

say them throw down their nets and have everything to follow a stranger.

He must have wondered also at the reports on every tongue, and the sights he had seen himself or miraculous healing. But while strangely drawn towards this new teacher from Nazareth, it could have been with no thought that the hand and the voice were for him. He was a publican, and how could they reach to such depths?

A caravan had just stopped. The pack-animals were being unloaded, bales and packages opened, private letters piled into. The insolent officials were looking things right and left, as they made a list of the taxable goods.

Joel was watching them with as much interest as if he had not witnessed such scenes dozens of times before, till he noticed a group gathering around one of the drivers. He was telling what he had seen on his way to Capernaum. Several noisy companions kept interrupting him to bear witness to the truth of his statements.

"And he who but a moment before had been the most miserable of lepers stood up before us all, cleansed of his leprosy. His skin was soft and fair as a child's, and his features were restored to him," said the driver.

Joel and Levi-Matthew stood side by side. At another time the boy might have drawn his clothes away to keep them from brushing against the despised tax-gatherer. But he never noticed now that their elbows touched.

When he had heard all there was to be told, he limped away to carry the news to Abigail. To know that others were being cured daily made him all the more impatient for the return of this friend of Phineas.

The publican turned again to his pen and his account-book. He, too, looked forward with a burning heart to the return of the Nazarene, unknowing why he did so.

At last Joel heard of the return, in a very unexpected way. There were guests in the house of Laban again. One of the rabbis who had been there before, and a scribe from Jerusalem. Now there were longer conferences in the upper chamber, and graver shakings of the head, over this false prophet whose fame was spreading wider.

The miracle of healing the paralytic at the pool of Bethesda, when he had come down to Jerusalem to one of the many feasts, had stirred Judea to its farthest borders. So these two men had been sent to investigate.

On the very afternoon of their arrival, a report flew through the streets that the Rabbi Jesus was once more in the town. Their host led them with all the haste their dignity would allow, to the house where he was said to be preaching. The common people fell back when they saw them, and allowed them to pass into the centre of the throng.

The Rabbi stood in the doorway, so that both those in the house and without could distinctly hear him. The scribe had never seen him before, and in spite of his deep-seated prejudice could not help admiring the man whom he had come prepared to despise. It was no wild fanatic who stood before him, no noisy debater whose fiery eloquence would be likely to excite and inflame his hearers.

He saw a man of gentlest dignity; truth looked out from the depths of his calm eyes. Every word, every gesture, carried with it the conviction that he who spoke taught with God-given authority.

The scribe began to grow uneasy as he listened, carried along by the earnest tones of the speaker.

There was a great commotion on the edge of the crowd, as some one tried to push through to the centre.

"Stand back! Go away!" demanded angry voices.

The scribe was a tall man, and by stretching a little, managed to see over the heads of the others. Four men, bearing a helpless paralytic, were trying to carry him through the throng; but they would not make room for this interruption.

After vainly hunting for some opening through which they might pass, the men mounted the steep, narrow staircase on the outside of the building, and drew the man up hammock and all, to the flat roof on which they stood.

There was a sound of scraping and scratching as they broke away the brush and mortar that formed the frail covering of the roof. Then the people in the room below saw slowly coming down upon them between the rafters, this man whom no obstacle could keep back from the Great Physician.

But the paralyzed hands could not lift themselves in supplication; the helpless tongue could frame no word of pleading,—only the eyes of the sick man could look up into the pitying face bent over him, and implore a blessing.

The scribe leaned forward, confidently expecting to hear the man bidden to arise. To his surprise and horror, the words he heard were: "Son, thy sins be forgiven thee!"

He looked at Laban and his companion, and the three exchanged meaning glances. When they looked again at the speaker, his eyes seemed to read their inmost thoughts.

"Wherefore think ye evil in your hearts?" he asked, with startling distinctness. "Whether is it easier to say to the sick of the palsy, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Arise, and take up thy bed, and walk? But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins," here he turned to the helpless form lying at his feet, "I say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy bed, and go thy way unto thine house."

The man bounded to his feet, and picking up the heavy rug on which he had been lying, went running and leaping out of their midst.

Without a word, Laban and his two guests drew their clothes carefully around them, and picked their way through the crowd. Phineas, who stood at the gate, gave them a respectful greeting. Laban only turned his eyes away with a scowl, and passed coldly on.

"The man is a liar and a blasphemer!" exclaimed the scribe, as they sat once more in the privacy of Laban's garden.

"Only God can forgive sins!" added his companion. "This paralytic should have taken a sin-offering to the priest. For only by the blood of sacrifice can one hope to obtain pardon."

"Still he healed him," spoke up the scribe, musingly.

"Only through the power of Satan!" interrupted Laban. "When he says he can forgive sins, he blasphemeth."

The other Pharisee leaned forward to say, in an impressive whisper: "Then you know the Law on that point. He should be stoned to death, his body hung on a tree, and then buried with shame!"

It was not long after that Joel, just back from a trip to Tiberias in a little sailing-boat, came into the garden. He had been away since early morning, so had heard nothing of what had just occurred; he had had good luck in disposing of his wares, and was feeling unusually cheerful. Hearing voices in the corner of the garden, he was about to pass out again, when his uncle called him sternly to come to him at once.

Surprised at the command, he obeyed, and was questioned and cross-questioned by all three. It was very little he could tell them about his friend's plans; but he acknowledged proudly that Phineas had always known this famous man from Nazareth, even in childhood, and was one of his most devoted followers.

"This man Phineas is a traitor to the faith!" roared Laban. "He is a dangerous man, and in league with these fellows to do great evil to our nation."

"Hear me, now!" he cried, sternly. "Never again are you to set foot over his threshold, or have any communication whatsoever with him or his associates. I make no idle threat; if you disobey me in this, you will have cause to wish you had never been born. You may leave us now!"

Too surprised and frightened to say a word, the child slipped away. To give up his daily visit to the carpenter's house, was to give up all that made his life tolerable; while to be denied even speaking to his associates, meant to abandon all hope of cure.

But he dared not rebel; obedience to these in authority was too thoroughly taught in those days to be lightly disregarded. But his uncle seemed to fear that his harsh command would be eluded in some way and kept such a strict watch over him, that he rarely got beyond the borders of the garden by himself.

(To be continued.)

### A Fisher Lad's Musings.

BY PAUL KENDALL.

Oh, Newfoundland! sweet Newfoundland,  
When shall I leave thy shore,  
And o'er the dark blue waters go,  
To see thee never more?  
When shall I leave thy craggy cliffs,  
And leave thy rugged strand,  
To go and seek my fortune  
In a far and foreign land?

How often have I left my room,  
On some stormy autumn night,  
To go and firmly tie the boats,  
And see that all was right.  
How often have I turned from home,  
Before the dawn of day,  
To go and try to catch some fish,  
For the needs of life to pay.

How oft has been the morning,  
When the codfish have been few;  
When cold has been the weather,  
And cold my fingers, too.  
Oh, we may work from morn till night,  
And catch a lot of fish;  
But very seldom can afford,  
To buy a dainty dish.

And now the summer has been good,  
And many a fishing-hand  
Has caught his fifty quintal,  
And brought them safe to land.  
But the price of fish is very low,  
And cash is scarce enough,  
And to many a hardy fisherman  
The times are very rough.

So now that I'm getting up to man,  
What must I do in life?  
Must my calling be a fisherman's,  
Must I use the splitting knife?  
Or must I go to distant land,  
To seek my fortune there,  
And return no more to see my home,  
Perhaps for many a year?  
Twillingate, Nfld.

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## Pleasant Hours:

A PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK.

Rev. W. H. Withrow, D.D., Editor.

TORONTO, JUNE 20, 1896.

### THE TRUE GENTLEMAN.

The following sketch is called the portrait of a true gentleman. It was found in an old manor-house in Gloucestershire, written and framed, and hung over the mantelpiece of a tapestried sitting-room:

"The true gentleman is God's servant, the world's master, and his own man; virtue is his business, study his recreation, contentment his rest, and happiness his reward; God is his Father, Jesus Christ is his Saviour, the saints his brethren, and all that need him his friends; devotion is his chaplain, chastity his chamberlain, sobriety his butler, temperance his cook, hospitality his housekeeper, providence his steward, charity his treasurer, piety his mistress of the house, and discretion his porter to let in or out as most fit. Thus is his

whole family made up of virtues, and he is the true master of the house. He is necessitated to take the world on his way to heaven; but he walks through it as fast as he can, and all his business is the way is to make himself and others happy. Take him in two words—a man and a Christian."

### JUNIOR EPWORTH LEAGUE. PRAYER-MEETING TOPIC.

JUNE 28, 1896.

Trust in the Lord.—Psalm 27. 11-14.

DIVINE GUIDANCE SOLICITED.

Men, however much they may be educated, often feel themselves in difficulty as to what course they are to do right, even when they are desirous to do right. The Psalmist wants to see his way clear, hence he prays thus. There are those who would involve him in trouble, and as they are always on the alert, he offers this appropriate prayer, which is a wise course for us to pursue. Use this verse as your prayer.

TROUBLE APPREHENDED.

Verse 12. Enemies will adopt every means possible to accomplish their ends, even by swearing falsely they will involve good people in trouble. The tender mercies of the wicked are cruel, and in the thousands of instances such cruel have been the subjects of such cruel hatred, that no means have been too vile, if they could only accomplish the ruin of those who fear God and work righteousness. The throne of grace is always accessible, and those who go to the mercy-seat will be sure to obtain help in time of need.

CONFIDENCE INCREASED.

Verse 13. It is good to review the way the Lord hath led us. Goodness and mercy encompasseth the path of those who trust in the Lord. Faith is the anchor of the soul. Those who have faith in God feel an assurance that he is too wise to err, and that all his purposes of mercy will be sure to be accomplished.

EXHORTATION.

Verse 14. Wait on the Lord. These are beautiful sentences. Seek to get to be more like God. Be intimately associated with him, so that you may always be sure of his inspiring aid. But while you wait upon God, take care not to give way to despondency. Be of good courage. Endeavour to be hopeful. Do not give way to fear, no matter how obscure your path may be, nor how discouraging your circumstances. Wait on the Lord. Tarry until he comes to your help. He has promised to be the help of his people in every time of need, and his promises never fail.

### CHINESE TREATMENT OF CHILDREN.

However little liked the Chinamen may be by his white neighbours, I have at all times found that the Chinese have at least one good and praiseworthy quality—the kindness shown by all of them towards their children. The poorest parents always seem able to save enough money to array their little ones in gay garments on New Year's Day or other holidays. The children in turn seem to be remarkably well-behaved and respectful towards their elders, and rarely, if ever, receive corporal punishment. They seem very happy, and apparently enjoy their childhood more than most American children. On all the most sunny day the fond and proud father may be seen at every turn in Chinatown carrying his brightly attired youngster in his arms. Other little ones hardly old enough to feel quite steady on their legs, toddle about with infants strapped on their backs. They do not appear to mind this, and it does not seem to interfere with their childish pastimes. About the time of the Chinese New Year, Chinese children are particularly favoured, and the fond fathers deny them nothing. The little ones of pocket-money to buy toys and candies. St. Nicholas.