



LESSON IX.—DEC. 2.

The Rich Young Ruler.Matt. xix., 16-26. Memory verses, 23-26.
Read Matt. xix., and Luke xvii.**Daily Readings.**

M. Entering—Luke xviii., 10-17.
T. Hesitating—Luke xviii., 18-25.
W. Following—Luke xviii., 26-30.
T. Some Peril—1 Tim., vi., 1-21.
F.—A Necessity—John iii., 1-16.
S. A Definition—John xvii., 1-8.

Golden Text.

'Children, how hard it is for them that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God!'—Mark x., 24.

Lesson Text.

(16) And, behold, one came and said unto him, Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life? (17) And he said unto him, Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is God; but if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments. (18) He saith unto him which? Jesus said, Thou shalt do no murder, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness. (19) Honor thy father and thy mother; and, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. (20) The young man saith unto him, All these things have I kept from my youth up; what lack I yet? (21) Jesus saith unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven; and come and follow me. (22) But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions. (23) Then said Jesus unto his disciples, Verily I say unto you, That a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven. (24) and again, I say unto you, It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God. (25) When his disciples heard it, they were exceedingly amazed, saying, Who then can be saved? (26) But Jesus beheld them, and said unto them, With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible.

Suggestions.

The rich young ruler who ran to ask our Lord what good thing he should do to obtain eternal life, no doubt thought himself sincere. He was in earnest or he would not have run to meet Jesus (Mark x., 17), nor have knelt to ask him the great question. He was rich not only in this world's goods, but in character and influence, rich in innocence and strength.

Why callest thou me good? asks Jesus.—There is none good but one, that is God. Therefore if Jesus Christ is not God he has no claim to any title of goodness. But he accepts the title Good Master, as it is his divine right and goes on to answer the question. Salvation can not be purchased by one good deed, nor by any number of good deeds. The Lord Jesus enumerated to the young man those commandments which had to do with his conduct toward his fellowmen ending with the summary, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. The young man answered with complacency, that he had always kept all these commandments.

Our Lord's demand was simply for a proof of the fulfilling of those commandments—if the young man truly loved his neighbors as much as he loved himself, surely he would be willing to sell his property and divide it amongst his destitute neighbors, what lesser proof could he give of perfect love toward his fellowmen?

It was a severe test but a just one, and if the young man had been perfectly sincere in his questionings he would have gladly accepted the conditions. This young man had doubtless considered these things before, he knew that at the call of Christ, Matthew had

left his remunerative business of taxgathering. Peter had left his fish nets, and the other apostles had laid aside their avocations that they might be free to closely follow the Saviour and to hear the gracious words that fell from his lips. Therefore he was not unprepared for our Lord's demand, still he had dared to hope that there might be some other way for him, he longed for the blessing but shrunk from the cross. He came to the gate of decision (as the Israelites came to the entrance of the promised land, Deut. i., 19), but his love for worldly goods overcame his desire for the eternal good, and—he went away sorrowful.

This young man of great possessions is a type of the best class of men to-day in whom the aspiration after immortality (the natural dower of every true man) is awakened, but not yet satisfied. Treasures of culture and refinement, treasures of a clean life and high ideals, the outward keeping of the law and self-satisfaction, treasures of popularity and confidence, treasures of time, talents, health and strength—these are the great possessions which, to the mind of many, constitute in themselves a claim on God for eternal life. Not so says the word of God. Salvation can not be bought by good conduct, nor by good surroundings, nor yet by hard work, all of these are as ineffectual as gold itself would be. The righteous God has included all men under sin that all might be saved (Rom. iii., 20-23; x., 12, 13).

A man who trusts in his riches (no matter what they are) has his eyes blinded to the true riches (Rev. iii., 17, 18). A man who willingly forgoes his chance of laying up treasure in heaven is like the man with the muck-rake, mentioned in 'Pilgrim's Progress,' whose attention was so fixed on the dust and debris in which he sought for treasure that he could not see the bright shining crown which a pitying angel was holding just over his head. A man who trusts in riches is a mammon worshipper (Matt. vi., 24), he cannot carry his possessions beyond the grave.

The term 'eye of a needle' refers to the narrow gate in the city wall through which merchandise was brought into the city. The camel had to have all his burdens removed before he could pass through. In like manner, he who would enter the kingdom of heaven, must lay aside all self-sufficiency, all trust in riches or attainments of any kind, and, unburdened and untrammelled, pass through the gate from the land of bondage and evanescent pleasures of sin, into the glorious liberty of eternal life.

God does not call upon all holders of property immediately to disperse their goods to the poor. Some men are poor entirely through their own sins, and if given money would simply spend it on liquor or lose it in gambling. Gifts of money would have been no blessing to the prodigal son when he was in want, but would probably have been to him a curse, leading him into deeper sin and forgetfulness. There is no merit in giving money away recklessly, though whose stoppeth his ears at the cry of the poor, he also shall cry himself, but shall not be heard (Prov. xxi., 13). The key to the whole matter is that God demands of each one of us faithful stewardship of our possessions, be they in gold or influence, strength or talents.

Questions.

Who came running to meet Jesus?
What did he ask?
What requirement did our Lord make of him?
What claim did the man make?
What proof of sincerity did our Lord demand?
How did the man meet this demand?
What was it that stood between him and eternal life?
What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?

C. E. Topic.

Dec. 2.—Spending time and taking pains for Christ. Matt xxv., 1-13.

Junior C. E. Topic.**TAKING TIME.**

Mon., Nov. 26—Use of time—Eph. v., 16.
Tues., Nov. 27—Plan for life Heb. viii., 5 (last clause).
Wed., Nov. 28—Jesus serving us. Matt., xx., 28.
Thu., Nov. 29—Doing for Christ. John xii., 26.

Fri., Nov. 30—God blesses our work. Pa. xc., 17.

Sat., Dec. 1—Other reward. Dan. xii., 3.

Sun., Dec. 2—Topic—Spending time and taking pains for Christ. Matt., xxv., 1-13.

The Sunday-School and the Mother.

Mothers send their little ones to Sunday school to be taught about Jesus; but if the mother is not helping them to live Jesus day by day all that teaching may be brought to naught. To be lasting and vital there must be hearty and earnest co-operation between the teacher and the parent. The mother must supplement one hour of religious teaching by seven days of practical religious training.

In our little Sunday school kindergarten the mothers are becoming so interested in what their children are doing that scarcely a week passes without some testimony of a practical nature. One tells me, 'My little girl is becoming so helpful!' another, 'There is a wonderful change in my little one!' And all this is the result of practical talks that we have together before going home. We usually make practical the lesson story by talking about how we can help mother during the week. One little girl is going to help with the dishes; a dear little four year old is going to dry the silver; a sturdy boy proudly says, 'I will carry the coal for mother!' and even a little three-year-old thinks that she will pick up the threads and pins from the carpet. Her mother is a dressmaker. It would certainly do the mothers good to hear their little plans.

Then we instruct them to tell mother a part of the Sunday-school story—that is, if she will listen. And the mother that will not listen is not only robbing her child of heart joy, but checking his intellectual and spiritual growth. She must not be surprised if she awakes some day to find that she has lost the confidence of her child. Wherever the mother becomes a ready, anxious listener, in that home we are finding one of Jesus's 'little lights.' The pastor has just come in, saying that one of our little girls, seven years of age, is not only bringing the mother to Jesus, but has also opened up three homes to the church.

Perhaps it may be hard to get a child to tell you anything about the happenings in the Sunday school. But this ought not to discourage, for probably the boy or girl has heard so much that the little mind is confused. Then ask him to tell you just one thing that happened at Sunday school, or ask, What did you hear about Jesus to-day? In so doing you have given him definite food for thought. After you have asked about the Sunday school, then plan together how the little one can help through the week that he may live the truth learned. For example, some pleasant surprise for papa, like having his slippers ready when he comes home tired and weary from work. Tell your child how Jesus, when a little boy, was always ready and willing to help Joseph in the carpenter shop. This makes the Christian living practical and definite.—'Congregationalist.'

Home Work.

The primary teacher who is willing to give afternoons or evenings to children, and who is trained in some skilled work, like drawing, wood-carving, sloyd or sewing, may teach a good deal more than actual accomplishment of actual work. None of us can measure the priceless value of a kind of work which makes the children careful, painstaking and conscientious in smallest detail. This quality of work results in the same quality of mind and thought. The children's surroundings begin to take on the color of their careful work. Their increase of hand faculty, which has been conscientiously pursued, ends in an unconscious increase of faithfulness in the detail of home tasks, and in conscientious thought for those who are in the home. A certain gentle, quiet music teacher had a system peculiarly her own of making her children exceedingly accurate and painstaking in their piano lessons. After months of drill, parents thanked this teacher for her work, saying: 'Your instruction shows in everything the children are doing. You are giving them a most valuable moral training.'—Miss Peck, in 'Sunday School Times.'