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**WHAT IS HEAVEN?**

"What is heaven?" I asked a little child, "All joy!" and in her innocence she smiled.

I asked the aged with her care oppressed. "All suffering o'er, O, heaven at last is rest!"

I asked a maiden, meek and tender-eyed. "It must be love!" she modestly replied.

I asked the artist who adored his art. "Heaven is all beauty!" spoke his raptured heart.

I asked a poet, with his soul afire. "Tis glory! glory!" and he struck his lyre.

I asked the Christian, waiting her release, A hale round her. Low she murmured, "Peace!"

So all may look with hopeful eyes above, 'Tis beauty, glory, joy, rest, peace, and love.

—Philadelphia Call.

**The Sabbath-School.****INTERNATIONAL LESSONS.**

[FROM PELOUBET'S NOTES.]

Third Quarter.—Lesson 5.—August 1.

JESUS HONORED.—JOHN xii: 1-16.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*Hosanna: Blessed is the King of Israel that cometh in the name of the Lord.*—JOHN xii: 13.

JESUS ANOINTED AT A SUPPER IN BETHANY.—Vers. 1-3.

1. *Then Jesus six days before the Passover.*

The exact date to a day is uncertain, because it is impossible to know whether the first and last days are inclusive or not, and whether they are counted from the 14 or 15 of Nisan. The Passover was celebrated on the 14th, between sunset and the time when darkness came on, the Paschal lamb was to be slain. With the evening of the fourteenth day, according to Jewish reckoning, began the fifteenth day of the month, which, lasting until the following sunset, was the first of the seven days of unleavened bread.

*Came to Bethany.* From Ephraim, where he had spent several weeks in retirement. *Where Lazarus was,* etc. This was the incident that gave notoriety to Bethany.

*There they made him a supper.* It was probably the next day after the arrival of Jesus, i. e., on Saturday evening.

Mark (14: 3) and Matthew (26: 6) tell us that it was in the house of Simon the leper, who had possibly been healed by Christ. According to a tradition, he was the father of Lazarus; according to others, he was the husband of Martha, or Martha was his widow. Very likely he was in some way related to the family of Lazarus. The words of John seem to indicate that the meal was a public one, as if the people of Bethany had combined to do him this honor. *Lazarus was one of them that sat at the table with him.* He was next to Jesus, the most distinguished guest, and it was to see him as well as his Saviour that the Jews came (ver. 9).

*Then took Mary.* Martha expressed her gratitude and love by active service. Mary expressed hers in an entirely different way. Each one showed her feeling in her own way, and this was right. A pound. A litra, a Roman pound, of 12 oz. avoirdupois. *Of ointment of spikenard.* Spikenard, from which it was made, was an aromatic herb imported from Arabia, India, and the far East. A liquid perfume rather than what we commonly know as ointment. It was contained in alabaster flasks. These were with long, narrow necks, which let the oil escape drop by drop, and could easily be broken. *Very costly.* It was worth 300 denarii (ver. 5) or Roman shillings, called "pence" in our translation, and worth about 15 cents each. The nard was therefore valued at \$45. But as a Roman denarii was the price of a day's labor in those days, the amount would be equivalent to \$300 or \$400 in our day. It was the costliest anointing oil of antiquity, used by the wealthiest families of the Roman Empire.

*And anointed the feet of Jesus.* She broke the alabaster box (Mark 14: 3), i. e., the narrow neck of the small flask, and poured the perfume, first on the head (Mark 14: 3), and then on the feet of Jesus. *And wiped his feet with her hair.* She took "woman's chief ornament," and devoted it to wiping the travel-stained feet of her teacher.

Jesus so valued this act of sacrifice and love, that he declared to the disciples (Mark 14: 9), that, "Whosoever this Gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world, this also which this woman hath done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her." Love in the heart always desires to express itself in action, to make sacrifices for the loved. It is not the largeness or the smallness of the gifts, but the cost to us, the self-sacrifice in giving, made freely and gladly, that measures love. Each must give in his own way, and what he himself has. Martha gave service, and it was accepted and recorded. Mary gave the alabaster box of perfume. Each did what she could. What God asks of us is the gift of our hearts, and whosoever gives the heart, necessarily gives with it all other things.

**OBJECTIONS FROM SOME DISCIPLES.**

—Vers. 4-8. *Then said one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot.* The thought originated with him, and he urged it till some others of the disciples assented to his ideas. Judas declared that this use of the precious ointment was a waste. So many now think that what is given away to help the poor, to Christianize the heathen, to endow institutions for education, what is spent in books, culture, enlargement of the mind, —that all these are waste. But it is the Judas spirit not the Christ spirit that says so. *Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence.* \$45 to \$50. *And given to the poor.* The real source of Judas' opposition was hidden under a mask of benevolence. The wolf puts on the sheep's clothing. Thus usually the opposition to good wears a mask of virtue.

*This he said, not that he cared for the poor, but because he was a thief.* It was not in selling our Saviour that Judas began to lose himself. The evil began long before; he had been a long time a thief; and his body only followed Jesus Christ, whilst his heart was far distant from him. *And had the bag.* The box in which the funds of the small company were kept.

*Then said Jesus, Let her alone.* Christ was indignant at the hypocrisy which made a pretended consideration of the poor an excuse for attacking and condemning an act of love towards himself. *Why trouble ye the woman indicates that Judas and the others had uttered their complaints to Mary, and that she was troubled by what they said.*

*Against the day of my burying hath she kept this.* She had given to him, a few days beforehand, that anointing with which loving hands usually prepared the body for the tomb (but which Jesus' resurrection prevented him from receiving).

*For the poor always ye have with you.* They will have plenty of opportunities to aid them; and the more they did for their Master, the more they would do for the poor. It is the successors of Mary of Bethany, and not of Judas Iscariot, who really "care for the poor."

**ANTAGONISM FROM THE JEWS.**—Vers. 9-11. *Much people of the Jews.* Large caravans would be coming up for the Passover from all portions of the country, and the news would spread quickly through the crowds that Jesus and Lazarus were at Bethany. These went to see the wonder-worker, and the man on whom he had wrought this marvellous work. The result was that many of them believed (ver. 11). The facts were so plain that they were compelled to accept Jesus as the Messiah.

*But the chief priests consulted that they might put Lazarus also to death.* This standing public proof of Jesus as the Messiah must be put away at any cost. But the chief priests, who were mostly Sadducees, would have an additional reason, in that Lazarus was a living refutation of their doctrine that "there is no resurrection" (Acts 23: 8).

**THE TRIUMPHAL PROCESSION.**—Vers. 12-16. *On the next day, Much people.* Josephus estimates the number present at one passover as three millions; and the Pharisees on this occasion say "Behold, the world has gone after him." The whole narrative must be compared with Matt. 21: 1 ff.; Mark 11: 1 ff.; Luke 19: 29 ff., in order to gain a sense of the tumultuous excitement of the scene. *Jesus was coming to Jerusalem.* Jesus leaves Bethany and draws near to Bethphage a small village. Here he stops, and sends his disciples for an ass (ver. 14), on which to ride into Jerusalem, as foretold in Zech. 9: 9. This procured, he advances toward Jerusalem, and meets the great company of people from the city, who had come to welcome him. This is the only known instance in which Jesus rode. He mounted that he might enter the holy city with all the significance of a triumph. He was the prince of peace, and yet he was a conqueror and a king.

*Took branches of palm trees.* The palm was the emblem of triumph. Combining the four accounts, we get the following features: Some took off their outer garments, the burnoose, and bound it on the colt as a kind of saddle; others cast their garments in the way, a mark of honor to a king (2 Kings 9: 13); others climbed the trees, cut down the branches, and strewed them in the way (Matt. 21: 8); others gathered leaves and twigs and rushes. And all shouted with a loud voice, praising God for the mighty works they had seen. *Hosanna* is a rendering into Greek letters of the Hebrew words, "Save, we pray" (Ps. 118: 25). It is like a shout of "Salvation!" "Salvation!" *Blessed is the king of Israel.* They expected their Messiah to be a king, and now they would welcome him as the promised king.

Thus he came into the city, amid an enthusiasm beyond description. He entered the temple, and there healed the blind and lame. And even the children in the temple

shouted with the others, "Hosanna to the son of David!"

*These things understood not his disciples at the first, But when Jesus was glorified, then remembered they.* The ignorance of the disciples was corrected by experience. What they did not understand now, they understood when the Resurrection and Ascension had taken place. They saw then in what sense he was a king.

**PRACTICAL HINTS.**—Expressions of affection are of great value. Each one may express his affection in his own way.

The motive, the love, gives value to the deed.

The way to increase our love is to express it in all natural ways.

Bad men often put forward good motives for their bad deeds.

The Christian church is to give special care to the poor, the sick, the needy; for in so doing they minister to Christ himself.

Jesus is a king, the king of the whole earth. But he is a prince of peace, and his victories are by the weapons of peace.

How little to be trusted is the honor that comes from cowards, who, on this day, were shouting, "Hosanna to Jesus!" and within a week were crying, "Crucify him!"

**BROTHER AND SISTER.**

Sometime somewhere we came across an article giving advice to brothers concerning their sisters, which so struck us that we cut it out, and we give it entire, hoping that our young folks will read it and heed it.

"Young men seldom realize how happy they can make their sisters by small acts of courtesy. How many brothers offer to their sisters the little attentions which they instinctively give to other girls or women? Nay, how many are there who do not feel themselves justified in venting upon their sisters the irritated feelings which they have felt obliged to conceal in their intercourse with the world? A brother who would not wrong his sister of the very least of her rights will yet inflict upon her the grave and almost irreparable wrong of rudeness —a wrong as irreparable as it is dastardly. For rudeness hurts—hurts grievously and lastingly; and what man is worthy of the name who hurts a woman? Brothers do not realize how far a want of courteous conduct at home may go to wreck their sisters' future lives. They wonder at the unaccountable liking of girls for men whom the brothers know to be unworthy—men whose very attentions they feel to be almost an insult to a woman's good sense. Do they not see that it is the courtesy of these men—their 'company manners,' if you please—which makes them agreeable to women? Women so seldom have a high standard of manhood! They so seldom see the best of the men they know the best. How should they not be deceived, and mistake that outside veneer of courtesy which makes pleasant the present hour for that inward truth of character which shall be a benediction to all their future lives? Brothers, if you would have your sisters love worthily, let them at least be accustomed to gentle manners, that when they see them in strangers they may not be so dazzled as to become incapable of distinguishing a true man from a sham."

**A GOOD MEMORY.**

"You had better put them down on a piece of paper," said Mrs. S. on giving her first order. "O, no," said Mr. S., "my memory is good."

"Well, then, a spool of 60 Coates' black thread."

"Yes."

"A yard of not too light and not too dark calico."

"Yes."

"A small hammer, a can of peaches of the Pasadena brand, a dozen small pearl buttons, two yards of cardinal ribbon, silk on one side, satin on the other."

"Yes," said Mr. S., thoughtfully.

"A pair of slippers for baby, a dozen lemons, a good tooth-brush, a pineapple, two ounces of sky-blue German yarn, an ounce vial of homeopathic nux vomica pellets, a—"

"Wait a second," said Mr. S., counting on his fingers.

"And a bottle of vanilla extract, and a yard of triple box-plated crepe lisse ruching, and three yards of small checked nainsook and—"

But Mr. S. had seized his hat and was running for the station. What the poor man brought home was a yard of bedtick, three yards of black crepe, a bottle of vinegar, eight yards of nankeen, a scrub brush, a pound of green yarn, sixty spools of coat thread, a yard of very black calico, and a pint bottle of homeopathic pills.

"There, my dear," throwing down his package triumphantly. "I don't think you'll find a thing missing. Who says a man can't do shopping!"

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