

The Quiet Hour

The Seventy Sent Forth.

BY WAYLAND HOYT, D. D.

"A pregnant phrase of St. Luke's shows that a new chapter (Luke 9: 51), and that the last of Jesus' life now opens." And Christ appointed seventy others (v. 1), others, that is, than the twelve, for peculiar and temporary service. "The number seventy was not a statistical accident. It was a sacred number, and bore the dignity of honorable and historic precedents. Moses had ordained seventy elders. The Sanhedrin numbered seventy. The number seven again and again recurs in the cycle of Jewish religious observance." These seventy were sent on a forerunning, John-the-Baptist errand. The shadows of the end were beginning to gather, Jesus could not tarry long in any place, therefore these were to prepare His way. Let us try to be, by holy example, by putting away all stones of stumbling, path-makers for Jesus. Notice the best way of religious pioneering work—it is two by two. We ought not to send people on *lonely*, difficult service.

Pray ye therefore (v. 2). Mark the place of our poor prayers—it is the mediating place between need and supply. Surely, the Lord knew that the harvest was plenteous, that the laborers were few. Yet the plain implication is that more laborers would not enter the harvest without human prayers. I cannot understand this. It seems to be, however, the constant spiritual teaching as to the high place our prayers really hold. Value prayer, use prayer. Where you see need, pray for its supply—in your church, Sunday school, Christian Endeavor society, anywhere. How often divine power is needed to make men willing to undertake for God! And such divine power is at the call of prayer.

As lambs in the midst of wolves (v. 3). Christ holds forth no deluding expectations. Frequently His service is hazardous. But this is not to stop or daunt when one hears Christ's "Go your way." This, too, is always to be remembered, that a beautiful, gentle, lamb-like carriage of the self is at once the best defence against wolfish opposition, and the surest way of overcoming it. Milton never said grander or truer words than when he spoke of the "unresistable might of weakness." The "purse" was a money-bag; the "wallet" a leathern sack for provisions; "shoes" were sandals. That such direction was for the time only is to be seen from the fact that "our Lord Himself and the twelve with Him sometimes had money, which Judas carried in a purse." (John 12: 6). The usual Eastern salutation "on the way" is an extremely lengthy and time-consuming ceremony. The salutation on entering a house was not. The practical lesson is, that sometimes our Lord requires unusual and extraordinary service. When He does, as in some emergency, when regular meals and wonted conveniences cannot be had, we should instantly and gladly give such service, not thinking of ourselves. Yet, even on this hasty service they were not to forget to use all possible courtesy.

Go not from house to house (v. 7). Again the idea of haste, of undeviating devotion; they were not to be anxious and finical about their food, as the Parisees were. Nor were they to consider themselves trespassers; they were, in thus serving their Lord and

benefiting their fellows, earning their way,—"the laborer is worthy of his hire." Learn also, from all these instructions, our Lord's attention to detail. He did not despise detail. When you plan work for Christ be as thoughtful and painstaking as possible about all the details of it. As thoroughly as you can, *think the plan through*.

And into whatsoever city ye enter, and they receive you (v. 8). Learn how a Christian worker is to carry himself—(a) With contentment, "eat such things as are set before you." (b) With sympathizing beneficence, "heal the sick that are therein"; do not be mindless of the physical sufferings of men; here is a special warrant for the medical missionary. (c) With the declaration of the truth, "and say unto them, The kingdom of God is coming nigh unto you." Learn (a) that sometimes severe truth must be spoken, but never vindictively; (b) that it is possible that further attempt in a special direction may be useless and is best ceased; (c) that rejection of the truth does not change the truth; though they rejected it, it was still true that the kingdom of God had come nigh.

And the seventy returned with joy (v. 17). Work for Christ is joyful work. When we go forth in faith and obedience we find ourselves *more helped and powerful* than we had thought—"even the demons are subject unto us," but it is always *by Christ's* power, not by our own, "in Thy name." Christian work is *successful*; there is always a prophecy of our Lord's final triumph in it. Christ will give us all *needed furnishings for our duty* if we will trust and obey Him, "behold I have given you authority to tread on serpents," etc.; of course, though it might be then, this is not now to be taken literally; miracles are not now needed; but there is a blessed spiritual truth, in the promise, viz., that, going forth in service, Christ will really and variously empower us. But the *chief thing* to be glad for is not gifts, but *is* goodness.

Explanatory Notes.

The early ministry of Jesus had been in Judaea. Then followed the work in Gallilee. This was now closed, and He was to enter on His ministry in Peræa, which filled the remainder of the time until He finally went to Jerusalem. *The harvest is plenteous* (v. 2). The words of Jesus in this verse are the same as those that preceded the sending of the twelve—*Go not from house to house* (v. 7). Perhaps a caution against wasting time through accepting many invitations to entertainment.—*Even the devils are subject unto us* (v. 17). Their commission had not expressly given them power to cast out demons such as the twelve received when they were sent out.—*I beheld Satan fallen* (v. 18). The victory of the seventy over the demons was a pledge of Satan's complete defeat.—*Heaven* (v. 18). Here used not as meaning the abode of the blessed, but as representing the height of power.—*Your names are written in heaven* (v. 20). You are counted among the citizens of heaven.

Bad habits are the thistles of the heart, and every indulgence of them is a seed from which will come forth a new crop of rank weeds.

The world is so planned that a man can accomplish more in six days than in seven—if the seventh be devoted to rest and worship.

A Large Prayer.—IV. The Prayer Itself.

Ephesians III. 14-21.

BY ANNA ROSS.

There are only two petitions in this prayer. Here is the first: That according to the riches of His glory, these Ephesian Christians may "be strengthened with might by His spirit in the inner man." This is a large petition as well as a large measure. Whatever the need of these very human Ephesian Christians may be, this petition overmatches it. It may be rewritten thus, that they may be "strengthened with might by in dwelling omnipotence." What a climax of supply! Strength, might, Divine Omnipotence.

"As thy day, so shall thy strength be," sounds a modest expression alongside of it; yet it is the same truth, expressed in the one case as a promise, in the other case as a prayer. "That He would grant you to be strengthened with might by indwelling Omnipotence," that is the prayer. "As thy day, so shall thy strength be," this is the promise. But the two expressions otherwise are identical. For, less than the might of indwelling Omnipotence can never be adequate for any "day" in any Christian life, if that day is to be what it was meant to be, a living out of the life and character of Jesus Christ among men. But "strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man," our strength will be as our day, and we shall be "more than conquerors through Him that loved us." With anything less than full portion we shall be less than conquerors, and that means defeat. Paul puts up a similar prayer for the Colossians. It may be well to lay the two together. For the Ephesians, "That ye may be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man, according to the riches of His glory." For the Colossians, "That ye may be strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness." In these ties we have the same strengthening, the same might, the same Omnipotence, and, though differently expressed, the same immeasurable measure.

How was Paul able to pray such prayers? This is a double secret.

1st. He had a large idea of the need of those for whom he prayed. Meagre prayers would never meet large necessities. The prayer for the Eph., as a little study of the preceding verses will reveal, sprang out of a keen sense of their need. The prayer for the Colossians sprang out of the same root as is evidenced by the words "unto all patience and long suffering with joyfulness." Patience implies trouble, long suffering implies troubles; and well Paul knows that nothing short of the mighty supplies he asks will work patience toward trouble or long suffering toward troubles, or joyfulness toward God and men while trouble reigns. Paul had a large idea of the need of those for whom he prayed.

2nd. He had also, as we have seen, a large idea of the supplies treasured up in Christ.

With a deep sense of need, and a large hope of supply, how could he help asking large things? Dr. John Duncan says, "There are two things make us meagre in prayer—a feeble sense of need and a small hope of supply. And there are two things that make us enlarged in prayer—a deep sense of extreme need, and a large and sure hope of supply. A deep sense of need may by itself make us urgent, but it requires the large hope of supply