

SUNDAY
SCHOOL

The Quiet Hour

YOUNG
PEOPLE

JESUS AND THE SABBATH.

(By Rev. J. W. McMillan, M.A.)

To pluck the ears, v. 1. A simple life is not a weary life. Because these disciples lived in a plain and bare fashion, we must not imagine that their lives were dull. Why, they were in company with a wonder-worker. They were seeing marvels every day. Anyhow, the zest and relish of life is not to be greatly found in food and drink. A glutton does not reach any height of exultation. A drunkard does, but soon falls from it with a crash. In fact, the first effect of excitement is to destroy one's appetite. In adventure or sport or war one does not expect or ask the finest food. Even an absorbing story can keep one from his meals. These disciples were like Mary, who had chosen the good part, and were not troubled about much serving.

Not lawful, v. 2. The whole law often corrects its part. There are perhaps exceptions to be noted to the statement of law which first catches your eye. You see a notice on the outside of a factory, the upper line of which reads, "No admission." Now if that were all, there would be no factory, for even the proprietor and the workmen would be excluded. But the lower line proceeds, "Except on Business," and the whole law is revealed. So the Sabbath law reads, "Thou shalt not do any work," but it adds, "except of necessity or mercy." There is the whole law, sensible, beneficent and beautiful.

What David did, v. 3. Here is the power of a great example. The Romans used to keep statues of their ancestors in their houses, to remind them of the great and good traditions of their family history. Each of us has in the gallery of memory some lofty figures which stir him to imitation. And sometimes, perhaps, there are images of people very different from David. Perhaps our heroes were great only in boasting, or sports, or dress, or pride, or folly. It is important that our heroes should be heroic. Let us emulate people who are of kingly character.

Mercy, and not sacrifice, v. 7. The vital rather than formal! To do a good deed is better than to repeat mechanical prayers. No doubt the priest and the Levite who passed by the wounded man (Luke 10: 25-37) were very particular and punctual in attending public worship. They should have stayed away from church that day to tend his wounds. If churchgoing did not teach them to rescue a fellow-being, who lay half-dead by the roadside, they might as well never have gone to church. The value of the formal is, that it produces the vital.

Mercy, and not sacrifice, v. 7. What would you think of an army that was so busy drilling, that it could not find time to fight? If all the marching and parading, the target practice and the bayonet exercise, only served to prevent the soldiers from repulsing their country's foe, then you would say that that army ought to be disbanded. So, all our "sacrifice," patient and self-denying attention to religious duties, misses its aim, unless it makes us love our fellowmen to better purpose.

Lawful to do good (Rev. Ver.), v. 12. He does not say that it is lawful to do whatever you like. Jesus was no anti-Sabbatarian, or enthusiast for the "anti-

mental Sunday," throwing down the walls which fence the sacred day of rest from the other six. This is the test of any proposed occupation: Is it necessary, or is it intended to do good? If it is only to give pleasure, or to make money, our Lord has declared against it. He would have horses fed, but not worked. He would have our Sunday made bright and glad, but not at the price of forcing others to have no Sunday at all.

Stretch it forth, v. 13. To obey Christ is to succeed. This man might have answered, "I cannot stretch forth my hand, it is withered. If I could stretch it forth, I would not be here, asking to have it healed." But as he set his will to obey, the power ran along his muscles and he was able to stretch it forth. Even so, when Christ commands us to forsake sin, or to perform some seemingly impossible task, let us never say, "We cannot." We shall find that, when we try, we can. He never asks us to do anything that He will not enable us to do.

A CHILD'S MORNING PRAYER.

The following is a morning prayer written as a companion to the evening prayer, "Now I Lay Me Down to Sleep":
"And now I rise and see the light,
I pray the Lord to lead me right;
In all I do, and think and say,
I pray the Lord to guide my way."

THE HEALING POWER OF THE TOUCH.

"He touched her hand and the fever left her.

He touched her hand as He only can,
With a wondrous skill of the great Physician—

With the tender touch of the Son of Man."

She rose and ministered unto Him."

Only our Lord can heal the sorrow, the sin, the pain of our lives; we must draw near to Him and let Him lay His soothing, healing hand upon our souls; let Him take all the worry, hurry, and fever from us. He wants us to lay all care and responsibility on Him; to realize that we are to Him but little children, and that we have a Father's gentle bidding to heed and fulfill.

There is no burden so great but God can take it away; or if we need the training that burden will give us, He will supply the strength to bear it until our lesson is learned; there is no trial so insignificant but He cares.

We may have the fever of restless living—our hearts yearning for love and praise that does not come; we may have the fever of spirit anguish, of discouragement, or some heat sorrow that will not die.

O, blessed touch of the Man divine;
So beautiful then to arise and serve Him
When the fever has gone from your life and mine."

Then we shall be willing to do His bidding with the hands He has touched; shall know and be thankful that He is always ready and glad to be called to relieve us; we shall cease to hurry and fret; cease to live in self and for self; but be content to follow Him.

When we are toiling, distressed or tormented by circumstances personally, in our homes, in business, or in our spiritual life, what a comfort to know that God is with us in it all, and to feel that it is His hand that guides us; that His strength surrounds and supports us!

"Now, Lord, Thou knowest us altogether—
Each heart's sore sickness, whatever it may be.

Touch Thou our hands! Let the fever leave us—

And so shall we minister unto Thee!"

LIGHT FROM THE EAST.

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

Corn—Is a general name for grain of any kind, including, in the Bible, wheat, barley, vetches, fitches, millet, beans and lentils. There is little doubt that wheat is the grain intended here. It has always formed one of the staple products of Palestine, and luxuriant crops of it are still grown on the plains of Sharon and Esdraelon. The seasons vary greatly in Palestine, according to the locality. The farmers are sowing all winter in the Jordan valley, and on the uplands they begin to sow about the end of January, or beginning of February. I passed through the fields of Esdraelon on the first week of March, and the wheat was then two or three inches high. Harvest begins in the valley of the Jordan about the last of April and ends on the uplands, and subalpine Lebanon, in July and August.

Temple—No religion except Judaism had only one central sanctuary where alone its highest rites could be performed. The temple was the only place where its priesthood could offer sacrifices and make expiation. And few can understand the fearful awe with which a Jew regarded that mysterious and awful shrine. To hear a humble may say he was greater than the temple must have seemed insanely blasphemous.

THE LESSONS OF THE MIRACLES.

"If we would learn the abiding lesson of Miracles," said Bishop Lang, "we must try to realize them as they were and to understand them as they are. We are first to picture the human, momentary scene, then to learn some of the divine, eternal truths which it revealed. It is the work of the Holy Spirit to take of the things of Jesus and show them to us—to take the lasting truth out of the temporary form in which it was at first revealed and bring it home to our own life and experience. We discern this work of the Spirit in the words of Jesus. Spoken though they were by human lips to human ears at a long past period of this world's history, and still when we read or hear them they touch the mind, the will, the conscience with the force and freshness of a living voice. Still and forever they are words of eternal life. So also must it be with the deeds of Jesus. Done once in act, in meaning they are eternal. The Holy Spirit takes the record of the act, and reveals to us the will of the ever living Jesus, of which it was once the expression. So the deed is forever done for us; our experience is brought within its teaching."—Ex.

KEPT IN PEACE.

The circumstances of her life she could not alter, but she took them to the Lord and handed them over into his management, and then she believed that He took it, and she left all the responsibility and the worry and anxiety with Him. As often as the anxieties returned, she took them back, and the result was that, though the circumstances remained unchanged, her soul was kept in perfect peace in the midst of them. And the secret she found so effectual in her outward affairs she found to be still more effectual in her inward ones, which were in truth even more utterly unmanageable. She abandoned her whole self to the Lord, with all that she was and all that she had; and, believing that he took that which she had committed to him, she ceased to fret and worry, and her life became all sunshine in the gladness of belonging to him.—H. W. Smith.

*S. S. Lesson, April 8, 1906—Matthew 12: 1-14. Commit to memory vs. 7, 8. Read Mark 2: 23 to 3: 6; Luke 6: 1-11. Golden Text—Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.—Exodus 20: 8.