

SUNDAY
SCHOOL

The Quiet Hour

YOUNG
PEOPLEPAUL'S SECOND MISSIONARY
JOURNEY—ANTIOCH TO
PHILIPPI.*

By Rev. Clarence Mackinnon, D.D.

Forbidden to preach the word in Asia, v. 6. Only a short time after his conversion at twelve years of age, David Livingstone read an appeal to the churches of Britain and America on behalf of China. Convinced, to use his own words, "that the salvation of men ought to be the chief desire and aim of every Christian", he decided to become a medical missionary in response to that appeal. But at the time when he was ready the Opium War broke out, and no Englishman was permitted to enter China. At this disappointing moment, Robert Moffat, the famous missionary to Africa, happened to address the students at the boarding house where Livingstone stayed. Speaking of a great plain to the north of his mission, he said, "I have seen in the morning sun the smoke of a thousand villages where no missionary has ever been." Why should I wait for the end of this Opium War? reflected Livingstone, "I will go at once to Africa." To Africa he went and laid bare the open sore of its hideous slave trade before the humanity of the world, and became the emancipator of its darkened millions. Thus does God superimpose his wiser plans upon ours, and makes our momentary disappointment the stepping stone to grander success.

Come, v. 9. Very differently does the missionary call come to different people; but it is always one of need, and one for help. To Paul, it was the voice of a Macedonian speaking in a vision. To William Carey, it was an open Bible before an open map of the world. To Henry Martyn, it came in the unexpected words of his tutor, "Martyn, aren't you the kind of man who might give his life to the evangelization of India?" To Robert Morrison, it became a heroic resolution, "My desire is to engage where laborers are most wanted." Bishop Tucker of Uganda had been painting the picture of a poor woman thinly clad and pressing her baby to her breast, wandering homeless on a stormy night in a deserted street. Suddenly he threw down the brush and exclaimed, "Instead of merely painting the lost, I will go out and save them." However it may come, "a call is a need, a need made known, and the power to meet that need." Have we not all heard such a call? What answer have we made?

Assuredly concluding (Rev. Ver.) v. 10. "I suppose, sir, you are the pilot of this boat," asked an interested passenger, as he watched the windings of the steamboat through an intricate channel. "For thirty years I have piloted over these waters," was the proud reply. "Then you must know by this time every rock, shoal and bar on the whole coast." "Not by a long way, but I do know where the deep water of the safe channel lies." There are many things about ourselves and this wonderful world in which we live, of which God has left us in ignorance. Bit by bit we may add to our information about them. One thing, however, He makes clear, and that is the deep channel along which He would have us go. We may "assuredly conclude" what the Lord has called us to do.

We went, where prayer was want to be made, v. 13. Some "travel stones" have been lately found in Nevada. They are almost perfectly round, of the size of a walnut and iron-like in nature. Placed on the floor two or

three feet apart, they begin of their own accord to roll to a common centre, nor do they stop until they are all collected together. Pick up one of them and put it three and a half feet away, and it will start with alacrity to return to its companions. The secret is not far to seek. The stones are composed of magnetic iron ore, and attract each other with the powerful force of magnetism. There is a similar attraction among those that love the Lord. They cannot live apart. Even when far away from home and sojourners in a strange land, they will seek their fellow Christians and congregate "where prayer is wont to be made."

Whose heart the Lord opened, v. 14. "When I get religion," exclaimed the enthusiastic young man, "I want to get it so I can jump over a barn." Some people estimate the value of conversion only by the excitement it produces. Yet, as deep streams flow silently, there can be a very profound change of heart with very little noise. Indeed we should be likely to have more confidence in the conversion of a man who immediately afterwards goes out quietly and pays the old debt, than in that of our young enthusiast who attempts to leap over a barn, but forgets that he has any creditors.

CONTROLLED BY GOD.

By C. H. Wetherbe.

Even some Christian people too frequently forget the great truth that God controls the affairs of this world. However much it may seem to us that wicked men and evil forces are having sway, and are triumphing over all that is good and true, yet in reality God is over them all, and they cannot take the reins of government out of His hands.

The history of all past ages ought to convince us that God has ever held the sceptre of universal dominion. The Bible contains many examples of the fact that God controlled the mightiest of wicked kings and the armies of the most hostile foes of His Kingdom and people. He used even His marshalled enemies to accomplish certain purposes which otherwise would not have been consummated. He raised up one king and set down another king. Many things which, to mere human view, seemed impossible of accomplishment, were accomplished in God's own time and way.

An ancient believer once asked: "Is anything too hard for God?" His faith claspeth the truth that God is absolutely infinite in all respects. Who can conceive the greatness of God's power? It is vastly beyond the reach of human thought. It was this truth that animated the stalwart believers of Bible story. They forcefully believed that God controlled nations, as well as individuals. This is why they were so serene, so hopeful, so expectant amid all threatening and darksome dangers. It is why they confidently looked for deliverance from menacing armies, however much greater in numbers and in equipment they might be, as compared with their own forces.

The men of faith saw Almighty God, and they were sure that He would give victory to His people, so long as they were true to Him. It was this sublime faith which Paul constantly exercised. He kept thought on the exceeding greatness of God, ever believing that He controlled all men and all things. Rest your heart in the thought of such a God. It will keep you from bad worrying and heart faintness.

If you are going to win the judge's approval by good morals, they must be very good. The safer plea of the best moralist is "God be merciful to me a sinner."

LIGHT FROM THE EAST.

By Rev. James Ross, D.D.

COLONY—A Roman colony was intended to be not only an outlet for surplus or dangerous population, but also a military safeguard on the frontier, and a check upon insurgent provincials. A law was passed by the senate fixing the amount of land to be distributed and the quantity to be given to each person. The colonists were organized in Rome in military order, and when they reached their destination the limits of the new city were laid out with religious ceremonies. The new city was a miniature Rome, its citizens spoke the Latin language, were governed by Roman law administered by their own magistrates, they possessed the privileges of Roman citizens, and the provincial governor could not interfere with them. In time a number of the native provincials grew up in the city, and there resulted from this two co-ordinate communities, which in time coalesced into one by the admission of the provincials into citizenship. Philippi was originally a Greek city, founded by Philip of Macedon, and made a colony by Augustus, after his victory over Brutus and Cassius in B. C. 42, at the foot of the hill on which it stands. Its first citizens were his soldiers, and he extended to it the benefits of the new law which exempted all the land of Italy from the ground tax.

PRAYER.

Almighty God, Thy grace is greater than our sin. Where sin abounds grace doth much more abound. Thou dost not only pardon, Thou dost abundant! pardon, as a sea might swallow up a little stream. When we look at our sin we burn with shame, we stagger under a great burden which we cannot carry; but when we look at Thy grace, at the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, behold, how vondrous it is, and how our hearts are constrained to right again, and how our whole life answers the mighty appeal of Thy love. Thou wilt conquer sin; Thou wilt destroy all the darkness—yea, the sun itself shall be counted dark, and as for the moon, Thou wilt drop it out of Thy great creation as needed no more. The Lamb shall be the light of the new place, the face of God shall irradiate the heavens. Amen.

Womanhood is only safe morally where manhood is sound morally. No amount of fine theorizing, or the application of regulative experiments, can keep the sexes from rising or falling together.

Dr. Henry Van Dyke says to church members:—"Make your life more simple, even if you have to make it less fashionable. The world wants you to make it less fashionable. The world wants to see a real difference between Christians and other people in their attitude toward money." What the world wants to see is not always the proper standard for the Christian, but it is correct in this case.

Christ has committed to our hands the Gospel. It is the best inheritance which heaven can give. We ourselves are heirs along with our brothers and sisters in heathen lands. In becoming Christians we ourselves have received our share of the estate. Shall we withhold from our fellow-heirs, who grope in the outside darkness, that which belongs to them? We are indebted to the lost nations in the full amount of gospel inheritance. Unless we send them the gospel, we fail to give them the square deal, as well as fail in loyalty to our Lord and Master.—Rev. S. J. Porter, D.D.

*S.S. Lesson July 4, 1909, Acts 16: 6-15. Commit to memory vs. 9-10. Study Acts 15: 36 to 16: 15.—Golden Text—Come over into Macedonia, and help us.—Acts 16:3.