

FOR THE SABBATH SCHOOL.

International 3. S. Lesson.

LESSON X.—THE RICH YOUNG RULER.—MARCH 10.

Mark x. : 17-27.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"Seek ye first the kingdom of God."—Matt. vi. 33.

CENTRAL TRUTH.—True Riches.

ANALYSIS.—**THE ONE** thing wanted, v. 17-20.
thing lacking, v. 21-22.
omnipotent, v. 23-27.

TIME AND PLACE.—March, A.D. 30; on Christ's last journey to Jerusalem, probably in Perea beyond Jordan.

HARMONY.—Matt. xix. 16-30, Luke xviii. 18-30.

INTRODUCTORY.—Owing to the excitement caused by the raising of Lazarus, Christ had to leave Judea, and seek refuge in the country of Perea. It was here, after the incident in which He blessed the children, that this conversation with the rich young ruler took place.

THE ONE THING WANTED, v. 17-20.—Since ever our first parents eating of the forbidden fruit brought upon themselves the sentence of death, there has been in the heart of man a longing after his lost immortality that ages of struggle with the vicissitudes and hardships of life have failed to extinguish. It is a God implanted longing, and as such must ever endure, until it has found satisfaction in the way that its Author has appointed. It was this desire in the heart of the rich young ruler that prompted him to seek from the master on bended knee some answer that perchance might give him peace. It was the same old question, so often repeated since, "Good Master, what good thing shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?" How many have echoed that cry, "What shall I do?" and found, sometimes after bitter disappointment, that there was nothing could be done by human heart to gain salvation, nothing but believe. The answer of the Master is evolved from His divine knowledge of human hearts; He saw in this seeker after life, a man of good moral character and high aspirations, but He realized where the greatest obstacle to his salvation lay, and at that He aimed His reply. The result lay all in the question, was what he longed for worthier in his estimation than what he already possessed?

THE ONE THING LACKING, v. 21, 22.—It is a beautiful touch to the story that the writer gives us in this twenty-first verse; "Jesus looking on him loved him." There was that in the earnestness of the young man that won his Saviour's heart, but apart from this there was his youth with all its glorious possibilities for good, and Christ yearned to see him set with his face toward righteousness and truth. There was nothing exceptional in Christ's love for this young man; the same love goes out to-day in unfailing tenderness to all young people, in whose developing years are bound up so much of future good or evil, according as Christ or Satan succeeds in getting the first foothold in their hearts. There was one thing lacking in the young man's character, but it alone was enough to bar the way of life eternal, how is it with you and I whose lives are so full of imperfections? Can we hope to win heaven on merit? "Go sell all that thou hast and give it to the poor;" that was the test, and to-day dear comrades it is exactly the same. While there is anything in your life you are unwilling to give up for Christ, riches or friends or pleasure, it matters not what, so long as such unwillingness remain you cannot possess Christ. To that which you prefer to Him, for awful as it sounds, it amounts to that, you must look for your salvation.

THE ONE OMNIPOTENT, v. 23-27.—Exceeding sorrowful the young man departed unequal to the test, he will not stand alone when the day of final award arrives. The epitaph upon the gravestone of his hopes, still cuts itself in awful letters on many a dead soul's tomb, "Sold for Gold." It is a solemn lesson the Master taught His disciples on this sad occasion, but time and experience have proved it to be only too true. Riches are an obstacle to the kingdom of God, and the way of salvation a hard one for the wealthy. His disciples were slow to perceive this truth, and surprisedly exclaimed, "Who then can be saved?" Many to-day do not realize it and often think, "Oh, if my circumstances were only more easy, how much better my life would be." Take the masters' word for it, it is a mistake. Change of circumstances is not what is needed but change of heart. "Who then can be saved?" Ah with men salvation is impossible, but with God all things are possible. He can lift the drunkard from the gutter and make him a saint, or turn the selfish pleasure seeker into a selfless seeker of God's pleasure. There is no man good enough to save himself, but there is none too bad for God to save. We all may lack, but there is One Omnipotent to supply.

NOTES ON THE TEXT.—V. 25. *It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle.*—This was a figure the people were in the habit of using when they spoke of an impossibility, or at least of some thing that was very difficult.

Application and Illustration.

WHAT CAN I DO?

BE IN EARNEST ABOUT ETERNAL LIFE, v. 17.—The young man ran and fell at Christ's feet, he was in earnest about this matter of eternal life. Are you in earnest about it? So many seem to think this the last question in the world to interest them.

Wait till the time has come to die, they say, and go on worrying over the little matters of every day life with the weighty interests of all eternity unsettled. Why are we not more in earnest about this thing? Why do not the souls of our unsaved friends bear more heavily on our hearts? Why is not the burden of the perishing more real to those of us who profess to be Christ's? God trouble our hearts on this question, and awaken us to the awful interests that are at stake.

POSSESS THE TRUE TREASURE, v. 21.—A rich nobleman said to a man: "All these lands, houses and flocks you can see are mine; am I not rich?" The man answered, "In that little hut on your land is an old woman who is richer than you, for she can say, 'Jesus is mine.' You will have to leave all these things; but when she dies, she will have a crown of glory and a home in heaven."

REALITY—THE DANGER OF RICHES, v. 23.—General Armstrong said once to a friend, "If you see me getting rich, pray for my soul." But very few men have made such a request. One morning the minister found on his pulpit desk a slip of paper, with this request: "The prayers of this congregation are desired for a man who is growing rich." It seemed a strange request, but no doubt it was a wise one. Xavier said that among all the thousands who had come to him with confessions, not one had ever confessed the sin of covetousness. Men are not conscious of their danger when growing rich.

BE WILLING TO GIVE UP ALL FOR CHRIST, v. 21.—There is a story of a rich Christian man one of whose ships was delayed at sea. When one day had passed with no tidings he was anxious; and with each added day his anxiety increased. At length, however, the man waked up to the fact that his money was having a tremendous hold upon him. Then he ceased to worry about the ship, and became anxious for his own soul. He was determined to break the perilous mastery, and took the value of his ship and gave it to a charitable object. We all need to deal thus rigorously with ourselves whether we have only a little money or much, that money may never be our master, but that Christ may be Master always and money our servant, to do our bidding and Christ's.—*Westminster Teacher.*

CHRISTIAN ENDEAVOR.

Everything for God.

First Day—Constrained by love—2 Cor. v. 13-21.

Second Day—Nothing but Christ—1 Cor. ii. 1-5.

Third Day—Necessity laid upon me—1 Cor. ix. 16-23.

Fourth Day—Pleasure in distresses—2 Cor. xii. 10; xi. 23-28.

Fifth Day—"Laboring night and day"—1 Thess. ii. 6-12.

Sixth Day—"This one thing"—Phil. iii. 13-21.

Seventh Day—Everything for God—Luke xiv. 25-33.

PRAYER MEETING TOPIC, March 10.—"EVERYTHING FOR GOD," Luke xiv. 25-33. It is a wonderful phrase, but how few actually realize by experience all that it means. As we look at our own lives and measure them by its standard, the blush of shame must surely suffuse our cheeks. "Everything for God," my business, my pleasures, my affections, my associations, my companions, myself in its entirety, body, soul and spirit. Oh Christ how short of this I fall! Such must be the honest expression of every heart that looks this question fairly in the face. But short of such surrender soul satisfaction can never be completely possessed. While there is one corner of your being, one possession of your soul unowned by God, there will be in your Christian life an element of discord and weakness. Sometime God will call upon you for a full surrender. No child of His ever goes home without experiencing this crisis in the Christian life. You remember He demanded from Abraham his only son Isaac. He won the life of Joseph in the darkness of the pit. He wrestled with Jacob and overcame his proud nature, and it was by faith that Moses forsook the court of Egypt with its alluring pleasures and prospects of power for God in the lonely desert. There were crises in these men's lives, testing times when the only alternative was all for God or nothing. You must experience just such a crisis in your life if you have not already. God give you grace to meet it faithfully.

Personal Testimony.

Do what you can to encourage it. It doesn't necessarily savor of egotism for you to speak of yourself. There are a multitude of reasons on the side of the personal testimony. It appeals to the listener as no other form of speech will. Witness in the midst of a dry sermon or address, the speaker makes a personal allusion, and at once the whole audience is on the alert. It establishes a feeling of kinship between him and them. Again, it helps the one who speaks to see himself. I believe that a word or two, in regard to his own hopes, and purposes, and temptations, has helped many a faltering, uncertain, young Christian to safer ground. We are never so truly humble in spirit, I think, as when we talk of our own Christian experience. These are some of the things that make the consecration meeting one of such importance. With all due regard to humility, and a certain sacredness that surrounds our personal relations with God, we may truly have reason to be concerned about those who can talk volubly upon almost any other subject, who can interest and moralize, but who grow strangely dumb upon the subject of their own personal Christian experience.—*The Outlook.*