

# The Quiet Hour.

## Loving And Obeying God.

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Golden Text—1 John 5 : 3. For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments.

This commandment, v. 11. The commandment is obedience to God, whose Word has been so often expounded in this book of Deuteronomy. All the Christian life may be summed up in the one commandment, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God."

It is not too hard for thee, v. 11 (Rev. Ver.) The command of God is not abstruse or difficult to understand, so that a great deal of knowledge is needful in order to comprehend its meaning. Jesus in His Gospel is so plain that the simplest child can take in His meaning. He expressed thanks to God that He had revealed His truth to babes, Luke 10 : 21. Neither does God's covenant require a strong man to understand its duties. Christ came to save the weak and sinful, and only faith is necessary in order to accept Him. All can love God, and love is the fulfilling of the law.

Neither is it far off. The Gospel is not in a distant place. Men do not require to make a pilgrimage to a remote country in order to worship God; neither do they require to study very hard ere they can come into the knowledge of the truth. The kingdom of heaven is in our midst.

It is not in heaven, v. 10.—An inaccessible height which none can scale. Luther thought that he had to climb the steps of the Holy Stair at Rome in order to satisfy God's desire; but he found that God's word was not so far up as that. Neither must children fancy that they require to climb up into manhood ere they can take the message of the Saviour.

Neither is it beyond the sea, v. 13.—In some distant region which none can visit. There was a time when the Crusaders thought they would do God's will by going across the ocean to Jerusalem in order to worship at the Holy Sepulchre. God's dwelling is in every country; and the homeland is the holy land.

The word is very nigh unto thee, v. 14. The prophets and teachers had given the word to Israel, and in our Christian land every one has the opportunity of listening to the services on Sabbath and of reading their own Bible. The Bible is translated into many of the languages of the world, and missionaries may be sent to all parts of the earth. The Word was never near so many people before. It was never so easy as it is now to bring the teachings of the Bible into the lives of the heathen world. Every one can and ought to help in doing this.

In thy mouth, v. 14. Those who have been brought up in Christian lands have heard the Bible talked about all their lives. No other book is so frequently a subject of conversation. Then we cannot read the words of our great writers without meeting constantly with quotations from or references to the Bible. There is no excuse for being ignorant of what the Bible teaches, since it has been so continually pressed upon our attention.

In thy heart, v. 14. When we read the

teachings of God's Word about right and wrong, our conscience within us agrees with what the Bible says. When we listen to the promises of the Bible, our hearts tell us that they are just the things that we need. When we ponder in our quiet hours on the words of the Bible, they come home to us with ever growing sweetness and power. This wonderful agreement between souls and the Bible verily shows that this book is from God.

That thou mayest do it, v. 14. The Word of God is a living word, that is, it must find expression in our life. "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them," John 13 : 17. All divine knowledge has a practical side, and leads up to action. (Compare 1 John 2 : 4 ; James 2 : 23.)

I have set before thee life and good, v. 15. The duty of action is the natural application which Moses here makes. The moment is important and the issues are very great. Obedience to God results in "life and good." According to the teaching of Christ there is no life until we know God. "This is life eternal, that they might know Thee—the only true God." Who can exhaust the blessings which come from serving God? Only those who taste can know how gracious the Lord is. God does bless those who serve Him. In the Old Testament times He gave temporal blessings to those who kept His commandments; but in our time He gives those spiritual joys which are far superior. If the heart is at peace with God all else will be well.

Death and evil, v. 15. Twin children. Evil has always been linked with death—"The wages of sin is death," Rom. 6 : 23. Sin destroys all real joy in the heart—"For the wicked are like the troubled sea when it cannot rest." Isa. 57 : 20. Sin also destroys the soul and unfits it for the dwelling place of God in heaven.

I call heaven and earth to record, v. 19. He summons all the witnesses in heaven and on earth to testify to the solemnity of his entreaty. An impressive appeal. So are the appeals of the gospel. If we reject these, heaven and earth will give their evidence against us. They know how well the case has been put.

Therefore choose, v. 19. The decisive choice. How much rests with a choice! Our salvation or our destruction depends upon our choice; therefore "choose life." And the right time to make this choice is the present.

## This Is a Beautiful World.

What is the secret of gladness? There are many things which help to make people glad. This is a beautiful world in which we live. When the work of creation was finished, God surveyed it and saw that it was very good. We do not think enough of what God has done for our pleasure in the way that he has adorned this world, preparing it to be our home. He has spread loveliness everywhere. He has covered the fields with a luxuriance of vegetation. He has sown the earth with flowers. The wonderful variety in nature—mountain and vale, lake, river and stream—gives an added charm to the marvelous beauty. Then over all this splendor God has thrown a vast

vaulted roof of blue, in which, when night comes, instead of black darkness, thousands of star lamps are hung to pour their soft, quiet radiance over God's children while they sleep.

Many Bible scholars say that when Jesus speaks of the many mansions in the Father's house, he does not refer to heaven only, but means that this world is one of the mansions, and heaven is another. Thus earth is one apartment of the Father's house. Surely it is beautiful enough, glorious enough, for this. No doubt heaven will be more lovely, more re-plendent, than earth; for sin has left its marblings here on everything. "The whole creation groaneth and travaileth together in pain." Perhaps earth's storms and earthquakes and floods and other calamitous events and occurrences are in some mysterious way part of the fruit of sin. In the story of the fall we have hints of a sad change that came upon the earth in consequence of sin.

At least we know that the heavenly home will not have any of these sad things in it. Earth is not so beautiful nor so good as heaven. Yet this is really one of the mansions of our Father's house in which we are now living, and its wondrous beauty and splendor ought to make us glad. He who studies nature, has an eye for its beauty, has found one of the secrets of gladness. There are scenes which have in them splendor enough to fill our hearts with rapture. He who has learned to see what is lovely in field and forest and landscape has found an exhaustless resource of gladness.—J. R. Miller, D. D., in "The Secret of Gladness."

## Prayer.

We beseech thee, Lord, to behold us with favor, folk of many families and nations, gathered together in the peace of this roof; weak men and women subsisting under the covert of thy patience. Be patient still; suffer us yet a little longer—with our broken promises of good, with our idle endeavors against evil—suffer us a little longer to endure and (if it may be) help us to do better. Bless to us our extraordinary mercies; if the day comes when these must be taken, have us play the man under affliction. Be with our friends, be with ourselves. Go with each of us to rest; if any awake, temper to them the dark hours of watching; and when the day returns to us—our sun and comfort—call us with morning faces, eager to labor, eager to be happy, if happiness shall be our portion, and, if the day be marked to sorrow, strong to endure it. We thank thee and praise thee; and in the words of Him to whom this day is sacred, close our oblation. Amen.—Robert Louis Stevenson.

Even while our physical eyes are looking at the seen and material, the things that are unseen and spiritual are laying their grip upon us, for good or evil, for blessing or bane. It is not a question of whether we will recognize unseen realities, but of how we will relate ourselves to them. And pre-eminently is this true of God, whom no man hath seen at any time.

Every fresh reading of the Bible even by one who has known most of it can, by God's blessing, bring a fresh and illuminating view of it, suited and helpful to our common minds.