

The Quiet Hour.

Peter Confesses the Christ.

S. S. LESSON. Mark 8: 27-38. April 10, 1904.

GOLDEN TEXT—Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.—Matt. 16: 16.

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But some say, v. 28 Only the sightless eyeball or the color-blind retina could fail to respond to the glory of Hermon, glittering in the light of morning, or flushed with the crimson glow of eventide; for these beauties were discernible by the natural eye. Far different was it with the spiritual glory of "the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." That was only visible to the eye of faith in the mind which God had illumined. Consequently, about Jesus there was great variety of opinion, and all guesses fell short of His true divine character. So to-day there are still in literature and among men different views of Him. To one He is the most faultless man, to another the sublime teacher, to another the highest embodiment of the human ideal. Only the eye of faith can read His true name Immanuel, "God with us."

Whom say ye? v. 29. On many questions a wide liberty of opinion may be allowed. With Copernicus, for example, we may believe if we choose that it is the earth that moves, while the sun is stationary; or with Ptolemy that the sun revolves about the earth. But our answer as to who Christ was, is vital. "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God." Do you believe this with your heart? Do you trust this divine Person, to whom you have said, with Peter, "Thou art the Christ?" Then you are saved, you have "overcome the world," you are an heir of all things. Many people are saved, who do not enter into the joy of their salvation. But the only way to be saved is by Peter's answer to this vital question; for God has revealed but one Saviour, and He is Jesus Christ.

Tell no man, v. 30. The book of Ecclesiastes (ch. 3: 7) wisely says that there is "a time to keep silence." Jesus felt that such a period had come in the history of His disciples. Doubtless He feared that their worldly ambitions would pervert their noble confession to unspiritual ends. Let them proclaim that the Messiah had come, as they were so keen to do, and the people would have arisen *en masse* to crown Him king. Civil war would have ensued. Hatred and strife would have destroyed His sublime teaching on love, and He would have been prevented from saving the world by the only possible way—the Cross. Times there are now when silence would be wise. The boastful trumpeting of the results of revival work, or even of Decision Day, has stirred un-Christlike ambition and envy at times, and has destroyed that humility and self-surrender which are the absolute requisites of successful spiritual work. Better to "tell no man," than an unseemly glorying in statistics. Besides, are there not things which it is not lawful for a man to utter?

Peter . . . began to rebuke Him, v. 32. To what lengths will not the self-conceit from a little success lead a man! Peter, uplifted by his confession, now thinks himself wiser than his Lord. He will teach Christ. There are boys that know more than their parents; pupils that ridicule the ignorance of their teachers; tyros in science who are wiser than the Bible. But pride goeth before a fall.

These court Christ's rebuke, "Get thee behind me, Satan."

Take up his cross, v. 34. The Moravians had an old device, of an ox standing between a plough on one side and an altar on the other, with the motto underneath, "Ready for labor or for sacrifice." So must the follower of Jesus be completely surrendered to His Lord's will. He must be crucified unto the world. "A Christian," said Luther, "is a Crucian."

Ashamed of me, v. 38. When Gladstone was a young man, he rose and left a dinner table where a doubtful story had been told. He was not ashamed of the purity of the Christ he followed. Rather was he ashamed of the sins his Master condemned. Let our lives be such that Christ will not turn from us in shame on the great day!

When he cometh, v. 38. What a glad day that will be for all those who are humbly trusting and faithfully serving their Lord. For has He not promised (Rev. 3: 22) that they will sit with Him in His throne, their foes at last overcome? Theirs will be a share, in some glorious fashion, in His victory, and joy, and dominion. A hope, this, to cheer the discouraged, and hearten them to press on in the race, whose prize is thus in full view. This is the bright side of the shield. His own is the fault if the dark side, picturing the fate of the unfaithful, need be turned to any one of us. Jesus offers joy. Man makes his own misery.

This Easter Day.

Across the windy slopes sweet bells were ringing;
A skylark's song came downward, clear and gay,
And my full heart broke forth in joy and singing;
This Easter day.

My risen Lord, I felt thy strong protection!
I saw thee stand among the graves to-day;
"I am the Way, the Life, the Resurrection,"
I heard Thee say.

And all the burdens I had carried sadly
Grew light as blossoms on an April spray;
My cross became a staff; I journeyed gladly
This Easter day. —Selected.

"True and Tried"

Life's companionships are full of significance for the Christian as well as for the worldling. While the determination of character is ultimately found in the will of the individual, it is nevertheless true that a man's companions, even his chance acquaintances, exercise a strong influence in directing, accentuating, or modifying his dominant characteristics. It is of the utmost importance, therefore, that a man should select his friends judiciously, and should deal with all transient acquaintances cautiously, not admitting any to close intimacy until their worth has been surely tested and their affection proved through extended trial. One there is whose friendship for the soul is ever dependable, blessed, and, in the supreme sense, rewarding. God can be trusted. An old lady's Bible was found to be lettered on the margin every here and there with the characters, "T. & T." Asked what the cabalistic signs signified, the old saint replied: "They are written after the verses which contain promises that I have personally tested, and which I have, there-

fore, marked, 'True and Tried.'" God is a helper who is "True and Tried." All true human friendships, like that of David for Jonathan, are types, partial, but significant, of that most blessed divine relation which subsists between the great Creator and the soul that humbly confides in him.—Zion's Herald.

Lying on the Promises.

BY C. H. SPURGEON.

When a pious old slave on a Virginia plantation was asked why he was always so sunny-hearted and cheerful under his hard lot, he replied: "Ah! massa, I always lays flat down on the promises, and den I pray straight up to my Heavenly Father." Humble, happy soul! He was not the first man who had eased an aching head by laying it upon God's pillows; or the first man who has risen up stronger from a repose on the unchangeable word of God's love. Spiritually, that man was a Croesus, for all his soul's wealth was in the currency of Heaven. If you take a Bank of England note to the counter of the Bank, in an instant that bit of paper turns to gold. If we take a promise of God to the mercy seat, it turns to what is better than gold—to our own good and the Father. The solvency of a bank, or of a government, gives the value to its notes. So it is the everlasting faithfulness of God that makes a Bible promise "exceeding great and precious." Human promises are often worthless. Many a broken promise has left a broken heart. But God has never broken a single promise made to one of His trusting children. When God promises pardon to a believing penitent here and glory hereafter, He does it in full view of all the risks that we can possibly encounter. When He promises to take care of His children, He knows perfectly well how much it will cost Him to maintain so vast and necessitous a family.

Without Convictions.

I can point you to a score of young men about you who climbed up to power on the shoulders of their great Christian fathers and mothers, who owe everything they are to their Puritan parents, who have come up to this city to make their fortune, who spend their nights at the clubs in gambling, who have used their unrivaled talents to buy the richest foods and the oldest wines, whose bodies are mere sieves for pleasures, who have despised everything their father loved and despised every ideal of their beautiful mother and whose journey through the city by day or by night is like the journey of swine through a rose garden. Twenty-five years ago these men and women would have been in some church every Sunday. This day of rest would have been the soul's library day for them, the day of worship, of which Emerson says that it means more to the country and its higher intellectual life than all the other days in the week. But to-day you will find them riding in the parks, stuffing themselves with rich foods, going to receptions on Sunday nights. They did not have a single great conviction. They are merely sleek animals, living for their pleasure. For them the world is a barnyard, the occupations are ricks and managers, and they were beasts feeding in the stall. These are the saddest events in life—not the ruin of the Parthenon or the wreck of the Temple of Diana, not the fall of the great statues of Phidias, but the decay of the great convictions.—Dr. Hills.