

SUNDAY
SCHOOL

The Quiet Hour

YOUNG
PEOPLE

PETER AND CORNELIUS.*

By Rev. J. W. Macmillan, B.A.

With all his honor, v. 2. There is a story called, "In Search of the Beautiful." It describes a person who resolved to seek and to find the beautiful. He bethought him of the mountains of Switzerland, and the sunny plains of Italy, and the forests of America, and ever so many wonders of the world. Before he completed his arrangements, however, a little bird whispered, "Begin at home." The little bird was wiser than the man. The beautiful is always with us. "Oh, my friend," says one writer, "make the place where God has put you beautiful. If it be only a tent in the desert, make it beautiful. If it be only a cottage in a lonely street, or an attic room in a cottage, or a fire-side, or a bench in a workshop, or a seat in a school, or a place on your mother's knee, or a place in her heart, make it beautiful. And the sadder, the darker, the poorer the place is, be the more eager to make it beautiful."

A memorial before God, v. 4. Henry Drummond used to tell of a little girl who once said to her father, "Papa, I want you to tell God something for me. I have such a little voice that I don't think He could hear it away up in heaven; but you have a great big man's voice, and He will be sure to hear you." Then the father took his little girl in his arms and told her that, even though God were at that moment surrounded by all His holy angels, sounding on all their golden harps, and singing to Him one of the grandest and sweetest songs of praise ever heard in heaven, he was sure that He would say to them, "Hush, stop the singing for a little while. There's a little girl away down on the earth, who wants to whisper something in my ear."

Peter went up to pray, v. 9. So many things have happened during prayer, that it may fairly be called one of the most eventful times in the life of man. Isaac found his wife while he prayed. Hannah got a son, the wish of her heart, for praying. Daniel shut the mouths of lions with his prayers. Paul recovered his sight in response to prayer. Jesus prayed on the mount, and the fashion of His countenance was altered. Queen Mary said that she feared the prayers of John Knox more than an army of ten thousand men. Instead of being a gentle and powerless occupation, as many think, prayer is the mightiest engine in the hand of the human race.

I have never, v. 14. Said the Duke of Wellington, "Don't tell me that habit is second nature. Habit is ten times nature." In fact, many of the things we do so lightly that we do not notice that we are doing them, are habits. Walking is a habit. It does not come by nature. A child left to itself might possibly never learn to walk. And what a trial it would be, if we had to learn to walk every time we wanted to go anywhere. The value of habit is that it saves us trouble. Good habits are our protection against temptation. Good habits are like the money which we have saved and can draw upon at will. Bad habits are like the debts we owe; as soon as we earn anything, we must pay it for the debt incurred long ago. Good habits

are allies in the fight. Bad habits are traitors always watching a chance to sell us out to the foe.

What God hath cleansed, v. 15. When John E. Clough went as a missionary to India, he soon succeeded in interesting some of the high caste Brahmans. They offered to send their children if he would start a school. He was delighted. But just then a few low caste Telugus sought baptism. The Brahmans sent him a message, saying, "We will not mingle with these outcasts. You can have nothing to do with us if you receive these people." Here was a challenge. Should he allow all his fine hopes of success to vanish? He sought help in the Bible, and found there that God rejected artificial distinctions among men. He turned his attention to the Telugus, and preached to them with ceaseless energy. The reward soon came. Before a year had passed, ten thousand of them were united with the church.

THY KINGDOM COME.

Christ was equal in power and glory with the Father, and had nothing to ask. But voluntarily putting Himself in a state of inferiority to the Father, by taking upon himself the human nature, by making a satisfaction for the sin of man, by paying a price, he can make this large demand. He glorified God on earth, God then glorified him. (John 17: 4, 5.) He is to ask the heathen, and the Father will give them to him. Ultimately he is to possess the uttermost parts of the earth. "The kingdom of the world is become the kingdom of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign forever and ever." (Rev. 11: 15.) He is not the Messiah of the Jews alone, but of the whole world, and finally the whole world must come under his sway. God has promised it, and it shall be. You and I can help in hastening the time when this shall come to pass. We can be "workers together with God" in bringing to, delivering to Christ the whole world.

UNKNOWN MARTYRS.

When God calls the roll of the martyrs, thousands will respond from the ranks of the lowly who have never seen a martyr's stake nor heard of the dungeons of inquisition. Quiet, uncomplaining men and women who have endured privation and wrong for Jesus's sake; who have given their lives to help and bless others; who have been robbed of fortune by the hand of greed and compelled to endure hardness through no fault of theirs; fathers and mothers who have given themselves for their children, who have worn their lives out to make others happy; sons and daughters who have forgone the pleasant ambitions which opened before them to take care of the old folks and make their declining years a delight; men and women who have gone down into the gloom and the blight of heathendom, surrendering the pleasures of home, for the Master's sake. There are scores of little ones who toil in the mines and mills until the sweetness and beauty of childhood are ground out of them and life itself made a desolation and a desert. Is there no martyr's crown for such as these? Has God no compensation for a career that is blighted through no fault of its own; but has rather given itself voluntarily to self-immolation for the good of others?—United Presbyterian.

LIGHT FROM THE EAST.

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

Unclean — The distinction established amongst the Jews between clean and unclean animals, which exists in some form among many tribes, was founded partly on that instinctive repugnance to certain forms of life which prevails among all civilized peoples; partly for the promotion of health, by prohibiting the animals whose flesh was not adapted for use in the climate of Palestine, or whose loathsome food, or filthy habits, or parasitic diseases, made them dangerous to men; and partly to separate the Israelites from surrounding nations, not only in the eating of insects, reptiles and carrion, but in those degrading feasts of warm flesh and blood, which are connected with idolatry. In cholera epidemics the Jew has enjoyed a large degree of immunity, and in Life Insurance offices his life is said to be a better risk, all other things being equal, than the life of a man of any other stock. But when the church was to be extended into every nation, the law of each member's life was to be his own enlightened judgment and conscience, and all legislation founded on local conditions or national peculiarities was withdrawn. The intimation of this to Peter was to suggest that the distinction between the Jew and other men was also abolished.

WHAT EFFORT BRINGS.

One who is willing to do all he can for Christ becomes able to do more. To him that hath the will is given the power. It takes faith to make a venture, but when the venture is made faith is increased, and power with it. Possibilities wonderfully unfold before the energetic will that refuses to be denied, and that throws itself with abandon into a great work. Many of the world's greatest inventions have been the incidental reward of patient investigation toward a wholly different end. And those who have done the most for Christ have been the men who have worked most willingly at the immediate task. They have found new labors, undreamed of, in offering themselves for their performance; and best of all, they have seen old difficulties vanish like mists before the sun, so that they have dared even to bid mountains be removed and be cast into the midst of the sea, and have been obeyed. Unstinted effort brings great faith and faith is our connecting link with power.

Sweet to think that the eye of the Lord is upon us, to deliver our soul from death. It seems to me, as a nurse keeps her eye upon her child, lest it should destroy itself, or as a keeper keeps his eye upon his poor lunatic, "the Lord is thy keeper." Then unbelieved jumps up, and says, "How do you know all this is for you?" Then, I do not know what to say, but, "My Master told me so."

Christian faith is like a grand cathedral with dimly pictured windows. Standing without, you see no glory, nor can possibly imagine any. Standing within, every ray of light reveals harmony of unspeakable splendour.—Hawthorne.

The shepherd David had five smooth stones in that primitive cartridge box of his, but it only took one to bring down Goliath. Maybe, if spiritual warriors had more of David's faith, they would have need to expend less pulpit ball and powder.

*S.S. Lesson, April 4, 1909, Acts: 10 1-20. Commit to memory vs. 13-15. Golden Text—In every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him—Acts 10:35.