

Devotional Service.

By Rev. T. J. PARR, M.A.

JULY 20.—"MEANS OF GROWTH."

Phil. 3, 12-15; Col. 1, 10-14.

HOME READINGS.

Mon., July 14.	Like a palm-tree.....	Ps. 92, 10-15
Tues., July 15.	Like a lily.....	Hos. 14, 1-9
Wed., July 16.	The growth of soul.....	Ps. 90, 1-7
Thurs., July 17.	"Built in Him".....	Eph. 2, 10-22
Fri., July 18.	Perfect.....	Heb. 12, 13-21
Sat., July 19.	Filled with fruit.....	Phil. 1, 3-11

Growth itself and means of growth are two very different things. There is growth in the apple-tree at this season of the year; but the means of its growth are sunlight, rain, atmosphere, and the nourishing properties of the soil. The believer has growth, or he is no true believer; but the means of his growth are various. The topic Scripture points out some of these means which should be carefully pondered, so that they may be appropriated.

A NEW CHANCE.

The idea of a new chance is the fundamental inducement offered in Philippi 3, 12-16. The most of us long for other opportunities. Particularly if we have squandered those already given, and lament it. The criminal, the debauchee, the profligate, as well as the soul less culpable, all unite in longing for the chance to try again. World-life usually denies the plea; but—wonderful grace—God hears the prayer and offers a restored opportunity. God draws a line across the present hour and gives us all a new chance for immortal glory.

A NEW IMPULSE.

A new chance is of little value without a new impulse. "This one thing I do." Before it had been many things and all unworthy. Now it is one thing only and that one exalted. The world's work has all been done by "one-idea" people. Not necessarily persons who were valueless in all but one direction, but those whose powers were all focalized upon one great effort worthy of all there was in them.

A NEW ATTITUDE.

A new chance and a new impulse account for the new attitude. "Forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before." A few things behind us would not forget—here and there a burning bush or a mount of transfiguration—but the most of the past is not worth a second thought. It is well to forget the discreditable past of other people, our own wrongs, our own successes. It takes a big man to forget. Little men remember and do so with exact correctness, but only men made big by the grace given from above can forget. This new attitude involves the forward look. Expectancy is the dominant element in this new attitude. The best things are all ahead. The past has been good, but the future is better.

A NEW AMBITION.

All this means a new ambition. There is a prize ahead. There is a high calling before us. God is beyond. Everything through cataloguing is in front. That accounts for the forgetting the past. Men do not forget things by sheer force of will. We forget some things by being deeply absorbed in other things. Exalted aims cause us to ignore and forget less exalted aims. There is urgency about it all. I "press" toward the mark. No mere placid wish, but a con-

suming determination to reach the goal. That is the decisive element in the effective forward look. It seems to constitute Paul's idea of perfection. "Let us, therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded."

A RETROSPECT.

We should not wholly and for ever forget the past. The best way of judging and using the future is by the past. We must cherish its lessons and correct its mistakes. But we must not brood over it, nor live in it. "Let the dead past bury its dead." Yes, we should forget much of what is past.

1. Past sorrows. God permitted them. We bore them in complaint or complacency. They marked us and are gone. God remembers them; that is enough.

2. Past mistakes. We did it, may be, the best we knew. They are over. To unduly regret them weakens us and may lead to remorse. Better watch and pray that you walk wisely to-day.

3. Past sins. We have condemned and repented of them. We have been or may now be forgiven. Where sin abounds, grace may much more abound.

"There is mercy with the Saviour,
There is healing in his blood."

4. Past attainments. They may have been worthy or unworthy of us. No matter now. Let us climb to better things from where we are. The successes of yesterday will not suffice for the duties of to-day. Nor need the failures of yesterday wholly prevent us from the accomplishment of new and larger conquests.

5. Forget the mistakes and sins of your neighbors. Our memory of them is sometimes more vivid than the memory of our own faults. How hard it would go with us if God dealt as severely with us as we sometimes do with our fellows.

6. Forget the methods and conditions of other days. We cannot live in the days and environment of our fathers. Cease sighing for them, and face the here and now with faith and courage.

A PROSPECT.

While it is wise to learn lessons from the past, yet we must with hope and enthusiasm look into the future. The prudent man will

"Act, act in living present,
Heart within and God overhead."

And still,

"Lives of great men all remind us,
We can make our lives sublime."

The future looms up before us with bright visions of noble achievement.

1. There must be vision and purpose. "Reaching forth" as the racer. The propulsion of life is ever onward.

2. There must be strenuous exertion to attain. "I press toward the mark." Wishing, longing, sighing will not suffice. We must seek diligently. We must seek persistently.

3. There must be singleness of purpose and concentration of effort. "Toward the mark." Take aim. Be definite. Narrow down. Be a specialist. Do fewer things and do them better.

"Glowing helpfulness." "For the prize," etc. Mr. Barrie makes sentimental Tommy say: "I wouldn't mind working if I could only find some way of making work seem like play." Here is the secret of easy and successful effort of any kind—relish for and joy in the work. And in what do you find such a splendid inspiration as in Christian living?

HIGHER! HIGHER!

Every attainment I make in the Christian life, says Abbott, every victory I win, every result I have achieved, is but the call of God to go on, on, ever on. I set before you, then, to-day, Paul's

ideal and God's call. Whatever ethical standard of righteousness has been wrought in the community, God's voice says, "Higher! higher!" Whatever spiritual attainment has been wrought in the church, God's voice to every church is still, "Higher! higher!" Whatever you have achieved in yourself, in victory over your passion, over your pride, over your lower nature, God says, "There is no time to sit down and recount the victories that are past; no time to write bulletins, higher! higher!" And this voice calls us higher, yet higher, as the sun calls the lark, whose song drops down to earth from his winged flight and the end of the ascending is the bosom of our God.

FLASHES FROM ANOTHER FIRE.

A satisfied soul is always a soul that does not deserve satisfaction.

To be contented ever, satisfied never, always resting in Christ, always reaching forward in Christ—this is the Christian paradox.

The Christian's goal moves forward as he moves forward, since it is nothing less than perfection.

Every unworthy goal we turn toward is a barrier in our progress toward the true goal.

If a Christian is not finding hard things all the time easier, he is finding easy things all the time harder.

God's providences are moving so rapidly onward that to stand still is to fall far behind.

If the gardener wants to obtain fine fruit he cuts off branches and buds and blossoms and throws all the force of the plant into a few twigs. "This one thing I do."

The leaves are all for the blossoms, the blossoms are all for the fruit. Look to the show of your life only as it forwards the substance.

A fruitful tree is not one with half a dozen apples on it, but a fruit-full tree, a tree with branches loaded.

A sound tree will bear sound fruit. Do not look to the fruit, then, but to the tree.

The time to plan for good fruit is before the tree has a blossom or a leaf.

POINTS FOR THE PRESIDENT.

You might arrange to have three brief addresses or papers in addition to a short general exposition of the topic. The subjects of these addresses might be: 1. The uses and abuses of the past. 2. The duty and beauty of the present. 3. The hope and power of the future. If you have a betwixt in your audience, ask him to give a brief talk on vegetable growth and its application to spiritual growth.

JULY 27.—MISSIONS: A MEETING IN THE INTEREST OF MEDICAL MISSIONS. "PREACH-HEAL."

Matt. 7, 8.

HOME READINGS.

Mon., July 21.	The withered hand.....	Mark 3, 1-6
Tues., July 22.	The palsied.....	Matt. 9, 5-13
Wed., July 23.	The demoniac.....	Mark 3, 1-15
Thurs., July 24.	The leper.....	Luke 17, 11-19
Fri., July 25.	The blind man.....	John 9, 1-41
Sat., July 26.	Lazarus raised.....	John 11, 30-45

Christ in performing his wonderful miracles of healing had at least two objects in view.—to authenticate his claims as the Son of God, and to show mercy and help to men. All through its beneficent history Christianity has been a restorative and earnest in bringing relief to the woes of humanity. And the modern idea of medical missions is but the Saviour's idea revived; and Christianity's purpose exemplified. Preach and heal; or heal if you cannot preach, and the very healing done in the name of Christ will be a Gospel sermon.