

SUNDAY
SCHOOL

The Quiet Hour

YOUNG
PEOPLEJESUS AT THE POOL OF BETH-
ESDA.

E. S. Lesson. John 5: 1-15. Golden

Text—And a Great Multitude Fol-
lowed Him, Because They
Saw His Miracles.—
John 6: 2.

By Rev. J. W. Clark, London, Ont.

Jesus went up to Jerusalem, v. 1. It is worthy of note how careful Jesus was in His observance of the services and rites of the Jewish religion. If ever any one might have held himself exempt, surely it was He who saw so clearly how much of mere form was in the worship. But He worshipped regularly in the synagogue, and He was careful in His attendance at the great feasts in Jerusalem, and that, too, when He knew that the character of many of the leaders was unworthy. If we stay away from church until the worship and the worshippers are perfect, we shall stay away always. If we have a sincere desire to worship God, we shall not be hindered by the shortcomings of others.

A multitude of them that were sick, blind, halt, withered (Rev. Ver.), v. 3. It is an old problem—why God should permit so much misery and suffering among men. We must not expect completely to solve it in this life. We are but children, and cannot understand perfectly the ways and purposes of our heavenly Father. But this we do know, that He loves men and is full of good-will towards them, for He has shown this in the gift of His Son. And we know, too, that suffering has often been a messenger to bring back wandering ones to His feet. Knowing these things, we can trust Him, and wait for the explanation of the things we do not understand.

A certain man, thirty and eight years in his infirmity, (Rev. Ver.), v. 5. Suppose this man had been healed sooner by being put down into the bubbling pool. Then, it is quite possible that he would have returned to his old sinful life, would never have seen the Saviour or received from Him the healing of his soul. It was in great mercy that his cure was delayed until a Physician came who could make him whole in body and in spirits as well.

Wouldst thou be made whole (Rev. Ver.)? v. 6. We must will if we hope to win. The prizes of life do not drop into our lap like plums from a tree. They come to those who strive for them with resolute determination. The willing that counts is more than mere idle wishing. We must will hard enough to put forth every possible effort after the object we seek. God's greatest gift, the gift of salvation, is for those who are bound to have it, and who for its

sake turn their backs upon everything else in the world.

Sir, I have no man: to put me into the pool, v. 7. It was enough for the widow who appealed to Elisha, to provide the empty vessels. God would fill them. And it is just when we give up all dependence on ourselves or any human power that God is ready to bless us. Faith is just holding up empty hands to receive the bounty of God. It is bringing to Him hearts emptied of all pride and self-sufficiency, that His grace may enter in.

Rise, take up thy bed, and walk, v. 8. Jesus is always commanding impossible things. He sets the five loaves and two fishes before the disciples, and bids them feed with them ten thousand people. He bids a man with a withered arm stretch it forth. And here he directs a cripple for a generation to get up from his bed. But He never leaves us to our own ability. Along with the command comes the power that multiplies our resources, that puts strength into the arm and courage into the heart. There can be no failure to those who simply go forward at His bidding, looking to Him for help and guidance.

He that made me whole—saith unto me, v. 11. How this reply sums up the whole of the Christian life! First, we come to Christ for healing and strength, and then we go out to do His will. Pardoned ourselves, we show the way of forgiveness to others. Saved ourselves we take our part in the glorious enterprise of saving the world. And as we work for Christ, our assurance that He has redeemed us becomes stronger and deeper. His energy working in us proves that we are His.

So the Jews said: But He answered (Rev. Ver.), vs. 10, 11. Let us be sure that we have as good authority as the Bethesda cripple, for the work we do on the Sabbath, and we may carry a good conscience. Of one thing we may be certain, that if we are testifying to the power and love of the Saviour, whether by our speech, or like this man, by our actions, we cannot be making a wrong use of the holy day.

Who is the man that said unto thee, Take up thy bed (Rev. Ver.), v. 12. In a well-known illustration, William Paley bids his readers imagine a man walking across a plain, and happening upon a watch. As he examines its parts, and the way they are fitted together, his thoughts naturally go back to the maker of it. To suppose that the watch came into existence by chance would be absurd. And when we think of the Church and all that it has accomplished, can we believe that it began and grew without a Founder who is more than human? Who is Jesus if He is not the Son of God.

The man went away, and told: that it was Jesus (Rev. Ver.), v. 15. With equal truth might we say that our homes so happy and pure, our schools and colleges, our hospitals and asylums, our just laws, all the best things in life, we owe to Jesus. He has the strongest claim on our love and gratitude:

"Jesus, Thy boundless love to me
No thought can reach, no tongue declare,
Oh! knit my thankful heart to Thee,
And reign without a rival there."

PRAYER.

Our heavenly Father, we are thine, bought by the blood of thy Son, made meet by thy grace to be partakers of the inheritance of life. We would know to whom we belong; we would see thy signature written upon our life; we would feel thy claim in our hearts, urging us by sweet persuasion of love to do some nobler deed. Draw us closer to thyself; speak as we are able to bear it; adapt the light to our vision; and when we would pray, let thy Spirit work mightily within us and teach our hearts great words to express great desires. Qualify us every day for broader service, for more patient suffering, for more loyal and loving obedience. And when the little flame of life's short day dies down and goes out from human eyes, may our souls wake in heaven's eternal morning. And this we ask in Jesus' name.—Amen.—Selected.

LOOK OUT FOR YOUR RIGHTS.

Our highest rights are worth guarding jealously. We must not allow them to be trampled upon, nor wrested from us. Only let us make sure that we do not mistake what our rights are. Some men talk about their "rights" as though they were a debt that the world owed them. When they talk about "standing up for their rights," they mean that they intend to "look out for number one," and to get and hold all that belong to them. But the word "rights" is simply the word right. To look out for our rights ought to mean to look out that we do no wrong. How different from the common bluster about securing one's rights even if one has to verge on the wrong to get them! God has given every one of his children inalienable rights: the right to love, to serve, to crucify self, and in these things to follow Him. Let no man take these rights from us.—S. S. Times.

Did the thief upon the cross die a triumphant death? So far as the record goes, there were no rapturous expressions of confidence; but there was a genuine faith, and death was swallowed up in victory. As a rule, however, a triumphant death follows a triumphant Christian life.