

The Quiet Hour.

Jesus Ascends Into Heaven.

S. S. LESSON—MAY 10TH, 1901 : Luke 24:44-53; ACTS 1: 1-11.

GOLDEN TEXT.—Luke 24:51. While He blessed them, He was parted from them, and carried into heaven.

That all things must be fulfilled, which were written, Luke 24:44. Jesus ever put high honor upon the written Word. And, in His time, the written Word was the Old Testament Scriptures. He held them to be of God, and declared (John 5:39) that they testified of Himself. Jesus entered into no minute dissection of the books of the Old Testament, but, taking them as they were, stamped them with His acceptance. This does not mean that they are not to be studied closely and critically, with a view to finding out when each book was written, of what materials composed, who its author, what its relationships to the other books and to the whole scheme of revelation. Such questions and lines of research are legitimate and truth has nothing to fear, and everything to hope, from honest and reverent study of the books. But it steadies one amidst the conflicting conclusions regarding a thousand points of detail, to know that the Lord from heaven received and taught the Old Testament as verily God's book, and found Himself and His work as the world's Redeemer, therein foreshadowed and foretold.

That repentance and remission of sins should be preached, v. 47. These words go to the very heart of things, and mark the pathway for the preacher and teacher. What men most need to do is to repent, and what they most need to receive is remission of sins. To be forgiven and to be holy—what can come closer to what we need and what God demands of us? Should the teacher of children hesitate to deal with topics of such solemnity? Are they too hard to be understood or too serious for the little ones? On the contrary, the very youngest can understand "repentance," for what else does it mean but to be sorry for doing wrong and to begin to do right. And the meaning of "remission of sins" is within the grasp of any child who has learned to know how a loving mother or father can forgive and forget a fault. Let the children have a glimpse of these deep truths. Children love to gaze into the sky, or at the mountains, or out upon the sea. Let them learn that, so far as they are concerned, the great thing in life is to turn away from evil and to be good; and that as for God, He is gracious—oh so gracious—in pardoning all those who truly repent and unfeignedly believe.

Tarry . . . until, v. 49; "until ye be endued with power from on high." Without this heavenly power they were helpless; and the best service they could render their Lord and Master, was just to wait for it. Fuss and hurry do not guarantee success; nor will the wisest plans that we can lay, or the hardest work that we can do. Nothing succeeds in God's work but God working with us. Are we then to rest idly on our oars until He sends the Holy Spirit, who alone can make our work effectual? The answer is given in the early chapters of the Acts. The disciples waited, but they waited with earnest and united prayer in the sweet spirit of brotherhood, and with an eager desire to enter upon acting service for their Lord. And then the power came and they wrought with effect.

Speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom, Acts 1:3. This was a Council of State, a King consulting with His cabinet. The King was making clear to His councilors the things of His kingdom, the kingdom which they were to spread abroad throughout the whole earth. Those were momentous days. It was, not merely the beginning of a new century, but of a new era. The "things pertaining to the kingdom" are the things that make earth heavenly and open heaven to men, when earth is done.

Wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel? v. 6. A natural enough question, but petty and mean in comparison with the great things their Lord contemplated for them. Even yet, notwithstanding all that they had seen of Him and heard from His lips, these disciples hoped for little beyond their own nation restored to its former glory: a small matter, at the best. What their Master has in sight was a world restored to the glory of righteousness and those eleven men as the leaders in the worldwide and age-long enterprise. It is ever thus, God intending us for greater things, for loftier character and grander service, than we are willing to believe.

I will not faint, but trust in God,

Who thus my lot hath given;

He leads me by the thorny road,

Which is the road to heaven.

Thou'st said my day that lasts so long,

At evening I shall have a song;

Thou'lt dim my day until the night,

At evening-time there shall be light.

—Rossetti.

Good Guide Book.

Let no one forget that a Bible in the home and a Bible in the hand, is of no use unless it also becomes a Bible in the heart. "Thy word have I hid in mine heart," says the Psalmist, "that I might not sin against thee," *Psa. cxix, 11*. And again: "The law of God is in his heart; none of his steps shall slide," *Ps. xxxvii, 31*. When pedestrians travel in Switzerland, they always have their guide-book with them. If you are in a mountain pass, doubtful as to your path, of what use is your guide-book if you have left it in your trunk at home? It must be either in your heart or in your hand, so that you can quickly turn to it for guidance. You can easily tell strangers in Switzerland by their red guide-books which they have with them. So the Christians travelling through the sinful world need a constantly present guide-book, and just this God has given them in the Bible. If any man loses his way with a good guide in his very hands, is he not to blame?

A true faith can no more be separated from good works than the light of the candle can from its heat, or the heat from its light.
—Jonathan Edwards.

Practising music, if it is to prepare one for the concert hall, must be done in the practise room as painstakingly as if before an audience. So, too, our religion will never be the light of the world unless first it shines brightly in our small corner.

The Revision of the Standards.

(Communicated.)

The cry in the United States to alter the standards of the Presbyterian Church or formulate a new creed, to which a city contemporary lately gave prominence in its columns, is the cry of a minority of only a small section—what is it to twenty millions who still stand for the old Confession of Faith? Those men who wish to tinker the creed are dying for notoriety, and, for the most part, held these unorthodox opinions before they were admitted into the church. Belonging to other denominations and poorly paid they sought admission, and by a false liberalism and charity in presbyteries were received and enrolled. Discussions in the General Assembly, the supreme court of the church, have again and again proved that the church is sound at the core and by an overwhelming majority opposed to innovation. There are thousands of ministers and elders in the U. States and all over the world, who with united front and in solid phalanx, will oppose any and every attempt of the enemies of the truth from *without or within* to alter one chapter or section of a chapter in that grand old symbol, devised under royal authority by the piety and learning of the Westminster divines. Their faith in it and attachment to its principles are less only in degree than their faith and attachment to the Word of God, which it so logically and clearly represents. There is *no doctrine* in the Bible which has not its legitimate place in either the Larger and Shorter Catechisms or the Westminster Confession of Faith and the Sum of Saving Knowledge. God's love to man (not to sin or sinners *per se*), and the work of the Holy Spirit in the economy of redemption are set forth, and for every doctrine the proofs of Scripture. Dr. De Witt in the late convention at New York represented the views of the church at large when he bore noble testimony to this, and called upon his ministerial brethren to stand firm, faithful to their profession and valiant for the truth, at a time when the black forces of infidelity were up, and the waves of doubt and scepticism rolling over all the Christian churches.

To show how much the agitation for a new creed has been exaggerated it is only necessary to quote the figures and to inform the public, and especially our own people, that while 37 presbyteries of the United States have asked a change, some of them a very slight change, 195 presbyteries have made no proposals at all. The conservative element is strong enough not only to bear the brunt of the attack, but to act in a spirit of calm forbearance toward those who take the opposite view. In deference to the wishes of those brethren, committees have been appointed from time to time to consider and report on the question of revision.

At a late meeting of the sub-committee on the revision of the creed held in Pittsburg it was resolved to recommend that the General Assembly at its coming session in May appoint a special committee to prepare a brief summary of the reformed faith bearing the same relation to the confession which the shorter catechism bears to the larger catechism, and formed on the general model of the creed prepared for the assembly of 1892, or the articles of faith of the Presbyterian church, of England, both of which documents are appended to the committee report and submitted to the Assembly to be referred to the committee that may be appointed.

"This summary is not to be a substitute for the Confession, and is not to affect the