

SUNDAY
SCHOOL

The Quiet Hour

YOUNG
PEOPLE

JESUS BEFORE PILATE.*

Let them should be defiled, v. 28. A choice example of straining at the gnat and swallowing the camel. A Gentile's house on a Feast day? No. But, Feast day or no Feast day, an innocent man's blood to be shed. Is there no risk now of the duplicating of this atrocious conduct? Is not the clean outside, with rottenness within, still a possibility? We cannot be too careful that we are sound through and through, that we do not hug wickedness to our hearts, whilst outwardly we keep up every form of propriety. To be what he seems, and to seem what he really is, is the only standard that an open-minded, honest-hearted man will set up for himself.

What accusation bring ye against this man? v. 29. Let us be fair. It is so easy to scatter fire brands. Any thoughtless child can whirl a blazing stick about, with risk of untold damage where the flame may happen to catch. If we are tempted to think evil or speak evil of anyone, let us ask ourselves, not in passion, but in cool blood—What is there really against him? What has he done that is wrong? If we do so, we shall often find ourselves ashamed to have been so nearly set on an injurious course by so little cause. A person needs to have done some very positive wrong, before we are justified in setting the story of it afloat.

Take him yourselves, v. 31 (Rev. Ver.). It is no uncommon failing, to shirk responsibility. Great man as he was, Pilate did it. The smallest can do it, too. But can we really escape responsibility? Pilate's course does not lend much encouragement. Through his shirking he was goaded into the greater sin. He became, at length, the murderer of the Lord Jesus. To try to get from under responsibility, is to leap off the car that would carry us, into the track of one that will run us down. Better bear bravely the load that God places on one's shoulders, than be borne down by the disaster that is so apt to follow slackness.

Thou art the king? v. 33. Well for Pilate, had he asked the question in sincerity; or at least listened with an open mind to what this Nazarene had to say for Himself. When one so asks and so attends, the reply is as if written in letters of light across the face of the heavens. Truly He is the King, who is so wondrous in His might and majesty, in His knowledge and wisdom. He is King of our hearts, who so captures them with His graciousness. He is King of our lives, who holds before us a life so worth the living.

Sayest thou this of thyself? v. 34. What a sword-thrust is in this question at all the petty gossip and tattling to which we are so prone to aid in giving wings. A sword-thrust, too, at the cheap, second-hand opinions with which, for very laziness to think things out for ourselves, we are liable to be content. Before we tell things, we should be sure of the source from which the news comes. Before we give out opinions on a subject, we should hammer it well out on our own anvil. Hasty judgments bespeak a small-minded man.

My kingdom is not of this world, v. 36. The whole aim of practical science now is to seize on the hidden forces of nature and compel them to do us service. His is the greatest triumph who most successfully enchains the unseen powers about us. Should not his honor be greater still, who sets the forces of the world that is to come

at work to sweeten and ennoble men's inner life. That is what God's great Messenger from above did. That is what every one of His followers does, who helps in making known His Master's grace and power.

For this cause came I into the world, v. 37. Like a weight on the head, which makes one stand erect, is a definite responsibility. To have it placed upon us arouses our strength. To assume it brings that strength into vigorous action. He who has taken up the life burden which is his by the decree of Providence, is already the bigger, better man for having so done. The burdenless man is the man least to be envied.

I find in him no fault at all, v. 38. Who can? Not even the most foul-hearted; for His perfect purity and goodness stand out from and above the base levels of ordinary human life, as yonder snow-capped mountain above the dust of the high-ways about its base. Pilate was correct in his estimate: Jesus is faultless. He was wrong, however, in the action taken. He should have sided with, not against, Him. It avails nothing to admire Christ's perfectness, unless, along with admiration, goes allegiance. If He is faultless, then He is a Model to follow, a Friend to be sought after, a King to serve.

Not this man, but Barabbas, v. 40. They could not have both; and with a sad perversity they choose wrongly. Barabbas was "robber." So, says good old Matthew Henry, "sin is a robber, every base lust is a robber." When we prefer these to the Christ, we are admitting bandits into our very castle. What can we expect, but that they will strip us bare, and shamefully use us? Who, that lets sin into close quarters, ever escapes the robbing and the mauling?

A CURE FOR EVERY CARE.

(Luke vi., 12; ix., 28.)

By Rev. J. A. Macfarlane.

It may come from the crush of sorrow,
Or rise from a sense of sin,
It may be hurled from foes without
Or born of the fears within.

But at times we are bowed and weary
With a burden we cannot bear,
And we stagger along life's highway
Like men who are drunken with care.

But when, in the hour of trouble,
We turn to the mount of God,
Taking the way that Jesus took
And climbing the path that He trod.

We share, at least, in a measure,
The comfort the Saviour felt,
As we, like Him, on the mountain,
In the presence of God have knelt.

And to us, as to Him, there cometh
From the parted skies above,
The Father's voice in the shadowing cloud,
Telling of heavenly love.

And somehow our hearts grow rested,
And the ill of life flee away,
For we find that this is the pathway
That leads to the Gates of Day.

And the way that we take is His way,
And the hand that leads is His own,
And the love that enfolds us is His love,
Till we rest by the great white throne.

Then we shall know as we cannot now,
That the cure for every care,
Is to talk it over a while with God
In the secret place of prayer.

A child of ordinary capacity and destitute of property, but converted to God in childhood, is frequently worth more to the church than ten wealthy men converted at the noon of life.—Dr. John Todd.

REAL PRAYER.

"The effectual, fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." Nearly all the prayers in the New Testament were followed by an immediate answer. When the disciples assembled on the day of Pentecost they continued in prayer for a period of ten days, when the great miraculous blessing fell upon them. While the theories so common with regard to the delayed answers to prayer are not found in the Bible, other reasons are there brought forward to account for them, "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me," says the Psalmist. The man who wavereth in his faith or purpose is not entitled to think that "he will receive anything of the Lord. For he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him."

The Scripture connects prayer with works, for "faith without works is dead." It makes watching an essential quality in prayer: "Watch and pray that ye enter not into temptation." It offers nothing to those who seek a blessing from God for the promotion of ends which make the kingdom of God subordinate, and these ends predominant. "Seek ye first the kingdom of God." "Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss."

Real prayer is answered, and that speedily, in the thing for which the person prays, if it be according to the will of God, or in such an uplift of Christian experience as will mark the beginning of a new, a brighter era in the praying soul. Such new eras may be as numerous as the prayers. What is called agonizing before the throne of grace is frequently, but the rectifying of the condition of the spirit; the final prayer that brings the answer in the thing desired may be as brief as that of sinking Peter. It was said of Saul of Tarsus, "Behold, he prayeth," and the most wonderful spectacle in the world is that of one who really prayeth. Such an one can say "Come and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will declare what he hath done for my soul. Verily God hath heard me. He hath attended to the voice of my prayer. Blessed be God which hath not turned away my prayer, nor his mercy from me."—London Primitive Methodist.

PRAYER.

Our Heavenly Father, in whose hand are all our ways, guide our steps, we pray thee, in the paths of peace. Implant in us a desire and longing for holiness and truth. Release us from the bondage of unworthy habit, from the love of all that is not in harmony with thy pure will; and awaken in our hearts an earnest and importunate yearning for thy presence and the manifestation towards us of thy forgiving and uplifting love. May our lives proclaim the power of thine indwelling, and shed forth the radiance of thy grace. And this we ask in the name of our blessed Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. Amen.—Selected.

THE POOR IN SPIRIT.

"Blessed are the poor in spirit," is the first beatitude—the gate to all the rest. It is not a popular virtue in these strenuous, pushing days. But it remains a necessity of holy living in any and every age. To win blessedness, we must learn "Humility, that low, sweet root From which all heavenly virtues shoot."

There is so much bad in the best of us, And so much good in the worst of us, That it hardly behooves any of us To talk about the rest of us.

—Robert Louis Stevenson.

There is no statute of limitation to the memory of an evil deed.

* S.S. Lesson VIII., May 21, 1905—John 18: 28-40. Commit to memory vs. 37, 38. Read ch. 18. GOLDEN TEXT—Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice.—John 18: 37.