

Devotional Service

"(The Missionary Text-Book for this year is "Methodism in Canada," by Rev. A. Sutherland, D.D. The missionary topics correspond with the chapters of this book which can be secured from Dr. F. C. Stephenson, Western Buildings, Toronto. Price, postpaid, in cloth, 50 cents; in paper covers, 35 cents.)

JUNE 17.—"THE GLORIFIED LIFE,"

John 17, 1-10, 22-24.

DAILY READINGS.

Mon., June 11.—Exaltation Following Humiliation. Phil. 2, 5-11.
Tues., June 12.—Christ Revealing God. Heb. 1, 1-8.
Wed. June 13.—Believers One in Christ. 1 Cor. 12, 12-27.
Thurs. June 14.—The Glorified Saviour. Rev. 1, 10-20.
Fri., June 15.—The Glorified Church. Rev. 7, 9-17.
Sat., June 16.—Take Courage. Rom. 8, 29-39.

THE REAL LORD'S PRAYER.

In all literature there is nothing like the passages before us. Even in the recorded utterances of Jesus the seventeenth chapter of John is unique. It is the only lengthy prayer of Jesus Christ of which we have any account. Here we hear one of the Persons of the Godhead engaged in audible communion with the Other. In studying the words of this chapter we are thinking over again the inmost thoughts of Christ concerning Himself and His Church. Matthew and Luke have given us a form of prayer which Jesus taught His disciples, but this is the real Lord's Prayer.

TOPIC HINTS FOR EXPANSION.

Entering on His passion, the Saviour asserts His essential Godhead and Divinity.—No mere creature could have used the words of John 17, 1, 5, 10. Either Jesus was the Incarnate, or He was the Prince of Impositors. The words here used are the loftiest and holiest ever uttered on earth, or they are the climax of blasphemy. Note the unparalleled claims of these verses. Jesus addresses God in terms of familiarity and equality such as the holiest saints never dared to use. He asserts that he has had a glorious pre-existence with the Father before the world was; that the essential unity with the Father has never been broken; that he expects presently to resume the state of glory wherein he laid aside when He became Incarnate. Other teachers professed to hear a voice from eternity; Jesus said that He had stepped from eternity into time, and was about to return to eternity. Others gave thanks for what God had pleased to give them. But in verse 10 absolute communion of perfect unity between Christ and God the Father is expressed as nakedly as words can express it.

With the sun of His life not yet at meridian, Jesus announces that it is not necessary for Him to live longer, as He has finished the work that God gave Him to do.—His death, resurrection and ascension being so near at hand, He speaks of them as though they were already accomplished. Of all born of woman Christ alone could say, "I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do." He did what Adam failed to do, and what all the saints of the ages failed to do. His life was complete. There were no omissions and no arrears. It is character, not time, that is needed to fulfil our mission. Jesus never lacked the blessing of a well-filled yesterday.

Himself about to die, Jesus declares that he has authority to give eternal life to as many as the Father has given

Him.—More than immortality is meant by the words, "eternal life." Jesus has in mind the more than the infinite extension of existence. This is made clear by what follows in verse 3. The secret of possessing eternal life, of being justified and sanctified now and glorified hereafter, consists simply in this: In having right knowledge of the one true God and of Jesus Christ, whom He has sent to save sinners. Our Lord declares that he who rightly knows God and Christ is possessed of eternal life. "Of course, mere head knowledge will not do, but knowledge which dwells in the heart and influences the life. To know God on the one hand—His holiness, His purity, His hatred of sin; and to know Christ on the other—His redemption, His mediatorial office, His love to sinners—are the two grand foundations of saving religion."

About to leave His disciples to the tender mercies of a persecuting world, Jesus makes them a special subject in His high-priestly prayer.—"I pray not for the world" does not mean that the world had no place in Christ's prayers, or that sinful and unbelieving men have no part in Christ's love. But it does mean, at least, that believers have a special place in the heart of their Saviour. "He is the Saviour of all men, specially them that believe." Believers, by accepting Christ's grace, have put themselves in a position to especially profit by Christ's intercession. His intercession for the twelve in the upper room is a type of His heavenly intercession for the universal brotherhood of believers.

Jesus, who has called His disciples to leave all and follow Him, refers to the real compensation He offers.—The glory which thou hast given me, I have given them. "This glory is the glory of adoption." On earth it is so. It is the glory of adoption. As Christ's glory consisted in His Sonship, so that of believers consists in their filial dignity as children of God and brethren of Christ, the elder brother.

Jesus points out that the effect of this glory being bestowed on believers will be twofold: 1. The formation of a closely united family in earth and Heaven. "I in them and thou in me that they may be perfect in one." God living in Christ and Christ living in each believer reproduce the Divine unity on earth. From this it will be seen that the unity Christ prayed for is vital and spiritual, not artificial, nor formal, nor necessarily ecclesiastical. 2. A demonstration to the world of Christ's mission. "That the world may believe that thou didst send me." As the Son said, "I pray that my disciples may be so closely united—I dwelling in them and thou dwelling in me—that they may be compacted and perfected into one body—having one mind and will, one heart and judgment, though many members—and that in them the world seeing this unity, may be obliged to confess that thou didst send me to be the Messiah, and that thou lovest my people even as thou lovest me."

Jesus, in view of his speedy departure from the world, prays that his disciples may be with him in glory, and there see and share his Divine glory.—Not his essential glory, but the glory of the Incarnate Head of a redeemed humanity. The expression "that they may behold my glory" must not be confined to the idea of looking on as idle spectators. It includes participation, sharing and common enjoyment. Heaven consists in the perfect and immediate presence of Christ. Perfect presence is all when all on both sides is present; all of Christ and all of the Christian. But now all of Christ is not with us, and all of us is not with him. On his part we have

Christ spirit word and grace. On our part there is present with him our hearts and the workings of our faith and love and desire towards him. But the presence is imperfect, and mixed with much distance and absence. This will be the beatific vision, but will be more than vision. For we shall be like him when "we shall see Him as he is."

ADDED POINTS AND ILLUSTRATIONS.

Compare the "Lord's prayer" with the one in the 17th of John, and note the significant fact that in the one there is a petition for forgiveness. In the other there is no acknowledgment of sin whatever. The self-complacency of our Lord is quite as notable as his meekly and lowly spirit. Some people would speak of Jesus as the noblest of the saints. But the one thing that distinguishes him from all saints, ancient and modern, is the absence of any sense of sin. The best men are the most ready to acknowledge their imperfection. Jesus said: "Which of you convinceth me of sin?"

The absolutely unique character of the 17th chapter high-priestly prayer of Christ makes its genuineness beyond dispute. It were impossible for a man to invent it. It surely came from one who knew the secrets of eternity at first hand. This prayer shows that he habitually lived on terms of closest intimacy with God. He conversed with the Father in a friendship that was utterly without regret or misgiving.

QUOTATIONS.

The sublime comprehensiveness of the prayer; its augmenting swell of thought; the awful depth of its self-conclusion; the limpid simplicity of its style; the movement from himself to his disciples; to the entire church, to the outside world; the ground on which he bases every prayer; the total absence of any personal weakness or sinfulness; the revelation and indubitable truth granted into the heart of the God-man, as its naturalness, if we concede the foregoing character; its profound humility, if we bear in mind his unique claims;—constitute this a supernatural phenomenon.—H. R. Reynolds.

There is no voice which has ever been heard, either in heaven or earth, more exalted, more holy, more fruitful, more sublime than this prayer offered up by the Son of God Himself.—Melancthon.

These verses begin one of the most wonderful chapters in the Bible. It is a chapter in which we see the Lord Jesus Christ addressing a long prayer to God the Father. It is a wonderful specimen of the communion that was ever kept up during the long period of the Son's ministry on earth. It is a wonderful example of the pattern of the intercession which the Son, our high priest, is ever carrying on for us in Heaven. Not the least is it wonderful as an example of what the sort of things that believers should mention in prayer.—Ryle.

It was a prayer after a sermon, a prayer after a sacrament; a family prayer; a parting prayer; a prayer before a sacrifice; a type of Christ's intercession.—Matthew Henry.

I am only one, but I am one; I cannot do everything, but I can do something; what I can do, I ought to do; and what I ought to do, by the grace of God I shall do.—Anon.

Eternal life is clearly more than and profoundly different from the principle of unending existence. Life is more than perpetuity of being. It refers to state and quality rather than to one condition of that state. . . . That which Christ gives to those who receive him is the life of God himself.—Marcus Dods.