

SUNDAY  
SCHOOL

## The Quiet Hour

YOUNG  
PEOPLE

## THE JOY OF FORGIVENESS.\*

(By Clarence MacKinnon, B.D.)

Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, v. 1. An Emperor of Germany long ago offended the Pope. Before the Pope would pronounce forgiveness, he made the poor Emperor stay for three days outside the castle gate. It was winter time and the snow was deep, and the unfortunate man suffered greatly, but he thought it all necessary to have his sin removed. Christ does not ask any such penance on our part. His pardon is full and free. There are no bitter hours of waiting. At once the poor sinner is blessed who seeks His pardoning love; and all who desire His forgiveness can have it.

In whose spirit . . . no guile, v. 2. A number of gamblers were in the room of an inn, and they were making night hideous by their noise and blasphemy. The famous preacher, Whitefield, happened to be staying at the same inn. He could not endure to hear the name of his Saviour thus profaned. It took away his sleep. At length he said, "I will go and reprove them." He did so, but the profanity did not stop. His companions, who had tried to restrain him, now asked, "What did you gain by speaking to those men?" "A soft pillow," was Whitefield's answer, and he lay down and was soon quietly asleep. He had relieved his conscience. He had delivered his soul from all sin of guilty compromise. The guileless man who has the clearest conscience has the softest pillow.

Thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin, v. 5. Some Orientals used to have a very simple way of keeping their books. They used a wax tablet, and when anyone owed them money, they took a sharp pencil and indented a mark in the soft wax. Afterwards, when the debtor came and paid his debts, they would take the flat end of the pencil and press it over the marks in the wax and obliterate them all, until there remained no more charges against the man. All our sins are recorded in the book of God's memory, and there they must forever stay, were it not that Jesus Christ has made an atonement for them, and now, if we confess our transgressions, God will blot them all out, and the past will never be charged against us; for He has said, "I, even I, am He that blot out thy transgressions for Mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins." (Isa. 43: 25).

Kind hearts are here, yet would the tend'rest one  
Have limits to its mercy: God has none!  
And man's forgiveness may be true and sweet,  
And yet he stoops to give it. More complete

Is love that lays forgiveness at thy feet,  
And pleads with thee to raise it. Only heaven

Means "crowned," not "vanquished,"  
when it says "forgive."

Thou shalt preserve me from trouble, v. 7. Very wonderful the way God takes to deliver His children from distress. When Queen Mary ruled in England, she gave orders near the end of her life for a persecution of the Protestants in Ireland. The commission was entrusted to Dr. Cole, who, on his

way, stopped at Chester, where he was waited on by the mayor. He told him his errand in the inn, where he was overheard by its maids, herself a Protestant. This worthy lady secretly removed the commission papers, and substituted a dirty pack of cards, with the knave of clubs facetiously turned uppermost. Imagine the doctor's chagrin when he unwittingly presented these unexpected documents to the Irish Privy Council! He hastened back to London to get his commission renewed, but in the meantime Queen Mary died, and the Irish Protestants were thus mercifully delivered from a calamity that might have involved irretrievable loss of life. God is never at a loss to find instruments for His purposes, however unlikely they may seem. The experience of this psalm will find thousands of witnesses.

Many sorrows shall be to the wicked, v. 10. There used to be no thistles in Australia, until a Scotchman, in mistaken attachment to the emblem of his race, sent a few seeds out to a friend. He thought it was a sad misfortune that any country should be without a thistle. The seeds could have been stopped on their entrance, but they were such a little thing, no one could suppose that any serious mischief would follow. Some years afterwards, this same thistle became the farmer's pest and plague. One glass will not harm, one throw of the dice will only amuse. One tiny, ungenerous scheme of revenge, what great evil can come of it? Alas, many drunkards are in their graves, many gamblers in the cells of the penitentiary, many homes are ruined and many hearts at lasting feud, because they did not recognize the full danger of a little sin, any more than the Scotchman foresaw the result of the introduction of a small package of thistle seeds to a new soil. Sin inevitably multiplies sorrow.

"If aught good thou canst not say  
Of thy brother, foe or friend,  
Take thou then the silent way,  
Lest in word thou shouldst offend.

If thou hast yesterday thy duty done  
And thereby cleared firm footing for  
today,

Whatever clouds make dark tomorrow's  
sun,  
Thou shalt not miss thy solitary way."

## THE SPIRIT OF FORGIVENESS.

It is a world of imperfections nothing is more needed than the spirit of forgiveness. In fact, we cannot live peaceably with our fellow mortals without it. He who essays to go through life without being wronged by some friend or foe hath not been far into the journey of life. It has ever been said that offences must come. Why? That is not our question here. We are thinking of the way to act when they do come. One says: "Strike back, only strike harder." That is the way of hell. No so with the Christian. He remembers that God says: "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord." He knows, if he knows anything, that "to err is human, to forgive divine." This means he must exercise the spirit of forgiveness else he were unchristian and unkind. No one was ever so wronged as his Saviour and our Lord, and yet his dying prayer for his enemies was "Father forgive them."

The sin that is scarcely able to stand alone to-day may outrun a racehorse to-morrow.

## LIGHT FROM THE EAST.

By Rev. James Ross, B.D.

Mule—Has always been much used in the East, although the breeding of it was forbidden by the Mosaic law. Pictures of mules are found on the monuments of Egypt and Assyria. Their surefootedness, hardiness, and power of endurance commended them, not only as beasts of burden, but also as saddle beasts for the wealthy. Some of those bred today from full-blooded Arabian mares are most beautiful animals and are extremely valuable. Not only are they hardy and patient, but they usually live twice as long as the horse, and will carry a heavier burden.

Bit—The original bridle was only a halter, although sometimes a muzzle was attached to keep a refractory beast from biting its driver or its yokel. The Assyrian horses had a bridle like ours, with an iron bit, and a side piece at each end to keep it from slipping through the mouth. The side straps were covered with rosettes, an arched crest rose between the ears, a short plume projected from the forehead, and a long tassel was hung round the neck. A bridle or muzzle was often fixed on refractory slaves and prisoners of war. When Cambyeses conquered Egypt, the king's son and ten thousand others were conducted to execution with ropes round their necks and bits in their mouths.

## A PRAYER.

Perturbed, restless, fear-smitten, my troubled heart turns to thee, O God, my refuge and my strength. Thou knowest my frame, thou understandest my thoughts afar off; so thou seest the secrets of my harried spirit. I cannot understand my own need: thou canst. Out of thy perfect knowledge and unfailing mercy, O Father dear, I beseech thee to send me help. Speak peace to my heart. Give me again a quiet trust in thee. May the calm confidence in thy love and providence which has been the strength of my life hitherto, not be shaken. And may I not lose my vision of thee in Jesus Christ. Let the promised Helper reveal him unto me; so that, for my own life, and for my service of thee and of the world, I may have his enabling. This I ask in the name of Jesus. Amen.

## GAINING NEW IDEAS.

How eagerly the newspapers are scanned every morning by thousands, yes, by millions of people to learn the latest news! The items most eagerly gleaned are those relating to material things—what some has done, or gained, or worn. This all well in its place, but isn't there something more? New thoughts are being developed, thoughts about bettering humanity, about right relations among men, thoughts about God and His love, about man's duty to God. Some of these thoughts are really original; some are old thoughts taking new possession of minds. Why not be eager to gain new ideas, the latest in the thought world, if possible? Thoughts are eternal; one can have them, use them, enjoy them when cities have crumbled to dust.

A man who heeds not the call of his brother in need will be disobedient to the pleadings of his own spirit.

Good intentions will not save the man who despising the warning, steps over the precipice.

S.S. Lesson October 23, 1908. Psalm 32. Commit to memory vs. 1, 2. Read Psalm 51; Romans, chs. 4, 5. Golden Text—Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. —Psalm 32:1.