

HOME PREACHER OR CHURCH IN THE HOUSE.

FIFTY-SECOND WEEK.

MORNING WORSHIP.

O THOU who art the only living and true God, who showest to them that be in error the light of Thy truth, to the intent that they may return into the way of righteousness, grant unto us who have been admitted into the fellowship of Christ's religion, that as strangers and pilgrims we may abstain from fleshly lust, and may follow all such things as are agreeable to holy profession, through our Lord Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

HYMN, or *Psalm xc.* 13-17.

FOR thy mercy and thy grace
Constant though another year,
Hear our song of thankfulness;
Jesus our Redeemer, hear.

In our weakness and distress,
Rock of Strength, be Thou our stay;
In the pathless wilderness
Be our true and living way.

So within thy palace gate
We shall praise on golden strings,
Thee the only Potentate,
Lord of lord, and King of kings.

MALACHI IV.

FOR, behold, the day cometh that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble; and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch. 2. But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings; and ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall. 3. And ye shall tread down the wicked; for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet, in the day that I shall do this, saith the Lord of hosts. 4. Remember ye the law of Moses my servants, which I commanded unto him in Horeb for all Israel, with the statutes and judgements. 5. Behold, I will

send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord: 6. And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.

Prayer.

O LORD, we would come unto Thy presence, at this time, in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, our alone advocate and intercessor with the Father, to offer Thee our worship and present to Thee our prayer. Graciously vouchsafe to us the aid of Thy Holy Spirit, that so we may worship Thee, who art a Spirit, in spirit and in truth, and may present to Thee, not the mere utterance of the lips, but the sincere and earnest desire of our hearts.

O God, who art the source of our life and the length of our days, we gratefully acknowledge Thy great goodness to us, in that Thou hast brought us in safety to the last sabbath of another year. Through dangers, seen and unseen, Thou hast brought us; Thy bounteous hand hath supplied our daily wants; Thou has kept us in the house and by the way; and amid the varying experiences of our journey, Thou hast never forsaken us or ceased to do us

good. What shall we render unto the Lord for all his benefits unto us? We will take the cup of salvation and call upon the name of the Lord. Bless the Lord, O our souls, and forget not all His benefits: who forgiveth all our iniquities; who healeth all our diseases; who redeemeth our life from destruction; who crowneth us with loving-kindness and tender mercies. Here would we anew this day set up our Ebenezer and say, Hitherto the Lord hath helped us.

We would also, O Lord, remember our faults this day. We would humble ourselves before Thee, at the remembrance of the little improvement we have made of the many privileges we have enjoyed. We have not profited by Thy bounty as we ought; we have not used, as we might, the opportunities of serving Thee which Thou hast given us; we have often forgotten Thee, and sadly gone astray from Thee; we have been selfish, and carnal, and worldly; many things which we ought to have done we have left undone; and alas! we have done many things which we ought not to have done. Our own hearts condemn us, and Thou art greater than our hearts, and knowest all things. O how unworthy and evil must we appear in Thy holy sight! Have mercy on us, O God; have mercy on us, and, for the sake of Him who died for us, do Thou forgive all our iniquity, and thoroughly cleanse us from all our sin. Restore to us the joy of Thy salvation; fill us with a sense of Thy redeeming grace; and give us to experience the blessedness of the man

whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Let Thy mercy, O God, be upon us as we hope in Thee.

We rejoice that, amid a conscious unworthiness, and under a humbling sense of our sinfulness, we can look up with confidence unto Thee, as our Almighty and All-gracious Father. With us all is changing and uncertain, but Thou changest not; from eternity to eternity Thou, O God, art. Thy grace never faileth; Thy promises are ever sure; Thy mercy endureth for ever. And we rejoice in the unfailing efficacy of our Saviour's work on our behalf -- in the abiding sufficiency of that sacrifice which, once for all, He offered for sin, and in His ability to save to the uttermost, all that come unto Thee through Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for us. In Him, who is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever, we would continually abide; drawing from His exhaustless fulness all that we need; feeling the constraining power of His love; consecrating to Him all that we are and have; walking in His ways and doing all His holy will.

Most merciful God, who hast the hearts of all men in Thy hands, may it please Thee at this time to incline our hearts to Thy service, that so, by reading of Thy word and meditation thereon, our souls may be quickened, refreshed, and strengthened. May we be as those whom the Lord visiteth and satisfieth with His goodness. Waiting upon Thee may we renew our strength, mount up as on the wings

of eagles, run and not be weary, walk and not faint. So endow us with Thy Holy Spirit, that we shall be raised above that which is transient and unsatisfying, and be made to find all our well-springs in Thee. O satiate our weary souls, and replenish us with Thy favour, for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

THE CHURCH IN THE HOUSE.

O LORD, Thou hast made our days on earth as an hand-breadth, and in Thy infinite mercy hast taught us to look for a better and an enduring life beyond the grave. May Christ now be formed in all of us the hope of glory, that when we are called away from this fleeting state, an entrance may be ministered unto us abundantly into Thine everlasting kingdom, for our Redeemer's sake. *Amen.*

HYMN, *or Psalm xxxix.* 4-8.

LIFE is a span, a fleeting hour;
How soon the vapour flies!
Man is a tender, transient flower,
That even in blooming dies.

Death spreads like winter's frozen arms,
And beauty smiles no more;
Ah! where are now those rising charms
Which pleased our eyes before?

The once-lov'd form, now cold and dead,
Each mournful thought employs;
And nature weeps, her comforts fled,
And wither'd all her joys!

Hope looks beyond the bounds of time,
When what we now deplore
Shall rise to full immortal prime,
And bloom, to fade no more!

JOB XIV.

MAN that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble. 2. He cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down: he fleeth also as a shadow, and continueth not. 3. And dost thou open thine eyes upon such an one, and bringest me into judgment with thee? 4. Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? Not one. 5. Seeing his days are determined, the number of his months are with thee; thou hast appointed his bounds that he cannot pass. 6. Turn from him, that he may rest, till he shall accomplish, as an hireling, his day. 7. For there is hope of a tree, if it be cut down, that it will sprout again, and that the tender branch thereof will not cease. 8. Though the root thereof wax old in the earth, and the stock thereof die in the ground; 9. Yet through the scent of water it will bud, and bring forth boughs like a plant. 10. But man dieth, and wasteth away; yea, man giveth up the ghost, and where is he? 11. As the waters fail from the sea, and the flood decayeth and drieth up; 12. So man lieth down, and riseth not: till the heavens be no more, they shall not awake, nor be raised out of their sleep. 13. Oh that thou wouldest hide me in the grave, that thou wouldest keep me secret, until thy wrath be past, that thou wouldest appoint me a set time, and remember me! 14. If a man die, shall he live again? All the days of my appointed time will I wait,

till my change come. 15. Thou shalt call and I will answer thee: thou wilt have a desire to the work of thine hands. 16. For now thou numberest my steps: dost thou not watch over my sin? 17. My transgression is sealed up in a bag, and thou sewest up mine iniquity. 18. And surely the mountain falling cometh to nought, and the rock is removed out of his place. 19. The waters wear the stones: thou washest away the things which grow out of the dust of the earth; and thou destroyest the hope of man. 20. Thou prevailest for ever against him, and he passeth: thou changest his countenance, and send him away. 21. His sons come to honour, and he knoweth it not; and they are brought low, but he perceiveth it not of them. 22. But his flesh upon him shall have pain, and his soul within him shall mourn.

JOHN V. 19-29.

THEN answered Jesus, and said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise. 20. For the Father loveth the Son, and sheweth him all things that himself doeth: and he will shew him greater works than these, that ye may marvel. 21. For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and

quickeneth them; even so the Son quickeneth whom he will. 22. For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son: 23. That all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the Father which hath sent him. 24. Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life. 25. Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear shall live. 26. For as the Father hath life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself: 27. And hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man. 28. Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, 29. And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life, &c.

SERMON LII.

“FOR WHAT IS YOUR LIFE? IT IS EVEN A VAPOUR, THAT APPEARETH FOR A LITTLE TIME, AND THEN VANISHETH AWAY.” -- James iv. 14.

THE sacred writer is in this contest arguing against an over-confident reckoning upon the future. To this we are all prone. Man has the power of anticipating the future, as well as of recollecting the past. He can look forward as well as around him and behind him. He can borrow, from experience accumulated in the past, guidance for the time to come. He can form plans for the regulation of his conduct and the management of his affairs in the future. And having confidence in the uniformity of nature, he is apt to overlook his own transitoriness, and the uncertainty of his own life, health, and ability, and in the confidence of his heart to say, “Tomorrow will be as this day, and much more abundant. To-day or to-morrow I will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell and get gain.” Yes, to-morrow will come, and it will be in itself as this day; but will it be so to *you*? Shall you be here to enjoy it or use it as you purpose? Or, if here, will your condition be such as to enable you to carry on, and carry out, the designs you have formed? “Go to,” says the sacred writer; “ye know not what shall be on the morrow: for what is your life? It is

even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time and then vanisheth away.” In this fleeting transient life, twenty-four hours are more than you can safely count on. You know not what a day or an hour may bring forth. There is but One to whom the future is certainly known. Be wise, then, and look above ourselves to that Infinite Being in whose hand your breath is, and whose are all your ways, and learn to say, “If the Lord will we shall live and do this or that.”

This lesson of the sacred writer, at all times needful and impressive, acquires a peculiar force and solemnity when uttered amid the departing shadows of an expiring year. The rapid lapse of time is one of those commonplaces to which all assent, but which very few realize and ponder as they ought. The truth is so familiar and trite, that the utterance of it awakens no emotion. It is like an old acquaintance, whom we see every day, and whose visit causes no surprise and excites but little interest. The only thing that has the effect of rousing us to ponder the transitoriness of life is the occurrence of some event which tells that *time is past*. “We take no note of time but from its loss.” Well is it when we note it even from that; well is it when the termination of any measured period of time surprises us into reflection on the rapidity with which time is passing away from us, and we are lapsing into eternity. For men are prone to turn away from them even such admonitions, and to silence amid noise and merriment the

voice that would summon them to “number their days so as to apply their hearts to wisdom.” Who shall say that this is wise? Who shall adjudge this to be worthy a being endowed with intelligence, capable of moral impressions, and born for immortality? Be it ours to avail ourselves of the opportunity which this the last sabbath of another year presses upon us to pursue those meditations which the truth stated in the text naturally suggests. I remark --

I. *We are here reminded of the transitoriness and brevity of human life.* “What is your life?” asks the sacred writer; and he replies to the question by selecting one of the most unstable and fleeting objects that present themselves to our observation as a fitting image of life. It is not the ever-enduring rock; it is not the ever-flowing stream; it is not the tree that fades and revives year by year, to which he compares it, but to a vapour, a shadowy unsubstantial thing, a thing no sooner seen than it vanishes for ever. And in keeping with this are all the similitudes which the Scriptures employ to set forth a just representation of man’s life. They speak of it passing as a tale that is told, pleasant or painful while it lasts, but soon ending, and leaving no abiding impression behind. They describe time as flying through the web of life swifter than a weaver’s shuttle. They compare life to a shadow, that flies before the sun and vanishes away. It is like grass that flourishes in the morning, and in the evening is cut down, and withereth

away. By such similitudes, borrowed from the common experiences of every-day life, God would in his word remind us of the transitoriness of our existence here; and would thereby impress upon us the conviction that this is not our continuing place of abode; that here we are but pilgrims and strangers; and that we are fast passing on to the grand crisis of our being, when our condition for eternity will be fixed for weal or for woe.

How true does the statement of the inspired writer appear when we look back on the year which is soon to close! What a transient vapour presents itself to our view! How rapidly it has passed! It seems but as yesterday since this year began. Many events, no doubt, have transpired as it rolled along; many experiences have been passed through, some painful, some pleasant, by every individual during its lapse; momentous histories, having their issues in eternity, have been recorded of it in the remembrance-book of God: but to us these manifold events, projected on the plane of the past, and seen in perspective there, seem little and crowded into a very narrow compass. And how noiselessly, how stealthily, its hours and days and weeks have slid on one after the other, till now they are nearly all gone! How many projects and plans, which floated before our minds at the commencement of it, have gone up as dust! How we counted upon it, and on what we should do as it passed on! And now that it is about to close, what remains to us of all

we purposed and planned? Alas! in the majority of instances, only the shadowy remembrance of what might have been, but never has been!

And what is this but a specimen of what happens every year of our lives? Truly our life is but a vapour. Whether we think of it or not, our years pass on with ever-lengthening stride, bearing us to that “bourne from which no traveller returns.” And ere long, for each of us the *last* year shall come. Take any congregation this day assembled, numbering, say one thousand persons. They are there in health and vigour, and it may be some of them counting on many days. But estimating their prospects by the general average, what is the certainty that lies before them? In the course of one year thirty-three will have died; in the course of ten years two hundred and ninety-four will have died; in the course of twenty years five hundred and thirty-nine will have died; in thirty years, seven-hundred and thirty-eight; in forty years, eight hundred and seventy-two; in fifty years nine hundred and sixty-one will be no more; and of the remainder a few years more at the longest will see the end. What a view this gives us of the mortality of man and the vanity of life? It takes but half a century to sweep a whole congregation, such as I have supposed, into the grave! And then, as they are there of all ages, and as death takes not the aged alone, but the young and middle-aged as well, we know not when any one’s turn

may come, or in which year's draft we ourselves may be called away. We start together on our journey on these few years, and every year our ranks diminish; ere twenty years are past half of our number probably are gone; and ere another thirty have lapsed, only a few survivors remain waiting to be called away. This is no fancy picture; it is the verdict of an appeal to facts and figures which cannot be set aside. Let us lay it to heart. Let us realize the fragility and transitoriness of these lives of ours. Let us not live as if we were to live alway; but as beings who are certain to die, and may die at any moment, let us live in constant preparation for our great change, that when the Master calls us we may be found with our work done, our warfare accomplished, and ready for our rest.

II. I remark secondly, that *though our years pass away rapidly and our life is but a vapour, yet time ever bears with it into eternity innumerable momentous issues.* -- Our life is but a vapour; but it is like those vapours that float in the atmosphere loaded with influences and pregnant with results. Time glides rapidly away from us, but "the ministries of time" are mighty, and its deeds momentous. The agent passes; the act and its consequences abide. Time is mighty to test character, to reveal the true inner nature of the individual, and to manifest the proper and necessary results of conduct. Along its shores are the wrecks of many a fair promise, many a vaunted scheme, many a proud and

tempting enterprise; whilst, on the other hand, many a scheme and plan of conduct and method of action on which the gay and thoughtless and pleasure-seeking poured scorn, as did the antediluvians on Noah when he was building the ark, has been proved by the test of time to be wise and good-- sufficient to ride out the gale, to abide the buffeting of the waves, and to carry that which was entrusted to it to a quiet and safe haven. Time is, in a sense, the measure of all things. It is the great revealer, the mighty worker. God himself commits the vindication of his ways to the action of time. We cannot comprehend his working, we cannot measure his plans. Much that He does appears to us dark and mysterious. His footsteps are in the great deep; clouds and darkness are around his throne. What He doth we know not now; but the time will show. The faithful and trusting spirit shall know it hereafter. In due time we shall understand the matter, and the mystery shall be made plain, and the ways of God shall be vindicated. "The vision is for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and shall not lie; though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry."

In the discipline of the individual life time plays a most important part. The fruits of life's experiences, its joys and its sorrows, its trials and its triumphs, do not ripen all at once. The goal at which we have to aim is reached only by slow degrees, and through many trying and depressing

adventures. The sunny peaks that stand up serene and calm above the clouds can be reached only by struggling through many a muddy ravine, and ascending many a slippery height, and scaling many a rugged and dangerous path. It will be a grand burst of music that shall hail the accomplishment of God's purposes toward our race; but in the meanwhile there requires a protracted tuning of the instruments, during which many discords and harsh notes are uttered. The agency of time is needed to prepare for the concert of eternity; and so we pass through a varied discipline here; and our years, as they roll on, are loaded with events of which the issue lies in the world that is to come.

Has it not been so with us during the year that is about to close? How much the lapse of these months has revealed to you that before was hidden! What lessons it has taught you of yourself, and of God's ways towards you! What enlarged experience it has unfolded to you of your own weakness, of your proneness to fall, of your lack of strength and courage and skill for the great moral warfare in which you are embarked, of your need of divine aid if you are to stand, and of the all-sufficiency of that aid even in the extremity of your weakness and your peril! How many things have happened to you this year, which have left their mark upon you, of which you never dreamt when the year began! You little knew what trials Time had in keeping for

you. You little knew how your faith, your principles, your character, were to be tested by the events of this year. But you have come through it; and you know that all has been for your good. Be comforted by the thought that time has its consolations, as well as its discipline. It is God's minister for this end. It heals over the scar itself has made. It dries up the tears it has caused to flow. It brings the harvest, as it brought the season of tillage and the seed-time. The promise stands firm, "In due time ye shall reap if ye faint not."

But some of you may perhaps say, "What is all this to me? I have had no very *marked* experiences this year. My time has passed on very quietly and equably. I have had no great cares, or sorrows, or losses, to press on me; nor have I had any very striking experiences of an opposite kind. I do not feel, therefore, as if I had any special call to such reflections as these." My friend, permit me to suggest that had you been more observant and more thoughtful, as the year rolled on, you might have found much in what it brought you well-deserving your notice as part of the discipline by which God was seeking to benefit your soul. But, apart from this, let me ask, Is there nothing in the mere fact that you have lived another year, of itself to cause serious thought in you? Is it nothing to know that, swiftly as it has passed, you have *had* it all -- every day, hour and moment of it, -- and must give account for it all? Is it

nothing that you are one year older -- one year nearer death, and judgment, and eternity? that you have one year less to do the work assigned to you, and to prepare for what lies before you? Oh! Count not, I beseech you, such such considerations of small moment. Dismiss not from your thoughts the solemn conclusions to which they point. Be wise, and listen to the admonitory voice which the departing year utters in your ears; for “there is neither work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave, whither you are fast hastening.”

III. And now let me invite all to an act of *serious, earnest, self-examination* in reference to the year that is soon to close. As I have said, we have *had* this year with its varied experiences, opportunities, and privileges: the question for each of us is, What have I made of it in relation to the great end of my existence -- the mighty interest of my spiritual being? We have had *time*: What use have we put it to? We have had *opportunities*: What improvement have we made of them? We have had *means of grace*: What advantage to our souls have we gathered from these? We have had *trials*: How have we borne them, and what religious effect have they had on us? We have had *mercies*: What gratitude have we showed for them? We have had *offers of salvation*: Have we accepted them, and are we now rejoicing with a good hope in Christ the Saviour? Or has all this been in vain for us? Have we been idle,

unprofitable servants? Have we been stupid and insensible, so that God's dealings with us have not been marked, and the lessons of his hand have passed over us unheeded? Have we been carnal and worldly, and selfish, caring more for "the meat that perisheth" than for "that which endureth unto eternal life" -- more concerned to know what we should do to inherit earth's advantages, or enjoy earth's pleasures, than to know how to "walk so as to please God," and realize the blessings of his favour? Has our time been spent on that which will abide the test? Or has it been spent in the pursuit of that which "perishes with the using," and leaves only ashes and dust behind? Oh! let this be with us a season of earnest, searching self-examination, that we may learn wisdom, and that this year may not wholly pass from us without our receiving a benefit which shall last when our ears shall be at an end, and for us time shall be no longer.

Beloved, the time is short. A few more revolutions of the earth's orbit -- a few more changes of summer and of winter -- a few more intervals of sunshine and shadow -- a few more work-days and sabbath-days: and all will be over. All that is earthly shall have passed away from us. We shall have entered the now unseen world; and in its searching, all-revealing light the worth of what we have lived for here shall be tried. Shall we carry with us what will bear this test? gold tried in the fire -- rich gems that

will shine in the light of heaven -- crowns of honour which we may cast at the feet of Christ upon his throne? Oh! let the lapse of time rouse us to diligence and earnest endeavour, that we may improve the time whilst it lasts, and so may be prepared to enter with joy into the presence of our Lord, when he shall call us hence. “Wherefore beloved, be diligent, that ye may be found of Him in peace, without spot and blameless.”

-- W. LINDSAY ALEXANDER, D.D.

THE CHILDREN'S SERVICE.

THE SEPULCHRE.

WHEN Jesus died on the cross several wonderful things happened. I do not know whether some one of the priests might be at that moment in the holy place, but I think it not unlikely. If so, he must have been much struck with what he saw. You know that between the holy place and the most holy there hung a veil of blue. No person could by the law pass through that veil except the high priest, and he only on one day of the year, taking blood of sacrifice with him. The holiest of all, as it was named, was a figure of heaven where God dwells; it represented God's nearest presence; and the veil which closed it said that the free way to that was not yet opened. Christ's death opened it, making true atonement for sin. So, to show this, at the moment of his death the veil between the outer and inner sanctuary was rent from top to bottom without a human hand touching it. The way to heaven by Jesus is open for ever now. There were other rendings and openings that same hour. The earth shook, rocks were riven, and graves where dead bones lay were opened. That was all that was done just then; but

after Christ had risen many of the sleeping saints came out of these opened graves, and were seen by numbers of people. That was another way of showing how Jesus' death was setting wide open the road to heaven.

The great darkness, also, that had hung round the cross, and over the land, passed away; and the evening light shone out.

When the centurion that had charge of the soldiers, and those that were with him, saw those things they were filled with awe, and the centurion cried out, Certainly this was a righteous man; he must have been the Son of God. A great many persons were looking on while these things were happening, and were greatly affected by them, and turned to go home, beating their breasts for grief and wonder. Many of Christ's friends, especially women from Galilee, who loved Jesus and had often served him, were also present, though they looked on at a distance, and had witnessed all.

After Christ's death a singular thing happened to his corse. The Jews did not wish the bodies of the three crucified to be left on the cross on the sabbath day, and they went to Pilate to ask him to order their death to be hastened by breaking their legs. That was a thing often done when it was wished to bring on death faster. Pilate consented, and the soldiers got the order. So they broke, one after the other, the legs of the two thieves. Then they came last to

Jesus, but they saw that he was dead already, and they did not break his limbs. The Scripture had long before shown that God was to put a fence round that sacred body, for it said, "A bone of him shall not be broken." One of the soldiers however, fulfilling, without knowing it, another saying of Scripture, thrust a spear into the side of Jesus, making a deep gash, and out of the wound there flowed immediately blood and water. John was near at the time, and says he saw it. You know what that blood and water say to us. They say that Christ gives pardon and pureness.

In the ancient scriptures it had also been said that Jesus, though it was meant that his grave should be with the wicked, was instead, with the rich in his death. This prophecy was now fulfilled. There was a rich man, a counsellor, who though from the fear of the Jews he had not confessed him openly, was a disciple of Jesus. He had not given his consent when in the council it was revealed that Jesus should be killed, and now he came out boldly as the friend of the crucified. For he went to Pilate, and asked to have his body to bury it. The governor made some inquiry to know for certain that he was dead, and at once gave Joseph leave to take the body away. So it was taken down from the cross. Joseph was joined, in his sad but sacred task, by another rich man and member of the council. That was Nicodemus, who at one time came to Jesus by night inquiring after the truth. He had bought a large quantity of

a mixture of myrrh and aloes, and Joseph and he together having wrapped the body in linen with the sweet spices, carried it and laid it in a new tomb that Joseph had in his garden. The tomb was a cave with a door hewn out of the rock, and no person had as yet been buried there. When the two rich men had placed the body of the Lord in this tomb, they rolled a great stone to the door, and went home. The women that had been looking on at the cross had still kept near till they saw where Jesus was laid. Then they also went home, having resolved to come when the sabbath was over to anoint his body with more care.

The Jews, remembering that Jesus had said he would rise again, and professing to be afraid that his disciples would come by night and steal the body, and then say he was alive again, got Pilate's leave to seal the stone and set a watch of soldiers to keep it. But they could not keep it against the powers of angels and of God. So after the sabbath was past, and the light began to break towards morning of the first day of the week, an angel, very bright and terrible to look on, came down from heaven and rolled away the stone from the door of the tomb. The ground shook all round, and the soldiers of the watch, seeing his face like the lightning, fell like dead men on the ground with fear. Then Jesus rose, and went forth into immortality.

Would it make the story too long if I were to tell you all that happened among the disciples on the day that Jesus

rose from the dead, and I could not be sure that I would tell it all in the right order. But I will tell you how Jesus showed himself five times that day. His first appearance was to Mary Magdalene. She was standing beside the empty grave, weeping; and as she wept she stooped down and looked into it, and saw two angels sitting, one at the head and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had been laid. The angels spoke to her, and said, "Woman, why are you weeping?" She said, "They have taken my Lord away, and I do not know where they have laid him." With that she turned, and saw through her tears a person standing, who spoke to her, and asked also why she was weeping, and whom she was seeking. She thought he was the gardener, and said, "Sir, if you have carried him from this, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away." It was Jesus himself she was speaking to, but she did not know him; and not knowing him, was turning to go away. Then, in a voice she could not mistake, Jesus said to her, "Mary." That was enough, she knew him at once, and turned, and with one word also, saying, "Master," and fell down to worship him. Jesus bade her go and tell the disciples. The next time Jesus showed himself was to a company of women. They had been at the grave, and had seen a vision of angels that told them Jesus was alive. They could hardly believe it, and were frightened by what they had seen, and were running to tell the apostles. On the

way Jesus himself met them,, and said, “All hail;” and they knew him, and went near, and held him by the feet and worshipped him. When they brought the disciples word, along with Mary Magdalene, of all this, they would not believe, but thought their words were idle tales. But before this day two of their company had occasion to go out of town to a village called Emmaus, and as they went they kept talking about what had happened, and about the strange report brought by the women. While they were doing so Jesus joined them, and walked on with them. Their eyes were held from knowing him, and he asked them, What are you saying to each other as you walk on so sadly? They said, Are you a stranger, and do not know what has been happening in Jerusalem these few days? Then they told him about Jesus, and how he was crucified; and how they had hoped that he was the Messiah, sent to redeem Israel. They went on to say how that very day, which was the third from his death, some women that were of their company had been at his grave, and had talked of seeing angels who told them he was alive. And certainly, said they, some of themselves had gone to the tomb and found it empty; but they had not seen Jesus himself. Then Jesus called them foolish, and reproved them for not believing the scriptures, and went on to explain a great many passages in all the Old Testament, and to show how they foretold that the Messiah was to suffer and die, and

then go to his glory. As he was talking they came to the village, and though Jesus was going on, they urged him to go in and stay with them, and have some refreshment. While they were eating, Jesus took bread, and brake it, and gave it to them, and they knew him then; but he immediately disappeared. They could not stay now, but got up in haste, and went back to Jerusalem to tell the news. When they came there they found the disciples gathered together, and saying, The Lord is risen indeed, and Simon has seen him. These two appearances make the third and fourth. The fifth and last that day was in the evening. The disciples were all together except Thomas, within doors, and having the doors locked, when Jesus stood in the midst of them, and said, "Peace be to you." And the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord.

Several times after this, and once to over five hundred persons at the same time, Jesus appeared to those who loved him. He staid on earth for forty days, and when he showed himself to the disciples, instructed them and directed them what to do when he should have gone away. One day he appeared to them in Jerusalem, and took them with him out as far as Bethany, and standing till he lifted up his hands and blessed them. In the very act of doing so, he rose from the earth, went away through the air, and a cloud took him and covered him from sight. Two angels then appeared, and said, "This same Jesus will come again as ye

have seen him go. Do not stand here gazing up into the sky after him.” So the apostles returned, and waited in the upper room till the ascended Saviour poured out his Spirit upon them on the day of Penteost; and they began to preach his gospel among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.

QUESTIONS FROM THE BIBLE STORY.

1. Where is Christ's body, slain and wounded, spoken of as the rent veil?
2. Where is Christ called the first-fruits of them that sleep?
3. What two places in the Old Testament speak of Jesus as pierced?
4. What two parts of scripture refer to the fact that not a bone of him should be broken?
5. When did Nicodemus speak a word on behalf of justice to Jesus in the council, to be answered only by a taunt?
6. What story were the soldiers of the watch bribed to tell after Christ's resurrection, in order to hide the truth?
7. In what chapter of the New Testament are six appearances of the risen Saviour referred to?

8. How many such appearances are recorded in all?

ANSWERS to the foregoing questions will be found by turning to the following chapters. -- Heb. x.; 1 Cor. xv.; Ps. xxii. and Zech. xii.; Ex. xii. and Ps. xxxiv.; John vii.; Matt. xxvii.; 1 Cor. xv.; Matt. xxviii., Mark xvi., Luke xxiv., John xx., and 1 Cor. xv.

Prayer.

O LORD God, who quickenest the dead, we thank Thee for the resurrection of Jesus. We thank Thee that He lay in the grave, but rejoice that He has left it for ever; we bless Thee for the hope of resurrection in Him. We pray Thee that Jesus, by His Spirit of grace and life, may now raise our souls from death, may be with us when we come to die in the body, and that when He comes to wake the dead, we may rise in Him to glory, honour and immortality. *Amen.*

THE EVENING SERVICE

OMNISCIENT God, who seest that we put not our trust in anything that we do, mercifully grant that by Thy power we may be defended against all adversities, or so mightily aided by Thy grace that we may not faint under them; but having heard Thy holy word with honest and good hearts, we may keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience, through Jesus Chris our Lord. *Amen.*

HYMN, *or Psalm lxxi.* 14-18.

O GOD of Israel, hear my prayer!
Let me thy richest blessing share:
Thy blessing shall my pardon be;
Oh! let that blessing rest on me!

If shining suns my path attend,
And all their cheerful influence lend;
Thy blessing still I'll most desire,
To that my highest hopes aspire.

Or if affliction's storm should lower,
I'll trust thee in the darkest hour;
On thee I'll rest my anxious mind,

And in thy blessing comfort find.

Preserve me from the snares of sin,
And ever keep my conscience clean,
Till all the cares of life shall cease,
And blessing thee, I die in peace!

ACTS XXVI. 1-29.

THEN Agrippa said unto Paul, Thou art permitted to speak for thyself. Then Paul stretched forth his hand, and answered for himself: 2. I think myself happy, king Agrippa, because I shall answer for myself this day before thee touching all the things whereof I am accused of the Jews; 3. Especially because I know thee to be expert in all customs and questions which are among the Jews: wherefore I beseech thee to hear me patiently. 4. My manner of life from my youth, which was at the first among mine own nation at Jerusalem, know all the Jews; 5. Which knew me from the beginning (if they would testify), that after the most straitest sect of our religion, I lived a Pharisee. 6. And now I stand and am judged for the hope of the promise made of God unto our fathers: 7. Unto which promise our twelve tribes, instantly serving God day and night, hope to come: for which hope's sake, king Agrippa, I

am accused of the Jews. 8. Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead? 9. I verily thought with myself, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. 10. Which thing I also did in Jerusalem: and many of the saints did I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priests; and when they were put to death, I gave my voice against them. 11. And I punished them oft in every synagogue, and compelled them to blaspheme; and being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted them even unto strange cities. 12. Whereupon, as I went to Damascus with authority and commission from the chief priests, 13. At mid-day, O king, I saw in the way a light from heaven, above the brightness of the sun, &c.

Prayer.

ALMIGHTY God, the God and Father of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and our God and Father through Him; we humbly beseech Thee for His sake to grant unto us at this time Thy blessing according to our need. Seal instruction on our hearts; grant unto us wisdom such as cometh from the right numbering of our days; and enable

us, we earnestly pray, to redeem the time, and during what may yet remain to us of life here, to order our ways with discretion, to live soberly, righteously and godly in the world, and to bring forth those fruits which shall be to the praise of the glory of Thy grace.

Thou hast reminded us that our life is but a vapour: oh! save us from seeking in this transient and fleeting existence our satisfaction and rest. Help us to set our affections on those things that are above at Thy right hand, where Christ sitteth. May our chief desire be to serve Him, and to glorify Him in our bodies and spirits, which are His. Redeemed by His precious blood, and resting exclusively on His finished work and high-priestly intercession, may we go on our way rejoicing; doing the will of God from the heart; seeking to be kind, courteous, and beneficent to all with whom we come in contact; looking, as time passes, with steadfast eye and longing desire to that promised day of the Lord when He who is our life shall appear, and we also shall appear with Him in glory. O increase our faith. May our life become ever more a life of faith, of faith in God and in the Lord our Saviour. Make us, we beseech Thee, more holy day by day; sanctify us wholly, in body, soul, and spirit; delivering us from those lusts and passions which war against the soul and sink men in perdition, and perfecting within us the new nature, that we may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things, and walk worthy of Him who hath called us to

glory and to virtue. Overrule all things that happen to us for our spiritual welfare, and for Thy glory through us. Make us to lead useful lives, promoting to the best of our ability all good causes, and devoting ourselves especially to the service of Christ's cause and kingdom in the world. Thus may we have grace given to us to live as lights in the world, holding forth the word of life, and leading men by our good works to glorify our Father who is in heaven. Gracious God, we commend unto Thee all who are near and dear unto us. Do Thou graciously have them in Thy safe keeping; enrich their souls with the treasures of Thy grace; and bring them with us to Thine everlasting kingdom and glory. Bless our country; continue to us the privileges we enjoy; save us from foreign invasion and internal discord; from the inroads of superstition, the ensnaring influences of infidelity, the wasting blight of intemperance, and the undermining effects of immorality. May our nation be an enlightened, virtuous, God-fearing nation, and our people be adorned with that righteousness which is the strength and glory of a kingdom. Be gracious to our sovereign lady the queen; give her long and prosperously to reign over these realms; and may Thy Holy Spirit so rest upon her, that all her works shall be wisely and piously done, and she shall be prepared for a crown of glory that fadeth not away. Bless all the members of the royal House, we beseech Thee; all persons in authority over us; all judges and magistrates

throughout the queen's dominions. May they, as intrusted with talents from God, have a deep sense of their responsibility to Thee, and act as those who have to give account. Be merciful unto us, O God, and bless us, and cause Thy face to shine on us; that so Thy way may be known upon the earth, and Thy saving health unto all nations. And to Thy great name shall be all the glory, through Jesus Christ our Saviour. *Amen.*

MORNING AND EVENING MEDITATIONS.

MONDAY.

Morning.

Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned: for she hath received of the Lord's hand double for all her sins.

He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith Unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely.

I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end: I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely.

He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be His God, and he shall be my son.

Isa. xl. 2. Rev. ii. 7. Rev. xxi. 6, 7.

Evening.

For thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I, even I, will both search my sheep, and seek them out.

As a shepherd seeketh out his flock in the day that he is among his sheep that are scattered; so will I seek out my

sheep, and will deliver them out of all places where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day.

And I will bring them out from the people, and gather them from the countries, and will bring them to their own land, and feed them upon the mountains of Israel by the rivers, and in all the inhabited places of the country.

I will feed my flock, and I will cause them to lie down, saith the Lord God.

Eze. xxxiv. 11, 12, 13, 15.

TUESDAY.

Morning.

O Israel, return unto the Lord thy God; for thou hast fallen by thine iniquity.

Who knoweth if he will return and repent, and leave a blessing behind him, even a meat-offering and a drink-offering unto the Lord your God?

Then will the Lord be jealous for his land, and pity his people.

And ye shall eat in plenty, and be satisfied, and praise the name of the Lord your God, that hath dealt wonderfully with you; and my people shall never be ashamed.

And ye shall know that I am in the midst of Israel.

Hos. xiv. 1. Joel ii. 14, 18, 26, 27.

Evening.

Then said Jesus unto them again, Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep.

All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers: but the sheep did not hear them.

I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture.

The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and have it more abundantly.

And ye my flock, the flock of my pasture, are men, and I am your God, saith the Lord God.

John x. 7, 8, 9, 10. Eze. xxxiv. 31.

WEDNESDAY.

Morning.

Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves: know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?

For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection:

Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.

Finally, brethren, farewell. Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you.

2 Cor. xiii. 5. Rom. vi. 5, 6. 2 Cor. xiii. 11.

Evening.

I have waited for thy salvation, O Lord.

And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us: this is the Lord; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation.

Therefore I will look unto the Lord; I will wait for the God of my salvation: my God will hear me.

In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him.

Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

Gen. xlix. 18. Isa. xxv. 9. Mich vii. 7. 1 John iv. 9, 10.

THURSDAY.

Morning.

Jerusalem hath grievously sinned; therefore she is removed; all that honoured her despise her, because they have seen her nakedness; yea, she sigheth, and turneth backward.

She remembereth not her last end; therefore she came down wonderfully: she had no comforter.

Ah sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evil-doers, children that are corrupters! They have forsaken the Lord, they have provoked the Holy One of Israel unto anger, they are gone away backward.

Why should ye be stricken any more? ye will revolt more and more. The whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint.

Lam. i. 8, 9. Isa. i. 4, 5.

Evening.

Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance.

Now I rejoyce, not that ye were made sorry, but that ye sorrowed to repentance: for ye were made sorry after a godly manner, that ye might receive damage by us in nothing.

For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death.

For, behold, this self-same thing, that ye sorrowed, after a godly sort, what carefulness it wrought in you, yea,

what clearing of yourselves, yea, what indignation, yea, what fear, yea, what vehement desire, yea, what zeal, yea, what revenge! In all things ye have approved yourselves to be clear in this matter.

Matt. iii. 8. 2 Cor. vii. 9, 10, 11.

FRIDAY.

Morning.

Every word of God is pure.

The voice said, Cry. And he said, What shall I cry? All flesh is grass, and all the goodliness thereof is as the flower of the field:

The grass withereth, the flower fadeth; but the word of our God shall stand for ever.

For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.

Prov. xxx. 5. Isa. xl. 6, 8. Heb. iv. 12, 13.

Evening.

Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed,

In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump, (for the trumpet shall sound;) and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them.

And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God: and the books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.

1 Cor. xv. 51, 52. Rev. xx. 11, 12.

SATURDAY.

Morning.

Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book: for the time is at hand.

And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.

I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last.

Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.

I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star.

Rev. xxii. 10, 12, 13, 14, 16.

Evening.

And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.

And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.

He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly: Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus.

Rev. xxii. 17, 18, 19.