

Our Story.

JANET MACFARLANE'S PRAYER.

BY MRS. AMELIA E. BARR.

IN THREE CHAPTERS.

CHAPTER III.—(Continued.)

The next day was a very busy and happy one for Malachi. In it he passed his examination with the highest honours; and almost simultaneously with his ordination he received a call from a church, with the active work of which he had been long connected. The invitation, in its promptitude and eagerness, gave him great pleasure. It was a small kirk in a fashionable locality; but then, as Helen said, there were a great many sinners to save, even among that decorous class which Charley Kingsley called "sitters in pew," and for work among the indigent and ignorant he had many other outlets.

After he had preached one Sunday in his new charge, he resolved to let his father and mother share in his joy. There could be no fear of a disappointment to them now; and he wrote and entreated them to give themselves a holiday, and come to Edinburgh for a few weeks. He urged them upon two grounds—work which he could not leave to them; and his probable early marriage. John felt that they could well afford this trip. His son's education had cost him much less than he had anticipated; so, with almost childlike delight, they prepared for it.

It was indeed a great event for Janet, who had never been twenty miles from her home; and even John felt a nervousness which, as an old soldier, he would not acknowledge. But all went well; and Malachi met them with a beaming face, and took them to his own home. Janet was much amazed at the handsome dwelling, but it was Saturday night when they arrived, and the strictness with which the Western Islanders observe the Sabbath admits of no worldly curiosity or conversation so near to it. In the morning John asked what minister they were to hear.

"Maybe you would like to hear your namesake, the Rev. Mr. MacFarlane, I think you would enjoy the service there."

"As I would like to see to hear one of the same name, he'll be Malachi MacFarlane's son, dooties," said John with a sigh. "I heard tell that he was in the holy office."

At the church door Malachi said to one of the deacons, "This is my father and my mother, deacon; will you put them in the minister's pew?"

But this request raised no suspicion in the minister's mind. The minister saw the probability that Janet would be a strength, and John said Janet should be near to the pulpit. They sat with bowed heads communing with God until Malachi's voice, uplifted in the opening prayer, broke the silence. He knew them too well to fear any visible or audible sign of their emotion. He was certain that, of all places on earth, they would have desired that this joy should come to them in the house and the presence of God.

Janet indeed laid her trembling hand upon her husband's, but even in that supreme moment, John would not suffer his human love and pride to enter with him into the presence of his Father.

By the time the prayer was over, both were gone and self-possessed. Indeed, John felt that it behoved him to listen without favour; and he was determined that none of the deacons should see that he was at all "set up" with having a son in the pulpit. But, oh, what a fountain of holy joy was in his heart! and it required all the stern conscientiousness of his nature to prevent his thoughts from rambling from the sermon to the preacher.

As for Janet, she had less strength. She sat with closed eyes, saying with Hannah of old, "For this child I prayed; and the Lord hath given me my petition which I asked of Him. Therefore, now I have lent him to the Lord; as long as he liveth he shall be lent to the Lord." My heart rejoiceth in the Lord.

A grip of his father's hand, the look in his mother's eyes, said far more to the happy preacher than any words could have said. They, of course, came the next day, but the Sabbath's silent thanksgiving had a joy beyond them.

"You gave us two grand sermons, Malachi," said John at the breakfast table. "It was a Sabbath of pleasant things to me, my son. I never had such a day since—God has been very good to me."

"I was just the happiest woman I ever had," Malachi; my dear bairn, you have paid me the hire of my love a thousand fold."

They remained in Edinburgh until after Malachi's marriage, and it was a wonderful visit to them. But at the last they placed a little for their home, and before the winter closed in they were back on the Jura hills. But there was no longer any necessity for them to sail, and indeed, John was no longer inclined to do so. He was seventy-seven years old, and the wounds and scuffs of his hand had begun to remind him that his day's work was done. He dug a little in his garden, and read

his Bible, and talked with Janet about Malachi, and thought a great deal about the land to which he was going.

One day in the following spring the MacFarlane called to see him.

"John," he said, "they tell me that you are sick fallen, but you look happy enough."

"I have happy memories, and happy prospects, MacFarlane; and my work is done. I am just resting a wee afore I gat the way that I'll never return."

"John, I heard your son preach last Sabbath day; his words went to the very bottom of my soul. I'll be a better man, my life long, for that sermon, I hope. John, I have the lands, and I have the title, but your son Malachi is 'The MacFarlane,' he is that, John."

Of all human praise, this touched John most. His dim eyes filled with happy tears; he lifted his bonnet and bowed his head gratefully. It was difficult for him to say clearly:

"Thank you, MacFarlane, and praise be to His name!"

One lovely night in the midsummer, John went home almost without warning. Sitting quite still and silent in his great chair at the open door of his cottage, he was looking over the ocean, which lay smooth as glass under a full moon, and letting his thoughts wander solemnly through eternity.

Suddenly his face shone with an adoring wonder, and his staff fell from his hand. He needed it no longer; treading the star-strewn spaces with the Sons of God and stumbling not.

Then Janet listened to Helen and Malachi. The little house was locked up, and she dwelt for the rest of her days with them. She heard her son preach every Sabbath, she carried his sons and daughters in her arms. She had nursed her boy for the Lord, and the Lord paid her grand wages. She saw him beloved and honoured, she saw him rise to the highest offices in the kirk. She shared in all the love and happiness of his beautiful home—she never grew old. When she was eighty years of age, her heart was so young, that Malachi's children made her their companion and confidant. Her last act was one of beautiful and appropriate significance.

It was her eighty-second birthday, and on it Malachi's new church—a large and splendid edifice—was to be opened. She had been weak and inclined to sleep for many days, and it was not thought well for her to be present. When Malachi returned from the opening service, she was still further away from life. He told her about it, and she seemed to listen.

"Do you hear me, mother, my dear mother?"

"A lang way off, my dear lad!"

"Mother, there is to be a beautiful tablet over the entrance to my new kirk—you are to choose the verse for it—what shall it be?"

"The fourth chapter of Isaiah and the sixth verse," she answered, without a moment's hesitation; though her voice was faint and far-away, as if it came from the very border-lands of being.

They were her last words. After them she went the way of all the earth, but Heaven had opened to her, and from the calm of the other side she yet speaketh, through the love of her faith and her dedication; for the verse which she chose for Malachi's church has been ever since its sentiment and its motive:

"A tabernacle be a shadow in the daytime from the heat, and for a place of refuge, and for a covert from storm, and from rain."—Isa. lv. 6.

Sabbath School Work.
LESSON HELPS.
FOURTH QUARTER.
Lesson VIII, November 25.
THE COVENANT RENEWED.
Josh. xiv. 19-25.
MEMORIAL VERSES 16-24.

GOLDEN TEXT.—The Lord our God will be served, and his voice will we obey.—Josh. xiv. 24.
CENTRAL TRUTH.
There is every reason why we should decide to love and serve God.
DAILY READINGS.
M. Josh. xiv. 1-16.
F. Josh. xiv. 1-18.
W. Josh. xiv. 19-25.
Th. Kings xvii. 27-39.
F. Deut. xvii. 1-10.
Sa. Matt. vi. 19-34.
Sa. 1 Cor. vi. 1-18.
TRISE.—R.C. 1464. Eighteen years after the last lesson.
PLACE.—Shechem, between mountains Ebal and Gerizim.
THE CAPITAL was still at Shiloh.
JOSHUA was nearly 110 years old, living at Shechem, not far from Shechem. Here he lived eighteen years after the conquest.
PARALLEL.—The Assembly in the same place twenty-five years before. Josh. vii. 26-27; Deut. xxi. 1-10; the covenant in the plains of Moab, Deut. xxi. 2 (including ch. xvii-xxi); Elijah at Carmel, 1 Kings xviii. 19-39).
INTRODUCTION.—Towards the close of his life Joshua gives his dying charge to his beloved people. First he assembles the leaders and officers and addresses them (ch. xxi.). Then he summons another assembly of rulers and people at Shechem, where they had made a solemn covenant to serve

God twenty-five years before, on their first entrance into Canaan. To-day's lesson contains a part of Joshua's address to this second assembly.

HELPS OVER HARD PLACES.—In the previous verses Joshua glances at their past history, and urges reasons why the people should serve the Lord with all their hearts.

(1) Gratitude to Him as the author of their nation; (2) His great power over all gods; (3) His preserving care; (4) His giving them possession of Canaan; (5) His hatred of sin (vs. 19, 20).

19. *You cannot serve the Lord; ye cannot in your own strength; ye cannot without great care and watchfulness. A jealous God: one who will have the undivided love of your hearts. He will not forgive: he will not allow you to go on in sin without punishing you. Ye are witnesses against yourselves: your public promise to obey will be a witness that you knew your duty, and accepted the conditions of blessing for obedience and punishment for disobedience. This is still true of men; (1) Every sinner's conscience is a witness against his course. (2) The principles on which business men must act as the conditions of worldly success, will witness against those who refuse to apply like principles to religion—principles which if lived out, would lead them to be Christians. (3) The fruit-finding of men against good people show that these fruit finders know what is right, and are to blame if they do not live up to it. (4) The principles on which good government is based indicate God's moral government in the world. (5) Our professions will be a witness. 25. *Set them a statute; made this covenant a part of their national law.**

SUBJECTS FOR FURTHER STUDY AND SPECIAL REPORT.—Joshua.—The two assemblies.—Similar assemblies.—Josh. vii. 26-27; Deut. xxi. 1-10; 1 Kings xviii. 19-39.—Choosing whom we will serve.—Reasons why the Israelites should choose to serve God.—Reasons why we should serve God.—A jealous God.—Witnesses against ourselves.

QUESTIONS.
INTRODUCTION.—What was the subject of the last lesson? How many years intervene between that lesson and this? How old was Joshua at this time? Where was his home?

SUBJECT: DECISION FOR GOD.
I. THE DUTY OF DECISION FOR GOD.—Whom did Joshua summon to come to him just before he died? (xxiii. 1, 2.) What great assembly did he govern after that? (xvii. 1, 2.) In what place? Of what did he first remind the people? (vs. 2-5.) In view of this history what did he exhort them to do? (vs. 14, 15.) Between what things would he have them choose? Have we a like choice? Between what? Can we help making a choice? How did Joshua address his soldiers? (v. 15, 16.)

II. REASONS FOR DECISION FOR GOD (vs. 19, 20).—What did the people reply to Joshua's exhortation? (v. 24.) How many reasons are given for this resolve? How would God's great power in overcoming those who trusted in other gods? What in God's preserving care? (vs. 2, 17.) What in His giving them possession of Canaan? (vs. 12, 13.) What in God's hatred as a jealous God? (vs. 19, 20.) What is meant by God's being jealous? What by not forgiving their transgressions? Do all these reasons hold why we should serve God? Apply each one to your own life and history.

III. THE DECISION MADE (vs. 21-25).—What promise did the Israelites make? How many times did they repeat it? How were they witnesses against themselves? With all sinners be witnesses against themselves? How did Joshua confirm this covenant? What two memorials did he make of it? (vs. 24, 27.) What similar promise was made in the same place twenty-five years before? (Josh. vii. 26-27; Deut. xxi. 1-10.) What similar decision on Mount Carmel 500 years later? (1 Kings xviii. 19-39.)

NEW TESTAMENT LIGHT.—What choice does Jesus bid us make? (Matt. vi. 24; Rom. vii. 20; xii. 17.) Must we choose between God and the world? (Matt. vi. 24.) Why should we choose God as our portion? (Matt. xi. 23-30; Rom. ii. 4; xii. 1; 1 Cor. i. 2; John iii. 16.)

PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS.
I. True religion is of necessity a matter of free choice.
II. But every reason is in favour of serving God.
III. We should cast our personal influences and example on the side of God.
IV. We should choose to-day.
V. God's goodness, care, power, providence, and holiness are all arguments why we should serve Him.
VI. Every sinner will be a witness against himself.
VII. There is a great advantage in being placed where we must make a decision.—*Abraham.*

HEAVEN AND EARTH.
There is no shadow where there is no heat; There is no glory where there is no glory; Darkness and light, heat and cold abide.
God comes among us through the words of His Word; And His sinners in His glory abide; Let by your presence on the mountain side, Fading and disappearing love and shade.

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"WHATSOEVER."

"I ALWAYS ask Emeline's advice, but I cannot get to her house to-day in the rain, with such a cold as I have."

"I think it is a question for you and your conscience to decide, and not for Mrs. Stowe."

"Then you will not give me the least advice? You are quite determined, Miss Thayer?"

"I will give you a rule which should govern a Christian at all times—one by which you should try your conduct and decide for yourself: 'Whether, therefore, ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.' If it will in any way be to his glory for you to spend the money for an elegant evening dress and to attend this so-called, where pleasure is the first thought, go without hesitation. Make haste with your preparations, as you should make haste always to do anything for him."

"I cannot see how it would be to his glory," Mary Van Andem responded. "I cannot see how dancing is to his glory."

"Nevertheless, we are told that 'whatsoever' we do must be for his glory—even the simple things of life; so what is the inference?"

"The inference?"

"Yes, it is if we must do all for his glory; we cannot do what is not for his glory. What we cannot turn to account for him we must leave undone. All our faculties, our members, must be in subjection to him. Our lives, our duties, our pleasure, must be for his glory. That is the Christian's rule of conduct, and the same rule applies to our conversation."

"Then you think this sociable—"

"It is not what I think. I cannot think for you; you must do that for yourself. It may be it is a good thing to dance, so you cannot go to Mrs. Stowe's and ask her. You are left with your conscience and your Lord, who has given you this rule."

"Oh, Emeline does not talk as you do, Miss Thayer. She would consider whether or not I would take cold in a thin dress, and if circumstances permitted me to go to a dance when mamma has been dead only a little over two years. She is very strict about such things. You put it so differently from any one else."

"Not I, but God's word. That does not put it differently, and so simply, too, that he who runs may read and make no mistake if the heart is determined to be led by it. It is just as if you said, 'I cannot go to see my sister if it rains. Does it rain?' Then you decide for yourself, when you look out of the window, whether it rains or not. So the rule is general, 'If it be not to the glory of God, I cannot go to this party, and you determine yourself whether it is or not. Now I must say 'Good-bye' to you. Come to see me whenever you can."

"I will come then, and I wish you would come often to see me. You help me always."

"Not I, but the simple words of Scripture. You have your Bible always; study that whenever you are in doubt, and you will never go away undecided. Now good-bye," and with a warm press of the hand the grey-haired benevolent teacher, whose whole life was a striving to live for the glory of God, took her departure.

Mary stood at the window watching the retreating figure, thinking, "Or whatsoever." How often in the busy stir of life she forgot that; and yet it completed, at many a winter, the whole of a Christian's life. Whoever she did not do for God's glory, and what she could not do for his glory was not to be done. What a record to look back upon when she came to the last day of life—every deed done in the flesh done for him, and nothing done that was not for him; in every act to have honoured him!

And the sociable? That morning's mail had brought Mary an invitation to a grand ball-dance-dancing sociable which was to be one of the events of the season; the fashionable world was excited over it. Mary had heard it spoken of by almost every one of her friends, but she did not dream the would be honoured by an invitation. "Honoured?" How could she be so that word? If she had been called upon to do some special work for the Lord, that would have been an honour; but this invitation to an assembly where God's glory was never thought of was something to be refused. There! she had settled it herself. She would send her regrets. She had come out of the world, separated herself from it, and her life must be governed by this rule: "Whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God."

Mary went up to her room and took the delicately-embroidered card from the table. "Mrs. Ward Allison." What a name that was in the society-world! How angry she was caught, and how delighted were the crowds when she deigned to smile upon them! It was no wonder that Mary was flattered when this little card came to her. Since her mother died she had lived alone in this great house with her father, and he generally advised her to do what gave her the most pleasure, only requiring that she do nothing that would lower the dignity of the Van Andem or bring dishonour to his name. And had she not another Father's name to befall? She never realised till to-day the full meaning of that command to do all to the glory of God, but she always had been sure to do what would be to the glory of the Van Andem.

Emeline was sure to do so, too. She had married to the glory of the Van Andem, and far from the honour of the Lord. She lived in and for the world, and it was her advice that Mary would have asked if the rain had not kept her indoors. While she was still debating what she would do, and had half a mind to send a note to Mrs. Stowe, her Bible-class teacher, Miss Thayer, called. She was sent, Mary believed now, by the Lord, to set her feet in the right path; so she knelt and thanked him for his kind care, asking strength and knowledge to do always all for his glory; and when she arose, a delicately-written regret was sent to Mrs. Ward Allison.

Five missionaries sailed for China from the Albert Docks on Thursday, Oct. 4, in the P. and O. steamer *Parosetta*. Rev. P. J. MacLagan, who goes to Swatow, is a son of Dr. MacLagan, of Berwick, and has a sister already at work in the mission field in connection with the Women's Missionary Association. Dr. Gavin Russell goes to Formosa, and is to be supported by the Rev. W. B. Barbour, of Bonkaid, son of the late George Barbour, who was for many years an ardent friend of the Mission. Dr. James Howie goes to Chang-hai at the cost of Mr. J. T. Morton. Miss Barnett goes to Formosa for the Women's Association, and Mrs. McIver returns to join her husband in the Hakka country. Rev. Murdo MacLennan, who is about to marry a daughter of Professor Blake, of Edinburgh, sails for the Hakka country about the end of November.

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