

WHEN IS THE TIME TO DIE?

I asked the glad and happy child, Whose hands were filled with flowers, Whose silvery laugh rang free and wild Among the vine-wreathed bowers; I crossed her sunny path and cried: "When is the time to die?" "Not yet! not yet!" the child replied, And swiftly bounded by.

I asked a maiden; back she threw The tresses of her hair; Grief's traces o'er her cheeks I know, Like pearls they glistened there; A flush passed o'er her lily brow; I heard her spirit sigh; "Not now," she cried, "O no! not now, Youth is no time to die!"

I asked a mother, as she pressed Her first born in her arms: As gently on her tender breast She hushed her babe's alarms; In quivering tones her answer came,— Her eyes were dim with tears; "My boy his mother's life must claim For many, many years."

I questioned one in manhood's prime, Of proud and fearless air; His brow was furrowed not by time, Nor dimmed by woe and care. In angry accents he replied, And flashed with scorn his eye; "Talk not to me of death," he cried, "For only age should die."

I questioned age; for him the tomb Had long been all prepared, But death, who withers youth and bloom This man of years had spared. Once more his nature's dying fire Flashed high, as thus he cried; "Life! only life is my desire;" Then gasped, and groaned, and died.

I asked a Christian; "Answer thou: When is the hour of death?" A holy calm was on his brow And peaceful was his breath; And sweetly o'er his features stole A smile, a light divine; He spake the language of his soul,— "My Master's time is mine."

—Old Poem.

PLEDGES AND SALOONS.

Thirty-five or forty years ago my father had a splendid Temperance Society. He conducted it upon Scriptural principles. The pledge was administered after Bible reading and prayer in every case, and frequently people signed upon their knees. In twelve months from its commencement 400 members were on the Society's roll. At that time he believed and often said, "The best way to close the public-houses is to preach the gospel and get all the people to abstain." Every effort was made by regular visiting and meetings to keep the society together. As soon as members broke the pledge they were induced to resign amid fervent prayer for grace to keep it. Things continued in this way for ten years. At the end of that time my father called his committee together for a special examination of the roll, and a special looking-up of members. The sad fact was revealed, that out of the 400 original members not ten were found true to their pledge. Upon close and careful enquiry the conviction was forced upon the committee that in almost every case the fall was traceable to the temptations of the public-house. Gospel preaching, prayer, visitation were all found to be powerless in face of these multitudinous traps of the devil. I will remember his coming home one evening, filled with sadness and despair. The fate of his lapsed members was a sore burden on his heart. I shall never forget the words he used, "I am sure," he said, "we have done our very best in every possible way to rescue and keep the people, and now I am as certain of one thing as I am of my existence that so long as the public sale of intoxicating drink is allowed in this manner by the Government, all the preaching and praying in the world won't save one in a thousand from drunkenness." These words astonished me, coming from one who had such faith in the word of God. But my subsequent experience has proved it entirely true. And I ask every Christian to-day whether with all the gospel preaching of the past 40 years the drunkards have been saved, and why not? Because the public-house still exists. How long are we blindly and stupidly to delude ourselves in this matter? As sure as we allow this overpowering temptation to continue

we shall, so far as the masses are concerned, preach and pray and work in vain. Drink will mock and thwart all our efforts, and though we may here and there save one, yet for each one saved a thousand will be doomed to a drunkard's hell.—Walter Bathgate, in The Sunbeam.

A DANGEROUS IDOL.

Daniel, a native of New Zealand, is only twenty, and his pretty little wife sixteen. He is a local preacher. There was a secret society which had great influence over the heathen. It had idols of its own, on which it was death for anyone to look who was uninitiated. The popular superstition was so strong on the subject that the members of the society, out of pure benevolence, kept these idols buried. But on one occasion rain had partially disturbed the soil, and a group of boys passing, of whom Daniel was one, perceived with horror that a portion of one of them was exposed. Under ordinary circumstances they would have hurried away from the fatal spot, but Daniel stopped them. "Boys," he said, "the missionaries say it is all nonsense about our dying because we look at those hideous old idols!—no one has ever tried—suppose we try! We'll dig this one up and look at it." It was a bold venture, but boys are the same all over the world—the spice of danger lent a charm to the enterprise. Quickly they set to work and unearthed the grim object of their terrors. Setting it up, they gazed boldly at it, and finding that nothing happened, they went in search for others. Soon the sacrilegious act was reported through the island, and, doubtless, mothers trembled and watched to see their children fade away, but as no evil consequences ensued, the idols fell into disrepute, and were soon abolished, and now the generation to which Daniel belongs, as well as many an aged cannibal, has seen by faith the unveiled face of the Incarnate God, and lives.

NOT A BAD MOTTO.

A gentleman who recently visited Mr. Edison's great laboratory, at Menlo Park, and whose son was about to enter upon business life, asked the Professor to give him a motto for his boy, so that he might remember it as a guide and stimulus in after life. Mr. Edison laughed a little at the novel request, and then said:—"Well, I'll give him this—tell him, never to look at the clock!" Which means this—that the man who succeeds to-day is not the man who does just what he has contracted to do and no more, but the man who throws his heart into his work, feels a genuine interest in it, and does not grumble if he has to work ten minutes after office hours.

"MESSENGER" BIBLE STUDENTS.

The publishers of the Northern Messenger are pleased to be able to announce to their young Bible students the results of the last Bible Competition.

THE SENIOR PRIZE.

Among the older students the first prize has been won by Miss Clara P. McEwan, Lakefield, Ont., and the second by Master Aubrey W. Fullerton, Round Hill, N.S.

SPECIAL MENTION.

The following deserve special mention either for neatness of papers or excellence of matter:—Margery Sorby, Ont.; Anna B. Christian, Ont.; Rebecca J. McDonald, Ont.; Lizzie Armstrong, Ont.; Daisy Hitchcock, Ont.; Maude G. Parry, Ont.; Jennie Grant, Ont.; Annie A. MacKay, Ont.; Jennie Follick, Ont.; M. E. Standen, Ont.; A. W. Maunder, Ont.; Charles H. Emerson, Ont.; Robert Cripps, Ont.; Sophia Hicks, Que.; Edith Baumgarten, Que.; Mabel Pridham, Que.; Eva Green, Mich.; Lillian Newton, Kansas.

OTHER SENIOR COMPETITORS.

Many of the following competitors are to be commended for good work done:—Mary Anderson, Ont.; Daisy B. Firby, Ont.; Virgil Burrill, Ont.; Lizzie H. Gingrich, Ont.; Maude Miller, Ont.; Mary Crow, Ont.; Jennie McKenzie, Ont.;

Sophia Boyle, Ont.; Grace Claypole, Ont.; Jane Greer, Ont.; Ernestine Bingham, Ont.; Linnie Therr, Ont.; Minnie A. Wilson, Ont.; Mabel Sprout, Ont.; Mary E. Parson, Ont.; Lily R. Ross, Ont.; John T. Rydall, Ont.; Arthur E. Young, Ont.; Andrew Stewart, Ont.

The following is the sketch winning the senior prize:—

JONATHAN AND DAVID.

"And the soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul." This was the beginning of that friendship which almost all the world knows about and loves to read of, Jonathan, the prince, the heir to the throne of Israel, and David the shepherd lad, "the stripling," as he is called, from the little village of Bethlehem. He had been anointed God's chosen king by Samuel, had come to Saul's court, had won the admiration of the people by his slaying of the great Philistine giant, and then also had won Jonathan's heart, and they made covenant together, Jonathan giving up his clothing, his sword and his bow as pledge. King Saul's jealous temper was soon aroused against David, the song of the women after battle, "Saul has slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands," could not be tolerated, and in a fit of anger Saul threw his javelin at the young man and finally removed him from the court, making him captain over a thousand men. Through all this the loyal friend, Jonathan, remained constant and watchful.

David was thrown in the way of every danger, slaying two hundred Philistines that in payment he might receive the king's daughter as his wife, and as he overcame those dangers, one by one, Saul's jealousy burned fiercer than before, till at length he speaks to Jonathan and to all his household, that they kill David. What a mistake that was to take David's best friend in the kingdom into a plot to kill him. Jonathan sent him word to hide himself until he should make peace with his father. This he succeeded in doing for a time, but Saul's hostility could not be buried for long. Again, and for the last time, David fled from before him in the court, and Jonathan and his wife lovingly covered up his flight. Shortly after David met his friend and renewed his vows of friendship and determined on a sign to show whether he might return once more in safety or not, the sign to be in the words Jonathan should address to his armor-bearer after shooting three arrows near David's place of concealment. The sign on that day was the one which smote Jonathan's heart to give, a sign which separated the friends for almost the last time, and in the field when the little lad gathered up the arrows, the record says "he knew not anything," but they knew and they fell upon each other's necks and kissed each other and separated, the one to go to an enraged father, the other to take refuge with the Philistines. Once more they met during Saul's pursuit of David. Jonathan found one opportunity to comfort his dearly beloved friend. The meeting was in a wood, and there Jonathan showed his grand character in full light. "Fear not, thou shalt be king, and I shall be next unto thee," but the brave, magnanimous man, the example for all time to those who would make firm friends, fell in battle soon afterwards at Gilboa, and David's lament still echoes in our ears. "Ye mountains of Gilboa, let there be no dew, neither let there be rain upon you, for there the shield of the mighty is vilely cast away." "How are the mighty fallen in the midst of battle, O Jonathan, thou wast slain in thine high places!" CLARA P. McEWEN.

JUNIOR PRIZES.

The first junior prize has been won by Miss Edina A. Thornburn, Broadview, Assa., and the second by Miss Jennie C. Crozier, Grand Valley, Ont.

SPECIAL MENTION.

Special mention either for neatness, or excellence of matter must also be made of Sarah A. Lawrence, Ont.; Bessie Laing, Ont.; Maud M. Goodwin, Ont.; Mabel Brownell, Ont.; R. M. Millman, Ont.; John Cochrane, Ont.; Gertrude McClenaghan, Que.; Helena Fairbairn, Que.; Addie Bushby, Man.; Unity M. McGee, N.S.; Laurie Brown, Mich.

OTHER JUNIOR COMPETITORS.

The following are also deserving of commendation:—Jessie McDonald, Ont.; Jennie R. Sprout, Ont.; Louise Jones, Ont.; Florence McCormack, Ont.; Isabella McLeod, Ont.; Sarah A. Tracy, Ont.; Levia E. Tracy, Ont.; Eva Caldwell, Ont.; Tena Shelton, Ont.; Chilton Leek, Ont.; Willie Hiles, Ont.; W. G. Stevenson, Ont.; Arthur Brownell, Ont.; Donald Farquharson Stewart, Ont.; Henry Cullen, Ont.; Stewart Slater, Ont.; Asa Donor, Ont.; Alex. Y. Johnston, Ont.; Mabel Moeser, Que.; Mable F. Awde, Que.; Rosie Hicks, Que.; Ethel May Young, Que.; Fred. Moeser, Que.; Ruby S. Skaling, N.S.; Evelyn Fraser, Man.; Eva McFadden, Ill.; Emma Nelson, N. Y.; J. H. Bingham, Dt.; John Ivor Guyther, N. Dak.; Oliver M. Cunningham, Mo.; Alfred Davidge, Ont.; Alfred Harris, Ont.; Frank French, Ont.; Walter Gillanders, Que.; Mercy S. Mann, N.B.; Edwin Colpitts, N.B.; Annie Crawford, Man.; Annie R. Guyther, N. Dak.; John L. Perham, N. H.

The following is the junior prize sketch:

STORY OF DAVID AND JONATHAN. This picture represents a scene in the life of David and Jonathan. They lived in the reign of Saul, the first king of Israel, who was Jonathan's father. David, who afterwards became the

second king of Israel, was the son of Jesse, a native of Bethlehem. The first word of their attachment for each other was after David had killed Goliath, the Philistine giant. Jonathan became so fond of David, that he stripped himself of his clothes and gave them to him, even to his sword and girdle.

Saul, who at first had been very friendly and had given David a position of trust in his army, now became so jealous, when he heard David's deeds of valor praised, that he twice threw a javelin at him. He was also afraid of him, because the Lord was with David, and was not with him, so he sent him away and made him captain over a thousand men. Another of Saul's plans to get rid of David, was by sending him to fight the Philistines, telling him he should have his daughter in marriage if he proved he had killed one hundred. Saul hoped that David would meet his death in this way. David fulfilled the conditions and became the king's son-in-law. Saul tried next to get his servants, and even Jonathan to kill David, but though Jonathan knew that David would be king after Saul, he always warned him whenever his father had any new plan against his life, bidding him keep out of Saul's sight, and then pleading with Saul not to kill David who was innocent of any evil and who had also done so much for Israel, until Saul's heart was softened and he promised not to hurt David. After this David went back and lived in the king's house. But Saul again tried to kill him by sending messengers to take him in his own house. But Michal, David's wife, hearing of it, let him down out of the window and put an image in his bed. Then David went to Samuel the priest. Saul pursued him there, but the Spirit of the Lord came upon him and he did David no harm. After this David went to Jonathan and asked that he might hide till after the feast of the new moon. If Saul inquired why David was absent, Jonathan should answer that he had gone to keep the feast at his father's house. If this pleased Saul, David was safe, if it displeased him David must fly. He also renewed the covenant which they had made. But David's absence angered Saul and he tried to kill his son, so Jonathan knew David must not return. Next day the friend parted with many tears and did not meet again. Afterward when Saul and his sons were killed in battle, David grieved exceedingly for his friends, even of Saul, his enemy, he spoke no evil. David was also very kind to Mephibosheth, Jonathan's crippled son.

EDINA A. THORNBURN, aged 12. Broadview, Assa.

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