

SUNDAY SCHOOL BANNER

for
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Lovest Thou Me?

BY LOUISE H. COBURN.

LOVEST thou me? O Simon, dost thou listen?

Thy Saviour talks with thee beside the sea.

Lovest thou me? The sunlit waters glisten;

Bethink thee well the word he asks of thee.

His gracious lips are questioning so sweetly,

His holy eye looks through thy soul completely.

What is it, son of Jonas, troubles thee?

Lovest thou me?

Lovest thou me? How bold wast thou declaring,

Though all shall faithless be, yet will not I;

And yet—hast thou forgot thy swearing,

When shamelessly thou didst thy Lord deny?

Is this the rock on which my Church is founded,

The Peter whose profession loudest sounded,

Who would unto the death my follower be?

Lovest thou me?

Lovest thou me? I have deserved it, truly;

My yoke is easy, and my burden light.

Have not green pastures waited for thee duly,

When thou hast trusted to my guiding might?

Thy Shepherd, on the precipice that stayed thee,

Upon his shoulder tenderly that laid thee,

Who unto death went forth for love of thee—

Lovest thou me?

Lovest thou me? With patient hand and tender,

Give to my sheep the food I gave to thee;

O grateful penance for the heart to render,

That grows with love and gratitude to me.

Thyself has erred; go forth to seek the erring,

Guide them unto the heaven thyself art nearing;

Protect my flock from their arch-enemy.

Lovest thou me?

Lovest thou me? Then keep my lambs from straying;

My little ones I bind upon thy heart;

Still in the dubious land of twilight staying,

Lead them unto the sun with patient art.

If thou dost love me, to my own be loving,

By service done unto my weak ones, proving

The love thou bearest him who strengthens thee.

Lovest thou me?

Lovest thou me? A hand shall gird the rougher

Than thou hast known, and lead against thy

will;

[suffer;

That which the shepherd bore; the sheep must

O son of Jonas, wilt thou love me still?

Love yet is love, although the tempests lower,

Love yet is love, although the flames devour;

Love sings its praises on the cruel tree.

Lovest thou me?

Lovest thou me? Thou knowest all, my Master—

My craven cowardice, my feeble zeal;

Oh, let thy heavenly fire burn brighter, faster,

Until my frozen heart its warmth shall feel.

Write upon my soul the word thou speakest,

And I, of all that love thee, Lord, the weakest,

Will say, I have denied, yet pardon me,—

Still love I thee.

As a substitute for the English Teacher's Notes, which are unavoidably omitted from the BANNER, we give the valuable Lesson Commentary which precedes the lessons. No effort shall be spared to make the BANNER more acceptable and more helpful to teachers than ever. Our illustrated articles on the Holy Land will be found of great interest and importance.