

SUNDAY
SCHOOL

The Quiet Hour

YOUNG
PEOPLE

ESTHER PLEADING FOR HER PEOPLE.

(By Rev. C. Mackinnon, B.D., Winnipeg.)

Again Esther spake, v. 10. The path of duty was the path of peril, and we are not surprised that the queen should hesitate. Life had its charms and its comforts for one in so royal a position; and an action that would rashly exchange these for the grim presence of the executioner might well make one falter. Nevertheless, the true course is to do the right and leave the consequences to God. A clerk who had been requested by his employer to do something dishonest, consulted his minister. "I shall lose my place if I disobey," he argued. "Look to God first, and trust in Him," was the wise reply. "Do not think He will let you suffer, because out of regard to His commandment you have lost your place. Never!" The young man lost his situation, but maintained his character, and in doing that, laid the foundation of future prosperity. Not the fear of man, but the fear of the Lord, is the beginning of wisdom, and it always pays to serve Him.

Think not...thou shalt escape in the King's house more than all the Jews, v. 13. She belonged to the Jewish nation; that would be enough! The tempest would level the tall tree as well as its less lofty neighbor, so long as it was part of the forest. No one lives to himself. Each is part of the other, in a family, a community, a church, a nation. The individual suffers in the national calamity, even as he receives his ray of glory when the nation is honored. And, therefore, to give the thought a slightly different turn, every one is responsible for his neighbor's welfare. His goodness enriches his community, his dishonor brings shame upon it. It is a strong incentive to right living to recognize that our holiness is a contribution to the common good.

If thou altogether holdest thy peace, v. 14. There is a sinful silence. Men are still possessed of a "dumb devil." Churches are sometimes found like the fabled people who dwelt on the banks of the vanges, and who had no mouths, but fed only upon the smell of herbs and flowers. There is a fragrance of religious sentiment about their walls, but no voice to denounce fashionable vices, nor to preach righteousness and duty at any cost. Such churches are not indispensable. They stand self-condemned.

At this time, v. 14. Mr. Bart Kennedy, in his recent book, "A Tramp Through Spain," describes the average Spaniard in this fashion: "The Spaniards are the most dignified loafers in the world. Tomorrow is for them the day of days. On that day everything will come right." "Manana" (tomorrow), says the indolent Spaniard. Nor does he stand alone. How ready most of us are to put off some plain duty, to turn aside from some obvious opportunity of service, until tomorrow. But the golden moment is really the present. Is there something we ought to do? It should be done "at this time"—now.

Then shall these enlargement and deliverance arise to the Jews from another place, v. 14. God calls us to be His instruments. He honors us with opportunities in His service. He lays the responsibility of His work upon our shoulders. Nevertheless we are not the only people in the world, and the divine purpose does

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Esther 4: 10 to 5: 3. Study ch. 4: 1 to 5: 3. Commit to memory vs. 13, 14. Read the Book of Esther. Golden Text—The Lord preserveth all them that love him.—Psalm 145: 20.

not stand or fall with our faithfulness or the lack of it. It we will not go, another will be found who will. The reformation did not depend upon Luther alone; it would have come through another agency had he declined the task. But he would have missed forever the opportunity of his life, his name would have been thrust from history and his crown of service given to another.

Who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this? v. 14. Each cog in the machinery has its own appointed task. Even the wayside weed has its purpose, if nothing more, a drop of honey to contribute to the common good. God had placed Esther on the Persian throne to deliver His people, Mordecai at the gate to give her courage and advice. He sent to the king a sleepless night, that it might assist in the great design. All people and events have their purpose to serve. As the Lord brought Abraham from Ur of the Chaldees, as He sent Moses to deliver Israel from Egypt, so has He a task for each of us. Our task undone, the whole world lags.

Esther put on her royal apparel, ch. 5: 1. It was not enough that the queen had decided to do her duty to her countrymen at all hazards. It was not enough that for three days and nights, she should have proclaimed a fast, the most intense form of ancient prayer. She did not neglect other and more extreme aids to the accomplishment of her purpose. Nor in the great enterprises of our church, or the great schemes of moral reform, are we to think it sufficient merely to decide upon their rightness or necessity and to pray over them. We must take every pains to secure success. The organization should be perfected, and the administration prudent. There is really nothing secular when employed in a sacred cause. The object sanctifies it. Esther's royal apparel became part of a patriotic and sacred duty.

What wilt thou?...to the half of the kingdom, v. 3. Who can read these words without thinking of another Sovereign, not ruled by passion or caprice, but moved by justice and love. "The half of the kingdom"—is this the offer He makes to us? Nay, He has given us the Son who is the Ruler of the kingdom. No greater gift could even He bestow, who controls the riches and resources of heaven. And this Gift is the pledge that He will withhold nothing needful from us, when we come as petitioners to His throne.

GIVING

Give, though thy gifts be small,
Still be a giver,
Out of the little fountains
Proceeds the river,
Out of the river's gifts
Gulfs soon will be
Pouring their waters out,
Making a sea.
Out of the sea, again,
Heaven draws its showers,
And to the fount imparts
All its new powers.
Thus in a cycle borne,
Gifts roll around,
And in the blessing given
Blessing is found.

CONSECRATION

Entire consecration embraces three things,—being, doing and suffering. We must be willing to be, to do, and to suffer, all that God requires. This embraces reputation, friends, property and time. It covers body, mind and soul. These are to be used when, where and as God requires; and only as he requires.

LIGHT FROM THE EAST

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

The King—Mentioned in this Book, is generally identified with Xerxes, emperor of Persia 485-464 B.C., although no monumental or historical confirmation of any of the incidents mentioned here has as yet been discovered, except that the feast of Purim celebrating the deliverance from Haman's plot (ch. 9: 26-28) was observed by Jews in all parts of the world in the time of Josephus.

Susian—The Susa of the Greeks was originally the capital of Elam, and subsequently one of the capitals of the Persian empire. Wherever the name occurs except here, the phrase, "the palace," is added. This, no doubt, refers to the remarkable audience room in the form of a Greek temple, with the throne in the place of the Divine Statue, where the emperor received the ambassadors from all countries of the world. The ruins cover about two and a half acres, and the porticoes and staircases opened upon a terrace forty-five acres in extent. Much of the beautiful frieze of enameled bricks, by which the walls were adorned, is now in the Louvre in Paris. The city was taken, after a desperate struggle, by Assurbanipal, its buildings destroyed, and all its treasures carried off to Assyria. Later, it was taken and plundered by Alexander the Great, who found \$60,000,000 in its treasures. After the Arab conquest of the East, its site was abandoned.

RELIGION AT HOME

I heard once of a young person who went to live in a home supposed to be a thoroughly religious home. She said afterward that from what she saw in that home she was inclined to think there was very little in religion. She saw disagreement and contention, and strife, and unkindness, which did much to lead her toward unbelief. Lovers of Christ, is there not for us a very solemn lesson in this? How closely all we do and say is watched by the world; and if they see in us exhibitions of temper, anger, passion, unkindly feeling, censoriousness, etc., how greatly it will tend to undo all the influence of our professions and our efforts for the cause of God.

One of the great wants of the age is more of Christ in the homes. Let us get so much of the religion of Jesus that we will everywhere exhibit the mind and temper of Christ. Christ said: "If I be lifted up, I will draw all men unto me." He may be lifted up in our lives, and if so, the drawing influence may be felt. It matters not how gifted the minister or leader, or Christian worker; if there be exhibitions in his life of those things not in harmony with his teachings, it neutralizes his best efforts. Nothing can take the place of a consistent life. Jesus is saying today: "Return to thine own home, and show how great things Jesus hath done unto thee." We can show by mild Christian temper what He has done, and the world will be powerfully drawn to Him.—Primitive Methodist.

MOCK HUMANITY

The lower we get the more we shine. We must get down in the dust if we are to be true followers of Christ. A man can counterfeit love, he can counterfeit faith, he can counterfeit hope, and all the other graces, but it is very difficult to counterfeit humility. You soon detect mock humility.—D. L. Moody.