

The Quiet Hour.

The Church at Antioch in Syria.

S. S. LESSON—may 4. Acts 11: 19-30.

GOLDEN TEXT—Acts 11: 21. The hand of the Lord was with them; and a great number believed and turned unto the Lord.

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

They which were scattered abroad upon the persecution . . . travelled . . . preaching, v. 19. It has been ever so in the history of the church. Persecution seldom accomplishes its end, but is over-ruled for the furtherance of the very cause to which it is opposed. The Christians in Rome were the poor of the city, but persecution brought them before Roman judges and the great of the land. They bore testimony to Christ before the Roman crowds assembled to see them cast to the beasts. Thus the knowledge of Christ spread throughout Rome and many were converted. It is certain that the recent persecution in China will result in the wider spread of Christianity. Already the doors of opportunity seem wider open. The greater danger of the Christian church is not persecution from without, but worldliness, sloth, selfishness, self will and sin within. These destroy her power. Persecution really helps her to show her colors and spreads her influence.

They of Cyprus and Cyrene, v. 20. God makes no mistakes in selecting His instruments. These men of Cyprus and Cyrene would have sympathy with the Gentiles, because they spoke the same language and mingled with them in business. Nor were they narrow Jerusalem Jews. They had imbibed something of the larger spirit of the great Roman Empire which comprised the whole known world. As, in those days, God used the commercial and political intercourse of those who spoke the same language and were associated in the same pursuits to further the salvation of the world, so, in our own day, He uses the civilization and resources of the British Empire and other Christian countries to bear the Gospel to the darkest corners of the earth.

Preaching the Lord Jesus, v. 20. This is the great business of the church and of each member of the church. We can preach, not only by our words, but even more powerfully by our lives. As a tiny dewdrop reflects perfectly, though in miniature, the whole sky above it, so onlookers should see in our lives an image of Christ's life. By word and by action, wherever we go, we should proclaim the name of Jesus.

The hand of the Lord was with them, v. 21. It is the Lord's power that makes effectual and successful all Christian work. The locomotive stands still and immovable on the track until the fire is kindled and the steam produced; so no work will produce great and enduring results in convincing and converting the world, unless behind it there is divine power.

Who, when he . . . had seen the grace of God, was glad, v. 23. Our character is revealed by the things which make us glad or sorry. If we rejoice when we hear of any success attending the work of the church in any part of the land, we show that we are really interested in that work. The good man will always be gladdened by beholding any good that is done, no matter by whom.

He exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord, v.

23. When we see any good cause which we can help by our sympathy and support, it is our duty to throw ourselves into it with all our heart and soul. We should not wait, like Gamaliel (ch. 5: 33-39) to see whether a righteous enterprise is likely to succeed, but put forth every effort to help it to succeed. If the advocates of the abolition of slavery or of temperance had waited until their cause was taken up by the great and powerful, instead of toiling and making sacrifices, at a time when everything seemed to be against them, the great advances which we have witnessed would never have been made.

Much people was added unto the Lord, v. 24. Goodness breeds goodness, God's Spirit in one man awakens the Spirit in another. Faith makes faith.

Then departed Barnabas to Tarsus for to seek Saul, v. 26. The work needed Saul, and good Barnabas "went to seek Saul" and together they spent a happy year at Antioch, "teaching much people." It is a magnificent example to Christian workers not to think of themselves, but, above all, of the work God has given them.

Then the disciples . . . determined to send relief unto the brethren which dwelt in Judaea, v. 29. The church in Jerusalem was now to reap the benefit of its missionary policy. In the hour of sore need the foreign churches came to their help by very tangible gifts of money. "Give, and it shall be given you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom." To withhold needed aid is to impoverish ourselves.

Prayer.

Dear Saviour give me a cheerful heart at all times, and if suffering ever comes to me or my loved ones give me strength to bear it for Thee. Keep me ever mindful of Thee I pray, and let me never forget the God who fills my life with His gifts and who gave his son for me. Keep me from having enemies but if there be one who does not count me as his friend, enable me to love him and to do him no ill; but direct me how I may show him kindness. Cleanse me from all my sins and save me for Jesus' sake. Amen.

Spiritual Growth.

Nothing is born full grown. It passes through a period of growth, and it must grow or die. The parent who is delighted with the innocent helplessness of his child and rejoices at its little efforts at speech, becomes seriously alarmed if this lisping, tottering, help requiring state threatens to become permanent. Would that the cessation of growth in the spiritual life create as much dismay! Would that it seemed as monstrous, as unnatural to have our spiritual as our natural growth checked! It would be a startling revelation to all of us were the discernment of our spiritual condition as keen and true as our vision of the body. What do you honestly believe that you would see yourself to be? Have you spiritually made the growth due to the time that you have been a Christian, or are you conscious that you are still a weak child? Have we grown up to maturity?

Children's Sermon.

BY JOHN CALHOUN.

"What a Little Girl Can Do," 2 Kings 5.

The text is not a single verse but a whole chapter, and it is about a little girl. We do not know her name or the name of her parents, or even the city in which she lived, but we know what she did. Little girls can be of service as well as boys. Every one has heard of the child Samuel and of the young lad Joseph, but these were boys and I am to tell you of a little girl. One day soldiers came to her home and probably her father fell defending his loved ones; the home was burned and she was carried hundreds of miles into a strange country among a people she could not understand and all strange faces. She was sold into slavery and was bought by the general of the King's army and given as a waiting maid to his wife. That is her history and you ask "what could a little slave girl like this do?"

1. She kept up a cheerful heart. It must have been very hard. She would think of her father slain in battle and her mother and brothers and sisters forever lost to her and the sob would come and the tears roll down her cheeks, but she was cheerful, and what is most remarkable, under such trying circumstances. Years ago thousands of colored people were held as slaves in our country and we have heard the old slave songs and they were nearly all sad and plaintive. The children of Israel could not sing the songs of Zion in a strange land and they wept when they remembered Zion; see how strange that this little girl should have kept up such a cheery disposition in a strange household. But the Lord gave her this cheerful heart, for He had a great miracle to perform and he needed this little girl to help Him. When you are sad and the sky above appears dark, try and remember the little captive maid; if you do, surrounded by those you love and everything to make you happy, you will be downcast no more.

2. She did not forget God. In the household in which she was a slave they worshipped idols, great images of gold and silver and wood. They knew not that there was any other God, but she knew that the Lord alone was God. Her parents taught her to pray and to believe in God and she did not forget her God. Is it not a hard thing to trust in a God who has let your home be burned up and your loved ones be torn from you? Yet her faith was strong and she believed that though she was a captive God loved her still and would hear her prayers. Do not people sometimes forget God? When we go to the country for a summer vacation we often forget to take our God with us: forget to read our Bibles and in the excitement often forget our prayers and sometimes we go to places that we should not and do things that are wrong, all because we forget God. Joseph in Egypt, advanced to be next to King Pharaoh, did not forget God. Daniel and his three young friends, taken to eat at the king's table in Babylon, did not forget God. The Jews could say of their Holy City "If I forget Thee O Jerusalem let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth and her right hand forget her cunning." If this could be said of the city where God's temple was should we not ever remember the God in whose honor and for whose worship the city and temple were built?

"Remember Thee and all Thy pains,
"And all Thy love to me:
"Yea, while a breath, a pulse remains,
"Will I remember Thee."