

SUNDAY  
SCHOOL

## The Quiet Hour

YOUNG  
PEOPLE

## JOSEPH SOLD BY HIS BROTHERS.\*

Rev. P. M. McDonald, M.A., Toronto.

His brethren envied him, v. 11. Envy is as abhorrent as smallpox. It destroys beauty of soul, rest and peace. It is caused by the success of others. Themistocles, the Athenian general and statesman, was exceedingly ambitious and envied any who succeeded. He was quite young when Miltiades won great fame in the battle of Marathon. Instead of rejoicing with his happy countrymen over Miltiades' achievement, Themistocles kept alone, and was very sad. When asked the reason, he said, "The successes of Miltiades will not suffer me even to sleep." Envy ought to be faced and fought and felled in its beginnings.

Go, see whether it be well with thy brethren, v. 14.—Neither the passing years, nor the furthest distances, destroy the love of parents towards their children. A prayer girdle surrounds the lads who are far from home. Let such a father hear of a traveller who thinks of visiting the land where the absent boy dwells, and he will beg him to hunt up his son and see whether it be well with him. It is only the thoughtless and foolish son who will cut himself adrift from these sacred and blessed attachments.

What seekest thou? v. 15. There is a love and good will that overlaps family, nation and race, and in kindness asks, "What seekest thou? Can I help?" Many tired men deny themselves rest and ease, that they may lend a hand to some who are trying to make out, in the gathering darkness, the words on the wayside cross. For the number who are saying, "Which way shall I take?" is very great, and the need of helpers is pressing. The teacher in the Sunday School, the missionary and the philanthropist, are among these helpers. It is the spirit of brotherhood that Christ has sent into life that prompts them to offer men help in their search for light.

They saw him afar off, v. 18. There is a wild, ruthless spirit in animals that has as its weapons, far-sightedness, swiftness and great power to kill. The vulture, the wolf and the shark are possessors of this. They can see and hear and smell afar off. The selfish, cruel, and inhuman institutions that survive in our civilization and stand to betray the young attest the presence of the vulture spirit in modern life. The saloon, the gambling shop, the cigarette mill, are pits, and the men who control them, see afar off in the boys and young men of to-day those who must support their vulture-like work. Forewarned is forearmed against these ruthless destroyers.

We will say, Some evil beast hath devoured him, v. 20. It is easy to say what is untrue; but it is hard to endure the results. The falsehood of the brothers was quickly resolved upon. Look at what it caused. It broke the heart of their father. It planted a guilty secret in their own breasts. That secret bore the bitter harvest of fear, worry and shame. These men knew no peace of mind after resolving to tell this lie. If we could see the crop of trouble and care that results from a lie, we would shrink from telling one, as a man shrinks from contact with a snake or

with plague. Telling a lie is like warming a snake in one's bosom.

What profit is it if we slay our brother?..let us sell him, vs. 26, 27. "Will it pay?" is what many ask about certain lines of conduct. What they ought to ask is, "What is the right thing to do?" The best men ignore personal, material gain for the sake of principle. Crates the Grecian, when he found he was too anxious to grow rich in dishonest ways, threw his gold bags into the sea, crying out, "I will destroy you, lest you should destroy me." If we would but remember that we shall carry all our principles away with us, but not a whit of the gain we get from selling Josephs, we would pray God for more power to stand firm by what is right. It is far better to have heaven in the heart here and hereafter, than earth in the hands only here for a short time.

## LIGHT FROM THE EAST.

By Rev. James Ross, D.D.

Pit—this was no doubt one of the rockhewn cisterns so common in Palestine. There are comparatively few springs or streams which continue to flow all the year round, while the rainfall is not very great, and is confined to certain seasons. Wells were difficult to dig, and often no water could be found, even when they were sunk to a considerable depth. Yet it was important to have water all the time in certain sections, for cattle and laborers. So they dug cisterns out of the rock, or excavated them in suitable places and lined them with masonry plastered with cement. Then trenches were skillfully dug to carry the surface water from a considerable area during the rainfall into the cistern. These receptacles were often of great size; the one under the temple hill in Jerusalem will hold three millions of gallons. In the ordinary cistern, the walls were arched up over the top and only a round hole two or three feet across was left, and this was generally closed by a flat stone. When they were empty, they were convenient places of confinement, for only something that had wings could escape from them. In cities and towns the water from outside springs was often conducted to cisterns inside the walls.

## MORNING BY MORNING.

Morning by morning think for a few moments of the chief employments of the day, and one thing of greater moment than others, thine own especial trial, any occasions of it which are likely to come that day, and by one short, strong act commend thyself beforehand to God; offer all thy thoughts, words, and deeds to Him, to be governed, guided, accepted by Him. Choose some great occasions of the day, such as bring with them most trial to thee on which, above others, to commend thyself to God.—E. B. Pusey.

Have you ever noticed how much of Christ's life was spent in doing kind things—in merely doing kind things? Run over it with that in view, and you will find that He spent a great proportion of His time simply in making people happy, in doing good turns to people. There is only one thing greater than happiness in the world, and that is holiness; and it is not in our seeking; but what God has put in our power is the happiness of those about us, and that is largely to be secured by our being kind to them.—Henry Drummond.

## ON THE WRONG SIDE.

Dr. Ambrose Shepherd, of Glasgow, preaching in London recently, called attention to the remarkable and saddening discrepancy between the intense activity of the churches to-day, and the lack of spiritual results. How it is that the churches have to say again and again: "We have toiled all night and have taken nothing!" Dr. Shepherd answered his own question in these words:

The reason why so much of the prayer, toil, and sacrifice of the Christian church counts for little or nothing is because so many of us are living on the wrong side of Pentecost. Many of us know Christ; many of us are following Christ; but how many of us have claimed our own Pentecost, or have sought at Christ's hands that equipment for service without which all other equipment counts for nothing—that Holy Spirit of God in the heart—that vital living power which is to the Christian what genius is to the artist, and without which, whatever his technique, there is no soul. Our clamant need is the fullness of the Spirit. For what harder work can there be in the world than to get spiritual work out of an unspiritual Christian?

The Evangelist and Christian work remarks: "Living on the wrong side of Pentecost!" That is assuredly the explanation of much if not all of the powerlessness of the Christian church to-day. Will not each reader ask himself the question: On which side of Pentecost am I living so far as experience goes?

## SYMPATHY.

To feel for all, and feel with all; to rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep; to understand people's trials, and make allowances for their temptations; to put one's self in their place, till we see with their eyes, and feel with their hearts, till we judge no man, and have hops for all; to be fair and patient and tender with every one we meet; to despise no one, to despair of none; to look upon every one we meet with love, almost with pity, as people who either have been down into the deep of horror, or may go down into it any day; to see our own sins in other people's sins, and know that we might do what they do and feel as they feel, any moment did God desert us; to give and forgive, to live and let live, even as Christ gives to us and forgives us, and lives for us, and lets us live, in spite of all our sins—this is the character we may get "out of the depths."

It is something to be a missionary. The morning stars sang together, and all of the sons of God shouted for joy, when they first saw the field which the first missionary was to fill. The great and terrible God, before whom angels veil their faces, had an only Son, and he was sent to earth as a missionary physician. It is something to be a follower, however feeble, in the wake of the Great Teacher and only model Missionary that ever appeared among men, and now that he is head over all things, King of kings, and Lord of lords, what commission is equal to that, which the missionary holds from Him? May I invite young men of education, when laying down the plan of their lives, to take a glance at that of a missionary? We will magnify the office! For my part I never cease to rejoice that God has appointed me to such an office.—David Livingstone.

\*S.S. Lesson, April 21, 1907. Genesis 37: 5-28. Commit to memory vs. 26-28. Read the chapter. Golden Text—For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work.—James 3:16.