

SUNDAY
SCHOOL

The Quiet Hour

YOUNG
PEOPLE

HEROES OF FAITH.*

By Rev. J. W. McMillan, D.D.

Faith is the assurance (Rev. Ver.) v. 1. Some botanists were one day hunting for specimens of mountain plants in the Highlands of Scotland. They saw several scarce and beautiful plants growing at some distance down the face of a steep precipice. They called a boy who happened to be near and offered him a sovereign if he would allow himself to be lowered in a basket to pluck the flowers. The boy shrank back at first, but, remembering how poor his parents were, he bravely answered, "I will go, if my father holds the rope." He knew the strength of his father's arm and the love of his father's heart, and felt safe. The assurance of our faith is our knowledge of the power and love of our heavenly Father.

Proving, v. 1. A captive was brought before an Asiatic prince. The scimitar was already raised above his head, when, oppressed by intolerable thirst, he asked for water. A cup was handed him. He could scarcely raise it to his lips, so much was he trembling with fear. "Take courage," said the prince, "your life will be spared till you drink that cup of water." He instantly dashed the cup of water to the ground. He knew how highly the barbarian ruler held his plighted word. God's promises are said to be immutable. That is a long word which means never to be broken.

Things not seen, v. 1. One evening a father and his little daughter were walking in a valley where the mist lay close to the ground. It rose above the child's head, but the man was out of it from his shoulders up. The little girl was frightened. She cried, "I can't see our house, papa. I don't know the way. Where are we going?" He replied, "I can see perfectly well, just keep hold of my hand, and I will take care of you." He was walking in the light, while she was walking in the darkness. He was guiding her to the "things not seen." So is it with every child of God. God sees, for He is Light and lives in light. And He leads His children safely through the darkness to the light. Faith "sees the Best glimmering through the Worst."

She feels the sun is hid but for a night, She spies the summer through the winter bud."

Abraham, v. 17. There is an ancient legend that the youthful Abraham, whose father Terah was a dealer in idols, once took a hammer and smashed all the images in his father's shop. Terah, in his rage, dragged his son before King Nimrod. Nimrod said to Abraham, "You will not adore the idols of your father; then worship fire." Abraham replied, "Why may I not pray to water which extinguishes fire?" "Be it so; pray to water." "But why not to the clouds which hold the water?" "Well then, pray to the clouds." "Why not to the wind which drives the clouds?" "Then pray to the wind." At last Abraham said, "Be not angry, O king, I cannot pray to the fire, or the water, or the clouds, or the wind, but to the Creator who made them. Him only will I worship."

The reproach of Christ, v. 26. Fifty years ago, in Madras, India, a young Brahman became a Christian. His friends determined to kill him, rather than that he should be baptized. He was taken to the missionary's house, which had to be guarded for days by soldiers to protect him from the mob that sought his life. At last, his father

and mother pretended to be reconciled to his being baptized, and asked him to come home for his evening meal. Overjoyed and unsuspecting of harm, the young man went. The mother put into the meal a drug, which does not destroy life, but renders its victim hopelessly insane. The son ate the food, lay down to sleep, and awoke in the morning, his reason gone. He was taken to an asylum. But he still held fast to his faith. "Forsake Jesus," he would exclaim. "Forsake Jesus, did you say? Never. I will never give Him up. You may kill me, but I will never give up my Jesus. Oh, Jesus Christ, keep me, keep me, keep me, keep me firm to the end."

The recompence of the reward, v. 26. "God give you eyes," wrote Samuel Rutherford to Lady Kennure, "to see through sickness and death, and to see some thing beyond death. I doubt not but that if hell were betwixt you and Christ, as a river which ye behoved to cross ere ye could come at Him, ye would willingly put in your foot, and make through to be at Him, upon hope that He would come in Himself, in the deepest of the river, and lend you His hand. Ye have also a promise that Christ shall do more than meet you, even that He shall come Himself, and go with you foot for foot, yea, and bear you in His arms. O then! O then for the joy that is set before you; for the love of the Man (who is also God over all, blessed for ever) that is standing upon the shore to welcome you, run your race with patience."

The walls of Jericho fell down, v. 30. In ancient history there is a story of a valiant captain whose banner was always first in the fight, and whose sword was dreaded by all his enemies. His king once asked to see the sword. After carefully examining it he sent it back with the message, "I see nothing wonderful in this sword. I cannot see why any man should be afraid of it." The captain sent the reply, "Your Majesty has been pleased to examine the sword; but I did not send the arm that wielded it." That is the mystery of the victories of faith. The instruments are often commonplace enough, as they were when the walls of Jericho fell down. It is the strength of faith that makes them mighty to the pulling down of the strongholds of sin.

OUR FOES.

A man's worst foes are those within his heart—

Which often seem to him his dearest friends,

Nor ever once suspects, until life ends,

That they have slain him as with deadly dart.

If by rare chance and grace of God's good part

We waken from the lethargy (which sends

A numbing influence over us and blinds

The ill and good) how bitter is the smart!

So let us probe far down the dismal wound

And drag forth every foe that lurks within

Alas how many are there ever found!

Until we know not of one soul's dear sin,

Then should we feel a happiness more blest

Than sleepless eyelids that at length find rest.

—Alexander Macaulay.

If God gives me work to do, I will thank him that he has bestowed upon me a strong arm; if he gives me danger to brave, I will bless him that he has not made me without courage; but I will go down on my knees and beseech him to fit me for my task, if he tells me it is only to stand and wait.—Jean Ingelow.

LIGHT FROM THE EAST.

By Rev. James Ross, D.D.)

STAFF (v. 21).—This was a straight pole about six feet long, carried by shepherds to assist them in mountain climbing, to chastise their flock, or to strike down for them leaves and twigs that are out of their reach. When the shepherd was at rest, he grasped it with both hands near the top and leaned his head upon his arms. A staff that had long been carried became highly prized; the old man laid aside from service, still kept it near him, and held it in great and affecting moments, and bowed his head upon it to worship as he did when standing on the hillside in his prime. The staff of the king was called his sceptre, was ornamented with gold and gems, and became the symbol of his government and power.

BONES (v. 22).—The Hebrews buried their dead as we do, and the bones were the only part of the body that remained after the lapse of years. But Joseph was embalmed after the manner of the Egyptians, his mummy was placed in a coffin, kept for 300 years, carried round by the Israelites in all their wanderings, and finally buried near Shechem in the grave his father had bought, and in the centre of the territory belonging to his descendants, the children of Ephraim.

THE MORNING PRAYER.

Now, before we work today,
We must not forget to pray
To God, who kept us through the night
And woke us with the morning light.

Help us, Lord, to love Thee more
Than we ever loved before,
In our work and in our play,
Be Thou with us through the day.

THE BLESSED GOSPEL TRUTH.

It is a beautiful conviction, one whose mysterious beauty we are always learning more and more, that the deeper our spiritual experience of Christ becomes, the more our soul's life really hangs on His life as its Saviour and continual friend, the more real becomes to us the unquenched life of those who have gone from us to be with Him. In those moments when Christ is most real to me, when He lives in the centre of my desires and I am resting most heavily upon His help—in those moments I am sure that the dead are not lost; that those whom this Christ in whom I trust has taken He is keeping. The more He lives to me, the more they live. If the city of our heart is holy with the presence of a living Christ, then the dear dead will come to us, and we shall know they are not dead but living, and bless Him who has been their Redeemer, and rejoice in the work that they are doing for Him in His perfect world, and press on joyously toward our own redemption, not fearing even the grave, since by its side stands He whom we know and love, who has the keys of death and hell.

A living Christ, dear friends—the old, ever new, ever blessed Gospel truth! He liveth! He was dead; He is alive for evermore! Oh that everything dead and formal might go out of your creed, out of your life, out of your heart today! He is alive! Do you believe it? What are you dreary for, O mourner? What are you hesitating for, O worker? What are you fearing death for, O man? Oh, if we could only lift up our heads and live with Him; live new lives, high lives, lives of hope and love and holiness, to which death should be but the breaking away of the last cloud and the letting of the life out to its completion! May God give us some such blessing for every day.—Phillips Brooks.

S.S. Lesson, June 13, 1909. Hebrews 11: 1-3, 17-25. Commit to memory vs. 24, 25. Study Hebrews 11: 1-40. Golden Text.—Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.—Hebrews 11: 1.