

WHAT ARE WOMAN'S GREATEST POWERS?

Sunday School Lesson Points Out Her Spiritual Intuition; Can Perceive Real Values

CHRIST REWARDS THE BEST

Story of Christ's Anointment and Eulogy of Mary by Saviour Discussed by Ellis

ONE WOMAN'S IMMORTAL FAME

The International Sunday School Lesson For October 4 Is "Christ Anointed For Burial"—Mark 14: 1-11 (By William T. Ellis)

It is almost uncanny the way this Book, called the Bible, sheds a new light on the latest problems of the present time. Nowadays we have the woman question perplexing everybody, dividing thinkers into two camps, and between them both the cause of woman is made to suffer. In such a day as this the Sunday Schools have allotted, for the study, of millions, a story which reveals vividly the greatest gift and essential power of woman.

In shining distinctness it is pointed out that the chief qualification of woman is her spiritual intuition. She is endowed with the ability to perceive the real values of life. Her capacity and loyalty in love are but variations of her ability to penetrate to the core of all things involving spiritual values.

In this sense of reality, which transcends all arithmetic, for it is the divine mathematics of love, woman is dowered above man. By the exercise of her powers of spiritual intuition she is to attain her highest service in the world. The fragrance that envelops the world

This story is one of the sweetest in the repertoire of the common people. The scene is laid at a large family dinner in the town of Bethany, a suburb of Jerusalem, where Jesus and His disciples were guests. The event of the occasion, which alone made the dinner noteworthy, was the action of Mary of Bethany, sister of Lazarus, who broke an alabaster vessel of pure nard—a superlative perfume, worth a working man's wages for a year—upon the feet and head of the Master, who had restored her brother to life, and who had been teacher and friend to her family.

This was the very extravagance of devotion. The guests gasped at the royal offering which filled the house where they sat. The anointing was a consummate token of lavish loyalty—better understood in the perfume-loving Orient, than in our western land. Yet the fragrance of that offering has for nineteen hundred years been sweetening this old earth of ours.

The thrifty, "practical" and un-sentimental guests were scandalized by such extravagance. They were displeased that the Guest of Honor should countenance such waste, and their disapproval of Mary became instantly clear to both her eyes and her ears. Chief among these prudent and protesting ones was that neighbor of the money bags, Judas Iscariot, who thought always in terms of lucre, and who straightaway, with appraising eye, began to estimate the possible use of the money that he had just seen. He outwardly talked of giving it to the poor; but he wanted it in his own money bags, where his avaricious fingers could clutch it.

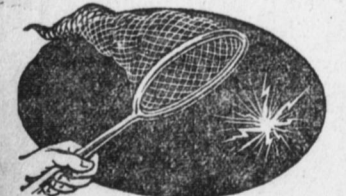
But Mary was shocked, embarrassed and hurt at the reception which her act was accorded by the other guests. A sensitive, spiritual personality, she quailed before this hostile criticism. Her one thought had been of her Lord. She was of those who do not weigh and calculate consequences. To her it was clear that her best, and the highest use of any possession of hers was to employ it in the service of love. She knew instantly—and wondered why the truth was not plain to everybody—that when great loyalties call nothing else matters.

A Gentleman to the Rescue True Gentleman that He ever was, Jesus came promptly to the rescue of Mary, bewildered by the carping criticisms of these small-souled disciples. Only for an instant was she permitted to suffer embarrassment or rebuke; then she became covered with the embarrassment of eulogy.

Jesus not only received her offering with gratitude—and nobody in

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Read on Page 4 How to Get A \$2.50 Clock for 9c FREE SOUVENIRS See Announcement on Page 4

Read Additional Announcement on Pages 4 & 5

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this world will ever know what a comfort it was to be hunted and harried Nazarene to feel that somebody really understood and really cared—but He also publicly defended it as the highest use of money. All true disciples of love are forever indebted to Mary for providing the occasion for these words of Jesus upon the superlative worth of love and all love's offerings.

Audaciously it must have seemed to His hearers, although He Himself never betrayed any doubt of His Gospel's growth. Jesus promised immortal fame to the deed of Mary. He declared further that his wisdom was greater than that of all His drilled disciples and of all the doctors of the law. Her intuition had outrun their reason. She saw what was hid from them, that Jesus was about to die. Her sensitive heart had caught the true importance of His repeated words to His uncomprehending disciples. This was her way of administering comfort and expressing loyalty.

The Time For Love's Offerings Later on, in due time, Mary would bear spices to the tomb of her crucified Lord. Now, however, while He was living and while His heart was heavy with the burden of the world's woe and of the relentless persecution of His enemies, and while He was shut apart by a great loneliness, Mary would make her timely offering to refresh His weary spirit. No comfort is commoner than this one that we should bear flowers to the living rather than gifts to the dead. Margaret Preston has put it into verse:

"Had I but heard One breath of applause, one cheering word— One cry of 'Courage' amid the strife, So weighted for me with death or life— How would it have nerved my soul to strain Thro' the whirl of the coming surge again."

"What use for the rope, if it be not lung Till the swimmer's grasp to the rock has clung?"
What worth is Eulogy's blandest breath When whispered in ears that are hushed to death? No! no! if you have but a word of cheer, Speak it while I am alive to hear."
Her sense of spiritual values made

Mary understand that love lives on lavish offerings. The rose has no value in the florist's shop; but it has a far greater value when it rests in the hands of the woman to whom it speaks of love and loyalty. In the eyes of Judas this alabaster vessel of pure nard was worth three hundred pence; streaming over the person of the Anointed One, it had a worth beyond all appraisal. It had come to its highest use. There is a hard utilitarian spirit which, in mistaken thrift, leaves life barren of the gracious gifts of love. The Orient, with its immemorial customs of gift-giving, is wiser than we. Surely no student of this beautiful story will miss the meaning of the fact that Jesus promised immortality of fame only to this one extravagance of loving devotion. Christ merits the best; Christ honors the best; Christ rewards the best.

The Money Lover at the Feast Aside from the Lord Himself and Mary, there were three other parties to this incident, who are worthy of study. Space permits only a mere mention of them. In the background, sinister, subtle, scheming, conspiring, were the ecclesiastical enemies of Jesus. They had determined on His death. With the cunning of veteran plotters they planned that this should take place after the visitors who came to the feast should disperse; they were afraid of the multitude. Even then oligarchy feared the people; and then, as now, the best defenders of Christ and His Gospel were the plain people. The plans and presence of these enemies were well known to the Master, who nevertheless filled His social obligations and never let the secret of His own woe dull the joys of His friends.

The host of the feast is a story by himself. Simon had been a leper but Jesus has cured him. This feast was his alabaster cruse or anointment; his offering of gratitude. All the resources and honor of his family were engaged to make this feast to Jesus and His disciples and friends a worthy tribute of love. Of all the banquets of antiquity there is none so well remembered as this one. The Man With the Money Mind The other character who must be mentioned was the outspoken objector to Mary's concentrated and sacrificial offering of what represented possibly her whole store of savings. Judas was so indignant that he forgot his manners. He ruffled the serenity of the feast by his churlish words. In the minds of men he is first among those who think only in terms of money—a state of mind

which is its own punishment. What shall we say of the man with Judas' mind who sacrifices all things to financial gain and measures all of life by money standards? The antithesis between him and Mary is sharply drawn in this scene. That love of money is the root of all evil is illustrated here. Avarice made Judas a boor, a traitor and a murderer.

All the while he thought that he alone was the sane, practical and business-like member of the group.

It was instinctive in him to protest against what he deemed, such mad waste as Mary's act represented. Poor Judas! he went to the place of waste in his soul before ever he filled the suicide's grave; his senses had become dead to the higher language of love and of the spirit. His money-seared soul was unable to comprehend that it is only the things of selfishness that are wasted; and that only that much of life is saved which is poured out in uncalculated, unquestioning, unreserved love.

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