

The Quiet Hour.

God Called Abram.

S. S. LESSON.—July 28th 1901; Genesis 12: 1-9.

GOLDEN TEXT—Gen. 12: 2. I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing.

Now the Lord had said unto Abram, v. 1 God recognizes the value of the individual, He calls Abram by his name; which call assures us that each soul has its separate worth in the presence of our Heavenly Father. So also Jesus, the good shepherd, calls His sheep by name and leadeth them out. (John 10: 3.) It is only as we realize that God is willing and able to enter into covenant relation with us separately, that our religion really begins. Then the soul knows itself alone with God. He who spake to the child Samuel is ready to speak to us and to hear our petitions as they rise; for God knows each child.

Get thee out, v. 1. For an affectionate child, it is a very hard thing to leave home. The first time we say farewell to kindred and country, it is with deep pain. It was no whit easier to Abram than to us. But faith is measured by the difficulty that it meets. If God asks us to "get out" from anything we like, if He asks us to make any sacrifice for Him, that becomes our chance to display our love and faith. No one can tell what an untried ship or an untried man can do. It is those who come out of great trials that stand before God.

And I will make thy name great, v. 2. Many seek for the possession of wealth, or pleasure or fame, thinking that this is greatness. God has in store for all His children a blessing which will far surpass all that earth can give. To be great in God's way is also to be happy and blessed.

And thou shalt be a blessing. This is the test of real greatness. According as we are a blessing to others, so do we fulfil God's plan. It is of the essence of greatness that it can only come by means of service. "Whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister." (Matt. 20: 26.) Abram was not called for the selfish purpose of his own salvation, but in order that through him all nations of the earth might be blessed. God's gifts always carry responsibilities, and our best powers are developed only by unselfish exercise. "Even Christ pleased not himself." (Rom. 15: 3.) "The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister." (Matt. 20: 28.) "Your greatness and mine, the Christian ideal of greatness, is attained, not by depressing, but by elevating others, not by ridding them of their freedom and happiness, but by ministering to and promoting it."

So Abram departed, v. 4. One of the great acts of the world. "He went out not knowing whither he went." (Heb. 11: 8.) He left his home, not to seek a fortune, not to escape trouble at home, not to wage conquest. Abram went out because God had called him; and by this act of trusting obedience, he earned the magnificent title, "Father of the Faithful." It is what we give up for God's sake that distinguishes us from people of the world. The business man will make sacrifices, will leave home for the sake of money. When the Christian is willing to make the same sacrifices for the sake of Christ that men make for earthly things,

the Kingdom of our Saviour will soon come.

And he builded an altar, v. 7. How frequently we see these altars on the way of the aged patriarchs! Do they mark our road? It is vain to attempt to get on in our religion without prayer and communion with God.

And Abram journeyed, going on still, v. 9. This journey of Abram's has become the type of the Christian's pilgrimage. He walked by faith and not by sight. (2 Cor. 5: 7.) He did not see the actual abode of God; but his imagination realized that the battlements of the eternal city were not far away; and then he beheld by the eye of faith. (Heb. 11: 10.) We require to use our spiritual imagination in order that we may see the blessedness of the city of God; for when our journey is over we shall be admitted into the Palace of the King, if we walk in His path. Would that we all were more concerned about our safe arrival in the future world.

"Oh give me grace in every place
In all things good and ill,
To see the city far away,
To see the lovely hill."

When Scoresby was selecting his men to accompany him in his Arctic explorations, he needed sailors that could stand the severest exposure, and had nerve to bear the worst trials. So every man who applied to accompany the expedition was made to stand barefooted on a great block of ice while the surgeon examined his body, and Scoresby inquired into his past history. Scores were rejected at once, as they had no nerve to endure the test. The men who stood the trial made up a band of the most glorious heroes. So sometimes God tries us when He has in store for us some great undertaking. Many faint and excuse themselves from the start. Some endure, and make the heroes and leaders of the church.

Each of us may be sure that if God sends us on stony paths He will provide us with strong shoes, and will not send us out on any journey for which He does not equip us well.—Alexander McLaren, D. D.

It is the glory of our age that the modern hero stands forth armed not with swords and spears, but weaponed with love and kindness, with service and sympathy.—Newell Dwight Hillis.

The test of religion, the final test of religion, is not religiousness, but love.—Henry Drummond.

We want no more powerful argument for missions than this, "Who loved me and gave Himself for me"—Himself, so infinitely much, for me so insignificantly little.—A. J. Gordon.

Eudamidas, a citizen of Corinth, died in poverty; but, having two wealthy friends, Arctaeus and Charixenus, he made a will, in which he bequeathed his family to them, to be taken care of as their own. And the two friends accepted the legacy. So Christ has bequeathed to His church the world to be converted. Let us accept the legacy.—Gotthold's Emblems.

The New Covenant—A Lost Secret.

BY ANNA ROSS.

iv. What is This Forgotten Secret?

It is a testament, or will; but it is also a covenant, or legal right given to certain privileged persons. It is a testament, because it is the bequest of our dying Redeemer to His people. But the thing He bequeathed to us was a New Covenant of partnership between us and God. "The Lord Jesus, the same night in which He was betrayed * * * took the cup, when He had supped, saying, This cup is the New Testament in my blood. Drink ye all of it."

He had not spoken to them of His will before. But now, as He had them gathered round Him for that last feast of fellowship, He put the symbol of His dying bequest into their hands, and said, "Drink ye all of it." He was not afraid that the provision He thus made would prove inadequate, for He added, "Peace I leave with you, my peace give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."

The scene suggests a dying father whispering to his children, "I leave you amply provided for. Do not be anxious."

Christ made a will before He went away. That is plain. He considered that will such ample provision for His people that He told them they were to have nothing to do with fear or trouble of heart, but that peace, His peace, was to be their continued portion, in the midst of the tribulation and tasks He bequeathed to them along with the inheritance.

What is this inheritance, the thought of which enabled our Redeemer to leave His disciples with the pending admonition: "Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid?" The inheritance Christ left to us was a new covenant of partnership with God. It was a document "ordered in all things and sure," drawn out by God Himself hundreds of years before, signed by His name, and attested by His oath. This document sets forth a covenant of partnership between God and His people constituting completely new terms made out in three promises.

But this document, though made out for so many centuries was a testament. It was a will. It had lain a dead letter all those years, for "a testament is of no strength at all while the Testator liveth." Now, Jesus Christ knew that the death which would turn that hitherto inoperative letter into a living covenant. Now He handed it to His disciples in symbol when He passed them the cup, saying, "Drink ye all of it. My dying bequest to you is a covenant of partnership with God that shall make all His resources your resources. Take hold of it every one of you. Thus, and thus only, shall you show the Lord's death—not merely the pain of it, nor the love of it—but the power of it and the glory of it—till He come."

This cup is the crowning glory of the Lord's Supper, as what it symbolizes is the crowning glory of Christ's salvation. The cup symbolizes the blood. Yes, and the remission which it has wrought. But it stands for unspeakably more than that, even for the new covenant of actual cleansing, insinuating of the knowledge of God, and filling with the Spirit of Christ. Not only remission, but *victory*!

Our Lord has bequeathed to us a new covenant of partnership with God, and its terms are so unspeakably generous that those who have fallen heir to it are described as "Heirs of God, and joint heirs with