

SUNDAY
SCHOOL

The Quiet Hour

YOUNG
PEOPLE

THE APOSTLES IMPRISONED.*

(By Rev. P. M. McDonald, B.D.)

Filled with jealousy (Rev. Ver.), v. 17. An old writer has it: "Of all the passions, jealousy is that which exacts the hardest service, and pays the bitterest wages. Its service is—to watch the success of our enemy; its wages—to be sure of that success." Let there be no place in your mind for jealousy. It fills the heart with the hot and dusty ashes of wrong desires. It gives you pain upon all the occasions which should give you pleasure. The ancients represented jealousy as a man with the head of a hawk; in his left hand he held a stick, and in his right a whip with three thongs. With these he punished his slaves.

"O, beware of jealousy
It's the green-eyed monster, which
doth mock
The meat it feeds on."

But the angel brought them forth, v. 19. God's angels still help defenceless ones who seek Him. Not long ago, a south-bound ship was wrecked the first day after it had come into the tropical waters. The crew took to the boats. A high sea was running, and it was only with the greatest care they kept the boats from swamping. As the dark night approached, most of the men were filled with fear. But one of them was a Christian, and he had the assurance that somehow God would bring them through the night in safety. He prayed earnestly for the protecting presence of God's angels. As soon as the sun dropped below the horizon, the ocean was full of a wonderful light. It was a phosphorescent sea they were in, and the night was as the day about the frightened boatmen.

Opened the prison doors, v. 19. There is a fable of a man in prison. He disliked his confinement. The misery of the place tortured him. He longed to get out. One day a shining Person came to his cell and said, "Come forth!" But the man crouched down where he sat, and cried aloud, "No! No! I am not ready to go yet. After all, the prison is warm and dry. Outside it is strange and the wind is cold. Besides, if my fellow prisoners are not virtuous, they are friendly." And he turned to his fellow prisoners and screamed, "Save me! Save me from the Man in white, and from the open door!" How many refuse the freedom from sin that Christ offers!

All the words of this life, v. 20. A legend tells how a secret disciple of Christ found the three crosses lying in a heap on Calvary, some days after the crucifixion, and not knowing which was the Saviour's she had a dead body brought and laid upon each of the crosses in turn. When it touched the third cross, the body was restored to life. This old story has no foundation in fact, but it pictures the power of Jesus to give the new life of purity and love.

We must obey God rather than men (Rev. Ver.), v. 29. These are the words the martyrs uttered, when the hand of persecution tried to turn them from Christ. John Bunyan was sentenced to three months in jail for preaching the gospel. When he was being taken out of the court, the judge said to him, "Unless you abstain from the course

you have been pursuing, we shall have to banish you from the country." To this Bunyan replied, "I am at a point with you. If I were out of prison again to-day, I would preach the gospel again to-morrow, by the grace of God." We are not called to assert our principles in such ways as these old saints; but in our daily life, in the home, on the street, in school, and at play or work, we have calls to do what God commands, rather than what selfishness or worldliness tempt us to do. We may do just as noble things as the martyrs, if we make the martyrs' motto our motto.

Rejoicing to suffer shame for his name, v. 41. An old mariner told me once, that the best wind that could blow for him when on the sea, in a sailing vessel, was "a head wind." A calm is the horror of seamen, and a fair wind makes a lazy crew; but when the wind is opposing and you have "to wear the ship" and "tack," you have order and discipline and obedience. "It takes a little longer time to make your run, but your men and yourself are in better condition for the vigilance and work," said he, "and it is great to feel that the obstinate wind, after all, has been made your servant." How good a prayer was that of the old saint, "Lord, do not make my burdens lighter, nor my foes fewer; but make me stronger and draw me nearer unto Thyself, and so shall I win the day and be more like Thee."

A PRAYER.

Our Father God—the doors of our hearts are not locked against Thee. Do not keep from entering them. Thou art ours. Make us Thine, in every part. Thy very Name and Nature is Greatness. Prevent us from resting before we get to Thee. All along the way, blossom our grassless desert into a delightful garden. In the transformation, transform us! Grow our lives from mere promise into mighty power. Arouse us to the largeness of a life so possible. Open our eyes to the supreme worth of such living. Keep us from the disaster of sealed sight. Consummate every ambition to serve our Christ and Church completely. Reveal the gladness of the giver of his best for Thy glory. Create in us conquering kindness and colossal charity that the influence of our lives may become wider with the years. From least to greatest remember Thy chosen in largest blessing. Through Thy Son, our Brother, we have asked. Amen.

No education is adequate to the needs of life which does not produce decision of character, courage, self-control and perseverance.

The Sabbath is to give us a chance to do what we like to do—to carry out our own character; the use we make of it shows whether our character is Christ like or not.—Anon.

It is unwise for us to try to hurry God. We ask for guidance and because it does not come before we have ceased asking we distrust God. That is not wise. The slowness of God is the safety of men.

The aim of all Christian teaching is to perfect character, and so initiate holy and helpful action. John Ruskin says at the close of one of his volumes: "This is the sum of all my writings, 'Whatever He saith unto you, do it!'" The words of Mary to the servants of Cana of Galilee is the word for us today: "Whatever Christ saith we can safely do, and less than that we dare not do."

LIGHT FROM THE EAST.

(By Rev. James Rose, D.D.)

Senate.—Means a full meeting of the Council or Sanhedrin. This court consisted of seventy-one members chosen by itself from the priestly aristocracy, who were Sadducees; the scribes, who were Pharisees; and the elders, who were prominent laymen. Every member must be a father, physically perfect, well read in the law and popular with his fellow men. The high priest was president, and the rest sat in a semicircle in the order of seniority. In the time of the Maccabees, the Sanhedrin was the supreme court of justice and the final court of appeal in Israel; but its power was limited by the Romans. Twenty-three members formed a quorum, and while a bare majority might acquit, a majority of two was required to condemn, unless when all the members were present, and then a majority of one might condemn. The Pharisees and Sadducees in the Council often quarreled, and this lessened its influence. It could meet any day except the Sabbath, but as sentence of death could be pronounced only on the day after the trial, such trials were not held on a Saturday, nor on the day before a festival. After the destruction of Jerusalem, the Sanhedrin moved from place to place, became only a school of interpretation, and finally sat for the last time at Tiberias in A.D. 425.

HOW TO PROSPER IN ALL THY
WAYS.

Daniel was a busy statesman. Darius had made him his chief minister. He had charge of the royal revenue, and was virtual ruler of the empire. But amidst all the cares of office, he knelt upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime. For these prayers nothing was neglected. The administration of justice was not standing still; the public accounts did not run into confusion; there was no mutiny in the army, no rebellion in the provinces, from any mismanagement of his. Even his enemies said, "We shall find no occasion against this Daniel, except we find it against him concerning the law of his God." He found leisure to rule the realm of Babylon, and leisure to pray three times a day. Some would say that he must have been a first-rate man of business to find so much time for prayer. It would be nearer the truth to say, that it was his taking so much time to pray which made him so diligent and successful in business. It was from God that Daniel got his knowledge, his wisdom, and his skill. This was the secret of his being found by the king ten times better than all the wisest men that were in all his realm. The man must be busier than Daniel who has not time to pray, and wiser than Daniel who can do what Daniel did without prayer to help him.—Life in Earnest.

It is the inner life that makes our world. If our hearts are sweet, patient, gentle, loving, we find sweetness, patience, gentleness and love wherever we go. But if our hearts are bitter, jealous, suspicious, we find bitterness, jealousy and suspicion on every path. If we go out among people in a combative spirit, we find combativeness in those we meet. But if we go forth in a charitable frame of mind, with goodwill in our hearts toward all, we find brotherliness and cordiality in every man we come up to in our walk and associations.

*S. S. Lesson, February 14, 1909.—Acts 5:17-32. Commit to memory vs. 19, 20. Study Acts 5:17-42. Golden Text.—Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake; for their's is the kingdom of heaven.—Matt. 5:10.