

SUNDAY
SCHOOL

The Quiet Hour

YOUNG
PEOPLEABRAHAM CALLED TO BE A
BLESSING.

By Rev. Clarence McKinnon, D.D.

Get thee out, v. 1. There is pioneer work for most of us to do. We can go out and hunt in those who do not attend church or Sunday School, and persuade them to come. The world owes a large debt to its pioneers. Why, Africa, long the Dark Continent indeed, its gloom pierced by scarcely a ray of gospel light, is now dotted all over with bright spots, ever becoming larger and more numerous, because men like Livingstone in spite of untold hardships and perils, blazed the way for the coming of the gospel. A very little effort and sacrifice on our part may help to bring the gospel, with its peace and joy, into some heart or home.

I will bless thee, v. 2. The promise comes after the command. It is as if the boss of the gang said to the laborer, "Go to the tool house—;" and then, when the man was starting on his journey, the boss should add, "You will find the foreman there; he is going to advance your wages." If the laborer were not obedient, his wages would not be advanced. If he hesitated about starting, and began to ask, "What is the use of my going there?" he would hear of no advance in his wages. Blessing is for those who ask no questions.

Thou shalt be a blessing, v. 2. When boys and girls go out from the old home, do they go out to be blessings? It was said of Attila, the barbarous king of the Huns, that the grass refused to grow wherever his horse trod. How hateful a path he marked across the continent of Europe! One of the wisest of Englishmen said that it was a worthy feat for any man to make two blades of grass grow where one had been growing. Every one of us is either increasing or decreasing the verdure of life. Which is it, in your case?

Abram departed, v. 4. Half-way religion does not count for much. Terah (ch. 11:3) came from Ur to Haran; he stopped there. He was not willing like Abram to go right on to Canaan. And so Abram's life has influenced the whole history of the world, while Terah is a mere name. If our lives are to tell, we must pay the price of whole-hearted consecration to God and the task He may give us to do.

Lot went with him, v. 4. Good for Lot! He was attached to his godly uncle. Like all young men, he was fond of adventure; but, unlike many, he did not think that to go on a religious pilgrimage was going to take all the relish from the adventure. So many young folk think God is a spoil-sport. The gathering where there is no prayer, the home which cares nothing for the church, the companions that are as ready to swear as to eat, these are what tempt many well brought-up youths. The fact is, that the fun that is irreligious lasts but a little while, and leaves a bad taste in the mouth.

Sichem. v. 5. These were places of no account then, but were to be famous in after years. Abram is an immigrant, destined to make these unknown regions the most celebrated in the world. What are we doing for the future of this new Canada? Macaulay makes the weird prediction of a time when the far New Zealander shall meditate on the fragments of London Bridge, and the ruins of Westminster,

But, even so; his meditation will honor the history of those notable spots. Will the visitor who long hence recalls the history of Canada, have a tale of as much heroism and sacrifice to muse upon? That depends on the people who are now making the history of Canada.

The Canaanite was then in the land, v. 6. He is in every land, this heathen, corrupt, dastardly scoundrel. He represents the human temptation to sin. He is the bad companion. He is the man with the sneer, whom the psalmist calls the "scornful." He is the political "heel-er," whose idea of citizenship is plunder. He is the creature of criminal instincts, sometimes a "hoodlum" on the streets, sometimes a briber of parliaments. Beware of him and his diabolical acts.

Altar, v. 7. Both wise and happy he who takes his worship with him. Those who forget about churches wherever they cannot see a church, and cease to live steady lives as soon as they get where their friends cannot see them, have forgotten to build an altar in their new homes. God is as near to any one part of the earth as to another, and can be worshipped, and His blessing secured, as well in unfamiliar places, as where we have lived for years.

Who appeared unto him, v. 7. At the end of the task comes the vision. One that journeys to some splendid city, may spend many hours on the road before he gets a sight of the goal of his travelling. On the last day it is as little in sight as in the first. Weary and foot-sore, he is tempted to say, "There is no such place." And then, one evening, he rounds a corner, and sees spread before his eyes the city's spires and parks and battlements, a spectacle of beauty and grandeur. So, at the end of life's journey, we shall see the city of the great King, and enjoy His presence forever.

LIGHT FROM THE EAST.

By Rev. James Ross, D.D.

Abram—Many legends gather around him in Jewish literature. One, which hints at the cause of the breach between him and his people, is as follows: Abram had studied one power of nature after another which his people worshipped, and had concluded that they were all creatures. So he asked his father, "Who created the heavens and the earth?" Terah, pointing to one of his idols, said, "This great image, our god." "Then let me bring a sacrifice to him," said Abram, and he ordered a cake of fine flour to be baked and offered to the idol, and when it did not eat, he commanded a still finer meal offering for it. But, as the idol did neither eat nor answer, Abram grew angry and kindled a fire and burned all the gods. When Terah returned, he went to Abram and said, "Who burned my gods?" Abram replied, "The larger one quarreled with the little ones, and burned them in his anger." "Fool that thou art," said Terah, "how canst thou say that he who cannot see, nor hear, nor walk, could have done this?" Then Abram said, "How canst thou forsake the living God, who made all things, to serve gods that can neither see, nor hear, nor walk?"

Oh, what a blessing is Sabbath interposed between the waves of worldly business like the divine path of the Israelites through Jordan! There is nothing in which I advise you to be more strictly conscientious than in keeping the Sabbath holy.—Wilberforce.

The man who can see no good beyond this life has failed to find the highest good in this life.

AFFLICTION.

When the Psalmist said: "It is good for me that I have been afflicted," he was not talking cant. He had reached the point in his earthly career at which he could look back upon the preceding years and see them—much as God sees them—as a whole. He could appreciate the danger of the temptations which he had met, and the necessity of sharp warnings at this point and of actual scourings of the soul at that point, in order to prevent his straying, or to rescue him, already strayed from the way of safety. Such a retrospect of life is granted to each of us at times, and it is full of instruction. It teaches us a tremendous truth, the need and use of unhappiness. Chastening widens experience, deepens sympathy, enlarges the range of friendship, invigorates character, throws the soul back upon God in firmer trust, and does a work for the soul so noble that, if its own character alone be regarded, the divine love behind it and pervading it becomes evident. Blessed are they who no longer need to be assured, because their own hearts have learned the truth and rest upon it.—The Congregationalist.

FORGETFULNESS THAT IS RE-
MEMBERED.

Self remembrance is a sure poison. It stunts our growth, and blocks our progress, and destroys our usefulness. And to be always thinking about ourselves is the surest way to help others to forget us. Some one has gone to the very heart of the matter in the saying: "Once in a great while a man forgets himself into immortality." For when a man cares more about every one else in the world than about himself, the world is not going to forget him. That is one reason why the name of Christ grows greater with every passing year. It is the Christ-way; and this recipe for immortality is only another way of saying that men may find life by losing it.—S. S. Times.

A PRAYER FOR LOVE.

O God the Father almighty, good beyond all that is good, fair beyond all that is fair, in whom is calmness, peace and concord; do Thou remove the dissensions which divide us from each other, and bring us back into an unity of love, which may bear some likeness to Thy nature. And grant that, being made one in Thee, who art above all, and through all, and in all, we may be kept in unity of Thy Spirit in the bond of peace; through that peace of Thine which maketh all things peaceful, and through the grace, mercy, and tenderness of Thine only-begotten Son. Amen.—Book of Common Worship.

NOT TOO WELL.

A friend of Rowland Hill having informed him of the sudden death of a lady, the wife of a minister, remarked: "I am afraid our dear minister loved his wife too well and that the Lord in wisdom called her home."

"What, sir?" exclaimed Mr. Hill with the deepest feeling, "can a man love a good wife too much? Impossible, sir, unless he can love her more than Christ loves the Church. 'Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the Church, and gave himself for it.'—Ex.

Never bear more than one kind of trouble at a time. Some people bear three kinds—all they have had, all they have now, and all they expect to have.—Edward Everett Hale.

*S.S. Lesson February 10, 1907, Genesis 12: 1-8. Commit to memory vs. 1, 3. Read Genesis, chs. 10 to 12. Golden Text.—I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing.—Genesis 12:2.