

SUNDAY
SCHOOL

The Quiet Hour

YOUNG
PEOPLE**"HEZIKIAH'S PRAYER."**(By Rev. C. MacKinnon, B.D.,
Winnipeg.)

Thou shalt die, v. 1. In the old morality play called "Everyman," the hero, Everyman, young and merry, comes singing across the stage of life. Suddenly Death meets him, and warns him that his time is short, and that soon he must go on a long journey into the unknown world, "there to give a reckoning." Everyman begs for a respite, but in vain, and he is assured that he will never return. Who will go with him? Fellowship or Kindred? These both refuse. Goods? He, too, turns away. At last Everyman finds that he can depend on good-deeds alone to support him in the dread hour. Now, we are not supposed that our good works can earn heaven for us. Only through simple trust in Christ can we enter the pearly gates. But if we have faith, we shall have good works, as surely as the tree bears fruit. And this faith, proving itself by its works, drives away all fear of the unknown future, and fills our hearts with a sure and joyful hope.

Then Hezekiah turned his face toward the wall, and prayed, v. 2. How frequently have we seen the father, the breadwinner, stricken down when least he could be spared, or the great reformer checked suddenly in the midst of his noble career, or the general shot when leading his soldiers to victory; and we have been made to feel the pathos of our human helplessness. But, though every earthly source of strength and comfort be cut off we need not despair. God still lives, and there is no limit to His resources, or bounds to His love. There is a rope in the belfry, and when we pull it, the bell rings in heaven; and that rope is prayer, and He that answers it is God. His ear is ever attentive to the summings of His children's need, and His hand ever ready to bring timely and sufficient help.

Remember now, O Lord, v. 3. It was an Old Testament prayer, pleading the King's own merits. We would plead in our prayers only the merits of our blessed Lord Jesus Christ. Nevertheless, Hezekiah's prayer held that comfort, common alike to Israelite and Christian, the consciousness of a life-long friendship with God, and of an endeavor to do His will; and how much better on a death bed is this than the hideous record of a life misspent in defiance of Him, to trouble one's memory and to haunt one's dreams. "No, the river at that time overflowed its banks in some places; but Mr. H. in his life-time had spoken to one Good-conscience, to meet him there; the which also he did, and lent him his hand, and so helped him over."

And Hezekiah wept sore, v. 3.—But Stephen said, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit"; and Paul declared "I am now ready to be offered"; and Samuel Ruth third exclaimed from his dying bed, "O for a well-tuned harp!" What had transformed the Old Testament death-bed from a couch of tears into a gate of heaven? Christ had come and brought "life and immortality to light." Now, "to live is Christ, and to die is gain." There is a window for us opening into the joys of heaven.

I have heard this prayer, I have seen thy tears, v. 3. Many prayers are like arrows drawn but a little way on the bow and that will carry only a short distance. Draw the arrow to the head and it will

* S. S. Lesson—Isaiah 38: 1-8. Study vs. 1-22. Commit to memory vs. 4-6. Golden Text—God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Psalm 46:1.

reach the mark. Demosthenes gave a listless ear to his client's story while he told it without spirit. His client, observing this, exclaimed hotly, "But the tale is true." "Now," said Demosthenes, "I believe you." When we mean what we ask, God hears us.

And, v. 6.—This is God's addition. He ever gives full measure and running over. We hold out our hand for a single gift, and He fills our lap. We cry out to Him in one sorrow, and He crowns our lives with loving kindness and tender mercies, and thus proves Himself both willing and "able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think."

And this shall be a sign, v. 7. Human faith oftentimes feels the need of a crutch. It looks about for some marvel that forcibly demonstrates the working of the divine power. God does not always give a natural miracle like that of the turning back of the shadow on the dial. But the "signs of the times" are never lacking. God ever works His miracles of grace. What greater proof of His presence could we ask than the revival in Wales, or the numerous other revivals on a smaller scale so often seen? What greater "miracle" than a life once plunged in the degradation of sin, and now washed and clothed and in its right mind?

INFLUENCE.

By John Elliot Bowman.

Is hidden by a pathless hedge,
And lies remote from men;
But unseen fingers bear afar,
Beyond the thicket's outer edge,
The poison of the fen.

Its rugged shores it may not break,
Or scorn their cold restraint;
Yet, borne by unseen hands abroad,
The waters of the highland lake
Give life to hearts that faint.

IF YOU HAD A HUNDRED.

One man asked another: "If you had a hundred sheep, would you give fifty of them for God's work?"

"Yes, I would."

"Would you do the same if you had a hundred cows?"

"Yes, I would."

"Would you do the same if you had a hundred horses?"

"Yes, I would."

"If you had two pigs, would you give one of them to God's cause?"

"No, I wouldn't; and you have no right to ask me when you know I have two pigs."

It is a great deal easier to say you would give fifty horses to the Lord when you haven't any, than to say you'll give one pig when it is half your present possessions. Yet it is the giving of one's property that counts more than the prospective giving out of one's abundance.

It is easy to be willing to give what we have not got. Probably if that man had owned a hundred sheep, he would have said, "If I had a thousand, I would give half of them; but I can not spare any of the hundred." Liberality does not always grow in proportion to prosperity.

When men feel that every child has a right to be educated, and when every child's right becomes every man's duty, when education comes to be the first and chiefest concern of a people, then the door of the general public welfare is thrown wide open. We will not forget, of course, that better than heaping up gold is the making of men that are finer than gold.—E. C. Branson.

THE SHEPHERD PSALM.

"Mother, I don't see why you would have me learn a Psalm every month," said Eva Preston; "none of the other girls do, and you can always read them."

The next day was Sabbath. A stranger talked to the Sabbath school. He said: "I worked among the poor children in a big city. I have many friends among the newsboys. One day one of them—Dave Herbert—was run over by a horse and wagon. He was carried to a drug store near by to wait for the ambulance to carry him to the hospital. The doctor and I were with him, and a crowd was in the store. The boy was a brave little fellow, but he suffered terribly. All at once he said, 'If I could hear about the shepherd, I could bear it better.' I knew what he meant. I had told them about King David's beautiful psalm at the mission school. I said it now over and over. I wish you could have seen the look on his face, children, as he listened. That little rough newsboy could understand that. He said after me, 'And I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.' Before the wagon came, Dave had gone to the Lord's house above. I tell you this, dear children, because nowadays so few of us learn the Scriptures by heart. We don't think it necessary. But I know it is. I wonder, now, if any child here can repeat the twenty-third Psalm for me?"

There was a long pause, but no one stirred. Then Eva Preston stood up and with folded hands, very clearly she repeated it.

As she finished, the children—and even the children—forgetting the place, softly clapped their hands.

The minister lifted his hand to check it. "Thank you, my dear," he said to Eva; "you have a gift no one can take from you."—Selected.

PRAYER.

Almighty God, Maker of heaven and earth, we children pray to thee. Thou art He who taketh up the isles as a very little thing; Thou art He who holdeth the waters in the hollow of His hand. Behold us as we struggle here. Life is our ocean; it is in thy hand; let the waters be calm, we pray. Thou art he who dost bring the storm-tossed to their desired haven. Bring us to our haven, we pray. Let not our whole voyage be in storm. Let not our hopes and purposes be wrecked and broken and beated to pieces on the rocks of time. Speak into our tumult peace; stand by us in the night of our distress, and promise us aid. So ours shall be the joy and Thine be the glory through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

BRINGING MEN TO CHRIST.

"The first step toward bringing men to Christ is to make sure that you know the way to Christ. The next step is to find the way to other men."

"No one ever found the Saviour without a sense of sin."

"There is only one carriage that will take men to Christ, and that is the Bible."

"There is only one magnet that will draw men to you, so that you can bring them to Christ, and that is love."

"Have you failed in trying to bring some soul to Christ? That failure may yet prove God's success."

Christianity wants nothing so much in the world as sunny people.

There is no high destiny without honest perseverance, no greatness without self-denial.