

The Quiet Hour

The Good Samaritan.

BY WAYLAND HOLT, D. D.

v. 25. He asks the most momentous possible question. It is worth while to notice the apostolic answer to a nearly similar question after the crucifixion, resurrection, ascension of our Lord. (Acts 16: 30, 31.) This answer the redemption wrought for us by Jesus has made possible. Notice the respect in which Jesus holds the *Written Law*. Certainly our Lord never gives the least hint of the notion that the Law was a kind of romance conjured by priests, and foisted upon the people by falsely attaching to it the name of Moses. What the lawyer quotes is a summary of Deut. 6: 5; 10: 12; Lev. 19: 18. Dean Farrar says, "as the passage from Deuteronomy was one of those inscribed in the phylacteries (little leather boxes containing four texts in their compartments) which the scribes wore on his forehead and wrist, it is an ingenious conjecture that our Lord, as He spoke, pointed to one of these."

When the demands of the Law press, as they did now on this lawyer, it is still the common attempt to seek to justify *one's self* before it. But it is the steady teaching both of conscience and of Scripture that this is impossible. This lawyer felt that he had not kept the law that he had so well enunciated. Condemned as we all are by the Law, our refuge is Jesus Christ. "Neighbor," in the original, means, literally—one near.

v. 30. Jericho was 3,500 feet lower than Jerusalem. The distance about twenty miles. Much of the road lay through a deep ravine. It is to this day the haunt of robbers. The whole tenor of the parable implies that this man, so set on, was a Jew.

And by chance a certain priest was going down that way (v. 31.) By coincidence. Dean Farrar says "the word 'chance' does not occur in Scripture, that is, in the original." This is a good note of Bengel. "Many good opportunities are hidden under that which may seem accidental." The "priest" had probably just gotten through with his duties at the Temple, and was now going home to Jericho, a city of residence for priests. Perhaps, too, he was afraid of ceremonial defilement. The "Levite" was one of the lower officers of the Temple. "Saw" "having seen," indicating a particularizing look. He had curiosity but no pity.

The "Samaritan" was a special outcast to a Jew. Their worship Christ declared erroneous (John 4: 22). I have never found a better condemnation of the whole teaching here than this. "Christ contrasts the Samaritan with the priest and Levite, not to honor Samaria, nor to despise the priest and Levites, but to teach that the most despised outcast who fulfills the law of love is better than the most honored minister of religion who disregards it." "Moved with compassion"—never forget that an essential and constant element in real religion is humanity.

Notice the gracious action of the Good Samaritan (a) he did not stand aloof, and try to do things at arm's length, (b) He was full of the needed service—"he bound up his wounds"; it is not at all unlikely he tore up his own garments to do it, and notwithstanding it was hand-soiling service, he did it. (c) He did *medicinally* the best he could—

"pouring in oil and wine"—the usual remedies for wounds; notice especially, as against the folly of so-called Christian Science, our Lord's implied endorsement of the use of medical means. (d) He sacrificed his own convenience—"set him on his own beast"; it must have been heavy work to lift the wounded man, and while he rode, the Good Samaritan walked. (e) He gave him shelter—"brought him to an inn." (f) He kept on in personal service—"took care of him"; through the night he was ready with nursing. (g) He helped with money—"took out two pence"—as money went then, two days' wages, so not an insignificant sum. (h) He used forethought for him—"Whatever thou spendest more, I will repay." Learn (1) the value of *personal service*—the Good Samaritan did not delegate to a committee. (2) The value of whole service—there was no half work about it. (3) And his heart went with his service; there was no withholding of tender word and touch—he had "compassion."

v. 36. "It is not place, but love, which makes neighborhood." Go—instead of questioning and waiting, do. "Whoever is in need is my neighbor." Dean Alford's interpretation is not amiss. All acts of charity and mercy done here below are but fragments and derivatives of that one great act of mercy which the Saviour came on earth to perform. And as He took on Him the nature of us all, being 'not ashamed to call us brethren,' counting us all His kindred, so it is but natural that in holding up a mirror (for such is a parable) of the truth in this matter of duty, we should see in it not only the present and prominent group, but also Himself and His act of mercy behind."

What shall I do (v. 25). The tense of the verb suggests the idea that the doing of some one thing would win eternal life.—In the law (v. 26). The order of the words gives emphasis to the law as something that should have been familiar to the lawyer.—Thou shalt love the Lord thy God (v. 27). This passage the Jews wrote in their phylacteries and repeated twice a day.—This do (v. 28). The tense here implies continued doing, and it is thus opposed to the suggestion in the lawyer's question.—An inn (v. 34). The word here is used nowhere else in the Bible. It is different from the one Luke 2: 7, and perhaps refers to a place where better accommodation could be had than at some of the mere lodging places for travellers.—I (v. 35). The pronoun is made emphatic.—Do (v. 37). The verb here is in the same tense as in verse 28, and different from that used in verse 25, and suggests repeated doing.

A Failure.

BY ORA SHEFFIELD.

"Her life was a failure," so they said,
With pitying word and sigh,
"But scanty measures of daily bread,
A roof to shelter her aged head,—
"Was better that she should die!"

But the angels looked with other eyes
On the page so blurred with tears,
And they read the page of sacrifice,
That others, upborne by her, might rise
Throughout all the weary years.

"A failure!" the earthly verdict cast:
But many a sweet surprise
Awaits the "failures" when life is past,
When the last are first, and the first are last!
And we see with angel's eyes.

A Large Prayer.—v. A Chain of Consequences. No 1.

Ephesians. III 14-21.

BY ANNA ROSS.

The first petition in this prayer occupies a part of one verse. The proposed consequences of the granting of it fill the next three verses, and each of these developing consequences is marked by the introductory conjunction of sequence, that. Let us read the prayer and mark each successive consequence, each introduced by this significant conjunction.

Petition: "That He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man." First consequence, "That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith." Second consequence, "That ye may be able to comprehend what is the breadth and length and depth and height of the love of Christ which passeth knowledge." Third consequence, "That ye may be filled with all the fullness of God."

These are large consequences that are to flow out of the granting of this large petition, meted out according to a large measure. Evidently Paul does not anticipate that this "strengthening with might by indwelling Omnipotence" is going to prove any mere wave of emotional comfort. Comfort? Yes, surely. But consequences as far ahead of mere emotional comfort as the inflowing of a tide of life and health is ahead of the soothing of a mere opiate.

First consequence: "That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith." We would expect this, for the special work of the Holy Spirit is not to bear witness of Himself, but to reveal Jesus Christ to the soul. "He shines into our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."

That Christ may dwell, may abide. "Lord with me abide." This is the eager cry of the soul that has tasted in the faintest degree the preciousness of the companionship of Jesus Christ. What Paul asks and expects to result from this strengthening with might is that the companion presence of the Lord Jesus shall become an abiding presence, and this shall be accomplished "by faith," continuous companionship through continuous, Spirit-wrought believing.

It is very simple, yet it is a secret. But it is a secret that God is waiting to reveal. "To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you the hope of glory." It is a secret, a mystery, but it is one that God would make known, and it is learned by faith, by simply believing what God has said about Jesus Christ, believing the "report."

The secret shines out of the following conversation "Do you ever get discouraged?" "No never," with the heart in the words. "How is that? That is a secret that should not die with you." The answer came in a different tone, the tone of one who spoke in the realized presence of a present God.

"Because Jesus Christ my Lord is God the Creator and because God means every word He says."

"Jesus Christ, God the Creator. My Lord," that was Christ dwelling in the heart, and it was done "by faith" through believing that "God means every word He says."