

SUNDAY
SCHOOL

The Quiet Hour

YOUNG
PEOPLE

JESUS IN GETHSEMANE*

By Rev. Clarence McKinnon, D.D.

While I go and pray yonder, v. 36. "Land on the starboard bow," shouts a voice from the masthead. Down on the level deck nothing is visible. The whole sea is enveloped in fog. But the sailor at the masthead has gone above the mists, and his unobstructed sight perceives the land toward which they journey, long before the others can. It is needful for the soul at times to reach an attitude where it will be above the obscurities that limit our earthly vision, to climb some masthead from which the great truths of God, salvation and heaven become evident, so that it may find peace and strength in the hour of conflict.

Tarry ye here, and watch with me, v. 38. Companionship in our hours of trial is what we all seek. There is no terror greater than to be alone. "You must pray with me; for I am dying." It was the entreaty of a wounded soldier whom the surgeons had left on the battlefield because he was already far beyond the reach of medical aid. "I cannot; I don't pray for myself," was what the young man addressed replied; but all the same he was greatly distressed at his inability to help his wounded comrade. Remembering that he had picked up a book on the battlefield, he looked at it now. It proved to be, "The Soldier's Prayer Book," and on its first, muddy page was printed a prayer for a dying soldier. It was blessed to the souls of both of them. Let us so train our lives, that we may prove helpful companions to others and be able to watch with them when they descend into their dark Gethsemane.

Fell on his face, and prayed, v. 39. Prayer may be in any attitude and in many forms. It may be but a desire, yet God regardeth the desire of the poor. Or it may be only a tear, yet "the Lord hath heard the voice of my weeping." Or perhaps it is just a groan, a sigh, a look, a breath, but God notes it and nothing is lost with Him that is sincere. It is not the arithmetic of our prayers, how many they are, that counts; nor the rhetoric, how long they are; nor their music, how methodical they may be; but their divinity, how they spring from the depths of a longing and believing heart. "Not gifts, but graces prevail in prayer."

Let this cup pass, v. 39. True heroism is not mere blindness to danger, but the courage to face it when its terrors are fully known. A locomotive engineer who was naturally so timid that he was afraid to go alone in the dark, was the one who was always selected when any work was needed requiring particularly strong nerve. There was no danger of his being panic-stricken. His timid nature foresaw all the perils before he placed his hand on the throttle, and he had made up his mind to face them. The fear that would avoid an enterprise is more to be trusted than the rashness that rushes boldly in without counting the cost. Jesus foresaw the sufferings of the coming day so clearly that He asked, if possible, for the cup to pass. But knowing that escape was impossible, He endured these sorrows with a calmness and heroism that to our human eyes is marvellous.

Watch and pray, v. 41. "I am aware that many of you are numbered amongst praying people," said the late Queen of Madagascar to some of her palace officers. "I have no objection to

your joining them, if you think it right; but remember, if you do so, I shall expect from you a life worthy that profession. I know that praying people profess to be truthful, honest and upright, to fear God and benefit their fellow men; if you do so, that will be right; if not, you will not be worthy of the profession you make." The oldest Christian minister could not have expressed the obligation more clearly. Our prayers must be supported by our moral alertness. We must avoid all evil, and we must be like the Roman warrior who attributed his victory to the fact that Heaven favored him because he begged success with a drawn sword in his hand.

Prayed the third time, v. 44. When John Welch, the persecuted covenanter of Scotland, was in exile in France, a friar came to the house where he was staying and passed the night there. The friar could not sleep for a continual whispering he heard all night. He believed the Huguenot house was haunted. Great was his surprise when he learned from the villagers next day, that the constant whisperings he heard were nothing else than the exiled minister's continued pleadings at the throne of grace. So deeply impressed was he, that he sought an interview which changed his whole life. The great revolution in religion in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries was not brought about by one prayer or by two prayers, but by constant wrestling with God. It was thus Jesus won His victory, and it is thus that we shall win our victory over the perils of our age and circumstances. Judas, one of the twelve, v. 47. In the deep meadow pasture beside the clear waters of the lake, surrounded by rich, nutritious grasses, fragrant blossoms and ripening fruits, may be found the poison hemlock. The soil that fed its neighbors and made them so valuable, feeds it and fills its juice with poison. Judas grew and ripened for his notorious crime under the same kindly and heavenly influences that made Peter and John such notable apostles. The gospel is either a savor of life unto life, or of death unto death. It either makes us grow in holiness and love, or else, under its rejected message, our hearts become hard and cruel.

HOW TO PREVAIL IN PRAYER.

Right prevailing in prayer is to prevail over one-self, not over God. And patience is a secret of such prevailing. God needs not to be influenced or prevailed upon. God knows our every need, and God rejoices in our telling Him of our needs. He intends to supply our every need, and He waits only for us to show that He may safely grant our petitions. If He knows that what we so earnestly pray for to-day can be to our best good only if granted a year from to-day, then the great question is whether we shall so exercise patience as to make the granting of our prayer a blessing when it does come. And in that exercise we need mightily to prevail over ourselves, and to pray God that He will prevail over our natural impatience and unfaith. Perhaps Dr. Torrey's greatest secret of what is called "power with God" was his power over himself, his grip upon himself, when for three years he prayed every week for the coming of a world-wide revival of religion, and kept on praying in steadfast faith and undiminished patience though scarcely a sign of an answer appeared. Then, after three years, God could send the answer, and could mightily use the man of patience; and He did. Let us strive to prevail over ourselves that God may answer our prayers.

LIGHT FROM THE EAST.

By Rev. James Ross, D.D.

Gethsemane—Was situated at the foot of Olivet, just across the Kidron, which runs parallel to the east wall of Jerusalem. The traditional site is owned by the Franciscans, and is about 150 feet long and 140 wide, enclosed by a picket fence. The eight olive trees in it are the oldest of their kind in the world, and are now banked up with earth and stones to keep them from falling to pieces. The garden is carefully kept, flowers bloom everywhere, and wormwood and the passion vine trail in profusion over the fence. It is a lovely spot. A cave formed by an ancient cistern, and now transformed into a Latin sanctuary and called the Grotto of the Agony, is shown about a hundred yards to the north of the garden, as the spot to which Jesus retired, now forever sacred as the scene of His agony. The garden to which Christ often resorted cannot have been far from this one, and was no doubt private property, belonging to some personal friend of Jesus, and, although not far from the public highway, yet amid the dense foliage which then covered the whole mountain, it would be a very secluded place. The Greeks have enclosed a piece of ground near by called it Gethsemane, and the Russians have built a large church with seven tapering domes, a little higher up.

LOOKING FOR THE REAL MAN.

Death is a wonderful revealer. Death really seems to make it easy for us to see and talk about and dwell upon everything that was lovely in anyone whom death has taken. Funeral "eulogies" are sometimes spoken of slightly, as though they were untrue and misleading. They are not, as a rule; the only difference between the after-death estimate of a man, and the common attitude of his fellow-men towards him in life, is that the latter puts chief emphasis upon his shortcomings, and the former is based on his worthiest acts and inspirations. And which is the real man? Which interests God most? Which is likely to help a man towards his best and worthiest, — to know that others are looking for the good, or the evil, in him? Suppose we should all adopt the after-death estimate of our friends and acquaintances, day by day, while they are still with us: would the world be better or worse for it?—S. S. Times.

THE ONE PATTERN.

What a glorious fact it is that there is one life that can be held up before the eyes of humanity as a pattern! There were lips that never spake unkindness, that never uttered an untruth; there were eyes that never looked aught but love and purity and bliss; there were arms that never closed against wretchedness or penitence; there was a bosom that never throbbed with sin, nor ever was excited by an unholy impulse; there was a man free from all undue selfishness, and whose life was spent in going about doing good.

The young man who is looking for a soft seat to sit down in would better buy a cane or a crutch and prepare to stand. The man who gets the soft snap is the man who prepares himself for it. Hard work is the only royal road to success.

*S. S. Lesson, November 11, 1906—Matthew 26:36-50 Commit to memory vs. 39, 39. Read Mark 14:32-52; Luke 22:39-53. Golden Text—Not my will, but thine, be done.—Luke 22:42.