

The Quiet Hour.

Greeks Seeking Jesus *

BY JOHN F. CONWAY, D.D.

Triumph is as different from glory as tow is from silk. These Greeks had gazed open-eyed on Jesus' spectacular triumph; now they caught a fore-glimpse of His real glory; and how it must have dumfounded them. It staggers the world yet to realize that, in practice as well as theory, unselfishness and glory are synonymous. Many college boys, and some emperors, to-day, want to spell glory, "g-o-r-y"!

It is not strange that the Greeks should have come to Jesus by the way of the two disciples that bore Greek names. Men are continually coming to Jesus by the round-about way of some Philip or Andrew, who has the same nationality, or trade, or something else, as themselves. Each one of us has something in common with some one else, that makes it easier for that one to approach Jesus through us than by any other way; it may be home-sick memories of the town from which we both came, it may be a workman's greasy suit of overalls, or it may be the marks of university culture. The main thing is for us to live near enough to Jesus to be useful in guiding others to Him.

Where Do You Seek Christ?

God's people—the church—are the natural sympathy-links through which the outside world can most easily lay hold upon with Jesus. And if a man is as sincere an inquirer after Jesus as those Greeks were, he will naturally take the most likely route to the Christ he wants to reach—the church services and fellowship.

Why, to be sure, the most direct way to a knowledge of God as a Saviour is through those He has saved. What does nature know about redeeming grace, compared with a redeemed Philip? What can the trees or brooks or flowers tell a man of the winsomeness of Jesus' personality, compared with Andrew who has walked miles by His side?

Christ-Seekers or Sightseers.

Whatever the percentage of curiosity in the mind of the Greeks, they were more than mere sightseers. They did not say, "We would see Jesus," as they would have said, "Show us your temple," or, "We would see the wonderful cisterns Solomon built," or, "Take us to Herod's palace." Clearly the request was for an interview, not for a mere peep-show. They did not ask to see Him as the wonder of the hour, but as "the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world."

Calvary's Wonderful Harvest.

Jesus' visitors must have had ambitious notions of His greatness buzzing in their heads after that triumphal procession, and the irresistible power displayed in cleansing the temple, but when He spoke about the loss of His life as His glorification, it was as though the world had been turned suddenly upside-down. They began to see that it was not glory to lead a street procession, borne above the heads of the acclaiming multitudes. It was glory to follow, in a far different procession, bearing a cross weighted with the world's burden of sin and woe. They had to rub their eyes and look a second time at the picture. *That*, His real triumphal procession, and the scene of day before yester-

day only a mockery? Yes, for the Sunday procession brought only a harvest of revilers on Friday. But the second procession, to Calvary, in which were buried all the false hopes excited by the glamour of earthly pomp in the first, brought a harvest of redeemed men and women.

But what is this about hating my life? Must I really do it? In the stoic's meaning of the word—No! In the way the savage debases and cheapens human life—No! As the prodigal hates the life he wastes in excesses—No! Science cries, No! Humanity exclaims, No!

The Way to "Hate" Life.

But in what way must I hate my life? As the fireman that plunges into the burning building after a sleeping child, with a thousand chances against him, throws his splendidly endowed life into flame and smoke, as though it were no more than the life of a gnat. As the physician goes into the midst of the plague to wrest from it the secret that will remove its sting, counting himself and all his years of training a small offering to lay on the altar of humanity.

Hate our lives? Yes if they are so contemptibly self-centred as to be indifferent to the man that lives on the other side of a brick wall from us, Hate the selfish life that keeps others in the house going from morning till night, with weary footsteps, from some of which we might have saved them had we not loved ease too well. Hate the life that sends the stranger from the church, back to his cheerless boarding-house, homeless and heart-sick for the cordiality we might have expressed, had we not been too encrusted in pride to give the greeting. Hate the life that tickles its own palate with luxuries, pampers itself with easy living, and seals its ears against the cry of the heathen and the beggar, with the plea, "I can't afford to give."

Hard Things Made Easy.

How shall I express-my hatred of such a life? Crucify it. But that is so hard. Is it hard for the farmer to throw away his last bushel of grain in order to get twenty from it in a few months. Is it hard for the limestone of the mineral kingdom to be crushed and burned to become absorbed into the grain in the vegetable kingdom above? Is it hard for the tissues of the brain to be burnt up in mental action to be transformed into the thought of an immortal mind? All that, at first, seems hard; but is it hard to give up the lower for the higher?

When we have won the victory, the heavenly voice will speak. It will not need to speak for our sakes; we shall be tingling with the thrill of conquest. But God will speak by our victory to all the weak kneed, doubtful, and hesitating ones. He will say to them, "See, here is glory; that you live in your heart and brain, instead of your stomach or nerves; that you do business according to the Golden Rule, if you die as poor as a church mouse; that you turn down your wine-glasses at the social board, and uphold the same standard of purity for men as for women, though you lose social invitations you covet, and are counted a prude by some."

And here is the gist of it all; the man that is able to do all this must have the provision that Jesus did, to see as already accomplished the triumphs of His kingdom

for the centuries to come. So may we have visions of coming triumphs. This is what nerves men to be heroes. Without it we are oppressed by the awful sinfulness of this world and the seeming triumph of Satan. But, looking forward to the sure triumphs of the cross, we, with Jesus, can see Satan cast down, and the love that streams from the cross triumphant over all the world.—Christian Endeavor World.

The Need of the Hour.

In nearly all churches there are problems of skepticisms, weak faith, indifference and inactivity in Christian service clamoring for solution. In most congregations there are persons who dislike a positive gospel. They do not quite believe in man's lost estate, in the necessity of forgiveness through a crucified Saviour, or regeneration through the agency of the Holy Spirit. With many the form of so-called sound words has lost its effectiveness. With most men mere assertion or dogmatism is offensive. The chief need of to-day is that this condition of things should be removed, for, while certain changes in expression may be necessary, truth has not changed. Man is still a sinner. He cannot gain eternal life apart from the aid of the Holy Spirit. Apprehensions of truth, and even of the nature of the work of the Saviour, may not always remain the same, but Jesus Christ himself is the same, yesterday, to-day and forever. Believers to-day ought to be better able to present him to their fellow-men than those who lived in the sixteenth or in the eighteenth century. Every year brings new witnesses to his power and grace. His promises to give the spirit to those who ask for him are verified before our eyes. We can no more deny this than we can deny the ordinary experiences of daily life. This gift of the Spirit can bring new life to the churches, and it is needed to-day as no other. Skepticism cannot be met by argument or counter assertion. Spiritual power alone can overthrow it. It cannot survive in a spiritual atmosphere. Neither can indifference, nor so-called Christian inactivity.—Congregationalist.

Begin Now.

The Christian who is constantly waiting for great opportunities to do good will never be anything more than an unprofitable servant. J. Hudson Taylor tells of a young Christian who had received Christ as his Saviour, but who said to the missionary that he would wait until he learned more about Him before making a public profession.

"Well," said Mr. Taylor, "I have a question to ask you. When you light a candle, do you light it to make the candle more comfortable?"

"Certainly not," said the other, "but in order that it may give more light."

"When it is half burnt down, do you expect that it will first become useful?"

"No, as soon as I light it."

"Very well," said the missionary promptly, "go thou and do likewise; begin at once."

The New York Tribune makes this not unjust criticism upon the preaching of to-day. It says: "The preaching of the day does not lack eloquence, does not lack earnestness, does not lack scholarship, does not lack vigor; but it does lack directness, boldness, frankness. It would be better calculated to arouse and quicken if it were less genteel."

*Sunday School Lesson for January 20.—Gospel Text—John 12:21. We would see Jesus.