

and excited in the yellow lamplight. His eyes were dilated with fear; his heart thumped so in the awful pause that followed, that he thought everybody else must hear it.

"I cannot!" he said hoarsely. "Oh, I cannot!"

"Then take yourself out of my sight forever. The doors of this house shall never open for you again!"

There was a storm of abuse from the angry man at this open defiance of his authority. With these two cold, stern men to nod approval at his zealousness, he went to greater lengths than he might otherwise have done.

With one more frightened glance around the table, the child hurried out of the room. The door into the street creaked after him, and Joel limped out into the night, with his uncle's curse ringing in his ears.

CHAPTER IX.

Phineas, going along the beach that night, in the early moonlight, towards his home, saw a little figure crouched in the shadow of a low building beside the wharf. It was shaking with violent sobs. He went up to the child, and took its hands down from its wet face, with a comforting expression of pity. Then he started back in surprise. It was Joel!

"Why, my child! My poor child!" he exclaimed, putting his arm around the trembling, mishapen form. "What is the meaning of all this?"

"Uncle Laban has driven me away from home!" sobbed the boy. "He was angry because you and Rabbi Jesus were invited to Levi-Matthew's feast. He says I have denied the faith, and am worse than an infidel. He says I am fit only to be cast out with the dogs and publicans!—and—and—" he ended with a wail. "Oh, he sent me away with his curse!"

Phineas drew him closer, and stroked the head on his shoulder in pitying silence.

"Fatherless and motherless and lame!" the boy sobbed bitterly. "And now, a homeless outcast, blighted by a curse, I have been sitting here with my feet in the dark water, thinking how easy it would be to slip down into it and forget; but, Rabbi Phineas, that face will not let me,—that face of your friend,—I keep seeing it all the time!"

Phineas gathered the boy so close in his arms that Joel could feel his strong, even heart-beats.

"My child," he said solemnly, "call me no more, Rabbi! Henceforth, it is to be father Phineas. You shall be to me as my own son!"

"But the curse!" sobbed Joel. "The curse that is set upon me! It will blight you too!"

"Nay," was the quiet answer; "for it is written, 'As the bird by wandering, as the swallow by flying, so the curse, causeless, shall not come.'"

But the boy still shook as with a chill. His face and hands were burning hot.

"Come!" said Phineas. He picked him up in his strong arms, and carried him down the beach to Abigail's motherly care and comforting.

"He will be a long time getting over the shock of this," she said to her husband, when he was at last soothed to sleep.

"Ah, loyal little heart!" he answered, "he has suffered much for the sake of his friendship with us!"

Poor little storm-tossed bark! In the days that followed he had reason to bless the boisterous winds that blew him to such a safe and happy harbour!

Over on the horns of Mount Hattin, the spring morning began to shine. The light crept slowly down the side of the old mountain, till it fell on a little group of men talking earnestly together. It was the Preacher of Galilee, who had just chosen twelve men from among those who had followed him to help him in his ministry.

They gathered around him in the fresh mountain dawn, as he pictured the life in store for them. Strange they did not quail before it, and turn back disheartened. Nay, not strange! For in the weeks they had been with him, they had learned to love him so, that his "follow me," that drew them from the

toll-gate and fishing-boat, was stronger than ties of home and kindred.

Just about this time, Phineas and Joel were starting out from Capernaum to the mountain. Hundreds of people were already on the way; people who had come from all parts of Judea, and beyond the Jordan. Clouds of dust rose above the highway as the travellers trudged along.

Joel was obliged to walk slowly, so that by the time they reached the plain below, a great multitude had gathered.

"Let's get close," he whispered. He had heard that those who barely touched the garments of the strange Rabbi were made whole, and it was with the hope that he might steal up and touch him unobserved that he had begged Phineas to take him on such a long, painful walk.

"There is too great a crowd, now," answered Phineas. "Let us rest here awhile, and listen. Let me lift you up on this big rock, so that you can see." "Sh! He is speaking!"

Joel looked up, and, for the second time in his life, listened to words that thrilled him like a trumpet call,—words that through eighteen hundred years have not ceased to vibrate; with what mighty power they must have fallen when, for the first time, they broke the morning stillness of those mountain wilds!

Joel forgot the press of people about him, forgot even where he was, as sentence after sentence seemed to lift him out of himself, till he could catch glimpses of lofty living such as he had never even dreamed of before.

Round by round, he seemed to be carried up some high ladder of thought by that voice, away from all that was common and low and earthly, to a summit of infinite love and light.

Still the voice led on, "Ye have heard that it hath been said, 'An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth.'"

Joel started so violently at hearing his own familiar motto, that he nearly lost his balance on the rock.

"But I say unto you, That you resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. . . . Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you."

Poor little Joel, it was a hard doctrine for him to accept! How could he give up his hope of revenge, when it had grown with his growth till it had come to be as dear as life itself?

He heard little of the rest of the sermon, for through it all the words kept echoing, "Bless them that curse you! Do good to them that hate you! Pray for them which despitefully use you!"

"Oh, I can't! I can't!" he groaned inwardly.

"I have found a chance for you to ride home," said Phineas, when the sermon was over, and the people began to file down the narrow mountain paths. "But there will be time for you to go to him first, for healing. You have only to ask, you know."

Joel took an eager step forward, and then shrank back guiltily. "Not now," he murmured, "some other time." He could not look into those clear eyes and ask a blessing, when he knew his heart was black with hate.

After all his weeks of waiting the opportunity had come; but he dared not let the Sinless One look into his soul.

Phineas began an exclamation of surprise, but was interrupted by some one asking him a question. Joel took advantage of this to climb up behind the man who had offered him a ride. All the way home he weighed the two desires in his mind,—the hope of healing, and the hope of revenge.

By the time the two guardian figures were in sight, he had decided. He would rather go helpless and halting through life than give up his cherished purpose.

But there was no sleep for him that night, after he had gone up to his little chamber on the roof. He seemed to see that pleading face on the mountain-side; it came to him again and again, with the words, "Bless them that curse you! Pray for them that despitefully use you!"

All night he fought against yielding to

it. Time and again he turned over on his bed, and closed his eyes; but it would not let him alone.

He thought of Jacob wrestling with the angel till day-break, and knew in his heart that the sweet spirit of forgiveness striving with his selfish nature was some heavenly impulse from another world.

At last when the cock-crowing commenced at dawn, and the stars were beginning to fade, he drew up his crooked little body, and knelt with his face to the kindling east.

"Father in heaven," he prayed softly, "bless mine enemy Rehum, and forgive all my sins,—fully and freely as I now forgive the wrong he has done to me."

A feeling of light-heartedness and peace, such as he had never known before, stole over him. He could not settle himself to sleep, though worn out with his night's long vigil.

Hastily slipping on his clothes, he tiptoed down the stairs, and limped, bare-headed, down to the beach. The lake shimmered and glowed under the faint rose and gray of the sky like a deep opal. The early breeze blew the hair back from his pale face with a refreshing coolness.

It seemed to him the world had never looked one-half so beautiful before, as he stood there.

A firm tread on the gravel made him turn partly around. A man was coming up the beach; it was the friend of Phineas. As if drawn by some uncontrollable impulse, Joel started to meet him, an unspoken prayer in his pleading little face.

Not a word was said. For one little instant Joel stood there by the shining sea, his hand held close in the loving hand of the world's Redeemer. For one little instant he looked up into his face; then the man passed on.

Joel covered his face with his hands, seeming to hear the still small voice that spoke to the prophet out of the whirlwind.

"He is the Christ!" he whispered reverently,—"*He is the Christ!*"

In his exalted feeling all thought of a cure had left him; but as he walked on down the beach, he noticed that he no longer limped. He was moving along with strong, quick strides. He shook himself and threw back his shoulders; there was no pain in the movement. He passed his hands over his back and down his limbs.

Oh, he was straight and strong and sinewy! He seemed a stranger to himself, as running and leaping, then stopping to look down and feel his limbs again, he ran madly on.

Suddenly he cast his garments aside and dived into the lake. Before his injury, he had been able to swim like a fish, now he reached out with long powerful strokes that sent him darting through the cold water with a wonderful sense of exhilaration.

Then he dressed again, and went on running and leaping and climbing till he was exhausted, and his first wild delirious joy began to subside into a deep quiet thankfulness. Then he went home, radiant in the happiness of his new-found cure.

But more than the mystery of the miracle, more than the joy of the healing, was the remembrance of that moment, that one little moment, when he felt the clasp of the Master's hand, and seemed wrapped about with the boundless love of God.

From that moment, he lived but to serve and to follow him.

(To be continued.)

JUNIOR EPWORTH LEAGUE.

PRAYER-MEETING TOPIC.

JULY 5, 1896.

Mount Ararat.—Genesis 8. 4, 20-22.

THE PLACE WHERE THE ARK RESTED.

The ark was a unique vessel built by divine command. The world had become very wicked, and God made known to Noah his purpose to destroy mankind except himself and family. The faith of Noah must have been very strong, seeing that he acted according to the instructions which he received. The ark was built of a certain kind of wood. Let the members of our Junior Leagues

find out the kind of wood. The dimensions and the purpose for which the ark was prepared were all specified. Noah was faithful in everything. His faith was tested 120 years.

WHEN THE ARK RESTED.

The first verse in the text tells us when. Five months after the commencement of the flood the ark was brought to a resting-place. This mountain has ever since been a celebrated place in the world. It is a mountain of great height, being more than 16,000 feet above the level of the sea. Few persons have ever been able to attain its summit. Some have disputed as to whether the ark did rest here. It is enough for us to follow the statement of Scripture.

RELIGIOUS SERVICE.

Noah had seen much of the goodness of God in sparing him and his family. Now that the ark has rested, what did he do? Read verses 20, 21. This conduct is worthy of commendation. How many forget to acknowledge the hand of God in their affairs. Noah was not of this class. John Howe was accustomed to say, "Wherever God gives me a cot, I will build for him an altar."

DIVINE PROMISE.

Verse 22. God has kept his promise. His promises never fail. Be encouraged to believe him. Trust in him with all your heart. He will next destroy the world with fire. Prepare for judgment.

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Pleasant Hours:

A PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK.

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

TORONTO, JUNE 27, 1896.

Canada is a very large country and it takes more than a week to reach its remotest parts. We, therefore, have to mail our Sunday-school papers from eight to twelve days before, that they may reach the more distant points in time for distribution on the date printed on the paper. Ontario schools sometimes complain that they have two packages for one week, and none the previous week. This is due to these schools delivering the papers a week ahead of the proper date, and to a delay in the mail, or it may be a delay in the mailing.

The circulation of these papers has increased so fast that successive editions have had to be printed to meet the supply. Schools should never distribute the papers before the date mentioned on the first page. The number contains the lessons, lesson notes, and poems for the following week. The design is that the teachers and scholars may have these for reading and study for a full week before the lessons are taught in the schools. Observance of this rule will prevent all cause of complaint.