

The Quiet Hour.

Hezekiah Reopens the Temple.

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GOLDEN TEXT—Them that honour me I will honour.—1 Samuel 2 : 30.

REV. W. J. CLARK, LONDON, ONT.

Hezekiah the king, v. 18. Look at the difficulties and disadvantages of the young king! The example of a weak and wicked father, a kingdom torn and distracted, and given over to irreligion—surely his fight was a stiff one. Nor had he any more than ordinary abilities. But he had "stick-to-it-activeness," and before his resolute will the obstacles vanished. Many a hard day's work went before the time came to reopen the temple with songs of rejoicing. Did the king regret the struggle? Why, it only made his gladness the greater, and his praise the sweeter. He teaches us that we are born to be masters, not slaves of our environment.

We have cleansed all the house of the Lord, v. 18. There are people still living, who remember when almost all the churches in Canada were log or frame buildings. We may be sure that no worship offered in the splendid structures of brick and stone of our own day is more pleasing to God than were the prayers and praises of the hardy pioneers. But when our own houses are more beautiful and comfortable, it is a shame to us if God's house is neglected. To Him we owe everything, and He is worthy of all honor.

Gathered the rulers of the city, v. 20. In our country the people are their own rulers. They elect the law-makers, and those who manage the affairs of city, or town, or village or township. Every elector should regard his right to vote as a sacred trust, to be used in the interests of righteousness. Equally sacred is the trust to rule. If we ought to vote aright in electing others to rule, we should likewise rule aright when we are honored with the confidence of others and placed in positions of power and influence.

And they bought, bullocks, etc., v. 21. The form of public worship in Hezekiah's day carried with it considerable expense. These cattle were a part of the people's wealth. So that there was always involved the element of self-denial and the principle of liberality. And there cannot be true worship without such a spirit. He who thinks to gain blessing in the public worship of God, while at the same time he is not willing to give of his means to support it, or to help others who are themselves unable to deceive himself, and the blessing will not be his in any large measure, if it can be said to be his at all. We must give if we would get.

So they killed . . . and the priests received the blood, and sprinkled it on the altar, v. 22. This is an object lesson. It teaches us that sin kills. How true that is! Some sins, like drunkenness and other vices, kill the body. And as surely as the frost blights the flowers, so surely does sin destroy everything that is beautiful and noble in character. God wants, oh, so much! to save us from the deadly power of sin. When the Hebrews offered sacrifices, it was as if their sin destroyed the life of the victim instead of their own. And when Christ came, sin was allowed to do its worst upon Him, that we might be saved from death. The deadliness of sin, and God's eagerness to save us from it, at

whatever cost, this is the lesson of sin offering.

And when the burnt offering began, the song . . . began, v. 27. Whole-hearted consecration and abounding joy—these always go together. Who can fail to be happy when, of his own freewill, he has given himself to God, and knows that he is working out in his life some part of God's great purpose? Song is as natural to him as to the lark at morn. Heaven is full of song, because God is the All in All to the dwellers therein. Its occupants know the secret of joy. For they spend themselves in doing the will of their King.

As many as were of a willing heart, v. 31. There is much gift giving among men which has as its basis the commercial exchange. And when such is the case, there will be calculation as to how little may be given and how much may be gained. But he who loves God counts no cost. Because his heart is God's, His all is God's. The question is ever, not how little, but how much of what He has given I can spare for His work.

A Prayer for a Crowded Day.

Thou wast so busy among men when on earth, O Saviour, that at times thou didst not have leisure so much as to eat. Therefore we turn to thee for sympathy and succor in this crowded day. Thou knowest how duties throng us; thou understandest how busy are our hands and our minds. We pray thee, therefore, to grant us thy peace amidst the turmoils of besieging tasks. May our spirits be serene and strong, and unruffled by any care. In the duty of the moment may we not lose sight of the purpose of our life. May every labor of our hands minister to thy glory and be done only in thy name. Forgive us if during this day our thoughts are turned from thee to our work; may we serve thee in our work, and by faithfulness and good workmanship may we praise thy name, O Master. Let our devotion to thee be the golden cord binding all our varied and petty tasks into one complete service. Enable us to merit at even-tide the "well done" which is the best reward of the true; and when the day is done, grant us rest from our labors and a quiet mind for the contemplation of thyself.—Amen.

Great Thoughts.

WENDELL PHILLIPS.

Christianity endeavors to reform the world by ideas. There is no such another attempt in the history of the race. There is nowhere a single religious leader that ever said, "I will remodel the world, and I will remodel it by thought." Christianity not only trusts to the mind, to the supremacy of the soul, but it is aggressive on that line. It not only says, with every thoughtful man, that the mind is stronger than the body, but the Saviour says, "Go out and preach the gospel to every creature." The great agitator of the centuries is Jesus Christ of Jerusalem, who undertook to found his power on an idea, and at the same time to announce his faith and to teach his disciples, "this idea shall remould the world." No other religion has attempted it; no other religious leader has proclaimed any such purpose, plan, or faith.

Christianity does not appeal to education nor appeal to caste; it does not appeal to culture and the disciplined mind,—in that century or any other. To the poor the gospel is preached. Christianity did not condescend to the lowest ignorance; it selected the lowest ignorance as the depository of its trust. Some one has said, "Christianity is the highest wisdom condescending to the lowest ignorance." That is an insufficient statement. Christ *entrusted* his gospel to the poor, to the common sense of the race, to the instincts of human nature. He turned away from Sanhedrim and school, from Pharisee who was observance, and Sadducee who was skeptical inquiry,—and called to his side the unlearned; planted the seeds of his empire in the masses, no caste, no college, no "inside" clique of adepts, and no "outside" herd of dupes. Christ proclaimed spiritual equality and brotherhood.

You see in the Bible that the Saviour was considered a babbler, a disorganizer, a pestilent fellow, a stirrer-up of sedition. All the names that have been bestowed on men that ever came to turn the world upside down were heaped upon that leader of Christianity in the streets of Jerusalem eighteen hundred years ago.

This is a most singular and unique characteristic of Christianity. It did not affect the schools; it did not ask the indorsement of the academy of Plato; it went to the people; it trusted the human race. It said, "I am as immortal as man. I accept human nature, and the evidence of my divinity will be that every successive development of a fact of human nature will come back here and find its key." Christianity says: "I leave my record with the instincts of the race. The accumulating evidence of my divine mission shall be, that nowhere can the race travel, under no climate, in the midst of no circumstances, can it develop anything of which I have not offered beforehand the explanation and key."

In all civilization as in every individual case, in all times as well as in all men, this rule holds. The level of a man's spiritual life and the spiritual life of an age is exactly this,—its ideal of women. No matter where you test society, what its intellectual or moral development, the idea that it has of women is the measure and test of the progress it has made.

I think it a greater credulity to believe that there ever was a man so much superior to Athens and to England as this Jewish youth was, if he were a mere man, than it is to believe that in the fullness of time a higher plane of moral and intellectual existence.

The miracles he wrought are nothing to the miracle he was, if at that era and that condition of the world he invented Christianity. Our religion was never at peace with its age. Ours is the only faith whose first teacher and eleven out of his twelve original disciples died martyrs to their ideas.

A man who says that Christianity is but the outgrowth of a human intellect must explain to me Europe as she stands to-day—the intelligence, morality, and civilization of Europe as compared with the Asiatic civilization, which has died out, Asiatic civilization failed from no lack of intellectual vigor or development. Tocqueville shows us that all the social problems and questions that agitate Europe and America today were debated to rags in Hindustan ages ago. Everyone knows that Saracen Spain outshone all the rest of Europe for three or four centuries. The force wanting was a spiritual one. Body and brain, without