

SUNDAY
SCHOOL

The Quiet Hour

YOUNG
PEOPLE

THE SUPPER AT BETHANY.*

By Rev. W. J. Clark, London.

Jesus therefore six days before the Passover came to Bethany, v. 1. Jesus always trusted His friends. Face to face with the cross, He sought the sympathy and heartening of those who loved Him. There was much that was imperfect and faulty in these friends of Jesus; yet He gave them his fullest and frankest confidence. And is it not so still? What marvellous faith He has in us, His followers! He has trusted to us the carrying on in the world of the work so dear to His heart. Surely we shall not fail such a Leader, whatever His service may cost us!

Where Lazarus was, v. 1. Two men went into a taxidermist's shop. One of them began to criticize the appearance of what he supposed to be a stuffed owl. "A live bird," he declared, would never hold himself in such a position." When he had finished his criticism, the owl hooted. There could have been no more complete answer. And the answer that silences all objections against the religion of Jesus Christ is the lives in which it has made a change as wonderful as raising one from the dead.

There they made him a supper, v. 2. Does anyone pride himself on being strong and brave? Let him ask this question: With death by crucifixion only six days distant, could he put the thought of his doom away from him, and enter into the enjoyment of his friends at a pleasant feast? The truth is that, for splendid courage and heroic self-mastery, Jesus as far surpasses the bravest and strongest men who have ever lived, as the glorious sun at noonday outshines the flickering candle.

Martha. Lazarus. Mary, vs. 2, 3. As in the case of the members of the Bethany family, to whom Jesus was so dear, and whom He loved so tenderly, there is but one mission in life for all His followers—to show forth His power and grace. But just as the same syllable in the language of the Chinese may have a great variety of meanings, depending on the tone used in pronouncing it, each disciple has his own way of honoring the Master. Deeds of kindly helpfulness to those about us; the silent testimony of a life ruled by the will of Christ; generous gifts to His cause;—those are some of the ways. The loving heart will find its own way, and however humble it may be, our gracious Lord will accept it with a smile of approval that will be a sufficient reward for any toil or sacrifice.

Why...not...sold for three hundred pence, v. 5. There are two ways of

*S. S. Lesson, April 16, 1905: John 12: 1-11. Commit to memory vs. 2, 3. Golden Text—She hath done what she could.—Mark 14:8.

counting riches, Judas' way and Jesus' way. "The one reckons men rich by what they get; the other by what they give. Who can doubt which is the true way? There is none of us who does not see that Mary now won the true riches. She became rich in the approving love of her Lord, rich in the honor done her by after generations, rich in the possession of heaven. When we see clearly and see far enough, there is no danger of our being carried away with the idea that the main thing in life is to get.

The chief priests consulted, etc., v. 10. It is a hateful picture this, of the religious rulers ready to brush out of the way anybody and everything that threatens their place and power. But, as we gaze more closely into it, we discover the same love of self to which we ourselves are all too prone. It was because He stood in their way that they so hated the Man of Nazareth. Their hate once aflame nothing but blood will satisfy it. The awful lengths to which self-love may lead is to the wise a sufficient warning to get rid of it.

HE TAKETH THEM IN HIS BOSOM.

A gentleman and his wife traveling in the Holy Land, while resting by the roadside, became interested in a shepherd as he sought to lead his flock over a stream. In vain he called to his sheep to follow him through the shallow waters, and again and again he coaxed them on.

They would come so far and no farther. At last, as a final resort, he caught a little lamb and bore it to the other side. Immediately the ram followed, and then the entire flock crossed safely to better pastures and cooler shade.

There was a lesson in that little incident for the two travelers. It had been necessary in their case, too, that the Good Shepherd should bear their only child across the stream, in order to draw them closer to Him. But their hearts had rebelled against the will of God, and they had sought to bury their sorrow in distraction.

As the meaning of the lesson came more fully upon them, they accepted the great truth it taught; and not only did they find healing for their own broken hearts and shattered hopes, but were used of God in bringing hope and comfort into many another burdened and darkened life.—Southern Churchman.

Michigan Presbyterian: Habit of prayer is enforced by Christ's example. A place, a time, a habit, these are the essentials of a growing intimacy with God in prayer. Get acquainted with your Father by being with Him every day.

INFLUENCE OF THE CHURCH.

What would have been the condition of the world without the Church? The inference is not so difficult if we compare those nations which have shared its blessings with those which are still in ignorance of its power. It is not going beyond the boundary of facts to affirm that the greatest good the world has ever known has come through the religion represented in the Bible. Our Saviour once said: "Ye are the salt of the earth." The earth has had no other preservative. It is this that has kept society and civilizations from corruption. The Church permeates all conditions of secular and industrial life and imparts its own purity and preserving qualities to every thing it touches. So that the blessed institutions of our civilization, such as schools and colleges, hospitals and asylums, houses of refuge and reformatories, libraries and art galleries, whether under the control of the Church or not, whether founded by Christian or agnostic, are the direct outgrowth of the Church's teaching and influence. The Church is God's "liberty enlightening the world" and the Bible is the torch in her hand.—United Presbyterian.

PRAYER.

Almighty God, we need to be comforted, upheld, sustained, directed. How many angels do we need to minister unto us would we be heirs of salvation!—one to answer the great argument; another to dispel the frowning, sullen doubt; another to sing to us in the night-time of our heartlessness; but are not all Thine angels ministering spirits, sent forth to minister, living to serve, and ordered by Thee to nourish and cherish Thy Church? We pray Thee to be with us Thyself—Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; three in one, one in three. We feel our need of this tri-unity, for we ourselves are three in one—a great mystery of being; now full of pain and sorrow, and now almost angels for brightness and joy. Pardon our sin. Only God can forgive sin; but the blood of Jesus Christ Thy Son was shed for sinners, and that blood availeth still. May we know the meaning of its application, and may we feel its gracious virtue.—Selected.

The most I can do for my friend is simply to be his friend. If he knows I am happy in loving him, he will want no other reward.—H. D. Thoreau.

Hath any wronged thee? Be bravely revenged. Slight the wrong and the work is begun; forgive it, 'tis finished. He is below himself that is not above an injury.—Francis Quarles.