

SUNDAY
SCHOOL

The Quiet Hour

YOUNG
PEOPLE

BARTIMAEUS AND ZACCHAEUS*

By Rev. Clarence Mackinnon, B.D.,
Winnipeg.

A certain blind man, v. 50. Two little sisters stood in front of the large, snowy window of a toy shop, and tried to explain to another little blind sister all the wonderful things they saw in it. But she had never seen the beautiful toys, and mere words gave a very inadequate idea of what they were like. Thus it is that many people listen to clear and simple sermons and explanations about salvation, and yet it is all a perplexing mystery to them. They cannot understand such things; they appear to them visionary and unreal. The reason is, that they are spiritually blind, and not until Jesus has touched the sightless eyeballs of their soul and given them the vision of faith, will they see and understand.

Jesus of Nazareth, v. 37. The physician famed for his skill has his waiting-room filled with patients. With mingled hope and fear, they listen for the summons into his presence. What will he say of their case? Will he be able to cure them? Some go away with joyful faces and uplifted hearts. They have been told that they will soon be well again. Others carry away with them no hope. The doctor can do nothing for them. Thank God! no case is hopeless with the great Physician. He touched the sightless eyeballs, and they saw the blessed light of day and the beauty of the world and the faces of kind friends. There was no disease that could baffle His skill and power. Our worst sickness is sin. It defiles our hearts and spoils our lives. But He can root out every evil, and make us clean and strong. It is a joyful hour when the sinner and this mighty Saviour meet.

Passeth by, v. 37. Passeth! How much easier it is for us to recognize the opportunity when it is passed! There are few of us who have not been present at revival services which would have brought a great blessing to us, had we been alive to our privilege. Others were converted, but we sat unmoved. Jesus was passing by, but we saw Him not. Now that the opportune time seems fled, we recognize how foolish we were. To seize the present hour is to catch the blessing; to recognize not only that Jesus did once pass before, but is passing at this very moment, is the insight of the truly wise man.

What wilt thou that I shall do unto thee? v. 41. For many years the ranges of the Rockies seemed an impassable barrier between the plains to the East, and the valleys and sea-coast of British Columbia to the West. But it was discovered that here and there the mountain ranges are pierced by passes; and through these railways have been built or projected, to provide easy highways for travel and commerce. Every offer of the Saviour opens up the way into a realm of richest blessing. The path is plain, and the entrance cannot be mistaken. If only we are willing to do His bidding and follow His directions, we shall surely find untold wealth of blessing.

Climbed up into a sycamore tree, ch. 19: 4. Zacchaeus doubtless felt his limitations. He was used to the remark, "There's Zacchaeus; isn't he a little fellow?" Probably, during all his boyhood, he went by the name of "Little Zaccus." But Zacchaeus did not give in to his limitations; he used his wits to overcome

them. He looked for a serviceable tree and, when seated on its branch, he could see farther than the biggest man in the crowd. Let no one sour under his limitations. What if your eye cannot see as far, or your ear hear as accurately, or your tongue talk as fluently, or your brain work as rapidly, as those of some others that you know? By the use of your wits, or by the grace of perseverance, you can more than make good what seems a heavy handicap in life's race. The tortoise had not the legs of the hare; but he won the race because he "stayed with the job."

Zacchaeus, haste, come, abide at thy house, v. 5. Look at the invitation of Jesus: It is personal, coming to each one for himself. It is urgent. There is need of haste: the opportunity is fleeting. And so gracious—"Come," says the Saviour, with wondrous winsomeness. And the promise Jesus our constant guest.

The Son of man came, to save that which was lost (Rev. Ver.), v. 10. As we write, the news is flashed across the cable of a dreadful railway disaster in England; over a score of persons hurried to their death. Among these was a young Canadian clergyman. As he lay pinned beneath the wreckage, knowing that death was near, he spent his last breath in praying for the suffering and dying around him. How he longed to save them, if not from bodily death, at least from the worse death of the soul! But his longing, and the longing of hearts like his, for the salvation of men, is but a trickling rivulet, compared with the full, strong stream of the Saviour's yearning. Who will not let Him have His way, and be saved eternally?

CONTRASTS.

If all the skies were sunshine,
Our faces would be fair
To feel once more upon them
The cooling splash of rain.

If all the world were music,
Our hearts would often long
For one sweet strain of silence
To break the endless song.

If life were always merry
Our souls would seek relief
And rest from weary laughter
In the quiet arms of grief.

LIGHT FROM THE EAST.

By Rev. James Ross, D.D., London.
JERICHO—Was one of the few cities that ever flourished in the valley of the Jordan. It was about fifteen miles from Jerusalem, and six miles north of the Dead Sea. Large springs and streams from the mountains supplied plenty of water, and artificial irrigation produced, as it does still, a wealth of vegetation. Notwithstanding many conquests, the "City of Palms" continued to flourish until the time of Christ and later; but after the Crusades it fell into decay. The modern village of Eriha, near the old site, contains about 300 dark and stunted inhabitants, who are probably descendants of the ancient Canaanites. It has now become a stopping place for visitors to the Dead Sea, and contains two good hotels. The ruins of the old city are under a large mound, about a mile and a half west of the village.

SYCAMORE—The English sycamore is a species of maple or plane tree; but the sycamore of the Bible is a kind of bastard fig tree. It is often planted by the roadside for the sake of the shade, as its branches cover a circle of from sixty to eighty feet in diameter. It grows to a great thickness, but never very high, and the fruit appears, thick together, on leafless twigs on the trunk, and large, wide-spreading branches, and is not very palatable.

STILL UPWARD.

By Rev. J. S. Henderson.

Many centuries ago, the prophet Ezekiel had a vision. He was with the captives of Israel by the river Chebar in Babylon. They were there serving out the punishment of their forgetfulness of God. The faithful prophet went down with them—Christlike—to share the depths of their suffering, that he might help them back again to the heights of God's purpose of grace.

"The hand of the Lord was upon him" there; and in spirit he is back again in his own land. Seated on one of its elevations, he sees the restored temple. An angel appears at the gate with a measuring reed in his hand; and the prophet is shown the proportions of the building, and its thorough equipment for the new life upon which his people are soon to enter.

Passing from the temple proper, he observes that the side chambers are three in number, reached by a winding stair, and that the topmost is the largest of the three. "And there was an enlarging, and a winding about still upward to the side chambers." "Still upward!" Still larger! That is the plan of the divine procedure, in creation, in revelation, in the history of the church—in all life. "Time was is past; thou canst not it recall." It is fixed and fastened, like molten iron cooled and rigid with the shape the mould has set upon it. But the future is fluid. It may be run into new and better shapes. It is pregnant with possibilities, it is the home of hope, it is astray with the ideal. If we will only respond to the voices calling and the influences pressing, the possible will become actual, hopes will be realized, the ideal will become real.

All life should be cumulative. To-day should be a growth out of yesterday. To-morrow should be larger and richer, because of what to-day has been.

There should be a "still upward" in knowledge. In a world like ours, and at a time when "to be living is sublime," that day is lost in which some truth is not garnered for life's enrichment.

There should be a "still upward" in character. Emerson says: "Character is more than intellect. A great soul will be strong to live as well as to think. Goodness outshines genius, as the sun makes the electric light cast a shadow." There is no greatness equal to goodness; no wealth to be compared to personal worth. Life's noblest purpose is the making of mankind. All life should tend in this direction, every day leave some line of beauty, every circumstance add something to the abiding riches.

There should be a "still upward" in service. Every attainment should be a footing for new attempts, and every goal a point of departure.

"I count this thing to be strangely true, That a noble deed is a step toward God—Lifting the soul from the common sod To purer air and broader view."

New Westminster, B.C.

Nay, all by Thee is ordered, chosen, planned
Each drop that fills my daily cup; Thy hand
Prescribes for ills none else can understand.
All is known to Thee.

No one can efficiently work in the promotion of good whose mind is filled with distrust for the good intentions of his fellow-men.—William M. Jackson.

When every Christian realizes that the Master's call to service is directed to him personally, the work of the kingdom on earth will be wonderfully helped.

* S. S. Lesson, September 2, 1906.
Luke 18: 35 to 19: 10. Commit to memory vs. 42, 43. Golden Text—The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.—Luke 10: 10.