

HOME PREACHER OR CHURCH IN THE HOUSE.

FORTY-SECOND WEEK.

MORNING WORSHIP.

O ALMIGHTY God, who by Thy blessed Son didst call Matthew from the receipt of custom to be an apostle and evangelist, grant us grace to forsake all covetous desires and inordinate love of riches, and to follow the same, Thy Son Jesus Christ, who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, one God, world without end. *Amen.*

HYMN, *or Psalm* civ. 31-35.

As Thou did'st rest, O Father,  
O'er Nature's finished birth,  
As Thou didst in thy work rejoice  
And bless the new-born earth;  
So give us now that sabbath-rest  
Which makes thy children free;  
Free for the works of love to man,  
Of thankfulness to Thee.

But in thy worship, Father,  
O lift our souls above,  
By holy word, by prayer and hymn,  
By eucharistic love,  
Till e'en the dull cold waste of earth --  
The earth which Christ hath trod --  
Shall be itself a silent prayer  
To raise us up to God.

So lead us on to heaven,  
Where, in thy presence blest,  
“The wicked cease from troubling, and  
The weary are at rest;”  
Where faith is lost in vision,  
Where love hath no allow,  
And through eternity there flows  
The deepening stream of joy.

1 KINGS XIX. 1-14.

AND Ahab told Jezebel all that Elijah had done, and withal how he had slain all the prophets with the sword. 2. Then Jezebel sent a messenger unto Elijah, saying, So let the gods do to me, and more also, if I make not thy life as the

life of one of them by to-morrow about this time. 3. And when he saw that, he arose, and went for his life, and came to Beer-sheba, which belongeth to Judah, and left his servant there. 4. But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a juniper-tree: and he requested for himself that he might die; and said, It is enough; now, O Lord, take away my life; for I am not better than my fathers. 5. And as he lay and slept under a juniper-tree, behold, then an angel touched him, and said unto him, Arise and eat. 6. And he looked, and behold, there was a cake baken on the coals, and a cruse of water at his head; and he did eat and drink, and laid him down again. 7. And the angel of the Lord came again the second time, and touched him, and said, Arise and eat; because the journey is too great for thee. 8. And he arose, and did eat and drink, and went in the strength of that meat forty days and forty nights unto Horeb the mount of God. 9. And he came thither unto a cave, and lodged there: and, behold the word of the Lord came to him and he said unto him, What doest thou here, Elijah? 10. And he said, I have been very jealous for the Lord God of hosts: for the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away. 11. And he said, Go forth, and stand upon the mount before the Lord. And behold, the Lord passed by, and a great and strong wind

rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks, before the Lord; but the Lord was not in the wind: and after the wind an earthquake; but the Lord was not in the earthquake: 12. And after the earthquake a fire; but the Lord was not in the fire: and after the fire a still small voice. 13. And it was so, when Elijah heard it, that he wrapped his face in his mantle, and went out, and stood in the entering in of the cave: and, behold, there came a voice unto him, and said, What doest thou here, Elijah? 14. And he said, I have been very jealous for the Lord God of hosts: because the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away.

## 2 KINGS II. 9-14.

**AND** it came to pass, when they were gone over, that Elijah said unto Elisha, Ask what I shall do for thee, before I be taken away from thee. And Elisha said, I pray thee, let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me. 10. And he said, Thou hast asked a hard thing: nevertheless, if thou see me when I am taken from thee, it shall be so unto thee; but if not, it shall not be so. 11. And it came to pass, as they still went on, and talked, that, behold, there appeared a chariot

of fire, and horses of fire, and parted them both asunder; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven. 12. And Elisha saw it, and he cried, My father, my father! the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof. And he saw them no more: and he took hold of his own clothes, and rent them in two pieces. 13. He took up also the mantle of Elijah that fell from him, and went back, and stood by the bank of Jordan; 14. And he took the mantle of Elijah that fell from him, and smote the waters, and said, Where is the Lord God of Elijah? And when he also had smitten the waters, they parted hither and thither: and Elisha went over.

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*Prayer.*

O ALMIGHTY and merciful Father, who in Thy tender love towards mankind didst ordain the blessing of Thy sabbath day; grant us grace so to open our hearts to Thy voice, and so to seek Thy face in spirit and in truth, that we may enter into rest indeed, because we rest in Thee. And, as Thou didst hallow this day by the resurrection of Thy dear Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, and by the outpouring of Thy Holy Spirit, grant that we may rise on it with Christ

above the vain and perishing things of this world, and be kindled by the fire of the Holy Ghost to love the eternal things of heaven.

Give us grace, O Lord, that we may not be ensnared by the love of this world; keep us from the lust of the flesh -- all vain desires of pleasure, all indulgence of carnal appetite; keep us from the lust of the eyes -- the longing for the praise of men and the glory that passes away; keep us from the pride of life -- from the lust of power, and from trust in self.

Give us strength, we beseech Thee, especially on this Thy holy day, to cast off all the cares of this world -- all covetous desire of riches, all anxious looking forward to the evil of the morrow, all worldly jealousy and strife and selfishness -- that our souls may be open to Thy grace, and our wills bowed humbly to Thy holy will.

Grant that not even the sweetness of earthly love may strive in our hearts against the love of Thee; and make us ever to remember that he who loveth father or mother more than Thee, is not worthy to be called by Thy holy name.

And, above all, O Lord, give us grace so to use this world, that we may ever look forward to that better world which is to come. Teach us to think of that day of death, when our bodies shall lie down in the dust, and our souls shall be present with Thee; teach us to look onward to that great day when the secrets of all hearts shall be opened

before the Judgment-seat of Christ; teach us ever in spiritual longing and in earnest prayer to press onward still to that blessedness of heaven which cannot fade, and that peace of God which passeth all understanding.

Hear us, O merciful Father, for the sake of Him, through whose cross we are crucified to the world, and by whose rising again we are raised to everlasting life, Thy Son Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

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## THE CHURCH IN THE HOUSE.

O MERCIFUL God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the Resurrection and the Life, in whom whosoever believeth shall live though he die, and whosoever liveth and believeth in Him shall not die eternally; we meekly beseech Thee, O Father, to raise us from the death of sin unto the life of righteousness, that, when we shall depart this life, we may rest in Him, and, at the general resurrection at the last day, may be found acceptable in Thy sight, and receive that blessing which Thy well-beloved Son shall then pronounce to all that love and fear Thee, saying, Come, ye blessed children of my Father, receive the kingdom prepared for you from the beginning of the world. Grant this, O merciful Father, through Jesus Christ our Mediator and Redeemer.  
*Amen.*

HYMN, *or Psalm lxxii. 23-26.*

LORD, it is not for us to care,  
Whether we die or live;  
To love and serve Thee is our share,  
And this thy grace will give.

If life be long, O make us glad  
The longer to obey:  
If short, no labourer is sad  
To end his toilsome day.

Come, Lord! when grace has made us meet  
Thy blessed face to see;  
For if thy work on earth be sweet  
What must thy glory be?

There shall we end our sad complaints,  
Our weary, sinful days;  
And join with those triumphant saints  
Who sing thy endless praise.

Luke XVI. 14-31.

AND the Pharisees also, who were covetous, heard all these things: and they derided him. 15. And he said unto them, Ye are they which justify yourselves before men; but God knoweth your hearts; for that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God. 16. The law and the prophets were until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it. 17. And it is easier for heaven and earth to pass, than one tittle of the law to fail. 18. Whosoever putteth away his wife, and marrieth another, committeth adultery: and whosoever marrieth her that is put away from her husband, committeth adultery. 19. There was a certain rich man, that was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day: 20. And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores, 21. And desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table: moreover, the dogs came and licked his sores. 22. And it came to pass, tht the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abrahams's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried, &c.

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## SERMON XLII.

“THEY HAVE MOSES AND THE PROPHETS;  
LET THEM HEAR THEM.” -- Luke xvi. 29.

THESE words of our Lord Jesus Christ are taken from the close of the parable of the rich man and Lazarus. The parable itself is one of the most terrible which ever fell from his lips -- a parable which, by its awful significance, has impressed itself on the very language of men, and which yet, probably on account of that same awfulness, we are peculiarly apt to evade by narrow and superficial interpretation.

It will be our object now, by God's blessing, to grasp its full meaning; remembering always that, in interpreting our Lord's parables generally, our chief danger lies in this tendency to limit them too narrow a sphere, and to think that we have fathomed their meaning, when we have grasped their first and most obvious lesson. We forget that He, as the “Word, by whom all things were made,” pierced through the whole outward system of life, to the few deep and simple principles which lie at the root of it all. We forget that the very ground on which his teaching by parables is based, is that God's dealings with this life and

with the next, with the things of earth and the things of heaven, are all based on the same deep truth, and guided by the same ultimate law. We forget that the very object of such teaching was, (as He Himself declared) to test the thoughtfulness and spiritual insight of those to whom He spake; and that, accordingly, while each parable has a lesson which “he who runs may read,” yet that the whole truth lies deep, and must be drawn out (so far as it can be drawn out in its fullness at all), only by thoughtful and prayerful study.

Now, applying the general principle to the parable before us, let us first see what the parable is not -- what (that is) are these delusive interpretations, whether false or superficial; and then let us try to see what the parable is in its true central lesson, which belongs to us, as much as to those who heard it from our Lord’s own lips.

First of all, then, the parable is sometimes supposed to be a mere enforcement of our Lord’s declaration as to the danger of riches. It has been thought that the rich “young ruler,” whom He loved, but who afterwards turned away from Him, because he could not give up his wealth, was none other than the Lazarus, whom our Lord is said elsewhere to have loved with a personal affection, and that his name was introduced in the parable, contrary to our Lord’s universal custom, that it might strike suddenly on his ear, and give him a first and startling warning. And many

have inferred that this warning is all -- that the parable merely declares poverty to be a safer, and therefore a happier, state than wealth. How much better, say they, to be the poor Lazarus in all his misery and degradation, which was his way to paradise, than the rich man in his purple and fine linen, with the torments awaiting him on the other side of the grave! Doubtless: but is it exactly the question of poverty or riches which makes the unspeakable difference? Who was that Abraham, who is here the very representative of the blessed? Was he not rich, a man of flocks and herds, of silver and gold -- a man to whom all bowed down as to a great prince, and who went to his grave full of wealth and honour? If he was in paradise, surely the rich man might have found his way thither. And, as a matter of fact and experience, do we not know that each state has its peculiar temptations? and that, if the rich are certainly tempted (as in the case of the young ruler) to idolatry of riches, the poor have their temptations to envy and discontent and dishonesty, which wreck many a soul? No! brethren, it will not do to fancy that all who suffer evil things here (especially if, as so often is the case, they bring half of their sufferings on themselves), will be in paradise hereafter; or that there is any charm in suffering, however it come, whether from God's providence or our own choice, to make us holier and better of itself.

We may put aside any such idea, as not only imperfect but untrue -- as one of the ways in which men will choose to lay stress on the circumstances around them, instead of looking to the spirit, which the Holy Ghost kindles in them.

Then, again, there is a notion of the parable apparently implied in the heading of the English Bible, which speaks of the rich man as the “rich glutton:” I mean the idea that this rich man was a type of a vicious, self-indulgent sensuality, the representative of the gluttons and the drunkards, or of the revellers in mere trifling and folly. The inference is that the parable is designed to tell us how this degradation of humanity will be punished, and its good things (if they deserve the name) swallowed up in an eternal loss. This indeed, is true enough in itself -- a lesson which all common sense and experience teach us, and which every heathen philosophy knew, and yet one to which men will shut their eyes, and to the consciousness of which they need often to be startled by the thought of “the worm that dieth not, and the fire that is not quenched.” But again we must say, that this is not the lesson of this parable. The very circumstances tell us this; for it was addressed especially to the Pharisees (verse 14), and great as their sins were, yet unbridled sensuality and mere self-indulgence were not among them, could not have been among them, without putting their pretensions to an open shame. And when we look carefully at the parable itself, we find that there is no

reason to believe that the rich man was a glutton at all. He was “clothed in purple and fine linen,” for this was the mark of his station; and the words translated “faring sumptuously” only mean, in the original, “enjoying himself in splendour.” We know not what his enjoyments were; they may have been sensual, or they may have been those which are respectable or creditable in the eyes of the world, and which, when when he was buried in pomp, may have been chronicled to his glory on his tomb. We must look a little further yet for the true lesson of the parable.

Is it, then, that which is so commonly drawn as to have become proverbial, that want of charity to the poor was the rich man’s sin, and that the writing of accusation against him was that a beggar lay unheeded at his gate? That he felt no true and living charity, I doubt not; if he had felt it, it might have been, not his salvation, but the way to lead him to it. But whether he was more than usually harsh to, or neglectful of, Lazarus, we do not know. Lazarus was allowed, after Eastern practice, to lie in his gate; in spite of his loathsome disease he was not driven away, as perhaps he might have been from ours. He “desired to be fed with the crumbs from the rich man’s table,” like the dogs, who were his comforters; and we are not told that his desire was refused. Indeed, the rich man seems to have known him by name, and, by his request to Abraham, must have thought that he had some right to use Lazarus’ service, which he

could hardly have done, if he had treated him with utter cruelty, and allowed him to starve before his eyes. Nor does Abraham's answer imply anything of the kind, but simply speaks of the impossibility of the request, and reminds the rich man how he had deserved his fate. Probably Lazarus received a sort of half-compassionate almsgiving, and the rich man was hardly conscious that he neglected any duty towards him. Granting that we have found one part of his fault, we are yet far from being at the bottom of it; granting that he did not love, we must ask still what was the secret of his unloving temper. The latter part of the parable, which has nothing to do with want of charity, shows that we are not yet come to the whole truth.

Indeed in this, as in all half-truths, there is a danger. Almsgiving, though it be good, is not the one thing needful. In older days men, in life or on their deathbed, thought, by giving goods to the poor, to purchase pardon and blot out a multitude of sins; and though we do not in set terms recognize this obsolete superstition, yet perhaps in its essence we are not clear of it, and the tendency of many in our age is to pardon everything in consideration of liberality and almsgiving, and to think that it, and it alone, makes a man's good or his evil. Such certainly is not the teaching of Scripture. We must then look further still, till we can discern the true lesson of the parable. We have indeed been doing so indirectly by these guesses; for the danger of

giving -- all have their part in the lesson, and will fall into their right places, when the central truth rises above them.

All such superficial interpretations are self-condemned by this, that they omit, or disconnect altogether, the latter part of the parable, in which its main lesson comes out. You remember how, in the wretchedness of the other world, the rich man implored Abraham to send Lazarus to his brethren, lest they also should come into this place of torment. He desired that some messenger from the unseen world, breathing all the terrible and unearthly mystery which surrounds it, should break in upon that fool's paradise of mere tangible and visible things, in which he himself had lived, and in which his brethren were living still. By his very prayer he confessed his sin; he showed where its source lay, in the absorption into things visible -- the pleasures, the prizes, the labours, even the duties and affections, of this life -- without any thought of things unseen, any grasp of spiritual principles, any thought of man's destiny and immortality, any true conception of God. There was, indeed, if one may so say, a certain vulgarity of idea, such as belongs to this lower kind of life, in his conception of the remedy required -- a conception which in our own days seems not to have died away. This is, in fact, clearly rebuked by the stern plainness of Abraham's answer. Mingled with the higher element of family affection and desire for his brethren's safety lay the implied

complaint, that he had not had his warning, that he had been allowed to go on in his folly and sensuous life, till the voice of death declared, "Too late! too late! ye cannot enter now." The plain declaration of the answer is one which, though it applied to him, applies tenfold to ourselves, that there is warning, there is teaching, there is loving entreaty, to call us, to melt us, to startle us, to do for us anything and everything, if only we will hear." "They have Moses and the prophets." If they hear them not, and have no heart to hear them, then a miracle would be a mere wonder, and a rising from the dead a mere fruitless miracle.

Such signs may attract the attention of those who are prepared in heart; they may lead them on, as our Lord's miracles so often did, to a real saving faith, but they cannot give the heart to hear, or kindle life in those who are spiritually dead. So our Lord said then, and his own experience confirmed his words. He did rise from the dead. His rising was the well-spring of faith and hope to his true disciples; but the world went on its way, as though He were in the grave still, or turned aside only to mock the belief and to invent fables to account for it.

Here then, I think, we have at last the true lesson of the parable. It tells us that only by faith in the things unseen -- in the presence of God with us, in our spiritual communion with Him, in the eternity or which this life is but a preparation -- only by a lively constant faith in these

truths, grasped, as alone they can be grasped, in the atonement and grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, can man rally live as a spiritual being, and rise above the temptations of this visible life.

I need not tell you how much there is to draw him down to it. I pass by the grosser forms of its influence through the mere appetites and passions, not because they are not full of a deadly power (for your own hearts will tell you what power they have), but because it needs little denunciation and less argument to remind us that, in St. Paul's emphatic language, those who live in them "are dead while they live." The real danger lies in the power of what we call worldliness, of which the rich man is a true specimen -- the danger of living, by an unconscious Sadduceeism, as if this life were our only life, as if its riches and its power, its glory and its beauty, its affections and its work, were all. We do not assert this in set terms, or deny the great truths of the Creed which contradict it; but we are apt quietly to ignore them, putting them aside, perhaps carelessly, perhaps with a show of reverence, but in an case putting them aside, and letting the great stream of our life flow on without them to that end to which such a course must at last come. This is the danger -- how great let experience tell! -- a danger to the able and energetic spirits which sway the world, rather than to the mere idler and

sensualist, who retire, as it were, to glut themselves in a corner.

How is it to be met? Our Lord's answer, given through Abraham in the parable, is full of eternal significance.

First, he says, "They have Moses." There is in the Law the great principle of duty, which comes in to curb appetite and passion, to refuse the world's prizes, to temper even the sweet spells of its affections. It tells us to look to our own nature; that we may see how helpless we are in ourselves, how from the cradle to the grave we rest on others, how impossible, therefore, it is to live for ourselves alone. It bids us look round each society in which we are included, -- our family or our school in early days, our nation, our church, or humanity itself, in mature life. It shows us great works going on, far beyond any individual power -- works of which our conscience bears witness to us, that in them we ought to do something ere we die. And behind this, its chief witness, there is the terrible warning of a retribution, begun here, yet surely not ended here in this state of imperfection, but hovering in gigantic, mysterious form, with its sword, drawn, over the regions of the unseen world.

All this, brethren, is impersonated in Moses, and a great power it is. If once the sense of duty is kindled in us, you know what it can do. The battle against the flesh is half-won: for it is a solemn and an ever-increasing power

which has seized upon us. The work of life grows before us, ever doing, yet never done; and there is a spell on our souls, which will never let us rest in mere enjoyment and worldliness. Never should it be despised; even if it seem to speak in human tones, it is still the voice of God.

But it will never come quite home to those depths of the heart, which no human power or passion can stir, unless it speak plainly and avowedly as the voice of God. It was much for the Jews to have such a Divine Voice in the Law of Moses; we know the indestructible vitality and energy which it gave them, and before which the heathen stood fairly amazed. But we have the voice of one greater than Moses. The Lord Jesus Christ, as He is our Saviour, so is He our King -- a King by the only true claim to kingship, by labouring and suffering for our salvation. His voice comes to us with all the power, not only of abstract law, but of living influence and example. It has its sterner tones -- stern by the very sadness which runs through them -- "What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" "Whosoever is ashamed of Me and of my words, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed, when He comes in the glory of His Father." "If thine eye offend thee, pluck it out; it is better to enter into life with one eye than having two eyes to be cast into hell." But it has its true and characteristic power in the words of love: -- "If any man will follow Me, let him take up his cross and follow

Me;” “As I have loved you, do ye also love one another;” “I go to prepare a place for you . . . whither I go ye know, and the way ye know. He who hears that voice, and is drawn on by it step by step -- old things falling off from him, new duties growing on him every moment -- he has learnt the first lesson of the life above the world.

But it is only the first lesson. They have not only Moses, says our Lord, but “the Prophets;” not only the Law, but the Spirit. There is in us all (surely we know it!) a spirit kindled by God, which refuses to rest on the mere enjoyments of the flesh, because it feels that we are made for better things -- which cannot content itself with the pleasures and glory, or even with the love and the duty of this world, because it has before it an ideal which it longs for, towards which intellect and conscience and imagination all reach eagerly forth. Nor are duty, law, retribution, quite sufficient to satisfy it: for we know the glory of freedom; we feel that in free loving action and thought lies the true glory of humanity.

There are many voices which speak to the spirit, and call out its latent energies. Witness the self-sacrifice of patriotism and loyalty! Witness the love which makes the sunshine of home, even through the clouds of trouble and shadow of death! Witness the earnest love of truth and right for their own sake, which mostly lies at the root of philanthropy! Again, I say, God forbid that we slight these!

for the voice of God is in them, vague, perhaps, but full, as “the sound of many waters.” You must know their power, at least in its simplest forms, and know how it exalts your whole nature.

But in “the Prophets” you hear the only voice which can quite reach the depths of your spirit -- even the voice of the Spirit of God. In them Jewish faith had the secret of its life and progress. They prepared for the future; and that future, brethren, is yours. The Spirit of God is with you; and He will give you the power, which cherishes, exalts, transfigures the spirit within. How He speaks to you in the word of God read and preached, in the services of the sanctuary, in the holy sacrament of Christ’s love, in the secrets of your own hearts, when you meditate on God’s truth, or when you wrestle in prayer -- of this we cannot speak now, nay, in some sense no man can speak; for we “cannot tell when He cometh and whither He goeth.” But the declaration of the parable is this -- that, unless you do in some way hear and receive the message of the Spirit, you cannot live your life here, or be ready for the eternal hereafter. Our covenant is nothing, if it be not of the Spirit. Law is much, but it speaks only from without; human influence is much, but it is narrow and full of weakness, and it must pass away. The Spirit of God alone can fill the soul within. By the delight in truth, by the intense desire of purity, by the power of love, as He raises our souls up to

Himself, so also He makes them new centres of spiritual influence on earth. If ever we speak to and sway the souls of others (and in the thought there is a thankfulness too deep and too solemn for joy), it is, and it must be, only because He speaks in us. For ourselves, and for others, we can but hear His voice within, and give ourselves up to it, whether in pain or in joy, whether freely and gladly or by the agony which shakes our whole nature: for it calls us to the life above this world -- the life which our Lord Himself lived for us once, and which He lives in us now.

There are two great types of life after all, into which all its forms gradually resolve themselves. There is the life of the rich man. It is a life centred on self, bounded by time; it is a life without God, and, to a great extent, without the love of men -- not denying either, but neglecting both. This is on the one side; and what can it offer? A certain amount of pleasure, or rather absence of pain; a certain amount of wealth or glory in this world; a certain power over men, which the shrewd and determined worldling gains. And this is literally all. Happiness here it cannot give; love it cannot win; rest and peace it knows not of, for they are bought by toil. And of the hereafter who shall speak? When we rise at the Great Day, and we are asked what we have done with God's talents, when conscience itself shall strike us dumb and anticipate the judgment on a wasted life,

who shall dare to speak of the sentence which shall follow?  
God grant us to flee from it in time!

What is on the other side? A life not for ourselves, not immediately for our brethren, but for God and for them in Him. It speaks thus in our souls -- "I am not my own; God made me, and gave me all these blessings beyond all I can desire and deserve. Christ redeemed me by His precious blood that I might live to Him. I have solemnly vowed that I will so live. I know that He has sent me into the world, and that He has given me, or will give me, some work to do in His name. I know that all the history of the world is but a working out of His great purpose of creation and redemption, by a thousand times ten thousand spirits, of which I am but one. I will put myself into His hands. I will labour in my generation to do the good which He has set me to do before I die. Other blessings are as nothing. If they come, I will receive them thankful; if they are denied, may He make me content without them! All that concerns me is to do His will, and then I cannot fail, for it is His work and not mine. What matter disappointment, or poverty, or neglect, or contempt, or loneliness here? He is with me and working in me here, and making me ready for heaven. I will, by God's help, give myself to Him. May He, by any means -- by joy or sorrow, by success or failure -- purge out from me all selfishness, and guide and lead me in his service until the end come!"

Such, brethren, is the other life, and what can it promise? Not absence of trouble and trial; for you follow our Master, and His way is the way of the Cross. No riches, or glory, or popularity here; these are in God's hand to be given, as is best for us, or denied. But it can promise you peace and restfulness -- the peace of knowing that your work and our salvation are in God's hand, and therefore can never fail; and the restfulness -- which comes from the mortification of all vain desires, and the ever growing power to say from the heart, "Thy will be done!" It can promise you the power of doing good -- a power which a selfish man can never have, and which an unselfish spirit never yet sought in vain -- although it be good, which shall never be known till it be uttered in blessings over your grave, or in witness before the throne of judgment. It can promise you, above all, rest in a more loving bosom than that of Abraham -- in His bosom who took you to His arms at baptism, who bears you up now in those arms over the ruggedness of the way, and who shall open them to receive you for ever, when your work is over, and your rest is prepared.

God grant us all to make the true choice, and to cling to it even to the end! Let us pray for ourselves and for others, that this choice may be the great lesson learnt day by day, and acted out in this world, which, now that Christ has died, is the "house of God," and now that the Holy Spirit is given, is the "gate of heaven." -- ALFRED BARRY, D.D.

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## THE CHILDREN'S SERVICE.

HOW THE WICKED WAS CAUGHT IN HIS OWN SNARE.

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WHEN Mordecai heard of the decree that had been sent out from the king to slay all the Jews in the land, he knew well whose hand had struck the blow. He knew, too, that it was aimed especially at his own life; but he was sadder to think of the danger of his brethren, than of that which threatened himself. He could not enough show his great grief. He rent his clothes, and put ashes on his head, and went into the midst of the town, wailing and crying. He even ventured to come close to the gate of the palace, covered as he was with sackcloth and dust. The law did not allow him to go in through the gate in that garb, but he went quite close to it, till all about the court began to notice his behaviour. The queen herself heard of it, and not knowing the cause of her uncle's sorrow, she sent her servants to him with other clothing, and asked him to lay aside his sackcloth. But he would not receive the garments

sent him, and went on wailing and crying bitterly as before. So the queen called for one of the king's officers, and bade him go to Mordecai, and lay a command on him to tell what was the matter. The officer, who was called Hatach, went out accordingly to Mordecai while he was in the street before the gate of the palace, and told him the queen's command. Thereupon Mordecai gave him the whole sad story -- how Haman had plotted to destroy all the Jews, and had persuaded the king to send out a decree to kill them, and had promised to make good any loss that might follow to the king's revenue. He put into Hatach's hand, to give to the queen, a copy of the proclamation which had been made to this effect in the city, and asked him to pray her to go in to the king, and petition him to save her people.

Hatach took faithfully to Queen Esther her uncle's message. When she heard it, she could not tell at first what to do. There was a law in the court of the king of Persia, that any one going in to the king's presence unasked should be put to death, unless the king should be pleased to hold out the golden sceptre, in token of pardon. Now Esther recollected that she had not been called in to see the king for a whole month; and she was afraid that he was displeased with her, and would be still more angry if she went in to his presence unbidden. She bade Hatach tell Mordecai all this. But he sent back a message to the queen, bidding her put away the thought that if the Jews should be killed she

would escape because she was the king's wife, and urging her not to lose the opportunity of trying to deliver her people. He said that perhaps God had brought her to the throne for just this very time, and that if she did not exert herself, God would no doubt deliver his own in some other way; but she should have blame and disgrace. When Esther heard this message, she no longer hesitated. She sent word to Mordecai to call the Jews together, and hold a fast for three days, and pray to God on her behalf. She said that she and her maidens would also fast, and that after that she would go in and see the king, adding this brave word, "If I perish, I perish;" meaning that she was ready to die if it must be so, in trying to save her people.

The fast was kept, both in the palace and in the city, as Esther wished. When the three days were ended, the queen put on her royal robes, and went in all her beauty and grace into the inner court of the king's house. It was a solemn moment for her. But she had prayed to God, and she went in with a firm step, trusting in him and resigned to his will. The king was sitting on his throne opposite the door. So looking out, he saw Queen Esther standing in the court, and was pleased to see her, and at once held out to her the golden sceptre. The queen went near, and touched it, and knew now that her life was safe. Then the king asked her what she wished to say; and she, very wisely wishing to take a favourable time for telling her sad story, merely

requested the king to honour her with his presence at a banquet she had made ready for him, and to bring Haman with him. So the king sent for Haman, and they went together to the queen's feast. When they were drinking their wine, the king again asked her to name her request, and said, if it should be for half the kingdom, she would have it. But Esther still thought it best to put off for a time, and said that if the king would come with Haman to another banquet next day, she would then tell her petition. The king gave his consent.

Full of joy and pride for the honour the queen had done him, Haman left the palace. You could see by his look how his soul was lifted up in him; but as he came out through the gate, he met a sight that maddened him. There was Mordeai sitting in his place, and he never moved to pay Haman the slightest attention. So he went home full of rage, and called his friends together, and his wife, and began to boast of his favour with the king, and of his grandeur, and riches, and power. He told them how that very day he had been in alone with the king to a banquet prepared by the queen, and that he was invited again for to-morrow along with the king; but then he ground his teeth, and added -- Yet all this is not enough, so long as I see that hateful Jew sitting at the gate. His friends said, Why, get him hanged out of the way. Put up a gibbet to-night for the purpose, and ask the king to-morrow to have him sentenced

to death. So the gallows was erected, but God had designed that another than Moredcai should be hanged on it.

That night the king could not sleep; and tossing about on his couch, he called some of his servants to come and read to him from the book in which the events of his reign had been written down. It happened as they read, that they came on the passage which told how Mordecai had once saved the king's life, by discovering a plot against it. The king said, Has Mordecai been rewarded for this? and his servants said, Nothing has been done to him. The king was quite vexed at this, and hearing that some person had come into the court (for it was now early morning), he called out to know who was in attendance. Now it happened to be Haman, who had come early to ask the king to give orders to hang Mordecai. So he went in when he was called for, and the king said to him, What shall we do to a man that I am very anxious to honour with marks of my royal favor? Haman said to himself, I must be the man; there is none the king would like to honour so much as myself. So he said, Let the man the king wishes to honour be clothed with royal apparel, and let him wear the king's crown, and ride on the king's horse; and let one of the most noble princes of the court lead him through all the city, and proclaim as he goes, This is what the king does to the man he wishes greatly to honour! Go, answered the king, and do as you have said to the man Mordecai, and make haste about it.

Haman had no choice. So he took the robes, and the crown, and the horse, and brought Mordecai through the city, and cried, as he led his horse, This is the way the king honours the man who has greatly pleased him! As soon as the procession was over he hurried home, covering his head for shame and grief; and when his wife heard what he had been forced to do to his enemy, she gave him the cold comfort of saying, If the man be a Jew, you are sure to fall before him. There was little time, however, for talking about it, for messengers came to hurry him to the queen's banquet.

When the feast was proceeding on this second day, the king again asked Esther to name her desire, and if it should be something worth half the kingdom, she should have it. The queen replied, My petition is for my life, and the life of my people: for, said she, we are sold to be destroyed and perish out of the land. If we had merely been sold to be slaves, bondsmen and bondwomen, I would not have said a word; but nothing will satisfy our enemy but our death. Who dares propose such a thing, said the king with his anger evidently rising; where is the man? There he is, said the queen, pointing to her guest; the adversary and enemy is this wicked Haman. At this word the poor wretch quailed and cowered, while the king rose up and walked out into the garden, filled with indignation. In his absence Haman threw himself at the queen's feet, to beg for his life. But

when the king came back into the room, he said a few words that showed the attendants that Haman's doom was sealed. So they covered his face, to show that he was condemned to die. One of the king's officers then told the king that Haman had a gibbet ready for Mordecai, and the king said, Hang Haman himself on it, and it was done at once. So the wicked man was caught in his own snare.

After that Mordecai was brought before the king, to whom Esther had said that he was her uncle, and had brought her up from a child. The king was greatly pleased with him, and put him in Haman's place, and indeed made him next to himself in dignity and power. At the request of the queen, means were taken to put the Jews on their defence against their enemies all through the land, and the days which they looked forward to with dread as days of slaughter, became a time of victory and joy. A feast was yearly kept for long after, called the Feast of Lots, in celebration of this great deliverance. And many happy days had Esther and Mordecai in the court of King Ahasuerus.

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1. Where do we find a proclamation and written decree spoken of, giving liberty to the Jewish people?
2. When did a king appear on the wall of a city wearing sackcloth?

3. When did a king and his whole people cover themselves with sackcloth?

4. When was God's gracious design to save lives fulfilled by a young Hebrew being raised to a place next a great king's throne?

5. When did a wicked man make a vain plot against the life of the king of the Jews?

6. When did sentence of death fall on a king's ear at a great banquet of wine?

7. When did sentence of just punishment fall on a king's ear, when he was speaking to himself of his honour and glory?

8. What psalm tells us that the lot of the violent and bloody man will be to be taken in his own snare, and to fall into the ditch he digs for others?

9. Where is a passage of the Old Testament, quoted in the New, teaching in other words the same truth?

ANSWERS to these questions will be found by turning to the following chapters. -- 2 Chron.xxxvi. and Ezra i.; 2 Kings vi.; Jonah iii.; Gen. xli., l.; Matt. ii.; Dan. v.; Dan. iv.; Ps. vii.; Job v. and 1 Cor. iii.

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*Prayer.*

O LORD thine eye is on all men's hearts. Thou seest the good and kind thoughts of those who love the right, and Thou seest also the base and cruel thoughts of those who are selfish and evil. Turn to nothing the plans of wicked people against the righteous. Keep thine own dear children safely from the devices of Satan, and such as serve him. We rejoice to think that no real evil can befall them, and that even things which seem to be against them shall be for them. May we be enabled to put our trust in Thee, and to go on doing what is right, fearing no evil. O, protect the helpless, visit the oppressed, prosper the cause of justice and truth in the earth. Let Christ more and more reign over all men, to Thy praise and glory, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

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## EVENING WORSHIP.

WE thank Thee, O Merciful Father, for the rest and peace which Thou hast given us this day, for the message of Thy love and the approach to Thy throne of grace. We thank Thee, O Lord Jesus Christ, that Thou hast been present this day in the midst of us, who have been gathered in Thy holy name. We thank Thee, O God the Holy Ghost, that Thou hast enlightened our minds to receive the word of the Lord Jesus, and kindled our hearts to worship in spirit and in truth. *Amen.*

HYMN, *or Psalm* li. 1-6.

A FEW more years shall roll,  
A few more seasons come;  
And we shall be with those who rest  
Asleep within the tomb.  
Then, O my Lord, prepare  
My soul for that great day;  
O wash me in thy precious blood,  
And take my sins away.

A few more struggles here,  
A few more partings o'er,  
A few more toils, a few more tears,  
And we shall weep no more.  
Then, O my Lord, prepare  
My soul for that blest day;  
O wash me in thy precious blood,  
And take my sins away.

'Tis but a little while  
And He shall come again,  
Who died that we might live, who lives  
That we with Him may reign.  
Then, O my Lord, prepare  
My soul for that glad day;

O wash me in thy precious blood,  
And take my sins away.

JOHN XIV. 1-26.

LET not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. 2. In my Father's house are many mansions: it it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. 3. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am there ye may be also. 4. And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know. 5. Thomas saith unto him, Lord, we know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way? 6. Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, and the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father but by me. 7. If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also: and from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him. 8. Philip saith unto him, Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us. 9. Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father? 10. Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? The words that I speak unto you, I speak not of myself; but the Father, that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works. 11. Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me: or else believe me for the

very works' sake. 12 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father. 13. And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. 14. If ye ask anything in my name, I will do it. 15. If ye love me, keep my commandments: 16. And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever: 17. Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him; but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. 18. I will not leave you comfortless; I will come to you. 19. Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more; but ye see me: because I live, ye shall live also. 20. At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you. 21. He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me; and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him. 22. Judas saith unto him (not Iscariot), Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world? 23. Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him. 24. He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings: and the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's that sent me. 25. These things have

I spoken unto you, being yet present with you. 26. But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you, &c.

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*Prayer.*

WE pray Thee, O Father, who knowest the secrets of our hearts, and yet art not extreme to mark what is done amiss, to pardon all the imperfections of our services, our wandering thoughts, our coldness of heart; grant that our prayers may be accepted through the intercession of Thy dear Son, and the words of Thy truth may be written by the Holy Spirit upon our hearts.

Enable us, we beseech Thee, to hear and receive the law of Thy divine will -- to hear Thy voice in all the calls of earthly work and duty, but above all, to read and learn and inwardly digest the message of Thy holy word, that, in all the changes and chances of this mortal life, we may say from our hearts, "Not my will, but Thine, be done." Especially, grant us to recognize that holy will in the life and death of our Lord Jesus Christ, to follow His blessed

example in perfect devotion and sacrifice to Thee, to hear His call when He stands at the door and knocks, and to take up our cross and follow Him whithersoever He goes.

Thou knowest, O Lord, that “our spirit is willing, yet our flesh is weak;” Thou knowest that, though we delight in Thy law after the inner man, yet there is a law of the flesh still in us, warring against the law of Christ Jesus. Grant us, therefore, O merciful Father, not only to know Thy will, but to receive the grace of Thy Holy Spirit, and to show forth its fruits -- by the earnest delight in truth, by the beauty of holiness, by the love which is the very bond of perfectness, and without which whosoever liveth is counted dead before Thee. Give us, we beseech Thee, the mind that was in Christ Jesus our Lord; let Thy Holy Spirit work out in us His divine image. Renew our souls day by day, that we may be ready for that time when our vile body shall be made like unto His glorious body, and we shall be one with Him for ever, in the place which He has prepared for us.

Grant us, O Father, so to live, by Thy will and in Thy Holy Spirit, in the work of the week which is to come; grant us, through each succeeding sabbath, to learn better that holy will, and seek more earnestly the gifts of Thy Holy Spirit; that so we may be ready for the eternal rest, which is laid up for the people of God, and seeing Thy Son, our Saviour, as He is, we may be made like Him for ever!

Hear us, O Lord, for Thy mercy is great, and of Thy great mercy look upon us, for the sake of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

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## MORNING AND EVENING MEDITATIONS.

### MONDAY.

#### *Morning.*

**But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost:**

In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.

For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake.

For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

2 Cor. iv. 3, 4, 5, 6.

#### *Evening.*

**Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.**

Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them; and them which suffer adversity, as being yourselves also in the body.

Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have.

Ready to distribute, willing to communicate;

To speak evil of no man, to be no brawlers, but gentle, showing all meekness unto all men.

Heb. xiii. 2, 3, 5.    1 Tim. vi. 18.    Tit. iii. 2.

## TUESDAY.

*Morning.*

**Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?**

Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin.

And the servant abideth not in the house for ever: but the Son abideth ever.

If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.

As free, and not using your liberty for a cloak of maliciousness, but as the servants of God.

Rom. vi. 16.    John viii. 34, 35, 36.    1 Pet. ii. 16.

*Evening.*

**Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin;**

That he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God.

Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as through some strange thing happened unto you:

But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy.

1 Pet. iv. 1, 2, 12, 13.

## WEDNESDAY.

*Morning.*

**God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord.**

Now, I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind, and in the same judgment.

For it hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them which are of the house of Chloe, that there are contentions among you.

But avoid foolish questions, and genealogies, and contentions, and strivings about the law; for they are unprofitable and vain.

1 Cor. i. 9, 10, 11. Tit. iii. 9.

*Evening.*

**Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation.**

Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines: for it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace.

For the bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burnt without the camp.

Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate.

Heb. xiii. 7, 9, 11, 12.

## THURSDAY.

*Morning.*

**For, behold, I create new heavens, and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind.**

But be ye glad and rejoice for ever in that which I create: for behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy.

And I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in my people; and the voice of weeping shall be no more heard in her, nor the voice of crying.

There shall be no more thence an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days: for the child shall die an hundred years old; but the sinner, being an hundred years old, shall be accursed.

Isa. lxv. 17, 18, 19, 20.

*Evening.*

**Rejoice ye with Jerusalem, and be glad with her, all ye that love her: rejoice for joy with her, all ye that mourn for her;**

That ye may suck, and be satisfied with the breasts of her consolations; that ye may have milk out, and be delighted with the abundance of her glory.

For thus saith the Lord, Behold, I will extend peace to her like a river, and the glory of the Gentiles like a flowing stream: then shall ye suck, ye shall be borne upon her sides, and be dandled upon her knees.

As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you; and ye shall be comforted in Jerusalem.

Isa. lxvi. 10, 11, 12, 13.

**FRIDAY.**

*Morning.*

**O Lord, thou knowest: remember me, and visit me, and revenge me of my persecutors; take me not away in**

**thy long-suffering: know that for thy sake I have suffered rebuke.**

Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart: for I am called by thy name, O Lord God of hosts.

I sat not in the assembly of the mockers, nor rejoiced; I sat alone, because of thy hand; for thou hast filled me with indignation.

Wait on the Lord, and keep his way, and he shall exalt thee to inherit the land.

Jer. xv. 15, 16, 17.      Ps. xxxvii. 34.

*Evening.*

**And now therefore thus saith the Lord, the God of Israel,**

Behold, I will gather them out of all countries whither I have driven them in mine anger, and in my fury, and in great wrath; and I will bring them again unto this place, and I will cause them to dwell safely:

And I will give them one heart, and one way, that they may fear me for ever, for the good of them, and of their children after them.

And I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me.

Jer. xxxii. 36, 37, 39, 40.

## SATURDAY.

*Morning.*

**Thus saith the Lord God, An evil, an only evil, behold, is come.**

The morning is come unto thee, O thou that dwellest in the land: the time is come, the day of trouble is near, and not the sounding again of the mountains.

Seek good, and not evil, that ye may live; and so the Lord, the God of hosts, shall be with you, as ye have spoken.

Hate the evil, and love the good, and establish judgment in the gate: it may be that the Lord God of hosts will be gracious unto the remnant of Joseph.

Eze. vii. 5, 6, 7. Amos v. 14, 15.

*Evening.*

**Behold upon the mountains the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace! O Judah,**

**keep thy solemn feasts, perform thy vows: for the wicked shall no more pass through thee; he is utterly cut off.**

Thou wentest forth for the salvation of thy people, even for the salvation with thine anointed; thou woundest the head out of the house of the wicked, by discovering the foundation unto the neck.

Thou didst walk through the sea with thine horses, through the heap of great waters.

Nah. i. 15. Hab. iii. 13, 15.