

The Quiet Hour.

God's Covenant With David.

S. S. LESSON—October 11, 1903.

GOLDEN TEXT: 2 Sam 7: 16. Thy throne shall be established forever.

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The word of the Lord, v. 4. The sailor with the aid of the compass makes his way in safety over a trackless deep; the builder by using plumb-line and spirit-level keeps his walls straight and true; the mathematician reaches right conclusions by following the laws of reasoning. In the word of God we have a guide that leads us into the only right way, a standard by which to test our opinions and practice, a rule for our daily conduct. Whatever agrees with its teaching is right; all that is opposed to it is wrong.

My servant David, v. 5. The highest title in the kingdom of God is that of servant. Not the service we can command, but the service we can render, is the true test of greatness. We hold our positions as stewards. Our talents, wealth and influence are so many opportunities. Every privilege carries with it an obligation. We are not our own. We should hold ourselves and all we have in readiness to do the will of our Lord and Master.

Shalt thou build me an house, v. 5. It is not an uncommon thing for one to have a desire to do some certain things for God's glory, and yet be denied the opportunity. Perhaps some young man would fain be a Christian minister, and the way is not open to him to make the required preparations. If God's will, as manifested in circumstances, shuts up the way, then submission to that will is the highest service. We must not only seek to serve God, but to serve Him in the way He has been pleased to appoint.

I took thee from the sheepcote. I was with thee, vs. 8, 9. It is one of the common temptations which try the successful man, to think that his prosperity is due to himself alone. Many besides Nebuchadnezzar in reviewing their possessions and progress have said: "Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of my kingdom by the might of my power, and for the honor of my majesty?" Dan. 4: 32. Such a thought is always folly, and God will, in one way or another, teach the one who thus glories in his mistake.

I will appoint a place for my people, v. 10. When a nation honors and acknowledges God, He will protect and bless it. We have much need as Canadians to remember this. Our great stretches of fertile land are filling up with peoples from afar. In the near future almost assuredly large addition will be made to our national wealth. Surely we should be filled with gratitude that God has been so gracious to us, and never forget that it is His goodness and not our desert. Nor should we forget that national righteousness is the condition of our continuing to enjoy the divine favor.

He shall build an house for my name, v. 13. Three thoughts are suggested by this divine decision. (1) God assigns to men tasks suited to their character and ability. (2) God waits for the right time to carry out His plans. He moves "without rest, without haste" to the accomplishment of His purposes. It is well for us if we learn something of His patience. (3) The plans of

God are sure to succeed. Delay with Him never means defeat. Success is sure to those who work with Him.

For ever, v. 13. Who but God can use words like these? Men erect the most splendid and substantial buildings and they soon fall into ruin. Kingdoms of great power and splendor have sprung up only to perish. The solid earth and the over-arching sky will one day be overtaken by dissolution. But all the while God is building up His kingdom. Its foundation is righteousness, its law is love, its Ruler is the eternal Son of God. This kingdom knows no end. Happy are we if our little lives are linked on to its fortunes. Then we shall share the only greatness that endures, the only riches that satisfy, the only joy that does not fade away.

I will be his father, v. 14. Christ has taught us the full meaning of this promise and assures us of our share in it. God offers in the gospel to take us into His family. This means that He will provide for all our needs and love us with a love as far surpassing that of earthly parents as the sun outshines the stars. Above all, it means that He will make us like Himself, as the son shares the nature and reflects the features of the father; and having once made us His children, He will allow nothing, not even death itself, to separate us from Him.

I will chasten him, v. 14. It is difficult for us to say concerning any particular case that God is punishing for ill doing on the part of His children, and yet it is often so. But even in the chastisement is to be found evidence of the divine mercy. "For whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth," Heb. 12: 9. Well it is for the ill-doer when by the chastening he is led to turn from his ill-doing to righteousness.

Thy kingdom shall be established forever, v. 16. The kingdom of Christ was at first small and despised. Many efforts have been made to destroy it. But it remains and grows by gathering in men of every race. Its progress will continue until the whole earth is brought under the sway of its Sovereign.

"Ye Ask Amiss."

BY REV. DAVID JAMES BURRELL, D.D.

The Yoruba Christians speak of prayer as the gift of the knees. Blessed is the man so gifted; for in the act of bending to his God he rises to the highest level of humanity. He bows his head to realize what Milton calls "that lowly loftiness of soul which is exalted by its own humiliation." He bends his knees, not like a cringing beggar, but like a weary soldier crouching at the fountain to drink up courage for the coming battle. He "stoops to conquer."

Prayer is the guard that keeps the fortress of the heart, the porter that secures the doorway of the lips, "a hilt for the hand and a sandal for the foot."

Prayer is an anchor in the storm that clasps its fluke upon the Everlasting Rock; a spy glass for the mariner, who "reeling on the topmast, sees the distant haven of untried rest."

Prayer is the eagle-flight of the soul to gaze at the full midday beam. Prayer is "our vital breath, our native air." It is "the Life of God in man returning whence it

came." It is the signet ring of the Creator on the forefinger of the creature. It is the trembling of the cable that unites God's footstool to His throne. It is the sinner's last hope; the saint's perpetual rest.

Then let my hand forget her skill,
My tongue be silent, cold and still,
This throbbing heart forget to beat,
If I forget the mercy-seat!

God loves to listen to the voice of supplication. We are instructed to approach Him with the address, "O Thou that hearest prayer." Yet there are some prayers which remain unanswered. Why? Has God forgotten to be gracious?

Each soul has its secret chamber, where unfiled and obsolete desires are laid away as sad memorials of the past. Would God they had been granted! There are prayers for material comfort, when the billows of adversity were rolling over us. Prayers for personal sanctification, while we continue to groan under the bondage of the body of this death. Prayers for the conversion of friends, some of whom are still, to all appearance, indifferent to spiritual things. Prayers that would have made us rich in mind and body and estate. Why were they not answered? The fault is not with God. "Ye ask and receive not, because ye ask amiss."

In all our Christian experience there is no confession more humiliating than this: "We know not what to pray for as we ought." We fall upon our knees with pious regularity and journey over the prescribed curriculum of O Lord's, and We beseech Thee's! We lift our hands while our hearts are far from God. This cannot please Him. "Ye shall seek me and find me when ye shall search for me with all your heart."

Perhaps we have lacked the sincerity of faith. God wants such earnestness as John Knox had when at midnight he prayed, "O God, give me Scotland or I die!" Such fervency as that of Blind Bartimeus when he cried, "Jesus thou Son of David have mercy on me!" Such importunity as that of Jacob when he wrestled with the angel till the breaking of the day. Such eager, panting, bleeding passion as that of our Saviour when he begged, "O my Father, let this cup pass from me!" If we want our arrows to reach the target up in heaven, we must pull the bow-string hard. God loves our importunity. His kingdom suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.

If we are in dead earnest and plead in filial faith, the Father may tarry a season, but he will surely answer in the fulness of his time. Wherefore pray on and expect. "Bide a wee an' dinna weary."—Christian Intelligencer.

Forgiveness.

The true sign of forgiveness is not some mysterious signal waved from the sky; not some obscure emotion hunted out in your heart; not some stray text culled out of your Bible; certainly not some word of mortal priest telling you that your satisfaction is complete. The soul full of responsive love to Christ and ready longing, hungry to serve Him, is its own sign of forgiveness. Must there not be sorrow for sin? Must there not be resolution of amendment? Surely there must, but it is not sorrow for sin for the sake of the sorrowfulness that Jesus ever wants. He wants sorrow for sin only that it may bring escape from sin.... I think that, with all we know of the divine heart of Jesus, He would far rather see a soul trust Him too much, if that is possible, than to trust Him too little which we know is possible enough. Phillip Brooks.