

SUNDAY
SCHOOL

The Quiet Hour

YOUNG
PEOPLE

THE PARABLE OF THE TALENTS*

By Rev. Clarence McKinnon.

His goods, v. 14. We are not to think that money is the most useful talent. They are often the richest capitalists who possess least money. "Capital?" exclaims the young lad, "I wish I possessed some of it. But, alas, this pocket is emptier than the other, and the other has nothing in it." And yet that same young lad has the best of all capital: he has time. While the multi-millionaire, overloaded with his gold, is tottering with one foot over the grave, this lad with the rich warm blood of youth coursing in his veins has before him thirty, forty, fifty years of opportunity and possibility. The boys and girls are the greatest capitalists in this respect; and theirs is the great responsibility of making the best investments.

To another one, v. 15. The man who received but one talent is neither to be despised nor commiserated. The great forces of nature are operated through apparently insignificant agents. Under the microscope the yeast plant reveals neither grandeur nor beauty. But it makes two products. One of these makes the dough rise, and renders bread light and digestible. It is an insignificant agent, but it can convert the flour of the Western prairies into wholesome food. Its other product is alcohol. The yeast germ is the original manufacturer of this. Without the yeast germ it would not exist. And when one recollects how many great men have been ruined, how many wise men have been made foolish, and how many happy homes have been blighted by drink, he cannot but shudder at the awful possibilities that reside in the microscopic, one-talented yeast plant. Infinitely greater for good or evil are the possibilities in every life. How much we need the grace freely offered, to turn our powers, however small they be, in the right direction and cause them to bring good to men and glory to God: for it is only the grace of God that can accomplish this.

His lord's money, v. 18. According to an Eastern allegory, a merchant on going abroad gave two friends two sacks of wheat each, to take care of until he came. When he came back, one took him into the storehouse and showed him the two identical sacks and the very same grains of wheat, but, as years had passed, the wheat had become mildewed and worthless. The other led him to the open country and pointed out field after field of waving grain which had grown from the two sacks of seed. The merchant said to him, "You have been a faithful friend to me. Give me two sacks of that wheat; the rest shall be yours." Some people think that, if they do not overt wrong in their lives, if they do not rob, or lie, or strike any one, they are keeping their talents all right; and that God must be pleased with them. But it is not possible to keep our talents without using them. Our hearts and minds will become all mildewed with selfishness and sin, if we do not employ them constantly in the Lord's service. Only the key that is used will remain bright.

Enter the joy of thy lord, v. 21. As

S.S. Lesson—October 21, 1906.—Matthew 25: 14-30. Commit to memory v. 21. Read Luke 19: 11-27. Golden Text—A faithful man shall abound with blessings.—Proverbs 28: 20.

the good Leighton beautifully says, "It is but little we can receive here, some drops of joy that enter into us; but there we shall enter into joy, as vessels into a sea of happiness; how glorious that entering, we know from the delights of the 'few drops' we receive now."

Well done, v. 23. This approbation was not given only to the one who had earned most. This would be manifestly unfair; for the man who had received five talents, had in that respect a great advantage over his less highly endowed fellow. But it was given to the man whatever his capacity was, who had done his best. The lake with its broad surface of water laughed at the narrow limits of the raindrop. But the raindrop replied, "I reflect in my bosom all of heaven that I can hold; and you with all your vastness can do no more." So the reward of the Lord's joy will not be estimated according to the recipient's greatness. It will be the same for all; for it will fill all to overflowing.

Put my money to the exchangers, v. 27. "What are these?" sternly demanded Oliver Cromwell, as he entered an English cathedral and noticed some silver images still lingering in its niches. "Please your Highness," replied the trembling dean, "they are the twelve apostles." "Well, take them away," ordered the grim dictator, "melt them down, and coin them into good money, that, like their Master, they may go about doing good." Let not our religious ideas be cherished for their mere sublimity, nor our worship for its outward grandeur, nor our theology because of a traditional loyalty. Let them not be idols in our souls, but let us put them out to use.

Unto every one that hath shall be given, v. 29. "I do not see the effects in nature which you depict upon the canvas," a critic once remarked to Turner. "Do you not wish you could?" was the sage reply. The great painter had spent years in the observation of these effects, and to him in reward was given the power to see. A similar criticism has been passed on the color of the sky in Holman Hunt's famous painting, "The Light of the World." But it is a color observed in the London air at a very early hour in the morning, and few have taken the trouble to rise and see it. To the artist has been given the eleventh talent, because he had the energy to convert his original five into ten.

LIGHT FROM THE EAST.

By Rev. James Ross, D. D.

Exchangers. — The money-changers of the old world were also the bankers of that time. They received money on deposit and paid a fixed rate of interest on it. They also loaned it out at higher rates and negotiated drafts on their correspondents abroad. Interest was charged on loans in Babylonia as far back as the twenty-third century B. C., and was then as high as twenty per cent. per annum in some cases. In Rome the legal rate was 1 per cent. per month, that is, twelve per cent. per annum, but the rate on loans on special risks, as on ship's cargoes, rose with the advances of the season, until it might be thirty per cent. Justinian afterwards fixed the rate at six per cent. In the East, grain, roots, and seeds were loaned as well as money. A slave was sometimes given as security, and his services, during the period of the loan, took the place of interest.

THANKSGIVING SENTIMENTS.

Has it never struck you as a remarkable thing that there should be such regular proportion between what is produced and what is needed for consumption in a given year? This might not excite our wonder if there were some world-wide regulation setting apart so many of the human family for directly productive labor. But when we think that the whole thing is left to individual choice, is it not evident that there must be some power at work to preserve the necessary equilibrium? There is, indeed, the law of demand and supply to regulate this. When the number of persons engaged in any particular business is too small, profits in that business rise, and thus others are attracted to it, until demand and supply are equalized, and profits reach the ordinary level. But, besides that this law is not sufficient of itself to keep the equilibrium as constant as it is, we must remember that this law is just like other laws. It implies a lawgiver. It implies a power above ourselves. The law of demand and supply is not found, any more than is the law of gravitation, in any earthly statute-book. It is a law of God. And we have him to thank that we do not find ourselves, some of these winters, in our fine houses, with our rich furniture about us, libraries well supplied with books, walls with pictures and mantle-pieces with ornaments, and nothing to eat. There is such a calamity as famine, and we have to thank God that it has not come to our doors. After all, however, any famine we ever read of or witness is only partial, and can be relieved by the transference of food from those places where it is in abundance. But what if there were a universal famine some year?—J. Munro Gibson, D.D.

A THANKSGIVING.

I thank Thee, Lord, for cloudy weather,
We soon would tire of blue;
I thank Thee, Lord, for Pain, our brother,
Whose rude care holds us true.

I thank Thee for the weary morrow,
That makes the past more sweet;
I thank Thee for our sister, Sorrow,
Who leads us to Thy feet.

WHAT WE HAVE TO BE THANK-
FUL FOR.

For life that has been spared unto this day of praise; for health that courses through our veins; even for the sickness and the pain that taught us patience; for food and covering; for shelter from the cold and from the heat and from the storm; for simple comforts of this earthly life.

For love that is the joy and crown of life; for homes of purity and happiness and peace; for loved ones spared yet to our love and care; for loved ones gone away and waiting us.

For work that can be done with joy and service that is helpful to the world; for rest restoring tired limbs and brain and changing weariness to energy; for hope of higher service and of rest that evermore remaineth.

For His loving favor; for His guarding care; for shielding us and giving us the victory; for patience and forgiveness when we fell; for sorrows that were fewer than our sins; for chastening that was lighter than our fault.

For hope of life eternal.—Presbyterian Standard.