is in Thee; be ever near to us with thine almighty and gracious aid. We cannot trust thee too much, nor ourselves too little.

“Blessed,” indeed, are all they who put their trust in Thee:”

“Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose soul is stayed on Thee, because he trusteth in Thee.” Grant unto us all that is necessary for soul and body, for time and for eternity. O Thou who knowest all our past lives, our manifold transgressions and inconsistencies; in the light of whose countenance are all our secret sins, who knowest the hard thoughts we have had of Thee, the hard speeches we have spoken against Thee, and what unprofitable servants we have been -- have mercy upon us. Pardon the sins of our tongue; our selfishness, pride, and vanity; our blindness of heart and unbelief; our impenitence and spiritual deadness. Pardon our sloth, in that we have done so little, and attempted so little. “Against Thee and Thee only have we sinned, and done this evil in Thy sight. Have mercy upon us according to Thy loving-kindness; according to the multitude of Thy tender mercies, blot out all our transgressions.” Pardon us for the sake of Jesus Christ Thy Son, who died for the chief of sinners.

If it please Thee, O Lord, continue long to us in Thy mercy the precious gifts -- our beloved friends. If it please Thee, give us and them such things as are necessary for the

support of our earthly life in comfort, and without suffering to mind or body. If it please Thee, deliver us from sickness and poverty, from plague, from war or sudden death. If it please Thee, preserve to us our reason, and take not away but increase our talents, enabling us to improve them for our own good and for Thy glory. O Thou who willest not the death of a sinner, but rather that he would return from the wickedness which he hath committed and live, deliver from sin, and preserve in the ways of righteousness ourselves and all who we know and love; and grant that this year we may all increase in the knowledge and love of Thyself, and be taught by Thy Spirit “to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, and righteously, and godly in this present evil world, looking for the glorious appearing of our Lord and Saviour, who gave Himself for us to redeem us from all iniquity, and to purify us to Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.” What we know not, yet ought to know, regarding Thee or ourselves -- our sins, our duties, our temptations, and Thy revealed truth -- do Thou, Lord, teach us! So long as Thou art pleased to continue us in being, may we bring forth much fruit, and abound in the work of the Lord. If it is Thy will that we should die, grant that we may so live as to be received by Thee among Thy faithful servants. “Our Father,” &c.

THE CHURCH IN THE HOUSE.

OUR Father! Inasmuch as it is eternal life to know Thee as the only living and true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent, we beseech of Thee to glorify Thy Son to us and in us by Thy Spirit, that so we may glorify Thee and enjoy Thee for ever. Vouchsafe of Thine infinite mercy thus to enlighten our heart and mind to love Thyself and Thy most holy and perfect will, to the honour and glory of Thy name.
Amen.

HYMN, or *Psalm lxii. 5-8.*

WHEN gathering clouds around I view,
And days are dark and friends are few,
On Him I lean, who not in vain
Experienced every human pain;
He sees my wants, allays my fears,
And counts and treasures up my tears.

If aught should tempt my soul to stray
From heavenly wisdom's narrow way,
To fly the good I would pursue,
Or do the sin I would not do;
Still He, who felt temptation's power,
Shall guard me in that dangerous hour.

If wounded love my bosom swell
Deceived by those I prized too well;
He shall His pitying aid bestow,
Who felt on earth severer woe --
At once betrayed, denied, or fled
By those who shared His daily bread.

If vexing thoughts within me rise,
And, sore dismayed, my spirit dies;
Still He, who once vouchsafed to bear
The burden of our guilt and care,
Shall sweetly soothe, shall gently dry,
The throbbing heart, the streaming eye.

And O! When I have safely past
Through every conflict but the last;
Still unchanging, watch beside
My painful bed, for Thou has died!
Then point to realms of cloudless day,
And wipe the latest tear away!

1 THESSALONIANS, V. 1-11, 14-28.

BUT of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. 2. For yourselves know perfectly, that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. 3. For when they say, Peace and safety, then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape. 4. But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. 5. Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness. 6. Therefore, let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober. 7. For they that sleep, sleep in the night; and they that be drunken, are drunken in the night. 8. But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and for an helmet the hope of salvation. 9. For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, 10. who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him. 11. Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do. 14. Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feeble-minded, support the weak, be patient toward all men. 15. See that none render evil for evil unto any man; but

ever follow that which is good, both among yourselves, and to all me. 16. Rejoice evermore. 17. Pray without ceasing. 18. In every thing give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you. 19. Quench not the Spirit. 20. Despise not prophesyings. 21. Prove all things: hold fast that which is good. 22. Abstain from all appearance of evil. 23. And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly: and I pray God your whole spirit, and soul, and body, be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. 24. Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it. 25. Brethren, pray for us. 26. Greet all the brethren with an holy kiss. 27. I charge you by the Lord, that this epistle be read unto all the holy brethren. 28. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. *Amen.*

SERMON V.

“SLEEP ON NOW, AND TAKE YOUR REST.” -- Mark xiv. 41.

“THOU KNEWEST NOT THE TIME OF THY VISITATION.”

-- Luke xix. 44.

THE importance of time to us cannot be measured by its length. Some hours may be more full of history than years, and a few minutes may mark the turning point of our life, and give birth to tiny springs of thought or action which shall swell into ever-increasing and never-ending streams of good or evil, joy or sorrow. The value of time is rather to be

estimated by the means which it affords of our receiving or doing good, and thereby fulfilling the very end for which we exist -- that of glorifying God, and enjoying him now and for ever; and the relative value of time depends upon the opportunities which it brings of our realizing this high and holy calling.

Accordingly, in the lives of us all, there occur periods of peculiar importance to ourselves, when God seems to draw very near, calling us to some special work -- precious hours, times of "visitation" -- when, without seeking it, our hearts or hands *find* something given us to accept or to reject, to perform or to resist, and when the spirit in which we live and act at that particular moment must necessarily affect our future history. What makes this thought the more solemn is the fact, that such periods may be very brief. For just as the fate of empires has been fixed for all time by a single battle fought on a small spot of earth and during a few fleeting hours, even so may the hours be as few and fleeting during which a like battle between good and evil may be fought in the solitude of our own hearts, the result of which may fix our destiny by determining our character. The opportunity afforded to us, in God's providence, of doing special service may thus pass so rapidly away, that it must be taken advantage of promptly, without any hesitation or delay, or be lost for ever. The work which our hand findeth to do may be of such a nature as necessitates

the doing of it “with all our might”, if it is to be done at all; for it often happens, without our knowing or suspecting it, that the only hour for labour assigned to us by the Master is not always one at early morn, which, though lost through sloth, may nevertheless be partially redeemed by increased diligence during the remaining period of the day, but is frequently as an eleventh hour at evening, when the shadows are falling fast around us of a night in which no man can work.

Another feature only I will notice, as one which characterizes those solemn times of visitation -- and that is, the absence of any outward sign to arrest the senses, to attract our attention, or to symbolize by anything striking or impressive the importance of what is taking place in the inner and unseen world of our own spirits. The loud noises and paralysing terrors of the earthquake and the storm play but a small part in nature, when compared with the silent but irresistible forces of the showers of spring, the warm sunbeam, the gentle breeze, and the morning or evening dew. Nor are great changes which affect human history, or events which mark points of transition from an old order of things to a new, always or often accompanied by what strikes the eye or excites the fancy. The transference, for example, of the vast empire of India, with its teeming millions, to the government of the Queen, was effected by a decision of the Legislature expressed in a few minutes, and

was made known by a proclamation read in as brief a period of time; yet who can comprehend the momentous consequences of this transaction! Again, a wire is dragged from the margin of the ocean, and connected in a few seconds with another in a small tent, by a few men whose presence or whose operations do not interest the peasant labouring in the neighbouring field. How quiet and calm is the whole process! Nevertheless, that wire connects continents, becomes the highway for words and thoughts between nations, annihilates space and time, and revolutionizes the world. And so it happens in spiritual things. God often speaks to the soul in the still small voice when He is not in the earthquake or the storm. “The kingdom of God” which is within us “cometh not with observation,” nor with observation does it depart. In the inmost recess of our own hearts, which no eye can see but God and ourselves -- in the quiet of our own rooms -- amidst the stillness of the house of God -- in a whisper with a fellow-being -- in the deep calmness of the sick-chamber, with nothing outward, perhaps, to startle or alarm -- may the hour come in which the history of years is to be determined; the hour when the step we take to the right or left will give a direction to our future journey; the hour which, according as we awake to the light of life, or sleep on in the darkness of spiritual death, shall usher in an endless day, or begin an endless night!

These thoughts find a fitting illustration in the affecting history from which the words of one of our texts are taken. When our Lord came on that memorable night -- His last on earth -- to the garden of Gethsemane, He said to His disciples, "Sit ye here, while I shall pray." He then took Peter, James, and John with Him, and, going further into the solitude of the garden, "began to be sore amazed and very heavy; and He said unto them, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, unto death." Then, as if seeking deeper seclusion, "He went forward a little, and fell on the ground, and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from Him." It was in these circumstances that He again said to His three chosen friends, "Tarry ye here, and watch." And wherefore? Whatever other reasons there might have been for His making this request, oh! surely we are not wrong in thinking that one at least was His desire as a man, with a heart more truly human in all its feelings and emotions than ever beat, who had himself wept with friends in sorrow, to have near him at such a time those who could feel with him and by their presence and sympathy help him to bear the terrible and mysterious burden of woe. Remember only what that night was to be to Him! -- how He was never to sleep again until He slept in the grave, and never see a friendly eye till, from the cross, He saw His mother; how the cup was to be drunk which was filled with the bitterest draught which the Saviour

could drink -- the malice, hatred, falsehood, treachery, ingratitude, cruelty, blasphemy, against Himself and His Father, of men, His own brothers, whom He loved as He alone could love! -- and how in a few hours, this, the most frightful scene of wickedness ever witnessed by men or angels on earth, was to be ushered in by the treacherous kiss of one of His disciples, and by the desertion of them all. His cup was full. As He was about to receive it, His hand trembled; His sweat like drops of blood fell to the ground; "being in agony He prayed the more earnestly." The scene of suffering in that lonely garden under the shadow of Olivet moved the hearts of the holy angels, one of whom came to His help, and ministered to Him. Yet the man Christ Jesus clung to His brethren. He craved *their* love as He had never done before; and wished them, of all others, to carry His burden of sorrow. But, alas! when in the midst of this long agony He sought their aid, He found them asleep; all was silent, and He was alone with His great woe. "What!" He exclaims, "could ye not watch *with me* one hour? Here, therefore, was a work given them to do, a glorious and blessed work of such sympathy with their Divine Master; and at such a time, and on such a night! There was need, besides, for their own sakes that they should be watchful. Perils they knew not of surrounded them. Warnings had already He given, especially to Peter, to quicken them. And so the loving Lord, who was ever

thinking of others more than of Himself, said, "Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit is willing;" but that was not enough, for "the flesh is weak." And then, with gentle but significant admonition, He said, "Simon, sleepest *thou*?" Here, indeed, was a crisis of life! -- an hour of momentous importance to those disciples. But they knew not the time of their visitation. When heaven was all alive to the importance, yet they who were so nearly concerned in its duties and trials allowed it to pass away in slumber. No doubt they had often spent nights beneath the canopy of heaven with the Saviour, and probably many in this very garden; for "Jesus oftentimes resorted thither with His disciples." They had frequently seen Him engaged in prayer, while the world was asleep. Other nights like this could be remembered, which had been followed by peaceful days. May not all things continue as they have been for years? All seems peaceful on earth and in heaven! The stars shine with their old untroubled lustre in the silent sky. Not a breath of air moves the olive leaves that hang from the trees, and glisten in the moonlight. Why then be awake and watchful? But at last, convinced that there is something unusual in this night -- aroused and ashamed of their sloth by the Saviour three times coming to them -- arrested by what they see about Him and hear from His lips, such as they never had seen or heard before -- they at last become wakeful and watchful. They are resolved to

sleep no more. Whatever has to be done, they are ready to do it now. Alas! Alas! it is too late!

The precious opportunity is lost and gone, never more to return! Yes, they could have shared and alleviated by their sympathy the sorrows of Jesus, and done a work of love, which would have been a sweet memory during life and after it, and enjoyed a privilege which angels coveted. But the time is past. It is vain to waken now -- "Sleep on *now*, and take your rest. It is enough -- the hour is come!" Oh! Bitter and painful thought in after years, what they *could* have done and ought to have done on that memorable night, if they had only forgot themselves, and thought of Him who "loved His own, and loved them to the end!" -- if they had only known this as the day of their visitation! But it was now lost, never to be recalled. The Saviour forgave their denial of the sympathy which He asked, and would have valued; but did they ever forgive themselves?

Now, the principle expressed in what we have already said might be applied to many instances which frequently occur in our own history, when God is specially calling us to awake, and when, if we refuse His call, this judgment may be passed upon us -- "Sleep on now, and take your rest."

The time when saving truth is revealed to the conscience is one of these, and the only one I shall at present notice. It is by the truth as it is in Jesus that we are "born again," "set free," and sanctified through the

Spirit. And God has many ways of revealing it to us, and of bringing it into contact with our spirit. It may shine on our souls from “words that burn,” as we read them in the Holy Scriptures, or hear them from the lips of a Christian friend, with earnest voice, and speaking eye, or last breath, and with the best of all comments on them -- the living epistle of a holy life, written with the finger of God. Or the truth may be read in the page inscribed by the living, or by those who, though dead, thus speak; or, as it most frequently happens, it may come each Lord’s day from the lips of a true preacher, which is himself possessed by it. But by whatever outward instrumentalities it travels from heaven to earth, truth is always a very solemn messenger from God to the responsible spirit of man, calling him to awake and walk in the light of life; and it is a memorable era in his history when face to face with it he must entertain it as a friend, reject it as an enemy, or delay meeting it seriously, til a more convenient season. Now most men shrink from untruthfulness in expressing their convictions, and many boast of their honesty in uttering their beliefs, whatever these may be. But let it be remembered that hypocrisy is but one form of untruthfulness. For while the outer man may be true in his words to the convictions of the inner man, the inner man may be untrue in his thoughts *to the truth itself*. And in this lies the real test of truthfulness -- the sincerity with which we desire to be found *by* the truth,

or turn our minds, like mirrors, to receive its beams. Now, there are times in every man's history, when truth has thus come to him with a power and a clearness which carried its own evidence to his soul; when it seemed to search him to his inmost heart, and to isolate him from all others -- as if it said, "I am come from Him who is the Truth to thee, to teach thee, to warn thee, to invite thee, to lead and guide thee, to bring thee out of thyself and unto thy God and Saviour; *thou art the man* to whom I am sent; awake now from thy sleep, and Christ will give thee light; believe and live!" Then comes the awful question on which his character and happiness for eternity may depend: yea or nay, will he, the responsible man, yield himself to the truth or rebel against it? He is perhaps, conscious of a struggle between the kingly voice of truth, in the person of the crucified and living Saviour, on the one hand; and of pride and passion, self-interest, vanity, sloth, or the fear of man, on the other. And perhaps, also, as the least painful alternative, he seeks to effect a compromise by delay. A yes or no, one manly resolution, might end the battle and establish peace for ever. But the charms of sleep are yielded to -- the hope is possibly entertained that at some future time truth will be received and obeyed, but not now. "*Today*" he has made up his mind not to "hear His voice," but to "harden his heart." A solemn crisis, verily, is this of choosing light or darkness! Yet there is nothing in the house of God, nothing in the silent room,

nothing perhaps, in the conscience, to indicate its importance. For this very delay may be the prelude to darkness and death. Truth accordingly soon begins to lose its effect -- impressions become every day less vivid -- convictions less sharp -- resolutions more feeble and evanescent. There is no faith, no repentance, no change of heart towards God. The Spirit is grieved and resisted, until at last there is heard only the murmur, "a little more sleep, a little more slumber, a little more folding of the hands." Alas! it shall be so. And if so, truth may then sound as before from book or living voice, but it has lost its power; and its reality is gone; for the fatal habit becomes formed of steeling the heart against its finer influences. It neither alarms, nor persuades, nor moves the soul as it once did. Its voice, once loud, becomes as a distant and indistinct echo to the deafening ear -- the living stream becomes like the chill waters in a dark cavern that as they fall on the heart add chill to chill, stone to stone. For God hath said, My Spirit will not always strive with man." The righteous sentence goes forth, "Sleep on now, and take your rest!" You would not be alarmed by the truth -- it will disturb you no more! "Because I called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; ye would none of my counsel, and despised all my reproof; *therefore* shall ye eat of the fruit of your *own* way, and be filled with your *own* devices." What an impressive example have we in the

history of Paul's brief interview with Agrippa and Felix, of the fact that there is often given to men "accepted times" when God is to be heard, and "days of salvation" when He will succour, but which may pass away in even a few hours! The apostle met these persons for the first time face to face, revealed to them saving truth -- pled with them -- "reasoned with them of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come." Life and death, light and darkness were there, and the choice of either was demanded of them. And Agrippa was almost persuaded to become a Christian, but never became one; Felix trembled, and resolved to send for Paul at a more convenient season, but never did so. Both refused to awake *then* to the light of truth, and no other opportunity was afforded. The crisis passed. Paul departed. The sentence was pronounced, "Sleep on now, and take your rest," and so they awoke no more. Like ships that meet in moonlight upon the ocean, exchange a few words, separate, and are soon lost to each other in the darkness, as they pursue their respective voyages, so did the tide of life bring those human beings together: words and thoughts of infinite moment passed between spirit and spirit; then they separated -- the prisoner to his cell with Jesus, the king and governor to the world without Him, and they never met again! Contrast this in your own minds with the prompt acceptance of the truth, and the glorious consequences of so doing, in the case of Paul himself, who

was “not *disobedient* to the heavenly vision” -- and of the thief on the cross -- of the Ethiopian eunuch -- of the jailor at Philippi -- of the thousands on the day of Pentecost. These awoke as the first beams of early morn touched their eyelids, and now they sleep no more.

Oh, I beseech you by the value of your immortal souls, and your sense of responsibility, by the love of God in revealing truth, and His righteous judgment upon all who reject it, that ye “receive not the grace of God in vain,” but give *earnest* heed to the things you have heard -- “to take heed *how* ye hear” -- to awake at once to its call, lest the sentence should be pronounced upon your unthankfulness, delay, or unbelief, “Sleep on now, and take your rest!” Let this be your resolution, from which nothing shall tempt you to deviate -- to receive the truth in the love of it, and be at peace with God and your own conscience. --EDITOR.

THE CHILDREN’S SERVICE.

THE FIRST TWO BROTHERS.

I DO not know what sort of house Adam and Eve lived in, after they were driven out from the garden of Eden. It was

probably at first only a booth, or tent: but perhaps God, who graciously clothed them, taught them also how to build a stronger dwelling. I have said, however, I do not know about that; but one thing I do know, whatever kind of home they had in outward respects, it was like other human homes since, for joys and sorrows. There was laughter in it, and there were tears: there were hopes, and fears, and changes, and deaths. When Adam and Eve went to it, they carried a bright hope in their hearts. They looked for a son who would be a great Deliverer, and crush the serpent that had led them into sin. So when in that first home of fallen man a little boy was born, his mother eagerly called him Cain -- a "possession, a thing gotten" -- almost as if we were to say, Gain. She thought this was the seed the Lord had promised. Alas! She was to be bitterly disappointed by and by. Another little boy was given her, but she did not seem to hope much from him, for she called him Abel -- "vanity" -- here, also, knowing what was coming. It is of these two boys, and what came of them, that I am about to tell you.

They grew up, no doubt, much as boys do still, playing with each other a great deal, sometimes gladdening their mother's heart, and sometimes vexing her. They would soon begin, too, in all likelihood to show the dispositions that came out in after years, and make their parents muse and pray. They did not go to school, for there was none to

go to, except the great school where the sun and stars and winds and trees and flowers are teachers. Except also the home-school. No doubt they had lessons there: and two things I think they were often told about; how their father and mother once lived in the fair garden, but did what God had told them not to do and were driven forth from it; and how, at the same time, God had given them hope of being forgiven and saved and brought into a fairer and better place by a great Deliverer. I think our first great-grandfather would sometimes take his boys by the hand, and walk with them up towards the gate where the cherubim were keeping watch, and the sword of flame was turning, and tell them the meaning of what they saw -- how it said to them, Do not come this way to seek a road to the tree of life, but trust and wait for another, safe and free. Then would Adam teach them, that to show faith in the promise of the great Helper who was to come and conquer Satan, though not without suffering himself, they were to offer sacrifices from time to time, and the boys would often stand by while the lamb was slain and burnt, and the smoke went up to heaven.

At length the boys grew up to youth, and began to act for themselves, choosing their occupations, and going on with them. Then they became men, and perhaps had houses of their own. Cain had chosen to be a farmer: he tilled the ground, and sowed, and reaped. Abel had preferred being a

shepherd, and had flocks which he took care of. Both were very pleasant employments: there was hard work in both, but that does not hurt one when he is healthy and strong; and the two might have been very happy brothers together. So they would have been, if they had thought alike on the greatest subjects. But they did not. Cain did not feel himself to be a sinner, and did not care for the hope of a Saviour, to bring forgiveness, and open the way to a higher life. He did not believe about sacrifices, and what they meant. He was content with his farming and his crops, and looked for nothing better than richer and wider fields. Abel felt himself a fallen creature; he wanted to get back to the lost tree of life: he believed the promise of God that his father and mother had told him about, and he was willing to offer sacrifice, because God had bidden them to do this in the faith and hope of a Saviour to come. This difference in the character of the two brothers came out strongly one day, and led to sad results.

They had gone together to worship. The time was probably the Sabbath-day, the seventh or last of the week: the place was perhaps near the gate where the sword-like flame shone and turned. Both went with offerings, and presented them before God. Cain's was a pile of fruits of the ground -- grain and produce of the fields -- and it seemed to say, God, I thank thee for my life and food, but nothing more. Abel's was taken from the flocks, and was

according to God's command. It seemed to say, Lord, I believe in thy promise of One who is to redeem us by suffering; I know myself a sinner, and want to be saved by him; I thank thee for the hope of salvation. So when they had each presented his offering, behold, God showed he was pleased with the one, and not with the other. His answer was probably by fire, as in other cases. Perhaps a stream of flame from that shining sword came forth and burnt up Abel's offering, and left Cain's heap lying on the ground. In some way, at least, God's acceptance of the one and his refusal of the other were clearly shown. Cain was very angry: his wrath was seen in his face: and although God spoke to him, and reasoned with him, as a father does with a child, he would not listen, but went away with hate to his brother in his heart.

Not long after this, the two brothers were in the fields together, talking with each other; when suddenly Cain struck Abel a cruel blow, and did not leave off smiting him till he died. He thought, I suppose, that being by themselves in the fields no one could see him do the wicked deed. But an eye from heaven was watching him all the time; God took notice, and came to the murderer, and told him that his brother's blood was crying to him from the ground, and sent him away from that place, with a heavy curse on him, to be a wanderer in the earth. But what do you think would Eve and Adam think now of their first born

son? And what would be their anguish when they found Abel slain in the fields? Yet, I am sure, they grieved less afterwards for the murdered than for the murderer: and with good reason, for Abel had gone to God, and Cain had gone away from him.

Dear children, that is a sad story to have happened in the first family on earth. It is full of lessons, solemn and warning. It teaches us the mystery that is in every baby's little form; who can tell "what manner of child this shall be?" It shows how soon the fall bore bitter, bitter fruits. It warns against angry passions, and hatred of others, which is already murder. It tells us how we are safe only when we own ourselves to be sinners and seek salvation in God's way. That way is now very plainly taught to us. We see what Abel could not see, and his faith with little light rebukes us if we do not believe with much light. The way of salvation is Jesus, who gave himself an offering for us. Every one who comes to God pleading Christ's name, will be delivered from death and hate, and will be made to live and love for ever.

QUESTIONS ON THE BIBLE STORY.

1. What mother was it that gave her new-born boy a name which his father would not let him keep?
2. Can you find any proof in the third chapter of Genesis that Adam believed God's promise about the woman's seed?
3. Do you know any passages of Scripture which represent the works of God as teachers?
4. Is the garden of Eden called paradise in Scripture? What else is so called?
5. Where is the tree of life said to be growing now?
6. Can you find anything in the third chapter of Genesis to suggest that God appointed sacrifices?
7. Can you name any other great Scripture characters that were shepherds like Abel?
8. Where is Abel named as the first of a roll of "elders" that have obtained renown?
9. What two very different voices are spoken of as coming from Abel after his death?
10. What voice is said to speak better things than one of these?
11. Can you name another first martyr, that, like Abel, died in the fields?
12. Can you name another brother-murderer besides Cain?
13. What sons of a good man were murderers of their brother in their hearts, though they did not shed his blood?

14. What two persons in the New Testament are somewhat like Cain and Abel offering sacrifice, for the contrast they present?

15. Can you name another murderer reprieved by God from death, like Cain?

SEARCH for answers: --Gen. xxxv.; iii.20; Ps. xix. and Rom. i.; 2 Cor. xii; Rev. ii. xii.; Gen iii. 21; Exod. iii. And 1 Sam. xvi.; Heb. xi.; Gen. iv. And Heb. xi.; Acts vii.; 2 Sam. xiii; Gen. xxxvii.; Luke xviii.; 2 Sam. xii.

QUESTIONS ON THE BIBLE LESSONS.

1. What was the first promise ever made of a suffering yet conquering Redeemer?

2. Mention some things regarding Christ prophesied by Isaiah? Isa. liii. 3, 5, 7, 9, 11.

3. Can a sinner be saved by his deeds? Rom. iii. 20.

4. How is a sinner saved? Rom. iii. 24-26.

5. Why did God send his Son into the world? Gal. iv. 4, 5.

Prayer.

O GOD, we mourn over the fall of our first parents by their sinning against Thee. We lament the sin and woe which their guilt has brought into the world. We mourn that men should so hate and war with each other, and so forget and refuse Thee. O God of love, who hast sent Jesus to save the fallen and lost, to ask us to go back to Thee by him, and to learn of him to be lowly and loving; by thy Holy Spirit put away from our hearts all hateful, envious, grudging feelings, and teach us to love. Teach us to love brothers and sisters, companions, neighbours, schoolmates. Teach us to love all. Teach us thy love, for Jesus' sake. *Amen.*

EVENING WORSHIP.

MOST merciful God! blot out all our sins -- all our backslidings and manifold injuries done by us to our own souls, and to Thy holy work on earth. Knit our wills to Thy most wise, holy and loving will, that we may be most heartily content with whatsoever Thou art pleased to do with us in the world. Help us so to trust Thee, that we may

peacefully suffer the greatest pains, if by these we are brought to a truer knowledge of Thyself. *Amen.*

HYMN, *or Psalm xxxvii.* 3-7.

How gentle God's commands,
How kind His precepts are!
Come, cast your burdens on the Lord,
And trust His constant care.

While Providence supports,
Let saints securely dwell;
That Hand, which bears all Nature up,
Shall guide His children well.

Why should this anxious load
Press down your weary mind?
Haste to your heavenly Father's throne,
And sweet refreshment find.

His goodness stands approved
Down to the present day:
I'll drop my burden at His feet,
And bear a song away.

ROMANS III. 20-26.

THEREFORE by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin. 21. But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested being witnessed by the law and the prophets; 22. Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe; for there is no difference. 23. For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God: 24. Being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus; 25. Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; 26. To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness; that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.

GALATIANS IV. 4-7.

BUT when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, 5. To redeem them that were under the law, that we might

receive the adoption of sons. 6. And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father. Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.

Prayer.

We thank Thee, most loving Father, through Jesus Christ Thy Son, that Thou hast this day defended us from all danger, and bestowed on our souls and bodies so many mercies. How much unhappiness we might this day have experienced! How much misery and anxiety! But Thou hast kept us in Thy peace, and the day is ended in Thy presence. “O Lord, what is man, that Thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that Thou visitest him?” yet Thou are mindful of us, and Thou visited us every moment of our lives with Thy loving-kindness and Thy tender mercy.

We cannot answer to Thee for one of a thousand of our transgressions; therefore we come to Thee confessing our sins, which are very many and very great, and asking from Thee their forgiveness for Christ’s sake. We fly for refuge to Thy mercy through thy Son, glorying in His cross and in His propitiation for the sins of the world.

Holy Father! We thank Thee for calling us to be holy like Thyself, and to be made conformable to the image of

Thy Son in all things. O grant that as He died for our sins, and rose again, so we too may die to our sins, and crucify the flesh, burying the old man with his affections and lusts, and rising daily with our living Head to newness of life. May Christ be in us the hope of glory. May His Spirit dwell continually in us as a spirit of adoption, shedding abroad Thy love upon our hearts, and enabling us to love Thee as our Father, all men as our brethren, and specially those who are born again of Thy Spirit. Inspire us more and more with the true spirit of self-sacrifice; so that losing our false life in the flesh, we may gain true life in the Spirit. May we take up our cross daily and follow Jesus, and every day more and more be possessed by “that love which suffereth long and is kind, which envieth not, vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not its own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; which rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; which beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things, and which never faileth.” Have mercy, O Lord, upon those who suffer in body or mind; those who are entering upon a night of pain or sorrow; those who are watching beside the sick and dying, or mourning over the dead! Have mercy upon the poor, upon the widow and orphan, on the oppressed of all lands; and grant that amidst all their trials they may be enabled to hold fast their confidence in Thee, which will never put them to shame. As

opportunities are given to us in Thy providence of doing them good, may we cheerfully avail ourselves of them. Comfort their souls by blessing them with a hearty repentance for all sins, a patient waiting upon Thyself in every trying dispensation, and a meek submission to Thy will as being at all times and in all circumstances perfect wisdom and perfect love. “Our Father, which art in heaven.” &c.

MORNING AND EVENING MEDITATIONS.

MONDAY.

Morning.

There is no God else besides me; a just God and a Saviour; there is none besides me.

Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is none else.

For the Lord shall comfort Zion: he will comfort all her waste places; and he will make her wilderness like Eden, and her desert like the garden of the Lord; joy and gladness shall be found therein, thanksgiving, and the voice of melody.

Hearken unto me, my people; and give ear unto me, O my nation; for a law shall proceed from me, and I will make my judgment to rest for a light of the people.

Isa. xlv. 21, 22.

Isa. li. 3, 4.

Evening.

The same was in the beginning with God.

All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made.

In him was life; and the life was the light of men.

And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.

To make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ:

To the intent that now, unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places, might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God.

John i. 2, 3, 4 5.

Eph. iii. 9, 10.

TUESDAY.

Morning.

I will make him my first-born, higher than the kings of the earth.

My mercy will I keep for him forever more, and my covenant shall stand fast with him.

His seed also will I make to endure for ever, and his throne as the days of heaven.

Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth.

In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely; and this is his name whereby he shall be called, **THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.**

The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be.

Ps. lxxxix. 27, 28, 29. Jer. xxiii. 5, 6. Gen. xlix. 10.

Evening.

And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.

For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.

Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end.

And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots;

And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord.

Gen. iii. 15.

Isa. ix. 6, 7.

Isa. xi. 1, 2

WEDNESDAY.

Morning.

In that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek: and his rest shall be glorious.

Strengthen ye the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees.

Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped.

Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing: for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert.

Isa. xi. 10.

Isa. xxxv. 3,5, 6.

Evening.

And the Desire of all nations shall come: and I will fill this house with glory, saith the Lord of hosts.

Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people, and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and

to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy.

Hag. ii. 7.

Dan. ix. 24, 25.

THURSDAY.

Morning.

Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my spirit upon him: he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles.

He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street.

A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench; he shall bring forth judgment unto truth.

I the Lord have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles.

Isa. xlii. 1, 2, 3, 6.

Evening.

Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God.

The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God.

He shall feed his flock like a shepherd; he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young.

Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart,: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.

For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

Isa. xl. 1, 3.

Isa. xl. 11.

Matt. xi. 28, 29, 30.

FRIDAY.

Morning.

Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee.

For behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee.

And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising.

So shall they fear the name of the Lord from the west, and his glory from the rising of the sun: when the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him.

Isa. lx. 1, 2, 3.

Isa. lix. 19.

Evening.

And all flesh shall know that I the Lord am thy Saviour and thy Redeemer, the might One of Jacob.

Thou shalt also suck the milk of the Gentiles and shalt suck the breast of kings: and thou shalt know that I the Lord am thy Saviour and thy Redeemer, the mighty One of Jacob.

And the Redeemer shall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, saith the Lord.

Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.

Isa. xlix. 26. Isa. lx. 16. Isa. lix. 20. Isa. liii. 4.

SATURDAY.

Morning.

They weighed for my price thirty pieces of silver.

And the Lord said unto me, Cast it unto the potter: a goodly price that I was prized at of them.

Awake, O sword, against my Shepherd and against the man that is my fellow, saith the Lord of hosts: smite the Shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered.

He was wounded for our transgressions he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him and with his stripes we are healed.

He was oppressed and he was afflicted; yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth.

Zech. xi. 12, 13.

Zech. xiii. 7.

Isa. liii. 5, 7.

Evening.

For dogs have compassed me: the assembly of the wicked have inclosed me: they pierced my hands and my feet.

They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture.

I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair.

They shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his first-born.

Ps. xxii. 17, 18.

Isa. l. 6.

Zech. xii. 10.