

SUNDAY
SCHOOL

The Quiet Hour

YOUNG
PEOPLE

JESUS ANOINTED IN BETHANY*

By Rev. Clarence McKinnon, B. D.

Alabaster box, v. 7. Every heart carries its alabaster box of precious ointment. In it are shut up sympathy, helpfulness and joy. But too often the box remains closed and the ointment within is wasted because it is not used. Let our hearts be like those spicy islands, whose fragrance is wafted far out to sea on the summer breeze and announces to the mariner even before he can see them, his approach to a sunny shore. Let the gladness in our eyes and the friendship in our handshake intimate even to strangers that we are their brothers and ready to help them. Sometimes these alabaster boxes are hard to break. They are clasped with the bands of selfishness; and suffering and disappointment are needful to force them open. If so, the world is the gainer by our apparent misfortune:

"No shattered box of ointment
We ever need regret,
For out of disappointment
Flows sweetest odors yet."

To what purpose is this waste, v. 8. To some, the sun is an object of never-ending wonderment, when they consider how its light fills the whole heaven and illuminates the distant planet, to others, it is a matter of consideration only for the light it gives their dwelling, and the fertility with which it blesses their field. We must be ever on our guard against this narrow, self-centered standard of judgment. The deeds that have lived in history are those that forgot selfish interest, refused to count the cost, but sacrificed all things for some noble purpose or some great principle. Mackenzie went to Korea, and in a very brief time he was in his grave; Lon Keith-Falconer went to Aden, and in a few months fell a victim to its fever-stricken climate. But who shall ask, "To what purpose is this waste?" seeing that the inspiration of their heroism has kindled like ardor in a hundred other breasts; and the corn of wheat that fell into the ground and died, has become a harvest.

Why trouble about the woman? v. 10. There are about 20,000 deaths annually in India from snake bites. From 1870 to 1882 nearly 200,000 died from this cause. Often the bite of a cobra is fatal in half an hour. We can therefore understand the vigilance of the Government in their endeavor to destroy this terrible scourge. In one year, 220,000 serpents have been killed, and nearly 12,000 rupees paid as a reward for their destruction. But there are serpents not so easy to overcome, and whose invisible bite is just as great a menace to the world's happiness. These are the criticisms, misconstructions, and unkind remarks that are continually being made on the actions of good people. There are those who see in every good deed some selfish purpose; others have faults to find in the method of its performance, or are ready to point out how something better could have been done. These uncalculated reproaches are unkind and hurtful. They trouble good people. How bitterly David complains of them! They are the snakes and serpents of the spiritual world. Let us endeavor to destroy them.

A good work, v. 10. On the borders of the sandy African desert lived a kind-

hearted man, who, every morning, took a picher of cold water from a spring and carried it to the dusty thoroughfare and left it for any thirsty traveler who might pass that way. Every such action that is prompted by sympathy for another's need or gratitude for benefits received, is a good work. We live on the borders of a spiritual Sahara. Around us are passing every day souls thirsting for the water of life. Shall we not each morning carry with us into the throng of men some sweet refreshing thought or purpose that we have found in the hour of our early devotions?

Ye have the poor, v. 11. St. Lawrence was arrested by a satellite of a Roman emperor on a rumor that the treasures of the Christian church were in his keeping. At the tribunal he was required to say where these treasures were. "In three days," he replied, "I will bring them." On the third day he collected the sick and the poor to whom he dispersed alms, and, placing them before the prefect, said, "Behold, here are the treasures of the church."

One of the twelve, called Judas, v. 14. Judas, the traitor; and yet one of the twelve most favored of Jesus' followers in the privilege they enjoyed of being always close to Him and of hearing Him teach and seeing His marvellous works day by day; one of the twelve, too, on whom the heaviest responsibilities were being laid by their Master. It may well make us pause. We have high privilege, for have we not known our Lord's ways and will since infancy? To us He has committed great tasks. Are we traitors, or are we true?

What will ye give me? v. 15. We do well to ask this question of the sins that tempt us. For every sin is its own paymaster. The brief pleasure it gives does not pay us out. There still remain the certain shame, the suffering that cannot be escaped. Behind the pleasing excitement of the first glass lies the ruin of the drunkard. The thief may enjoy his ill-gotten gain for a time; but the terror of being detected; the disgrace of discovery; the prison and the penalty—these are yet to come. What is the pay? Before we sin, let us make sure of that.

LIGHT FROM THE EAST.

By Rev. James Ross, D. D.

The Leper—It is not likely that the host was still a leper; he had probably been healed by Christ. But the freedom with which the lepers of the East mingle with other people is surprising to us. A number of them will sometimes surround a traveler, if they can separate him from his party, and corner him up, and stretch their fingerless hands towards his face, to try and extort backsheesh from him.

Pieces of silver—By this phrase the Jewish shekel is usually meant. The Jews at this time had no silver coins of their own, but the shekel of Tyre was in common circulation among them. It had the head of the Tyrian Heracles, crowned with laurel, on one side, and on the other an eagle with one foot on the prow of a galley, a palm branch over one shoulder, a club, and the monogram of the mint master, together with the inscription, "Tyre the sacred and inviolable." Later, the Jews coined a shekel of their own, having a chalice on one side, with the date and the words, "Shekel of Israel." On the other side, it had a flowering lily and the inscription, "Jerusalem the holy." The value of the coin was about sixty-six cents; so that Judas got for the betrayal less than twenty dollars.

SPARKS FROM OTHER ANVILS.

Lutheran Observer: The work of missions is based entirely on appreciation of spiritual values. Its motive is love of Christ and its aim is the salvation of men.

Southwestern Presbyterian: How hard it is to sympathize with one who disagrees with you. And yet there may be a thousand points in which you agree to one in which you are apart!

Central Baptist: All up and down the line of the conflict the results have been against the traffic. Some of us might have preferred a sudden and wholesale abolition of the nefarious business, but we will welcome it all the same if it comes to us by degrees.

Herald and Presbyter: No one of us can bring the whole world to Christ, but if each one of us does what he can there will be a great deal more done than if we say we can do nothing, and keep on doing it. There are a great many professed Christian people in the world, and if each one does and gives something a great deal will be given and done.

United Presbyterian: We desire to emphasize the importance, the very great importance, of committing as much as possible of the Bible especially when young. It may be said that children cannot understand the Scriptures and their minds should not be burdened with that which is above their age. To this it is enough to say that at no age is the mind more receptive of the truth than in childhood, at no subsequent time can the Scriptures be so imbedded in the memory.

Michigan Presbyterian: Two strong words they are: "Presbyterian" has a wealth of association and meaning that need not be amplified here. Possibly the magic of the name is in "Brotherhood." This is what men hanker for. There are brotherhoods in politics, in clubs, and in secret orders. There are Masonic and business brotherhoods. Its fine essence is always determined, and we may say limited, by its qualifying word. The far-off day of human brotherhood, "when man to man the world o'er shall brothers be an' a' that," may be held up as an ideal, and will, no doubt, come with the fullness of the kingdom. The "Presbyterian brotherhood" will do much to hasten the day.

Christian Intelligencer: The Gospel wheresoever it goes and is received leads men to love God, and one another; and this tends to healing, first of individual hearts, and then, with its universal spread and influence, the healing of the nations. Millions have felt its benign power, and have been constrained to devote themselves to the service and praise of God. . . . It has softened hard hearts, stilled impetuous passions, conquered unreasonable prejudices, dispelled the gloom of ignorance and superstition, and removed every obstacle to real happiness. And who that has ever known its excellency; who, that has ever experienced its efficacy; who, that has been convinced of its Divine origin, its delightful nature and peaceful tendency, but joins in the prayer of the royal poet: "Let the whole earth be filled with its glory, amen and amen!"

Heaven is God's homestead for adopted children.

*S.S. Lesson, October 28, 1906. Matthew 26:6-16. Commit to memory vs. 12, 13. Read Mark 14: 1-11; Luke 7: 36-50. Golden Text—She hath wrought a good work upon me.—Matthew 26:10. trayal less than twenty dollars.