

Devotional Service

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

Friend After Friend Departs

Ever since this paper was started, seven years ago, the Expositions of the Prayer Meeting Topics in these pages have been provided by Rev. T. J. Parr, M.A. His faithful work in this department has given general satisfaction, especially during the past three months, when he introduced a decided change in the method of treating the topics. A number of communications have been received by the Editor recently, expressing great appreciation of Mr. Parr's efforts, and we were hoping that he might be able to continue the work. After having sent in the Expositions for the February number of this paper, Mr. Parr mailed the following letter to the Editor, which will be read with melancholy interest by his many friends:

HAMILTON, Jan. 26th, 1906.

Dear Bro,—I am dictating a letter this morning that I would rather not if I had control of circumstances. I have found, during the year, that the



REV. T. J. PARR, M.A.

demands of the church of which I am pastor are quite sufficient for the strength which I have to expend, and the extra duty of writing the expositions for the Era is more than I should continue to undertake.

I have written these expositions for The Guardian and The Era for nine years and a half, and I fondly hope that the thoughts sent forth will prove an abiding blessing to the young people of Methodism, but reluctantly I must ask you to relieve me from the responsibility.

It seems short notice to ask you to look up some one to write the expositions for the March number of The Era, but I am laid up and quite unable to do it myself, and this is the only way out that I can see.

The work of writing these expositions has been for the most part a pleasure, and I exceedingly regret the necessity of giving them up. Hoping that you will be able to make satisfactory arrangements.

I remain, very cordially yours,

THEO. H. PARR.

Just twelve days after dictating this letter, Brother Parr passed away. He did not expect to die, but clung to life and work with marvellous tenacity. His strong spirit of determination kept him

at his duties long after most men would have stopped. He was born at Woodstock, Nov. 24, 1861, and died in Hamilton, Feb. 8th, 1906. He graduated from Toronto University in 1894. More than fifty ministers attended his funeral, indicating the high esteem in which he was held by his brethren.

MARCH 13.—"CHRIST'S LIFE. HIS SUMMARY OF CONDUCT: THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT."

Matt. Chaps. 5, 6, 7.

DAILY HOME READINGS.

CHRISTIAN CONDUCT.

- Mon., Mar. 12.—Conduct towards brothers. 1 John 3, 14-17.
Tues., Mar. 13.—Towards our enemies. Rom. 12, 14-21.
Wed., Mar. 14.—Towards the poor. Deut. 15, 7-11.
Thurs., Mar. 15.—In prayer. Luke 18, 9-14.
Fri., Mar. 16.—In business. Rom. 12, 9-13.
Sat., Mar. 17.—In doing things. Jas. 1, 22-27.

BY AMOS R. WELLS.

The Sermon on the Mount has well been called the programme of Christianity. Looking over those three chapters of Matthew to gain a comprehensive view of Christ's plan of life, the first feature that strikes the student is its splendid unselfishness. Self is barred from it altogether. The beatitudes are not for those that get, but for those that give. Christians are to be salt, giving out health; and light, spreading sunshine. Their treasure is not to be on earth, but in Heaven. They are to take no anxious thought about their food or clothing. They are not to resist evil or expect a return for good. They are to love their enemies. They are to live in others' happiness. They are to find their reward in the joy of the world.

The next outstanding feature of this picture of the ideal life is its insistence upon inward realities as opposed to outward shows. It is the pure heart that sees God, the poor in spirit and the meek that inherit Heaven and earth. Hunger after righteousness shall be satisfied, and there is a petition, but no promise, regarding material bread. The lustful thought is held equivalent to the foul deed; the angry word, to murder. Alms are to be in secret, prayer is not to be paraded on the street corners, fasting is to be hidden behind a smiling countenance. "Out of the heart," our Lord insists, "are the issues of life."

And yet with equal clearness a third feature of the picture stands out, namely, its practical character. We are what we are within; but we are known by our fruits, by the outward showing of what is within. This showing is inevitable, but it is none the less essential. It is not hearing Christ's sayings, but doing them, that wins his commendation. It is not saying "Lord, Lord," or even prophesying and casting out devils, that gain an entrance into the Kingdom of Heaven, but it is doing the will of the King of Heaven. And Christ's directions are perfectly plain, straightforward, practical; be a peacemaker; swear not; give freely; love your enemies; forgive; do not worry; do not judge harshly; pray trustingly. These are His commands, entered with absolute authority. It is a gospel for the daily life.

If one begins at any point in this programme of Christianity, and begins sincerely, he will not end till he has passed through the entire experience of it. Being meek, betwixt pure in heart, being a peace-maker, thirsting after righteousness, enduring persecution, loving one's

enemies, giving one's self to the needs of the world—these all hang together. For any Christly deed one needs Christ, and all of Christ.

Therefore it matters nothing that the Sermon on the Mount is not systematic, nor is it necessary to study it in a systematic way. Read it, line by line, till you reach a point where your quickened conscience condemns you of disobedience. Then go forth and in the Master's strength do at that one point the Master's will. Thus at length, and only thus, will you make your own this discourse of the ages.

HINTS AND SUGGESTIONS.

By the Editor.

A SUMMARY OF CONDUCT.

1. *Native. What is to be Avoided.*
- (1) Unjustifiable Anger. Matt. 5, 22-24.
- (2) Formality and Hypocrisy. Matt. 5, 20.
- (3) Profanity. "Swear not at all." Matt. 5, 34-37.
- (4) Resistance of Evil. Matt. 5, 39-40.
- (5) Ostentation in Well-doing. Matt. 6, 1-4.
- (6) Hoarding of Earthly Treasure. Matt. 6, 19.
- (7) Unnecessary Worry. Matt. 6, 25.
- (8) Harsh Judgments. Matt. 7, 1.
- (9) Hearing without Doing. Matt. 7, 26-27.
2. *Positive. What is to be Done?*
- (1) Cultivate Inward Purity and Righteousness. Matt. 5, 1-10.
- (2) Exercise a Good Influence. Matt. 5, 16.
- (3) Cultivate Self-Denial. Matt. 5, 29-30.
- (4) Love your Enemies. Matt. 5, 44.
- (5) Lay up Heavenly Treasure. Matt. 6, 19.
- (6) Make Religion the First Pursuit. Matt. 6, 33.
- (7) Follow the Golden Rule. Matt. 7, 12.
- (8) Seek the Fruitful Life. Matt. 7, 20.

BIBLE LIGHT ON THE BEATITUDES.

(Have members read these texts, with the comments, adding thoughts of their own.)

1. Matt. 5, 48. "Be ye therefore perfect." This is the keynote of this sermon. Heavenly perfection is to be the goal which we must place before us. Nothing less will do. The Master proceeds to show us how this perfection is to be obtained.

2. Matt. 5, 3. "Blessed are the poor in spirit." The foundation of all is laid in poverty of spirit. To be poor in spirit is to be conscious of need. It is a state of dependence on God, and has no reference to material poverty. It is a condition of heart.

3. Matt. 5, 4. "Blessed are they that mourn." This does not mean mere sorrow as such. Grief as often makes men worse as it makes them better. This truth must be linked closely with the former one in order to understand it. The mourners whom Christ calls "blessed," are evidently those who mourn because of their sin. They recognize the gulf between what they are and what they ought to be, and are weighed down by a sense of imperfection and failure.

4. Matt. 5, 5. "Blessed are the meek." And who are the meek, and how may they be distinguished from those who are poor in spirit? Poverty of spirit is humility looking God-ward, a grace before God. Meekness is humility looking manward—a grace before men. And both graces must grow together.

5. Matt. 5, 6. "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst." There is such a thing as soul hunger. Spiritual food is