

# The Quiet Hour

## The Centurion's Servant Healed.\*

BY WAYLAND HOYT, D.D.

"A certain centurion" (v. 2). A centurion was a Roman military officer, set over a hundred men, corresponding in rank to our captain. It is noteworthy that in every instance the New Testament speaks well of the centurions who figure in it. A man may be a good Christian and a good soldier.

"Servant" (v. 2). Literally, "slave." The abolition of slavery is instance of the steadily working influence of Christianity. Christianity teaches and surely brings more and more to pass, the recognition of the essential rights and value of the individual man.

"Was dear unto him" (v. 2). "The master's interests are the servant's care; and to the master the dependent is more than 'a hand'." Thus it ought to be. That is a meagre religion which does not benignantly embrace employees in kitchen, factory, store. This centurion's spirit is the best remedy for "strikes." Let the pain and danger of another, even of a very lowly one, urge to action on your part.

"He heard concerning Jesus" (v. 3). How much the centurion had heard concerning Jesus we do not know, but the fame of Jesus is the fame of a helper; spread it as widely as you can in this suffering world. I suppose the centurion sent three elders because he thought that they being Jews, and Jesus also being Jew, they would be likelier to persuade Jesus than he, a Gentile, could be. Be thankful for your better knowledge of Jesus; you have learned concerning Him that you may boldly and immediately make known your requests; use your gracious privilege.

"That He would come" (v. 3). Pray for others.

"Himself built us our synagogue" (v. 4). Says Dean Farrar, "If Capernaum be Tell Hum (as I became convinced on the spot itself), then the ruins of it show that it probably possessed two synagogues. The walls of one of these, built of white marble, are of the age of the Herods, and stand just above the lake; it may be the very building here referred to." Learn how a kind deed can bridge prejudice; this centurion built the synagogue. Learn the benignant harvest of a kind deed; you cannot sow kindness and not reap it. You can never afford needlessly to affront people; some day your need of help, even from those you may have snubbed, will come; if this centurion had despised Jews, as Gentiles were wont to, in his time of need he had missed their good offices. Never needlessly make an enemy of anyone.

"Jesus went with them" (v. 6). Here, as in our last lesson, is instance of the quick reply of Jesus to the call of need; never doubt that Jesus will heed our prayer.

"The centurion sent friends to him" (v. 6). These verses tell of this centurion's second thought while the first messengers are gone. First second thought: "I am not worthy." But, as Augustine says, "By saying that he was unworthy, he showed himself worthy of Christ's entering, not within his walls, but within his heart." Second second thought: Christ's power,—"But say in a word." This is the centurion's argument: "I recognize authority and exert it; if my ranking officer commands me, I obey; if I command the soldiers under me, they obey; in either case a word is enough; surely the great Teacher can say as well his authoritative word; let Him say it; that is sufficient; my servant shall be healed." When we feel our own unworthiness, so feel it that we quickly turn toward and lay hold of Christ's power, we are in good case. Also notice, it is a wise thing to let your occasion teach you religious lessons, as this centurion learned from his soldiership.

"I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel" (v. 9). I count this Scripture an inestimably precious one, because it so clearly reveals to us precisely what, in our Lord's estimation, is great faith. So many imagine that faith means strain, struggle, outcry, passionate seeking, a great inward feeling of something. But what does our Lord, and marvelling at it, call "so great faith"? "But say the word, and my servant shall be healed," said the centurion. "So great faith," answered our Lord. This, then, is great faith; great grip on the word of Christ. In one other place it is said that our Lord marvelled, "And He marvelled because of their unbelief" (Mark 6: 6). Let not our unbelief excite the wonder of our Lord. Rather, let us lay unrelaxing grasp on His great words. You want more faith? Well take a promise of the Saviour, applicable to your special case, and, risking all on it, you will have great faith.

"And they that were sent, returning to the house, found the servant whole" (v. 10). Trust in the word of Christ, and you shall not come to disappointment. You shall find your soul in good health; you shall be able to sing, "It is well with my soul," as you implicitly trust, not yourself, your moods and feelings, but the gracious words of the gracious Christ.

Oh, the joy to see Thee reigning,  
Thee, my own beloved Lord!  
Every tongue Thy name confessing,  
Worship, honor, glory, blessing,  
Brought to Thee with glad accord,  
Thee, my Master, and my Friend,  
Vindicated and enthroned!  
Unto earth's remotest end  
Glorified, adored and owned!

—F. R. Havergal.

For Dominion Presbyterian.

## To Him That Overcometh.

BY REV. M. H. SCOTT, M.A.

As we read Rev. 2 and 3 at the family circle the other evening, it was remarked by one of our number, that she had been reading that the key to the interpretation lay in the fact that the rewards promised bore some relation to the condition, conflicts and trials of each of the churches addressed; but she added it is not clear to me that the fruit of the Tree of Life might not just as well have been promised to any other of the churches as well as to Ephesus. I was then appealed to as to whether I knew of any other key to the situation. My answer was, that the correspondence between the state of the individual church and the promise to the faithful should not be ignored, as in several cases it was sufficiently obvious to claim attention; but that there was a better solution by considering these seven promises in these historical series, and thereby establishing the New Testament church on the basis of the privileges and triumphs of the Old Testament church. Archbishop French says: "It is impossible not to acknowledge here an order parallel to that of the unfolding of the Kingdom of God from its first beginnings on earth, to its glorious consummation in heaven." It is interesting to find in this age of criticism, of the Old Testament especially, that in the last book of the Scriptures the historical accuracy of the leading events of the old Testament history are heartily acknowledged. It cannot be anything else but a mark of Divine wisdom in order to put to shame all doubt and unbelief.

1st.—The promise to Ephesus begins with the Tree of Life in the Paradise of God. These were a reality in the distant past, and there is a home and a blessed life beyond to the faithful in the heavenly Paradise. And this message like the other messages is to all the churches as well as to Ephesus.

2nd.—To the church of Smyrna it was promised "He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death." The second act in the great drama after Paradise, was sin and death and the incomparable promise of life and victory—So this poor persecuted church should some day see the curse abolished, and death swallowed up in victory. The correspondence between the ascription to Christ in v. 8, the condition of the church and the promise in v. 11, is specially fitting.

3rd.—To Pergamos there is the promise of the hidden manna and the white stone with the new name. How fitting that the miracle of forty years standing should be acknowledged here, and the faith of the New Testament church established in an event so momentous, but buried so far back in the past. The weary pilgrimage of modern life has its manna as of yore. This line of historical interpretation fastens us down to the conclusion that the white stone must have had some part in the wilderness journey. Doubtless it refers to the Unin and Thummin as the emblem of Jehovah's communication with his people through the high priest, and established at the outset of this journey. His weary ones are fed, and live in heart communion with him, and to-day are hearing the new name of sonship in the heavenly household.

\*S.S. Lesson IV., April 22. Luke 7: 1-10.

Golden Text.—Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him.—Ps. 103: 13.