

SUNDAY
SCHOOL

The Quiet Hour

YOUNG
PEOPLE

THE TWO REPORTS OF THE SPIES.*

By Rev. Clarence Mackinnon, B.D.,
Winnipeg.

Go, v. 17. In this word of two letters, are summed up the marching orders of every follower of Jesus. And how great the need is in the heathen world, that we should go to its countless millions with the glad tidings of salvation! From the famous African mission field of Old Calabar, a missionary writes to Scotland pleading for two missionaries to be placed in a district where each of them could easily reach a hundred thousand people. And from all over heathendom there are heard calls equally urgent.

Be ye of good courage, v. 20. Peto and Elstowe dared to speak out bravely about the misdeeds of Henry VIII. They were summoned before the king's court to receive a reprimand. One time-serving courtier remarked that they ought to be sewn in a sack and flung into the River Thames. But Elstowe replied, "Threaten such things to rich and dainty folk, who have their hope in this world; we fear them not, we know the way to heaven to be as ready by water as by land." Such men could not be daunted by cruel threat. Nor should the Christian ever lack courage. His chief hope is not in what men can do for him, but in what God has promised; and God will not deceive him.

One cluster of grapes, v. 23.—Spurgeon was on one occasion in great despondency, when an aged minister, who was blind and had been so for twenty years, arose and spoke. With a weak voice the tremulous old man talked of the faithfulness of God. But though the voice might be weak, the tone was firm, for the old man spoke of what he himself had tasted and seen, and his words fell with such force and unction, that they brought fresh comfort to the soul of the great preacher. Such ripe experience was like a cluster of grapes that had matured on a branch long grafted into the true Vine. It was the best evidence of the fertility of the Christian life, and it was the best sustenance for a fainting spirit. Everybody who walks humbly with God, whatever his trials may be, will always carry such clusters of grapes for the weary pilgrim.

The children of Anak, v. 28.—In Luther's Table Talk we read the following quaint rebuke: "At one time I was sorely vexed and tried by my own sinfulness, by the wickedness of the world, and by the dangers that beset the church. One morning I saw my wife dressed in mourning. Surprised, I asked her who had died. 'Do you not know?' she replied, 'God in heaven is dead.' 'How can you talk such nonsense, Katie?' I said. 'How can God die? Why, He is immortal and will live through all eternity.' 'Is that really true?' she asked. 'And yet, though you do not doubt that, you are so hopeless and discouraged.' Then I observed what a wise woman my wife was, and mastered my sadness." When, like Luther, we are cast down by the many enemies which war against our Lord, when we are fearful because these children of Anak appear such huge and invincible giants, let us remember that God lives, and that His power is superior to all enemies combined. "If God be for us, who can be against us?" (Rom. 8: 31.)

S.S. Lesson, September 1, 1907. Numbers 13: 17-20, 23-33. Commit to memory vs. 30, 31. Read Numbers, chs. 13, 14. Golden Text—The Lord is with us; fear them not.—Numbers 14: 9.

At once, v. 30. "Mother, do I always obey you?" asked a little girl. "You know best yourself," was the discreet answer of her parent. "Well, I never disobey you," went on the little girl, "I always do what you bid me, but sometimes I go slow." For how much disobedience is "going slow" responsible! We mean to do the thing, but we procrastinate so long that at length it is never done. Success in life depends in no small measure upon punctuality. We take the short route to Canaan when we obey at once. If we procrastinate at the critical moment, we shall most likely wander forty years in the wilderness. Nelson once said, "I owe all my success in life to having been always a quarter of an hour before my time." Many a saint in glory could likewise testify how much he owed to promptness of decision and action.

A PRAYER.

Our Father, who knowest the difficulties and dangers of daily life in endurance of sorrow and loneliness, in contact with sin and worldliness, in encounters with greed and selfishness, we pray Thee for such radiant revelations of Thy love that we may never be affrighted at anything we shall be called to meet or bear. Keep us from murmuring over the weight of our burdens, the roughness and dustiness of our journeys and the frequency of our foes. Whatever comes to us in the work of today, may we recognize and reverence it as part of our equipment for better work tomorrow—as a tool put in our hand, or as training in the interests of inner workmanship.

We pray Thee also for the enrichment of that life which lieth out of sight, of that real self which is beneath the threshold of consciousness. May so much of us, as is thus hidden, be hidden with Thee in Christ. Then, when the shadows lengthen and the evening comes, may we not dread the disclosures of the resurrection dawn, nor shrink from the revelation of what we really are. But, when the morning breaks and we have no longer any secrets from ourselves, may we be found worthy of light and life and immortality. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

SIN ALWAYS DEFILING.

It is a mistake to suppose that one is more likely to become a great saint because he has once been a great sinner. The two conditions have nothing in common. Paul was not great in righteousness because he looked upon himself as "the chief of sinners." He could say, "By the grace of God, I am what I am." Peter was not better because he denied his Lord. The remembrance of sin may stimulate a good man to greater zeal in religion; but it is the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and not the remembrance of his evil life, that makes him what he is. Thousands of men have recalled the iniquity of their earlier years and have not been made any better by it. Neither sin, nor the remembrance of sin, can make the character pure. "Thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine," was not spoken of the prodigal. The remembrance that a man once smeared himself with filth does not make his complexion any fairer. There is nothing in sin to make any one's character beautiful or his life better. Grace and purity do not come from beneath, but from above.—United Presbyterian.

THE POWER OF CHRIST.

There is an invisible source of energy of which everyone may avail himself; but this energy is available only for good, never for evil. It is more than a match for all the evil forces which combine to turn us away from the right way. It is abundantly sufficient to support us in all the adversities of this world. It is fully adequate to any burdens of duty which may be laid upon us.

Paul was greatly afflicted. He calls his affliction a thorn in the flesh. What that was we know not, except that it was some exceedingly sharp pain. He prayed three times for its removal, and this is the answer he received, "My grace is sufficient for thee." The grace of Christ is an inward energy which He bestows on all those who follow Him and trust in Him. Paul felt himself stronger with his affliction than without it, because of the support of this grace. Therefore he says, "I will glory in my infirmity." He had other things in which he might glory. He had a wonderful vision. He was caught up into the third heaven, where he saw and heard things which it was not lawful to tell. But he would not glory in this vision. He rather glories in his affliction, because this furnishes a splendid opportunity for the grace of God to manifest itself through him. No matter what comes so it be a channel for the grace of God to flow into the soul. "I will glory in mine infirmity that the power of Christ may rest upon me."

Let no one flee from his affliction. Let him not fear tribulation. Terrible as it may seem, grace is more than a match for it. The power of Christ is the chief thing. We may be weak and helpless in ourselves, but nothing is too hard for us if the power of Christ shall rest upon us.

THE LIGHT.

I saw a little blade of grass
Just peeping from the sod,
And asked it why it sought to pass
Beyond its present clod.
It seemed to raise its tiny head,
All sparkling, fresh and bright,
And wondering at the question, said,
"I rise to seek the light."

—Anon.

"LO! IT IS NIGH THEE."

The surprise of life always comes in finding how we have missed the things that have been nearest to us; how we have gone far away to seek that which was close by our side all the time, says Phillip Brooks. Men who live best and longest are apt to come, as the result of all their living, to the conviction that life is not only richer but simpler than it seems to them at first. Men go to vast labor seeking after peace and happiness. It seems to them as if it were far away from them, as if they must go through vast and strange regions to get it. They must pile up wealth, they must see every possible danger of mishap guarded against, before they can have peace. Upon how many old men has it come with a strange surprise that peace could come to rich and poor only with contentment, and that they might as well have been content at the very beginning as at the very end of life! They have made a long journey for their treasure, and when at last they stoop to pick it up, lo! it is shining close beside the footprints which they left when they set out to travel in a circle. —J. R. Miller.