

The Quiet Hour.

Jesus Teaches Humility.

S. S. LESSON—Mark 10: 35-45. May 22, 1904.

GOLDEN TEXT—For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister.—Mark 10: 45.

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Do for us whatsoever we shall desire, v. 35. It is a foolish and unscriptural view of prayer that declares we will get anything we ask, provided we only have faith to expect it. James and John did not doubt the ability of Jesus to give a favorable answer, but they seemed to have hesitated at the worthiness of their request, and justly so. It was a pagan's prayer. The heathen says to his idol: "Give me what I want." The Christian says to his God: "Do for me whatsoever Thou desirest." It is a higher faith that leaves the request in the hands of God. The prudent father does not give his child a razor because he asks for it, and God denies many an ambitious petition, because it is as dangerous to the man, as the razor to the child.

In thy glory, v. 37. James and John could have supported their claim with a very plausible plea. It would seem that their mother Salome was a sister of Mary; and therefore they were cousins of Jesus, and, according to Oriental usage, entitled to the most honorable offices at His disposal. But the essential selfishness of their motive is very apparent. They do not ask to be crucified, one on the right hand and the other on the left hand of His cross, but only to hold these conspicuous places in His glory. The true test of discipleship is not to occupy the foremost seats in the synagogue, when "religion walks in silver shoes," but to be faithful to one's post in times of depression, hardship and persecution. Even Mammon can admire heaven's golden pavement; but it takes a converted Paul to declare, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross." The emblem of shame had become his boast.

To them for whom it is prepared, v. 40. Mere caprice, or favoritism, or the accidental ties of kinship have nothing to do with the award of heaven's highest honors. In that purely spiritual realm other principles rule supreme: "shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" Our immediate business is with "the cup," the Old Testament symbol for portion of life; which Christ drank, and which is offered to our lips, and the baptism with which He was baptized. Are we able for these?

Exercise lordship, v. 42. To most of us a sense of authority is very pleasing. We like to have our commands considered as supreme, our word regarded as law. But the love of power unrestrained has often spread wreck and ruin. It has always been a fruitful cause of misery. It has been the mother of many crimes and has stained the steps to the throne with innocent blood. Power, be it little or much, is safe in our hands, only when we regard it as a sacred trust, to be used for the glory of God and the good of others.

Servant of all, v. 44. As the barley ears that bear the most fruit hang lowest, as the fragrant violet shrouds itself under its own leaves, "as incense smells the sweetest when it is beaten the smallest," so the chiefest of Christ's disciples conceal their own importance behind their interest in others. Mr. Gladstone was in the habit of accosting a

little street sweep for whom he had taken a fancy. But several days passed and the little lad was not at his post. Mr. Gladstone inquired where he stayed, and was found one day sitting in a lonely attic reading the Testament at the bedside of the city wail. Although the cares of an empire weighed upon him, he showed his greatness in becoming the servant of the humblest.

Even the Son of man, v. 35. His was by right the highest place among men. And this place might have been swiftly His, had He chosen to yield to the voice of the tempter. The magnificence and power of a great earthly throne were offered to Him. But He chose instead the Cross. He knew that thus He would establish a kingdom that would endure after all others had perished, a kingdom whose subjects would serve Him with adoring love and boundless gratitude, called forth by His wonderful sacrifice.

His life a ransom, v. 45. The Jubilee year brought to the Hebrew slave glad release from his bondage. Our year of Jubilee has come. The price of our freedom has been paid. We have been delivered from the power of sin. The Cross is the emblem of our liberty. Through its sacrifice our shackles are struck off. With loving, grateful hearts, we enter now the service of Him who has purchased us at so great a cost. We yield ourselves to His will, not by compulsion, but because we find in it our highest joy.

FOR DOMINION PRESBYTERIAN.

Bell's Story.

Covenant Hold a Weapon Against Famine.

BY ANNA ROSS.

Ever since the great famine year in India, the year 1900, Bell has been deeply impressed by the thought that there lies an article a long forgotten article—in the Treaty of Ararat, which, if called to mind, and honestly claimed in terms of the Treaty, would effectually protect from famine any part of this earth inhabited by the descendants of Noah.

Before passing this over as a delusion or a joke, will the reader first carefully consider the Scripture account of the Treaty of Ararat, or God's covenant with Noah.

As Noah stepped out upon the smiling but depopulated earth, he gathered his family about him for a most remarkable act of worship.

His heart, as the father of all the human tribes that should ever re-inhabit the earth, was loaded with fears that could find no relief but in sacrifice, and that the completest sacrifice that it was in the power of man to present. Every clean beast and every clean bird was represented upon that altar. What could he do more to secure a sacrifice worthy of the occasion? In that elaborate sacrifice it is easy to see the intelligent worshipper reaching out toward a sacrifice that should be adequate indeed—the heart awakened to the sinfulness and danger of sin in himself and in his household through all their coming generations, reaching out dimly toward the perfect and all-sufficient sacrifice of Christ.

The same principle is to be seen in God's own arrangements for the great Day of Atonement. A bullock, a ram, and a slain and a living goat—all these enter into the expiatory ordinances of the day, each doing its own part in foreshadowing the complete sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

The same appears in the variety of animals whose blood lies at the foundation of the covenant made with Abraham—a heifer, a ram, a turtle-dove, and a young pigeon.

As the offerer was thus reaching out toward the blood of Christ in the offering, God smelled a sweet savor, and gave a most marvellous covenant on account of it. The blood of the sacrifice is the "blood of the covenant," that is, it is the ground on which it was given, and upon which it stands, and upon which it can be claimed. The rainbow in the clouds is its token.

With such a foundation for this covenant, no surprise need be felt if the blessings contained in it for the descendants of Noah should be surpassing great. With such a seal set to it as the many-colored arc of the circle of glory surrounding the very throne of God, Rev. 4: 3; Ezek. 1: 28, we are meant to understand that these blessings are secured to us with a certainty for which that throne is given us as surety. When God says to Noah and his sons, "I will look upon the bow that I may remember the everlasting covenant," He indicates that there is continuous blessing in it for all generations of men, that He wants them to remember this, and is continually summoning them to remember it every time He sets His bow in the clouds.

The general impression seems to be that the only benefit needed to the race by this rainbow-sealed covenant is protection from another universal deluge. Man has forgotten that there is vastly more than this. Here is one promise it contains;—"While the earth remaineth, seed-time and harvest, cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease."

If this is a covenant promise to Noah and his seed, then the fulfilling of it is a treaty right, and can be claimed by the descendants of Noah in any part of the earth. But this claim must be grounded upon the sacrificial blood, on account of which at first the covenant was given, and through which alone it can be validly claimed.

When the showers are withheld, and there is no seed-time, it is for those who believe in the God of Noah to gather together and remind Him of His promise, and claim, as a blessed covenant right, the fulfilling of it. Then He will look upon the bow, (He need wait for no showers or clouds for that look, for the rainbow is the one ornament about His throne continually,) and remember His covenant, and this special term of it,—"Seed-time and harvest shall not cease."

The sinfulness or holiness of the people to be benefited does not, it would appear, enter into the question. The covenant is made out to descendants of the man who offered that complete sacrifice on Mount Ararat. It can be claimed by or for any of Noah's seed. The righteousness of Noah or his seed was not the ground on which the covenant was given. The blood of that Christ-foreshadowing sacrifice was God's ground for giving it, and it must be the simple and all-sufficient ground for claiming it and the fulfilling of any one of its terms.

If these things are so, when rain is needed, it is not mere prayer that is wanted, in the ordinary sense of the word, it is the bold putting in of a covenant claim to a precious covenant right, to be claimed as descendants of Noah, on the ground of sacrificial blood. For the abundant answer of such covenant prayer we are to take the rainbow in the clouds as our covenant pledge, and be as sure of the answer before it comes as we are after. So shall we honor God's covenant and enjoy it, and famine shall be baffled at every turn he makes. Besides that the Bible