

SUNDAY
SCHOOL

The Quiet Hour

YOUNG
PEOPLEJESUS APPEARS TO THE
APOSTLES.*

By Rev. P. M. MacDonald, M. A.

Disciples glad, when they saw the Lord, v. 20. A daring navigator ventured round the Cape of Storms and opened a route to the East Indies. Then he gave the Cape of Storms the name Cape of Good Hope. That is what Christ did. The long, black cape of death that thrusts itself out into the sea of life, had been the cause of sorrow to men; but He has passed it and returned, and has taught that death is the servant of a loving God, which, instead of leading God's children to loss, lets them into the soul's homeland, where the treasures of grace are safely kept for the redeemed.

As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you, v. 21. "As"—"so" Was ever a pair of one-syllabled words so charged with meaning! What Jesus was, His followers are to be; what He did, they are to do. The Father's will was the rule of His life; it must also be the rule of theirs. He spent Himself in the loving service of others; they must show the same compassion and helpfulness. As the clouds that surround the sun are lit up with its radiance, so, from the disciples, should be reflected something of the Lord's glory and beauty.

Receive ye the Holy Ghost, v. 22. "Take ye the Holy Ghost", we may render the expression; and we thus bring home to ourselves the responsibility of appropriating what the Lord freely offers. It is not enough that the fountain never ceases to spring; we must bring our pitcher to the fountain. We take, by patient waiting. That was a lovely phrase of the old Quakers, "waiting for the springing up of the life". Let us wait in Jesus' presence, and the life of His Spirit will rise, a full and flowing tide in our hearts. We take, by faithfully using the power given us in loving service. The more we do the more we get. We take, by studiously avoiding everything that hinders the Spirit's coming. Sometimes, in winter, the supply of water fails in a house. A plug of ice has formed in the service pipe. Selfishness, worldliness, sin of any sort, is a plug of ice in us. This must be removed, else the Spirit cannot enter.

Sins ye remit, remitted, sins ye retain, retained, v. 23. The same heat, as the early Fathers of the church used to say, softens wax and hardens clay. Jesus Christ came to "put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself". Every Christian is called to continue that work, and has the right to call upon men everywhere to "behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world". To every one who looks to Jesus in penitence and faith, we have authority to say, "Thy sins are forgiven". The one who rejects or neglects, binds his sin upon himself, as it were, by his own hands. The power of life and death lies in the preached gospel, and that power has been put into our hands. How earnest and faithful, how tender and loving, we should be in giving the message entrusted to us!

Thomas... was not with them when Jesus came, v. 24. We never know what we may lose by staying away from one church service that we can and ought to

*SS. Lesson, June 7, 1908, John 20: 19-31. Commit to memory vs. 19, 20. Golden Text—Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God.—John 20:28.

attend. An aged saint who traveled seven miles to church, was asked why he went on a particular Sabbath, which was stormy and wet. "Well", said he, "we have been praying for the Holy Spirit to come upon us; and, for the world, I would not miss one day, for fear I might miss Him and the blessing."

Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed, v. 29. The late Dr. Arnold of Rugby, one of the most serious-minded and earnest of men, was suddenly summoned to meet death and judgement. In the midst of perfect health, he was attacked with spasm of the heart, and learned that, in a moment, he would be called into the infinitely holy presence of his Maker. As he lay upon his deathbed, still, thoughtful, and absorbed in silent prayer, all at once he repeated firmly and earnestly, "Jesus saith unto him, 'Thomas, because thou hast seen Me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.'" Death, for him, was robbed of its terror, because of his confidence in the risen Lord whom his eyes had not yet beheld.

DEVOTION DAY BY DAY.

SUNDAY.—Eternal God, I pray that Thou wilt prepare my mind for the word of Thy truth. Make me hungry for Thy salvation.

MONDAY.—Almighty God, let Thy good Spirit be my companion and defence. Let me feel the strengthening influence of His shadow, and take away all my fear.

TUESDAY.—My Father God, anoint mine eyes with eye-salve that I may see. Give me a constant vision of the lovely. Let me perceive the beauties that lie hidden in my neighbor, and the glories of my Lord. Save me from moral and spiritual blindness.

WEDNESDAY.—Merciful God, impart unto me the spirit of compassion. Let me do unto others as I would have them do unto me.

THURSDAY.—Eternal God, I would remember all who begin the day in sickness and weariness and despair. For all who have had a restless night, and who awake to a troubled day, good Lord hear me. For all who find it hard to live, and who yet fear to die, good Lord hear me.

FRIDAY.—Most mighty God, may I mingle with the world as a citizen of heaven! May the heavenly disposition be in all my affairs, and let me mix with my fellows as a child of God.

SATURDAY.—Gracious Lord, I myself would gracious be. Let Thy grace fill my life like a brimming river.

THE IMITATION OF CHRIST.

You cannot begin to imitate Christ till you are fully surrendered to Christ, and are living in the power of His Spirit. In any other way you are certain to be caught with surface qualities of His mission, or specific applications, to the neglect of that central spirit of trust, and love, and obedience, that glorified all. If in the strain and stress of a natural self-denial we attempt this imitation, we breed asceticism. If, in modern wise, we grasp His social teaching, without a surrender to His Person and appropriation of His Spirit, we win more or less of His doctrine, but without the inner vision that keeps from exaggeration, or the transfiguring power, as vital sap, makes all things new, as fire melts barriers away.—The late John Smith, D.D.

LIGHT FROM THE EAST.

By Rev. James Ross, D.D., London.

Peace—some set form of salutation must begin all intercourse in the East. It is counted discourteous to deliver a message, ask information, or begin any business, without some formal expression of good-will, or a prayer for the prosperity of the other. Even a beggar expects a salutation along with the copper, or the piece of bread; and even if he be refused alms, he claims to be dismissed with a recommendation to the divine care. In a country and age when every traveler appearing on the horizon might easily be an enemy, the first and most important word of greeting was, "Peace", the common formula is, "Peace be on you." And the reply is, "And on you be the peace and mercy of God and His blessings". The contact with Western methods, and the hurry of impatient travelers, have shortened the long and tedious salutations, which Jesus enjoined His disciples to avoid. There are, however, set answers to every question, and it is counted rude to use any other. If one is asked, "How is your health", he replies, "Praise be to God", and it is only from the tone of his voice, that his friend can tell whether he is well or ill. "Is it well with thee?" The answer is, "God bless thee". Every such enquiry begins a tedious round of commonplaces.

A NEW USE OF THEOLOGY.

Just then a sweet voice from the next door neighbor floated in with the drowsy hum of the bees.

"Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;

Praise him, all creatures here below;
Praise him above, ye heavenly host;
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost."

It was repeated again and again. I thought, "How beautiful! how appropriate!"

Soon my hostess came in, and upon inquiry, I found that the neighbor was Miss H., President of the Christian Endeavor Society of that place.

"She has made a mistake, or something has gone amiss," said my friend. I looked up with inquiry eyes.

"Yes," continued she, "that is the way she has of controlling her temper and of keeping sweet. I heard her singing a few mornings ago, and, running over on an errand, I found her patiently ripping a sleeve to a new muslin dress. She said she had made a mistake, and had made them both for the same arm; and, as there were no more goods, the sleeve had to be ripped and turned. 'So,' said she, 'I must sing "Praise God," so as not to get cross and impatient; one can not possibly sing of God's goodness and love, and feel vexed or angry.' She smiled and spoke as if nothing had gone wrong.

"So now, when I hear her singing the Doxology, I know something has gone amiss."

"How beautiful!" I thought; that is a better way than counting ten as my mother taught me when I was a child.

Endeavor World.

The Saviour becomes more personal to us as we engage in personal work for Him. It is when we set out alone on His errands that we find sweetest companionship with Him. This is one of the most precious rewards of individual work for Christ—a closer walk with Him, and a clearer individual knowledge of Him.