

seem to him to be a simpleton or a sluggard. Yet the contemplative Mary was more practical than her practical sister, after all. She knew how to seize the golden opportunity which came to her with the visit of Jesus; and she had the wisdom to gather, in this quiet hour, strength for the lonely days to come, when the Master would sup with them no more.

"One thing is needful." What is that? It is very characteristic of Jesus that He does not say. He does not always tell us plainly what we should so much wish to know. He does not tell us, but He shows us. One thing is needful. Look at Mary, and you will see it. There it is! or rather, there she is! for Mary is that thing incarnate. Sitting at the Master's feet, and hanging wistfully upon His every word, she is an immortal illustration of the truth which Jesus would bring home to the restless Martha, and to all those eager, strenuous spirits of which Martha is the type.

In one of its phases, the one thing needful is the power to sit down. To some, every hour is lost which is not crowded with action. Meals must be prepared, and business transacted; if there is no well-spread table to show, no achievement to record, the time has been spent in vain. God can only be served by busy hands and nimble feet. But aspiration is as necessary as action, and is the condition of the noblest action. True, we test our souls in the hour of labor and conflict; but we win them in the quiet hour, communing with our own hearts, or with those who are wiser than we: and the wisest of all is Jesus. Many a man has been ruined because he could not do this, because he did not know how to be happy within the four walls of his room.

In another of its aspects, the one thing needful is to hear the words of Jesus; for it was to hear those words that Mary exposed herself to the misunderstanding of her sister, by sitting at the Master's feet. Many words are wise and fruitful; but there are none like His. None see so deep into life, or so far across death; and the soul that does not steady itself on His words is likely enough to be anxious and troubled about many things. But to sit down in a quiet hour,

when the mood comes upon us—for this mood is the visit of Jesus—to read and ponder His words till we learn from them that peace which passeth all understanding, and which will keep us from being anxious and troubled any more; that is the one thing needful.—Christendom.

A FINANCIAL STRENGTH

Dr. Rainsford, the rector of St. George's Church, New York city, has been telling the story of his wonderful pastorate. He has found the Sunday School a source of financial as well as of spiritual strength, and he has cultivated it accordingly. He says: "Here at St. George's we have received in these twenty years over 4,500 accessions to the Sunday School alone, and though I suppose there is hardly a child in the Sunday School who can afford to put ten cents in the plate, yet I get thousands every year from the young people of the Church. It is easier to train twigs than trunks."—The Congregationalist and Christian World

SAUL'S FAILURE

By Rev. W. R. McIntosh, B.D.

The story of Saul runs through twenty-five chapters of the Books of Samuel, and is told with much detail, so that we may presume it was intended by God as a beacon-light of warning to the world.

Like a noble vessel that puts to sea with flying sails, but, through faulty timbers, is shipwrecked in mid-ocean, the fair prospects of Saul's early life came to an unhappy and untimely end.

Saul's failure was the failure of the spirit, the only real failure. Till towards its close, outwardly his life was a success. Nature had made him "a choice young man, and a goodly" and providence brought him to manhood at a time of great opportunity. God gave him the kingship. He was the people's choice and their idol. He reigned for forty years, for the most part honored and triumphant, and his memory is enshrined in an elegy of exquisite pathos and beauty.