

SUNDAY
SCHOOL

The Quiet Hour

YOUNG
PEOPLE

JOSHUA ISRAEL'S NEW LEADER*

By REV. FREDERICK L. A. BRADSHAW,
D.D., MONTREAL

AFTER THE DEATH OF MOSES, v. 1. MOSES had been so much to Israel, that his death seemed an irreparable loss. The hands that were so strong to do, were loosed for burial. The voice that had talked with God was hushed in silence. But Moses was only the instrument, which may be broken and laid aside. He who uses the instrument, will never be stopped in his great work of redemption. The worker may be buried, but the work goes on.

Moses' minister, v. 1. Service is the path to leadership. Dr. Grenfell was a man of birth and means and social position. He never needed to have exposed himself to hardship. But he gave his life to the service of the lonely, hard-set fishermen of the Labrador. During long and arduous years he grudged no toil or sacrifice that would help them in body or soul. But every year of labor added to his powerful influence, and now he stands before the world as the leader of those he serves so faithfully, into a veritable Land of Promise, in which they may enjoy a plenty and prosperity before unknown. In any sphere it is true that none are so sure to become leaders amongst their fellows as those who give themselves ungrudgingly to serve others.

The land which I do give, v. 2. Missions are but claiming the world for its rightful Owner. The great Teacher pictured the world to His first disciples as a vast harvest field, with its sea of waving grain, ripe and ready to be gathered into the barns of the great Husbandman. The harvest before the eyes of Jesus was the souls of men, a multitude too great for numbering, and belonging every one to His heavenly Father. But He saw, too, a great enemy robbing God of His precious harvest. And he bade the disciples pray and toil that the harvest might be saved and garnered. This work is still going on, and each of us is called to a share in it. It is the most glorious work in the world, and its reward will be the joy unspeakable of the harvest home.

As I was with Moses, so I will be with thee, v. 5. Reading the history of the past is like walking through a gallery, on whose walls are hung the pictures of heroes of the long ago. Their mighty deeds pass in all their golden glory before our imagination, and beside their lives, ours seem dull and commonplace. But there is no monopoly of heroism. The power to live nobly is intended, not for a favored few, but for all. The fountain of that power is in God Himself, and He remains the same from age to age. He still calls us to fight the great battle with self and sin—a conflict that demands all the strength and courage we can obtain. Let us never fear that the supply of these will fail us. It is infinite as God Himself, and free as the air.

Be strong and of a good courage, v. 6. In a busy city street, a huge building is being erected. Immense stones must be lifted to a great height and fitted into their places. It is amazing to see how easily the derrick picks up

the tremendous weights and swings them hither and thither at the will of the operator. There is a lesson for us in all this. The most difficult tasks become easy, when we lay hold, as we may do, of God's strength. Nothing is too hard for Him.

Turn not to the right hand, or to the left, v. 7. The only safe way through life is that marked out by God's Word. However attractive other ways may be, they lead at last to misery and shame. At a certain point in their journey, Christian and Hopeful, in The Pilgrim's Progress, came to a stile leading into a path to the left of the road, through By-path Meadow. Because the walking was easier for their feet, the travellers turned aside into the meadow path. But pleasant as the way seemed, it led them at last to the castle of Giant Despair, who put them into "a very dark dungeon."

Withersoever thou goest, v. 9. There is a highway in the Laurentians that I know quite well, and from beginning to end, a gladsome river keeps it company. They turn together, they wind together, the river and the road—the road and the river. Sometimes they seem to part, and for a while the river is hidden by a rock or a clump of trees, only to re-appear again. It is never very far away, and at any time one may turn aside from the dusty road to be refreshed from the brimming river. The angel of God's presence follows along with us in the path of duty.

ONCE IN A WHILE.

Once in awhile the sun shines out,
And the arching skies are a perfect blue;
Once in a while mid clouds of doubt
Hope's brightest stars come peep'ng through.
Our paths lead down by the meadow-fair,
Where the sweetest blossoms nod and smile,
And we lay aside our cross of care
Once in awhile.
Once in awhile within our own
We clasp the hand of a steadfast friend;
Once in awhile we hear a tone
Of love with the heart's own voice to blend;
And the dearest of all our dreams come true,
And on life's way is a golden mile;
Each thirsting flower is kissed with dew
Once in awhile.
Once in awhile in the desert sand
We find a spot of the fairest green;
Once in awhile from where we stand
The hills of Paradise are seen;
And a perfect joy in our hearts we hold.
A joy that the world cannot defile;
We trade earth's dross for the purest gold
Once in awhile.

—Nixon Waterman.

A father had a wayward son, who had almost broken his heart. He went about from day to day bearing a weight of anxiety in his breast. One day it occurred to him that perhaps he also had grieved his heavenly Father, and wounded divine love as his son had wounded him. The thought brought him to repentance, and by this means he was won to Jesus Christ.

"He only is advancing in life whose heart is getting softer, whose brain is quicker, whose spirit is entering into living space."

STRENGTH GAINED THROUGH SUFFERING.

Truly our way to eternal joy is to labor and to suffer here with Christ. It is true, and you will find it true when years hence you look back on the events of your lives—you will find, I say, that the very events in your lives which seemed at the time most trying, most vexing, most disastrous, have been those which were most necessary for you, to call out what was good in you, and to purge out what was bad; that by those very troubles your Lord, who knows the value of suffering because He has suffered Himself, was making true men and true women of you; hardening your heads while He softened your hearts; teaching you to obey Him, while He taught you not to obey your own fancies, and your own passions; refining and tempering your characters in the furnace of trial, as the smith refines soft iron into trusty steel; teaching you, as the great poet says:

That life is not as idle ore,
But heated hot with burning fears,
And bathed in baths of hissing tears,
And battered with the strokes of doom,
To shape and use.

—Charles Kingsley.

A PRAYER.

The tides of Thy Spirit seem to be surging over the world, and through Thy Church, O our Father and our God. When we consider the mysterious movings of Thy power and Thy providences, we are ashamed of our smallness of life, of our short-visioned faith, and of our enervating fears. Thou art in our times omniscient, omnipotent and inscrutable Jehovah, and we pray for grace to follow hard after Thy leadings. Make us brave enough to be loyal to Thee, pure enough to be used of Thee, and spiritual enough to understand Thee. Keep us so close to Thy mind that we, too, shall have a world embracing conception of human need and divine mercy. Save us from being failures in our time; make us Thy true soldiers and close friends, all for Thy Name's sake. Amen.

CAST THE NET AGAIN.

"Did you ever notice," said an old lady, smiling into the face of a troubled one before her, "that when the Lord told the discouraged fishermen to cast their nets again, it was right in that same old place where they had been working all night, and had caught nothing? If we could only go off to some new place every time we get discouraged, trying again would be an easier thing. If we could be somebody else, or go somewhere else, or do something else, it might not be hard to have fresh faith and courage, but it is the same old net in the same old pond for most of us. The old temptations are to be overcome, the old faults to be conquered, the old trials and discouragements, before which we failed yesterday to be faced again to-day. We must win success just where we are if we win it at all, and it is the Master Himself who, after all these toils, disheartening efforts that we call failures, bids us "Try again." However it seems to us, nothing can be really failure which is obedience to His command, and some bright morning the great draught of reward will come."—The Wellspring.

The mire of sin may be deep, but the fountain of cleansing is deeper.

*S. S. Lesson, October 6, 1907. Joshua 1:11. Commit to memory v. 7. Read Numbers 27:12-23. Joshua, ch. 1. Golden Text—I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee.—Joshua 1:5.