

The Quiet Hour.

Jesus and Peter.

S. S. LESSON.—May 5th 1901; John 21: 15-22.
GOLDEN TEXT.—John 21: 17. Lovest thou me?

Simon, son of Jonas, v. 15. The disciple who had basely and repeatedly denied his Master in the hall of the High Priest, did not deserve to be called Peter, the "rock-man." The contrast between Simon and Peter is the contrast between what we are in ourselves and what the grace of Christ can make of us. Simon asserting with oaths and curses that he does not know Jesus (John 18: 25-27.) and Peter, declaring in the teeth of his enemies that he will obey God rather than man (Acts 4: 19, 20.) are the same person. There he was trusting in self and tell; here he was trusting in Christ and stood fast. The grace that did so much for Simon can do as much for us.

Lovest thou me more than these? v. 15. Judson tells of a Karen woman who offered herself for baptism. "After the usual examination, I enquired whether she could give up her ornaments for Christ. It was an unexpected blow. I explained the spirit of the Gospel; I appealed to her consciousness of vanity; I read to her the apostle's prohibition (1 Tim. 2: 9.) She looked again and again to her handsome necklace: and then, with an air of modest decision that would adorn beyond all ornaments any Christian in the land, she took it off, saying, "I love Christ more than these!"

Lovest thou me? v. 15. He alone who loves is fit to serve, if the service is to be from any higher motive than wages; and whole-hearted service, a service that never stops to count the cost, or having counted the cost, rejoices to pay it even to tears and blood, is the truest evidence of genuine love.

Feed my lambs, v. 15. Here is a word which teachers and preachers do well to remember. "The work begins with the little lambskins. Put the food therefore where they can get at it. Some preach as though the Lord said, 'Feed my camelpards.' Nothing but giraffes would be able to reach it from the lofty rack in which they place the food."—Spurgeon.

Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? v. 17. It recalled his three-fold denial and the very fact that he looked back at that sin with grief, repentance and hatred, was the surest of signs that he loved Christ. In the soul, as in mechanics, action and reaction are equal. Our hatred of sin is the measure of our love to Christ the Holy One.

Feed my sheep, v. 17. There is distinct progress in the ideas—(1) 'Feed my lambs: (2) Rule (shepherd) my sheep: (3) Feed my little sheep.' First, let Peter, let the apostolic company, let all preachers and teachers, learn the delicate duty of supplying the just and appropriate nourishment to those that are young in years as in graces; then let them also learn to guide, direct, protect from outward foes, the mature disciples; and preserve the discipline of the flock, seeking the lost sheep till it be found; and they will find that a third duty emerges. The sheep that are young in heart, the old men that are child-like in spirit, the trembling sheep that require even more care than the lambs themselves, are specially thrown upon the shepherd's care."—Reynolds.

When thou wast young thou girdest thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldst, v. 18.

Youth is the period of freedom. It is then that we can choose our path untrammelled, unfettered by our past. Life is then a block of unhewn marble waiting for us to fashion it into a shape of beauty. It is then an unwritten page ready for us to inscribe upon it the story of noble deeds. Choice is more difficult when we are old, because we have then formed habits whose marks we must carry to the grave.

And when he had spoken this, he saith unto him, Follow me, v. 19. It was a bitter death that Peter was to die. But whatever he should be called to endure, he would be following Christ. If the master appoints for any of His disciples a path of suffering and sorrow, He comforts them by telling them that He has trodden it before them. They will find His footprints in the way. He came through it all and is crowned with glory. So He will bring us safely through all we have to endure for Him.

The disciple whom Jesus loved following, v. 20. It is a good thing to follow Jesus as Peter did in obedience to His express command. It is a better thing to follow as John did at the bidding of the heart. The self-surrender of John, who never thought of not following is our pattern.

Lord, and what shall this man do? v. 21. Our attention is far too frequently turned to the lot and duty of others. We often envy our neighbors, thinking that their condition is so much happier than ours. The truth is that for the child of God there is no place better than his own, because God has placed him there. Let us bear our cross lovingly and cheerfully and not envy others the crosses which we foolishly think lighter and easier than ours. To exchange crosses for a day would likely cure the folly.

In the Shadow of God's Presence.

Under the shadow of God's presence
O how safe my life appears,
Though mine heart is full of sorrow,
And mine eyes be full of tears.

I am quickly helped and strengthened
When I lift my soul in prayer.
For the shadow of God's presence
Is around me everywhere.

Often in my life's confusion,
Scarcely knowing where I stand,
Do I feel a sacred presence
And by faith I grasp the hand

That I know will guide me safely
Through this world of sin and care,
For the shadow of God's presence
Is around me everywhere.

The Law of Service to God.

"Not only the slave, but also the master, is under the law of service to God. The Bible solves the problem of capital and labor. There is but one law for employer and employee in the Word of God. "And ye masters do the same things unto them, forbearing threatening, knowing that your Master also is in heaven, neither is there respect of persons with Him." If that Word were regarded, the work of Commissions to investigate strikes would never have to be done. The insolence of capital is as bad as the insolence of labor. But the law of Christian service, applied to capital and labor and poverty alike, would work wonders in the industrial world."—Christian Intelligencer.

The Blessing in Meditation.

Many Christians who say their prayers regularly never meditate. The very words seem to them rather to belong to religious phraseology than to describe anything actual and practical in Christian life. Yet they little know how much they lose, especially with reference to the life of our Lord and Saviour, by neglecting this most healthful and fruitful exercise.

You say you do not know how to set about it. Very well, try something of this kind. After saying your morning prayers, open a New Testament, and ask God to enable you to realize His presence, and to send His Holy Spirit to enlighten and guide you. Then read two or three verses or a short paragraph, a miracle, a parable, a part of a discourse, as the case may be. Do not think of its grammatical or historical or literary aspects, but say, "What do these words say to me? What truth do they teach? What fault do they correct? What resolution do they make necessary?" If earnest, you will soon see your way. Scripture is so full of meanings that the real difficulty is which to select out of its abundance. Then having decided on the main lessons of the passage, pray earnestly that you may practically remember them, and turn them in whatever way to the best account.

The whole exercise need not take up more than ten minutes, but at the end of a year it will, if regularly practiced, have made a great difference in matters which most intimately concern the soul.—Canon Liddon.

Prayer.

Our Father in heaven, we know Thee through Jesus Christ our Lord. We bless Thee, for Thy mercies have been renewed in our life day by day. Every hour has brought its own miracle of grace, every moment has seen some fresh display of Thy patience or providential care. We put our life into Thy keeping. We know not when its last breathings shall be; help us, therefore, to be diligent with all filial anxiety to do that which is right in Thy sight, and to serve well our day and generation. Deliver us from the torment of fear, and create in us that overflowing joyousness which comes of complete trust in Thee. Pity us when we are infirm and little in soul and purpose, save us when we are most conscious of aggravated guilt, fill our visions with Thy beauty when that which is of the earth would tempt us with meaner attractions. The Lord make our souls lovely with His grace and strong with His strength. And this we ask for Jesus' sake. Amen.—Selected.

The congregation and the Sabbath school should be the same in numbers. The older people should mostly attend the Sabbath school, as well as the church service, and the children should, for the most part, be with their parents in both services.

Nothing is eternal but that which is done for God. That which is done for self dies. Perhaps it is not wrong, but it perishes. That which ends in self is mortal: that alone which goes out of self into God lasts forever.—F. W. Robertson.

Sin would not be so deadly if the devil could not wear a mask.

God never forgets the man who is willing to take a hard place.

Men famishing for righteousness cannot be fed on flowers of rhetoric.

If you would grow more in grace, try praying more for people you don't like.