

ness. This young man of excellent morals was mastered by the glitter of his gold.

"Go sell that thou hast and give to the poor, and thou shalt have a treasure in heaven: and come and follow me, v. 21. Mark tells us that Jesus "loved" this young man. But the love of Jesus was wise enough to be severe. The law was not sufficient to convince the youth of his need; the kind but firm physician used a sterner method. As with the knife of a surgeon he cut deep down into the soul of the youth and laid bare the selfishness, which, after all, was the ruling power in his life. The searching test of Jesus awoke that love of self of which this youth of spotless character had been unaware. "The volcano is quiet and silent for years. No fires and lava pour forth from its crater. Meanwhile people venture up its slopes, and lay out their gardens and build their villas, and plant their vineyards; and flowers bloom and fruits hang in purple clusters, and beauty covers the once fire-swept, lava-furrowed mountain slopes. But has the volcano really been tamed? Have its fires been put out? Is all permanently peaceful in the mountain's heart? Is it otherwise in the breast of him who has merely trained himself into good moral and ethical habits. What the best mere self-culture can do for a life is no more than the planting of flowers and vineyards on the volcano's sides, while its fires still burn within, ready to break forth again and say in all their old fury: "The heart must be changed." This change of heart was worth all the riches of this wealthy ruler.

But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions. v. 23. Did the youth ever return to the Saviour? Did he obtain at last the

The young man did the best thing he could do with his difficulties, he brought them to Jesus. v. 16.

The goodness that passes muster with men does not always stand the searching gaze of God. v. 17.

Every law of God would pierce our hearts

gift of eternal life, which that day he bartered for his riches? Dante tells us that he saw in the lower world the shade of him who, "with ignoble spirit refused the great offer," and who has been identified with this rich young ruler. According to the great Italian, the refusal of that day was an eternal refusal. Some, again, have held that this youth was the same person as Lazarus of Bethany and that he did become a follower of Jesus, but only after sickness and death. We may not be able to decide this question; but the two views illustrate two possible results of refusing the offers of Christ. The refusal may be final. We may never have the opportunity again. Then throughout eternity we shall lament our folly and sin. Or, to bring us to Christ, God may send us sickness, suffering, misfortune. The latter alternative is to be chosen rather than the former. But we may avoid either by resolving at once, whatever the cost may be, to follow Christ. It is a step that will never be regretted.

It is hard for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven, v. 23 (Rev. Ver.). "It is worthy of note that it is as a hindrance to entering the kingdom that riches are here stigmatized—which suggests the thought that the danger is not nearly so great when riches increase to those who have already entered. Not that there is even for them no serious danger, nor need of watching and of prayer, that, as they increase, the heart be not set upon them; but where there is true consecration of heart, the consecration of wealth follows as a natural and easy consequence. Riches are a responsibility to those that are in the kingdom; they are a misfortune only to those who have not entered."—Dr. Mouro Gibson.

POINTS AND PARAGRAPHS

If we were not encased in the armor of self-righteousness. v. 18.

The sharpest arrow in the quiver of the law is the commandment to love our neighbor as ourself. v. 19.

Self-righteousness is a wall which it is hard for the law to batter down. v. 20.