

SUNDAY
SCHOOL

The Quiet Hour

YOUNG
PEOPLE

THE ASCENSION OF OUR LORD.*

(By Rev. P. M. McDonald, M.A.)

The former treatise have I made, v. 1. An eastern monarch became suspicious of the visits one of his officers made to an unused room in the palace; so he entered the room at an hour when he knew the officer was there. What did he find? A plot to overthrow his royal power! No. His officer was sitting deep in thought, clad in the rough peasant coat he used to wear before he was summoned to serve the king. When he was asked to explain why he put on his old coat, he said, "I do it that I may remember what I was before your majesty honored me. I find that this coat helps me to be humble, and grateful. It tells me what I was without you, and what I am with you." We are to forget the past, if dwelling upon it hinders us from giving our minds to our present duty. But we do well to recall how God has guided us and blessed us in bygone days, that we may give Him thanks and praise, and be filled with hope and courage for the future.

Began both to do and teach, v. 1. For generations the houses of a village were constructed on the lower banks of a river. With every spring thaw, there came a flood that submerged the floors of the houses, and the people would live in tents on the high ground, until the waters fell. A newcomer to the place, in a spring month, saw the foolishness of the people, and put his house on the high ground, above the destroying stream. Then he talked with his neighbors about their home sites, until the low grounds were abandoned, and the village became a city set on a hill. To such great results did this small wise beginning lead. Each day of this new year, just begun, should see us begin to make life better and happier for ourselves and others.

Through the Holy Ghost had given commandments, v. 2. And what commandments! A few poor, unknown fishermen of Galilee were bidden to go and conquer the world for the new faith. But the commandments did not stand alone. Along with them came the power that would surely overcome all opposition. To each believing disciple would come the power that they had seen working in Jesus Himself, the power of God Himself. With that power, every command was really a promise of conquest.

He charged them to wait (Rev. ver), v. 4. It is easier to be active than to wait; but sometimes all depends upon our ability to be patient and quiet, and willing to wait. A young lad of restless temperament met with a serious accident to his knee. The doctors who attended him said he might have to undergo an operation to save his leg; but he had a chance of keeping the use of his leg, if he could keep still in body and avoid all complaining and fretfulness. His own power to lie contented on his bed would bring about his recovery unimpaired. The situation was frankly stated to him, and he was told that all he could do was to wait patiently. He was a Christian and knew his Bible, so he began to recall such texts as "Wait on the Lord; be of good courage, and He shall strengthen thine heart" (Ps. 27 : 14); and, "Thou wilt

keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on Thee," (Isa. 26 : 3). Such promises as these were his mind food during long days and nights; but there were enough, and today he is an eager, active man.

Ye shall be witnesses unto me, v. 8. Miss Frances Ridley Havergal tells of going away to boarding school soon after she had united with the church. When she entered the school, she learned that she was the only confessed Christian among all the girls in the school. Her first feeling was one of fear. How could she acknowledge Christ before those gay and pleasure-loving girls? But her next thought was that Christ sent her there as His witness. Had she not come into the school for this very purpose? "I am the only one He has here," she said. This thought strengthened her, and the work of her wonderful Christian life began there. Her conduct and her conversation were forces for Christ always.

A PRAYER FOR THE NEW YEAR.

Almighty God, the unfailing source of light and mercy, who has brought us to the beginning of this year, and art sparing us to love thee and to keep thy commandments, prepare us, we beseech thee, for the coming days. Let thy grace enlighten our darkness and strengthen our weakness. Help us to forget the sins and sorrows of the past, cherishing only the wisdom and the humility they may have taught us. Inspire us with new purposes and new hopes. Deepen within our hearts the love of truth and goodness. Enable us to discern the solemn meaning of these earthly days and the high and sacred purpose for which they are given. Suffer us not to be unfaithful to thee. Thou hast richly blessed us hitherto; still lead us by thy hand, still admonish and guide us by thy Spirit, and leave us not to ourselves, thou Good Shepherd of the sheep. Amen.

WHERE HAS THE OLD YEAR
GONE.

John Imrie, Toronto.

Where has the Old Year gone?
Gone to join the mystic ages,
One more leaf in history's pages,
To be read by fools and eages:
There has the Old Year gone!

Where has the Old Year gone?
Gone the circle of the earth,
Grief to some—to others mirth—
Back to God who gave it birth:
There has the Old Year gone!

Where has the Old Year gone?
Gone with promise false or true,
Gone with loving friends we knew.
Hid for ever from our view:
There has the Old Year gone!

Where has the Old Year gone?
Gone with all its hopes and fears,
Gone with all its joys and tears,
Dead and buried with the years:
There has the Old Year gone!

Where has the Old Year Gone?
Gone till God recalls the past,
Good or ill—the die is cast,
Judged by it we are at last:
There has the Old Year gone.

Where have the Old Years gone?
Gone! and left their scars for ever
On our hearts. Erase them? Never!
Till we cross Death's chilly river:
Ah! there have the Old Years gone!

LIGHT FROM THE EAST.

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

Kingdom.—The Jews believed that when Messiah came, He would establish the glorious kingdom of God of which they had read in the prophets. He would take His stand upon the sea shore and command it to pour its treasures at His feet. He would lead Israel, splendidly armed, against the nations, and none would be able to stand before Him. The mountains would be red with the blood of the slain, Israel will be avenged and rich with the spoil of the world. The universal kingdom thus formed will be a paradise for the Jews, and all the heathen, their subjects, will turn to Jehovah. Under the rule of righteousness the earth will be more fruitful than ever before. The most barren spots will be fertile, a single grain will load a wagon, and men will draw wine from it as from a cask, and a kernel of wheat will be as large as the kidney of an ox. The people will be all prophets, none will be sick, blind or leprous, the dumb will speak and the deaf hear. Jerusalem will be a day's journey across, and its houses higher than anything yet known. Its gates will be precious stones, and gems throughout the country will be common things.

THE BLESSED GOSPEL TRUTH.

It is a beautiful conviction, one whose mysterious beauty we are always learning more and more, that the deeper our spiritual experience of Christ becomes the more our soul's life really hangs on his life as its Savior and continual Friend, the more real becomes to us the quenched life of those who have gone from us to be with him. In those moments when Christ is most real to me, when he lives in the center of my desires and I am resting most heavily upon his help—in those moments I am surest that the dead are not lost; that those whom this Christ in whom I trust has taken he is keeping. The more he lives to me, the more they live. If the city of our heart is holy with the presence of a living Christ, then the dear dead will come to us, and we shall know they are not dead but living, and bless him who has been their Redeemer, and rejoice in the work that they are doing for him in his perfect world, and press on joyously toward our own redemption, not fearing even the grave, since by its side stands he whom we know and love, who has the keys of death and hell.

A living Christ, dear friends—the old, ever new, ever blessed Gospel truth! He liveth; he was dead; he is alive for evermore! O that everything dead and formal might go out of your creed, out of your life, out of your heart today! He is alive! Do you believe it? What art you hesitating for, O worker? What are you fearing death for, O man? Oh, if we could only lift our heads and live with him; live new lives, high lives, lives of hope and love and holiness, to which death should be nothing but the breaking away of the last cloud and the letting of the life out to its completion! May God give us some such blessing for every day.—Phillips Brooks.

There is great danger, at the present day, of compromising truth for the sake of union. This should be carefully guarded against. There can be no true union attained at the expense of truth. The true Christian's motto should ever be—Maintain truth at all cost; if union can be promoted in this way, so much the better, but maintain the truth.—Mason.

*S. S. Lesson, January 3, 1909—Acts 1 : 1-11. Golden Text.—It came to pass while he blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven.—Luke 24 : 51.