

HOME PREACHER OR CHURCH IN THE HOUSE.

THIRTIETH WEEK.

MORNING WORSHIP.

GOD of Love, who hast sent Thy Son Jesus Christ to be an high priest of good things to come, and by His own blood to enter in once into the holy place, having obtained an eternal redemption for us, mercifully look upon Thy people, that by the same blood of our Saviour, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot unto Thee, our consciences may be purged from dead works, to serve Thee the living God, that we may receive the promise of eternal inheritance, through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

HYMN, *or Psalm* xxii. 1-5.

GO to dark Gethsemane,
Ye that feel the Tempter's power;
Your Redeemer's conflict see:
Watch with him one bitter hour;
Turn not from his griefs away;
Learn of Jesus Christ to pray.

Follow to the judgment-hall;
View the Lord of life arraigned.
O the wormwood and the gall!
O the pangs his soul sustained!
Shun not suffering, shame or loss!
Learn of him to bear the cross.

Calvary's mournful mountain climb;
There adoring at his feet,
Mark that miracle of time --
God's own sacrifice complete.
It is finished! hear Him cry:
Learn of Jesus Christ to die.

Early hasten to the tomb,
Where they laid his breathless clay,
All is solitude and gloom:
Who hath taken Him away?
Christ is risen, He seeks the skies:
Saviour, each us so to rise.

LEVITICUS XIX. 9-17.

AND when ye reap the harvest of your land, thou shalt not wholly reap the corners of thy field, neither shalt thou gather the gleanings of thy harvest. 10. And thou shalt not glean thy vineyard, neither shalt thou gather every grape of thy vineyard; thou shalt leave them for the poor and stranger: I am the Lord your God. 11. Ye shall not steal, neither deal falsely, neither lie one to another. 12. And ye shall not swear by my name falsely, neither shalt thou profane the name of thy God: I am the Lord. 13. Thou shalt not defraud thy neighbour, neither rob him: the wages of him that is hired shall not abide with thee all night until the morning. 14. Thou shalt not curse the deaf, nor put a stumbling block before the blind, but shalt fear thy God: I am the Lord. 15. Ye shall do no unrighteousness in judgment; thou shalt not respect the person of the poor, nor honour the person of the mighty: but in righteousness shalt thou judge thy neighbour. 16. Thou shalt not go up and down as a tale-bearer among thy people; neither shalt thou stand against the blood of thy neighbour: I am the Lord. 17. Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thine heart: thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbour, and not suffer sin upon him.

PSALM CXIX. 1-8.

BLESSED are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the Lord. 2. Blessed are they that keep his testimonies, and that seek him with the whole heart. 3. They also do no iniquity: they walk in his ways. 4. Thou hast commanded us to keep thy precepts diligently. 5. O that my ways were directed to keep thy statutes! 6. Then shall I not be ashamed, when I have respect unto all thy commandments. 7. I will praise thee with uprightness of heart, when I shall have learned thy righteous judgments. 8. I will keep thy statutes: O forsake me not utterly.

Prayer.

ALMIGHTY God, our heavenly Father! we invoke Thy name, and beseech Thee to turn away Thy face from our manifold sins and transgressions, whereby we have not ceased to draw Thine anger upon us. And because we are most unworthy to appear before Thy sovereign majesty, be pleased to regard us only in Thy well-beloved Son Jesus Christ, accepting the merits of His death in satisfaction for all our offences, that by His atonement we may become well-pleasing in Thy sight. Pour upon us Thy Holy Spirit,

illuminating our minds in the true understanding of Thy word; and bestow upon us grace, that, receiving Thy truth into our hearts with humility and fear, we may be led to put all our trust in Thee only, and live in Thy service and worship, to the glory of Thy holy name. These benefits we ask, not only for ourselves, but also for all people and nations on the earth. Bring back, O Lord, into the right way of salvation all poor captives of ignorance and false doctrine. Raise up true and faithful ministers of the word, who shall seek not their own ease and ambition, but the exaltation of Thy name, and the safety of Thy flock.

Remove and scatter all heresies, and errors, which are the nurseries of strife and dissension in Thy church; and may all Thy people be of one mind, and live in brotherly union.

Rule thou and govern with Thy Spirit all kings, princes and magistrates, who hold the administration of the sword; that their dominion may be exercised, not in avarice, cruelty, and oppression, or any other evil and inordinate affection, but in all justice and uprightness. May we also, living under them, pay them due honour and reverence, and lead quiet and peaceable lives, in all godliness and honesty. Comfort all distressed and afflicted persons, whom Thou dost visit with any kind of cross or tribulation; the nations whom Thou dost chasten with war, pestilence, and famine, or any other plague; and all men whom Thou dost afflict with poverty, imprisonment, sickness, banishment, or any other distress

of body or infirmity of mind. Grant them firm patience under their trials, and speedily bring them out of their afflictions. Confirm and strengthen all Thy faithful children, who in any place are suffering persecution for the testimony of Thy heavenly truth. Give them steadfast constancy; console them; suffer not the rage of the wicked to prevail against them; but enable them to glorify Thy name, as well in life as in death. Preserve and defend all Thy churches which at this day are labouring and fighting for the testimony of Thy blessed name. Defeat and overturn all the counsels of their enemies, their machinations and devices. Grant unto the ministers and members of Thy church true unity in spirit and in truth, that so Thy glory may be revealed, and the kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ be increased and promoted, till it shall fill the whole earth. All this we ask of Thee in the name of our sovereign Lord and Master, Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

THE CHURCH IN THE HOUSE.

WE bow our knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that he would enable us by His grace to be more and more partakers of Christ in loving Thee our God with heart, soul, and strength, and our neighbour as ourselves, thus having fellowship with the Father and the Son, and with one another. *Amen.*

HYMN, *or Psalm cxvi.* 1-8.

HARK, my soul, it is the Lord;
'Tis thy Saviour; hear his word,
Jesus speaks, and speaks to thee--
Say, poor sinner, lov'st thou Me?

I delivered thee when bound,
And, when bleeding, healed thy wound:
Sought thee wandering, set thee right:
Turned thy darkness into light.

Can a woman's tender care
Cease towards the child she bare?
Yes, she may forgetful be,
Yet will I remember thee.

Mine is an unchanging love,
Higher than the heights above;
Deeper than the depths beneath:
Free and faithful, strong as death.

Thou shalt see my glory soon,
When the work of grace is done;
Partner of my reign shalt be,
Say, poor sinner; lov'st thou Me?

Lord, it is my chief complaint,
That my love is weak and faint,
Yet I love Thee, and adore:

O for grace to love Thee more.

JOB XXXI. 13-22.

IF I did despise the cause of my man-servant, or of my maid-servant, when they contended with me: 14. What then shall I do when God riseth up? and when he visiteth, what shall I answer him? 15. Did not he that made me in the womb make him? and did not one fashion us in the womb? 16. If I have withheld the poor from their desire, or have caused the eyes of the widow to fail; 17. Or have eaten my morsel myself alone, and the fatherless hath not eaten thereof; 18. (For from my youth he was brought up with me, as with a father, and I have guided her from my mother's womb;) 19. If I have seen any perish for want of clothing, or any poor without covering; 20. If his lions have not blessed me, and if he were not armed with the fleece of my sheep; 21. If I have lifted up my hand against the fatherless, when I saw my help in the gate; 22. Then let mine arm fall from my shoulder-blade, and mine arm be broken from the bone.

ISAIAH. LVIII. 1-7.

CRY aloud, spare not; lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and shew my people their transgression, and the house of Jacob

their sins. 2. Yet they seek me daily, and delight to know my ways, as a nation that did righteousness, and forsook not the ordinance of their God: they ask of me the ordinances of justice; they take delight in approaching to God. 3. Wherefore have we fasted, say they, and thou seest not? wherefore have we afflicted our soul, and thou takest no knowledge? Behold in the day of your fast ye find pleasure, and exact all your labours. 4. Behold, ye fast for strife and debate, and to smite with the fist of wickedness: ye shall not fast as ye do this day, to make your voice to be heard on high. 5. Is it such a fast that I have chosen? a day for a man to afflict his soul? 6. Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke? 7. Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? when thou seest the naked, that thou cover him; and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh?

SERMON XXX.

“LET EVERY ONE OF US PLEASE HIS NEIGHBOR FOR HIS GOOD TO EDIFICATION. FOR EVEN CHRIST PLEASED NOT HIMSELF.”

--Romans xv. 2, 3.

THERE is a pleasing of our neighbour which is very different from that here described -- a pleasing of him by chiming in with his prejudices; by flattering his infirmities; by complying with his sinful wishes; by laughing at his wicked jokes; by countenancing him in his evil ways; in short, by doing, or *not* doing, that which will insure us *popularity* with our neighbour, though at the expense of principle in ourselves. This is, indeed, pleasing him as we please the drunkard when we give him intoxicating drink, or the self-willed when we give them their own way; but such gratifying of our neighbour is not pleasing him “for his good to edification,” but rather for his injury to destruction. And nothing is more common than this sort of pleasing of each other. It is done, people say, “for the sake of peace,” “to give no offence.” With such plausible excuses, men cloak over their unprincipled and slothful selfishness and want of love to their neighbour. For if they really loved their neighbour -- if they felt themselves responsible for their

conduct towards him -- if they were concerned for his *good*, they would seek to please him consistently with that good, and in such a way as he would thank them for at the day of judgment. What we all must learn is to seek our neighbour's well-being, so that his evil should be our burden, and his good our happiness and reward. We must learn *so* to love him, as that we shall, if necessary, *displease* him, and put him to pain, and make him perhaps angry with us for a time, if in this way only we can do him good in the end; just as a kind surgeon will put us to pain in order to save our lives.

“Every one of us” must thus please his neighbour; because every one has some neighbour thus to please. Were it asked, “Who is my neighbour?” We reply, that person, whoever he be, with whom God in his providence brings us into contact; whether we meet him by accident for a few minutes only, or associate with him every day of our life; the person, in short, who can in any way be influenced by us -- by what we are, as well as by what we do. That person is our neighbour, is more or less closely “bound up in the bundle of life” with us; and in as far as we can by word, look, or action, “please him for his good,” so far it is our duty and privilege, as fellow-workers with God, to do so.

A moment's consideration will show us, that there is no one, however poor, however unknown, however unlearned, but has, at least, one talent of influence which he may use,

and which he dare not lay up in a napkin. Not only so, but that he also possesses greater opportunities of influencing one or more individuals, than any other person on earth has. Let us ask, for instance, whether there is not some one whom we know better, and come in contact with more frequently, than any others do? It may be our child or parent, or brother or sister, our fellow-workman or daily acquaintance; but some one there is whom we know better than anyone else does, and who is, therefore, in a *special* sense, our neighbor, one for whom we are therefore responsible. This one talent every man possesses, -- while thousands, from their position in society, possess may more: this one work each one of us may do for others, and, perhaps, no one else can do it so well as ourselves. The opportunity of doing this good, is a power given us by God, which is peculiarly our own. We cannot point to a single case in which this will not hold true. That old decrepit woman, who cannot stir from her chair by the fireside, may, nevertheless, day by day, "please the children who play around her knee, "for their good to edification" -- a good which may tell upon families yet unborn. That poor invalid who can scarcely move or speak, may by patience, and love, and meekness, and consideration of the feeling of others, springing from trust in God, shed a holy influence around her dying bed. That sick-nurse, who watches beside this other sleepless sufferer, may, in the silence of the night,

speaking words which, by God's blessing, may end in life everlasting. That infirm man, who for support leans on his staff, may by his affectionate advices to the young -- his pious visits, rich in prayer, to his sick neighbours -- his kindly words, and peaceful happy walk before all - scatter blessings round him while he lives, and leave them behind him in the hearts of many when he dies. But not to multiply instances, or to select them from higher walks in life, it will suffice to say, that if we only remember how each one of us comes in contact with many individuals every day -- and how every hour we cannot but exercise *some* influence upon them -- we must see how we never can want neighbours, whom we have the means of "pleasing for their good to edification." This talent of doing good or evil to others, is a very solemn one. But it is a fact, and no power of ours can alter it; nor should we seek to have it otherwise; for all God's appointments are good, both for the world and for us. In order to make this great talent gain other talents, one thing is needful; but that is everything -- viz., *that we be good ourselves*. If we first please God, by giving Him our hearts for our own good to salvation, then we cannot but choose to please our neighbour for his good to edification. Should any one still ask, "Who is my neighbour?" we would refer them to the reply given by our Lord to the same question, in the Parable of the Good Samaritan.

2. But we may illustrate the duty of pleasing our neighbour in another way.

Few errors are more common in daily life, than supposing, either that others are of no importance to us, or that we are of no importance to others. These errors stand and fall together. The moment we discover how much our state is affected by others, that moment we also discover how much the state of others is affected by our own. Now, when we ask, "What are others to us" -- as if they really were nothing to us -- is it possible that we seriously believe this to be true, or that we can imagine ourselves to be so separated from our kind as to be beyond the reach of their influence? Let us consider the matter calmly. If, for example, any of us were in deep family affliction -- if we had lost a beloved wife or child, and our heart was breaking beside our lonely fireside -- and if a neighbour, that is, anyone, who was hitherto almost a stranger to us, entered our house, and spoke kind and sympathizing words to us -- shed his tears with ours, and convinced us by his whole manner that he felt for us with a brother's heart, -- could we say then, "My neighbour is nothing to me?" If we and our family were confined to beds of sickness, with little in the house to support us, and everything going to wreck and ruin; and if this man or woman visited us, cheered us up with words of hope, shared their food gladly with us and our children, and if we required it, they with ready hand

performed those little domestic duties to our household, which restore a look of comfort and neatness to our dwelling -- would such neighbours be nothing to us? If we were in spiritual difficulties and soul distresses; and if in our hour of darkness, when temptations were overcoming us, when we were backsliding from God, or when we had fallen into sin, and were by our own carelessness and godlessness becoming separated from our best friends; yea, if when we were seeking to live without God in the world, a Christian neighbour came to us -- not in the spirit of anger, to upbraid us, or in the spirit of pride to trample us down--but, in the spirit of meekness and of love, to carry our heavy burden, making it his own; grieving over our misery; helping to restore us to God, and to restore us to ourselves; affectionately warning us, encouraging us, and earnestly praying with us -- tell me, would such a neighbor as this be nothing to us? We will not multiply the various ways in which a neighbour might please us for our good. And we need not ask, if such brotherly kindness would touch our heart. We know it would. Deeds far less considerate than these excite our gratitude; we acknowledge that such neighbours would make the world look to us far brighter than in the case supposed, and life in spite of its sorrows would be a very sunshine. After such experience of goodwill from our fellow-men, we would never again say, "My neighbour is nothing to me;" but would rather confess

with thankfulness “my neighbour is everything to me: he is my help, my counsellor, my friend. I know not what I would have done without him.” Ah! then, we cannot choose but see what an effect such neighbours would have upon our good and happiness. And why? Because they were rich? No! or learned? No? they may possibly be humble unknown men and women; poor and unknown, as Jesus Christ and his parents were. What have they, then, which has made them of such importance to us? They have *hearts* -- hearts touched with the love of God and man. Silver and gold they may have none; but what they have they gave to us -- tender sympathy, willing aid, sincere prayers, sweet and tender charity; and this, thank God, the poor can give the poor; and upon the giving of this depends the world’s good and happiness, more than on aught else beside! Our neighbour has learned this grand lesson from his Master -- not to please himself, but to please us for our good; he has trampled under foot the selfish and unchristian saying, “I keep myself to myself;” and he has put in its place one more worthy a follower of Christ, “I give myself to thee.” And though this neighbour is of little importance to the big, noisy world, he is of great importance to us. He is like the candle or the food in our house -- if the one were extinguished, and the other removed, neither would be missed by the world; but they would be very greatly missed by us and by our family.

But if we now see clearly how others may tell upon our good and happiness, we hope we also see how, in the very same way, we may tell upon the good and happiness of others? What does any neighbour do to us, which we may not do to them? He commenced this kind of intercourse. Until he entered our door, we had no idea there was so much love in the world -- we had hard thoughts of men; but this kind of brotherly dealing gives us a new view of things. We begin to think, that such Bible texts as these -- "be kindly affectioned one towards another, in honour preferring one another;" "Bear ye one another's burdens and so fulfil the law of Christ;" "Consider one another, and provoke to love and to good works;" "Love seeketh not her own" -- are not heard from the pulpit or read in a book merely, but are seen in living epistles, and are read in the lives of Christian men. Nay, that Christian neighbour has brought out of our own heart feelings of gratitude, kindness, and sympathy, which we thought were dead, but which were only sleeping there; and, by so doing, he has made us better -- he has made us happier. Well, then, *what he has been to us, we may be to others.* "Go thou and do likewise." Some of our neighbours have hard or indifferent thoughts of us, as we once had of the world. Go and change them. Some are saying, "We have heard of Christianity, we should like to see a Christian." Go and show them one, by opening to them a Christian's heart and life, and not a

Christian's opinions merely. And so that good neighbour made us feel he was of importance to us, so may we as good neighbours make ourselves felt to be of importance to others. We repeat it, we need nothing else than heart which truly loves God and man -- that is, the heart of a child of God -- to be an unspeakable blessing, and of immense importance in our present place in society. Our words and example may awaken in many a now miserable home a note of gladness, which will be echoed on earth through many generations, and endure for ever in heaven. No man is common-place who loves God and his fellow-men: this makes every man great. Let us, then, never again shut our heart against our neighbour, nor, with a Cain-like spirit, ask, "Am I my brother's keeper?" but rather, with Christ-like spirit, seek "to please him for his good to edification," and to "love him as ourselves!" and I doubt not we will very soon, even in this world, have our reward -- the highest reward which a loving heart seeks -- to be loved in return.

3. But the Apostle further sets before us Jesus Christ as the great example of self-sacrificing love, when he says, "even Christ pleased not himself." Even Christ! He who is the first-born of every creature, heir of all things" -- "who is God over all, blessed for ever." Even *He* pleased not himself," but sacrificed himself for his neighbour; and we need not ask of Him who his neighbour is, who himself not

only perfectly loved the Lord his God, but his “neighbour as himself.” Christ’s neighbour was, every man. By this glorious example does the Apostle, in writing to the Philippians, exhort Christians to consider the well-being of others. “Let nothing be done through strife or vain-glory; but in lowliness of mind, let each esteem others better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others. Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus; who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God; but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.”

“Even Christ pleased not himself.” These words describe his character. For the sake of others, He came into the world; for others He lived; for others He prayed; for others He wept; for others He died; for others He intercedes; and for others He will come again! The works and words of every day He spent upon earth, are a comment upon this beautiful picture, “He pleased not himself.”

That we may realize to ourselves the unselfishness, if I may so speak, of our blessed Master’s character, let us glance at that portion of his history which is embraced in the last week of his life; and see how, in the most

overwhelmingly trying circumstances, He ever forgot himself in seeking the good of others.

A few days before his crucifixion, He entered Jerusalem as a king: multitudes met him by the way and welcomed Him with loud hosannahs; never before had He been so honoured, or received. It was the only day of triumph He had in his life. He reached the brow of the hill which overlooked Jerusalem. "He beheld the city!" -- the city so long highly favoured by God, and now about to perish for its impenitence -- and that sight absorbs his whole thoughts. He thinks not of himself; nor is He attracted by the applauses of the people. His heart is with his eye; and both rest upon desolate Zion. He weeps bitter tears; and his wailing cry is, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem! O! that thou, even thou, hadst known the things of thy peace!" In the beautiful language of Jeremy Taylor, "He wet the palms with his tears, sweeter than the drops of manna, or the little pearls that descended on Mount Hermon; weeping, in the midst of his triumph, over obstinate, perishing, malicious Jerusalem. For this Jesus was like the rainbow; He was half made of the glories of the light, and half of the moisture of a cloud; in his best days He was but half triumph, and half sorrow!" Behold Him again the evening before his death, seated at the paschal supper with his disciples! What an utter forgetfulness of himself --- what a seeking of the good of others -- does He manifest in all He

said, and in all He did! He does not ask his disciples to comfort *Him*, to sympathize with *Him*, though *He* was to be the sufferer. His whole time is occupied in pleasing *them* for their good to edification;” “Let not *your* hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid.” There is not a thought about himself expressed. He warns, He exhorts, He instructs, He cheers, his disciples; and prepares them for coming trial, and for temptation. He is indeed, troubled in spirit; but it is with making the sad announcement, that one whom He had always trusted as his friend is about to betray Him.

The supper is over; “His hour was come that He should depart out of this world to his Father.” Yet, ‘having loved his own which were in the world, He loved them to the end.’ That love, like all true love, will stoop to do the humblest acts, in order to do good to the beloved object. We read, accordingly, that “Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that He was come from God, and went to God” -- what then? With the full knowledge of the glory which He had left, and to which He was about to return, and of the universal dominion which the Father had given -- yet, O! marvellous love, which seeketh not her own -- “He riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments, and girded himself, and poureth water into a basin, *and began to wash the disciples’ feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded.*” *How true is it, that “even Christ pleased not himself!”*

Our Lord is in the garden of Gethsemane. He is about to pass through unheard of agony, as our Saviour -- agony immeasurable, incomprehensible! But He thinks of the good of his disciples, while "the chastisement of our peace was upon Him." He leaves them, in order to be alone in his sorrow. The sight was too trying for their weak faith. "Sit ye here, while I go and pray yonder." When He finds them asleep, there are no reproaches for their want of sympathy with Him. How tender the slight rebuke! How mingled with it is the comfort! -- "What, could ye not watch with me one hour? The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak!" Even Peter's special danger, from overweening confidence, is not overlooked by Him. He would quicken him to watch and pray against temptation, by the question -- "Simon, sleepest *thou*? In all this, He was mindful of the good of others.

The cruel band of soldiers, led by the traitor, approach; they surround Jesus. His first thoughts are for the safety of his disciples -- "Let these," He says, "go away." Peter wounds Malchus: Jesus attends to the sufferer, though an enemy, and heals him!

But He is, at last, alone, in the presence of his tormentors; all his disciples have forsaken Him. He is standing before the high priest, at early dawn, after his night of toil and horror; He is buffeted, insulted, blasphemed. Yet even then He thinks of others. He is

yearning over the fallen disciple. He hears him curse and swear that he knew Him not; “And the Lord turned and looked upon Peter.” -- a look of pity, reproach, and love, which broke his heart with godly sorrow, and saved his soul.

Jesus is carrying his cross; the women of Jerusalem alone feel for Him, and they accompany Him on his way with bitter lamentations. But He “will seek the good of Zion,” rather than the comfort offered by “Zion’s daughters.” “Women of Jerusalem,” He says, “weep not for me; but weep for yourselves!” and He warns them of the coming destruction of their city!

Jesus is hanging on the cross! Never was there such an hour as this in the history of the universe. Who but God can measure the greatness of our Saviour’s sufferings when nailed to the accursed tree? “There was no sorrow like his sorrow.” Can He think of others then? Yes. The infinite love which brought Him into the world in order to live and die for others; which enabled Him, for the salvation of guilty men, to drink the cup in Gethsemane, and to endure the cross and despise the shame on Calvary; that self-sacrificing love was displayed to all around Him, while “wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities.” He thinks of his weeping, agonized mother, and commends her to his beloved disciple, saying “Woman, behold thy son; son, behold thy mother!” He thinks of a

dying thief, who cries, Remember me!” and give peace to his troubled soul by the blessed assurance, “This day thou shalt be with me in Paradise.” And before He resigned his spirit into his Father’s hands, He thinks of his cruel murderers, and cries, “Father, forgive them, they know not what they do!” Such is Jesus.

And we see the same spirit manifested in all He said and did while upon earth. He ever sought to please his neighbour, but only for his good, by the sacrifice of self. Every other pleasing is but a pleasing of self by the sacrifice of good. Thus only, let us add, can Jesus please us now, or bless us, by doing us *good*. Well might the apostle say, “He pleased not himself.”

And such is the “mind” which must be in us if we are “in Him.” “We that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Let every one of us please his neighbour for his good to edification. For even Christ pleased not Himself.” “Now the God of patience and consolation, grant you to be like-minded one toward another, according to (*i.e.* after the example of) Jesus Christ.” Let the enmity to the living God which is in our natural hearts, be slain by faith in his love to us through Christ, and then shall all enmity to our fellow-men be slain also. Let God’s love to us be shed abroad upon our hearts by the Holy Spirit, and then shall these hearts be shut no longer by wicked selfishness against our neighbour. Let us

carry our Lord's cross, and then we shall carry our brother's burden. "Hereby," says the apostle John, "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." "This is my commandment," says our Lord, "*That ye love one another, as I have loved you!*" And what kind of love? It is thus described -- "Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things," and "never faileth." --Editor.

THE CHILDREN'S SERVICE.

HOW AN ANGEL WENT TO PRISON, AND WHAT HE DID THERE.

THERE are two persons whom we read of in the New Testament under the name of Herod the king. They were grandfather and grandson. The son and father that was between them was cruelly put to death by his own sire. This man, the grandfather, was very passionate, cruel, and wicked, although he is called in history Herod the great. It was he who will always be thought of as a monster, even by the little children of the world, as having tried to kill the infant Jesus, and as having slaughtered a number of innocent babes to make sure of his end. His grandson was, in bad things, only too like him. He could not try to destroy the infant Saviour, but he did make the attempt to crush his infant church and cause. He was king when the gospel was taking hold of the hearts of many people in Jerusalem by the bold preaching of the apostles, and when it was beginning to spread among the Gentiles also. Finding that the great men of the Jews were vexed at this, and wishing to please them, he determined to try and scare the followers of Jesus. So he laid hold on one of the apostles, James the

brother of John, and had him killed. Then, seeing that his bloody deed was what the great Jews liked, he thought he would take Peter's life, too. But at that time the passover was going to be observed, and he knew that though the men he wished to please would be glad to see Peter dead, they would not like his blood to be shed during the feast. He, therefore, only put Peter in prison, and charged as many as sixteen soldiers to watch him, and keep him safe, intending, after the passover, to have him slain. But there were *two* fighting against Herod's purpose, that he little thought of. The first was a praying church, and the second was the prayer-hearing God. The Christians in Jerusalem held meetings to cry to God for Peter's deliverance, and they never gave over till God sent his angel, and took him, in spite both of guards and gates, safe out of prison.

It was just the night before the bad king intended to bring Peter out, and let the people see what he was resolved to do the preachers of the gospel. All through the feast days Peter's good friends had been praying for him, but he was still in the jail. To make sure of his not escaping, the soldiers had bound him with two chains; and when he lay down to sleep, two of them lay down beside him, one on each side. Other two were keeping watch before the door. You would think there was no hope of Peter's escaping. I suppose he may have thought so himself; but whether or no, he was not anxious, for, lying between the soldiers, he had

fallen fast asleep. You have heard, I daresay, of a Scottish nobleman who slept sweetly a few hours before he was led out to die. But, while Peter was asleep, many were awake praying for him in the house of one of the Marys, the mother of John Mark; and God, who never sleeps, heard their prayers.

While Peter was lying, as has been said, he started to find some one touch him on the side, and then put his hand so as to raise him up a little. When he opened his eyes, there was a light shining all around, and a person beside him, very pleasant to look on, who asked him to get up at once. That, you may think, was not so easy for a chained man to do; especially as his chains tied him to the soldiers at his side. If he rise, he will be sure to wake them up as well. But as Peter tried to get up, the chains fell from his hands, and the soldiers slept on. You can hardly wonder that he thought he was dreaming, everything was so easy and so strange. But the person who had waked him did not give him much time to think about it, but bade him dress himself, and follow him. He did not hurry him, however, but bade him put on, first his girdle, and then his shoes, and then his cloak. God wanted to show that he could take not Peter only, but all he had, out of the prison. All this while the soldiers kept on sleeping, and did not know in the least what was going on beside them. When Peter was ready, his guide went before him, and passed the soldiers that were

outside the doors without their taking any notice. I do not know whether they had fallen asleep, or whether God had shut their eyes and their ears, but they were quite still. At length there was only one thing between Peter and freedom, but that was a great iron gate, leading to the city. If Peter thought anything about how that could be opened, he did not need to think long. For as he and his companion came near it, it opened of its own accord, as if it had been waiting for them, and knew how to withdraw its own bolts. When they had passed out, it quietly shut itself. Can you wonder that Peter still thought that he was dreaming?

On he went however, in his dream, as he supposed, till he had gone the length of one street, and then his guide disappeared. Peter stood still for a minute, not knowing what to make of it all. But soon he felt that he was really standing quite free in the street, and he said, I know quite well now what this is; God has sent his angel, and delivered me from the king's rage, and the people who expected to see me die will be disappointed of their cruel hope. What shall I next do? So he considered for a little, and then resolved to go to Mary's house where the prayer-meeting was going on, though I do not know that Peter was aware of it. I rather think he did not know about it, but thought that was the best house to go to, and be at rest till the morning. I think this because, when he found that there was a meeting, he

only told them what had happened, and went away to another place.

You may think that as the Christian people were gathered together to pray for Peter's escape, they would be quite prepared to see him walk into the midst of their company. But that was not the case. We often are not quite prepared for the answer to our own prayers. We expect God to answer us in some particular way, and when he sends his answer in another, we will hardly believe it. So Peter found it. For when he knocked at Mary's door, he was kept a long while waiting before it was opened. The servant that answered to his first knock -- her name was Rhoda -- knew his voice, indeed, and was quite sure that it was he, but she was too glad to be able to open to him at once. She felt she must first run to the rest, and say, Here is Peter! When she said it they would not believe her. They said, Rhoda, you are mad! But she said, I am quite sure of it. Well, well, said they, it must be his angel; it cannot be himself. Peter, however, went on knocking, and at length they opened, and saw him, and every one was ready to cry out, How strange, can it be you? He, however, told them the whole story, and said, Let the rest of the church know, and then went away somewhere else.

You may be sure that the soldiers who went to sleep with Peter lying chained between them, were very much astonished to find in the morning that he was gone, they

knew not, and could not guess, where. The chains were left all right, but the chained man was off. The keepers before the door could throw no light on the strange fact. They had seen no one go out. The whole band were in great wonder and fear. Poor men! They might well be; for they had a very cruel master to deal with. When Herod found that Peter had escaped, and that the keepers could tell him nothing about it, he ordered them to be killed. But poor, foolish, wicken man, he was soon in worse stead than they; for God smote him for his pride with a fearful disease. He was eaten up of worms, and died.

The Bible, which tells us this, goes on to say that God's word, which this wicked king fought against, went on to grow, and multitudes believed it. So vain it is to fight against the gospel.

QUESTIONS ON THE BIBLE STORY.

1. Do you know where the name of a king, other than Herod, occurs in the Bible, whom we are in the habit of calling the Great?

2. Can you state what emblem in prophecy denotes another king, also called the Great?

3. Where do we read of the slaughter of many little children, for the sake of reaching one little babe, who escaped?

4. Who first preached the gospel, so as to lead the church to say, God has sent the Gentiles also repentance unto life?

5. James, the brother of John, being the first of the apostles that died, do you know who was the last?

6. What other example have we of men quite ready to do a wicked deed of blood, who yet were very careful about observing the passover?

7. What gates did God once send an angel to shut, when one of his servants was in a strange prison for a night?

8. Do you know of a prayer-meeting of three persons that greatly helped God's people when they had a great work to do?

9. When did deliverance come to a number of good men at a late hour of their watching and toiling?

10. What prisoner was allowed to dwell by himself, with one soldier attending him?

11. Can you give two instances of people struck blind by God?

12. When did Paul dispute with a friend about John Mark?

13. Can you repeat a promise about knocking and opening?

14. Can you find another promise about what will happen if you open to one that knocks?

FOR answers to the foregoing consult Isa. xlv.; Dan. viii.; Matt. ii.; Acts x.; John xxi.; John xviii.; Dan. vi.; Matt. xiv.; Acts xxviii.; Gen. xix. and 2 Kings vi.; Acts xv.; Luke xi.; Rev. iii.

Prayer.

O LORD of angels, we have read in Thy word that Thou givest them charge concerning Thy children, and sendest them forth to minister to the heirs of salvation. We praise Thee for this Thy care of Thy people. We have read also, as the words of our blessed Lord, how the angels of the little ones always behold Thy face. We beseech Thee to give us part in the great honour and privilege of being kept by Thy strong angels, and by Thyself. So shall we be preserved from snares and deaths here on earth, and

gathered in the great day by Thy reapers into the harvest of Thy love, to life everlasting. *Amen.*

EVENING WORSHIP.

GOD of infinite power and wisdom, by whose Spirit and the whole body of the church is governed and sanctified, receive our supplications and prayers, which we offer before Thee for all estates of men in Thy holy church; that all the members of the same, drawing near unto Thee with a true heart and in full assurance of faith, having their souls and bodies purified from all uncleanness, may hold fast the profession of their faith without wavering, and in their vocation and ministry truly and godlily serve Thee, through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

HYMN, *or Psalm* cxlix. 1-5.

BEHOLD the glories of the lamb
Amidst his Father's throne:
Prepare new honours for his name,
And songs before unknown.

Let elders worship at his feet,
The church adore around,
With vials full of odours sweet,
And harps of sweetest sound: --

Those are the prayers of the saints,
And these the hymns they raise:
Jesus is kind to our complaints,
He loves to hear our praise.

Now to the lamb that once was slain
Be endless blessing paid:
Salvation, glory, joy remain
For ever on thy head.

ROMANS III. 9-31.

WHAT then? are we better than they? No, in no wise: for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin; 10. As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: 11. There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. 12. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. 13. Their throat is an open sepulchre: with their tongues they

have used deceit: the poison of asps is under their lips: 14. Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness: 15. Their feet are swift to shed blood: 16. Destruction and misery are in their ways: 17. And the way of peace have they not known; 18. There is no fear of God before their eyes. 19. Now we know, that what things so ever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law; that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. 20. 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. 27. Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay; but by the law of faith. 28. Therefore we conclude, that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law. 29. Is he the God of the Jews only? is he

not also of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also: 30. Seeing it is one God which shall justify the circumcision by faith, and uncircumcision through faith. 31. Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law.

GALATIANS V. 13-18, 22-26.

FOR, brethren, we have been called unto liberty: only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another. 14. For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. 15. But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another. 16. This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. 17. For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other; so that ye cannot do the things that ye would. 18. But if ye be led by the Spirit, ye are not under the law. 22. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, 23. Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. 24. And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh, with the affections and lusts. 25. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. 26. Let us

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

Prayer.

O ETERNAL, Almighty, and most gracious God! heaven is Thy throne, and earth is Thy footstool; holy and reverend is Thy name. We sinners are bold, through our blessed Mediator, to present ourselves and our supplications before thee. Receive us graciously, help us by thy Spirit, let Thy fear be upon us, let Thy word come unto us in power, and be received in love; cause us to be fervent in prayer, and joyful in Thy praises, and to serve Thee without distraction, that we may find it good for us to draw near unto thee.

Thou art infinite in power, wisdom, and goodness, dwelling in the light which no man can approach, yet dwelling also with the humble and contrite, and taking pleasure in Thy people. Thou hast consecrated for us a new and living way, that with boldness we may enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus. Behold us at Thy footstool. Despise us not, though unworthy, put Thy fear into our hearts, that with

reverence we may serve Thee; write Thy laws in our minds, and let us all be taught of Thee. So may the words of our mouths and the meditations of our hearts be acceptable in thy sight.

O heavenly Father! Bless the word heard this day. Thy word is perfect, converting the soul; a sure testimony, making wise the simple, enlightening the eyes of the blind, and a powerful mean of salvation for all that believe. Help us, thine unworthy servants, whether we teach, or whether we be taught, to learn of Thee. We are blind by nature, wholly incapable of doing any good; and Thou wilt help none but those that are of a broken and contrite heart. We beseech Thee to enlighten our understanding with Thy holy Spirit, and give us a meek heart, free from all haughtiness and carnal knowledge, that hearing Thy word, we may rightly understand it, and rule our lives accordingly. Be graciously pleased to convert all those who yet stray from Thy truth; that we, together with them, may unanimously serve Thee in holiness and righteousness all the days of our life. We ask all things for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom, with Thee and the Holy Ghost, be all honour and praise evermore. *Amen.*

MORNING AND EVENING MEDITATIONS.

MONDAY.

Morning.

And they entered into a covenant to seek the Lord God of their fathers with all their heart and with all their soul;

That whosoever would not seek the Lord God of Israel should be put to death, whether small or great, whether man or woman.

And they swore unto the Lord with a loud voice, and with shouting, and with trumpets, and with cornets.

And all Judah rejoiced at the oath: for they had sworn with all their heart, and sought him with their whole desire; and he was found of them: and the Lord gave them rest round about.

2 Chron. xv. 12, 13, 14, 15.

Evening.

Evil men understand not judgment: but they that seek the Lord understand all things.

For thus saith the Lord unto the house of Israel, Seek ye me, and ye shall live:

Seek him that maketh the seven stars and Orion, and turneth the shadow of death into the morning, and maketh the day dark with night: that calleth for the waters of the sea, and poureth them out upon the face of the earth; The Lord is his name.

But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him.

Prov xxviii. 5. Amos v. 4, 8. John iv. 23.

TUESDAY.

Morning.

And now, Lord, what wait I for? my hope is in thee.

Deliver me from all my transgressions; make me not the reproach of the foolish.

Blessed is that man that maketh the Lord his trust, and respecteth not the proud, nor such as turn aside to lies.

Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end, for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given unto us.

Ps. xxxix. 7, 8. Ps. xl. 4. 1 Pet. i. 13. Rom. v. 5.

Evening.

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.

And who is he that will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good?

Behold, the eye of the Lord is upon them that fear him, upon him that hope in his mercy.

To deliver their soul from death, and to keep them alive in famine.

Our soul waiteth for the Lord: he is our help and our shield.

1 Pet. iii. 12, 13. Ps. xxxiii. 18, 19, 20.

WEDNESDAY.

Morning.

Hear, O Lord, when I cry with my voice: have mercy also upon me, and answer me.

When thou saidst, Seek ye my face; my heart said unto thee, Thy face, Lord, will I seek.

Hide not thy face far from me; put not thy servant away in anger: thou hast been my help; leave me not, neither forsake me, O God of my salvation.

When my father and my mother forsake me, then the Lord will take me up.

In the fear of the Lord is strong confidence; and his children shall have a place of refuge.

The fear of the Lord is a fountain of life, to depart from the snares of death.

Ps. xxvii. 7, 8, 9, 10. Prov. xiv. 26, 27.

Evening.

O God, thou knowest my foolishness; and my sins are not hid from thee.

Let not them that wait on thee, O Lord God of hosts, be ashamed for my sake; let not those that seek thee be confounded for my sake, O God of Israel.

O Lord, I will praise thee: though thou wast angry with me, thine anger is turned away, and thou comfortedst me.

Behold God is my salvation; I will trust, and not be afraid: for the Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song; he also is become my salvation.

Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation.

Ps. lxix. 5, 6.

Isa. xii. 1, 2, 3.

THURSDAY.

Morning.

Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children;
And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and
hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God
for a sweet-smelling savour.

But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness,
let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints;

Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting,
which are not convenient; but rather giving of thanks.

Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of
these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of
disobedience.

Eph. v. 1, 2, 3, 4, 6.

Evening.

**Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for
when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which
the Lord hath promised to them that love him.**

Let no man say, when he is tempted, I am tempted of God; for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man.

Thou hast proved mine heart; thou hast visited me in the night; thou hast tried me, and shalt find nothing: I am purposed that my mouth shall not transgress.

James i. 12, 13. Ps. xvii. 3.

FRIDAY.

Morning.

I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars:

And hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted.

Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love.

But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.

Rev ii. 2, 3, 4. Matt. xxiv. 13.

Evening.

And they come unto thee as the people cometh, and they sit before thee as my people, and they hear thy words, but they will not do them: for with their mouth

they shew much love, but their heart goeth after their covetousness.

And, lo, thou art unto them as a very lovely song of one that hath a pleasant voice, and can play well on an instrument: for they hear thy words, but they do them not.

Thus saith the Lord, I remember thee, the kindness of thy youth, the love of thine espousals.

Ezek. xxxiii. 31, 32, Jer. ii. 2.

SATURDAY.

Morning.

For I the Lord thy God am a jealous god.

The Lord shall go forth as a mighty man, he shall stir up jealousy like a man of war: he shall cry, yea, roar; he shall prevail against his enemies.

God is jealous, and the Lord revengeth; the Lord revengeth, and is furious; the Lord will take vengeance on his adversaries, and he reserveth wrath for his enemies.

The Lord is slow to anger, and great in power, and will not at all acquit the wicked: the Lord hath his way in the whirlwind and in the storm, and the clouds are the dust of his feet.

Exod. xx. 5. Isa. xlii. 13. Nahum i. 2, 3.

Evening.

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?

Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors, through him that loved us.

For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come,

Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Rom. viii. 35, 37, 38, 39.