

The Quiet Hour.

Captivity of the Ten Tribes.

S. S. LESSON. 2 Kings 17: 6-18. Dec. 11, 1904.

GOLDEN TEXT.—The face of the Lord is against them that do evil.—1 Peter 3: 12.

REV. W. J. CLARK, LONDON, ONT.

Carried Israel away, v. 6. We shall escape the worst bondage so long as the will is free. But once the great enemy of soul captures the will, we are slaves indeed. By our own act we have forged the chains that bind us fast. We cannot value too highly the God-given faculty by which we can reject the evil and choose the good. By constant practice it should be strengthened, and jealously guarded, like some precious treasure, against the forces that would impair or destroy it.

For so it was, v. 7. Let this be fixed in our minds, that we cannot break God's moral laws, and not bring suffering upon ourselves, and, it may be, upon others. No one in his senses expects that, if he dashes himself down some lofty precipice, the law of gravitation will spare him. Without fail it will dash him to pieces at the bottom. Not less certainly does penalty follow—not always swiftly, but always surely—upon wrongdoing. A steady, honest look at the consequences would often keep us from entering the door of an evil course, held open never so invitingly.

Sinned against the Lord their God, v. 7. How could they have done it, if they had only remembered? For, what had not the Lord done for His people? What deliverances had He not wrought? What blessings had He not bestowed? So we may well say. And so we feel like saying, until we think of our own sins. Did God do great things for those children of His? A thousand-fold greater things He has done for us. What was the deliverance from Egypt compared with the redemption that Christ has wrought? What was the revelation of Himself through priest and prophet, to the marvellous manifestation of His truth and grace through that same Jesus Christ? What were the blessings of Canaan to the privileges of Christ's kingdom which we enjoy. Ah! let every tongue be stilled, and let every heart acknowledge its own black ingratitude in sinning against light and love.

Did secretly, v. 9. That was the beginning; and the open transgression followed as a matter of course. No one ever blasphemes with his mouth who has not first blasphemed in his heart. The vile act flows from the impure desire. It is the heart that needs to be kept, if we would have the life and conduct clear.

Ye shall not do this thing, v. 12. The searchlight on the front of an engine throws its rays far along the track, enabling the driver to see obstacles in time to stop his train. The whole pathway of our life lies open to the sight of God, and He has thrown the light of His warnings upon the dangerous places. He commands and forbids, not to restrict our freedom, but to save us from wreck and ruin, and bring our journey to a prosperous and happy end.

They would not hear, v. 14. There is infinite pathos in this sentence. God never did and never will say to any penitent, however dark his sin, "I will not hear." His attitude towards the sinner is revealed in Jesus, who said to the sinful city, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often would I have

gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!" "I would!" "Ye would not!" If we are not saved, the blame is not God's, but ours.

Therefore the Lord was very angry, v. 18. "God is love," says the sweet apostle John. Can that be true, and these words as well? Can love be angry? Can love punish? One needs only ask the first man he meets, who is a father. Can he be angry with his child's wrong-doing, and yet love him all the while? He is no right father who is not angry with persistent waywardness on the part of his child. Yes, and he will punish, as God punished these children of His long ago, in order that He might bring them to a better mind. Be thankful if God is angry. It shows that He still loves you, and yearns that you shall come back to His bosom of love.

And removed them out of his sight, v. 18. With what pride and satisfaction a father watches the career of his son, who is bringing new honor to the family name. But the son who goes astray in evil paths—who can measure the heart break that comes to the old home through his folly and sin. And God is a most loving Father. Our sin may be so great, that He cannot but send us away from His gracious presence. But it is with infinite grief He does this. The fear of grieving the One who loves us so should keep us from sinning against Him.

Prayer

Prayer is the peace of our spirit, the stillness of our thoughts, the evenness of recollection, the seat of meditation, the rest of our cares, and the calm of our temper; prayer is the issue of a quiet mind, of untroubled thoughts; it is the daughter of charity, and the sister of meekness; and he that prays to God with an angry, that is, with a troubled and discomposed spirit, is like him that retires into a battle to meditate, and sets up his closet in the out-quarters of an army, and chooses a frontier-garrison to be wise in.—*Jeremy Taylor.*

JOE DOMINION PRESBYTERIAN.

Christ and the Scriptures, No 4.

BY GEORGE W. ARMSTRONG.

We cannot thoughtfully peruse the Old Testament Scriptures without being strangely impressed with the fact that their central theme is Jesus, the Messiah, the Saviour of our fallen race. If read aright, the whole of the thirty-nine books are an anticipated biography of the divinely promised teacher and Redeemer. "They are they which testify of me." The Cherubim with the flaming sword had scarcely been set to protect the tree of life when the first promise respecting Christ was uttered. The church's night of sin had hardly begun when the moral universe was illuminated at its meridian with the life giving beams of the Sun of Righteousness—Jesus Christ.

The earliest Biblical promises and prophecies make special reference to the Redeemer; in fact, all the inspired writers allude to Him more or less. In Christ centre all the divine promises, apart from Him the Bible loses all its force and power. The name of Christ is embalmed in almost every page and inlaid in almost every promise.

Judaism with all its rites and ceremonies typified Him, in fact, Christ was its foundation. His Name is so interwoven in the sacred writings of the Jews that it would be impossible to extricate it without marring their beauty and harmony and spoiling their sense and meaning.

Search these Scriptures and you will find allusions made to Christ directly or indirectly throughout the whole.

From the first promise in Paradise to the last prediction in Patmos, Christ is the sum and substance of the whole.

To the progenitors of our race it was said: "The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head." Jacob prophesied and said: "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a law-giver from between His feet until Shiloh come." Abraham saw His day afar off and was glad. Moses declared: "A prophet shall the Lord, your God, raise up unto you like unto me." Balaam prophesied and said: "I shall see him but not now, I shall behold him but not nigh; there shall come a star out of Jacob and a sceptre shall rise out of Israel." Job in the midst of afflictions and troubles finds comfort in contemplating his Redeemer. "I know that my Redeemer liveth," David refers to Christ when he says: "Thou art fairer than the sons of men;" whilst his son Solomon designates Him "His beloved." Isaiah alludes to Christ as: "A precious cornerstone, a sure foundation," Jeremiah, the weeping prophet, finds relief to his troubled soul in the midst of his wailing lamentations by reflecting upon the coming of Him who shall be called "The Lord our Righteousness." Christ is the Shepherd of Ezekiel: The Messiah the Prince of Daniel. Hosea prophesied of Him as the "Lord God of Hosts," and Joel shows the blessings that shall arise when the Kingdom of Christ shall be established. Amos, the herdsman of Tekoa when referring to our Saviour said: "The Lord is His Name." Obediah and Jonah, in their brief prophecies make allusion to the Kingdom of Christ. Micah speaks of "The Ruler in Israel whose goings forth have been from of old, even from everlasting." Christ is the "publisher of peace, the bringer of good tidings," in the prophecies of Nahum. He is "the Holy One" of Habakkuk. Zephaniah, when referring to the advent of the Messiah, exhorts the daughter of Jerusalem "to rejoice with all the heart because the Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty." Hagai declares Him to be "The desire of all nations;" whilst Zachariah alludes to him by saying: Behold the man whose name is the Branch; and He shall grow up out of His place and He shall build the temple of the Lord." And Malachi in closing the inspired writings of the Old Testament calls Christ "The Sun of Righteousness who shall arise with healing on His wings."

Passing to the New Testament we find the four gospels a complete epitome of His life, his teachings, his death and resurrection. Christ is the great theme that engaged the inspired tongues and pens of the apostles; and from the time when the divinely inspired records were completed to the end of time, His name shall continue to be known in the earth.

Thus we see Christ is the very essence of inspiration, its chief cornerstone and glory. It is Christ the first, and Christ the last. Christ the Alpha and Christ the Omega; Christ the beginning, Christ also the ending and Christ all the way through the Scriptures. Christ in the Scriptures is all and in all.

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