

The Quiet Hour.

Paul and Silas at Philippi.

S. S. LESSON—Acts 16: 22-34. Jan. 4, 1903.

GOLDEN TEXT—Acts 16: 31. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.

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Inner prison, v. 24. It was not the first time that the apostles had suffered on behalf of the faith. The world is not ashamed of reviling those who interfere with their plans and success. The followers of Jesus must lay their account with opposition and misunderstanding. "In the world ye shall have tribulation," John 16: 33. "If they have persecuted Me, they will also persecute you," John 15: 20.

Prayed and sang, v. 25. What a unique prison experience! And as they sang the Psalms or some recently composed Christian hymn, the cell would become transformed for them, and they would almost see the Son of God walking in their midst, like the Hebrew children in the fiery furnace, Dan. 3: 25. Prayer is the very life of the Christian, and singing should be his daily habit. To omit one's morning prayer is like forgetting to say "Good morning" to one's friends, and neglecting to talk to them. Singing is the best antidote to grief. If anyone is heavy, let him sing hymns. People lay up money for the future and wish for some support for their old age, but the greatest treasure of all, the richest income, is God Himself, and we lay up treasure with Him by prayer and song.

Prisoners heard, v. 15. Unusual sounds for such a place and time. Curses and groans are replaced by the strains of sweet music. It was a marvellous concert. Some despairing criminal would take hope again, some wayward son would remember the sweet voice of his mother, and change in the heart would come from the service of song. Who can ever tell of the spiritual blessing which prayerful singing has brought to the troubled, sinful world? Let us not refuse to give our share of song in the journey that we take through life.

A great earthquake, v. 26. The God to whom Paul and Silas prayed held the earth in His hands, and could move it at will. The unexpected calamity seems to have surprised these Christians in no way. They trusted God, and perhaps went on singing. "Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed," Ps. 46: 2.

Would have killed himself, v. 27. The height of despair is reached by this man, who thinks of suicide. He has no confidence in the future, that God can guide him and the world. What a terrible condition, when a man despairs of life, and thinks it is no more worth living! Here it is fear that prompts the act. With Judas it was the remorse of sin. God can forgive sin. He can make all things work together for good to those who trust Him.

What must I do to be saved, v. 30. The all important question, and one which teachers must make plain to their scholars. Salvation is rescue from danger, and since the greatest danger is death, salvation is rescue from death. But the only kind of death is not that of the body. There are more awful forms of danger. A man may be dead while yet be alive. This is the death of joy, of peace, of prosperity. When weariness takes possession of the heart, and a sense of des-

pair fills the mind, that is having a mind in some such sad state as this jailer. When Paul was in a condition of despair, he described it as being like unto death, "Oh wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" Rom. 7: 24. Sin and remorse for it are the most bitter sorrows of all—"Sin revived, and I died," Rom. 7: 9. There is a story of a priest of Tibet, a great lama, who went all up and down through India in search of the river of the arrow, in which if a man washed, he was cleansed from all taint and trouble of sin. Our search for the way of life cannot be too earnest and urgent.

Believe on the Lord Jesus, v. 31. Simple but sufficient order. Christ is the only way to the land of peace and safety, Rom. 1: 16; John 3: 16. Faith is not magic, not acceptance of a few doctrines. Faith is union with Christ. It is becoming His friend and follower, it is being admitted into His society, one not of customs, but of life. Jesus teaches us that we can expect forgiveness. "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus," Rom. 8: 1. He drives off the loneliness. For Christ may "dwell in your hearts by faith." He causes the old self to be changed, "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature," 2 Cor. 5: 17. He gives us His peace, John 16: 33.

The same hour of the night, v. 33. A most prompt and practical believer, this jailer, who will not even wait an hour before declaring his faith, and showing his faith by his works. A rebuke and an example, he is to those who in everything except their Christian service are prompt.

David and Goliath.

BY GEO. W. ARMSTRONG.

David and Goliath may be looked upon as representative men. Goliath represented the national God of the Philistines, Dagon; David, the representative of the Lord of Hosts—the God of Israel.

They each represented their respective nations—Israel and Philistia. They each represented the fighting power—the army of these nations. Goliath was the champion of spiritual darkness, moral degeneracy, and heathenism. David the champion of spiritual enlightenment, truth and God. The army of each nation stood on a mountain side and the position of each was strongly entrenched and each army seemed indisposed to become aggressive, or, to leave the protecting shelter their position afforded. Hence, as was not uncommon in those times, the fate of armies and the arbitrament of battle was decided by single combat.

Goliath with his great stature—9 feet 9 inches; his immense strength, as indicated by the weight of the weapons he carried; his foresight and precaution for self protection, as exhibited by the armour he wore; was probably in a position to challenge successfully any individual who could be pitted against him.

Goliath's challenge, though apparently fair, was thinly clad boastfulness, presumption, and self confidence. "Am not I a Philistine?"

King Saul was a man of unusual

stature, still, he, like the rank and file of the army of Israel was afflicted with timidity when he beheld the greater stature of Goliath, "and all Israel were dismayed, and greatly afraid."

Physical prowess may overawe timidity and fear is always weak.

This boastful, defying Philistine relied upon his size, his strength, his weapons, his armour, all of which were perishable and proved ineffectual for his safety and success. Goliath must have been a stupendous personage, and in his armour terrible to behold, for "All the men of Israel saw the man, fled from him, and were sore afraid." It is an awful thing when "the army of the living God" quails before an arm of flesh. Israel was humiliated by her timidity and God had to teach her a lesson. He uses the weak things of the world to confound the things that are mighty; and so he selects a youth, a stripling unused to the art of warfare and with an experience limited to the protection of sheep, whilst his adversary "was a man of war from his youth."

We naturally exclaim, these antagonists are unequal y matched; so thought the army of Israel, and his own brothers called his courage "pride" and "heart naughtiness." True courage inspires confidence and seeks to strengthen the faintheartedness of others; hence, David says to Saul: "Let no man's heart fail because of him; thy servant will go and fight with this Philistine."

There is no parallel between the two combatants, it is all *con rat*. Youth against maturity; warrior against shepherd; unusual size against ordinary proportions; training and skill against inexperience; warrior's weapons and armour against playthings and ordinary garments; self-reliance against firm faith in God. No wonder Goliath, not knowing the wonderful power of faith in God, disdained with contempt his insignificant enemy and asked: "Am I a dog, that thou comest to me with staves? Staves are useful to control sheep but are as nothing to withstand my spear, the staff of which is like a weaver's beam and the spear head weighs six hundred shekels of iron." Goliath with his heathenish heart knew nothing of unseen weapons and armour!

Goliath had an helmet of brass upon his head, and he was armed with a coat of mail and the weight of the coat was five thousand shekels of brass. And he had greaves of brass upon his legs and a target of brass between his shoulders. His armour, like himself, was brassy in its nature! David was armed with the whole armour of God. His loins were girt about with truth; his breastplate was righteousness; his shield, faith; his helmet salvation and his sword, that of the Spirit—all unseen by the physical eye but realized by the eye of faith.

When the sling and stone had done their work and faith had gained a victory; physical means were used for physical ends and the boaster's sword was used for his own decapitation.

Both combatants had stated what they would do with the others carcase when the fight was over—Goliath with a large personal pronoun "I." David prefixed his assertion with "This day will the Lord deliver thee into mine hand." Then follows David's personal pronoun "I" and concludes that the result will be, not glory to himself but to God who will