

The Quiet Hour.

Abstinence From Evil.

S. S. LESSON—1 Peter 4: 1-11. September 20, 1903.

GOLDEN TEXT—Eph. 5: 18. Be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess.

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Connecting Links—This Epistle was written to Christians suffering severe persecution. Its aim was, partly, to exhort them to patience and perseverance, and partly also, to urge them to so blameless a life, that their enemies would have no excuse for persecuting them. The Lesson contains, (1) warnings against intemperate living, vs. 1-6; (2) some closing directions of the apostle, vs. 7-11.

I. An Example to be Followed, 1, 2.

V. 1. Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered. In ch. 3: 18 the apostle had pointed his readers to the sufferings of Christ, as an example to them of patient endurance. They were to find encouragement amid their own sufferings, by looking to the glory which had followed His (ch. 3: 22), and which they would one day share. V. 1 returns to the thought of Christ as an example of patience and trust in God under suffering for us. In His death, Christ offered himself as a sacrifice on our behalf, dying, "the just for the unjust," ch. 3: 18. In the flesh. Because He had a body and soul like our own, sin excepted, the sufferings and temptations of Christ were the same in kind as ours. Arm yourselves; against the temptation to turn aside from the right path through fear of suffering. With the same mind; the same hatred of sin, the same love of God and goodness. Hath ceased from sin. God's purpose in sending suffering upon the Christian is to keep him back from sin, and the Christian himself should earnestly strive that this purpose may be fulfilled. The blessed effect of suffering is described in Ps. 119: 67, 71.

V. 2. Live the rest of his time in the flesh. The Christian must live out his appointed time in the world, doing the daily duties of his appointed place. But though his life is in the world, it is not controlled by the spirit of the world. Lusts of men; the uncontrolled appetites of the flesh. The will of God. Contrasted with the wild, wayward desires drawing the sinner this way and that, is the calm, fixed purpose of God, leading His people on in the upward path of holiness, 1 Thess. 4: 3.

II. Sins to be Avoided, 3-6.

Vs. 3-5. May suffice us. The whole of life belongs to God. Every day spent in the service of sin has been wasted. The time that remains should be all employed in doing the will of our true Master. Compare Romans 13: 11, 12. The will of the Gentiles; the heathen among whom they lived, and whose ways they were in danger of learning. A dark description of the sins into which the will or desire of the Gentiles led them, is given in the first chapter of Romans. Lasciviousness. The Greek word is a plural denoting the many forms of impurity. Excess of wine; literally "overflow of wine," expressive of the immoderate, insatiate desire for strong drink. Revellings; riotous feasts protracted till late at night. Banquetings; literally "drinking parties," (Rev. Ver., "carousings"). Abominable idolatries. The grossest and most unnatural

impurities were practised in connection with heathen worship. Wherein they think it strange. "It is not hard, even from our own experience, to picture to ourselves the surprised heathen, when he found his friend refusing an invitation to a banquet, shrinking from contact with the evil livers of Greek cities, or when there, passing the wine cup untasted" (Cambridge Bible). Run not with them. Evil men like company in their ill-doing, and those who resist their invitations will have, especially at first, no easy task. Excess of riot. The words describe the condition of one who has become utterly reckless about his health, morality and character, so long as he may gratify his passions. This is a sad, but common result of indulgence in strong drink. Who shall give account. It is impossible for the impenitent sinner to escape the penalty of his deeds, 2 Cor. 5: 10. The quick and the dead; the living, and those in the grave.

V. 6. For this cause; namely, that man, through suffering by reason of sin, might be set free from its power. Was the gospel preached also to them that are dead. "The dead" are those who had died before the coming of Christ. It has just been said, that they, as well as the living, will be judged, v. 5. But how can they be fairly brought into judgment, when they had never heard the gospel? Peter solves this difficulty by saying that they had heard the gospel. The mercy of God and His willingness to save had been made known to them, Ex. 34: 6. Judged according to men; as men count judgments, through sickness, pain and death, and in temporal things—and all this, to turn them from sin. In the flesh; as Christ had suffered in the flesh, ch. 3: 18. Live according to God. Suffering was intended, not to destroy them, but to lead them to a life of harmony with God's will. In the spirit. As the power of evil desires grows weaker, the spiritual nature by which we know and love God becomes stronger. This quickening and developing of spiritual life is like the resurrection of Christ, as our suffering is akin to His.

III. Duties to be Performed, 7-11.

Vs. 7, 8. The end of all things. Since he knows not when this will come, the Christian's attitude should be one of constant preparedness. Sober. A better translation is "temperate," which expresses the due control of the passions. Watch unto prayer. The word translated "watch" means "be sober," "be temperate." It is easy to see how lack of sobriety hinders prayer. Fervent. The word conveys the idea of intensity. Charity. The substitution of "love" by the Rev. Ver. here and in 1 Cor. 13, brings out the harmony of the teaching of the three great apostles, Paul, Peter and John. (See 1 John 4: 7.) For charity shall cover the multitude of sins. Two thoughts are included in this saying: (1) Love will lead us to cover, that is, to forgive the sins of others; (2) In forgiving them we fulfil the condition of receiving the forgiveness of our own sins, Luke 7: 47.

Vs. 9-11 dwell on the duties of hospitality, Christian giving, speaking for God, ministering to the needy. It is pointed out that in the use of all our gifts, we should aim at the glory of God. We glorify God through Jesus Christ, that is, "through service rendered in His name and for His sake." His sufferings (v. 1) are an example to His disciples of

patient endurance. His exaltation (v. 11) is their great consolation. Sharing His sufferings, they will also partake of His glory.

FOR DOMINION PRESBYTERIAN.

The Pre-pentecostal Character of Christ's Disciples.

A Study of Luke 9: 37-56.

BY REV WM. SHEARER,

It is a remarkable fact that in the five incidents recorded in these verses the character of the apostles of Jesus Christ shows up to great disadvantage. One would have supposed that after nearly three years of fellowship with Him they would have become very much conformed to his ways of thinking and doing. But such was not the case. We find here that

1. They lacked *faith*, v. 41. They were defeated in their attempts to cast an unclean spirit out of a young man. When Jesus heard of it he was exceedingly grieved and rebuked them for their lack of faith.

2. They lacked *spiritual insight*, v. 45. When He spoke of the sufferings which he was very shortly to endure they did not understand him. They were conscious of their lack of apprehension, but were afraid to ask for further explanation for fear of rebuke.

3. They lacked *humility*, v. 46. There arose a reasoning among them which of them should be the greatest. Jesus perceiving the thought of their heart, said, "He that is least among you all shall be great."

4. They lacked *charity*, v. 49. They manifest a spirit of ecclesiastical exclusiveness and bigotry. When they saw a man who did not belong to their little circle, casting out devils, they forbade him; not because he was doing any harm, but simply because he did not belong to their number. So Jesus had to point out to them that no man doing a miracle in His name could speak lightly of Him, and since such a person could not be supposed to be against Him, they must take it for granted that he is for Him.

5. They lacked *forbearance*, v. 54. Because certain villagers in Samaria would not receive him when on his way to Jerusalem, they would have Jesus revenge Himself on them forthwith by calling down fire from heaven to consume them. Again Jesus is grieved, and administers a sharp pointed rebuke: "Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of."

Now if we turn to the Acts of the Apostles and the Epistles we shall find that all this is changed. Evil spirits are cast out, a deep insight is given them into the mysteries of the kingdom, and on scores of occasions they manifest a humble, charitable and forbearing disposition. Was this mighty transformation the result of gradual development dating from the time they first knew the Lord, or was it the result of a crisis in their lives? No bible student can deny it was the latter. One short experience through which they passed marked the transition, and that event was the baptism of the Holy spirit on the day of Pentecost.

Many of Christ's disciples to-day are conscious of grievous failure to live up to the standard set up by Jesus Christ. Even though they know they shall never attain to sinless perfection in this life, they do know that they might and should be a great deal holier than they are. But something more is needed than gradual development of character dating from the time they first knew the Lord, and that something is a definite, specific baptism of the Holy spirit. "Ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you."