

SUNDAY
SCHOOL

The Quiet Hour

YOUNG
PEOPLEJESUS TELLS WHO ARE
BLESSED.*

By Rev. J. W. Macmillan, B.A., Winnipeg.

Blessed, v. 3. Who wants to be happy? Everybody. And why are they not happy? Because they go about it in the wrong way. They break the laws which govern the production of happiness; and trouble is the certain result. The law of comfort in footwear is, that the shoes shall fit the feet. If you try to reverse this law and make the feet fit the shoes, you will suffer for your folly. If the shoe is too tight or too loose, too heavy or too light, or if you should go to a blacksmith and get your shoes nailed on, you would, in greater or less degree, pay the price of your mistake. Now Jesus is teaching men in this Lesson to find happiness, by obeying the laws of happiness.

Poor in spirit, v. 3.—Not poor-spirited! Dr. Grenfell of the Deep-Sea Mission has turned his back upon money, ease, power, fame, society—all the things which the men of the world battle for. He will not fight with his fellow-men, contending for the prizes which only the victorious few can possess. Will you call him poor-spirited because he shirks that contest? Why, he will risk his life in storm and fogs, among rocks and icebergs, to help his fellowmen! He dares more, to cure their bodies and save their souls, than almost anyone will dare in war, or adventure, or money-getting. The one who is poor in spirit, is not a coward.

Meek, v. 5. Have you seen a St. Bernard with a poodle barking at his heels? And did you not admire the calm majesty of disregard which the big dog showed toward his puny assailant? He would not fight, not because of fear, but because of self-respect. But the little dog, no doubt, held another opinion. That is meekness, and meekness misunderstood. The noble-minded man is above bickering and retaliation. Would we have admired the martyr Stephen, if he had tried to hurl the stones back at his murderers? Would we worship Christ, if, when He was reviled, He had reviled again, or if He had fought with the soldiers who arrested Him, or plunged revenge upon Judas and Peter?

Hunger and thirst, v. 6. Christ demands enthusiasm. A weak, colorless, insipid preference for righteousness is common enough; but Christ will have none of it. The people who will do right when it is as easy as wrong, whose chief objection to vice is that it is ugly, and who are therefore as unlikely to reform, as they are to commit it; the half-hearted worshippers; the dead-and-alive religionists; the people who admire Jesus, and love themselves;—all the sluggards and cynics and pessimists; are by this verse condemned. Happiness is not found in dozing and yawning, or in musing and wishing, but in alert, eager, active, wide-awake enthusiasm for what is true and just and Christlike.

For my sake, v. 11. Be sure that your trouble is undeserved, before you complain of it. The governor of a great prison states that nearly every convict considers himself unjustly punished. Even if his guilt is undeniable, he seizes upon some point in his trial, the incorrectness of some minor statement by a witness, the zeal of the prosecuting attorney, or the judge's refusal to release him on a technicality.

*S. S. Lesson, March 4, 1906.—Matthew 5: 1-6. Commit to memory vs. 3-6. Read Mark 3: 13-19; Luke 6: 12-26. Golden Text—Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God, Matthew 5: 8.

"If self the wavering balance shake,
It's rarely right adjusted."

We have heard of a boy, whose mother complained, "Jimmy has worked in a dozen places and in every place the boss took a spite at him." Jimmy was posing as a martyr; whereas the truth was that he was lazy, impudent and untruthful. Every man who was beaten with stripes in apostolic days, was not an apostle, nor every man who was crucified, as innocent as Christ.

Salt, v. 13. Not sugar. Salt preserves by antagonism. Some well-meaning people think they should be just a little better than the world; then the world is not offended, and doing good becomes easy. The trouble is that such a process is ineffective. It is like trying to persuade a horse to kick more gently, or putting a nick or two in an assassin's dagger. It is an evil world, or Jesus had not come to save it. And evil is never to be placated or compromised with, but to be resisted and destroyed.

Light, v. 14. A man once said, "I have no more influence than a farthing rushlight." "Well," was the reply, "a farthing rushlight can do a good deal; it can burn down a house; yea, more, it will enable a poor creature to read a chapter in God's book." No light is to be despised. And shining is bright and beautiful, and any light will shine.

Shine—that they may see, v. 16.—There is not the smallest particle of the invisible gases which make up the atmosphere which surrounds this earth of ours, not the tiniest dust speck floating in the air, that is not needed to diffuse the light of the sun. But for these we could see only the sun, and in every other direction there would be darkness. The very dust speck becomes a miniature sun doing its share to illumine the darkness. And with every particle a reflector, the whole world is lighted up. What if every word and deed of each Christian reflected the rays that come from the great Sun of Righteousness. Then the darkest places all round the globe would be radiant with heavenly light.

LIGHT FROM THE EAST.

By Rev. James Ross, D.D., London, Ont.

Mountain—A late tradition has fixed the scene of this discourse on the Horns of Hattin, two peaks, which rise, one from each end of a low ridge running along the plain, about four miles west of the Sea of Galilee, near the road to Nazareth. They are only fifty or sixty feet above the surrounding fields, but they are the centre of an impressive scene. The summit of the eastern horn is a small, circular, and perfectly level spot, and the top of the ridge between the horns is also flattened into a plain. A striking illustration of the outcome of a Christianity, the very opposite of that outlined in this sermon, occurred at this very place on the 4th and 5th of July, 1187, when Saladin cut off the Crusaders from water, and, under the burning sun of a very hot day, threw them into a panic by setting fire to the scrub, and then cut them to pieces by repeated cavalry charges. The knights were sold into slavery, and most of their leaders were executed. Thus the century of cruelty and treachery, which disgraced the Christian occupation of Palestine, came to an end, although the Red Cross banner of the Hospitalers floated from the fortress above Bethlehem for eighteen months longer.

Then because you love the work, you enjoy speaking for Christ, reading the Bible, praying, doing the various kinds of committee work.

"I'M THE CHILD OF A KING."

It is said that a gentleman, riding along the road one morning, heard some one singing. He stopped to listen and caught the words, "I'm the child of a King." Riding on, he came upon the singer—an Irishman, with a pipe in his pocket and a pick in his hands. On the hillside was a dirty, torn tent; near by was a rickety spring-wagon, and up among the bushes was roped a poor, bony, hungry-looking horse. The man was a skeptic. He never permitted an opportunity to pass without making a thrust at any form of religious worship. Seeing the Irishman, he said to himself, "Now, isn't he a pretty-looking child of a King? How foolish religion can make a man." Then, aloud: "So you are the child of a King. If such is the case, why are you not better fixed? How is it that you, a prince, are wandering about as poor as a beggar?" The Irishman went on with his digging, while he continued his song:

"My father's own Son, the Savior of men!

Once wandered o'er earth as the poorest of them;

But now he is reigning forever on high,
And will give us a home in the sweet by and by."

The skeptic was surprised at the answer and evident rebuke, but continued: "And this is the home of a King! Look at that old wagon—and just look at that old tent." The Irishman began the fourth verse:

"A tent or a cottage, why should I care?
They're building a palace for me over there;

Though exiled from home, yet still I may sing,
'All glory to God, I'm the child of a King!'"

And as the skeptic, meditating, rode away, acknowledging that he had been beaten at his own game, he heard the chorus, strong and clear:

"I'm the child of a King,
The child of a King;
With Jesus my Saviour,
I'm the child of a King."

"PAPA'S PRAYERS."

A great many people are spending their breath praying when they ought to be materializing their prayers. Are you one of them? It is useless to pray down blessings upon your pastor, or the poor and needy, when your granaries and larders are fairly bursting with them. The following may be a timely hint:

Sickness came one year to the poorly-paid pastor of a country church. It was winter, and the pastor was in financial straits. A number of his flock decided to meet at his house and offer prayers for the speedy recovery of the sick ones, and for material blessings upon the pastor's family. While one of the deacons was offering a fervent prayer for blessings upon the pastor's household, there was a loud knock at the door. When the door was opened a stout farmer-boy was seen, wrapped up comfortably.

"What do you want, boy?" asked one of the elders.

"Pa couldn't come, so I've brought his prayers," replied the boy.

"Brought pa's prayers? What do you mean?"

"Yes, brought his prayers, and they're out in the wagon. Just help me an' we'll get 'em in."

Investigation disclosed the fact that "pa's prayers" consisted of potatoes, flour, bacon, oatmeal, turnips, apples, warm clothing and a lot of jellies for the sick ones. The prayer meeting adjourned at short notice.