

The Quiet Hour.

Peter, Aeneas and Dorcas.

S. S. LESSON—April 13, 1902. John 20: 6-18.

GOLDEN TEXT. Acts 9: 34. *Jesus Christ maketh thee whole.*

BY REV. A. S. MORTON, B. D., ST. STEPHEN, N. B.

Peter passed through all quarters, v. 32. Peter, by his missionary journeys, fixed up on the church the policy of missionary campaigns which eventually carried the Gospel to Judæa, the Roman Empire, and to the great half-civilized Teutonic peoples, and brought it to our very door. To day in our pure and free church, and in our great Empire, we reap the distant fruits of Peter's policy. It is our turn now to give as we have received. The church at Jerusalem did not lose by the mission work of the apostles. In the time of famine and sore distress, it was the foreign churches that raised the money to relieve them. Mission work costs; but we do not lose by it. In the larger love for our fellows, the larger sense of Christ's redemptive mission, and the pulse quickened by the sense that the world will soon be at His feet, we have an abundant reward.

Jesus Christ maketh thee whole, v. 34. At best Peter is but the delegate of Jesus Christ. He can be the means of working a cure; but it is Jesus Christ that makes whole. Jesus could say, as He did to the impotent man at the pool of Bethesda, "Rise, take up thy bed and walk," for in Himself lay the divine power. Peter and all the other apostles being ambassadors or delegates, in frank humility recognize that the power is not theirs, but Christ's, and say, "Jesus Christ maketh thee whole." In their Christian work the followers of Jesus are not always so frank in their humility. They trust themselves, and so mar their work and come to failure. The only way to do wonders for Jesus is to acknowledge His power at our back and trust in Him; for it is written for all eternity, "Not by might, nor by power, but by My spirit." Zech. 4: 6

Saw . . . and turned to the Lord, v. 35. These people were not already Christian. They were outside, uninterested, perhaps even hostile, minds. They saw manifest within their own experience and observation the power of Christ to raise up from disease. Christ became a rock fact to them, one not to be overlooked. "They saw . . . and turned to the Lord." When Christians live and work with Peter's frank dependence in the power of Christ, they will cure souls of the disease of sin; and when the community—the uninterested outsider and even the hostile mind—see in their own experience and observation the power of Jesus, they will be convicted and turn to the Lord.

They sent unto him, desiring him . . . to come, v. 38. The good Dorcas is dead. In the very heyday of their Christian usefulness she was suddenly taken away. The whole church at Joppa feel it is a calamity. The poor, the widow, and the orphan, especially feel their loss is untold. No doubt, in the hour of sorrow the little church at Joppa wondered about God's goodness, and what He could mean in taking away such an active Christian worker in the prime of her usefulness. They needed a strong Christian on whom to lean, and Peter was but three hours' journey away. They sent for him—probably not expecting a miracle—but

to have the consolation of his words and sympathy. He had a keen sight into the love of God. His own experience had given him, in the scene of denial and at Calvary, a great sense of the everlasting goodness of Jesus, and his eye was quick to see the meaning of God in the daily events of life. No wonder people leaned on him and sent for him in their hour of sorrow. Happy are those that have such a deep and lasting sense of God's goodness in Jesus who died, that they can convey something of it to the bereaved in their most forlorn hour. Happy those who can so see God's finger in the daily experiences of life as to teach others to read His will in their hour of sorrow.

Kneeled down and prayed, v. 40. Three times Christ raised the dead by His simple word, for the life-giving power lay in Himself as Son of God. It was not so with Peter; for he prays to God for power. Elijah (1 Kings 17:20-23) and Elisha (2 Kings 4:32-35) had also raised the dead only by prayer. It is not given to us to raise up from bodily death, but it is to day possible to raise up a soul that—like a corpse without response—is dead to God and to good. And again, it is not by our own power, but by that which God gives us in answer to prayer.

Many believed, v. 42. The power of Jesus to raise from the dead, seen and experienced, was the proof that brought the conviction that Jesus, the risen Saviour, was at the door of men's lives. The power of Jesus to raise men from the death of sin, seen and experienced amongst ourselves and at this day, is proof, and proof that brings conviction, that Jesus, the risen Saviour, is at the door of men's lives. The result of this manifestation of the power of Jesus will be ever the same—many will believe in Him.

When Day Is Done.

When day is done, and from the gaudy sky
The glory fades,
Then quiet falls; and rest comes by and by
With night's dear shades.
When life is done, and climbed its craggy steep,
All hot suns set;
When in vast joy that neither sighs nor weeps,
We then are met.
When rest shall hold our hands, and grace,
Like evening psalm,
Shall whisper peace! And from the troubled face
Heaven's blessed calm
Shall every tear-stain wipe away and fear.
With Christ at hand
No heartache can through golden years draw
near
That heavenly land.
Rev. William A. Quayle D. D.

Be Cheerful.

We cannot rightly carry out any true or noble object in life in a spirit of despondency. . . . A depressed life—a life which has ceased to believe in its own sacredness, its own capabilities, its own mission—a life which contentedly sinks into querulous egotism or vegetating aimlessness—has become, so far as the world is concerned, a maimed and useless life. All our lives are in some sense a "might have been;" the very best of us must feel in sad and thoughtful moments, that he might have been transcendently nobler, and greater, and better than he is; but while life lasts every "might have been" should lead, not to vain regrets, but to manly resolutions; it should be but the dark background to a "may be" and "will be yet."—F. W. Farrar.

Spiritual Growth.

Nothing is born full grown. It passes through a period of growth, and it must grow or die. The parent who is delighted with the innocent helplessness of his child and rejoices at its little efforts at speech, becomes seriously alarmed if this lisping, tottering, help requiring state threatens to become permanent. Would that the cessation of growth in the spiritual life created as much dismay! Would that it seemed as monstrous, as unnatural to have our spiritual as our natural growth checked! It would be a startling revelation to all of us were the discernment of our spiritual condition as keen and as true as our vision of the body. What do you honestly believe that you would see yourself to be? Have you spiritually made the growth due to the time that you have been a Christian, or are you conscious that you are still a weak child? Have we grown up to maturity? Are we growing to maturity! Have we grown beyond our associates? Or are we conscious that many others stand head and shoulders above us? Physically we once needed to be lifted if we were to see, or touch, or be on the level of certain things; we should be humiliated were it so still. Is it so spiritually? Do we find ourselves face to face with things that once towered above us and seemed unattainable? Can we stand alone now? Are we men in understanding, able for ourselves to see what is good, having within ourselves a strength sufficient for all needs of life, truly sons of God who have entered into the full liberty and strength that God means his sons to have? And being born again is a great thing, but it is not everything. The growing after birth to maturity is much more the end for which birth is alone desirable and valuable.—Marcus Dods, D.D.

Pray More!

BY REV. F. B. MEYER.

The great lack of our life is that we do not pray more. And there is no failure so disastrous or criminal as this. It is very difficult to account for it. If in all times of discouragement and vicissitude we could have access to one of the wisest and noblest of our fellow creatures, or to some venerated departed saint, or to the guardian angel deputed to attend our steps, or to the archangel that presides as viceroy over this system of worlds, how strong and brave we should become! Whatever our need, we would at once seek His august presence, and obtain His counsel and assistance. How extraordinary is our behavior, then, with respect to prayer, and that we make so little of our opportunities of access into the presence of our Father, in whom wisdom, power, and love blend perfectly, and who is always willing to hear us—nay, is perpetually urging us to come!

A Saintly Life.

"Christ simply places himself by our side, and shows us a perfect life. God's life on earth in man, and He says, 'You are to be saints and heroes, every one of you, in the only true sense, just where you are. That is the reason why I have come to you where you are.' He uses no compulsion, no violence. He does not put His power in the place of your liberty. Whoever lives the heroic or saintly life will do it of his own choice, his free will. There is no manhood, womanhood, character, otherwise."—The Lutheran.