

leap as a hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing!" Yea, he hath bound up the broken-hearted; and he shall yet 'proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord!"

Then with both hands clasped high above his head, he made the prison ring with the cry, "The kingdom is at hand! The kingdom is at hand! I shall soon be free!"

Not long after that, the castle blazed with the lights of another banquet. The faint aroma of wines, mingled with the heavy odour of countless flowers, could not penetrate the grim prison walls. Nor could the gay snatches of song and the revelry of the feast. No sound of applause reached the prisoner's ear, when the daughter of Herodias danced before the king.

Sitting in darkness while the birthday banqueters held high carnival, he heard the heavy tramp of soldiers' feet coming down the stairs to his dungeon. The great bolts shot back, the rusty hinges turned, and a lantern flickered its light in his face, as he stood up to receive his executioners.

A little while later his severed head was taken on a charger to the smiling dancing girl. She stifled a shriek when she saw it; but the wicked Herodias looked at it with a gleam of triumph in her treacherous black eyes.

When the lights were out, and the feasters gone, two men came in at the warden's bidding—two men with heavy hearts, and voices that shook a little when they spoke to each other. They were Timeus and Benjamin. Silently they lifted the body of their beloved master, and carried it away for burial; and if a tear or two found an unaccustomed path down their bearded cheeks, no one knew it, under cover of the darkness.

So, out of the Black Castle of Macherus, out of the prison-house of a mortal body, the white-souled prophet of the wilderness went forth at last into liberty.

For him, the kingdom was indeed at hand.

Meanwhile, in the upper country, Phineas was following his friend from village to village. He had dropped his old familiar form of address, so much was he impressed by the mysterious power he saw constantly displayed.

Now when he spoke of the man who had been both friend and playfellow, it was almost reverently that he gave him the title of Master.

It was with a heavy heart that Joel watched them go away. He, too, longed to follow; but he knew that unless he took the place at the bench, Phineas could not be free to go.

Gratitude held him to his post. No, not gratitude alone; he was learning the Master's own spirit of loving self-sacrifice. As he dropped the plumb-line over his work, he measured himself by that perfect life, and tried to straighten himself to its unbending standard.

He had his reward in the look of pleasure that he saw on the carpenter's face when Phineas came in, unexpectedly, one day, dusty and travel-stained.

"How much you have accomplished!" he said in surprise. "You have filled my place like a grown man."

Joel stretched his strong arms with a slight laugh. "It is a pleasure to work now," he said. "It seems so queer never to have a pain, or that worn-out feeling of weakness that used to be always with me. At first I was often afraid it was all a happy dream, and could not last. I am getting used to it now. Where is the Master?" Joel asked, as Phineas turned toward the house.

"He is the guest of Simon. He will be here some days, my son. I know you wish to be with him as much as possible, so I shall not expect your help as long as he stays."

"If I could only do something for him!" was Joel's constant thought during the next few days. Once he took a coin from the little money bag that held his hoarded savings—a coin that was to have helped buy his revenge—and bought the ripest, juiciest pear he could find in the market. Often he brought him water, fresh and cold from the well when he looked tired and warm from his unceasing work.

Wherever the Master turned, there, close beside him, was a beaming little face, so full of love and childish sympathy that it must have brought more refreshment to his thirsty soul than either the choice fruit or the cooling water.

One evening after a busy day, when he had talked for hours to the people on the seashore who had gathered around the boat in which he sat, he sent away the multitude.

"Let us pass over unto the other side," he said.

Joel slipped up to Andrew, who was busily arranging their sails. "Let me go, too!" he whispered pleadingly.

"Well," assented the man, carelessly, "You can make yourself useful, I suppose. Will you hand me that rope?"

Joel sprang to obey. Presently the boat pushed away from the shore, and the town, with its tumult and its twinkling lights, were soon left far behind.

The sea was like glass, so calm and untroubled that every star above could look down and see its unbroken reflection in the dark water below.

Joel, in the hinder part of the ship, lay back in his seat with a sigh of perfect enjoyment. The smooth gliding motion of the boat rested him; the soft splash of the water soothed his excited brain. He had seen his Uncle Laban that afternoon among other of the scribes and Pharisees, and heard him declare that Beelzebub alone was responsible for the wonders they witnessed.

Joel's indignation flared up again at the memory. He looked down at the Master, who had fallen asleep on a pillow, and wondered how anybody could possibly believe such evil things about him.

It was cooler out where they were now. He wondered if he ought not to lay some covering over the sleeping form. He took off the outer mantle that he wore, and bent forward to lay it over the Master's feet. But he drew back timidly, afraid of awakening him. "I'll wait awhile," he said to himself, folding the garment across his knees in readiness.

Several times he reached forward to lay it over him, and each time drew back. Then he fell asleep himself.

From its situation in the basin of the hills, the Galilee is subject to sudden and furious storms. The winds, rushing down the heights, meet and clash above the water, till the waves run up like walls, then sink again into seething whirlpools of danger.

Joel, falling asleep in a dead calm, awoke to find the ship rolling and tossing and half-full of water. The lightning's track was followed so closely by the crash of thunder, there was not even pause enough between to take one terrified gasp.

Still the Master slept. Joel, drenched to the skin, slung to the boat's side, expecting that every minute would be his last. It was so dark and wild and awful! How helpless they were, buffeted about in the fury of the storm!

As wave after wave beat in, some of the men could no longer control their fear.

"Master!" they called to the sleeping man, as they lent over him in terror. "Carest thou not that we perish?"

He heard the cry for help. The storm could not waken him from his deep sleep of exhaustion, but at the first despairing cry, he was up, ready to help.

Looking up at the midnight blackness of the sky, and down at the wild waste of waters, he stretched out his hand.

"Peace!" he commanded in a deep voice. "Be still!" The storm sank to earth as suddenly as a death-stricken raven; a great calm spread over the face of the waters. The silent stars shone out in their places; the silent sea mirrored back their glory at his feet.

The men huddled fearfully together. "What manner of man is this?" they asked, one of another. "Even the wind and the sea obey him!"

Joel, looking up at the majestic form, standing so quietly by the railing, thought of the voice that once rang out over the night of Creation with the command, "Let there be light!" At its mere bidding light had flowed in across the darkness of primeval night.

Just so had this voice thrilled the storm with its "Peace! Be still!" into utter calm.

The child crouched at his feet, burying his face in his mantle, and whispering, in awe and adoration, "He is the Christ! He is the son of God!"

(To be continued.)

### The Angels' Ladder.

"If there were a ladder, mother, Between the earth and sky, As in the days so long ago, I would bid you all good-bye, And go through every country, And search from town to town, Till I had found the ladder, With angels coming down.

"Then I would wait, quite softly, Beside the lowest round, Till the sweetest-looking angel Had stepped upon the ground; I would pull his dazzling garment, And speak out very plain: 'Will you take me, please, to heaven When you go back again?'"

"Ah, darling," said the mother, "You need not wander so To find the golden ladder Where angels come and go. Wherever gentle kindness Or pitying love abounds, There is the wondrous ladder, With angels on the rounds."

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### Pleasant Hours:

A PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK.  
Rev. W. H. Withrow, D.D., Editor.

TORONTO, JULY 4, 1896.

### A BUSHEL OF CORN.

Said a man recently to a Chicago reporter: "Do you see that man over there? Well, he's a farmer down near Elgin. He and a friend are going to get a drink. The farmer will pay for it. That man will sweat two mortal hours next spring to plough enough ground to raise one bushel of corn. The bushel of corn he will sell for thirty cents. He is going in there now to spend the thirty cents for two drinks. The farmer and corn have parted. What becomes of the seventeen quarts of whiskey—four and one quarter gallons. The distillery gets its first profit—forty cents a gallon. There you are—\$2 for that bushel of corn. The Government comes in for ninety cents a gallon—\$3.85, added to the \$2 makes \$5.85. That brings the product of the bushel of corn down to the jobber and the wholesaler, and finally by several stages to the retailer. By the time it reaches the latter the bushel of corn, or its product of four and one-half, which means eight and one-half gallons. There are sixty drinks to the gallon. Eight and one-half gallons means five hundred and ten drinks, at fifteen cents each. There we have

\$76.50 as the consumer's price for a bushel of corn, which the farmer raises and sells for thirty cents. The farmer spent his whole bushel of corn on the price of two drinks, and the people who did not till the soil get away with \$76.20." How long will it take a farmer to get rich if he sells his corn for thirty cents a bushel and buys it back at \$76.50? This is the problem for the nation to solve.

### JUNIO EPWORTH LEAGUE. PRAYER-MEETING TOPIC.

JULY 12, 1896.

Hebron.—Genesis 13. 18; 23. 2; Josh. 14. 13.

AN OLD CITY.

Only few cities older than Hebron, said to have been built seven years before Zoan, the capital of Lower Egypt. It was about eighteen miles from Jerusalem. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob spent many years of their respective lives at this place, and their residence there added not a little to its celebrity. Distinguished citizens have often added to the importance of places because of their residence there. Is the place of your residence better for your being one of its citizens? Abraham built an altar here.

SARAH DIED AT HEBRON.

Abraham's piety did not exempt him from affliction, and the death of his beloved Sarah was such an affliction as none can understand but those who have been similarly afflicted. No place, however sacred, is invulnerable to death. The shafts of the last enemy fly abroad everywhere. Live in a state so as to be ready to leave the world at any moment.

CALEB'S INHERITANCE.

You know the story of the spies, twelve in number, who went to spy out the land of Canaan. You have not forgotten the faithless manner in which ten of these persons acted. They brought a bad report concerning Canaan. Caleb and Joshua were faithful to their trust. They had strong faith in God that he would enable them to conquer their foes. His words to the people were words of cheer. He followed the Lord fully. He was a brave man among cowards, a real hero. Imitate him. You know that

"Lives of great men oft remind us,  
We may make our lives sublime."

GOD REWARDS FAITHFULNESS.

"Them that honour me, I will honour," saith the Lord. Caleb and Joshua honoured God by their fidelity, and see how he honoured them. Caleb was rewarded even in this world. Joshua became a distinguished general and successor of Moses. Do you not call to mind what the apostle says, that "Godliness is profitable unto all things." He may not see fit to reward us after the same manner as he did those distinguished men, but verily there is a reward for the righteous. Great peace have they that love God's law. He is their sun and shield.

### LIFE A FAILURE.

A gentleman of high standing—a lawyer, a politician, a man of talents, and, as the world estimates, a man who was successful in all his undertakings—was suddenly arrested by disease, and soon brought to the close of life. As it was evident that he could not live but a few days, he was asked by a friend how he felt, as he looked back upon his past life. And the answer, coming from a man of sense and thought, with eternity moribund: "With all its success, I now see and feel that my life has been a failure! I have not gained one of the great ends for which life was given, and now it is too late to gain them!"

What a thought, what a feeling, what a prospect for the hour when life is closing, and eternity is to be entered, and character, and destiny, and state, are to be forever fixed? What a lesson to impress on all right views of the great ends for which life was given, and to lead every one so to live here prepared for the life beyond this world.