

SUNDAY
SCHOOL

The Quiet Hour

YOUNG
PEOPLE

THE RICH YOUNG RULER.

By Rev. Clarence MacKennon, B. D.
Eternal life, v. 17. There are three doorways into the cathedral at Milan, and each has an inscription of its own. Over one is written, "All that which pleases is but for a moment"; over the second, "All that which troubles is but for a moment"; but under the great central entrance the visitor may read, "That only is important which is eternal." These three doorways remind us of the three great avenues of life that the pilgrim may tread. He may be enticed by the pleasures of the world, or he may be oppressed by its cares, or he may be impressed by the thought of the great eternity that environs it. And the inscriptions are truly written, for the pleasures and cares of this life are of but momentary importance. The supreme concern is that of eternity, and the supreme question, "What shall I do, that I may inherit eternal life?"

One thing thou lackest, v. 21. Up, up, up, stretched the ladder to the sky, and the schoolmaster in his dream was climbing it with all his ardor. But alas! he came at length to a place where there were no more rungs, and there he had to halt, with the sky still far beyond his reach. So men have tried to scale heaven by their own good works, but all in vain. One Commandment after another have they kept, one rung after another have they successfully climbed, it is true; but in time there comes the great hiatus, the impassable gap, the disheartening omission, some notorious lack in their normal and spiritual life, which they cannot get over, and which renders their method of allowing eternal life impracticable to them. To such defeated ones the gospel comes, and on its wings of faith and love bears them to the goal of their desire, as it did the apostle of the Gentiles in its early days. Surely we too can trust that same gospel to do for us what the law, through the weakness of our flesh, has failed to accomplish.

Treasure in heaven, v. 21. A few eagles' feathers, some wampum, and two or three strings of glittering beads, were the treasures of the old Indians' wigwam. How paltry they are, compared with the masterpieces of art, the historic pictures and the superb sculptures that adorn the mansion of the millionaire! Just as paltry will these latter seem—mere silly trinkets—in comparison with the treasure in heaven. For that treasure consists not chiefly in the gorgeousness of heaven's beauty, but in its uninterrupted peace, its harmony, its love, its companionship, its endless song, and the brightness of the presence of the Lord. Heaven is a day without night, sunlight that knows no eclipse, spring that never changes to autumn and whose leaf never withers. How unwise to sacrifice its bliss for the doubtful chance of the world's baubles!

Riches, v. 23. No mirage of the desert has ever led deluded traveler into more barren sands than has the prospect of riches led those worldly people, who have been foolish enough to be deceived by it. How they have

toiled and sacrificed to get wealth, and what then? Stephen Girard, accounted one of the wealthiest men of his day, wrote: "As to myself, I live like a slave. I am constantly occupied all through the day, and often passing the night without being able to sleep. I am worn out with the care of my property. If I can only keep busy in the day and sleep all night, this is my highest happiness." Rothschild placed a pistol under his pillow before he laid his head upon it. And even with all that anxiety, now true is the Talmudic proverb, "Worldly prosperity is like writing on water." It is not necessary to be in the way of a great fortune to be fascinated by money; there is glamour enough about even a paltry fifty-cent piece to buy some men's souls.

Them that trust in riches, v. 24. The devil, of course, is not in the yellow gold itself; that can be neither good nor bad. But the harm lies in the feeling which it awakens in a man's heart. Indeed, there is no touchstone for character like gold. Show us a man's attitude to money, and you show us what that man really is. Just as he who gently handles a rose preserves its bloom and its fragrance, while he who grasps it roughly loses both, so the man who puts riches to any unselfish use becomes a benediction to his fellow-men, while he who hoards up the glittering pile and trusts in its accumulation for honor and happiness, shall lose all, miss the peace and the love which the kingdom of God stands for here, and eternal life in the world to come.

First last last first, v. 31. Have we not seen—

"The thorn frown rudely all the winter long,

And after bear the rose upon its top;
And bark that all away across the sea
Ran straight and steady, perish at the last

'E'en in the haven's mouth?"
Let no one be discouraged by rebuffs and seeming failures. For as surely as the spring sun and showers brings the brilliant rose beside the prickly thorn, so surely will God crown all honest effort with the garland of His praise. And let none be carried away with a too swift success. For the prize is not for the one who is ahead at the start, but for the one who is first at the goal.

SURRENDER.

By Martha G. Sale.

I held my first-born to my heart, my precious treasure—mine!

If human love can be so sweet, what must be love divine?

What'er I miss of earthly bliss my children will supply;

Idolatry in subtlest form my soul can not deny.

But can I meet their call for light? Their way I dare not choose.

For, struggle with my utmost might, my way I sometimes lose.

So I revere them, Lord, to thee; too precious to be mine.

If human hearts can beat so true, how must the Heart Divine?

Let the surrender be complete; their hearts to Thee incline,

For Thou hast led my wayward feet to rest in love divine.

If human love can be so sweet what must be love divine?

If human hearts can beat so true, how must the Heart Divine?

LIGHT FROM THE EAST.

Poor—The same causes which now produce poverty were at work then, and some others, such as famine, raids, and forced labor. On the other hand, little was then needed in the way of a house, furniture, clothing, fuel, or even food; and there were mitigating circumstances in the lot of the poor. Early marriages and polygamy prevented some of that destitution among unmarried women, which is common in our civilization. The institution of slavery increased the credit of the poor man, because he was able to offer his person as security for a loan. Slavery was regarded with less horror, and carried with it less disgrace, than our poorhouse. The slave was better off relatively than many of our working people. The Old Testament legislation on behalf of the poor, although founded on Eastern customs, was far ahead of anything in the surrounding nations. And Jesus made almsgiving a duty, and tried to purify the motive that underlay it.

Eye of needle.—Beside the large gate in some cities, there was a smaller one for foot passengers, called the "Needle's Eye," through which a camel without any burden might possibly have squeezed himself on his knees. Some think it was to this that Jesus referred, and that He does not use a figure implying absolute impossibility, but one of very great difficulty.

That loss is common would not make
My own less bitter, rather more.

Too common! Never morning more
To evening but some heart did break.
—In Memoriam.

PRAYER.

O Lord, have men become infidels, unbelievers, atheists, mockers because the day is so short there is no time to do anything in; we are interrupted, and broken in upon, and our purposes are shattered, and so we let our tails go; and the little, hurrying eager days would take us swiftly into the eternal state, where we shall have the opportunity to see God on His own scale, and to study God with the advantage of an infinite calmness. Teach us that all things are in Thy hands; why should we fret or murmur, or weep hot tears? The Lord gave, and if the Lord hath taken away, He will bring back again a greater abundance; Thou canst grow a thousand harvests in the year, we can hope but for one. We fall into Thy hands, King, Lord, Father, Saviour; and there we are in heaven. This and all other prayers we say in the sweet name of Christ, the name to sinners dear. Amen.

SENTENCE SERMONS.

Logic may illumine, but love leads.
Only heaven's scales can weigh the heart.

You do not make life sacred by looking at it.

The ideal is the mold in which the real is cast.

Heaven leaves the heart when hatred enters.

Money makes the mare go, but it cannot say where.

The tight fisted preacher gets the poor grip on the church.

You cannot tell much about your crown by the size of your hat.

The way to heavenly mansions may lie through mean tenements.

Man, in the making, can only be measured by the Master Workman.

*S.S. Lesson, August 26, 1906—Mark 10: 17-31. Commit to memory vs. 23, 24. Read Matthew 19: 16-30; Mark 10: 2-16. Golden Text—If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.—Matthew 16: 24.