REV. DR. TALMAGE.

THE BROOKLYN DIVINE'S SUNDAY SERMON.

Subject: "The Fire Worshipers."

TEXT: "There came wise men from the East to Jerusalem."—Matthew ii., 1.

These wise men were the Parsees or the so-called fire worshipers, and I found their descendants in India last October. Their heathenism is more tolerable than any of the other false religions and has more alleviations, and while in this round the world series I have already shown you the worst forms of heathenism to-day I show you the least offensive.

The prophet of the Parsees was Zoroaster, of Persia. He was poet and philosopher and reformer as well as religionist. His disciples thrived at first in Persia, but under Mohammedan persecution they retreated to India, where I met them, and in addition to what I saw of them at their headquarters in Bombay, India, I had two weeks of association with one of the most learned and genial of their people on shipboard from Bombay to Brindisi.

The Bible of the Parsees, or fire worshipers, as they are inaccurately called, is the Zend-Avesta, a collection of the strangest books that ever came into my hands. There were originally twenty-one volumes, but Alexander the Great, in a drunken fit, set fire to a palace which contained some of them, and they went into ashes and forgetfulness. But there are more of their sacred volumes left than most people would have patience to read. There are many things in the religion of the Parsee that suggest Christianity, and some of its doctrines are are in record with our own religion. Zoroaster, who lived about 1400 years before Christ, was a good man, suffered persecution for his faith and was assassinated while worshiping at an altar. He announced the theory, "He is best who is pure of heart," and that there are two great spirits in the world, Ormuzd, the good spirit, and Ahriman, the bad spirit, and that all who do right are under the influence of Ormuzd, and all who do wrong are under Ahriman; that the Parsee must be born on the ground floor of the house and must be buried from the ground floor; that the dying man must have prayers said over him and a sacred juice given him to drink; that the good at their decease go into eternal light and the bad into eternal darkness; that, having passed out of this life, the soul lingers near the corpse three days in a paradisaic state, enjoying more than all the nations of earth put together could enjoy or in a pandemoniac state, suffering more than all the nations put together could possibly suffer, but at the end of three days departing for its final destiny, and that there will be a resurrection of the body. They are more careful than any other people about their ablutions, and they wash and wash and wash. They pay great attention to physical health, and it is a rare thing to see a sick Parsee. They do not smoke tobacco, for they consider that a misuse of fire.

At the close of mortal life the soul appears at the bridge Chinvat, where an angel presides and questions the soul about the thoughts and words and deeds of its earthly state. Nothing, however, is more intense in the Parsee faith than the theory that the dead body is impure. A devil is supposed to take possession of the dead body. All who touch it are unclean, and hence the strange style of obsequies. But here I must give three or four questions and answers from one of the Parsee catechisms:

Question—Who is the most fortunate man in the world?

Answer—He who is the most innocent man in the world?

Q.—Who is the most innocent man in the world?

A.—He who walks in the path of God and shuns that of the devil.

Q.—Which is the path of God and which that of the devil?

A.—Virtue is the path of God and vice that of the devil.

Q.—What constitutes virtue and what vice?

A.—Good thoughts, good words and good deeds constitute virtue, and evil thoughts, evil words and evil deeds constitute vice.

Q.—What constitute good thoughts, good words and good deeds and evil thoughts, evil words and evil deeds?

A.—Honesty, charity and truthfulness constitute the former, and dishonesty, want of charity and falsehood constitute the latter.

And now the better to show you these Parsees I tell you of two things I saw within a short time in Bombay, India. It was an afternoon of contrast.

We started for Malabar hill, on which the wealthy classes have their embowered homes and the Parsees their strange temple of the dead. As we rode along the water's edge the sun was descending the sky, and a disciple of Zorosster, a Parsee, was in lowly posture and with reverential gaze looking into the sky. He would have been said to have been worshiping the sun, as all Parsees are said to worship the fire. But the intelligent Parsee does not worship the fire. He looks upon the sun as the emblem of the warmth and light of the Creator. Looking at a blaze of light, whether on hearth, on mountain height or in the sky, he can more easily bring to mind the glory of God—at least so the Parsees tell me. Indeed they are the pleasantest heathen I have met. They treat their wives as equals, while the Hindoos and Buddhists treat them as cattle, although the cattle and sheep and swine are better off than most of the women of India.

This Parsee on the roadside on our way to Malabar hill was the only one of that religion I had ever seen engaged in worship. Who knows but that beyond the light of the sun on which he gazes he may catch a glimpse of the God who is light and "in whom there is no darkness at all?"

We passed on up through gates into the garden that surrounds the place where the Parsees dispose of their dead. This garden was given by Jamshidji Jijibhai and is beautiful with flowers of all hue and foliage of all styles of vein and notch and stature. There is on all sides great opulence of fern and cypress. The garden is 100 feet above the level of the sea. Not far from the entrance is a building where the mourners of the funeral procession go in to pray. A light is here kept burning year in and year out.

We ascend the garden by some eight stone steps. The body of a deceased aged woman was being carried in toward the chief "tower of silence." There are five of these towers. Several of them have not been used for a long while. Four persons, whose business it is to do this, carry the corpse. They are followed by two men with long beards. The tower of silence to which they come cost $150,000 and is twenty-five feet high and 276 feet around and without a roof. The four carriers of the dead and the two bearded men come to the door of the tower, enter and leave the dead. There are three rows of places for the dead—the outer row for the men, the middle row for the women, the inside row for the children. The lifeless bodies are left exposed as far down as the waist. As soon as the employes retire from the tower of silence the vultures, now one, now two, now many, swoop upon the litless form. These vultures fill the air with their discordant voices. We saw them in long rows on the top of the whitewashed wall of the tower of silence. In a few minutes they have taken the last particle of flesh from the bones. There had evidently been other opportunities for them that day, and some flew away, as though surfeited. They sometimes carry away with them parts of a body, and it is no unusual thing for the gentlemen in their country seats to have dropped into their dooryards a bone from the tower of silence.

In the centre of this tower is a well, into which the bones are thrown after they are bleached. The hot sun and the rainy season and charcoal do their work of disintegration and disinfection, and then there are sluices that carry into the sea what remains of the dead. The wealthy people of Malabar hill have made strenuous efforts to have these strange towers removed as a nuisance, but they remain and will no doubt for ages remain.

I talked with a learned Parsee about these mortuary customs. He said: "I suppose you consider them very peculiar, but the fact is we Parsees reverence the elements of nature and cannot consent to defile them. We reverence the fire, and therefore will not ask it to burn our dead. We reverence the water and do not ask it to submerge our dead. We reverence the earth and will not ask it to bury our dead. And so we let the vultures take them away."

He confirmed me in the theory that the Parsees act on the principle that the dead are unclean. No one must touch such a body. The carriers of this "tomb of silence" must not put their hands on the form of the departed. They wear gloves lest somehow they should be contaminated. When the bones are to be removed from the sides of the tower and put in the well at the center, they are touched carefully by tongs. Then these people besides have very decided theories about the democracy of the tombs. No such things as caste among the dead. Philosopher and boor, the affluent and the destitute must go through the same "tower of silence," lie down side by side with other occupants, have their bodies dropped into the same abyss and be carried out through the same canal and float away on the same sea. No splendor of Necropolis. No sculpturing of mausoleum. No pomp of dome or obelisk. Zoroaster's teaching resulted in these "towers of silence." He wrote, "Naked you came into the world, and naked you must go out."

As I stood at the close of day in this garden on Malabar hill and heard the flap of the vultures' wings coming from their repast, the funeral custom of the Parsee seemed horrible beyond compare, and yet the dissolution of the human body by any mode is awful, and the breaks of these fowl are probably no more repulsive than the worms of the body devouring the sacred human form in cemeteries. Nothing but the resurrection day can undo the awful work of death, whether it now be put out of sight by cutting spade or flying wing.

Starting homeward, we soon were in the heart of the city and saw a building all aflash with lights and resounding with merry voices. It was a Parsee wedding in a building erected especially for the marriage ceremony. We came to the door and proposed to go in, but at first were not permitted. They saw we were not Parsees, and that we were not even natives. So, very politely, they halted us on the doorsteps. This temple of nuptials was chiefly occupied by women, their ears and necks and hands aflame with jewels or imitation of jewels. By pantomime and gesture, as we had no use of their vocabulary, we told them we were strangers and were curious to see by what process Parsees were married. Gradually we worked our way inside the door. The building and the surroundings were illumined by hundreds of candles in glasses and lanterns, in unique and grotesque holdings. Conversation ran high, and laughter bubbled over, and all was gay. Then there was a sound of an advancing band of music, but the instruments for the most part were strange to our ears and eyes. Louder and louder were the outside voices and the wind and stringed instruments, until the procession halted at the door of the temple and the bridegroom mounted the steps. Then the music ceased, and all the voices were still. The mother of the bridegroom, with a platter loaded with aromatics and articles of food, confronted her son and began to address him. Then she took from the platter a bottle of perfume and sprinkled his face with the redolence. All the while speaking in a droning tone, she took from the platter a handful of rice, throwing some of it on his head, spilling some of it on his shoulder, pouring some of it on his hands. She took from the platter a cocoanut and waved it about his head. She lifted a garland of flowers and threw it over his neck and a bouquet of flowers and put it in his hand. Her part of the ceremony completed, the band resumed its music, and through another door the bridegroom was conducted into the center of the building. The bride was in the room, but there was nothing to designate her.

"Where is the bride?" I said. "Where is the bride?" After awhile she was made evident. The bride and groom were seated on chairs opposite each other. A white curtain was dropped between them so that they could not see each other. Then the attendants put their arms under this curtain, took a long rope of linen and wound it around the neck of the bride and the groom in token that they were to be bound together for life. Then some silk strings were wound around the couple, now around this one and now around that. Then the groom threw a handful of rice across the curtain on the head of the bride, and the bride responded by throwing a handful of rice across the curtain on the head of the groom. Thereupon the curtain dropped, and the bride's chair was removed and put beside that of the groom. Then a priest of the Parsee religion arose and faced the couple. Before the priest was placed a platter of rice. He began to address the young man and woman. We could not hear a word, but we understood just as well as if we had heard. Ever and anon he punctuated his ceremony by a handful of rice, which he picked up from the platter and flung now toward the groom and now toward the bride. The ceremony went on interminably. We wanted to hear the conclusion, but were told that the ceremony would go on for a long while, indeed that it would not conclude until 2 o'clock in the morning, and this was only between 7 and 8 o'clock in the evening. There would be a recess after awhile in the ceremony, but it would be taken up again in earnest at half past 12. We enjoyed what we had seen, but felt incapacitated for six more hours of wedding ceremony. Silently wishing the couple a happy life in each other's companionship, we pressed our way through the throng of congratulatory Parsees. All of them seemed bright and appreciative of the occasion. The streets outside joyously sympathized with the transactions inside.

We rode on toward our hotel wishing that marriage in all India might be as much honored as in the ceremony we had that evening witnessed at the Parsee wedding. The Hindoo women are not so married. They are simply cursed into the conjugal relation. Many of the girls are married at seven and ten years of age, and some of them are grandmothers at thirty. They can never go forth into the sunlight with their faces uncovered. They must stay at home. All styles of maltreatment are theirs. If they become Christians, they become outcasts. A missionary told me in India of a Hindoo woman who became a Christian. She had nine children. Her husband was over seventy years of age. And yet at her Christian baptism he told her to go, and she went out homeless. As long as woman is down India will be down. No nation was ever elevated except through the elevation of woman. Parsee marriage is an improvement on Hindoo marriage, but Christian marriage is an improvement on Parsee marriage.

A fellow-traveler in India told me he had been writing to his home in England trying to get a law passed that no white woman could be legally married in India until she had been there six months. Admirable law would that be! If a white woman saw what married life with a Hindoo is, she would never undertake it. Off with the thick and ugly veil from woman's face. Off with the crushing burdens from her shoulder! Nothing but the gospel of Jesus Christ will ever make life in India what it ought to be.

But what an afternoon of contrast in Bombay we experienced! From the temple of silence to the temple of hilarity. From the vultures to the doves. From mourning to laughter. From gathering shadows to gleaning lights. From obsequies to wedding. But how much of all our lives is made up of such opposites! I have carried in the same pocket and read from them in the same hour the liturgy of the dead and the ceremony of espousals. And so the tear meets the smile, and the dove meets the vulture.

Thus I have set before the best of all the religions of the heathen world, and I have done so in order that you might come to higher appreciation of the glorious religion which has put its benediction over us and over Christendom.

Compare the absurdities and mummeries of heathen marriage with the plain "I will" of Christian marriage, the hands joined in pledge "till death do you part." Compare the doctrine that the dead may not be touched with as sacred and tender and loving a kiss as ever given, the last kiss of lips that never again will speak to us. Compare the narrow bridge Chinvat over which the departing Parsee soul must tremblingly cross to the wide open gate of heaven through which the departing Christian soul may triumphantly enter. Compare the twenty-one books of the Zend Avesta of the Parsee which even the scholars of the earth despair of understanding with our Bible, so much of it as is necessary for our salvation in language so plain that "a wayfaring man, though a fool, need not err therein." Compare the "tower of silence," with its vultures, at Bombay with the Greenwood, of Brooklyn, with its sculptured angels of resurrection. And bow yourselves in thanksgiving and prayer as you realize that if at the battles of Marathon and Salamis Persia had triumphed over Greece instead of Greece triumphanting over Persia, Parseeism, which was the national religion of Persia, might have covered the earth, and you and I instead of sitting in the noonday light of our glorious Christianity might have been groping in the depressing shadows of Parseeism, a religion as inferior to that which is our inspiration in life and our hope in death as Zoroaster of Persia was inferior to our radiant and superhuman Christ, to whom be honor and glory and dominion and victory and song, world without end. Amen.

CURIOUS FACTS.

Bermuda farms bear three successive crops in one year.

A house in Calhoun County, Georgia, has been struck by lightning thirteen times.

A fair article of molasses can be made from the stalks of the common maize.

The Greeks had oats B. C. 200, but used them only as food for their horses.

The Russians make a soup of sardines. It is said to be as rich as the Rothschilds.

Jefferson McKenley, colored, of Great Barrington, Mass., is 100 years old and the oldest person in the State.

The "Ministry of Old Boots" supply 30,000 garments and 2000 pairs of boots to the needy ones of London annually.

There are about 100,000 islands, large and small, scattered over the oceans. America alone has 5500 around its coasts.

A Minnesota sheriff spent $1000 and traveled 5000 miles to capture a man who stole a $40 wheel. He got the man and the wheel.

Wet-ground snuffs are always allowed to ferment after grinding, and various perfumes and essences are then added to give the desired flavor.

From 1867 to 1881 Russia sent 624,000 persons to Siberia, fully 100,000 relatives of prisoners having accompanied the exiles of their own accord.

Edible birds' nest, prepared for use, are worth from $1 to $5 per pound, according to quality. There is a constant demand in China for all that can be obtained.

Darius Hystaspes in 480 B. C. introduced a system of assessment and taxation of land, and made himself so obnoxious by it that he was called Darius the Trader.

The Towers of Silence in Persia are stone structures provided with gratings within on which bodies are exposed to be devoured by the flocks of vultures that always infest the locality.

Lemons are in season all the year round, but March and April in the spring, and September and October, in the autumn, are the times when the crops are gathered in large quantities.

Grand Duke Alexis, of Russia, a brother of Alexander III., is the most elaborately tattooed Prince in Europe. A huge Japanese dragon extends almost from wrist to shoulder of his right arm.

In a hurricane at Bathurst, Australia, a mass of timber weighing eight tons was detached from the show ground pavilion and carried 200 yards. The timber in the pavilion was all splintered like matchwood.

There is a timber chute out in the Oregon Mountains 3328 feet long, where the logs come whizzing down the mountainside into Columbia River with a velocity of a cannon-ball and make the distance, which is about three-fifths of a mile, in twenty seconds.

There are only 450,000 persons in the State of Washington. If that State was as closely settled as Switzerland it would have 12,000,000 persons; as France, about 17,000,000; as Holland, about 25,000,000; as England, at least 40,000,000, and as Belgium more than 50,000,000.

W. E. Page, of Netarts, Wash., is exhibiting out there some samples of seal and sea lion leather, also shoes of the same material, made by him. He says the seals and sea lions are very valuable for their hides and oil, and that they are easily procured. The leather is very tough and soft and takes a fine finish.

English and American Postmen.

The difference in compensation between the postmen in London and the United States is remarkable, the highest sum paid to a London postman being $34 a month and the lowest paid to postman in the United States being $50. The pay of a London postman is only from eighteen to thirty-four shillings, or from $4.50 to $7 a week in our money. But he may obtain three good-conduct stripes, each of which entitles him to one shilling, or twenty-five cents, a week extra. The first stripe is given for five years' faithful service, the second for ten and the third for fifteen. He receives full pay when absent from duty on account of sickness, is provided with gratuitous medical attendance and is awarded a pension when he is too old or too disabled to work. He also is furnished with two suits of uniform each year, one for winter and one for summer. Thus a London postman cannot get, even after fifteen years of faithful service, a larger salary than $332 a year, while the pay of an American postman is $600 at first, then $800 and finally $1000.

The number of auxiliary postmen or "subs" in London is 2364, who manage to earn from six to sixteen shillings a week—that is, from $1.50 to $4—according to the amount of work they perform.

Twelve deliveries a day are made in the downtown or business districts and from six to eight in the residence section. Postmen are employed for eight hours a day, but their work is not continuous. It is made up of two or three or sometimes four turns of duty of two to four hours each.—Chicago Record.

Triumph of Anti-Toxine.

The first practical test at St. Louis, Mo., of the benefits of the recently discovered anti-toxine as a cure for diphtheria was made, a few days ago, and was proved a success.

The subject upon which the experiment was made is the three-year-old child of Floyd Schock. The child's condition was such that tracheotomy had been decided upon as a last resort to save its life. The parents, however, consented to the experiment of anti-toxine and its effect was instantly apparent. The child breathed easier, and in twelve hours all diphtheritic symptoms had passed away.

Queen Victoria's Eyesight Failing.

London Truth says that Queen Victoria's eyesight is failing.

RELIGIOUS READING.

THE COUNTY INSTITUTIONS.

Miss Grace Dodge has written an article on a subject too important to be passed by, even if it did not offer to many people just the opportunity for "Christian effort" that they are looking for. How many of our readers, dwelling in country towns and villages, have ever seen their own county institutions? How many have visited their inmates? How many have so much as given a thought to their existence?

We admire those men and women in our great cities who devote time and thought to the condition of those who are shut up in the great institutions—the almshouses, refuges, penitentiaries, and many of us who do not live in cities envy them their opportunities. Yet it is possible that the small institutions that lie within an hour's walk or a morning's drive need such ministrations still more. To begin with, the wardens and matrons of county institutions are often of a lower intellectual grade than those in city and State institutions; they may be even more well-meaning and conscientious, but they have a narrower experience and none of the quickening influences that come from contact with other people, attendance on public meetings, access to the literature of the subject, and the like. Your visit may be most welcome to them, not to speak of those under their charge, and most valuable, spurring them to new interest in their charge, giving them a new motive for well-doing—the consciousness of the interest and sympathy of others—and inspiring them with a desire for a better knowledge of methods and principles.

And the inmates of these institutions, how much they need a "Friendly Visitor"! "What sadness and gloom are found in a small county prison or poorhouse," says Miss Dodge. These people are usually not monsters of iniquity. If they were they would still need looking after in a judicious way, but most of them are as much sinned against as sinning, and the unfortunates—ah! how unfortunate they are! In the lonely, gloomy almshouse may be, as Miss Dodge says, some little, lame child. What a life for it! What a blessed day for it when some unknown but never-to-be forgotten friend drives up, talks kindly to it, lifts it into the carriage or wagon and takes it away for an hour's outing, leaves it a picture book and bids it good-bye with a kiss or a kindly pat on the head. Can we imagine the brightness of that day to such a child?

Or there may be, Miss Dodge reminds us some blind man or woman to whom an hour of pleasant chat, a bit of news read out, or a pleasant story from a simple book would be a comfort indescribable. And then, if there should be abuses, neglect, inadvertent or designed, such visits would go far to remedy the evil, though no word of reproof were uttered and no complaint made. "Sick and in prison, and ye visited me" applies to these country institutions as well as to those great centres of iniquity and cruelty which a Howard and an Elizabeth Fry purified and blessed by their Christ-like labor. And here is an opportunity that lies near the hand of many a one who desires to do good.—Messenger.

THE MOTHER TOO,

A blue-eyed slip of a girl gave her heart to the Lord Jesus in our children's meeting, one afternoon, and the following week I was led to go to the child's mother who I knew was not a Christian. But how could I spare an hour or more from my own precious little parish on that busy afternoon? However, I started with my bit of paper containing the address that had been given me, and reached 16—— street, to find it a shop with the rooms above quite vacant. The man in the shop knew no one by the name I gave, but the woman next door, at number 14, said, "Oh, yes; she lives in the rear of this house, go through that gate and you'll find it." So through the gate I went, and down some steps and along a narrow walk, and up some more steps and I had reached the home. Such a home! Lots of dirt and disorder, but very little sunshine and not much air. The woman had such a tired, disheartened look and no wonder. She was sick and lonely and times were hard, and no one knew her here in this great city, and no one cared. And oh, wasn't it sweet to tell her about One who had himself been homesick and tired, and lonely, and poor, and who knew her and who "cared"—who cared so much that he went to Calvary—for her.

She realized her hopeless, helpless condition and her need of such a Friend as this, and in a most childlike way she received him, begging him to forgive her and take her in.

There were tears in her eyes and on her cheeks when she said good-bye, but they were glad tears, and the discouragement took was all gone.

Last week now she is in her place at our mother's meeting, for it lightens the burden and brightens the way, to come and rest at his feet.

And there are so many, many in these homes in Chicago, just as ready as he she to hear of a Saviour. I wonder why we are slow to go to them?—J. E. Hand, in Record of Christian Work.

THE BUSINESS MAN'S LESSON.

He was an upright business man. In his heart he believed the religion of Christ to be true. But he was very busy, and when Sunday came he was thoroughly tired. He had become interested, too, in his Sunday paper, so he gradually dropped off going to church. His wife went regularly, and sometimes the children. One morning, just after his wife had set out, he was comfortably seated reading the money article, when he heard his boys talking in the next room. Said eight-year-old Willie:

"When you grow up, shall you go to church as your mother does, or stay at home like father?"

"I shall do neither," said the one, decidedly. "When I'm a man I shall have my horses, and be on the road Sundays, and enjoy myself."

The newspaper suddenly lost its attraction. Between the father and it there came a picture of his boys associating with loose men, and drifting into a godless, reckless life, and of himself looking on it in his old age as the fruit of his self-indulgence. Five minutes after he was rapidly walking toward the church. When the service was over, his wife, coming down the aisle, saw him waiting at the door. There was questioning, glad surprise in her eyes, but he only remarked that he had taken a walk, and thought he would join her on her way home. Next Sunday, however, the whole family were in their pew, and all the rest of the day there was a kind of peace about the home that reminded him of his boyhood happy days in his father's home. And who will say that he was the less fitted for another week of business life by his share in the services of God's house, instead of "staying at home all Sunday to rest?"—Sunday School Times.

OUR SINS AS THE SANDS.

A poor fisherman's wife came to the minister with her hands full of sand saying, "Do you see?" Oh, my sins, my sins, as the sands of the seashore for multitude, as the sands of the seashore!" "Where did you get it?" said he. "Down by the beacon." "Go down by the beacon and dig up a pile of sand as high as ever you can," said the minister and wait for the tide to come in." She went down by the beacon and heaped up the sand. She watched the waves as they crept higher and higher and swept over her pile of sand, and it was gone; then she clapped her hands for joy. It was a pantomime of the glorious gospel. The tide, the crimson tide, rolls in, which taketh away the sins of the world. "It cleanseth me, it cleanseth me! Oh praise the Lord, it cleanseth me!"

We may not all be able to say with St. Paul: "I have fought a good fight; I have kept the faith!" But, thank God, we can all say with him: "I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed to him against that day."

Low Prices of Living.

No. 1 Oregon flour is selling at $2.75 per barrel of 200 pounds; canned tomatoes are selling at seventy cents per dozen, though canners say that the cans cost that sum, without allowing a cent for the contents; dry granulated sugar is selling in New York at 4⅞ cents; middling uplands cotton is changing hands at New York at 5¾ cents. These are prices which have never been paralleled; they command the thoughtful attention of all who are concerned for the future.

Cast Lots for the Shrievalty.

At Elizabethtown, Ky., the vote for Sheriff in Larue County was a tie. Lots were cast for the office and the Republican won. He immediately appointed his opponent his chief deputy.

SABBATH SCHOOL.

INTERNATIONAL LESSON FOR JANUARY 13.

Lesson Text: "Feeding the Five Thousand," Mark vi., 30-44—Golden Text: Luke i., 53—Commentary.

30. The apostles, having been sent forth to heal the sick and to preach the gospel, returned and told Jesus all things, both what they had done and what they had taught. They went forth in His name and wrought and taught in His name and returned and reported to Him. This is just the thing for every worker to do—go forth from Him, work and speak in His name, and then tell Him all and leave it with Him.

31. No leisure even to eat. What a description of the life of Him who went about doing good! Truly He pleased not Himself (Rom. xv., 3). He lived wholly unto God and sought to lead weary ones into His own rest and peace, even to rest in God and in His pleasure. No leisure for Himself, but every moment for others and their good. Though He considered not Himself, He did consider His apostles and their comfort; hence His invitation to come aside and rest awhile.

32. They went by ship, and He went in the ship with them. They were a little company, yet one was an unbeliever, but He loved them all and sought their welfare. There are about 1200 souls on this ship, and He loves them all, and many of them love Him, but there are many unbelievers. We can tell them as far as possible of His love and leave results to Him.

33. The people saw them crossing the lake and ran afoot and outwent them and came unto Him. Would not multitudes come unto Him to-day if He were kept before them in somewhat of His loveliness by the doing and teaching of His followers? Multitudes in heathendom would come to Him if they only knew of Him and His love for them.

34. He was neither angry nor grieved when He saw the multitudes, although He had to fight His disciples apart to rest, but He had compassion, was sorry they had no shepherd and began to feed their hungry souls. In Ezek. xxxiv., 2, we read of shepherds who feed themselves instead of their flocks and scatter and neglect the sheep instead of caring for them.

35. It did not prove such a resting time as many seek, for He taught them till the day was far spent, and the disciples began to think that it was time to send them away. How little of their Master's spirit these men had—how little we have! He came not to be ministered unto, but to minister and to give His life a ransom for many (Math. xx., 28).

36. The disciples felt sorry that the multitudes were hungry, but had no thought of feeding them, only of sending them away to get something. It is so much easier to send people away than to spend our thoughts and time and strength in caring for them. It is so much more like Jesus to care for them, even though it takes time and strength and care and denial of self.

37. How surprised the disciples must have been, when instead of sending them away, as they suggested, He said: "Give ye them to eat!" Their surprise is manifest in the question of this verse. John says that Jesus, to prove Philip, asked Him whence they should buy bread to feed this multitude. And Philip suggested that 200 pennyworth might give every one a little. Thus vain and fruitless are all our calculations and plans in reference to the Lord's work.

38. He asks what they have in the way of food. Andrew discovers that a lad has five loaves and two small fishes, but thinks the fact hardly worth mentioning (John vi., 8, 9). We are such creatures of sight that we seem unable to believe that the thing can be done unless we see the wherewithal. Moses failed in this matter when he asked if all the flocks and herds should be slain to give the people the meat the Lord promised (Num. xi., 21, 23). Sarah failed when she laughed at the Lord's promise (Gen. xviii., 13, 14). Let us walk by faith, not by sight, and let our hearts cry out, "Ah, Lord God, there is nothing too hard for Thee" (Jer. xxxii., 17).

39. He now begins to work, they having calculated and looked around, apparently in vain, and having come to their wits' end, but everything must be done in order; hence they are commanded to sit down in companies. There is no peace nor victory by looking within or around, but only by looking unto Him.

40. In companies convenient to be waited upon they are now seated upon the green grass, for there was much of it. See last verse and John vi., 10. "Let all things be done decently and in order" is a law of Scripture (I Cor. xiv., 4), for, although we read in Gen. i., 2, that "the earth was without form and void," we read in Isa. xiv., 18, that the Lord did not make it that way. See R. V.

41. The loaves and fishes pass from the lad's hands into the hands of Jesus. The lad gives them wholly and unreservedly up. Then Jesus acknowledges the Father by looking up to heaven for a blessing upon them, after which He passes the food to the disciples to be passed on to the people. All can see that the disciples are not doing this, but are simply the messengers or waiters, and Jesus acknowledges that He is not doing it, but the Father in heaven, even as He said in John xiv., 10.

42. "And they did all eat and were filled." Not each one a little, as Philip had suggested, but each as much as they would (John vi., 11). It is not the Lord's way to give a little, but rather to fill full. "Be filled with the Spirit," "Let the Lord dwell in you richly," "Drink abundantly, O beloved!" are some of His words which indicate His pleasure. He would have us full of joy and peace (Rom. xv., 13) to our good and to His great glory—no cares nor anxieties nor plans nor worries, but the quietness and joyfulness of children.

43. He will have nothing of His lost (John vi., 12), and if so careful about loaves and fishes how much more about His redeemed ones bought by His precious blood! Yet there are saved ones who cannot seem to trust Him to keep that which He has redeemed with so great a price. Let all such consider their own carefulness of precious things and ask if they are better than He. Let them eat and rest on John x., 28, 29; II Tim. i., 12.

44. The number fed and filled was 5000 men, besides women and children (Math. xiv., 21), but it was not wonderful to Him, who for forty years had fed millions miraculously. He is the very same Jesus still, and can use you, dear reader, to feed and bless hungry thousands if you will only put yourself as unreservedly in His hands as the lad put his loaves, and be willing to live wholly and only for His pleasure. This seems to be the only miracle recorded by each of the four evangelists. May it not be to teach us that the great mission of every believer is to have compassion upon and save and feed the perishing?—Lesson Helper.

We Eat too Much of One Kind.

The nutritive value and cost of food is discussed at length in a bulletin of the Agricultural Department, based on investigations made by the Bureau of Animal Industry. The results of these studies, says the bulletin, confirm the general impression of hygienists that our diet is one sided and that we eat too much. Owing to the large consumption in this country of sugar and the use of large quantities of fat meats, the food which we actually eat has relatively too little protein and too much fat, starch and sugar. It is found that the protein of ordinary meats, fish and milk is readily and completely digested; that of vegetable foods is much less completely digested than of animal foods. One-fourth or one-third of potatoes, whole wheat and rye flour may escape digestion and thus be useless for nourishment, and one-sixth of the protein of wheat flower, corn meal, beans and peas may be assumed to be undigested when cooked and eaten in the usual way.

"Of the meat extracts in the market," continues the report, "some contain very little and others practically no material which builds tissue or yields energy. Animal foods gratify the palate in many ways which the vegetable foods do not, and what is perhaps of greater weight in regulating the actual usage of communities by whose demand the prices are regulated, they satisfy a real need by supplying protein and fats, which vegetable foods lack."

Wheeled a Mile in 1.21.

John J. McLaughlin, a Columbia (Penn.) bicycle rider, rode an unpaced mile over the Ironville Pike, in 1.21 flat. This beats the paced and unpaced records held respectively by Johnson in 1.25 2-5 and Pensoyer 1.53 2-5. McLaughlin's first attempt was made in 1.36. Six watches were held on him.

AGRICULTURAL.

TOPICS OF INTEREST RELATIVE TO FARM AND GARDEN.

DOCKING PIGS' TAILS.

The pig's tail is too small to be of much service to it in keeping off flies. Nor is the tail good for anything to whoever cuts it off. Most old farmers, however, dock their pigs when they are eight to ten weeks old, thinking that the animal thrives better for it. The story is that one old farmer remarked that it cost an extra bushel of corn to maintain the growth of the pig's tail, and at last it wasn't worth anything for any purpose.—Boston Cultivator.

QUANTITY OF MANURE THAT MAY BE USED.

The quantity of manure used on the land is regulated generally by the supply of it. The quantity that may be usefully applied has never yet been discovered, for market gardeners who have made use of as much as 100 tons to the acre have thought that they might profitably have used still more, and some have even used a ton of fertilizer on an acre in addition to the manure. A great deal depends on the method of cultivation, for it is this that enables plants to make use of more food. It is a common thing for persons who try to grow prize vegetables to plant the seeds in actual beds of manure, and the mammoth squashes and cabbages shown are grown in this way, and by the help of liquid manure as well. Thus it cannot be said that the ultimate quantity of manure that may be profitably applied has ever been settled by experience.—New York Times.

WINTERING IDLE HORSES.

On most farms there is not enough work during the winter season to keep constantly employed half the number of teams kept busy during seed time and harvest. Many farmers think it economical to winter the idle horses at the straw stack, but such economy is more imaginary than real. If these horses had their shoes removed and were allowed to run loose in a twelve by fourteen ground floor box-stall and fed a less quantity of straw than they eat and trample under foot in the open yard, their condition would be far better at the opening of spring. It should also be remembered that only young horses whose digestion is good and that are known to be easy keepers, can be successfully wintered on straw alone. Oats are the natural food of the horse and should be fed during enforced idleness rather than grain or meal of a more stimulating nature. If kept in a stable they should have new bedding as needed, and be curry-combed and brushed daily whether they are stabled or in the open air. A feed of potatoes, carrots, turnips, beets, or apples should be given weekly. Such food is fully worth the market price for feeding to horses in winter.—American Agriculturist.

WORKBENCH AND TOOL CLOSET.

The ordinary workbench is too often a litter of tools, shavings, bits of wood, nails, screws and other articles, affording no little inconvenience whenever it is desired to use the bench, says the American Agriculturist. Tools are thus frequently lost, and many of them made dull by contact with each other, and with nails and other hard substances. There is frequent rusting also when the

A HANDY TOOL CLOSET.

weather becomes damp. A plan is shown in the illustration by which the tools may be kept each in a safe place, and yet conveniently at hand the moment one is wanted. Nails and screws should be kept in boxes with apartments for the various sizes, and these boxes may also find a place in the closet at the head of the bench, or, if desired, a drawer for nails, screws, etc., may be made below the bench.

STORING HONEY.

Mrs. Jennie Atchley, in American Bee Journal, says the public, for some reason or other, especially the consumers of honey, have come to believe it won't do to buy honey in large quantities, thinking it will sour and spoil. But it is a mistake, for good, ripe honey kept in a good vessel will keep for a lifetime and be good. It will no doubt solidify, but it can be brought back to its liquid state by melting it in boiling water, by placing the vessel containing the honey in another with the water, and let it remain until all is melted; and the honey will be as clear and as good as the day it was put up.

I would keep the the barrels in the cellar or some cool place, but a warm place will not hurt it, only the barrels may shrink, and eventually leak if kept where it is too warm. But a warm room will not affect the honey.

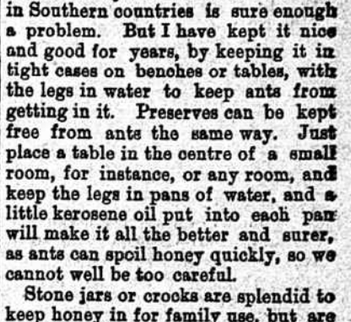
Now, the foregoing directions are for keeping honey for home use, and for you to tell your customers how to keep their honey when they buy a barrel or keg from you at a time. Of course I do not expect you to keep your honey any longer than you can find sale for it, and sometimes we may have our honey engaged before we extract it. You may say that people ought to know how to keep honey, but I tell you the public need schooling, and they look to you to tell them how, etc. Some bee-keepers fail to build up a honey (home) market just by not schooling people about honey, and being ready and free to advise.

Comb honey is somewhat more troublesome to keep than extracted, and ought to be kept in a warm, dry room instead of a cellar. Keeping section honey free from moth and ants in Southern countries is sure enough a problem. But I have kept it nice and good for years, by keeping it in tight cases on benches or tables, with the legs in water to keep ants from getting in it. Preserves can be kept free from ants the same way. Just place a table in the centre of a small room, for instance, or any room, and keep the legs in pans of water, and a little kerosene oil put into each pan will make it all the better and surer, as ants can spoil honey quickly, so we cannot well be too careful.

Stone jars or crocks are splendid to keep honey in for family use, but are a little hard to keep covered tightly; but I can place a beeswaxed cloth over the top, then the cover, and it does splendidly. I have kept green fruit in jars for a season by sealing tight with beeswaxed cloths.

HOME-MADE ROLLER.

I have had a cheap and convenient hand roller in use for some time, says a writer in American Gardening. It is made of a piece of stove pipe, say three feet long and from five to eight inches in diameter. Circular pieces of wood, the heavier the better, are fitted in both ends, and the pipe is filled with sand or old pieces of lead and dirt and rammed down to keep it solid. The handle is a heavy oak or hickory sappling, split up far enough to make the bow as shown in the cut. An axle may be made of an iron rod running through the blocks in the ends of the pipe, and completely through the cylinder, or they may be screw bolts running into the blocks. The block should be put in one end of the pipe and securely nailed; then the pipe should be filled with sand, or



HOME-MADE ROLLERS.

other heavy matter, and then the block should be put in the other end and this should also be well nailed. An old piece of stove-pipe, the larger in diameter the better, a hickory sapling, say eight feet long, a rod or bolts for the axle and a couple of round blocks of the same size as the pipe, and an hour's time will make as good a hand-roller as can be bought for $4 or $5 at the hardware store. The roller may be put in a framework made of old boards, and an old lawn roller-handle used instead of a sapling. It is well to paint the stove-pipe to keep it from rusting.

Such a roller is very useful when putting in radishes, turnips of any small or light seed. Figure A shows how the handle is made with a sapling. Figure B shows a handle made of board with an old handle from a lawn mower or something of the sort.

FARM AND GARDEN NOTES.

Twenty hens will give as much yearly profit as a cow.

Give the hen house a good cleaning up and whitewashing.

Fresh cut bones as a poultry feed are gaining friends every day.

Don't forget that "green food" you mean to feed daily now that the ground is frozen.

In order to have plenty of eggs fresh blood should be introduced into the flocks every year.

In breaking a high-strung colt, one with a nervous temperament, think twice before you strike him with the whip.

Crowd the fattening stock with all they can be made to digest and don't wait too long before disposing of them.

Short-necked horses never look well, and when added to this unbecoming feature is a big coarse head they have no attractions at all.

Regularity in feeding and exercising, together with good grooming and proper shoeing, will prevent you paying many a veterinary bill.

It is stated that a horse can live five days on solid food without drinking, seventeen days without eating or drinking, or twenty days on water alone.

If the hen house is so cold as to freeze water solid during the day, give it twice a day and a little warm at that—not so hot as to scald the fowls