

VII. OUR INFLUENCE.

By reason of him....believed. v. 11.

Beholding the man. Acts 4. 13, 14.

Your good works....glorify God. Matt. 5. 16.

VIII. OUR FAITH.

Many....believed on Jesus. v. 11.

Believe on his name. John 1. 12.

Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. Acts 16. 31.

EXPLANATORY AND PRACTICAL NOTES.

Once more under the friendly roof at Bethany Jesus rests and receives the loving tribute of Mary, the sister of Lazarus, before entering, in the strangest sort of triumph, the city of Jerusalem. The four accounts of the anointing of Jesus present some peculiar problems. According to Luke, a "woman which was a sinner" came to the house of Simon the Pharisee (apparently either in Nain or Capernaum), where Jesus "sat at meat," and, bringing an alabaster box of ointment, wept and washed his feet with tears, wiped them with her hair, and anointed them with the ointment. This from the surroundings of the story might be dated in the early summer of A. D. 28. According to Matthew and Mark, an unnamed woman came to the house of "Simon the leper" in Bethany, while Jesus "sat at meat," and bringing an alabaster box of very precious ointment (spikenard), broke it and poured the ointment on the Saviour's head. According to John, this woman was Mary, the sister of Lazarus, and she anointed the feet of Jesus and wiped his feet with her hair. This, according to the surroundings of the story, occurred in the spring of A. D. 30. The similarity in the details of these two incidents has led many reverent Bible students to question whether we have not here rather two accounts of the same event; and some have gone so far as to identify the "woman which was a sinner" with Mary Magdalene, and Mary Magdalene with the sister of Lazarus. But the difficulties in the way of this explanation are even greater than those in the way of that more commonly accepted. We may assume that our Lord, entertained as he was in the house of people of various rank, often had his feet bathed and perhaps repeatedly had his head anointed.

Verse 1. Jesus, six days before the passover. And therefore six days before his own death. It was probably the evening of Saturday, April 1, A. D. 30, after sunset, and therefore after the close of the Sabbath; the triumphal entry into Jerusalem was made the next morning. The passover, we need hardly remind the student, was the great annual festival of the Jews, "the feast of unleavened bread," begun with the formal paschal meal, and lasting seven days. **Came to Bethany.** On his way to the feast, from Perea by way of Jericho. He probably reached Bethany before the Sabbath began. **Where Lazarus was which had been dead.** Until now Bethany has been described as the home of Martha and Mary, whom Jesus loved, but this latest and greatest of wonders crowds other things from the historian's notice.

2. There they made him a supper. This supper was held, as Matthew and Mark tell us, in the house of Simon the leper, whom we may suppose to have been a kinsman of Lazarus. **Martha served.** Quite agreeably to her bustling, practical nature. **Lazarus was one of them that sat at the table.** This suggests that the feast was in honor of the miracle worked upon him. We catch here a glimpse of the easy household manners of the Jews of Palestine, with whom men and women mingled more freely than in other antique nations. Verse 2 tells what Martha did and what Lazarus did. What did Mary do?

3. Then took Mary a pound of ointment of spikenard. Matthew and Mark tell of the anointing without naming the woman, and their accounts, supplemented by that of John, imply that her coming with the spikenard was unexpected and startling. This "ointment" was really a distilled perfume. The word indicates a particular kind of perfume; what kind cannot now be certainly said. **Very costly.** To other incidental indications of the wealth of the family of Lazarus the costliness of this perfume may be added. Mark tells us that it was carried in an alabaster flask, so that the case was quite as valuable as its contents; for this "alabaster" is a delicate and beautiful stone, quarried near Thebes, and of high price. **Anointed the feet of Jesus.** According to Mark, she broke the flask over his head. It was the part of servants on special occasions thus to anoint the heads of guests. As hostess, and to show peculiar reverence, Mary did it herself, and apparently took occasion, also, to perfume her Master's whole body, even to his feet. We are not to think of any such heavy oils as come into frequent domestic use among ourselves, and which would make clothing uncomfortable and unclean, but of a light, volatile perfume which would pervade the whole room almost as soon as the flask was broken; **the house was filled with the odor of the ointment.**

4. Judas Iscariot, Simon's son. It is generally explained that Iscariot means Kerioth, Ju-