

# The Quiet Hour

For Dominion Presbyterian.

## The River of Salvation.\*

To people who dwell in a dry and thirsty land, the gift of water is one of God's greatest blessings; the gentle shower, the bubbling spring and the flowing river are appropriate figures of grace and salvation. Thirst is one of the most striking symbols of spiritual need and desire. "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled." "Ho every one that thirsteth come ye to the waters, and ye that have no money come buy wine and milk without money and without price." "And let him that is athirst come and take the water of life freely." These are among the most precious words contained in the sacred book, and they all have the same underlying idea, the promise of living water to the people who are thirsting after God.

This, then, is a vision of a future time of peace and blessing, and our lesson selects as one feature for our special consideration, salvation under the figure of abundant, sweet and wholesome waters, waters proceeding from the temple and carrying healthful influences all around. The writer of Rev. 22:1 no doubt had Ezekiel's vision in mind when he wrote: "He showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb, and in the midst of it, and on either side of it, was there the tree of life bearing twelve manner of fruits, and the leaves of the trees were for the healing of the nations." The real fulfillment of the vision is in the healing, uplifting influence of the Christian religion; rich fulfillment has already been given, but there is much more to follow. Compare the words in Zach. 13:1: "In that day there shall be a fountain open for sin and uncleanness for the house of David and for the inhabitants of Jerusalem." 14:8-9: "In that day living waters shall go out from Jerusalem." To the Jewish prophet Jerusalem was naturally the centre of the world, and the temple of God the source of all healing and helpfulness; to us the "house of God" has a large meaning, less local and material, more spiritual and universal. But at that time the voice of Jewish prophecy was the highest and clearest. This great reality was to the prophet a matter of faith, not of sensuous, but of spiritual insight. Seeking God, he was guided to see the picture which was so full of comfort and hope. The centre of it is in the house of God; the ancient prophet could not conceive of a purer life and a greater prosperity except as the result of a nobler religion; the living waters must proceed from the place of God's manifested presence. The river issued from beneath the altar of the most high God. Jerusalem had only a small stream, which was very insignificant compared with the great rivers of the world, but here we have the picture of a stream which soon swells out into rich and abundant waters, "up to the ankles," "to the knees," "to the loins," then "waters to swim in." Thus, indeed, has proved the contribution of Jerusalem to the life of the world. From that place has gone

\*International Sunday-school lesson for August 20th.—Ezekiel 47:1-12. Golden Text.—Rev. 22:17.

forth a mighty river of instruction and stimulus. Here it is symbolised by the healing influence of the mystical river. Wherever this river comes there is life and beauty, living creatures abound and trees spring up on the banks; the scene everywhere is one of gladness and fruitfulness. Wherever the land has been diseased, and there are waste places, the coming of the river brings healing and new life; no malarial fever-breeding influence can continue where its breath prevails. By its influence trees shall live, bringing forth all kinds of meat, so that men shall find within easy reach appropriate food and medicine. This picture is Oriental, but the facts that it represents speak with power to men of all classes and climates in all directions the river goes and from all sides the grateful worshippers will come, for the city of God stands four square, having its gates to north, south, east and west, so that the seekers of the true God from every quarter may enter in. W. G. T.

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By Nicol Moffatt.

Remember the night Nicodemus discussed with Jesus the only true way of reforming men—the new birth? You may still have to ask, childlike, "how can these things be?" and be contented with the answer: "We speak that we do know." But the means and results are not withheld from you. Try them and see how they work in your case. Put your heart into the furnace of holiness and you will run from sin. Sit down with the Sermon on the Mount before you, and you will want to live a better life. Bend your will as well as your knee and wait for the Lord to draw near. There will be no sound of His foot, no press of His hand. But He is with the soul in renewing power. Now turn to that scene in heaven—an only Son, the Son of God, stooping to bear the load of a world's guilt. Restrain not the tears; you and I have heaped on our share. Spare not the time to gaze; prophets longed to see this day. Withhold not the praise; life and home and all are free.

But it is for service you were saved. Wait a season, therefore, until you are endued with power. It is the heart's school you must pass, to be strong and furnished for life. Explore the Word, walk straightly, live in the presence, for not many days hence He will appoint you to your work.

So when my Savior calls, I rise  
And calmly do my best;  
Leaving to Him, with silent eyes  
Of hope and fear, the rest.

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## The Secret of Rich Christian Experience.

By Rev. B. B. Williams.

There is to Christian life a two-fold side, The inner and the outer, the unknown and the known.

All Christian life has, of course, its outward manifestation, but by far the larger part is hidden or unseen. This was the truth

which Paul desired to teach the Colossians when he wrote: "Your life is hid with Christ in God." Rooted in God, there is evermore a rich reserve behind the visible expression. It would be singularly unfortunate if it were otherwise. Suppose the life of a tree were expressed fully in foliage, blossom, and fruit—what then? Its valued life would cease. It lives on from year to year because the fullness of its life is not outwardly embodied.

The time for the full manifestation of Christian life is not yet; that is to come; at present it is in a large measure hidden.

Take the matter of penitential sorrow. Is not this, for the most part, hidden or unseen? When in great grief of spirit we mourn over our shortcomings and sins, when the vision of our transgressions clouds our sky, we do not think it well to take our stand in some public place and parade our anguish by smiting upon our breasts—nay, we retire into our chamber and there, in secret, confess and weep.

The love that we bear to the Savior by reason of His love to us—is not this, to a great extent, hidden or unseen?

We are ever—if Christianly healthy—ready to speak of Christ and for Christ; ready to testify concerning the deep, unchanging love to us, but of our love to Him we are chary to speak.

The trust which we repose in God—is not this largely hidden? Perhaps the grandest avowal of trust in God on record is this: "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him." When in some measure we catch the spirit of these words, and are moved to use them, we never think of shouting them out in the ear of the world; they are uttered by us as the low, soft whisper of the soul in the ear of God.

How very little, comparatively, those who lie nearest to us know of our most real, our deepest, richest Christian experience! We feel instinctively that it is too sacred for common talk. The curiosity that would pry into the inmost chamber of our spirits, we resent—and rightly, too.

There are transfiguration moments—bridal hours of the soul—which we shrink from laying bare even to our dearest friends. Not easily should we forgive ourselves if we were to utter the secrets of high and close intercourse with our Lord.

There is a sad lack of spiritual delicacy in persons who do not understand that not everything which is a matter of experience is therefore a subject for conversation; we cannot speak openly of such subjects without taking away their bloom—without vulgarizing them.

To each of His servants God gives a white stone, and in that stone a new name, which no man knoweth save he that receiveth it.

True modesty forbids the attempt at full disclosure. But if it were perfectly legitimate to speak openly and fully of our joys and griefs, our hopes and fears, our elevations and depressions, what language is there at our command strong enough, rich enough, to give fair expression to that which is deepest and best in us by the grace of God? There is none.

"No great thinker ever lived and taught you all  
The wonders that his soul received;  
No true painter ever set on canvass all  
The glorious visions he conceived.  
No real poet wrote in numbers all  
His dream, but the Divinest part  
Hidden from all the world, spake to him  
only  
In the voiceless silence of the heart.

So will love, for love and art united  
Are twin sisters, different, yet the same;  
Poor, indeed, would be the love of any  
Who could find its full and perfect name.  
Love may strive, but vain is the endeavor,  
All its boundless riches to unfold;  
Still its truest, deepest secret lingers  
Ever in its deepest depths untold."