

SUNDAY
SCHOOL

The Quiet Hour

YOUNG
PEOPLE

THE CAPTURE OF JERICHO.

By Rev. Prof E. A. Mackenzie, D.D.

Joshua had spoken unto the people, v. 8. Bushnell, the famous New England preacher of the middle of the last century, has a notable sermon on "Duty not Measured by Ability," his text being Christ's command to the disciples to feed the multitude (see Matt. 14:15-21 and parallel passages). Jesus is still bidding us do the impossible. Take the evil passions, selfish desires, hurtful habits, so entrenched in our hearts, that to overcome the least of them is as far beyond the strength, as the capture of Jericho was beyond the might of Israel. But each difficult task our Lord bids us undertake should fill us with joy rather than dismay. For He who commands with divine authority, also promises omnipotent help. What we ought to do, by His grace we can do.

"So near is glory to our dust,

So close is God to man,

When duty whispers low, "Thou must!"

The youth replies, "I can."

Armed men...priests...with the trumpets...reward after the ark, v. 9. It is faith that is to conquer the world for God, but faith working through organization. The walls of Jericho fell, not before an irregular mob, but before a well disciplined army.

"Not a step was out of tune,

As the tides obey the moon."

We serve a God, not of confusion, but of order. Planning is needed as well as prayer. These two are like twin engines, driving the great movement forward to the goal of certain success. Organization will certainly fail unless God is at the head of it. The secret of Israel's victory was their having the ark, the symbol of God's presence, in the central place. Nothing can stand before intelligent, well directed effort, inspired and sustained by humble and confident trust in God.

Compassed the city once...so did they six days, v. 14. It is not in sunny southern climes, which require little toil from their peoples, so easily and abundantly does the ground produce its fruit—not in such countries, that men grow, who are strong of muscle and vigorous of mind. For the most sturdy and stalwart races we must look to the colder northern regions, where men must wring their living from the soil by hard and steady work. A stern climate, requiring patience and self-denial, is the best, alike for brawn and brain. It is in such a climate, too, that heroes of faith grow and reach their highest development. As we see the host of Israel marching round Jericho day after day, apparently to no purpose, we see them stronger and stronger in faith, until, at last, they can rely, without a tremor of doubt, on the naked promise of God. Then, with a mighty shout of triumph, they sweep everything before them.

Rose early in the morning...about the dawning of the day, vs. 12, 15. The Jericho region is hot, of course. It is a deep, narrow, sun scorched valley, far below the level of the sea. Prudence, therefore, and convenience, suggested the early morning hour for the march. But there was eagerness, as well—each morning early, and the seventh earlier

*S. S. Lesson, October 20, 1907.—Joshua 6:8-20. Commit to memory vs. 20. Read Joshua, chs. 5 to 8. Golden Text—By faith the walls of Jericho fell down after they were compassed about seven days.—Hebrews 11:30.

still, because it was to be the day when the task was to be gloriously ended, that apparently impossible task which they had undertaken at the Lord's command. It was the eagerness of faith. The day dawn cannot come too soon for him who believes himself called of God to some great duty. The longest years of the missionary whose life has been consecrated to some need abroad, are the necessary years of preparation; and no day ever seems long enough, in any work, to him who believes that that is the work for which he is held responsible by the divine Master.

The seventh time...the Lord hath given you the city, v. 18. There are three periods in the life of every plant, one very slow, another much more rapid, and the next of whirling rapidity. First, is growth by the root—obscure and very slow. Then follows growth by the stem, much faster. Last of all comes growth by the flower and fruit, which comes with a rush. Christianity, for centuries, has been growing by the root, but that long period of delay is past. It is now growing by the stem and making haste. We are on the eve of the last period, when with celerity the gospel shall blossom and bring forth fruit, and "a nation shall be born in a day." The world over, missions seem to have taken on a new life. Revival, as for example in India, has been rife, and great nations, as China, are awaking from the sleep of centuries.

Keep yourselves from the accursed thing, v. 18. "His strength was as the strength of ten."

Because his heart was pure."

The ancient scriptures and the modern poet agree as to the source of real strength. They both alike find it in purity of heart. Picture a man walking amidst the evil in this world and keeping himself undeveloped like a ray of light passing through an atmosphere filled with disease germs and yet keeping itself free from the poison. When such a man speaks out against evil or in support of good, his words fall upon the ears of all with immensely greater weight because of the character behind them. To be pure is to be powerful.

Long, long centuries
Agone, One walked the earth, his life
A seeming failure:
Dying, he gave the world a gift
That will outlast eternities.

PRAYER.

I have sinned greatly, O God, and in many things; but in nothing do I perceive myself so sinful as in this, that I bear my sins so easily. I am not stricken at heart for them as I ought to be. I am not duly concerned because of my repeated transgressions. My heart is cold and untroubled, though I endeavor to repent. Lord, this also must be Thy gift to me. I have no worthy penitence to offer Thee. I beseech Thee to bestow upon me a greater sensibility of conscience, a heart that can feel, a soul that can be moved. I pray Thee to make in me a holy fear, a purifying shame, a sorrow that worketh life. I have no hope of this, except in the gift and power of Thy Holy Spirit. Put forth Thy mercy by Him, O God, to take the stony heart out of my breast; and to give me a heart of flesh, that I may walk in Thy statutes and keep Thine ordinances. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

ONE PERSON'S WORK.

By C. H. Wetherbe.

There are far too many people who underestimate the value of the work which they are quite capable of doing. They possess a retiring disposition. They have but little confidence in their ability. They feel ignorant and weak. If I have any such readers I want to stimulate them to do the very best that they are capable of doing. History shows many instances in which only one person did a work that was of great value to God and humanity; and they had on ly ordinary talent.

A retired minister, in a religious paper makes the following remarks: "One person is not many, but if he is just where God wishes him to be he may do a great work, as Moses before Pharaoh, Elijah on Mt. Carmel, Jonah at Nineveh, or Paul in Europe. One woman was left as the only member of a little Indiana church. She absolutely refused to be dissolved. An evangelistic committee came and held a meeting and nearly fifty persons were converted and added to the church, so that it was greatly strengthened, and remains a good church to-day. And this was much better than dissolving it."

It is evident that that woman did not perform any difficult work in connection with her church. Nothing is said about her ability, nor her standing in society, but she just determined to hold fast to what remained of the church, hoping for brighter days. Her work seems to have been mainly that of waiting, praying and watching. It was a very quiet work. It was a patient steadfastness in the work of holding on where others would have let everything go down in gloom and failure. And what a worthwhile work it was! How well she was repaid for it! Reader, you may be of vastly more use to your fellows than you imagine that you can be.

"When the shadows gather,
Hasten to the Father
Every day."

Do not hang all your mottoes on the wall. Hang some of them in your heart and in your life.

It is not success, but obedience, that is the measure and condition of a Christian's joy.—Rev. James Millar.

The man who admires the gospel, but refuses to accept it, is in the position of one who is in favor of what he doesn't want.

In the long run, they who find the soft spots in life and the easy things to do are those who in the beginning chose the rough ways and hard tasks.

Wrong relationship to God is wrong relationship to man. Ungodliness is the growth. Unrighteousness is the fruit and foliage of the tree.

Jesus contains in himself the sum of all helpfulness, because he touches humanity at all points, and because he is familiar with and can touch every chord of human experience. To the afflicted, he comes with healing; to the blind, he gives sight; to the dead in trespasses and in sins, he brings life; to the seeker after truth, he shows forth knowledge; to turbulent seas of passion, he imparts stillness; for the bereaved, he has the calm assurance "I am the resurrection and the life."