

ture takes months to do, we cry, 'a miracle!' 'Men are more wont to be astonished at the sun's eclipse, than at its daily rising,' he quoted, remembering his conversation with the old traveler, on his way to Nathan ben Obedia's.

A feeling of exaltation seized the people as they ate the mysterious bread; it seemed that the days of manna had come again. By the time they had all satisfied their hunger, and twelve basketfuls of the fragments had been gathered up, they were ready to make him their king. The restlessness of the times had taken possession of them; the burning excitement must find vent in some way, and with one accord they demanded him as their leader.

Joel wondered why he should refuse. Surely no other man he had ever known could have resisted such an appeal.

The perplexed fishermen, at Jesus' command, turned their boat homeward without him. To their simple minds it seemed that he had made a mistake in relating the homage forced upon him by the people; they longed for the time to come when they should be recognized as the honoured officials in the new kingdom. Many a dream of future power and magnificence must have come to them in the still watches of the night, as they drifted home in the white light of the Passover moon.

Many a time in the weeks that followed, Joel slipped away to his favourite spot on the beach, a flat rock half hid by a clump of oleander bushes. Here, with his feet idly dangling in the ripples, he looked out over the water, and recalled the scenes he had witnessed there.

It seemed so marvellous to him that the Master could have ever walked on those shining waves; and yet he had seen him that night after the feeding of the multitudes. He had seen, with his own frightened eyes, the Master walk calmly towards the boat across the unsteady water, and catch up the sinking Peter, who had jumped overboard to meet him. It grieved and fretted the boy that this man, of God-given power and such sweet unselfish spirit, could be so persistently misunderstood by the people. He could think of nothing else.

He had not been with the crowds that pressed into the synagogue that Sabbath after the thousands had been fed; but Phineas came home with grim lips and knitted brows, and told him about it.

"The Master know they followed him because of the loaves and fishes," he said. "He told them so."

"When we came out of the door, I could not help looking up at the lintel on which is carved the pot of manna; for when they asked him for a sign that they might believe him, saying, 'Our fathers ate manna in the wilderness?' He answered: 'I am the bread of life! Ye have seen me, and yet believe not!'"

"While he talked there was a murmuring all over the house against him, because he said that he had come down from heaven. Your uncle Laban was there. I heard him say scornfully: 'Is not this the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How doth he now say "I am come down out of heaven?"' Then he laughed a mocking little laugh, and nudged the man who stood next to him. There are many like him; I could feel a spirit of prejudice and persecution in the very air. Many who have professed to be his friends have turned against him."

While Phineas was pouring out his anxious forebodings to his wife and Joel, the Master was going homeward with his chosen twelve.

"Would ye also go away?" he asked wistfully of his companions, as he noted the cold, disapproving looks of many who had only the day before been fed by him, and who now openly turned their backs on him.

Simon Peter gave a questioning glance into the faces of his companions; then he pressed a step nearer. "Lord, to whom shall we go?" he answered impulsively. "Thou hast the words of eternal life. And we have believed, and know that thou art the Holy One of God."

The others nodded their assent, all but one. Judas Iscariot clutched the money bags he held, and looked off across the lake, to avoid the searching eyes that were fixed upon him.

These honest Galileans were too simple to suspect others of dark designs, yet they had never felt altogether free with this stranger from Judea. He had never seemed entirely one of them. They did not see in his crafty, quiet manners, the sheep's clothing that hid his wolfish nature, but they could feel his lack of sympathetic enthusiasm.

He had been one of those who followed only for the loaves and fishes of a temporal kingdom, and now, in his secret soul, he was sorry he had joined a cause in whose final success he was beginning to lose faith.

The sun went down suddenly that night behind a heavy cloud, as a gathering storm began to lash the Galilee and rock the little boats anchored at the landings.

The year of popularity was at an end.
(To be continued.)

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Pleasant Hours:

A PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK.

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

TORONTO, JULY 11, 1896.

SOUND CHRISTIANS.

Going up town one day, I overtook two little boys. The largest boy had a basket on his arm containing a few apples. The other little fellow was asking for one, and the boy with the apples handed him one, which the little one refused, saying, "I don't want that, it's half rotten." The other boy then gave him another, which was not rotten, but the little fellow still seemed dissatisfied.

"What's the matter now?" said the big boy, "don't that suit you either?" "No, Willie, it don't, 'cause you said you'd give me a real, good, nice apple, and this one ain't sound, for it's got two specks in it; 'tain't rotten, but there is specks, so it ain't sound."

"Oh, Eddie, them specks don't hurt it,—they are only kind of dry rots; the apple is just as good."

"Well," answered the little fellow, "I think when apples ain't all over sound, they're not nice, anyway, if they are called good."

Dear young Christians, these little fellows by their talk, set me to thinking. I thought what a good illustration was this taken spiritually. We, as God's children, must be sound Christians, if we would be good and nice. We need a Christian experience that is all over sound.

Let us think of this every day, and let us try to keep the specks out of our Christianity. Remember if we get angry, that is a nasty speck upon us. Our friends cannot think us nice if we get provoked at every little thing that don't suit us. Every time we speak untruthfully that is a speck upon us. If we speak a word wrongly against any one, that is a very ugly speck upon our religion. If we indulge in light, trifling

talk, we shall thus bring many specks upon our lives. Whatever we do that is unwise, is a speck upon our Christian character; and when we leave our duty undone we do wrong, and therefore are not sound in our Christian experience.

When we say away from the means of grace with only a slight excuse; when we neglect secret prayer, and reading God's Word, we stain our Christianity.

Oh, my young friends, how easy for us to become full of specks or flaws, for every wrong act is a flaw in our religion; and if we have these flaws we are not good Christians.

Let us examine ourselves and see if we have any now, and if we find little specks of unkindness, or ill feeling, or anything wrong in us, oh, let us not rest until we have them all washed away in the blood of the Lamb, and feel we are cleansed and made perfectly whole. And then let us watch daily that our religion is not stained by little specks. Oh, let us endeavour to live day by day under the blood that we may ever keep a sound, Christian character.

JUNIOR EPWORTH LEAGUE PRAYER-MEETING TOPIC.

JULY 19, 1896.

Bethel.—Genesis 28. 10-22.

A MEMORABLE PLACE.

This word means "the house of God," and of all the names given to places of worship, there are few more appropriate than the word "Bethel." The place, however, was not always called by this name. It was at first called Luz—Jacob gave it the name by which it will always be known. When he fled from home because of his quarrel with Esau, he tarried one night at this place, and from the remarkable dream which he had, he made a covenant with God as to how he would act if God would prosper him in the way he was going, and allow him to return home in peace. He pledged himself as to the return he would make. How many enter into new speculations, and move from one place to another without even consulting the Almighty. Acknowledge him in all your ways.

JACOB'S SUCCESS.

Read the verses at the head of the lesson, and you will get a clear view of the marvellous career of Jacob. Jacob was by no means a perfect man. He was a shrewd man of business and understood the path to success, but we do not believe that he would have succeeded as he did, had he not been faithful to his pledge. His Uncle Laban sought to use Jacob for his own gain, but he could not accomplish his selfish purposes. When a man has God on his side, they are a majority.

BETHEL, A FAVOURITE PLACE.

When Jacob returned from his Uncle Laban, Bethel was ever afterwards a favourite place with him. Mark you, though his uncle ill-treated him, he never attempted to leave him until God commanded him to do so. Always be sure that you are doing what God would have you to do. Jacob had been in servitude for the space of twenty years, and now God commands him to move, and on his return journey he seeks divine direction. See Genesis 32. 1; 9-12.

RESULTS.

Esau's wrath was appeased. Jacob knew that he acted improperly towards Esau, though he was not the only person who acted improperly at that time. But now when Jacob had good reason to be afraid Esau should take vengeance upon him, he prays to God, and God comes to his assistance. See the memorable contest in prayer (Genesis 32. 24-32.) Bethel was often visited, and Jacob never forgot his covenant. Have we no occasion to go to Bethel? Should we not remember our obligations and the promises we have made as to what we would do.

THE NEW MINISTER.

(To be read in Junior League meeting.)

Dear Juniors,—Before this letter reaches you the great itinerant wheel

that surrounds your Junior Epworth wheel will revolve, and, perhaps, will send you a new minister.

Juniors like new things—new dresses, new bicycles, and new ministers. The older people may be unwise enough to say, "I know I shall never like him as well as I do our dear pastor who has gone," some may even say, "I'm bound I won't like him," but the Juniors will welcome him, and make room in their hearts for him. Is this because the child heart is flexible? I believe not. It is rather because of the delicate, sensitive plate of the child's mind a composite picture is developing, and each child calls that picture, "my minister."

So, my dear Juniors, I want to tell you what the new minister may be, and wants to be to you. He wants to be your friend. He wants to know your name, and where you live, to visit you in your home, and see the baby and all the home treasures. So, when you meet him on the street, be sure and speak to him. You can easily remember his name, for there is only one of him, but you must tell him your name more than once, for there are many of you. I read the other day of a little girl who felt aggrieved because, as she told her mother, "the gentleman spoke to me, mamma, but he didn't shake his hat to me." The new minister will not only speak to you, and shake his hat to you, but will shake your hand and tell you he is glad to see you every time he meets you.

During the three years or more that the new minister is likely to stay, many of the Juniors will be sure to begin a Christian life, and if you want to make your pastor's heart glad, and to cure him of "that homesick feeling," there is no better way than to invite him into your Junior League meeting, and begin a revival by giving yourselves to the service of the Lord.—Zion's Herald.

The Seed and the Sower.

Ever so little the seed may be,
Ever so little the hand,
But when it is sown it must grow, you see,
And develop its nature, weed, flower or tree;
The sunshine, the air, and the dew are free
At its command.

If the seed be good, we rejoice in hope
Of the harvest it will yield;
We wait and watch for its springing up,
Admire its growth, and count on the crop
That will come from the little seeds we drop
In the great wide field.

But if we heedlessly scatter wide
Seeds we may happen to find,
We care not for culture, or what may betide,
We sow here and there on the highway side;
Whether they've lived or whether they've died,
We never mind.

Yet every sower must one day reap
Fruit from the seed he has sown;
How carefully then it becomes us to keep
A watchful eye on the seed, and seek
To sow what is good, that we may not weep
To receive our own.

FORGETTING.

This is the cause of much of our misery. It is as bad as ignorance, or even worse, for we have laboured in vain when, having spent time and money to acquire knowledge, we forget what we have learned. Memory is as needful as store, home, or stomach. The food we partake of must be digested, hence retained for a certain length of time. A bad memory is like a pocket full of holes. Forgetting is like one throwing away his money. "Oh, I forgot," is often said, as though it excused us. What if the railroad man forgot to put on the brakes or stop the engine? The consequence of forgetting is dreadful sometimes. Souls perish by it, millions of them. We hear and read, or see many things, which move us to a better life, then forget them, and their influence is lost.