

SUNDAY
SCHOOL

The Quiet Hour

YOUNG
PEOPLE

THE POWER OF THE TONGUE.*

By Rev. J. W. Macmillan, D.D.

Offend not in word... a perfect man, v. 2. The tongue is like the coast line of Britain, the part which is most exposed to attack. The fortifications of the United Kingdom are just at the edge of the sea. The huge battleships patrol the ocean in order to protect the coast. If the enemy can be kept from landing, all the cities, homes, and people are safe. When the vast Spanish Armada sailed up the channel in the days of Queen Elizabeth, the whole might of England was hurled against it to prevent its landing. The tongue is the part of the body most exposed to temptation. If we can keep our tongues under control, we can master our feet and hands. Let us watch our words, and we shall spare ourselves many regrets for the good words that we did not speak, and probably far more for the unworthy words we did speak. And the more carefully we keep watch over our lips, the more earnestly should we call upon God to guard them from evil speaking. "Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth; keep the door of my lips."

Bits... rudder (Rev. Ver.), vs. 3, 4. The steering gear is always small. The colonel can steer his regiment by a word. He calls out "Forward," and the tier of companies proceeds straight ahead. He shouts "Right wheel," and the line of advance swings a quarter circle to the right. He shouts "Left turn," and each man turns in his tracks and the regiment has a new front. He commands, "Right about turn," and the advance becomes a retreat. And many words that are spoken in other than military circles turn out to be effective commands. Lockhart, son-in-law of Sir Walter Scott, never forgot the dying words of the old author, "Be a good man, Lockhart; nothing else is worth while." You may say some word that will change the whole direction of another's life. Therefore speak wisely. You may hear some word that will change the whole direction of your own life. Therefore listen wisely.

A fire, v. 6. One Sunday evening, in the fall of 1871, a cow kicked over a lantern in a stable in Chicago. Before the fire was extinguished, by a whole line of houses being blown to bits with gunpowder, it burned a district four miles long and a mile wide. One hundred thousand people were rendered homeless, and the loss of property amounted to nearly two hundred million dollars. The apostle James says that the tongue can act like that. It starts a story about some one. The story spreads. It grows worse as it spreads. It becomes more destructive as it grows worse. It becomes impossible to stop. It travels faster than any denial can. An innocent life is wrecked, and people who deserved nothing but happiness are made wretched. Who did it? It almost did itself. Just start the fire or the slander, and it will find its own way of spreading. Therefore we won't start it, nor help it on if it comes our way.

Poison, v. 7. When hunters in Africa kill a poisonous snake, they dig a hole in the ground and bury its head. For they know that if a barefooted native stepped on the head, even long after, the native might be poisoned, so deadly

is the venom. Othello, in Shakespeare's play, was a high-spirited, honorable soldier who loved his wife Desdemona with the deepest affection. The crafty Iago was able, by means of sly words, so to infuriate Othello that he would not even listen to his wife's defence of herself. In his passion of wrath he killed her. Iago poisoned Othello's mind. And the poisoners are busy everywhere, separating friends, breaking up families, splitting churches in two, making trouble in business, politics and society. And other people, who don't stop to think what they are doing, help to distribute the poison.

The tongue can no man tame, v. 8. God is always requiring of us impossible things. The tongue must be tamed if one is to become a perfect man; and yet, "the tongue can no man tame." But impossible tasks ought never to discourage us when they are commanded of God. For with every bidding of His comes the strength to perform it. Before He sends us out to the duty to which no human power is equal, He permits us to touch His all-conquering hand, and then hindrances melt away like snow before the suns of spring. Spurgeon once said, "I have read of those who bathe in certain baths of Germany which are much impregnated with iron, that they have felt after bathing, as if they were made of iron and were able in the sun to cast off heat as though they were dressed in steel. Happy indeed are they who bathe in the bath of such a promise as this: 'I am with thee.' Put your whole self into that promise, and you will feel your strength renewed, so that you can bear troubles which before would have overburdened you."

Seldom can the heart be lonely
If it seek a lonelier still;
Self forgetting, seeking only
Emptier cups of love to fill.

USELESS BIBLE STUDY.

It is possible to spend a great deal of time in Bible study with very little result. Our best use of the Bible is to let it feed our own and others' spiritual life. Yet there is a constant temptation to be drawn aside from the into searches and questionings that are of no gain to any one except for the possible satisfying of curiosity. Whether or not Paul had Bible study in mind as he began his first letter to his young friend Timothy, his warning there is needed in this field to-day: "Neither to give heed to . . . endless genealogies, which minister questionings, rather than a stewardship of God which is in faith." Let us test our desire for Bible knowledge by the question, "What will it mean to me after I have understood this?" There is more in the Bible than any one can master in a lifetime; it is worth while to give what time we can to the study that promises results in deepened life and power.—S. S. Times.

ALIVE AND GROWING.

One who is not growing is not living. Life is growth; there can be no life without growth. Therefore when growth stops, death sets in. "Is so-and-so still alive?" one man asked of another. "Well, he's still walking around," was the dubious answer. A man can keep on growing long after his body has begun to go back on him; and if he does so, his life, through growth, will always keep the upper hand of death. It may be well for us to ask ourselves, from time to time, whether we are really alive, or just walking around.—Sunday School Times.

LIGHT FROM THE EAST.

By Rev. James Rose, D.D.

Ships.—James has in mind the ships which traded between the ports of the Mediterranean, and which were of considerable size. Paul's ship carried 276 persons (Acts 27: 37), besides the supplies and cargo; many of them were capable of carrying from 500 to 1,000 tons. They had usually only one mast, with strong ropes passing through a block at the masthead, and one large sail fastened to an enormous yard. Occasionally there were topsails also. This arrangement concentrated the strain on a small part of the hull, and there was a great tendency to leakage there. With a fair wind, an ancient merchantman could sail within about seven points of the wind, that is, at rather less than right angles to it. Ships of war and some others were propelled by rowers, galley slaves, who sat on benches in three rows on each side, one above the other, and their oars varied in length according to the row. The hinged rudder was unknown in ancient times, and the vessel was steered by one or two broad bladed oars, one on each side of the stern, and handled by two men. Later, a device was invented whereby the ends of the two oars were fastened together, so that one steersman could handle them both.

QUITE COMPATIBLE.

Doing good is not incompatible with the most refreshing recreation. It will give a delightful flavor to vacation hours, among the mountains or in the seaside cottages, to keep the great relations and objects of life in remembrance. It is not necessary to encroach upon the requisite physical rest, or to challenge the brain to any serious service. Simply keep up the habit of thoughtful piety, and watch for accessible opportunities for a kind, sympathizing Christian word. The field is the world, and we are never out of its limits. A holy heart is a seed-bearing vessel, and wherever one carries it the blessed germs will be distributed. "Blessed are ye that sow!"

PRAYER.

Almighty God, Father of our spirits, Thou knowest what we need. We need not plead with Thee, because Thy love doth anticipate all our want. Yet it hath pleased our Father to bid us pray, as if He knew nothing, as if He would hear the tale of want and pain and sorrow from our own lips. Our life is one long need; to-day cannot stand for to-morrow. We cry unto Thee hour by hour, ye, moment by moment, for there is no cessation to our want. Amen.

LIFE ETERNAL.

I was walking to the city one morning, and on the way was accosted by a friend:—"Good morning, Mr. —, I see you are like the rest of us, getting old." I replied: "No, sir, I flourish, and shall continue to flourish, in immortal youth. This is life eternal to know Thee, the only true God and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent. I know God in Jesus Christ, therefore, I have eternal life, and eternal life cannot get old.

Good morning. Thanks for the lesson, and two immortal beings passed on.

* S.S. Lesson, June 6, 1909. James 3: 1-12. Commit to memory vs. 8-10. Golden Text—Whoso keepeth his mouth and his tongue keepeth his soul from trouble.—Proverbs 21: 23.