

## THE FORTY DAYS INSTRUCTION.

We come next to the themes on which our Lord discoursed. They are in marked contrast with the discourses which preceded his Crucifixion. He chose a new style of instruction. We look through the pages devoted to this period and find nothing like the Sermon on the Mount, or the conversations recorded in the latter part of St. John's Gospel. He discoursed about the Kingdom, but we have none of the parables by which he had formerly explained its nature, or the precise predictions concerning its grand results at the judgment day. Nor did he coming back from the world of the departed, bring any revelation concerning the mansions of which he had spoken, or concerning the condition of generations who had gone before. There was not a word about "spirits in prison," if he had been preaching to any such; not a word of Judas, or of the penitent malefactor, who had been with him in Paradise, or of the saints whose bodies came out of their graves and were seen of many after his Resurrection. And yet he discoursed of grand themes, past and future, going back to the times of Moses and forward to the ends of the world.

We note four special points of discourse:

First, after giving assurance of his personal identity, he taught them the meaning and fulfilment of the Scriptures, showing from the things written in the sacred books of the Jews how the Messiah must needs be a sufferer, and through suffering enter into glory; and how repentance and remission of sins must be preached in his name in all nations. It was a comprehensive and detailed exposition of all the things written concerning him in the Law, and the Prophets, and the Psalms.

Next he gave them promise of the new dispensation of the Holy Ghost. On the first day he breathed on the ten, saying, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost." Then, later, "Ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence;" and then, "Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you, and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." "But tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high."

Third, there was the great Commission, with all which it involved, now addressed to *one*, as to Peter, "Feed my sheep"; now to the *ten*, "Whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them"; and now to *all*, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature."

And then there was the promise of His Presence and the assurance of His power. "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and so, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world."

So the days hastened on; so the demonstration for that age was completed; so the first principles of the gospel were implanted in men's minds; so the Resurrection was lifted up to a place of prominence in human thought as the grandest fact in history.

Then the eleven chose Matthias to be a wit-

ness with them of the Resurrection; and Peter began to preach, and tell the people that God had raised up Jesus from the dead; and Paul, on Mars' Hill, discoursed to Athenian philosophers of Jesus and the Resurrection; and at Corinth he told them, first of all, how that Christ rose from the dead the third day, according to the Scriptures. He himself was not a whit behind the chiefest of the apostles, because he had seen the Lord, and one who had seen the risen Lord could never cease to find in the Resurrection of Jesus a basis of confidence and a source of consolation which time could never weaken. Take away that great fact, said Paul, and our hope is vain, our preaching is vain; we are of all men the most miserable: but now *is* Christ risen: no axiom, is more true, no fact is more indisputable. "Now is Christ risen, the first-fruits of them that slept;" and in him shall all be made alive; and concerning this I would not have you ignorant; I show you a mystery. The Lord himself shall come again with the voice of the archangel and the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first; then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words."—*Easter to Ascension.*—*Gilman.*

## SUNDAY TALKS.

BY BARBARA YECHTON.

"Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord."—ROMANS VI. 11.

In these words St. Paul urges us to put sin away from us; and coming as the injunction does while our hearts are thrilling with the remembrance of the crucifixion, and with the joy of the resurrection we cannot fail to be impressed by it.

You know, dear boys and girls, it was because He loved us and wanted us to inherit eternal life that our Lord Jesus Christ left His heavenly home and came to earth to suffer and die. He did not do this because He was obliged to, but because His heart was filled with love and pity for "the children of men."

It was for love of us that Christ suffered the betrayal, the agony in Gethsemane, the arrest and illegal trial, the mocking, and scourging, and the crucifixion and death, and all He asks of us in return is that we shall love Him—with a love that will give Him the first place in our hearts and fill us with such a desire to keep His commands that we shall be, as St. Paul expresses it, "dead indeed unto sin." Christ died on the cross that we might die unto sin, and rose again from the grave that we might be alive unto God.

For Christ's sake, therefore, let us strain every nerve to overcome the sin that meets us at every turn in our lives. For His sake let us strive to put out of our hearts every thing that draws our love away from Him.

For our Saviour's sake we must love none other than Him. We must not worship idols—whether the world, or pleasure, or riches be the one that appeals most to us. We must not be profane. We must keep our Sundays holy. We must be gentle and loving and kind to our parents. We must bear no envy or hatred or

malice in our hearts against any one. We must keep our bodies pure and holy. We must not steal. We must guard our tongues lest they do work for the evil one instead of for God. We must not covet anything belonging to another—"Hear the conclusion of the whole matter": we must love the Lord our God with all our heart, and with all our soul, and with all our mind, and we must love our neighbor as ourselves.

To fulfill these two great commandments we must not only "be dead indeed unto sin" but we must also be "alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord."

Being "alive unto God"—that is, being full of love for our dear Lord—is the only way in which we shall ever find strength to overcome sin. You remember, dear boys and girls, almost the last thing which our Lord said, before His Ascension, to St. Peter was, "Lovest thou me?" He is still asking the same question of each of us to-day.

Oh, may our hearts be so filled with love for our dear Saviour and Master that we may be able to do those things which please Him, and to say with the earnest sincerity of St. Peter—"Lord Thou knowest all things; Thou *knowest* that I love Thee."—*Churchman, N.Y.*

## Opera Singers in Churches.

The salaries paid to singers by the New York churches are enormous. One of the worst cases, which is enough to bring down the fierce anger of the Almighty on the congregation, is that of Dr. Paxton's Presbyterian church. A French prima donna—Mlle Clementine de Vere, receives, a salary of \$4,500 as solo soprano. Taking out her vacation in summer, she receives over \$100 a Sunday. But there is a still blacker feature about it. During the music season she leaves the choir after she has sung her solo and hastens to a popular music hall, where she frequently gathers in \$300 more for a couple of opera bravura songs.

*The Living Church* says, in allusion to the enormous expenditure incurred in the competitive struggles for new attractions in the way of singers: "In a great city over-run with hopeless, despairing poverty and wretchedness, where hundreds of thousands suffer, and suffer more deeply year after year, the query is wrong from the conscience—can all this vast expenditure for artistic concert music services in those rich luxurious churches make for the better worship of God, when it represents hundreds of thousands of dollars that might otherwise help and feed the hungry, clothe the naked, and house the homeless."

Not only are the purely religious elements of musical worship wholly lost for a monotonous succession of feeble and second rate Sunday concerts, but for the most part profitless and uninspiring.—*St. Georges Par. Mag.*

Why should we live half way up the hill and swathed in mists when we might have an unclouded sky and a visible sun over our heads, if we would only climb higher and walk in the light of his face?—*Dr. Macharen.*