

SUNDAY
SCHOOL

The Quiet Hour

YOUNG
PEOPLE

RUTH'S WISE CHOICE.*

By Rev. Prof. MacKenzie, B.D.

Orpah kissed Ruth, and she gave her up. v. 14. Travelling by rail from England to Scotland, the train crosses a narrow stream dividing the two countries. Northward from this thread of water lies the "land of brown heath and shaggy wood, land of the mountain and the flood," while southward one can almost see the glare and hear the roar of the wonderful metropolis of London. Like Orpah and Ruth, every young man and woman comes to a dividing line in life. In one direction runs the path of duty, it may be of stern self-denial; in the other, the primrose way of pleasure and ambition. Happy those who turn resolute hearts and faces whither God's voice calls, to share with His people in His blessed service.

Return thou after thy sister in law, v. 15. Was Ruth moved merely by an impulse of passionate regret, or by a well considered purpose firmly rooted enough to stand against every wind of privation and hardship? Would she be content to dwell in a land, home indeed to Naomi, but alien to herself? Naomi's counsel, in which her true unselfishness shines out, was a test of Ruth's steadfastness, and right nobly she endured it. So Joshua, after his people had exclaimed, "God forbid that we should forsake the Lord." (Josh. 24: 16), said to him, "Ye cannot serve the Lord." (v. 21.) And our Lord warned those who would come after Him, that they must count the cost, like a man building a tower, or a king planning a campaign, (see Luke 14:28-33.) We must lay our account with trials and difficulties that will strain to the utmost our faith and courage. If we would follow Jesus. "Quit you like men," is the trumpet call of the brave and resolute apostle Paul. The battles of the Christian and of the church call for those who will not fall nor flinch in the hour of toil and peril.

Entreat me not to leave thee, v. 16. For love to a person, men have always been ready to do and to dare. And no person has so won and held the love of men as Jesus. His love seen in His self-denying life, and especially in His death on Calvary's hill, has bound His followers to Him with bonds that cannot be broken. Apostles and martyrs and missionaries have faced death in a thousand terrible forms out of love to Him. Multitudes are to-day spending themselves in strenuous toil for the spread of His gospel, or in stalwart testimony for Him in the busy marts of trade and commerce, or in the sweet ministries of the home; and all for His dear sake. "For Jesus' sake," is the spring and moving power, day by day, of countless noble and unselfish deeds. And who could be more worthy of our love and service? He was rich; for our sakes He became poor. His by right was the throne of heaven; for us and our salvation, He endured the shame and agony of the cross. To gaze upon Him is to have kindled and kept alive within our breast the flame of a deathless personal affection that will find expression in glad and grateful obedience. No task will seem too difficult, no service too irksome, to undertake out of love to Him who so loved us.

Thy God my God, v. 18. In the Chin-

*S. S. Lesson, December 8, 1907. Ruth 1:14-22. Commit to Memory vs. 16, 17. Read Ruth, chs. 1 to 4. Golden Text—Thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God.—Ruth 1:16.

ese city of Wen-hoi, in the year 1838, lived a wretched victim of the opium habit. He longed to be cured, and at last he heard of a R-fuge in Hung-tung, a hundred miles away, for this cure of opium users. He found his way thither, and was delivered from this dreadful bondage. Best of all, he was set free from the slavery of sin by trust in Jesus. He returned to his own city, rejoicing in his deliverance and eager to share with others the blessings for body and soul which he had received. Not long after, two or three other strangers arrived in Hung-tung. "We are friends," they said, "of Mr. —. He told us of the Refuge. We, too, want to be cured and believe in Jesus." The healed and believe in Jesus." The healed world is full of men and women, enslaved, soul and body, by vices without number. In the gospel of Jesus Christ, we have the power that can save them and set them free. Ours may be the privilege and the joy of carrying or sending the message of deliverance and peace to the ends of the earth.

They went, they came, v. 19. These words are the two clasps of the volume of life. In the story before us, it was a journey well ended. Ruth's resolve was splendid; how much better to see it brought to a successful issue. We can call no man a hero till after the march is over and the victory won. The shot-pierced flag brought home from the victorious campaign is more interesting by far, than the new and unstained banner. There is one, and one only, unfailing guarantee that our life journey will have a happy and successful ending, that our life battles will result in final and complete victory—it is to make, at the very beginning of life, Ruth's choice that the true and living God shall be our God and His people our people. Then our path will be safe, and its goal blessed.

PRAYER.

We bless Thee for Thy house. We run into it and are safe; we sit down within it and are conscious of a Father's blessing; we look forward to it, and it is as the rising of the sun. Pity us in our littlenesses and weaknesses, in our infirmities of every kind; and let Thy pity grow into pardon when it fixes the eyes filled with tears upon our guilt and iniquity; cover it up, we beseech Thee; bless us with a sense of forgiveness, and dry the tears of our penitence with the assurance of Divine pardon. The Lord's mercy be the secret of our life, the spring of our consolation, the pledge of our immortality in heaven. And to the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost, Three in One, One in Three, be the kingdom and the power and the glory, world without end. Amen.

Christ said, "Ye are my witnesses." When John the Baptist was asked if he was Christ, he said he was not, but that he was "a voice." You and I can always at least be "a voice;" we can, under all circumstances, speak a word for Jesus and His cause. You may say that you cannot "do" anything; but you can talk, can't you? And even though your tongue be paralyzed, you can always live upon Jesus' side, take your stand with His disciples.

Before you begin any undertaking seek first to know if it is the will of God. It is shameful to have to ask Him to help us out of a predicament into which we would not have plunged had we shown respect to his safe counsels.

FORGOTTEN WORKERS.

Little men do work for which great men get credit. Unseen men, unknown men, lay foundations, upon which others erect monuments and establish their own fame.

The nurse instructing a little child, the mother forming the mind of her offspring, the teacher communicating the first elements of truth or the first principles of righteousness, these are the persons who if they do their work well ensure the purity of the family, the prosperity of the community, the blessing of God upon the generation to come.

O lowly, lonely worker, toil on. Let your little work for God be done faithfully, and done well. Others may take the credit of the work you wrought, and boast of great results and great success, but God knows the beginning and the end of our labors; and the day is coming when he shall bring to light all hidden things, and give to every man according as his work shall be. What revelations shall then astonish the holders, when great things shall be made small, and little things shall shine forth in grandeur, when many that are now first shall be last, and many that are now last shall be first. —Selected.

TESTED BY BLESSINGS.

Not every one is entrusted with the discipline of the deepest waters of affliction. Joseph was enough of a man to be allowed to go to Pit College and the University of Arabia, as two lesson-writers have suggested. Not all of us would stand just such training, therefore it is not given to us. But we are all under testing and training that is ample for our growth. Some of us are being tested by seeming ease and prosperity. There is nothing harder to take aright than that. And if things are not blocking our path, how much greater is our responsibility to move ahead as God directs! If we are not being misunderstood and unjustly attacked, how rich is our opportunity to carry out His plans! Yet the healthy affliction of personal temptation is always with us, and we may, if we will, make that the gymnasium of our strength-bringing struggles. If we are freed from every opposition save that of our own sins, how much greater the shame if we do not conquer these 1-8, 8. Times.

THE DISCIPLINE OF DELAY.

God's best gifts come slowly. We could not use them as He wants us to use them if they did not. Many a man who is called of God to the doing of a work in which he is pouring out his life, and rightly convinced that God means to bring that work to abundant success, nevertheless grows discouraged at times and chafes that "results" do not come. But growth and strength in waiting are results, greater results often than the end that is so impatiently longed for. No one who has ever done really great things for God did them quickly. Paul had time to realize this as he lay in prison; Moses must have wondered "why" many times during the delays in Midian and the wilderness. Jesus, himself, experienced the discipline of delay in His thirty silent years. God means to send us that success in His work that we so eagerly pray for. But He cannot send it until the blessing of waiting has first fitted us to use the later blessing aright when it comes. Our acceptance of this preliminary blessing determines our receiving of that for which we wait.