

SUNDAY
SCHOOL

The Quiet Hour

YOUNG
PEOPLE

THE GOSPEL IN SAMARIA.*

By Rev. P. M. Macdonald, B.D.

Then sent unto them Peter and John, v. 14. For long it had been said, "The Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans." But the love of Christ makes those who were once enemies helpers one of another. Two brothers had quarreled, and for twenty years never spoke to each other. One of them had prospered, the other had suffered reverses, so that their homes were very unlike. Coming from the market the poor brother had to pass the home of the other one, and often he felt he was being scorned and despised by the owner of that home. One winter day he was taking home a load, and his team, stuck in the drift close to his brother's home. After he had tried in vain to get them out, he saw his brother coming with his team. "Will you allow me to help you now, and as long as I live?" said he. "I am a changed man, and I want to be a real brother to you. Will you allow me?" "Oh, my brother," was the answer, "I, too, have been changed, and I have been praying for this hour to come." And there in the storm they became brethren indeed.

Simon offered them money, saying, Give me also this power, vs. 18, 19. There are some who think that money can procure every advantage. Carlyle said, "To a shower of gold most things are penetrable." Most things, but not the best things. A man cannot buy with money a trained mind. Gold can buy libraries, but libraries unread are like mummy wheat in the tombs of Pharaoh. Gold can go far to giving success, but there comes a point where its helping power falls. Esteem and love are obtained by goodness and honesty and kindness. When the last dread hour cometh, money is miserably weak. On his death bed, Cardinal Beaufort, eighty-five years old, exclaimed, "Why should I die, having so much riches? If the whole realm would save my life, I am able by policy to get it, or by riches to buy it. Fle, will not death be hired, or will money do nothing?"

Pay the Lord (Rev. Ver.), v. 22. A man who denied that there was a God and tried to win his friends over to his belief, was brought one day face to face with death. There seemed no escape for him. No human hand could help. In an agony of earnestness he lifted his eyes to heaven and cried aloud in the hearing of many who stood about him, "My God, help me." The danger passed, and the man became an earnest Christian, praying to God every day. We are ready enough to pray, when some great need of help presses in upon us. But, though we often forget it, every hour is with us an hour of need. Without God's help we could not draw the next breath or lift our hand to the next task. We shall always be weak unless we lay hold on His strength, ignorant unless filled with His wisdom.

In the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity, v. 23. The story is told of a tyrant who ordered one of his subjects into his presence and commanded him to go and make a chain.

He gave him no money to purchase the material, but ordered him to make the chain. The man toiled and worked, and, at last, came with the chain. The tyrant told him to go and make it as long again. The man obeyed, and was told the third time to go and add to the chain. So he worked hard and after some months came with it. Then the tyrant called his slaves, and told them to bind the man in the chain he had made and cast him into prison. The sinner serves a tyrant, who makes his servants forge chains of habits and then imprisons them.

Pray ye for me (Rev. Ver.), v. 24. God is very attentive to our prayers for others. A father learned this truth for himself from his children. When his boy came asking him some favor, his father love disposed him to grant his child's request, and send the lad away happy with the thing he wanted. One day, however, the same boy came with the story of another child's need and misery, and asked his father to help that other one. The pleading was sincere, and, as the father listened, his heart swelled with pleasure, while with a liberal hand he answered his boy's prayer for another. So it is with our prayers. When we come to God, He hears with special delight prayer which rises for another's good.

JESUS CHRIST'S IDEAL WOMAN.

We all have our ideals for life, and they vary widely. But Christ sets before us an ideal which is all-inclusive, holding in its breadth all the best elements that are in the ideals we make for ourselves. I have tried to picture to myself what Christ's ideal woman would be like.

She would be perfectly true. There would be no deception or insincerity in her. In every relation of life she would be found faithful.

She would be perfectly pure, not only in deed and word, but in thought and heart.

She would put herself last. In her heart Christ would be on the throne and self on the cross. Self-control would take the place of self-will.

She would be serviceful. Her hands would reach out in loving helpfulness to every needy, suffering soul with whom she came in touch, and no service would be too slight.

She would be clothed with humility. No pride or self-conceit would mar the beauty of the things she did.

She would be gentle in speech. From her lips would come no sharp words to wound the hearts that were nearest and dearest to her.

She would be personally attractive. She would glorify her Master by proving that he can make his followers beautiful with a more than earthly fairness.

She would be popular. But the hosts of friends whom she would draw would not stand between her and her Lord. Rather, she would draw them nearer Him.

She would love pleasure, knowing that Christ would wish her to be happy. But her good times would be of such a kind that Christ could be a sharer in them.

More than all, she would be perfectly consistent. Her life would square with her profession.

So she would walk triumphantly the Way of the Holy Cross, glorious in her discipleship and crowned with the more than royal crown that He shall give to those who overcome.—M.D.H., in Philadelphia Westminster.

LIGHT FROM THE EAST.

By Rev. Jas. Ross, D.D.

Simon Magus — Was a Samaritan from Gitta, near Nablus, and had learned the art of magic in Alexandria. He aided Felix to obtain Drusilla, Queen of Emesa, and after his rejection and exposure by Peter went to Rome, where he created quite a sensation by teaching his mixture of magic and oriental philosophy. He was the first of the Gnostics, a religious sect which flourished from the first to the sixth century A.D., and attempted to graft the Magian art of wonder-working and the Gnostic philosophy on Christianity. He had added to the language of the church the word "simony," which means the buying or selling of a spiritual office.

Laying on Hands.—When a Roman master wishes to free a slave, he brought him before a magistrate, and the attendant called licitor laid his rods on his head, declaring that he was a free man. The master meanwhile held the slave, and after the licitor had finished, he said, "I wish this man to be free," turned him round and let him go. This symbolic act was often used in Israel. The high priest laid his hands on the head of the scapegoat and confessed the sin of Israel, and thus transferred it. The offerer laid his hand on his thankofferings and peace offerings to transfer them to Jehovah, and the representations of the other tribes thus designated the tribe of Levi to act for them.

THE PRESENCE OF GOD.

"The practice of the presence of God the best rule of a holy life" is all but an ancient saying. A less antiquated author has said: "There is not in the world a kind of life more sweet and delightful than that of a continual conversation with God. Those only can comprehend it who practice and experience." "How can I do this great wickedness and sin against God," the exclamation of Joseph in a great temptation to a great sin, involved no doubt, the idea that if he yielded then he must sin in the presence of God. Every place is made a holy place as God's presence makes places holy. The unwavering consciousness that life is spent hour by hour in the presence of God is purifying and brightening and a source of exquisite joy in the heart. It is for the saint an inspiration to courageous struggle, unflinching loyalty in witness bearing, and at last glorious victory. Let it be tried.—Presbyterian Standard.

A PRAYER.

O Lord, we have not come to the point that might be touched and that burned with fire, but we have come unto Mount Zion, the city of the living God, and unto the blood of Jesus. By that holy sacrifice we have all things that are good, the nourishment of our soul, and the education of all our faculties, and our preparation for all things yet to come. Without the cross we have nothing. With Thy cross Thou Son of God, we have all things, and we abound. Amen.

Not until we know all that God knows can we estimate to the full the power and the sacredness of some one life which may seem the humblest in the world.—John Ruskin.

*S.S. Lesson, February 28, 1909. — Acts 8: 14-25. Commit to memory vs. 14, 14. Study Acts 8: 4-25. Golden Text — The people with one accord gave heed unto those things which Philip spake, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did.—Acts 8:6.