

## The Quiet Hour.

### The Tabernacle.

S. S. LESSON.—Exodus 40:1-13. August 3, 1902.

GOLDEN TEXT.—Ps. 110:4. Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise.

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And the Lord spake, v. 1. Months before (ch. 25) God had given the plans and specifications for the building of the tabernacle. Now He directs how it is to be set up. Moses' part and the people's, both in the building and in the setting up, and in the services that were appointed, was to do as they were bidden. God would have them learn that He is to be worshipped in the way in which He Himself appoints, and not in the way in which our own fancies may lead us. God longs, oh! so greatly, that we should find Him; but He knows that, unless we come in the path that He directs, we shall certainly lose our way.

Thou shalt set up the tabernacle, v. 2. The tabernacle stood for the divine Presence, and here for the first time God came to dwell with His people. Abraham and Jacob had gained temporary visions of the heavenly power and grace, but these visits of God had thus far been short. Now God will meet with His people upon the mercy seat. Rev. 21:3 assures us that the "abernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them." The earth is not void of the divine light. God walks to and fro in our earth: He is among men. The clearest proof of this is in Jesus Christ; for the Gospel of John says (1:14) that the "Word was made flesh and dwelt among men." Here was the permanent spiritual presence, of which the tabernacle was a passing type. The fine gold of the earthly structure might become dim; but nothing can ever tarnish the beauty of that life which Jesus has revealed to the world, neither can the ravages of time mar the glory of that teaching which He came to make known to us. God is among us in the Spirit of His only begotten Son.

The ark of the testimony, v. 3. Israel's most precious possession, because God's dwelling place. Its most precious part, again, was the mercy seat. The ark was overlaid with gold, but the mercy seat, as most holy of all, was made of gold. God dwelt above the mercy seat; and while the penitent might dread his own transgressions in the breaking of the ten commandments which were contained within the ark, here was a cover placed over those transgressions, as it were, and God would meet with the people.

The table, v. 4. Upon the table were placed the shewbread and the several utensils in eating, spoons and flagons and bowls. It surely was meant that the ordinary blessings of life, our bread and our drink, are part of the gift of God to us, who meant that we should sanctify our most common things unto Him. The thanksgiving of the modern Christian home in the blessing at meal-time and the petition in the Lord's Prayer, are true successors of this olden custom;—a confession of dependence. (Compare Gen. 28:22; 1 Cor. 10:31.)

The candlestick, v. 4. This gave light to the tabernacle at night (Compare 1 Sam. 3:3), and is explained in Zech. 4:2-12. Light is one of our most essential possessions, and it were impossible to carry on the work of

the world without this blessing. The candlestick gave men a reminder that the light which they enjoyed was a consecrated thing: it came forth from Him who said, "Let there be light." The new covenant of Christ is better provided, because He has come as the "Light of the world" (John 8:12), and all can find in Him that direction which is so necessary.

The altar, v. 6. Scarcely any people have been found who had not some form of rude structure, called an altar, and on it often the most cruel sacrifices were offered. This was because men felt they had broken God's law; and they attempted to appease His wrath with gifts. It is only in Christ's teaching that we find no altar and no sacrifice. He, the spotless Lamb of God, has once for all "offered up of Himself a sacrifice to satisfy divine justice." Through this we have free access to God. Christian churches are the only temples that have no altar.

Most holy, v. 10. All things connected with the tabernacle were holy. The original meaning of holy was "separated unto God." The people of Israel were holy because they were separated unto God. The Holy Land was separated unto God. But since things that were separated unto God must partake of His character, holy gradually obtained an ethical signification. This holiness is the condition of our acceptance—"Holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord."

The priest's office, v. 13. One tribe was chosen to act as priests for the rest of the nation. Christianity has no priests; but all of us are priests unto God: "Ye are a royal priesthood," 1 Pet. 2:9. Many evils came into the Church when the Roman Catholics developed the system of sacerdotalism. The priests claimed to be on a different level from ordinary Christians, and assumed power which belonged only to God. They gradually became tyrants, and their influence was so strong that it took many a conflict to regain the freedom of the New Testament faith. Christ is the one High Priest. Through Him each believer may have free access to God.

### Old Age.

I am sad, alone and weary, in the afterglow of life,  
Too old to perform life's duties, or mingle in its strife;  
Useless to those above me, falteringly I go,  
Down in the valley, with tottering step so slow.

Once I was young and happy, in the morning-tide of life,  
The world seemed full of gladness, I dreaded not its strife;  
The flowers the birds, the sunshine, thrilled my soul with joy,  
Life was a dream of happiness; cares did not annoy.

But these no longer thrill me; the flowers I cannot see;  
I cannot hear the chorus the birds sing in the tree;  
My loved ones all have left me, silently one by one,  
And I am old and desolate, wishing my journey done.

Father, I am so weary, my soul longs to be free;  
I long to see my loved ones who have been so long with Thee,  
Sunshine to me is darkness; day to me is night;  
I long to smell the flowers, I long to see the light.

### Dixie's Six Cents.

A short time ago a pale-faced little girl walked hurriedly into a bookstore, and said to the man serving at the counter: "Please, sir, I want a book that's got 'Suffer little children to come unto me' in it; and how much is it, sir? And I'm in a great hurry." The shopman bent down and dusted his specs.

"Suppose I haven't the book you want, what then, my dear?"

"Oh, sir, I shall be so sorry; I want it so!" And the little voice trembled at the chance of a disappointment.

"Will you be so very sorry without the book?"

"Well, sir, you see I went to school one Sunday when Mrs. West, who takes care of me, was away; and the teacher read about a Good Shepherd who said those words, and about a beautiful place where he takes care of his children, and I want to go there. I'm so tired of being where there's nobody to care for a little girl like me, only Mrs. West, who says I'd be better dead than alive."

"But why are you in such a hurry?"

"My cough's getting so bad now, sir, and I want to know all about him before I die. I'd be so strange to see him and not know him. Besides, if Mrs. West knew I was here, she'd take away the six cents I've saved running messages, to buy the book with; so I'm in a hurry to get served."

The bookseller wiped his glasses vigorously this time, and lifting a book off the shelf he said: "I'll find the words you want, my little girl, come and listen."

Then he read the words of the loving Saviour, Luke 18:16 (get your Bibles and find the place, children), and told her how this Good Shepherd had a home, all light, rest, love, prepared for those who love and serve him.

"Oh, how lovely!" was the half breathless exclamation of the eager little buyer; "and he says, 'Come.' I'll go to him. How long do you think it may be, sir, before I see him?"

"Not long, perhaps," said the shop-keeper, turning away his head. "You shall keep the six cents, and come here every day, while I read some more out of this book."

Thanking him, the small child hurried away. Tomorrow came, and another morning, and many days passed, but the little girl never came to hear about Jesus again.

One day a loud voiced, untidy woman ran into the shop, saying: "Dixie's dead! She died rambling about some Good Shepherd, and she said you was to have these six cents for the mission box at school. As I don't like to keep dead men's money, here it is." And she ran out of the shop.

The cents went into the box, and when the story of Dixie was told, so many followed her example with their cents that at the end of the year "Dixie's cents," as they were called, were found to be sufficient to send out a missionary to China to bring stranger sheep to the Good Shepherd.—Christian Observer.

### Meeting the Great Issues.

He who is waiting to meet a great issue as it presents itself lives a leisurely life. There is little for him to do at ordinary times. Great issues rarely present themselves as being great, and when they are before one they do not seem to be of exceptional importance. The only way to make sure of meeting great issues fittingly is by meeting every issue as it should be met. Then a little thing met worthily may prove to be a great thing met as it should have been met.