

SUNDAY
SCHOOL

The Quiet Hour

YOUNG
PEOPLESOLOMON DEDICATES THE
TEMPLE.*

By Rev. C. MacKinnon, B.D.

Then Solomon assembled, v. 1. Delays are dangerous. A man dreamt he saw Satan on his throne asking the evil spirits around him, "Who will go forth to ruin souls on earth, and what will you tell them?" "I," said one, "will tell them there is no God." "No use," said Satan, "for deep down in their hearts they believe in God, and know they must face Him some day." "I," said another, "will tell them that God is so just and holy and that they are so bad, that He will have nothing to do with them." "No better," replied Satan, "their very desperation will drive them to Him." Then a third evil spirit spoke up: "I will tell them there is a God. I will let them hear the gospel as often as they like, and read the Bible too, and believe that salvation is a free gift; but I will add that there is time enough to think about believing and accepting God's offer, and they may wait a little longer." A murmur of applause passed through the caverns of hell; and the Prince of Darkness said, "Go forth. That will be sufficient." Time enough, has been the phrase that has wrecked many a life, balked many a religious enterprise, left many a church unbuilt. Let us emulate the wise king and promptly set our faces towards God and His service.

The chief of the fathers, v. 1. Some young bloods met one evening in an inn and the conversation turning to religion, an animated argument arose as to the truth of Christianity. From six o'clock to eleven at night, the debate continued between the unbelievers and the believers. An elderly gentleman, a stranger, was a silent listener to it all; when, suddenly, one of the unbelievers, tired of the debate, whirled round and said, "Well my old gentleman, what think you of these things?" Imagine the company's amazement when the old gentleman took up the argument, reviewed the whole of the debate point by point, showed the sophistries in the attack on religion so clearly, so simply and so sublimely, that every one was silence. Curiosity arose as to who this remarkable man could be, when it was discovered that he was a most distinguished judge. The keenest, ablest, most honored men have been the readiest to do homage to Jesus Christ the Perfect Man and the divine Son of God.

King Solomon and all the congregation, v. 5. George III., walking out one morning, met a lad at the stable door. "Well, boy," he said, "what do you do, and what do they pay you?" "I help in the stable," replied the lad, "and I have nothing for it except food and clothes." "Be content, I have no more," was the unexpected comment of the King. All that the richest possess beyond food and raiment and house, is but theirs in name. They have merely the keeping of it. The true difference between George III. and the stable boy, between Solomon and his congregation, between Dives and Lazarus, is not in the quantity of things that each is said to possess, but in the real quality of their souls; and the humbler have the greater

compensation. "Blessed be ye poor: for your's is the kingdom of God" (Luke 6: 20).

The two tables of stone, v. 9. Enter some General Post Office in a large city at night, and what a scene of busy confusion meets one's eyes. Bushels of letters are tumbled on the great central table. Nimble hands pick them up faster than the untrained eye can follow them. They are flung into canvas bags, scattered all over the room. Morning comes and the mails go out. North, south, east, west, along railroads, over streams across the prairie they go, until each letter finds its way to its proper street number, or hamlet, or lonely shack. A million letters go forth, and scarcely one fails to reach the person to whom it is addressed. Behind the turmoil and the apparent disorder, an invisible law was at work accomplishing its intelligent purpose. So, in the hurried and entangled affairs of this life, God's law is always operating. It directs the streams in their channels, guides the planets in their courses, and regulates the movements of society. Like the tables of stone hidden in the ark, God's moral law is written in men's consciences, and out of the chaos of human passions brings a sweet and beautiful character.

THE CHRISTIAN PROSPECT.

The Christian's outlook upon the world and at home is neither the outlook of the optimist nor of the pessimist. He who tells us that all things are for the best in the best of all possible worlds, and that humanity is progressing rapidly to some glorious future, tells us what all the history of the past proves to be false; and he who tells us of no hope for the future, he who says "no progress," that we may fold our hands and sit down in despair, trembling waiting for what is coming, quickly contradicts the lessons of history, and the truths of experience, and the promises of the word of God. We Christians, as we look forward to the prize of the mark of the high calling—as we look forward to the coming of the King of kings and Lord of lords, when the nations shall learn war no longer, when evil and sin shall corrupt and destroy no more—we look forward to this as the certain future of our world, and we know that meanwhile, now sin and now righteousness, now joy and now sorrow, now peace and now war, now prosperity and now adversity, shall work as it pleases Him who orders all things; but that out of these He, in His divine and eternal wisdom, He in His mighty and overruling love, is shaping the destiny, is forming the future, of the world that He has redeemed. He lays the beams of His chamber of eternal happiness, aye, even in the waters of the great water-floods of human contumely and human passion, and the time is yet to come, and His time will surely come, when the redeemed of the Lord, who in their patience have possessed their souls, shall be called to dwell with Him in peace and in security for ever. As we wait for that, as we think of that, as we believe in that, as we hope for that, we can calmly and patiently bide our time, and to do our work that God has given us to do in this world of His, and, forgetting the things that are behind, press forward to the mark of the prize of our high calling of God in Jesus Christ our Lord.

He who longs for a purer vision of God will ever have a clearer vision of life.

THE USE OF THE TONGUE.

(By Rev. W. Selner.)

Everything is given for use. There is a wrong use and a right use. The resultant of the wrong use or perversion of anything is misery, while the right use brings blessings. The wrong use of money may entail untold suffering bodily, mental or moral; the converse may be the result of money wisely and well spent. The members of our bodies are all designed by the all-wise and beneficent Creator to be so used, as to benefit us and glorify him. The hand, the foot, the eye, and the ear may be used either for good or evil. The tongue is an important member of the body, the use of which may be fraught with either good or evil. The tongue, like fire, must be held under control. The tongue, like fire, is a good servant, but a bad master. Fire only does harm when allowed to get out of your reach or control. The tongue sees harm when uncontrolled. "Let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak." The unruly tongue must be held in with bit and bridle.

Aesop was quite right when he taught by means of his dinner of tongues that the tongue is the best thing in the world, as well as the worst. It all depends upon the use men make of it. Well may Aesop say: "Is there anything better than tongues? Is not the tongue the bond of civil society, the key of science, and the organ of truth and reason? It is by means of the tongue cities are built and governments established and administered; with it men instruct, persuade, and preside in assemblies; it is the instrument with which we acquit ourselves of the chief of all our duties, the praising and adoring of the Deity. The tongue is the worst thing in the world as well as the best; for it is the instrument of all strife and contention, the fomentor of lawsuits, the source of division and war, the organ of error, of calumny, of falsehood and of profanity." The mischievous and ill tongue brings much sorrow and many bitter tears, and forever parts dear friends while the virtuous and well regulated tongue mitigates sorrow, dries the tear, calms the agitated bosom and firmly cements friendship. The best regulator for the tongue is a good, large dose of divine grace. Prating and evil speaking about others evince no large stock of grace in the heart. The use of the tongue indexes one's religion; for James says: "If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridlETH not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain."

Again, generally, there is too much talking and too little thinking. Thought is everything. Right speaking is conditioned upon right thinking. Solid thought counts; not loquacity.

James says: "For every kind of beast, and of birds, and of serpents, and of things in the sea is tame, and hath been tamed of mankind; but the tongue can no man tame; it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison. Therewith bless we God, even the Father; and therewith curse we men, which are made after the similitude of God. Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not so to be."—Lutheran Observer.

In the dreams of every good man and woman there are seen the ascending and descending angels. Where the pillows of stone are there will the angels be gathered.

*S. S. Lesson, Dec. 13, 1903.—I Kings 8:1-11. Commit to memory vs. 10, 11. Study I Kings, ch. 8. Read I Kings, chs. 5 to 8.

Golden Text—I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord.—Psalm 122:1.