

The Quiet Hour.

Peter Delivered From Prison.

S. S. LESSON—May 11. Acts 12 : 1-9

GOLDEN TEXT—Ps. 34 : 7. The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them.

BY REV. A. S. MORTON, B. D., ST. STEPHEN, N. B.

Herod the King, v. 1. An old Greek philosopher said, "When I hear a child swear, I strike the father." Parentage has much to do with character. The spirit of persecution ran in the family of the Herods. The grandfather, Herod the Great, sought to kill the infant Jesus; the grandson, Herod Agrippa, killed James and intended to kill Peter. Those who have evil parents have a long start on an evil life. The children of good parents start out on life's journey with many advantages. Those who have pious parents should be grateful and should realize what special responsibilities rest upon them. But children of evil parents ought not to be discouraged. God is greater than heredity. They have difficulties to overcome, but striving against these will develop a strong and noble character.

And he killed James, v. 2. The same hand which brought Peter from the prison, could have held back the sword that beheaded James; but it is not God's purpose to save His church from suffering. He has many lessons for His people to learn and many methods of teaching. The deliverance of Peter taught the lesson of confidence in prayer; the death of James, that of heroic endurance.

Because he saw it pleased the Jews, v. 3. Men will always be found ready to give people what pleases them. Members of Parliament will support laws that will please those upon whose votes their position depends. Saloons flourish because they supply that which pleases a large number of people. Indecent exhibitions will be given so long as people take pleasure in witnessing them. The people of any community can put down such evils by showing disapproval of them. A pure and righteous public sentiment is one of the strongest forces against wrong, and we are responsible for doing our part to educate and influence those around us, so that people shall come to be pleased only with things which are right and worthy.

Intending after Easter to bring him forth to the people, v. 4. Men always miscalculate, when they leave God out of account. It seemed certain to human eyes that the great Spanish Armada would destroy the small English fleet opposed to it, but God sent His winds and His waves to scatter the ships of the Spaniards and to save England from invasion. Napoleon confidently counted on victory in the Russian campaign, but he did not reckon with General Famine and General Winter, who were God's messengers sent to bring his designs to failure and disaster. Our plans in life will succeed only if they are in harmony with God's will.

But, v. 5. This word points the contrast between the resources of Herod and the power of the church. On the side of Herod were the soldiers, who did his bidding, and the prison, whose doors opened and shut at his command. The members of the church were poor and, from a human standpoint, feeble. But through prayer they were able to reach the heart and move the arm of the Almighty, and Herod, in fighting against the

church, found that he was contending with God. In such a conflict there could be but one issue. There can be only disappointment and defeat to those who set themselves in opposition to God.

The angel of the Lord came upon him, v. 7. The artists of the Middle Ages represented angels with wings and flowing robes. The angels of the Bible appear in human form. It is human angels that the world requires to help its need. Men and women may be the angels of the Lord to help those round about them. If we see poverty which we can relieve, or ignorance which we can remove, or suffering which we can assuage, it is useless for us to pray to God to send an angel from heaven to give the needed help. God wants us to be His angels.

Gird thyself and bind on thy sandals, v. 8. God will not do for us what we are able to do for ourselves. When we pray to God for blessings, we should put forth every effort to obtain those blessings. Peter was delivered in answer to the prayer of the church, but he must rouse himself at the command of the angel and go out of the prison, running the risk of being seen and arrested by the watchful guards.

Thought he saw a vision, v. 9. The church and the world owe much to men who have seen visions and have set themselves to turn these visions into reality. Carey saw a vision of India brought to the feet of Christ, and though he was ridiculed of a dreamer, before the end of his life he had done much to realize that vision, and every year brings nearer the day when it will be completely fulfilled. Morrison saw a vision of China, with all its walls and prejudices broken down before the Gospel, and in spite of every difficulty and obstacle, he labored to bring about that glorious result. Judson saw a vision of Burma turning to the Lord, and although many years passed without a single convert, he never lost hope of success. We have seen the results which he was confident would follow the preaching of the gospel in that land.

Prayer.

Our heavenly Father, give Thy Holy Spirit and it shall be well with us. Let Thy grace dwell in our hearts, beautiful as a guiding cloud in the day-time, radiant and warm as a flame of fire in the night season. May we in Christ have bread that the world knoweth not of, and of the fullness of grace may we eat and drink abundantly day by day. Give us understanding of Thy Word. Show us how Thy Book is full of seed. May we sow the seed in good and honest hearts, and may it be watered with dew from heaven and warmed by the Sun of righteousness. Then shall Thy Church be a beautiful garden, a wondrous landscape with all beautiful growths adorning and enriching it. The Lord hold the light above His own Book whilst we read it. The Lord cause a light to shine out of the Book whilst we peruse it. The Lord whisper to us the meaning of the spirit whilst we read the letter. The Lord speak to us from the cross of forgiveness, complete and final; and to the release of forgiveness add the liberty and joy of sanctification. And this we ask in Jesus' name. Amen.—Selected.

For The Dominion Presbyterian.

China : The Work at Chang-te-Fu.

BY REV. JAMES MENZIES, M.D.

Yesterday the newly appointed Hsien official called on us. He only arrived in the city a few days ago and consequently must be very busy just now. To show our respect and kind wishes Mr. Goforth went to his yamen in the morning to call on him, but he was out at the time. We did not expect his return visit for some days at least, but early in the afternoon he appeared apologising profusely for not being at home in the forenoon. He is from Canton and seems a capable energetic man with a pretty good knowledge (for a Chinese official) of what is going on in the world.

All the officials have been very friendly since our return to Honan, but we are even more touched by the friendliness of the people generally. It is spring-time, and I suppose a certain amount of croaking is in order, but we all, here, at the centre of things, are quite satisfied to let the frogs do it. At some of the seaports where they do not know much of what is going on in the country, and where foreign troops are still in evidence there are some croakers and you are more than likely to see their reports in some of the home papers and that will set you there is no one here in Honan wasting his time in that way. The decided, unanimous, and strongly asserted conviction of all here is that there never has been such an opportunity for mission work, nor a time when the good will of officials and people alike was so much in evidence.

Dr. McClure and Mr. Hood, after holding a very successful station-class at Chu Wang, have gone on to Huai Ching Fu. Mr. Mitchell has gone to Wei Hui Fu. Mr. Goforth is in the city every day preaching with more satisfaction than ever before.

Our heathen workmen almost demanded, that we have worship together in the morning as in past years, but judging from the way they listen to what is said I cannot think their motive was merely to quit work for a little. The head mason one day brought 500 cash as a contribution for the church, and the head painter came with 300 cash for the same object (their pay is 135 cash per day) and said, "I am a believer, I have taken down all the false gods and will never worship them again. I would come to church every Sabbath, but in my house there are seven mouths to fill; I have only one boy old enough to work and they eat an awful lot, working seven days in the week I can hardly keep them going."

One thing that pleased us very much lately was an invitation from the bell founder's village, directly east of us, to go and see their fire-works at the new-year season. In the past that village was always unfriendly, and the head man, Mr. Meng, was quite decided in his unfriendliness. They sent a deputation to invite us and when all was ready Mr. Meng's son came to escort us to the village. They had erected a screen of cedar branches and tied fire crackers, rockets, etc., in it. Then the moulders melted a crucible of iron as though they intended making a casting. When the iron was melted there was a great scurrying among the crowd of people, old and young, as the red hot molten metal was carried near the screen. Then the young men taking the iron up on wooden paddles would toss up the lump and as it came down would hit it with the paddle and scatter it into a spray of liquid fire, and when it hit the screen the