

HOME PREACHER, OR CHURCH IN THE HOUSE.

FIFTEENTH WEEK.

MORNING WORSHIP.

O GOD, whose blessed Son was manifested that He might destroy the works of the devil, and make us the sons of God and heirs of eternal life; grant us, we beseech Thee, that, having this hope, we may purify ourselves, even as He is pure: that when He shall appear again, with power and great glory, we may be made like unto Him in His eternal and glorious kingdom, where with Thee, O Holy Ghost, He liveth and reigneth, ever one God, world without end.

Amen.

HYMN, *or Psalm* cxix. 113-117.

FATHER, whate'er of earthly bliss
Thy sovereign will denies,
Accepted at thy throne of grace,
Let this petition rise:

“Give me a calm, a thankful heart,
From every murmur free;

The blessings of thy grace impart,
And make me live to Thee.

Let the sweet hope that Thou art mine,
My life and death attend;
Thy presence through my journey shine,
And crown my journey's end!"

NUMBERS XIV. 1-21.

AND all the congregation lifted up their voice, and cried; and the people wept that night. 2. And all the children of Israel murmured against Moses and against Aaron; and the whole congregation said unto them, Would God that we had died in the land of Egypt! or, would God we had died in this wilderness! 3. And wherefore hath the Lord brought us unto this land, to fall by the sword, that our wives and children should be a prey? Were it not better for us to return into Egypt? 4. And they said to one another, Let us make a captain, and let us return into Egypt. 5. Then Moses and Aaron fell on their faces before all the assembly of the congregation of the children of Israel, &c.

Prayer.

HEAVENLY FATHER, we thank Thee for the sabbath-day. We thank Thee that Thou has consecrated one day out of seven to be kept holy unto Thyself. We desire to regard it as a token of Thy love to us, that Thou requirest this at our hands. May we show our love to Thee by a simple child-like obedience to Thy loving command. This is the day which the Lord hath made, we will rejoice and be glad in it. May we call the sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honourable, not thinking our thoughts, but Thine; not doing our works, but those which please Thee. May we be in the Spirit on the Lord's day -- in the spirit of true devotion, of deadness to this present evil world, and of intentness on the one thing needful.

Manifest Thyself, we beseech Thee to us this day, in all the riches of Thy grace. May Thy presence go with us, and do Thou give us rest. Cause all Thy goodness to pass before us. We beseech Thee, show us Thy glory. Show us the light of Thy countenance. Shine into our hearts. Shine upon our path. Go before us and may we hear Thy voice and follow Thee.

We thank Thee for the sabbaths gone by in which we have in some measure realized Thy love, and understood how true it is that Thou hast never said to any of the

weakest of Thy people, Seek my face in vain. O Lord, to us belong shame and confusion of face. It is not merely that we confess, and deplore as we confess, the sin in our hearts, in our thoughts, in our words, and in our lives; but this specially we desire to mourn over that while we know Thee to be so full of love, while our eyes have been opened to see somewhat of the beauty of Emmanuel, our love to Him should be so cold and barren. God be merciful to us sinners. Give us real, deep, and godly sorrow for all our sins -- our sins of ignorance and sins of presumption; our sins when we were in darkness, and our sins when the light has shone upon us; our sins which bring dishonour on our Christian name; our sins which, if hidden from others, are known to ourselves; our sins which, before the eyes of Him with whom we have to do. O forgive all. Blot them out. Cover them. Cast them behind Thy back, into the depths of the sea. Remember them no more.

Father, Thou wilt hear us and forgive, for hast not Thou sent Thy Son into the world to seek and save lost souls? In His name alone we ask forgiveness. All our hopes of pardon spring from the cross of Christ. Blessed be Thy name for His death and passion, His glorious resurrection and ascension, and for His unceasing intercession above. O wash us in His blood. Cover us with His righteousness. Regard us as one with Him. Look on us in the face of Thine anointed and give us the unspeakable

joy of the man whose unrighteousness is forgiven, and whose sin is covered.

And now, Lord, send Thy Holy Spirit into our hearts that He may sanctify us wholly to Thy service this day, that in private we may commune with Thee and be still, and that in public we may be among the true worshippers who worship Thee in Spirit and in truth. Pour out of the same Spirit on all the assemblies of Thy people, this day, throughout the world. May the windows on high be opened, and such a blessing poured forth upon them as there shall not be room enough to receive it. Touch the lips of Thy ministering servants this day, as with a live coal from off Thine altar. May they, as ambassadors for Christ, diligently preach the word, and duly administer the godly discipline thereof. And may that word have free course, and be glorified, may it be brought home to many souls, quickening and converting them by the grace of Christ, so that He may see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied, and that there may be joy in heaven over many sinners that repent. And may Thy people, everywhere, be built up in their most holy faith. May great grace be on all those that love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity; and make Thy way to be known on earth -- Pour out of Thine infinite and loving mercies on all dear to us; endue them with Thy Holy Spirit, enrich them with Thy heavenly grace, and bring

them to Thine everlasting kingdom, through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

THE CHURCH IN THE HOUSE.

O GOD, who hast prepared for them that love thee such good things as pass man's understanding, pour into our hearts such love toward Thee, that we, loving Thee above all things, may obtain Thy promises, which exceed all that we can desire, through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

HYMN, *or Psalm ix.* 7-11.

O draw me, Saviour, after Thee!
So shall I run and never tire;
With gracious words still comfort me,
Be Thou my hope, my sole desire:
Free me from every weight -- nor fear,
Nor sin can come, If Thou art here!

What in thy love possess I not?
My star by night, my sun by day,
My spring of life when parched with drought,

My wine to cheer, my bread to stay;
My strength, my shield, my safe abode,
My robe, before the throne of God.

From all eternity with love
Unchangeable Thou hast me viewed;
Ere knew this beating heart to move,
Thy tender mercies me pursued:
Ever with me may they abide,
And close me in on every side.

In suffering, be thy love my peace,
In weakness, be thy love my power;
And when the storms of life shall cease,
Jesus, in that important hour
In death as life be Thou my guide,
And save me, who for me hast died!

JOHN XXI. 15-25.

SO, When they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter,
Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these? He
saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee.

He saith unto him, Feed my lambs. 16. He saith to him again the second time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him. Feed my sheep. 17. He saith unto him the third time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep. 18. Verily, verily, I say unto thee, When thou was young thou girdedst thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldest; but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch out thine hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not. 19. This spake he, signifying by what death he should glorify God. And when he had spoke this, he saith unto him, Follow me. 20. Then Peter, turning about, seeth the disciple whom Jesus loved following; which also leaned on his breast at supper, and said, Lord, which is he that betrayeth thee? 21. Peter, seeing him, saith to Jesus, Lord, and what shall this man do? 22. Jesus saith unto him, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? Follow thou me. 23. Then went this saying abroad among the brethren that that disciple should not die: yet, Jesus said not unto him, He shall not die; but if I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? 24. This is the disciple which testifieth of these things and wrote these things; and we know that his testimony is true. 25. And there are also many other things

which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written. Amen.

EPHESIANS III. 14-21.

FOR this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, 15. Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, 16. That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; 17. That Christ may dwell in our hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, 18. May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height: 19. And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God. 20. Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, 21. Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.

1 CORINTHIANS XIII.

THOUGH I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a

tinkling cymbal. 2. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. 3. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing. 4. Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, 5. Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; 6. Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; 7. Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. 8. Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away. 9. For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. 10. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away. 11. When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things. 12. For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known. 13. And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity.

1 JOHN III. 10-21.

IN this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother. 11. For this is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another. 12. Not as Cain, who was of that wicked one, and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous. 13. Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you. 14. We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren: he that loveth not his brother abideth in death. 15. Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him. 16. Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. 17. But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him? 18. My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed, and in truth. 19. And hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our heart before him. 20. For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things. 21.

Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God.

SERMON XV.

“WHOM HAVING NOT SEEN, YE
LOVE; IN WHOM, THOUGH NOW YE SEE HIM NOT, YET
BELIEVING, YE REJOICE WITH JOY UNSPEAKABLE, AND FULL
OF GLORY.” -- 1 Peter, i. 8.

THREE things are set forth in this passage -- Love, Faith, and Joy.

The first is a marked feature in those whom the apostle was addressing; the second is the root from which this feature is derived; and the third is the precious fruit with which it abounds. Let us look at these successively.

I. “Whom having not seen, ye love.” A little consideration will prove that there is the statement here of a very remarkable fact; and remarkable as it was then, it is still more so now. For observe, it is not a matter of opinion that is here spoken of. It is not what believers think about Christ. It is an emotion: it is what they feel in their hearts towards him. Well, those to whom the apostle wrote had never seen him, and yet they loved him; and more than eighteen centuries have run their course, and God’s people

this day love him also, though they too have never seen him. How is this strange fact to be accounted for? How comes it that my heart at this moment glows with love towards one who lived and died more than eighteen hundred years ago? It cannot arise merely from what is recorded of his whole character and life. There is doubtless every thing there to attract the deepest attention. The history of the Man of Sorrows cannot fail to call forth the liveliest interest, if it does no more; and more it assuredly does to the earnest and thoughtful mind -- it fills him with admiration and reverence. He looks on as Christ puts forth his power, and he says, "This is the finger of God." He follows him as he multiplies these wonders with lavish power, and he knows that "he went about doing good." He listens to him in his doctrine, and he confesses "never man spake like this man."

And yet all this, and much more, does not touch the mystery of that love which burns in the heart of a child of God towards the person of Christ, "whom having not seen, we love." It is not difficult to illustrate this. Let us turn our attention to any other historical character. Let us dwell on the record of such men as Abraham, or Moses, or David, or Daniel, or John. Let us fill our minds with all that is noble and good and true in them. Let us dwell on such features of character in them, as the most winning and attractive to us now in the living men and women of our

own day, and then let us make the effort to step beyond the boundary of mere admiration into the adjoining region of heart-felt love, and we shall soon discover that “with man this is impossible.”

Nay, more, let us suppose the case of one who has inherited a large property, which many generations before had been accumulated by the skill and industry of one, who at the same time, in all the varied relationships of life, was “honest, lovely, pure and of good report.” And yet, after all, what can there be personally in common between the two, between him who made the fortune and him who succeeded to it? The latter does indeed enjoy the fruits of his ancestor’s labour, and he may greatly revere his memory as that of a good and righteous man; but to speak of love in such a case is an abuse of language. The one and the other have never been brought into such close personal relationship as that the labour of the one and the enjoyment of the other should be illumined and enriched with the unutterable brightness of mutual love.

And yet here stands the fact regarding Christ and his people now; though they have never seen him, they love him. The heart of the believer is not only conscious of love, but often glows in love toward Christ. It so fills him, that all other earthly affections become subordinate to it. It takes such possession of all in him, that he will leave father and mother and wife and children for Christ’s sake. The

nearest and the tenderest ties fail to bind him with the potency of this one. Nothing can separate him from this love. Trials of every kind, and all his life long, cannot do it. The dungeon even, the rack, the axe, the stake, become as it were transfigured before him, because they lead into the presence of “him, whom having not seen, he loves.”

And let it be noted, that this is not an experience realized by a few enthusiasts. This is not an experience of a merely imaginative mind, of one who by a sort of dreamy romance fancies himself by contemplation into the idea that he loves. Very far from it. The consciousness of love to Christ is as universal as the acceptance of his gospel. No matter what the natural temperament or disposition may be; when Christ changes the heart, the heart turns to him. No matter how widely different in condition, in country or class; as soon as the grace which bringeth salvation begins to work in his soul, so surely, even as the needle points to the pole, does the new heart turn to Christ, with the opening at least of that emotion -- “Lord, thou knowest that I love thee.”

Riches cannot smother this love. Poverty cannot starve it. A rich Barnabas who sold all his possessions for his Master’s sake, did not love him more than the beloved disciple who had nothing but his fishing-tackle to give up. The man who by grace now consecrates his wealth to God, is conscious of the same constraining love in what he does,

as the poor woman, who, after her scanty meal of dry bread and pure water, was ready at the door to give of her poverty to a helpless stranger.

This love finds its way into minds of the highest as well as the lowest stamp. The aged statesman, as he passes from the stage of his earthly triumphs finds it to be unutterably precious, and the very imbecile can taste a joy in it, which makes light to spring up even in his darkness. The experience of this love does not depend on any outward advantages, regarding the cultivation of those talents with which man is endowed. He who perhaps, of all modern philosophers, has left the deepest foot-prints on the sands of time, the great Newton, was not so overburdened with his science, and his constant devotion to it whether in the heavens above or on the earth beneath, but that he could turn with the heart's love of a child to one who first loved him; while on the other hand, he who looked forth on the wonders of creation with a shepherd's eye, as he watched over his flocks on Salisbury plain, loved his Master no less than his gifted brother, who was opening up some of the mighty secrets of the universe.

Nor does this experience of love belong to any age in the life of a man. It is not merely when the heart is young and tender and impressible, that this emotion finds entrance and diffuses its sweetness. It brings forth its precious fruit in old age. "The Young Cottager" and "the Dairyman's

Daughter” drank of this stream by the way, and in their youth were gladdened and refreshed; and the aged minister who has so sweetly recorded their experience, found his own heart filled with the same unutterable sweetness in the evening of his days. Young Henry Martin and McCheyne leave all, and sacrifice all, for love to Christ; while in the extreme debility of old age, and at the point of death, the only being that, amid the wreck of all else, still holds his place in loving remembrance in the saintly Beveridge, is Christ, “whom having not seen, he loved.”

Nor yet, again, does this love find a place in only one kind of temperament among men. The man of diligent, active, business habits equally with the quiet contemplative mind which delights in retirement and the shade, are alike open to its blessed and constraining influence. There is no darkness of despondency which it cannot illumine, and no throbbing of happy life which it cannot chasten, elevate, and sanctify. The grave drink here, and look up with the sunlight of peace and joy. The merry hearted discover here, what all else fails in giving, “a joy with which the stranger intermeddleth not:” and all this too, and much more than this, not occurring in one nation or another people, but in all peoples, and nations, and languages, and tongues under the whole heaven. This is a love which wins its gentle way into the heart, amid the snows of greenland or under the burning sun of Africa. Sons and daughters of this great family --

whose one bond, amid other endless differences and varieties, is this love -- come from the east and the west, the north and the south, even from the ends of the earth.

Nor, once more, has the lapse of time changed the current or the character of this love. Through eighteen centuries one heart has caught the glow after another, and millions now in glory see Him face to face, whom, whilst on earth, though not seen, they had learned to love. And in all that countless throng, being gathered continually from the tumult below to the rest above, there is one thing which is as supreme as it is universal -- one thing which alike distinguishes them all, whatever be their place in glory, whether it be as the sun, or the moon, or the stars -- they are each and every one "made perfect in love."

And how is it possible to account for all this, but by the frank admission that the very love of Christianity is supernatural. No ordinary causes could produce such results as these. Nay, no ordinary cause could produce one such result among these millions. The being who draws forth such love must be something more than man. He must be one within reach of every one of those whose hearts are to be touched with love towards him. He must in truth be, what Christ declares of himself, "I am he that liveth and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore:" "Lo, I am with you alway, even to the end of the world." Here indeed is the link formed which binds Christ and his people

together in the blessed emotion of mutual love. His child looks back with deepest emotion to the time, when on earth, his best friend suffered and bled and died for sinners. He sees Him gathering around Him, in the days of his flesh, all the deepest and tenderest sympathies of men. He sees Him weep and he hears Him sigh, and amid it all, he marks Him as He lifted up his eyes to heaven and prayed for his own, and then he finds that He looked out over the vast multitude which through successive ages should be gathered to him, and while He bore those before Him on his heart he shed the sweetness of his loving heart far beyond: "I pray not for thee alone, but for all who shall believe on me through their word." And thus, while in the mysterious person of the God-man Christ he gathered around him those emotions which swell in our hearts and influence our lives, he bound these in indissoluble union with the unchanging mightiness of his Godhead; and to the end of time presents himself to each one of his people, and by a peculiar operation on their hearts, equally divine with that which encompassed him with human sympathy, he whispers to the poor stricken heart, 'I loved you, before you loved me; I thought of you, when you neglected me; you were on my heart when I prayed that prayer; your sins were on me when I was in that agony in the Garden; it was your sins I meant to cleanse away when my blood streamed upon the cross: give me now thine heart!' And thus, in a manner altogether

superhuman and divine, one after another solves the mystery in his own most blessed experience -- “whom having not seen, ye love.”

Of all internal evidences his is the strongest, the sweetest, and the best. As regards “those who are without,” the child of God can rest happily in the conscious possession of that which nothing can shake. His Master may be lightly esteemed and despised; but his heart whispers, “I know whom I have believed.” Rude assaults may be made against the truth; earth and hell may combine in furious rage against the Lord and his people, but the child of God retires happily into the inner chamber with his Beloved and says, “Thou knowest that I love Thee;” and as he comes forth from such communion as this, he can calmly meet the ignorance and unbelief of his enemies -- “I have meat to eat that ye know not of.”

II. But turn very briefly to consider the root from which all this springs -- “Yet believing.” This is the link of gold which binds the Saviour and the saved one in the bonds of heavenly, holy, spiritual love. It is this which in the child of God takes the place of seeing with the bodily eye. From the first he does not “know Christ after the flesh.” His Master has come first to him within the very innermost circle of his heart’s deepest affections, where the fountain of love wells up in the heart. There, far away from human gaze, and not distracted by external things, the espousal has

taken place which has made him one with Christ and Christ with him for evermore. Neither the traditions of men nor the rudiments of the world have had anything to do with this. By the bright and pure light of a gift imparted to him, he has seen the Lord, and the plant of tender holy love has struck its roots deep down in the clear and blessed apprehension by faith of the friend who is nearer and deeper than a brother. And thus he experiences the power and graciousness of his Lord's words to Thomas -- "Blessed are they who have not seen, and yet have believed."

III. Finally, think of the precious fruit which hangs in rich clusters on such love as this, so rooted by faith in that which is unseen: "In him, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory." Love, both deep and strong, may sometimes be accompanied by a consciousness of the unworthiness of its object and so its tenderest emotions will be ever passing into stings of agony. Or love may take full possession of the heart, and yet from a consciousness of its being altogether unrequited, it must abide in the darkness of its own solitude, and consume itself by the inward fires which it must at all hazards conceal. But this love has one for its object who is "altogether lovely," one who is without the shadow of a shade upon his glorious character, and whose infinite worthiness it is impossible to express; and then this love is returned, or rather let it be said, his gentle love has called

forth the experience, “We love him, because he first loved us,” and so pure and heavenly happiness ever mingles with it, and joy irradiates it, as when the morning is spread upon the mountains.

It is the comprehending the love of Christ in some measure -- the knowing it experimentally -- which fills the heart with “all the fulness of God,” and causes it to overflow with joy. The believer is strong in this love. He can ask without presumption, “Who shall separate me” from it? He can deliberately and unshrinkingly reply, “I am persuaded” that nothing ever can. He has become so absorbed in it that he can say, “To me to live is Christ,” and in such a life he counts it “all joy when he falls into divers trials.” He does not count them strange, but he “rejoices in that he is made a partaker of Christ’s sufferings.” This is a joy which no bereavement can take away, for does not the heart, even in its deepest sorrow, still turn to its one friend, and say, “Christ is all?” And even when all is spared to it below, and the cords of earthly love are yet unbroken, this still is paramount, “Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee.”

But the joy which springs from deep love never even attempts to express itself in words. It will beam forth from the eye; it will mellow the voice with its clear echo; it will give blessed animation to the lips, even as the breeze in the summer evening stirs all it touches; but it is too deep for

common utterance. And so of the great love of the soul to Christ, it is, as the apostle says, “unspeakable.” The soul has full possession of this “joy and gladness” -- “in the Lord;” but the utterance yet is impossible.

But if it is unspeakable, it is also “full of glory.” It waits for, desires and pants for, the glory which is coming when the “Beloved” shall appear. “In him, though now we see him not.” The love which fills the child of God goes forth towards the day when he “shall see him as he is,” when the loved one shall be met face to face. Then shall the day break, and all shadows flee away. And the servant shall not only “*enter* into the glory of his Lord,” but having arisen after that Master’s image, he “shall be satisfied with it” in the everlasting fruition of that which his Beloved has ordained: “Father, I will that they whom thou hast given me be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory.”

One or two words ere closing: -- See why it is that we continue of the earth, earthy. It is the lack of this one grand and all penetrating principle. We need not wonder that where this love to Christ is not, all worldly and carnal things shall be in the ascendant. In the absence of the good and the true, the poor needy souls which cast about on every side for something which, if it does not satisfy, will at least relieve in some miserable manner the tedium and the weariness of its path, and in the absence of the great light of a Saviour’s love, compass the darkened heart with sparks of

vanity. But oh! the children of the world know not what they are neglecting. Would they but try this! It is not the experience of others that will guide them here. It must be their own. Oh! that they would go near to Christ. He is waiting for them. This being, so great, so true, so wise, so loving, -- shall he still have to say, "Ye will not come unto me, that ye might have life?"

One word to us who profess to be children of God. Abide in this love. The experience of it, even by the way, fills the heart of every child of God. If such be the sweetness of the stream, what will the fountain be? When we are admitted to his presence, we will find ourselves near one whose love lies deeper down than that of father, or mother, or brother, or sister, or wife, or husband, or child -- a love which has never wavered, and never been away from us during the whole of our earthly pilgrimage; a love which has associated itself with every moment of our spiritual being; a love which has borne our sorrows. With us, and mingled with our joys; a love which has been ever as watchful as it is tender, as ardent as it is lasting; a love which has cared for us in sickness and health; a love without autumn and winter; a love which only clings closer as heart and flesh fail, and which is ready to welcome us for ever into the place it has prepared for us in the mansions of the Father's house. -- D.K.T. DRUMMOND, B.A.

THE CHILDREN'S SERVICE.

OF A GREAT WONDER WROUGHT BY A SERPENT OF BRASS.

WHAT I am now about to tell you of, happened very near to the time when the wanderings of the people of Israel were coming to an end. They had come to the borders of the country of Edom and their straight road to Canaan, by the east side of the Jordan, lay through that country. The place where they were encamped was called Kadesh. They had been there once before, a great many years back. It was from that place that Moses sent forth the twelve men, one from each tribe, to spy out the land. When the spies returned, ten of them frightened the people with the account they gave of the country and the giants that lived in it; and though the other two said in faith that the land was good, and that God was able to give it to them, the ten were believed, and the host would not go forward. Then God was angry for their want of trust in him, and he said that all the grown men would be left to die in the desert. So he made them wander about in the wilderness for forty years. These were now, however, drawing to a close, and the people were brought back to Kadesh again. This time God did not bid them go straight into Canaan by the south, but

meant to lead them in from the east, across the Jordan. So Moses

sent word to the king of Edom, asking him to allow Israel to go through his land, promising to hurt nothing, and to buy and pay for all the things they might need. Now the people of Edom were the descendants of Esau, the brother of Jacob from whom the Israelites were sprung, and one might have thought that their king would have said, Certainly; pass through my land by all means; especially as the message of Moses was a very kind and polite one. But the king said, No, you must not pass through my country, and brought out his army to fight against them and hinder them. So God told his people to go round another way. But this way took them back again into the desert, and led them a long way about. They were very much discouraged by the long hot journeys they had to take, and they began to complain and murmur once more against Moses and against God. No doubt it was a hard trial to them to be turned back after they were so near the land of promise, and to be made to travel through the sandy wilderness again, which would look very dry and bare after they had seen the green plains of Edom; but they should have thought of all the kindness of God to them, and have borne their toils for a little longer waiting to see how God would lead them. But this they did not do; and God was very angry with them for their hard complaining words after all he had done for them. So he

sent fiery flying serpents to bite them. I suppose the serpents leaping from place to place, seemed to fly, without actually having wings. But be that as it may, their bite was very deadly, and a great many persons were poisoned and died. Then the people began to think, and to feel that they had been unthankful and impatient; and they sent to Moses and confessed to him that they had sinned, and asked him to pray to God to take the fiery serpents away. Well, Moses went and prayed to God about it, and then happened the wonderful thing of which I was to tell you.

God said to Moses, Make a thing of brass, of the shape of the fiery flying serpents that have stung the people, and set it up on a high pole, and tell the people when anyone is bitten, and feels that he is poisoned and must die, just to look to the brazen serpent, and he shall live. Moses did not stop to say, What good would it do to look at a piece of shining brass, when one had got deadly venom in his veins; he went at once and did what God had bidden him. He knew that God could do what he pleased by any means he liked to use. He had sometimes wondered before how God could do what he said he would, and had been answered by God's saying to him, Is any thing too hard for the Lord? This time he did not object nor wonder at all, but had a brazen serpent made, and raised it high up on a standard pole, so that from all points of the camp it could be seen plainly. The yellow brass glittered in the sunshine, and

could be looked at a long way off. Then Moses sent heralds all through the camp to cry aloud, that if any person should be bitten by a fiery flying serpent, he might be healed at once by turning his eyes to the serpent of brass. I suppose when the people heard that, it would sound very strange to them, and some would scarce believe it. Perhaps some might be mad enough to say, What good can looking do? and to die rather than look. But probably it was otherwise; for people do not like to die, and will try any means to live; and the children of Israel had seen God work so many wonders that when they were brought to think, they could hardly doubt that he was able to do this wonderful thing as well. So they began to look when they were bitten, and when they looked they were healed at once. Soon nobody was afraid of the serpents and by and by they left the camp altogether. I dare say you have seen pictures of this strange cure, and perhaps you may recollect seeing the figures of poor dying men and women with their eyes turned towards the pole holding on high the serpent-shape of brass, and among them fathers and mothers lifting up little children that had been bitten so that they might look, and be healed. It is something like what the poet who has made such beautiful lines about the rainbow, says was done, in these lines: --

“And when thy heavenly radiance smiled
O’er mountains yet untrod;

The mother held her child
To bless the bow of God.”

Perhaps, in the case at least of very young children, if any such were bitten by the serpents, it was not needful that they should themselves see the brazen cure. Perhaps the look of faith by father or mother brought health to the babe. In all cases, however, you should notice that it required to be a look of faith -- of trust in God's power and in his promise. If a bitten Israelite, without knowing of what Moses had done by command of God, or paying no regard to the proclamation about looking, had just chanced to cast a glance at the brazen serpent, I do not suppose that the brass would have acted like a charm. If anyone had looked, saying, all the while, that he was sure it would do him no good, he would have died of the bite all the same. But when others were getting life by a look, it is not likely that any would neglect to look, or look without hope. What joy there must have been in the camp when the cures were found to be so easily wrought! Surely there would be also thankful worship of God. There would, too, no doubt, be much talking to one another about what had happened, much talking by the wounded who had been healed as to how they had felt, when like to die, and then made to live so wonderfully.

Many hundreds of years after this occurred in the wilderness, Jesus, conversing with Nicodemus, referred to what Moses did by the command, and made use of it to preach the gospel very sweetly. He said, "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up; that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life." He meant by this that he was to be lifted up on the cross, and to his throne on high, and then in the preaching of his name as the Saviour; and that just as the dying Israelites were saved from death by looking, so by trusting in Jesus perishing men would be saved from hell and sin. The proclamation of the gospel may be said to be, Look and live. We have almost these very words in a text of Isaiah, which is one of those which all young people should have by heart. Will you learn it now will you try to act on it? It is this: -- "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is none else."

QUESTIONS ON THE BIBLE STORY.

1. In what chapter of Isaiah is the text just quoted to be found?

2. Where are the words of our Lord, cited a little before, to be met with?
3. Find another text where Jesus speaks about his being lifted up, and predicts a grand effect?
4. Where do we read of one who received healing of a very sore disease, by simply touching an object?
5. What was it that Moses himself thought at first God would not be able to do?
6. What were the names of the two spies that did not join the rest in giving a bad report of the land?
7. Find places where they are mentioned as both alive after the people of Israel had gone into Canaan?
8. What great word of commendation is repeatedly spoken about one of them?
9. Where is the other of them called Jesus?

ANSWERS to the foregoing questions will be found by consulting the following chapters: --Isa. xlv.; John iii.; John xii.; Mark v.; Num. xi.; Num. xiv.; Josh. xiv.; Acts vii., and Heb. iv.

Prayer.

O LORD God of salvation, we thank Thee that Thou hast sent Jesus to heal our souls. We rejoice that when He was on earth He cured a great many diseases. We are sure He is quite as able to cure the sickness of the soul, as He showed Himself to cure that of the body. We come to Him for healing for sin, for we need it. We pray Him, to make our hearts clean and whole. We know of none that can save us but Himself. We look to him, and try to trust His grace. "Lord, touch us and we shall be healed; O bless us, and we shall be blest." To Father, Son, and Spirit be glory for ever. *Amen.*

EVENING WORSHIP.

O LORD, who hast taught us that all our doings, without love, are nothing worth, send Thy Holy Spirit, and pour into our hearts that most excellent gift of love, the very bond of peace and of all virtues, without which whosoever liveth is counted dead before Thee. Grant this for Thine only Son Jesus Christ's sake. *Amen.*

HYMN, or *Psalm clviii.* 1, 2-10, 11.

HOW heavy is the night
That hangs upon our eyes,
Till Christ, with his reviving light,
To cheer our souls arise!

Our guilty spirits dread
To meet the wrath of Heaven;
But in his righteousness array'd,
We see our sins forgiven.

Unholy and impure
Are all our thoughts and ways;
'Tis his th' infected heart to cure
With sanctifying grace.

The powers of hell agree
To hold our souls in vain;
He sets the sons of bondage free
And breaks their cursed chain.

Lord, we adore thy ways
To bring us near to God,
Thy sov'reign power, thy healing grace,
And thine atoning blood.

PSALM LXXII.

GIVE the king thy judgments, O God, and thy righteousness unto the king's son. 2. He shall judge thy people with righteousness, and thy poor with judgment. 3. The mountains shall bring peace to the people, and the little hills, by righteousness. 4. He shall judge the poor of the people, he shall save the children of the needy, and shall break in pieces the oppressor. 5. They shall hear thee as long as the sun and moon endure, throughout all generations. 6. He shall come down like rain upon the mown grass; as showers that water the earth. 7. In his days shall the righteous flourish; and abundance of peace so long as the moon endureth. 8. He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth. 9. They that dwell in the wilderness shall bow before him; and his enemies shall lick the dust. 10. The kings of Tarshish and of the isles shall bring presents: the kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts. 11. Yea, all kings shall fall down before him; all nations shall serve him. 12 For he shall deliver the needy when he crieth; the poor also, and him

that hath no helper. 13. He shall spare the poor and needy, and shall save the souls of the needy. 14. He shall redeem their soul from deceit and violence: and precious shall their blood be in his sight. 15 And he shall live, and to him shall be given of the gold of Sheba: prayer also shall be made for him continually; and daily shall he be praised. 16. There shall be an handful of corn upon the top of the mountains; the fruit thereof shall shake like Lebanon: and they of the city shall flourish like grass of the earth. 17. His name shall endure for ever; his name shall be continued as long as the sun; and men shall be blessed in him: all nations shall call him blessed. 18. Blessed be the Lord God, the God of Israel, who only doeth wondrous things. 19. And blessed be his glorious name for ever: and let the whole earth be filled with his glory; Amen, and Amen. 20. The prayers of David the son of Jesse are ended.

REVELATION XI. 14-17.

THE second woe is past; and behold, the third woe cometh quickly. 15. And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever. 16. And the four and twenty elders, which sat before God on their seats, fell upon

their faces, and worshipped God, 17. Saying, We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come; because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned.

1 THESSALONIANS V. 15-24.

SEE that none render evil for evil unto any man; but ever follow that which is good, both among yourselves, and to all men. 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.

1 PETER III. 8-12.

FINALLY, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another; love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous; 9. Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise

blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called that ye should inherit a blessing. 10. For he that will love life, and see good days let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile: 11. Let him eschew evil, and do good; let him seek peace, and ensue it. 12. For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous,, and his ears are open unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil.

Prayer.

WE thank Thee, heavenly Father, for the mercies of another sabbath day, for the privileges of private prayer and meditation on Thy holy word, and for the public ordinances of Thy day and house. We entreat Thee to forgive the sin which mars all our duties and mingles in all our services. Thou hast witnessed much in us this day which may well cover us with shame -- carelessness, wandering thoughts, worldly-mindedness, spiritual sloth; all these, and whatever else Thou has seen amiss, forgive, for the sake of Him who is our advocate with the Father and the propitiation for our sins.

And we earnestly pray Thee to seal us now by Thine own Holy Spirit. Take away what belongs to us. Give us what pertains to Thee. Bring home to our consciences, help us to retain in our hearts, all the truth which Thou has presented before us this day, and fill us with joy unspeakable in the possession of that which is more to be desired than gold, and sweeter than honey and the honeycomb; and may our profiting appear unto all men. Send us forth anew to the ordinary duties of life, with a fresh baptism of thy Spirit, and with ever increasing tokens that we have been with Jesus. May we be more Christ-like. Grant us to drink into his spirit, to lean upon His arm, to walk in His blessed steps, and to be conformed to His image. May He who is the light of life shine in our hearts and shine forth in our lives. And give us more grace, that we may contend earnestly and successfully against all our spiritual enemies. Clothe us anew with the whole armour of God, that we may fight the good fight, as seeing Him who is invisible. Give us calm and holy trustfulness in Thee when thou makest our mountain to stand strong; and if it be Thy will that troubles and trials await us, may our feet be shod as with iron and brass, and as our day, so may our strength be. Guide us all our journey through, from grace to grace, from sabbath to sabbath, until we enter on the rest that remains -- enjoy the sabbath which never ends, and join in the congregation of Thy saints for evermore.

And we desire at the close of this day to bear in mind before Thee all our brethren of mankind. Have pity on the nations. Alas! how many are yet in darkness. O send out Thy light and Thy truth. Pour out Thy Spirit on all flesh, and send forth labourers into Thy harvest, and may light spring up in all lands. Dispel the grosser darkness of antichristian superstition and error. Sound loudly Thy warning to Thy people in the spiritual Babylon, and speedily bring them out, lest they be partakers of her plagues. Deliver those who are in bondage under the delusions of the false prophet. Take away the dreadful curse which still rests on Thine ancient people. May they in these latter days look unto Him whom they have pierced, and mourn, and be yet again grafted into their own olive-tree. May the kingdoms of the earth to which in Thy providence many outward blessings have been vouchsafed, learn the true wisdom of serving the Lord, and seek first that righteousness which alone exalteth a people. Mercifully look on our native land. Manifold have been and are our provocations against Thee, and wonderful have been thy long suffering and patience towards us -- our kings, our rulers, our whole nations. O cast us not away from Thy presence! Leave us not to our idols. Give us not over to the sins which defile and degrade us. In the midst of wrath remember mercy. Spare us good Lord. Turn our hearts back again to Thee. May our churches be purified from all

evil leaven. May the great social iniquities which abound be removed. Purify us unto Thyself, as a peculiar people, zealous of good works. Give Thy blessing to all true-hearted labourers among us, whether their efforts are directed to those at home or abroad. Direct and sanctify all zeal for education, that while the needful culture of the mind is cared for, the precious things of the soul may be paramount. Crown with success all efforts to secure the honourable peace of our country. Let all exertions to improve the condition of the people at large, as regards both bodily and spiritual necessities be largely owned by Thee. When Thou dost afflict with any of Thy sore judgments, give deep humiliation and true repentance; and when Thou dost withdraw Thy heavy hand, give grateful and loving hearts to Thee, who doest all things well, and according to Thy will, in heaven and in earth.

And now, Lord, we commend ourselves and all our loved ones to Thee. Thou Shepherd of Israel, who never slumberest, watch over them and us. Keep us all under the shadow of the Almighty and in the secret place of the Most High; and give to us more gracious foretastes every sabbath-day on earth of that day when we shall serve Thee in thy temple, without weariness and without sin, for evermore. Even so, come, Lord Jesus, come quickly; come and take the kingdom to thyself, and reign for evermore. Amen.

MORNING AND EVENING MEDITATIONS.

MONDAY.

Morning.

Be filled with the Spirit:

Speaking to yourselves in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord;

Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God.

Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord.

For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church; and he is the saviour of the body.

Therefore, as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing.

Eph v. 18, 19, 21, 22, 23, 24.

Evening.

Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life.

But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man.

For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies.

For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit.

For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace;

Prov. iv. 24. Matt. xv. 18, 19. Rom. viii. 5, 6.

TUESDAY.

Morning.

Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it;

That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word;

That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy, and without blemish.

So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies: he that loveth his wife loveth himself.

For no man ever yet hated his own flesh but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church.

Be diligent, that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless.

Eph. v. 25, 26, 27, 28, 29.

2 Pet. iii. 14.

Evening.

**Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain
that build it: except the Lord keep the city, the watchman
waketh but in vain.**

It is vain for you to rise up early, to sit up late, to eat
the bread of sorrows: for so he giveth his beloved sleep.

Lo, children are an heritage of the Lord: and the fruit
of the womb is his reward.

As arrows are in the hand of a mighty man; so are
children of the youth.

Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them: they
shall not be ashamed, but they shall speak with the enemies
in the gate.

Ps. cxxvii. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5.

WEDNESDAY.

Morning.

**Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers:
for what fellowship hath righteousness with
unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with
darkness?**

And what concord hath Christ with Belial? Or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?

And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

Wherefore, come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you.

2 Cor. vi. 14, 15, 16, 17.

Evening.

Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!

It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard, that went down to the skirts of his garments;

As the dew of Hermon, and as the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion: for there the Lord commanded the blessing, even life for evermore.

Can two walk together, except they be agreed?

Let brotherly love continue.

Blessed are the peace-makers: for they shall be called the children of God.

If we love one another, God dwelleth in us.

Ps. cxxxiii. 1, 2, 3. Amos iii. 3. Heb. xiii. 1.
Matt. v. 9. 1 John iv. 12.

THURSDAY.

Morning.

Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord.

Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them.

Children, obey your parents in all things: for this is well-pleasing unto the Lord.

Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged.

Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh; not with eye-service, as men-pleasers; but in singleness of heart, fearing God:

And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men.

Masters, give unto your servants that which is just and equal,

Forbearing threatening: knowing that your Master also is in heaven; neither is there respect of persons with him.

Col. iii. 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23. Col. iv. 1. Eph. vi. 9.

Evening.

But this I say, brethren, the time is short: it remaineth, that both they that have wives be as though they had none;

And they that weep, as though they wept not; and they that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not; and they that buy, as though they possessed not;

And they that use this world, as not abusing it: for the fashion of this world passeth away.

For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men,

Teaching us, that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world;

Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.

1 Cor. vii. 29, 30, 31. Titus ii. 11, 12, 13.

FRIDAY.

Morning.

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge; but fools despise wisdom and instruction.

My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not.

Walk not thou in the way with them; refrain thy foot from their path.

So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God.

Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumbling block, or an occasion to fall, in his brother's way.

Prov. i. 7, 10, 15. Rom. xiv. 12, 13.

Evening.

Unto thee lift I up mine eyes, O thou that dwellest in the heavens.

Behold, as the eyes of servants look unto the hand of their masters, and as the eyes of a maiden unto the hand of her mistress; so our eyes wait upon the Lord our God, until that he have mercy upon us.

I wait for the Lord, my soul doth wait, and in his word do I hope.

My soul waiteth for the Lord more than they that watch for the morning; I say, more than they that watch for the morning.

Ps. cxxiii. 1, 2. Ps. cxxx. 5, 6.

SATURDAY.

Morning.

Judge not, that ye be not judged.

For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged:
and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you
again.

And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy
brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine
own eye?

Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out
the mote out of thine eye? and, behold, a beam is in thine
own eye?

Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine
own
eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote of
thy brother's eye.

Matt. vii. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5.

Evening.

**But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace,
long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith,**

Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.

And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh,
with the affections and lusts.

If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.

Let us not be desirous of vain-glory, provoking one
another, envying one another.

And as many as walk according to this rule, peace be
on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God.

Gal. v. 22, 23, 24, 25, 26. Gal. vi. 16.