

Our Young People

A Prayer Meeting on Church Going.

Topic for March 5: "The Gates of Zion."—Ps. 87: 1-7; 100: 1-5.

Four Gates.

By Rev. William Fothergill Gibbons.

Christianity has been called the religion of the city. In the early days of the church the epithet "pagan" was almost the synonym for "countrified." The beginning of the history of the church was in a garden; the consummation is represented under the figure of a heavenly city with walls and gates.

"The Lord loveth the gates of Zion." (Ps. 87: 2.) There is no doubt about that. But do the inhabitants of our cities to-day love the gates that lead to the sanctuary of the Lord? In David's day the tribes came up in festival attire by troops and bands, making holiday of their religion, and singing in antiphonal chorus the psalm of degree, "Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and the King of glory shall come in." In our day multitudes who live at the very gates of the churches troop from the cities by trolley, train, or boat during the summer season to demoralize the country, or bake their brains by the register over the Sunday newspaper in the winter, regardless of the fact that church-doors swing open with a welcome.

We need not wait until the gateways of the heavenly city appear before we enter into the presence of God. We may approach Him through the gates of the earthly temple. There is

The Gate of Hearing. According to the allegory of Bunyan's "Holy War," it was through Ear-Gate that the enemies of Christ found access to the city of Mansoul. Through the same avenue of entrance Immanuel came. There must be the hearing of the saving truth before there can be any saving truth. The first step toward God is often the step that crosses the threshold of the church. The first gate that opens on the way to God is usually the gate of hearing. "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God."

The Gate of Prayer. Do not regard prayer in the light of a merely mechanical method of approach to God. It is not by the use of a certain number of solemn words, uttered in an awe-smitten tone, with the body bent into a conventional posture, that the soul enters into the presence of God. "Prayer is a true wish sent Godward." Prayer is the longing of the soul after God, the desire of the soul for communion with the living God. (Ps. 84: 2.) He who

feels that longing, enters through the gate of prayer into the holy place where God dwells.

The Gate of Praise. Glorious as is the gate of prayer, the gate of praise is still more glorious. Many find their way to God through their needs. Poverty, pain, disappointment, drive them to grope blindly for God in prayer, "if haply they may feel after Him and find Him." Fewer there are who are led to God through their blessings. Many

"Lips cry, 'God be pitiful'
That ne'er said, 'God be praised.'"

But it is the higher privilege of the Christian to "serve the Lord with gladness;" to "come before His presence with singing;" to "enter into His gates with thanksgiving, and into His courts with praise." (Ps. 100: 2, 4.)

The Gate of Vision. Go through this gate, and "thine eyes shall see the King in His beauty." (Isa. 33: 17.) No wonder that holy men of old longed for the beatific vision. But it is only to those who are pure in heart that the promise is given that they shall see God. Kingsley, ready to be translated, cried out, "How beautiful God is!" Gaze on this version of the perfect Christ, and you will be "changed into the same image, from glory to glory."

May our souls long for God, to see His power and glory as we have seen Him in the sanctuary! — Christian Endeavor World.

For Daily Reading.

- Monday, Feb. 27—How amiable are thy tabernacles!—Ps. 84: 1-12.
Tuesday, Feb. 28—Strength and beauty in the sanctuary.—Ps. 96: 1-13.
Wednesday, March 1—Holiness becometh thine house.—Ps. 93: 1-5.
Thursday, March 2—Reverence my sanctuary.—Lev. 26: 1-13.
Friday, March 3—Help from the sanctuary.—Ps. 29: 1-9.
Saturday, March 4—Vows paid in God's house.—Ps. 116: 1-19.
Sunday, March 5—Topic. The Gates of Zion.—Ps. 87: 1-7; 100: 1-5.

A Reminder.

In the porch of the old church at Grasmere, where Wordsworth worshipped, and with whose quiet enclosure this poet of nature sleeps, is this request: "Whoever thou art that enterest this church, forbear not to put up a brief prayer for the minister and the congregation who worship here; and, above all, forget not to offer a petition for thyself."

The Gate Beautiful.

In the old temple there was a gate called Beautiful. Its leaves were gold; its pillars were exquisite with carving; its floors were mosaics of precious stones. Over its entrance was flung a golden grape-vine whence depended jewels for clusters of grapes. It was the crown of the temple worship; it was the joy of the temple architecture.

Every Christian church ought to have a Gate Beautiful,—not a Gate Beautiful of gold and bronze and precious stones, but a gate built of something costlier far,—a gate built of warm and loving hearts going out in brotherhood and sisterhood to those who do not know the Lord, seeking to win them to Him and so to win them to His Church.

And I do not know a better Gate Beautiful for any church than a Christian Endeavor society, going out towards associate members through all the congregation, that, first beginning as associate members, they may be won for the Lord Jesus and so won for His church.—Wayland Hoyt, D.D.

And God Shall Wipe Away all Tears.

And God shall wipe away, at last,
All tears from eyes that weep;
Death, sorrow, crying pain all passed
For those in Christ who sleep.
Not e'en a mother's love can stay
Her child's returning tears;
But those which God doth wipe away,
Are gone for endless years.

Our tears of shame and sorrow, shed
O'er failure, sin and loss—
Tears for the dying and the dead—
Tears 'neath our heavy cross—
Tears for a loved one gone astray—
And tears with those who weep—
All tears, God's hand shall wipe away,
For those in Christ who sleep.

O, this the vision from of old,
Sometimes of greater cheer,
Than gates of pearl, and streets of gold,
And waters, crystal clear.
No death, nor grief, nor pain, nor sighs—
And tears all wiped away;
For that we wait with lifted eyes;
Speed, Lord, that happy day!

The vision of God—this is the one thing needful for worship and for conduct.—George Adam Smith.

In prayer we are occupied with our needs; in thanksgiving we are occupied with our blessings; in worship we are occupied with God Himself.—Anon.

What is a consecrated place? Is it only the church edifice, or the cathedral? Wherever the soul finds God is a sacred spot. Jacob on his pillow of stone in the silent night solitude, exclaimed, "How dreadful is this place! this is none other but the house of God, and the gate of heaven!"—T. L. Cuyler, D.D.

The world has a right to look worshippers, as they come out of church, in the face, and ask them, What do you bring away from your altar, your psalm, your sermon, your benediction? What gifts have you to distribute in your neighborhood?—Bishop Huntington.