

The Quiet Hour.

Jesus Betrayed

S. S. Lesson, March 3rd 1901; John 18: 1-24.
Golden Text—Matt. 26: 45. The Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of Sinners.

A band of men, and officers from the chief priests and Pharisees, v. 3. Surely they were not very brave men these enemies of Jesus! They were afraid to arrest Him in open day, lest a rescue should be attempted by His Galilean sympathizers. They steal upon Him at night, in a solitary place, where He is sure to be accompanied only by the Twelve; and even then they dare not come but with a small army. Everything that is vile and contemptible gathered itself about the slaying of Christ. Cowardice is added to jealousy, treachery, perjury and cruelty.

Knowing all things that should come upon him, v. 4. Many elements combined to make the sufferings of Christ unique. And this was one of the elements, that He knew what was before Him. It is not so with us. In God's great mercy, we do not know the future, and though we may have trial and suffering to pass through, at all events we have not to endure it beforehand by anticipation. But Jesus had long known what the end of His earthly career must be. Even in detail, He had told His disciples what must befall Him in Jerusalem. (Mark 10: 33, 34.) Should it not increase our sense of His marvelous courage and devotion, and of His boundless love to think that, though fully aware of all this, "He steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem," and that now, "knowing all things that should come upon Him, He went forth" to certain and shameful death?

I am he, v. 5. They asked for a man—a certain Jew named Jesus. He disclosed to them, if they had but eyes to see and ears to hear, the very God, and the great "I AM," the divine Being who had revealed Himself to their fathers as their God and Redeemer. (Ex. 5: 14.)

Judas stood with them, v. 5. There were just two sides in that group in the garden. Jesus and His disciples were on one side; the enemies of Jesus were on the other. Judas had been a disciple of Jesus. Which side is he on now? He is standing with Christ's enemies. Questions concerned with Christ and His kingdom are always emerging and dividing men—Christ and His true followers on the one side, the enemies of Christ upon the other. Oh, the pity of it and the shame of it, that when such questions arise the professed followers of Christ should ever be seen among His enemies. Surely, when the issue is clearly drawn—right or wrong, God's law or man's will—no one but a Judas will be found standing on the side of wrong.

They went backward and fell to the ground, v. 6. Meanness abashed by nobility of soul, guilt quailing before innocence, the pride of men humbled in the presence of One who has been evidently with God. Could testimony be more emphatic to the sense of God and good that abides in even the most depraved souls? Where the true light shines, darkness must flee away.

Let these go their way, v. 8. "The whole sublime doctrine of the atonement is here emphasized. The Lamb of God has come to earth to make this very sacrifice of Himself, in order that He might die, the godly

for the ungodly, the Redeemer for the redeemed, the Good Shepherd for His sheep. Right where the lightnings of divine wrath against sin are striking, Jesus stands and bids the bolts to fall in their deadly fury upon His own head. Between our enemies and us, the loving Saviour plants Himself and receives the penalty due to us, and bids us go our way, pardoned, rescued, redeemed, protected and saved forever. "Let Me die, but let My blood bought followers go their way."

Put up thy sword into the sheath, v. 11. Peter's action brought back the old temptation that had followed the Lord Jesus all His life, the temptation to make His kingdom a kingdom of this world, and to use worldly methods in attaining it. It was a terrible temptation. If He had yielded to it He would have met the expectations of His nation and been welcomed by them instead of being rejected. He would have avoided the way of the cross and might have walked in the path of glory. Withal, He was conscious of the great powers which He possessed and which He might have used even as an earthly king, for the benefit of humanity. But all this temptation He resisted. First because it was God's will (John 18: 11.) Secondly, because a kingdom that is founded upon force can be overthrown by force (Matt. 26: 52), as history has again and again shown. Jesus would found His Kingdom on self-sacrificing love, and it is the only kingdom that shall never pass away. Thirdly because it was by methods of self-sacrifice, not by methods of violence, that the Scriptures were to be fulfilled (Matt. 26: 54.) The Scriptures had foretold the coming of a Messiah, but He was to be a suffering Messiah, wounded for the transgressions, bruised for the iniquities, of His people and healing them by His stripes (Isa. 53.)

For Dominion Presbyterian.

Jonah: A Character Study.

BY GEO. W. ARMSTRONG.

Jonah is called a minor prophet! Can anything be "minor" that God calls to do? His predictions may not be as numerous as those of Isaiah, or Ezekiel or others, but, as far as they went, they were pregnant with issues of great importance to the nation and people concerned. Jonah seems to have had a two fold mission.—1st as a patriotic politician; or, a prophet to his own nation—Restoring the ancient landmarks 2 Kings XIV. 25; and, 2nd a prophet to a neighbouring nation deeply sunk in ignorance, degradation and sin. "Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry against it; for their wickedness is come up before me." This was his commission, How did he respond? His response brings out his paradoxical, his anomalous character.

1st. He was cowardly and timid, filled with fear at the work God gave him to do. He was told to go to Nineveh. "But Jonah rose up to flee to Tarshish from the presence of the Lord."

2nd. He was noble, self-sacrificing and brave. In the midst of a raging storm when "the mariners were afraid," Jonah "lay, and was fast asleep." And when there seemed no way of abating the storm, he acknowledged his sin and "said unto them take me up and cast me forth into the sea,"

for I am the cause of your calamity. Willing to sacrifice himself for the benefit of others.

3rd. Jonah was a devout and deeply religious man. It is a unique place in which to pray, but, "out of the fish's belly" that day there arose one of the world's model prayers, the sincere out breathing of a truly repentant soul.

And here comes in another of the anomalies of his character, arising it may be, 4th, from defective education in the word of God, or from the narrow prejudices of his Hebrew mind. He thought to flee from "the presence of the Lord." He cannot surely have understood that God was Omnipresent; and yet had he carefully considered the Psalms he would have read: "Whither shall I flee from thy presence?" Ps. 139 7. Jonah took refuge in a ship of Tarshish—strong and compact—but again, had he heeded the teachings of these same Psalms he would have known there was no safety against God, who "breaketh the ships of Tarshish with an east wind." Ps. 48 7.

Jonah's prophecies teach us:

1st. That disobedience will be punished.

2nd. That prayer and repentance lead to restoration to the divine favor.

3rd. That none can hide from the all seeing eye of God. "Thou God sees't me."

4th. That God selects and appoints his own workmen. Jonah disobeyed the first, but he got a second commission.

5th. That when men do God's work, with full reliance upon Him, they are sure of success.

6th. That God, though always angry at sin, repents when men repent. "And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God repented of the evil, and He did it not." Jonah 3:10.

7th. That the manifestation of Divine power has a salutary effect, at times, upon godless men. "Then the men feared the Lord exceedingly, and offered a sacrifice unto the Lord and made vows." Jonah 1:16.

Another anomaly displayed in Jonah's character is: *Being displeased with success.* Men generally rejoice at success, but Jonah "was very angry." He had sufficient insight into the moral character and attributes of God to know that repentance and remission were closely allied, but with his exclusive Jewish notions he would rather destroy a whole city and nation than that they should secure God's mercy. "I knew that thou art a gracious God, and merciful, slow to anger and of great kindness, and repented thee of the evil; therefore I fled before into Tarshish."

Some men are better than their creeds: but Jonah is far below, far worse than his creed.

Jonah was a good man, with much that was humane and narrow and bigoted interwoven in his nature and character.

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The world has a right to look worshippers as they come out of church, in the face, and ask them, What do you bring away from your altar, your psalm, your sermon, your benediction? What gifts have you to distribute in your neighborhood?—Bishop Huntington.

It was a wise fellow that said, "The idle man is the devil's cushion." When you are doing nothing for God, you are doing much for Satan. He asks for nothing better than that Christians should just sit down and take it easy.