

## THE FOURFOLD ASPECT.

The early life of Jesus Christ has been pictured to us in different aspects. Four of His friends undertook the task; and each painted his Lord in that character in which he loved himself to remember Him. St. Matthew, a thorough Jew, whose desire and prayer were that the children of Israel might be saved, spoke of Christ as the Messiah promised to the fathers—the Messiah who fulfilled the Law and the Prophets which were so dear to Hebrew hearts. St. Mark wrote for the practical and energetic Romans, and he told them of a Saviour as active and untiring as they were, but in a better cause. St. Luke, the beloved physician, gazed out on the wide world with eyes that were pitiful and tender, and depicted Jesus as the Healer of men without distinction, hated Samaritans and distant Gentiles as well as the members of the common-wealth of Israel. St. John—St. John whom the old Schoolmen likened to an eagle—soared to regions higher still. His Christ is the Christ who is divine, God of an infinite majesty.

Here, therefore, is a fourfold Christ. And Christians should aim at reproducing, not one of the portraits of their Master alone, or two, or three, but all. They should stand foursquare.

We ought to imitate Matthew's Christ. He loved whatever was good in the past of His people. He did not destroy it, but gave it fresh life and meaning. We need to walk in His steps; for we forget the lessons taught us by the past history of our land, and we do not copy, as faithfully as we might, what was pure and lovely in the belief and conduct of our fathers. They were great Bible-readers; but there are so many newspapers and magazines which we must peruse and discuss, that the Word of God is in danger of being slighted. Their old-fashioned religion made much room for self scrutiny, and quiet prayer, and earnest meditation; but ours is full of excitement and restlessness. They drew a distinct line between the Church and the world; but we are afraid to be entirely consecrated, lest society should pronounce us destitute of breadth and liberality. Take them for all in all, the former days were not better than these; but there are some matters in which we should certainly do well to "travel back and tread again the ancient track."

But Christian men must love Mark's Christ too. He was unwearied in His labours. Every day, every moment, He was busy, seeking the glory of God and the good of men; sometimes He had no leisure so much as to eat. We complain that we cannot do much, because our sphere is small. But His sphere was small—a carpenter's shop in Nazareth, and then, for only three years more, the provincial town of Capernaum and the narrow streets of Jerusalem. Palestine, from Dan to Beersheba, is a little land—a land commonplace and rugged. It is not a continent, with wide plains and populous cities and ship-bearing rivers. Yet, within this contracted space, Christ spent that brief life of His which was so fruitful in blessing. Why should His disciples hanker after the fat pastures and the ample estate and the richly furnished house? We may glorify the meanest circumstances by the sweetness and grandeur of our character. We may help forward, in a true and large sense, the Kingdom which is righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.

And Luke's Christ should be just as dear to us. His was an unfettered sympathy, a universal compassion, a limitless love. There are some of God's children towards whom we find it hard to cherish any attachment—the righteous men, for whom one would scarcely die; the critical people, who are continually finding fault; the gloomy Christians, who would almost infect the brightest saint with their melancholy. But even these we must try to love, in spite of their angularities, on account of the Master to whom they belong. The woman in the Gospels washed the feet of Jesus. His travel-stained and toil-worn feet, and we should not despise any member of His body, however weak and unattractive and aggravating. But our tenderness, if it is to resemble His, must not be confined to the channel of the covenant; it must overflow the embankment like a river in full flood. It must go out to Zaccheus the publican, and to the prodigal son, and to the woman of the city, and to the robber condemned for his misdeeds. It must weep for those who will have none of the Saviour. Only then will it be like the love of Him of whom St. Luke speaks to us.

But John's Christ, the divine Christ, without spot or

wrinkle or any such thing—is it possible for us who are foolish and evil to reflect His majesty, and to rise from our littleness to so lofty a statue and so perfect a strength? It is gloriously possible. If our trust is in Him, we are even now sons and daughters of God; we are partakes of the divine nature; we are the spiritual kinsfolk of the Word, who was in the beginning, and who became flesh and dwelt among us. It is a thought to deter us from everything unworthy; to shed a celestial radiance over the humblest spot in our lives; to make us anxious that, by cherishing the Holy Ghost, and by contemplating our King in His beauty, our heavenly citizenship may grow more and more apparent. Then death, when it comes, will only be the opening of a door for us into the Presence we have loved, and so shall we be for ever with the Lord. *Sunday School Chronicle.*

Let a man at midnight examine a sun dial by the brightest of lamps, or the most brilliant moonlight, he will not understand the dial, but let him go by noonday, and the glorious sun will reveal his working, and all will be clear. The word of God cannot be understood by the brightest intellect, or most luminous tradition, until the Spirit be given.—*New York Observer.*

Spiritual life needs opposition to bring out its best development. It flourishes most luxuriantly in adverse circumstances. The very temptations which makes our life one unceasing warfare train us into true soldiers of Christ. The hardness of our experiences, which seem to us to be more than we can possibly endure, make the very school of life for us in which we learn our best lessons and grow into whatever beauty and Christlikeness of character we attain.—*J. R. Miller*

## CHRISTIAN ENDEAVOR.

DAILY READINGS.

First Day—"Behold, a sower went forth to sow." Matt. xiii. 1-23.

Second Day—The Wheat and the Tares. Matt. xiii. 24-30.

Third Day—Parables of the Kingdom of Heaven—Matt. xiii. 31-52.

Fourth Day—"Whose fan is in his hand." Matt. iii. 1-12.

Fifth Day—"Then shall the end come." Matt. xxiv. 1-14.

Sixth Day—"The Son of Man . . . in his glory." Matt. xxv. 31-46.

PRAYER MEETING TALK. March 13.—"The Shorter Catechism: its makers, merits, and influence."—Deut. vi. 1-23.

Prof. Salmond, of Scotland, said recently, "There is a very cheap way of speaking of catechisms. Luther and Calvin knew their value, and spared no pains to prepare them for their own lands. No one who understands what the catechism has been in the history of the Church would ever speak slightly of it."

## THE SHORTER CATECHISM.

Of the average Scotch Presbyterian emigrant going out to his new and lonely home in some part of the British Colonies it is told that he is sure to take with him his Bible and his Shorter Catechism, and through their use he is biblically fed and nourished. The strong meat contained in a work intended for those of "tender years and of weaker capacities," is enough to satisfy all his needs, and to tax all his powers to digest. The Scottish peasant regards the Catechism as a book of meditation, quite as much as a Catechism to be repeated, and so it holds in his thoughts a place absolutely unique. Years ago, the writer was visiting an aged church member, whose little home was far away on a lonely hill side, in the midst of turf moor and moor. Through infirmity, she was confined to bed, and in addition had lost her sight. As the little house was entered, the visitor was told to "com ben," and found his parishioner in bed, and alone in the house, the members of her family being engaged in their farm labour. "Are you not lonely here, Mrs. A?" was asked. "Oh no," was the reply. "I say my psalm to myself, and I know a great many chapters of the Bible off by heart, and I gae over them, and then I tak' the Questions (Shorter Catechism) and I gae over them, asking mysel' the questions, and when I come to