

FIRST TUESDAY.

Oh, might it be ours to live in the realized presence of God! How happy to be continually looking up to Him, and to desire his eye to be upon us! There are sacred feelings in the human heart which can be understood by none so well as by God—which He understands, and which He can explain to us. There are wants, too, which none other can supply in such divine fullness.—*Dwell in me, O God.*

A PRAYER FOR LENT.

O Son of God, who didst suffer Thyself to be tempted that Thou mightest destroy the works of the devil, deliver us, we beseech Thee from all his snares, and strengthen us against all temptations; that we may be no more hindered in running the race that is set before us, but may follow Thee with a ready heart and a quiet mind; who livest and reignest with the Father and The Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end. *Amen.*

ASH-WEDNESDAY.

"Have mercy upon me, O God, after Thy great goodness; according to the multitude of Thy mercies do away mine offences.—Psalm li, 1.—Commination Service.

"Jesu, Jesu, miserere;
Hear my cry, to Thee."
Come thou tainting one and weary,
Come to Me.

"Sin and shame my heart benumbing,
Shall I gain Thy feet?"
Shrinking, trembling, hardly coming,
Thee I meet.

"Jesu, Jesu, miserere,
Save me or I die."
Hearken, in the darkness dreary,
It is I.

"Clothed in rags and miry raiment,
Dare I see Thy face?"
Blood-bought, free, and without payment
Is My grace.

"Jesu, Jesu, miserere,
Hush my soul's unrest."
Lay thee, travel-worn and weary,
On My breast.

"Jesu, come, come quickly to me,
Only make me Thine."
I am here: thy anguish drew me,
Thou art Mine.

—*Bickersteth's "Frem Year to Year."*

THE PRAYER OF JESUS.

The Saviour spent much time in prayer. We read such records as the following concerning Him: "In the morning, rising up a great while before day, he went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed." "And he withdrew himself into the wilderness and prayed." "And it came to pass in those days that He went out into a mountain, and continued all night in prayer to God."

But none of those prayers have been recorded. For what the Saviour prayed on those occasions we can only conjecture. It must have been for those things that lay near his heart, and His prayers must have been fervent. Peter seems not to have been forgotten. At a certain time the Lord said unto him: "Simon, Simon, behold Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not." In his interview with the disciples on the night of His betrayal, whilst praying for them, He added: "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also that shall believe on Me through

their word." And we well know for what he soon after prayed when he was in an agony in the garden.

These prayers give us a clue to what may have been the subjects of His prayer when He was alone with the Father upon the mountains. He well knew what would be the needs of His disciples, soon to be deprived of His presence; and also the needs of His followers in all subsequent time. These, probably, were often remembered in His addresses to the Father. And then there were His own more urgent needs—His present daily needs in his intercourse with wicked men, who sought to entangle Him in His talk, and to find something against Him. And, more especially, there were His anticipated needs in that fiery trial that was before Him, when, arrested by His foes, all the disciples should forsake Him; when men and devils should unite to do their worst against Him; when it should be their hour and the power of darkness; and when even the Father should say, "Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow."

That dreaded hour was doubtless much and often in mind. The cross was ever casting back its dark shadows over Him. When Moses and Elias came to Him on the Mount of Transfiguration, they spoke of the decease which He was to accomplish at Jerusalem, and He was ever straitened till it should be accomplished. Doubtless in His experience, during that life in which He was "a man of sorrows and acquainted with griefs," there was more than one Gethsemane. Doubtless, could the mountains and the wilderness speak, they could testify to these:

"Cold mountains and the midnight air
Witnessed the fervor of Thy prayer;
The desert Thy temptations knew,
Thy conflicts, and Thy victory too."

But all these are now passed. The great work for which the Saviour came into the world is "finished." He now reaps the fruit of all His love. He sees of the travail of His soul and is satisfied. But to the end of time, his friends shall experience the benefit of those midnight supplications.—*Clericus in New York Observer.*

HIGHER RELIGIOUS EDUCATION.

Among the many societies and associations which have been formed of late years we know of none from which we look for better results than those lately established for the purpose of promoting higher religious education. Such societies already exist in the Diocese of Canterbury, of Oxford, of Lincoln, of Bath and Wells, of Winchester; and one, we believe, has lately been formed in the Diocese of Salisbury. It is the object of these Diocesan societies to encourage those who have leisure and education to study in a definite and systematic way the writings of the Old and New Testaments, the Prayer-book, and Church history. For this purpose a selection of subjects is arranged for each year, on which lectures are delivered at various centres, and classes held; while, to aid the student in his work at home, a series of papers are issued, which contain an epitome of each subject, and indicate the line of reading. An examination is also held, at which members are invited to present themselves, so as to test the accuracy and thoroughness of their work. As an illustration of the manner in which the laity have welcomed this scheme of higher religious education, it may be mentioned that, while in the Diocese of Winchester the Society was only started in October, 1887, it already numbers nearly two thousand members, and lectures are being delivered at no less than eighteen centres.

It is sometimes asserted that the age in

which we live is one of growing unbelief and scepticism. However that may be, it is also one distinguished for the interest which it takes in religious questions. At no previous period of the Church's history have theological problems been discussed with the same frequency and sincerity. They are no longer treated with conventional silence, or regarded as the peculiar province of the clergy; they are openly discussed in society; they are treated in our leading magazines; they are introduced into works of fiction. The enormous popularity of *Robert Elsmere*, and, in a lesser degree, of *John Ward, Preacher*, is an indication of this interest in religious questions.

But while the interest taken in theology is undoubtedly great and widespread, yet we fear that there exists but little real knowledge of the subject. And the very publicity now given to the discussion of sacred questions renders such knowledge all the more necessary. There can be no better bulwark against the assaults of scepticism than an intelligent knowledge of the results of modern criticism. The arguments, or the ridicule, of unbelievers are almost always directed against Biblical stories and doctrinal positions, which admits of a perfectly satisfactory explanation. The actual views held by theologians of the highest repute and orthodoxy are often wholly misunderstood. To refer again to Mrs. Humphrey Ward's celebrated novel, which may justly be regarded as an attack upon Christianity, there is no indication, as Mr. Gladstone has pointed out, from the beginning to the end of the book, that the distinguished authoress has ever taken the trouble to consult the writings of our greatest Christian apologists. The only one to whom she refers is Canon Westcott, and Canon Westcott she has most grievously misrepresented.

And therefore it is that we welcome, with feelings of the highest satisfaction, any movement which aims at disseminating religious knowledge among our upper and middle classes. It was urged at the Church Congress at Manchester, by some of the appointed speakers, that the clergy should utilise their pulpits for the purpose of instructing their people in the results of modern criticism. We cannot but feel that such a step would be injurious. Some of the clergy do not possess the requisite knowledge and scholarship themselves, and many members of a congregation need to be fed with milk, and not with meat. But in the societies which we have mentioned, and which we regard with so much hope, we recognise the medium of instruction. Through their agency a real knowledge of Biblical criticism and of Church history will, we trust, be more widely extended.

And the moral and religious importance of such study few, we suppose, will care to dispute. In these days of hurry and of light and superficial reading, a short time daily spent in serious study would be undoubtedly time well spent. And it would be time not unhappily spent. The study of Church history, or, at any rate, of Christian biography, is as interesting as it is instructive. If, as a great teacher of our time once said, the course of ecclesiastical history be sometimes dark, 'there is always a bright side to be found in ecclesiastical biography. Study the lives, study the thoughts, and hymns, and prayers, study the deathbeds of good men. In them we can trace the history, if not of the "Catholic Church," at least of the "Communion of Saints." And if the study of Christian biography be instructive, so surely is the study of the Bible. The Bible belongs to that class of literature which, as Lord Bacon said, must be chewed and digested. And the more thoroughly it is understood the more fascinating will the study of it become, and the greater will be the love and reverence which it inspires. We are told that when Dean Stanley was once visiting the great German scholar, Ewald, a New Testament which was lying on the table accidentally fell to the ground. 'In this book,' said Ewald, as he stooped to pick it