

## The Quiet Hour.

### Paul's Journey to Jerusalem.

S. S. LESSON—Acts 21: 3-14. April 26, 1903.

GOLDEN TEXT—Acts 21: 14. The will of the Lord be done.

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And finding disciples, v. 4. The Christians of Tyre were obscure people, and it was not easy to find them in the great city, but they were members of a kingdom which still remains and grows, while the many splendid buildings of their city have fallen into ruin and its commercial greatness has passed away. These humble believers were doing their part in the building of that enduring kingdom, and the apostle searched them out to give them encouragement and stimulus. The eye of One greater than Paul rests upon those who, however unknown and unnoticed by men, are faithfully serving Him. No effort of theirs will be overlooked by Him or fail to receive its reward.

He should not go up to Jerusalem, v. 4. It is wrong and foolish for us to run into danger, unless it lies in the path of duty. The example of Paul himself escaping from the city of Damascus by night, when his life was in peril in that city, shows that it is not right for us to run risks when they can be avoided without disobedience to the commands of God and the voice of conscience. But when the voice of duty calls us clearly into any course, we are bound to follow in spite of every threatening calamity, and we may be sure that when our great Leader calls us, He will give to us the needed courage.

They all brought us on our way, v. 5. We may be sure that Paul was heartened for what lay before Him, by the loving interest and tender concern of his friends. Our Lord Himself was cheered in prospect of the cross by the love of the woman who broke the alabaster box and anointed Him with its precious perfume. And there is no disciple, however humble, who cannot, by kindly word or deed, win the commendation, "She hath done what she could."

Kneeling down on the shore, v. 5. The yellow sands heard earnest petitions, we may be sure, that day at Tyre. When fear fronts us we pray with real purpose. It is need that drives us to God, and then the dumb lips become unsealed, and we pour out our longings into His ear. Our prayers are often formal and meaningless because the sense of need is dim and faint in the heart.

We took ship; and they returned home again, v. 6. All our religious privileges flow of their real purpose if they do not result in the faithful discharge of every day duty. A Sabbath service should not be considered as ended when we leave the church. Its influence for good is only begun and should continue to be felt by us in all the work and intercourse of the week.

One day, v. 7. A very little, or a great deal, may be accomplished in a day. It depends upon our will. We may make the day historic for good or for evil. We may begin the day with the holy resolve that God will be in our thoughts, or we may neglect all our religious duties and suffer its precious hours to slip by without any blessing. And then, our life history is only a combination of days. Let us not refuse to do things because we have only one day.

Some people with a single day accomplish more than others with a whole year.

Four daughters, v. 9. It is a great privilege to have godly parents and to be brought up in a Christian home. But great responsibilities rest upon those children who enjoy this privilege. More is properly expected of them than of others not so highly favored, and their condemnation will be all the greater, if they fail to follow the good example which has been set before them.

Besought him not to go, v. 12. Obstacles in the path of duty are intended to strengthen our character. Just as severe exercise and hard work increase muscular strength, so the difficulties of life, if they are faced bravely and manfully, will impart to us increased moral vigor.

What mean ye to weep, v. 13. We ought not to hinder others in doing what they regard as their duty. Each one has to decide much of this for himself, and it is unwise to be too anxious to give advice to others. Let each man be fully persuaded in his own mind. There often comes a time when even personal affection has to give place to a higher call.

I am ready . . . to die . . . for the name of the Lord Jesus, v. 13. This verse must be added to the lesson. In it Paul teaches us the secret of Christian endurance. His own life of Christian service began with his vision of the risen Lord, on the road to Damascus and the vision never faded from his mind. From that moment he was bound to the Saviour with the chains of a devotion which no power on earth could break or weaken. Whatever path his great Leader pointed out to him, he entered without question and without hesitation. He lived and served under the constraining influence of Christ's love to him. The same power should be supreme in our lives. Truly to see Christ as our Saviour, will make us, as it made Paul, ready to follow wherever He leads, and to undertake any task He assigns us.

### Bible Study: One Clause at a Time.

No. 3. Luke 1-13.

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"Hallowed be Thy name."

When a child I used to wonder why the Lord Jesus, in His own prayer, had told us to ask for so many things that I did not want. I could enter intelligently into it only when it came to "Give us this day our daily bread." But now I thank Him with all my heart for such mighty petitions put into our mouth by His own direct command. He has thus stamped each one with a seven fold seal. "This is emphatically according to *Thy will*." John has told us how we may present such petitions. "This is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He heareth us. And if we know that He hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of Him." Surely then, in testimony of our desire and assurance to the heart, we can add the double *Amen, so be it, and so it shall be*.

"Hallowed be Thy name." Back of this petition is another, "Father, glorify Thy name," for God's name must be glorified—it must be so manifested as to be known—before it can be hallowed. Are not these two prayers really identical? As surely as

our Father's name is known, so surely will it be hallowed. It is only because we do not know the glory of that name, or because so very little of its glory has shined out upon us, that we so feebly hallow it.

What the Church needs is to *know God*. "This is life eternal, that they might know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent." Every promise becomes easy to believe as we know the God who has spoken them. The simplest promise staggers the faith if we know God but by the hearing of the ear. It is possible to pass a theological examination with the greatest credit and carry the badge of perfect orthodoxy, and yet *not* know God—not see one ray of His Divine glory.

It is this inner knowledge of the name of God that leads the heart of man to watch for His simplest word and find delight in fulfilling His smallest command. Honouring His word and doing His will—this is hallowing His name. "They that know Thy name will put their trust in Thee." They that do not know Thy name will not—*can* not—put their trust in Thee—cannot hallow Thy name.

"Hallowed be Thy name." In this petition we take our place at Christ's side and send up with Him the prayer that expresses His whole heart—"Father glorify Thy name." "Father, the hour is come, glorify Thy Son, that Thy Son also may glorify Thee." His highest, dearest object in the answer of every prayer is given in these words, "I will do it, that the Father may be glorified (manifested, known, trusted, loved, honoured) in the Son."

### What are the decrees of God?

The decrees of God are His eternal purpose, according to the counsel of His will, whereby, for His own glory, He hath foreordained whatsoever comes to pass.

Long after childhood had passed, this statement of the great purpose in all God's proceedings puzzled me. I knew it was scriptural, and never thought of disbelieving it. But it puzzled me. It is not morally excellent in me, full well I knew, to make my own glory the prominent object in life. But I am made in the image of God. How then can that be morally excellent in Him which is morally detestible in me? It was a complete puzzle, but I waited.

It was while seeking to teach the Shorter Catechism to a class of students that the light came.

Man has been made in the image of God. That is the key to the whole mystery. Man, as created, was a tiny counterpart of God Himself in every essential attribute. How is this tiny counterpart to be nourished up into an ever-enriching approximation to the infinite Original? It is only the inflowing of the knowledge of God that will do it. "Man shall not live (and develop) by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God"—but by every revealer that God has given of Himself.

Faith grows according to our apprehension of God's faithfulness; if we fail to see that faithfulness, there will be no faith. Courage springs up as we are enabled to see His power, and that power becomes ours as by faith in the written promise, we lay hold upon it. Calmness of confidence comes as we apprehend the unerringness of His wisdom, and that wisdom becomes ours for practical purposes as faith sees its way clear to appropriate it. Man is nourished up toward "the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ, by apprehending more and more what God has revealed of Himself, by simply 'seeing the glory of God.'"