

SUNDAY
SCHOOL

The Quiet Hour

YOUNG
PEOPLEJESUS ENTERS JERUSALEM IN
TRIUMPH*

By Rev. Clarence McKinnon, B.D.

Go, and ye shall find, v. 2. A story of the middle ages tells of a painter who was begged by his friends to join them in a search for the philosopher's stone, which could turn all it touched into gold. By way of answer he took them into his studio, and showed them a picture just sold for a great price. In his genius and industry he already possessed the true philosopher's stone. And every one has the surance of genuine success and happiness, who gives himself to a life of honest toil, be it ever so lowly, in the service of Jesus.

The Lord hath need of them, v. 3. It was only a tiny axle that the skilled mechanic smoothed with such patient skill. It was only a small, insignificant wheel into which he fitted it with such painstaking care. But without the tiny axle and the insignificant wheel, the chronometer would have hung useless, and without the chronometer, England's fleet could not have been successfully guided to Trafalgar. So everything has a place in God's comprehensive plan. The money in the bank of the millionaire, the thoughts in the brain of the scholar, the knowledge in the printed page of the book, the little restless tongue of childhood, the active hands and feet of the boys and girls, and, above all, the affections of their hearts—"the Lord hath need of them"; they have a place in His great plan.

A very great multitude spread their garments in the way, v. 8. Many have followed, consciously or unconsciously, the example of those enthusiastic crowds. Scholars, using their learning to translate and explain the scriptures; explorers devoting their lives to bring lands hidden into the light of clear and full knowledge; inventors, who have made travel easy with railways and steamships and telegraphs; statesmen, who have extended the boundaries of civilization—all the world's wisest and most powerful—have been paving the way on which King Jesus is advancing to the kingdom that shall embrace all mankind. And even the poorest and the weakest of us, by our smallest gifts and our feeblest efforts, can help to make that road smoother and easier by which this glorious Sovereign shall reach his throne in the hearts of men.

Hosanna. Blessed. Hosanna, v. 9. The recent progress of the Prince and Princess of Wales through India was one great triumphal procession. It was meet that it should be so. For they represented a king who has won his place in the hearts of his subjects chiefly as a peacemaker. But One greater than the representative of any earthly sovereign is amongst us. The very Prince of Peace is here. He has come from heaven, bringing its light and joy into our lives and homes. Who is worthy as He of praise and homage.

Who is this? v. 10. We do not cease to ask the question. A profane man is converted. No longer blasphemous words issue from his lips. A hard drinker is reformed. His home is restored to happiness and peace. A niggardly soul becomes generous, and heads a charitable subscription with a startling sum. A revival breaks out, as it did in Wales; and the saloons are closed, the theatres emptied, the stage managers depart for more genial climes; the most notorious sinners

break into floods of tears and then into shouts of Hosanna; a Presence not of earth is manifest; and men ask, "Who is this?" The answer we know: "Jesus of Nazareth passeth by." It is by His grace that such wonders are wrought in the lives of men.

The temple of God, v. 12. An old Quaker dreamt, that the floor of the meeting house was very filthy, and that the congregation were assembled to discuss how to cleanse it, when one speaker arose and said, "Friends, I think that if each one of us would take a broom and sweep immediately around his own seat, the house would be cleaned." Could anything be simpler? Or more effective? It is a good plan to follow. Let each one see that his own heart is pure; and then the whole church of the living God will be clean.

Out of the mouth of babes, v. 16. Flageolet! cried the conductor of a musical festival, throwing up his baton. The flageolet had not been doing its part properly. Ordinary people would not, however, have detected the omission; they would have sat entranced by the great volume of music. But one trained ear noted the silence of the flageolet, and could not proceed without it. Older people are sometimes apt to think that children are in the way; at least, they do not feel the omission when they are absent. It is different with Jesus. He misses their happy voices. Their note must be heard in the great chorus of music. The mighty psalm of praise that arises from God's universe will only be perfected out of the mouth of babes and sucklings.

LIGHT FROM THE EAST.

By Rev. James Ross, D.D.

BETHPHAGE—The place of young figs, was a small village on a ridge at the eastern base of Olivet, about half a mile north of Bethany. It is mentioned in the Talmud as the limit of a Sabbath day's journey from Jerusalem. Some think it was on the site of the Mohammedan village near the summit of Olivet; but the text seems to indicate that it was near the base of the mountain, and the frescoes of the crusaders show that they thought it was there. The Franciscans have built a chapel on the old ruins.

MONEY-CHANGERS — Storekeepers were not then in the habit of furnishing small change, and every purchaser required to have a stock of it about him. He got it from the changer, who charged a commission of from two to four per cent. The vast number of different coinages in the East in all ages made the money-changer an important person. The Jewish tax of half a shekel for every adult male, to maintain the services of the temple, had to be paid in the Jewish, that is, the old Phoenician coin. The high priest's family rented all these booths in the temple, and drew a large revenue from them. So flagrant and scandalous was this abuse, that even the Talmud represents the people as crying out against them, "Go hence, ye sons of Eli; ye defile the temple of Jehovah."

Righteousness is never better for taking a rest.

There can be no finality of truth that comes to fallible men.

You cannot measure a man's righteousness by his reticence.

The polished Christian comes from the mills of adversity.

They lose who win through fraud and sin.

God has promised forgiveness to those who repent, but He has not promised repentance to those who sin.—Augustine.

THE OTHER PRODIGAL.

By Rev. John A. Clark, B.A.

The prodigal son has too often been looked upon as the type of all sinful men. It has been forgotten, that the father, in our Lord's parable, had two sons. The elder son represents man, just as much as his prodigal brother. Taken into the far country and waste one's substance in riotous living, is not any more common, nor is it more dishonoring to the father, than the cultivation of a mean, narrow, grudging, jealous nature. To be respectable and industrious and thrifty and moral, is not the whole of virtue. No man is a true son of the perfect Father, who is not generous and forgiving and loving.

It is not difficult to recognize the elder son. He is a very excellent and useful man. He is one of those steady, industrious men, who do their work and discharge their duties in such a way that no one can possibly charge them with neglect. The neighbors and friends of the family often contrast him with his brother. The prodigal is a lazy, vicious, degraded creature. His brother is a hard-working, trustworthy, useful citizen.

But the morality of the elder son is a poor thing after all. It is a mere formal, external, monotonous performance of duty. There is no joy nor power in the daily task. The law of the father is a constraint rather than an impulse. Life is wanting in all the deeper and sweeter emotions. This explains his conduct when his prodigal brother comes home again. The prodigal's absence and folly have been the shame and sorrow of the father and the father's house. It has meant nothing to the elder brother. The prodigal's return and repentance are causes for the greatest rejoicing to his father. They have no interest for his brother. This elder son has no living, loving relations with those around him. He lives at home, but he is not at home; for he has nothing of that sympathetic and fraternal spirit which makes a home. He lives with his father; but he is separated from his father by a distance greater than that of any space, because he has no fellowship with his father's generous and loving spirit. And so his life is empty of all gladness. We know why his father never gave him a kid, that he might make merry with his friends. He had neither time nor inclination for play or the cultivation of cheerful friendship. "Music and dancing" are for living men not for mechanical drudges.

To be worthy and true sons of our heavenly Father, we must be more than dutiful and moral. We need most of all to have that mind and spirit which is warm, pitiful, generous, forgiving, loving. There is a grave temptation to think ourselves excellent and worthy men, because we despise and ignore the vicious, the improvident, the indolent, the foolish. Our prodigal brother is a fool and an outcast. We are thankful that we have nothing whatever to do with him. This sin of selfish indifference, of proud separation, is so great, that it constitutes us prodigals as truly as he who lives in drink and vice. It was this which Jesus affirmed time and again to the respectable and religious men of His day, that publicans and harlots would enter into the kingdom, while they would be thrust out. Would He say anything different to you and me?

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* S.S. Lesson, September 9, 1906, Matthew 21: 1-17. Commit to memory vs. 9-11. Read Mary 11: 1-11; Luke 19: 29-44. Golden Text—Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.—Matthew 21: 9.