

## The Quiet Hour.

### Joseph and His Brethren.

S. S. Lesson, 27th October; Genesis 45: 1-15.

Golden text: Rom. 12: 21, Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.

Then Joseph could not refrain himself, v. 1. He had held back to test them, to make sure that they were true men and not the envious, lying brothers who had sold him into bondage. When this is made sure, then the affection of this true brother burst through all barriers. Does it seem as if Jesus were refraining Himself, holding back some blessing that we crave? He is only testing and proving us, as He tried Mary and Martha or the Syrochænan woman. He is brimming over with love all the while. He goes through with the trial for our sakes, so that He may purge away all the dross and leave only the pure gold of a tried character.

And he wept aloud, v. 2. Behold in the tears of the great prime minister the strength of the sacred bond which unites members of the one family. And beware of putting such a strain on the affection of your kindred as the brethren of Joseph put on his.

And Joseph said . . . I am Joseph. And they were troubled, v. 3. This announcement must have fallen among the brothers like a bolt from the blue. As in the glare of a vivid lightning flash, they saw what a blunder and a failure their sin had been. They had measured their strength and craft against the might and wisdom of God and this was the result. They had ventured to break the laws of God and here they were, enclosed in the firm meshes of a net from which they could not escape. They had sown and now the harvest was ripe. They had disregarded the voice of mercy and now they could expect no mercy. So God lets us go on in our disregard and defiance of Him until we have landed ourselves in failure and defeat from which we cannot deliver ourselves. But in the moment of extremity He opens to us the door of forgiveness and we are saved.

And they came near, v. 4. These sons of Jacob found more than a long lost brother in Egypt. They found their better selves. For years they had been trying to escape from their sin. They strove to bury it in oblivion. They endeavored to drown it in a multitude of occupations and interests. They attempted to strangle its accusing voice. But turn whither they would, surround themselves with what company they chose, their sin was still there. It refused to be forgotten, it would not be silent. Its weakening and degrading influence was felt in every part of their lives. Its enslaving power kept them in bonds and fetters. But when the words of frank forgiveness from the one whom they had injured fell on their ears, their bonds were loosed, and their hearts were filled with new courage and hope. The sin that had so long dogged their footsteps and poisoned their lives was now blotted out by a full and free forgiveness. There is only one way in which we may escape from the pursuing power of a past sin. The multitudinous waters of the ocean will not wash out its stain, but the blood of Jesus Christ will cleanse it. We, too, have a Brother who is waiting to forgive us, and the moment in which we receive His forgiveness is the beginning of a free and more joyful life.

And there will I nourish thee, v. 11. There have been sons whose wealth and power have made them ashamed of their parents and desirous to have them as far away from them as possible. But Joseph is our example in his use of wealth and power for the benefit of his needy kindred.

### Alfred's Prayer.

"Mamma," said Alfred one night, as he was going to bed, "I prayed that God would keep us children from quarreling, but He has not answered that as yet, for sister Daisy and I quarreled dreadfully to-day."

"Ah, my son, you will have to help the Lord to answer that."

"Help the Lord, mamma? Can't He do everything?"

"He won't make you good against your will. If you choose to be a naughty boy, God will be sorry for you; and when Satan tempts you to quarrel, if you turn right to God for strength to resist him, and then fight like a good little soldier to keep down the naughty temper, then God will give you victory. But He won't do the work for you."

"Oh, I didn't understand," said the little boy.

"Yes, my dear," continued mamma, "you have something to do yourself, when you pray such a prayer, to help God to answer it. You must watch and pray, and fight against temptation; and if you do this, you will be able, by and by, to come and tell me that God has answered all your prayers."—Kind Words.

### Look in the Bible.

Grandfather's spectacles were lost. He could not read the letter which the postman had just brought, and it troubled him. His memory was failing and he could not recollect where he had laid those glasses. He and we looked here and there, and, as we thought, everywhere, but in vain. At length grandmother said: "Look in the Bible." We did so at once, and there they were. After reading awhile the good man had stopped to rest his eyes and meditate. He laid his glasses on the page that he had been perusing, and, when his attention was turned to the letter, he closed the Book, not observing that the glasses were in it.

Before he read his letter, grandfather looked with his peculiar smile upon us, and said: "I hope you will all remember the advice that grandmother has just given. When you want light in darkness, look in the Bible. I might have known that my glasses were there if I had stopped to think a minute. What a blessing it is to have good wives, good mothers and good ministers to keep telling us to look in the Bible!"

The only real and Christian way of purity is to live in the open world and not be of it, and keep the soul unspotted from it. There are no fires that will melt out our drossy and corrupt particles like God's refining fires of duty and trial, living as He sends us to live, in the open field of the world's sins and sorrows, its plausibilities and lies, its persecutions, animosities and fears, its eager delights and bitter wants.—Horace Bushnell.

### Light Use of God's Name.

We are often shocked, in our contact with foreigners, at their light use of the divine name. "Ach Gott" and "Mon Dieu," with modifications, are used with a frequency that is startling, when we consider the position and character of the persons who use them. It sounds profane, in spite of the absence of profane intent. Yet are we guiltless? As a nation we are the most irreverent of peoples. We take everything lightly, until some great calamity forces us into seriousness.

The flippant spirit penetrates even into our religion, and we ordinarily wear our faith as jauntily as we wear the badge of the order to which we may belong. "God knows," "How lightly it is said! "Yours in Christ," or "In His Name"—we write it as we would write "Yours truly," and attach it to a letter in which is not one word of more than business, or the news or gossip of the day. Used in that way it is a meaningless form of subscription, which surely is not reverent.

The Mohammedan puts us to blush by his reverence for the Holy Name—a reverence which is almost superstitious and yet is wonderfully suggestive. No scrap of paper bearing the name of Allah is allowed to be thrown away or trampled carelessly in the street. The faithful Moslem picks up each torn bit which he may chance upon, lest the name of God should be defiled.

How lightly, too, Scripture passages are used in apt quotations, or by way of joke, to give point to a story; and holy things made sport of. There is no intention to be irreverent or profane, but it is surely a violation of the Second Commandment; and while we rightly condemn the light use of God's name by others, we need to see that we do not sin against the same commandment in a different manner.

### The Kind of Religion We Want.

We want religion that softens the step and turns the voice to melody and fills the eye with sunshine and checks the impatient exclamation and harsh rebuke; a religion that is polite, deferential to superiors, considerate to friends; a religion that goes in the family and keeps the husband from being cross when the dinner is late, and keeps the wife from fretting when the husband tracks the newly washed floor with his boots, and makes the husband mindful of the scraper and door mat; keeps the mother patient when the baby is cross and amuses the children as well as instructs them; cares for the servants besides paying them promptly; projects the honeymoon into the harvest moon, and makes the happy home like the eastern fig tree, bearing on its bosom at once the tender blossom and the glory of the ripening fruit. We want a religion that shall interpose between the ruts and gullies and rocks of the highway and the sensitive souls that are travelling over them.—Helpful thoughts.

There is a mountain in Scotland called Cairngorm—literally "the blue mountain"—and on it are found valuable rock crystals. The way in which the Highlanders gather the stones called Cairngorms is this: When there is a sunburst after a violent shower they go and look along the whole brow of the mountain for certain sparkling spots; the shower has washed away the loose earth, the sunbeams light upon and are reflected from the stones and thus they are detected. It is just God's way of bringing forth His own—His jewels.—Affliction lays them bare.—Cumming.