

The Quiet Hour.

The Passover.

S. S. LESSON—MAT. 26: 17-30. May 29, 1904.

GOLDEN TEXT—For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us.—1 Cor. 5: 7.

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My time is at hand, v. 18. Although events may seem to be the result of accident, or although we may be able to unravel the chains of causes that lead up to them, they are none the less of God's ordaining. Our studies during the last two Quarters have led us through many stirring scenes in Christ's life. He has been in perils by sea and in perils among His own countrymen; but never did He show alarm, for His time was not yet come. Now He calmly prepares for the end, for He knows that His hour is near. Nothing so gives life such a sense of security, or such unbending strength, as the knowledge that our times are in God's hands, and that "we are immortal till our work is done."

As Jesus had appointed, v. 19. True discipleship involves implicit obedience. If Jesus has required a certain service of us, it is vain to question, criticise, or protest; rather ought we to be zealous to observe each minute particular of His demands. His tenderest request is, "This do in remembrance of Me." Have you done it? Neither good intentions, nor timid procrastination, nor criticisms of other's conduct can atone for your neglect.

Is it I? v. 22. A betrayer in the "upper room" is a matter for alarm as well as surprise. May it be possible for one to be many years identified with the Christian church, to be even prominent in its work, and yet to be at heart a traitor to its Lord? Alas, it was so with Judas, and, sad to relate, it has sometimes been so with those holding positions of honor in the church since his day. No church can afford to boast over another; and self complacent respectability is the last attitude for a disciple of Christ. The true, humble-minded Christian, conscious of his many defects, too vividly mindful of the many occasions on which he has proved disloyal to his Master, asks tremblingly, "Lord, is it I?"

This is my body, v. 26. The literal flesh of the Lord Jesus could profit us little, even though it were multiplied as miraculously as the five loaves and the two fishes. But the life that was in Christ, and which He gives to the believer, is the most priceless blessing we can receive. It is this divine life that is so forcibly symbolized by the broken bread. The symbol makes the possession more intensely real. The sacrament is not to be preferred before the sermon, as though we saw our Friend in the one and not in the other. We need them both. Spurgeon says: "I see Him in no other way in the Supper than in the sermon; but sometimes when my eye is weak with weeping, or dim with dust, that double mirror of the bread and wine suits me best."

My blood, shed for the remission of sins, v. 28. No idea has been so potent to bring peace or to transform a sinful life as the truth expressed by the sacramental wine. Dr. Valpy, whose dictionary was on our father's bookshelves, converted late in life, gave it simple but effective expression in these lines:

"In peace let me resign my breath
And thy salvation see;
My sins deserve eternal death,
But Jesus died for me."

Lord Roden, struck with the lines, affixed them to the walls of his study, where they were the means of converting the careless but gallant General Taylor, who had served at Waterloo. Another officer in later days who fought in the Crimea, saw the lines and could never forget them, and they filled his last hours with peace and comfort. But the most touching expression of this sublime truth is when the wine cup is passed from lip to lip at the communion table. If not a communicant, stay and witness this silent scene, which has never ceased to be repeated, since Christ first instituted it in the upper room in the city of Jerusalem.

Until that day, v. 29. The Lord's Supper has a forward as well as a backward look. Not memory alone, but expectation has its place here. We turn our eyes from the crucified, to the returning and triumphant, Christ, and rejoice in the prospect of sharing His glory.

The Kingdom of God.

RICHARD CHENEVIX TRENCH.

I say to thee, do thou repeat
To the first man thou mayest meet
In lane, highway, or open street—

That he and we and all men move
Under a canopy of love,
As broad as the blue sky above;

That doubt and trouble, fear and pain
And anguish, all are shadows vain,
That death itself shall not remain;

That weary deserts we may tread,
A dreary labyrinth may tread,
Through dark ways underground be lead;

Yet, if we will one guide obey,
The dreariest path, the darkest way
Shall issue out in heavenly day;

And we, on divers shores now cast,
Shall meet, our perilous voyage past,
All in our Father's house at last.

Prayer.

Almighty God and Heavenly Father, we are poor and needy, yet Thou dost think upon us and art ever nigh us to hear the voice of our cry. Beget within us the spirit of penitence, and then grant unto us pardon, purity and peace. We would be in a receptive mood so that Thou canst fill us with Thy Spirit. Help us to be strong in faith, zealous in service, patient under provocation, and unselfish and gentle in spirit. We would lay hold of the grand truth that all things work together for good to them that love Thee; upon this rock we would rest. So may we quiet our restless spirits and hush all the voices of doubt and fear and be at peace. And this we ask in Jesus' name. Amen.

The Value of Time.

Time is the cradle of hope, but the grave of delusion. Time is the stern corrector of fools, but the salutary counselor of the wise. Wisdom walks before it, opportunity with it, and repentance behind it. He that has made Time his friend will have little to fear from his enemies, but he that has made Time his enemy will have little to hope for from his friends.—J. Bullar.

Life Indeed

God has been wrestling with you patiently and lovingly for many years. He has sought by the prosperity and happiness that He has sent you to make you conscious of His tender love and care and to draw you to Him by the cords of gratitude. And when you failed to perceive Him in the daylight, He has met you in the darkness. He has thrown His strong arm around you and still you have not known Him. He has wounded you—He has had to wound you—because you struggled against Him. Can you not now see that it is He? And is it not idle to resist Him? Oh, if men only knew that God is not their enemy, but their best friend! If instead of holding Him off or trying to break away from His embrace, they would cling to Him, as Jacob did, exclaiming: "I will not let thee go, except thou bless me!" As soon as that prayer is offered the blessing comes and the morning breaks. There would have been no need of the long struggle if the soul had only yielded sooner to Him whose one supreme desire is to bless and save it.—Edward B. Coe, D. D., in Life Indeed.

Gather to Distribute.

We have found in the old fence-rows the holes of the ground squirrels stored with nuts which they had gathered and packed away for some future time of need. And there is many a man who belongs to the chip-munk species. He is merely a gatherer. We have seen the bees fly home from their gleaming among the sweets of nature and have seen them toil in the hive over their saccharine treasures, but we have never seen them distribute to other hives. And there is many a man who belongs to the honey-bee species. He gathers sweets for himself and his own home and stores them in some great hive of industry or business enterprise for his heirs to sip at when he is gone. We have seen the ants run toward their communal cities with the fruits of their forays; and some men are but ant-men, foragers for themselves and their homes. But the true man, the one who has the right conception of life, not only gathers for himself and his household, but distributes for the blessing of others. He not only stores up for a time of need, but out of that store he seeks to befriend the less fortunate. This man excels the creatures of field and hive and wood. He shows likeness to God, who not only holds the universe in the hollow of his hand, but has distributed his benevolences with the love of a father. Man should not follow the example of squirrels and ants with that which God has given him ability to gather—United Presbyterian.

No Remaining Stationary.

A life without growth is without power. Life is of itself a wonderful mystery, but the absence of growth is a sure herald of death. Mere exercise is retrogression. A rose bush has life, vigorous healthy life, but it lies in a dry cellar where there is not one particle of moisture. Will it grow and bear roses? Every day that it lies there is one day nearer hopeless death. There must be either progression or retrogression. If we are not growing intellectually or morally there is only one alternative. We cannot remain stationary. Like the stream in the desert sands, we will recede in force and usefulness until we vanish from the earth.—Selected

What we need is not a plainer, easier path to heaven, but a deeper determination to climb courageously any road that leads us nearer to God.