

The Quiet Hour.

The Quarterly Review

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GOLDEN TEXT.—And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness. —Matt. 4: 23.

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The lessons of the present Quarter display the Lord Jesus as The Worker. "I must work," are His own words, John 9: 6. "I have finished the work," is His consolation, as His stay on earth is coming to a close, John 17: 4. The twelve lessons of the Quarter turn upon this Heavenly Worker and His works among men.

I. The Worker Making Ready. Take time with this lesson; make the scholars see with their very eyes the Boy of twelve in the temple, eagerly listening and questioning, "My Father's business," already His chief concern. One of our most eminent missionaries said, "From my earliest boyhood, there was only one thing I ever wanted to be—a minister." The boy or girl has a hold on the true secret of success in life, who can say, "First, last, and always, I want to be a Christian."

II. The Worker Announced. Not as a King merely, though a King he was, but as the great Husbandman. The picture in v. 12 (Matt. 3: 12) is startlingly vivid—the garnering of the good and the destruction of the bad, at the last day; a process that is going on all our lives. Every act of obedience brings us a little bit of heaven here and now, and every wrong deed, sooner or later, a sharp taste of hell.

III. The Worker Tested. First, acknowledged by the dove like Spirit and the voice of God from heaven, as God's Son and God's Messenger; then tested, thrice over, by His, and God's, and our, greatest foe. "Stand like an anvil," is a necessary reminder to all who will work for God; for Satan will hammer them hard.

IV. At Work in His Own Town. It needs more courage than to work anywhere else. But Jesus shirked no task because it was difficult. What came of it? A storm of wrath, and a murder-onset. The worker who is not ready to run all risks is little fit for God's service.

V. Summoning Fellow-Workers. Only God can save men; but even in this—His own, peculiar work—He calls men to His aid, as Jesus did the four fishermen that day. And what greater honor open to any man than to be a "labourer together with God" (1 Cor. 3: 9)?

VI. A Day's Work. How crowded full they were, the days of Jesus' ministry—with teaching, preaching, healing! That day in Capernaum was a fair sample—in the synagogue, in Simon's house, at the street door; and so full of sympathy, so eager, so unwearying. A hard-hearted, careless, idle Christian, is a contradiction in terms.

VII. A Work of Grace. Surgeons like the famous Lorenz can do wonders for twisted limbs. But no surgeon can cure a paralytic. Jesus did; and more, infinitely more; He forgave the man's sins. That was a work of grace, God's grace. The only Saviour who can meet our deepest need, is one who can work such works of grace in us and for us.

VIII. Sabbath Work. The disciples

plucking the ears of grain; that was a "work of necessity." The restoration of a withered hand. That was a "work of mercy." Such is the fence, inside which no one should find it hard to abide, on the Sabbath Day. (See Shorter Catechism, Ques. 60.)

IX. The Law of Work. The man who says, but does not do, and the man who both says and does—need you ask the scholars to make their choice between the two?

X. A Work of Power. How vast the reach of this wondrous Son of Man! Even the wind and the sea obey Him. Truly, we are safe if He is nigh.

XI. A Like-minded Worker; who will fearlessly bear his testimony and do his duty, even when black dungeons and the executioner's sword are in sight. John the Baptist's spirit is that of every one who would be a true yoke-fellow of the Lord Jesus.

XII. A Work of Mercy. Not to restore a limb, or to heal a leper, or to save a life; but to keep a weary crowd from hunger. If the lessons that have gone before show Jesus as the Son of God, this reveals Him, oh how graciously! as the Son of man, our Brother and Friend.

Time for Devotional Bible Study.

1. Let it be a regular time. We should have a Median and Persian hour, that is, an unchangeable hour. It is a well known law of Psychology that to form a habit we must suffer no exceptions.

2. Let it be a daily time. Some of us may have a regular time, for example, once each week; but the daily plan is the more excellent one. The world pulls us daily. Satan spreads his snares for us more than once each day. Self asserts itself many times each day. Therefore, we should mortify our lives spiritually at least once a day.

3. Let it be an unhurried time. We should give ourselves believing time. It takes time to become spiritual. Spirituality is not a matter of chance; it must be preceded by an adequate cause. If we would have large spiritual results in our lives, there must be sufficient spiritual causes. There is natural law in the spiritual world. But some one asks, How much time is unhurried time? We trust it will not mean not less than half an hour each day for any of us. Yet more important than this, it means time enough to forget time; time enough to forget the watch and the clock; time enough to forget the thing we have been doing, and the thing we mean to do next; time enough to meet God, and to hear Him speaking to the depths of our lives. We are not pleading for a mere form, but for an actual, personal, duty meeting on the part of each with its God.

4. Let it be the very choicest time in the day. When is that? We used to think it was the last thing at night, but we found that usually the mind was tired or occupied with the many things which had taken place during the day. Then we tried the middle of the day, but found it impossible to avoid interruptions at that time. At last, several years ago, when we were at Cambridge, we heard of the Morning Watch—the plan of spending the first half hour or first hour of the day alone with God—and adopted the plan. With some of you who are following the same plan, we firmly believe that it is

the best time in the day. The mind is less occupied. The mind is, as a rule, clearer, and the memory more retentive. But forget these reasons if you choose. The whole case may be stacked on this argument; it equips a man for the day's fight with self and sin and Satan. He does not wait until noon before he buckles on his armor. He does not wait until he has given way to temper, or to unkind words, or to unworthy thoughts, or to easily besetting sin, and then have his Bible study. He enters the day refreshed and forearmed. John Quincy Adams, President of the United States, noted in his journal, in connection with his custom of studying the Bible each morning, "It seems to me the most suitable manner of beginning the day." Lord Cairns, one of the busiest men in Great Britain, devoted the first hour and a half of every day to Bible study and secret prayer. A friend recently saw his Bible in the Queen's apartments at Windsor, and told us that the pages of that book, which was his companion in the morning watch, were so worn that one could scarcely read the print. He always reminds us of Sir Henry Haverlock, who took care to be alone each morning to ponder some portion of the Bible. When on the heaviest marches it was determined to start at some earlier hour than that which he had fixed for his devotions, he arose quite in time to hold undisturbed his communion with God. Ru-kin, in speaking to the students at Oxford, said, "Read your Bible, making it the first morning business of your life to understand some portion of it clearly, and your daily business to obey it in all that you do understand." Greater than all, we have it on the best of evidence that Christ rose a great while before it was day to hold communion with God. What he found necessary or even desirable can we do without? Spirituality costs. Shall we pay what it costs?—John R. Mott.

"Is not Puffed up."

The Apostle Paul, in his great panegyric of love, includes in the list of qualities this—"is not puffed up." That sentence is a measure for all human spirits. Where headiness and conceit are found, there love and the Spirit of Christ are not. Yet we find a number of people who claim to be extra charitable, broad minded, and "advanced" expositors of Christian truth exhibiting a conceit which is far removed from the apostle's picture. We have noticed in one or two recent books, which, in the name of Christianity, seek to denude the Faith of the Gospel of all its miraculous elements, this conceit is apparent everywhere. We have remarked the same thing in certain public utterances. The assumption that an iconoclast is necessarily right and all the rest of the world are wrong, is not a sign of superiority—it is a disease of the soul, and is the very opposite of the Spirit created by Christ. Such things unbelief is modest and inquiring, too frequently it is rude and domineering. Young Christians especially need to be on their guard against the pretended omniscience of rational critics, and that to remember that pompous pronouncements by individuals against the Truth which has stood for two millenniums, are consonant neither with modesty, history, nor Christian experience.—*The Christian*.

Prayer is the key of the day and the lock of the night. We should every day begin and end, bid ourselves good-morrow and good-night with prayer. This will make our labor prosperous and our rest sweet.—Berkeley.