

The Quiet Hour.

The Boyhood of Jesus.

S. S. LESSON—Luke 2: 40-52. January 3, 1904.

GOLDEN TEXT—And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man.—Luke 2: 52.

BY REV. CLARENCE MACKINNON, B.D., SYDNEY, N.S.

The child grew, v. 30. Of course He grew, as every healthy child must, and He was the perfect boy, as afterwards He became the perfect man. The serious question, however, with the boy is, After what manner shall he grow? The anchor is weighed, the sails spread. On what course is the ship heading?

The grace of God was upon him, v. 40. This is the secret of a beautiful life. After living for some days on the hot prairie, one is surprised, when, on its western limit, he puts his hand into a stream, to find the water ice cold. The explanation is that this river was born far up near the mountain top in the glittering glacier, and it carries with it the character of its infancy. So did the blessed Jesus. The grace of God that was on Him in childhood followed Him later into the glory of His manhood. God's grace is just His loving presence; God in the soul, like the sunlight in the dewdrop.

After the custom of the feast, v. 42. The Jewish child at three put on the tasselled garment, at five began to learn the law at his mother's knee, at thirteen wore phylacteries. At twelve Jesus goes up to the feast at the holy city. Life should be made an orderly unfolding of capacities and responsibilities. We too have a feast where every boy or girl at the opening of their manhood and womanhood should take their place. It is the Lord's Table. The great Spurgeon declared that no children admitted by him in early life to full communion in the church required to have their names afterwards expunged from the roll. An early beginning in this case, is a good beginning.

They found him in the temple, v. 46. The wise young lad will always be found in his pew. He may sometimes find it wearisome. Often, he may not understand; or, boy-like, he may rebel against what is said. There was much that was objectionable and possibly tiresome about the ancient temple. But Jesus went to worship and to learn. Dr. Seiss, a great preacher and expounder of the scriptures, when a boy of fourteen, walked several miles to be present at a Synodical Convention. He was led by a mixed feeling of curiosity and duty. The visit transformed him into a singularly useful minister.

Both hearing them, and asking them questions, v. 46. This is the model Sunday-School scholar. The habit of inquiry is natural to a boy. Show him a gun, an electric car, an engine, a man-of-war, and he will fairly overwhelm you with questions until he understands. The wise teacher will encourage this same native curiosity concerning those highest matters, our obligations to God and to men.

They were amazed, v. 48. There comes a time in every home when the quiet, docile, obedient child unexpectedly changes. He suddenly takes the initiative, and marks out his own line of conduct. It is the advent of manhood. The parents may be amazed and perplexed; but they must bow to the inevitable. Henceforth, they are to guide their son less by authority, and more by

sympathy and reason. And the grown-up son, if he be of the right sort, will remember that along with new privileges come larger responsibilities. He will be more eager about discharging his duties than about claiming his rights.

I must, v. 49. What an interesting study the "musts" of Jesus would be! He willingly placed Himself under law. He made a loving choice of God's will and yoked Himself to the burden of the world's need. And was He not withal the freest of men? The bondage of passion, of gain, of ambition, never flung its chains about Him. And He calls us to follow Him in that path of loving service which alone leads to real liberty.

My Father's business, v. 49. We are not God's slaves but His sons. A classic story tells how, when a Roman Emperor was returning in triumph, a little child sprang up beside him and put his arms around his neck. "That is the Emperor," said a stern officer. "He may be your Emperor, but he is my father," replied the child. God's work is our Father's business. We serve Him, not as hirelings, but as sons.

Nuit de Noel.

By CLARA THWAITES

When our homes in snow are shrouded,
By the fireside's ruddy glow,
Hearts are glad and eyes unclouded
As our Christmas carols flow.

Through the gathered mists of ages,
Angel songs our spirits stir,
Oh, to offer with the sages
Gold and frankincense and myrrh!

Have we, while our own caressing,
Careless viewed another's need?
He who gave himself in blessing
Still rebukes us in our greed.

As the sages poured their treasures,
Rich and costly, at His feet,
Full and overflowing measure
Bring us as an offering meet.

"Oh, precious human voice, with power untold!

Oh, precious human love to mortals given!
A word or smile are richer gifts than gold—
Better be angels here than wait for heaven."

A Prayer.

Show us, Heavenly Father, that we belong to one another and all to Thee: that man is one, that society is one, that in a great house there are vessels of gold and vessels of silver, vessels of honor and vessels of inferiority; but the roof is one, the enclosure is one, the ownership is one. In my Father's house are many mansions. Show us that the old and the young belong to the same family, and that we must make way for one another by ascension, leaving those who come behind to continue the fight and turn the war to conquest. Give us nobler thoughts, brighter conceptions, a sense of more delightful and vital fellowship with Thyself. Then we shall have no pain, no fear, no dread of to-morrow, bring with it what it may; nor shall there be any more sea, or crying, or pain, or night, or death, but life shall be one loud triumph song. This is what we are aiming at. This is our hope and aspiration.—Dr. Parker.

The man who remains master of himself never knows defeat.—Ralph Connor.

FOR DOMINION PRESBYTERIAN.

A Good Word for the Sleeping Disciples.

BY REV. T. FENWICK.

Matthew tells us that our Lord, during His agony in Gethsemane, came thrice to His disciples, mentioning only Peter, James and John—the three most favoured ones—and each time found them asleep (26: 40, 43, 45). So does Mark (14: 33, 37, 40). Luke speaks only once of Christ's coming to His disciples in the Garden and finding them asleep (22: 39, 45). John says merely that He and they entered into a garden over the brook Cedron (18: 2).

Many in very strong terms condemn the disciples for sleeping during their Lord's awful sufferings in Gethsemane. They look on it as a proof of their want of feeling for them. Matthew and Mark simply say that they slept. Judas was not with them. He was outside, doing the devil's work, preparing to betray his Lord. Luke uses a very striking expression when he speaks of the sleep of the disciples in Gethsemane. He says that they slept "for sorrow." We cannot but admire them for doing so. So strong was their love to Christ that the sight of His sufferings made them so sorrowful that their bodily strength was completely overcome, and the result was as stated. They loved Him even when afterwards they forsook Him and fled. They were weak. The day of Pentecost had not yet come. Christ did not reprove them for sleeping. Oh, no; Matthew and Mark tell us what He said: "The spirit indeed is willing but the flesh is weak." He knew their hearts and He excused their sleeping, though He was Himself at the time suffering. How beautiful! What else He said to the disciples was of course in perfect harmony with what I have just quoted.

Some may think that sorrow will rather keep a person awake than put him to sleep. The statement of Luke regarding the cause of the disciples' sleeping is enough. I shall here tell a story of a like nature which may interest my readers. It is in a number of the Family Friend published several years ago, and is as follows: An accident happened in a coal mine which imprisoned many of the workers. The news of it soon spread widely abroad. Mothers, wives, daughters, sisters, and sweethearts hurried to the entrance to see or hear of those near and dear to them who were within. Many of them were so much affected by their painful thoughts that they fell asleep.

Let us then deal gently with the sleeping disciples in Gethsemane.

Woodbridge, Ont.

Day by Day.

A weak man breaking away from temptation prayed God to keep him for one hour. Then, growing more confident by reason of God's protecting care, he asked to be kept for two hours, and then for three. And so being kept hour by hour he was enabled to resist temptation for the entire day. And then, morning by morning, he put himself in God's hands for the day, praying, "O God, thou didst keep me yesterday: Keep me to-day." It was in this way that he conquered the power of evil habits and became a man of strong and noble character and of great good in the world. "Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in him, and he shall bring it to pass." Lay each day, as a jewel, in the hand of God, ask him to keep it for you, "and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart."—Selected.