

SUNDAY
SCHOOL

The Quiet Hour

YOUNG
PEOPLE

THE GOLDEN CALF.*

By Rev. Clarence MacKinnon, B.D.

Moses delayed to come down, v. 1. God's designs are oftentimes severe tests of His people's faith. When the answer come in on the heels of petition, faith blazes out like a great flash of light and "every common bush" becomes "afire with God." But when the day fallows day and the unanswering heavens still are dumb, the heart is put in a place of great peril. Like the Israelites, when Moses did not appear, it may apostatize and seek another god; or, like the Syrophenician woman, when Christ rewarded her pathetic prayer at first with only a cold look and indifferent words, it may become more importunate than ever. That pushing away brought out the pleading hands and caused every tendril of her heart to clasp Him more closely. God's winter is sent to bring our summer.

The golden earrings, v. 3. Ornaments are easily converted into idols, which it is very hard to destroy. A Karen woman applied to Dr. Judson for baptism. She answered his questions very intelligently. Yet there was something about her that puzzled and failed to satisfy the faithful missionary. At length his eye fell on a glittering necklace of a kind much esteemed by the Karens. "Can you give up your ornaments for Christ?" he asked. Tears filled the woman's eye. She took the necklace off, and looked at it admiringly. The struggle was a severe one. But laying it down at length on the missionary's table, she said, "I love Christ more than that." The last idol was gone. Nothing but genuine love to our Lord can induce us to such complete consecration, and then we discover that we have parted with a paltry idol to find everything in Christ.

And they said, These be thy gods.... which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt, v. 4. A very rich man had been born a poor boy, but was fortunate in his business and at last came to own a palatial residence. He had made money his idol and was not so slow to acknowledge his god as some Christians are to confess theirs. After exhibiting his beautiful grounds to a Quaker, he remarked, "The almighty dollar has done it all! What cannot money do?" "Ah, friend," replied the quaker, "thou remindest me of the Israelites who worshipped the golden calf, saying it brought them out of the land of Egypt. In reality it hindered rather than helped them in their journey to the Promised Land, and maybe thy dollars will do the same for thee." Men are often sadly mistaken as to what is the most efficient power in accomplishing their purposes. They forget that, after all, material things are but means in God's hands for His plans, and that He is the only living and true God, and to reach the Promised Land we must rely on Him and Him alone.

Corrupted themselves, v. 7. A gentleman in India took down a book from his library, and felt in doing so a prick as of a pin in his finger. He gave it no heed at the moment, but soon the finger began to swell, then the arm, then the body, and in a few days the unhappy man died. It was no pin point that pierced his flesh, but a small and deadly serpent that had coiled itself among the books. There are other invisible

and as deadly serpents coiled in the foliage of many a fine sounding book. The thoughtless reader, hungry for new sensations, recklessly turns the pages, imbibes the poison and ruins a life. To touch a bad book is to incur this risk, to instil moral poison into one's soul.

Peradventure I atonement for sin, v. 30. Manufacturers have had considerable difficulty with certain dyes, especially Turkey red. Steep rags of this color ever so long in a solution and they will still retain their hue, though, of course, somewhat paler. Use stronger solutions and the color will at length disappear, but not until the fibre is completely rotted. With such rags the manufacturer can do nothing but make them into cheap red blotting paper. So dyed with evil has human nature become, that its sins are as scarlet. The task of ridding it of its sin and still preserving its life, is beyond the power of Moses or any other man. Only One can make effective atonement for our fallen nature, and that is the Lord Jesus Christ. This He has done, and now we may be assured that though our "sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool."

Thy book, v. 32. A book is not necessary made of perishable paper. The Anglo-Saxon word "hoc," from which "book" is derived, meant beech tree, because on its bark the first literary Anglo-Saxons used to write. The oldest Latin extant is engraved in brass. Moses' law was cut on tables of stone. And Paul adds, "Ye are an epistle of Christ, ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in tables that are hearts of flesh," 2 Cor. 3:3. But, whatever the material, God's book is imperishable, and we are filling its pages day by day.

"Whatever hath been written shall remain,

Nor be erased, nor written o'er again; The unwritten only still belongs to thee,

Take heed, and ponder well what that shall be."

LIGHT FROM THE EAST.

By Rev. James Ross, D.D.

Earrings—Were worn by all women in ancient Egypt. At first, they were disks of metal, then plain rings, then rings with pendants. They also wore necklaces, bracelets, and anklets of gold or some other metal. To-day the earrings are the most prized of all the wedding ornaments of a Syrian bride. An Eastern woman of very humble position will often have a head-dress of coins, and a long network attached to it also covered with them, and hanging over her shoulders to the waist. These form a small fortune, and are a secure investment, as they cannot be seized for her husband's debts, and if he puts her away, she carries them all with her.

Molten—The Egyptians understood the art of smelting the precious metals by the use of the blow pipe. Large quantities were melted by a continuous stream of air poured into the furnace from two bellows, worked by the alternate pressure of the feet, and the heat produced from proper fuel by this means was astonishingly great. Gold was obtained from the mines of the Sinaitic peninsula at great expense of suffering and death among the slave miners. Many of the ornaments found in tombs are of exceedingly fine workmanship, and the most skillful jewelers of the present day would find it difficult to duplicate them.

LET US TAKE TIME.

Let us take time for the good-bye kiss—we shall go to the day's work with a sweeter spirit for it.

Let us take time for the evening prayer. Our sleep will be more restful if we have claimed the guardianship of God.

Let us take time to speak sweet, foolish words to those we love. By and by, when they can no longer hear us, our foolishness will seem more wise than our best wisdom.

Let us take time to read our Bible. Its treasures will last when we shall have ceased to care for the war of political parties and rise and fall of stocks, or the petty happenings of the day.

Let us take time to be pleasant. The small courtesies which we often omit because they are small, will some day look larger to us than the wealth which we have coveted or the fund for which we have struggled.

Let us take time to get acquainted with our families. The wealth you are accumulating, burdened father, may be a doubtful blessing to the son who is a stranger to you. Your beautifully kept house, busy mother, can never be a home to the daughter, whom you have no time to caress.

Let us take time to get acquainted with Christ. The hour is coming swiftly for us all, when one touch of his hand in the darkness will mean more than all that is written in the day-book or ledger, or in the records of our little social world.

Since we must all take time to die, why should we not take time to live—to live in the large sense of a life begun here for Eternity.—Selected.

PRAYER.

O, Thou God of power—Source of the invisible forces of life; Thou hast given man freedom that he might choose, and choosing be. Thou has provided help for the spirit of man, giving him Thine own spirit that if he may live in Thee and by Thee and for Thee; that the weakness and wickedness of his selfish life may be put away and the grace and the goodness of Thy Son Jesus Christ may be by him appropriated and possessed. O God, thus make my spirit true and strong! Help me to purify the fountains of character, that the outgoings of my life, the invisible and unconscious influence of it, may be healing and uplifting and inspiring and a secret source of benefit to all those who come within its reach. And may the words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart always be acceptable in Thy sight, O Lord my Strength and my Redeemer!—J. H. Vincent.

The exercise of patience involves a continual practice of the presence of God; for we may be called upon at any moment for an almost heroic display of good temper, and it is a short road to unselfishness, for nothing is left to self; all that seems to belong most intimately to self, to be self's private property, such as time, home and rest, are invaded by these continual trials of patience. The family is full of such opportunities.—F. W. Faber.

He who sedulously attends, pointedly asks, calmly speaks, coolly answers, and ceases when he has no more to say, is in possession of some of the best requisites of man.—Lavater.

*S.S. Lesson, July 28, 1907. Exodus 32:1-8, 30-35. Commit to memory vs. 34, 35. Read Exodus, chs. 32 to 34. Golden Text—Little children, keep yourselves from idols.—1 John 5:21.