

SUNDAY
SCHOOL

The Quiet Hour

YOUNG
PEOPLE

DAVID GRIEVES FOR ABSOLOM.*

By Rev. Clarence MacKinnon, B.D.

David sat between the two gates, v. 24. When Cicero and Quintus were both proscribed by the second triumvirate at Rome, Quintus hid himself so successfully that the soldiers were not able to find him. Enraged at their disappointment, they took his son and put him to torture; but never a word would the faithful lad utter. Nothing more than an involuntary sigh and an occasional groan escaped his lips. The father was near enough to hear. He was so affected at the thought of the son dying to save his own life, that he could endure it no longer. He presented himself to the murderers and asked that he might take his son's place. No such sacrifice on behalf of father or mother may be required of us. But there are opportunities without number of making our parents' hearts glad by words and deeds of loving unselfishness. And these we owe to them for their unstinting goodness to us. Let not the pagan son of Quintus be more dutiful than the children of Christian parents.

Good tidings, v. 27. Some poor children of a city were taken for a few days' outing into the country. Several of them were put up at a farm house, and a rare treat it was for those street Arabs to breathe the fresh air and enjoy the delights of field and forest. The mother of the home, however, noticed that one little fellow did not drink his milk, and she asked him why. "I ain't got no milk," was his unexpected reply. "There it is," she said, "right by your plate." "That ain't milk," protested the little fellow, "milk's blue." Poor little chap, he had never known any other than the miserable watered stuff given to him in the slum; and it was one of the trials of his life when he had to leave the fresh creamy drink of the farm and go back to the thin doctored milk of his city home. The food of the soul is the tidings that it hears. How much of the stuff that it feeds upon in the cheap literature of the age, is thin and blue! There is no sustenance in it, nothing to give the soul a further vision and a wider hope. The gospel is the only really good tidings, and when once the soul has drunk of these "wells of salvation," it has no inclination to go back to the rubbish that contents the world.

Is the young man Absalom safe? v. 32. A sad incident happened at the burning of a newspaper building some years ago. The Associated Press room was in the upper story. All the operators but one left their posts in time to escape. Notwithstanding the warning that had been given, this man remained too long at the wire, ticking off the latest news of the fire. He found his exit blocked. The interest of his work had so engrossed him, that he neglected the opportunity of escape, and unhappily perished in the flames. A young man may not become the victim of any of the more glaring vices of his associates. He may be clean and respectable and bear a good name among his friends; but he may be so engrossed in his business or pleasure as to neglect altogether the warning and the offer of salvation in the gospel. The young man Absalom is not safe, unless he has a firm hold of the only Saviour, Jesus Christ.

O my son Absalom, v. 33. Chevalier Johnstone tells an affecting story that

occurred in Scotland during Prince Charlie's rebellion. A young man was an officer in one of the English regiments. His father, on the contrary, was a warm Jacobite, and joined the standard of Prince Charlie. Imagine the father's horror at receiving an order to attack next day the very regiment in which his son was an officer. "Perhaps," he said, "I may be so unfortunate as to kill my son with my own hand." Nothing would console the afflicted parent. The battle took place. The following evening, however, nothing could exceed the father's joy as he returned from the fight with one prisoner, alive and well, and that his son. For the time being, he cared not how many others be captured. It is a sad circumstance when the home is divided, when the son is found fighting against the father in the ranks of the enemy; but He who gave up His own Son to die for sinners, knows what are the sorrows of a father, and knows also the deep and abiding joy in the heart of a father when the prodigal is brought home. For this purpose it was that He gave up His Son.

THE NOBLEST GUEST.

Dr. Charles Bayard Mitchell thinks that we have lived in vain if we have not discovered "that there is a power greater than any physical force that ever acts in the universe of matter." "I will tell you," he says, "what is finer than the foaming leap of the torrent from the crag. It is a rush of a man's courage along the fearful path of some high and holy duty. I will tell you what overtops the grandeur of an Alpine peak at sunset. It is integrity resisting temptation. I will tell you what is more glorious than a Norway twilight, which turns mountain, plain and ford into the softest tints of violet. It is love, giving and blessing without stint, like your mother's. I have often thought that I would love to have been one of that little company in that storm-tossed boat that night on Galilee; to have felt the thrill of danger and the loneliness, and then to have known the ecstasy of beholding my master coming through the storm, walking on the sea as on solid pavement; gathering up those turbulent waves, as a mother presses her babe to her bosom, and speak them into peace. But I have seen a grander thing than that. One day my life's bark was sorely tossed, and a tempest swept down over my soul with terrifying onset, and it seemed to me that I would be engulfed. Then it was I saw this same Jesus coming to me on the waves, speaking peace to my heart, bringing me out into an open and delightful haven, where it has been joy to dwell ever since. Oh, believe me; what I want—what you want—is to find 'the power unto salvation.'"—Exchange.

The soul would have no rainbow,
Had the eyes no tears.

—John Vance Cheney.

Let us give thanks to God on Thanksgiving Day. Nature is beautiful and fellow-men are dear, and duty is close beside us, and he is over and in us. What more do we want, except to be more thankful and more worthy of the tasks and privileges he has given us. We want to trust him with a fuller trust, and so at last to come to that high life when we shall "be careful for nothing, but in everything, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let our requests be made known unto God," for that and that alone is peace.—Phillips Brooks.

LIGHT FROM THE EAST.

By Rev. James Rose, D.D.

Runners—Eastern kings had a body of professional runners around them, partly as attendants, partly to carry orders and to bring back news. These men were trained from their boyhood to swiftness and power of endurance, and the speed they could keep up for a whole day was remarkable. I have seen two official runners with the wands of office preceding the carriage of the present Pasha of Egypt when it was being driven quite swiftly. I have seen an Arab over seventy, keep up a steady trot all day in front of a horse, and seem quite fresh at night. Down to the eighteenth century, runners went before every nobleman's coach in England, and they were often needed to keep it from being overturned, so rough were the roads. The Persian kings organized a regular system of mounted couriers, who traversed the whole kingdom with the royal mandates and general intelligence, and their swiftness became proverbial.

"The Enemies .be"—An Oriental will not give a direct reply, if he knows that it means evil tidings. He will give it some turn to modify its effect. The news of his son's death is conveyed to David in the form of a loyal wish for the destruction of all his enemies.

Many a time, when cantering through these lovely glades, (of Gilead), as my steed dashed under the low-sweeping boughs, how easy have I felt it would have been to have incurred the fate of Absalom had my hair been as long as his.—Tristram.

CHRISTIAN PATIENCE.

The patience of the Christian is the patience of strength. The task is great, but the laborer is conscious of his ability to perform it; the trouble is overwhelming, but he is conscious of the everlasting arm about him. He "sees the rainbow through the rain." Such patience is not the fruit of philosophy, nor is it the result of training. It springs from a source deeper than the intellect, and it reaches up and takes hold of a power that is above the heavens. It is the majesty of the divine sonship. If any of the King's children are fretful and easily disturbed by little things, they are still among the least in the kingdom. Those that have grown beyond infancy show some degree of their Father's patience.

Christian patience is not merely endurance. It is the patience that works—the patience that is not easily discouraged by apparent defeat or elated by apparent success. The task of him that has become Christ's fellow-laborer is Christ's own task. He is more than willing that all the smaller tasks that life imposes on him should succeed or fail, as may be best; but about the great task of life he has no fears. It must and will be accomplished, for God is not defeated. "Consider him who endured such contradiction of sinners against himself." He was never more triumphant than in the hour of his apparent defeat. The stupidity and timidity of his friends did not discourage him, nor did the exultation of his foes dismay him.

Patience is not over-eager for results. She will have her perfect work because she will have her work perfect. Cheap and showy success will not satisfy her, for she is heaven-born and she builds for eternity. She knows whom she has believed and whom she serves, and she hopes to offer to Him work that has been done for Him and for Him alone; and if He has directed the work, it will be perfect.

S. S. Lesson, November 8, 1908—2 Samuel 18 : 24-33. Commit to memory v. 33. Study 2 Samuel, ch. 1. Golden Text.—A foolish son is a grief to his father.—Proverbs 17 : 25.