

SUNDAY
SCHOOL

The Quiet Hour

YOUNG
PEOPLE

OUR HEAVENLY HOME.*

Let not your heart be troubled, v. 1. An old hunter once told me, that the noblest birds rise to the upper air when they are shot at. "When they are flying low over their feeding grounds," he said, "and we surprise them, they mount in a sharply ascending direction, and unless we can quickly shoot again, they are beyond any harm we can do to them." What a way is this for harassed souls! When troubles assail and dangers bring dread, fly higher and nearer to God in trust, in faith, in love. If they strike at you again, fly still higher, and soon you will be so superior to them, that the darts and slings of evil fortune and temptation will fail to reach you.

Ye believe in God, believe also in me, v. 1. Sometimes the captain of an ocean steamship, making her way up the majestic St. Lawrence, finds it necessary to cast anchor. There the great vessel lies, all the force of the river's strong current striving to carry her out again to sea; but she keeps her place, because the anchor has taken firm hold on the bottom. Everyone knows of many forces, which, like that mighty stream, threaten to sweep him away from the place of peace and joy to which he has attained. But he is held firm, in safety and quiet confidence, if he has cast the anchor of his trust in God,—not a God far away and unknown, but a God to be seen and loved in Jesus Christ. "Trust God," says Jesus, "yea, trust Me, in whom God is fully revealed."

In my Father's house are many mansions, v. 2. There is enough accommodation and provision in the hospices, in the dangerous Alpine passes of Switzerland, for all the people who have to travel through the passes in times of peace during the winter months. But let the foot of war begin to move in that region, and let it be necessary for vast armies to march over these mountain paths, and the hospices would be quite inadequate to minister to the needy crowds. It is not so with the house of God opened for men. All along the way of the pilgrim, it offers comfort and refuge to every one weary and heavy-laden, and when the life-work of all the sons of men is done, the house of our Father will be roomy enough for each of the race to say, if he will, "I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever."

"Therefore will I wait patiently,
Trusting, where all God's mansions be
There hath been one prepared for me!

And go down calmly to death's tide,
Knowing, when on the other side
I wake, I shall be satisfied."

A place for you, v. 2. On the tomb of Dean Alford, in Canterbury Cathedral, is the inscription in Latin, The Inn of a Traveller on his way to Jerusalem. That is the Christian view of the grave. It is not a place where one must abide in eternal darkness, but a resting place for a brief space, until the glorious resurrection day shall dawn. Then the believer shall come forth, as did his Lord, and enter into a joy and happiness that shall never end.

I am the way, the truth, and the life, v. 6. Our deepest needs are met in Christ. Superficial demands can be appeased by external means; but, for all the hunger of the heart and the outgoing of the soul's desires, He only is

*S. S. Lesson, May 3, 1908. John 14:1-14. Commit to memory vs. 2, 3. Study John ch. 14. Golden Text—In my Father's house are many mansions.—John 14:2.

the all-sufficient One. Thomas a Kempis puts it well: "Without the Way we cannot go; without the Truth we cannot know; without the Life we cannot live. I am the Way which you ought to follow, the Truth which you ought to believe, the Life which you ought to hope for." How foolish is he who refuses way, truth, life! It is only madness that will make one refuse a guide when the land is strange. To reject truth is the act of the ignorant. To refuse life is to be a suicide. In Christ are all the things we need. He is a trinity of supply for us. Let us make Him ours,—Way, Truth, Life.

Greater works than these shall He do, v. 12. What! greater works than the miracles which Jesus wrought, when He made the blind to see, and gave back their lost strength and activity to palsied limbs? Yes, greater works than even these. For the disciples would have the wonderful story to tell of Calvary, with its revelation of God's heart of love. Of the empty grave and of the might of the risen Lord, and of Olivet, whence He was received up into the opened heavens. More, He would be seated on the throne of omnipotence, and His power would energize all their work and ensure its success. The key to boundless resources would be in the hands of the disciples,—the key of believing prayer. Thus equipped and endowed, they would go forth, not merely to heal a few sick ones, who must, after all, die in a few years, but to bring salvation for time and for eternity to the souls of men the world over.

THE WORLD'S BIBLE.

Every confessed follower of Christ is daily helping or harming Christ's cause among men. For, while those who have not accepted Christ are under just as much obligation to do his will as those who have accepted him, nevertheless it is to his followers that the world properly looks for evidence in favor of or against Christ's claims. It has been said that "the Christian, very frequently, is the only Bible that the world can be induced to read." Are the pages of our life presenting, or misrepresenting, our Saviour to the world? The world's power to read is mercilessly keen.—S. S. Times.

RELIGION COVERS ALL.

You cannot draw any lines whatever when you are dealing with the religious life. There are no provinces outside of it. It covers the equator and the poles, and thrusts its root into the core of the world of personality. If it does not go through and through a man, it does not go into him at all. That is the nature of religion; it is as thorough-going, as permeating, as life itself. I pulse into and suffuses the least things—as the life blood warms the very finger-tips—and says: "These are mine; these are sacred things. Make them so." Nothing is too small or remote to have a vital religious significance. If we really and truly believe that, we will make an end of drawing those futile lines between what we call secular and religious, commonplace and sacred. There are no such distinctions in the new life which the Lord Jesus Christ brought into the world. Like His own garment, that robe of life is all one piece, seamless, inseparable; and every thread that enters it runs straight through wrap or woof, and intertwines with every other thread to form the entire fabric of character.—James Buckingham.

LIGHT FROM THE EAST.

By Rev. James Ross, D.D., London.

Mansions—The ancient Persians thought of heaven as divided into seven parts or spheres, rising one above the other, and their great prophet Zarathustra enthroned in the highest. Rabbinical literature speaks of seven, and even of ten, heavens. In the third of the seven, or the seventh of the ten, Paradise was placed, and within it the treasures of the life and righteousness for the soul. The language of both Old and New Testaments gives countenance to the idea of a plurality of heavens; for example, Paul mentions the third heaven, 2 Cor. 12:2. But the conception is free from the extraneous which are found in the extraneous books. In the light of the New Testament references, it is difficult to avoid the idea of gradation, as well as number, in the "many mansions."

"Shew us the Father"—The early conceptions of God were materialistic. If He had not a body so gross as man's, it was believed possible to strengthen human vision, so that His rarer, but real, form could be seen. It would appear from Ex. 24, 10, 11, that the Supreme Being accommodated Himself to the limitations of a childlike age, and assumed a human form to meet a need in their spiritual education. The prophets, in such passages as Isa. 40:5, had awakened the expectation of many, that, what their fathers had once enjoyed, should be common again.

LOVE'S SACRIFICE.

By Rev. Henry J. Keith, D.D.

Knowledge is power. When a scholar inquires about this thing and that, what a difference it would make to the teaching of the lesson if we only knew. If we had but taken more time to prepare, there would be greater knowledge. There would also be keener attention, and teaching would be an easier matter. There would be greater results. Yes—knowledge is power.

But there is something more important than knowledge—a power that conquers where knowledge fails or is all together beyond our reach, a power that solves the problems of preparation and teaching, and makes them comparatively easy. It is the power of love. Love for the souls of the young placed under our training, love for ourselves, a loving desire that they may know the love of Christ. God is love. God loves, and through his love He reveals Himself. His love conquers us. Our love is the secret of conquering others. Love is the channel of our understanding God, and of our revealing God. Love is the means of winning others to God.

It is when we learn to love, that sacrifice becomes a joy. Time to prepare for the lesson is gladly found. The teaching of the lesson becomes a pleasure to which we look forward.

Peterboro, Ont.

PRAYER.

Almighty God, give us the blessing of heaven, and we shall never more be poor. Without Thy blessing there is no wealth; with it there is no poverty. Send upon Thy believing children—a double blessing, and no sorrow shall be added with it. It shall be a great peace, a tender sight, an assured and inextinguishable hope. They who are thus blessed can never be disquieted. The foam will be on the surface, the depths of their hearts will be as a sanctuary inhabited by the spirit of peace. Amen.