

## Junior Department

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### Weekly Topics

July 16.—"The end of a good man's life." Deut. 34.

The good man was Moses. His life was near its end when God showed him in vision all the land of Canaan. Then, as in v. 5, he died somewhere in the land of Moab; but just where no man knows. The life of Moses divides itself into three sections of about equal length. He was 120 years old at his death. The first third of his life (40 years) was spent in Egypt as a member of the royal household of Pharaoh. The second third (40 years) was spent in Midian in the household of Jethro, his father-in-law. The last third (40 years) was spent in conducting the children of Israel through the wilderness. But it is principally with the character of Moses that we have to do to-day. What kind of a man was he? Verses 10-12 of the chapter tell us clearly. He was the greatest man of his times. He is still held in highest esteem as one of the world's wisest law-givers. Make your treatment of this subject centre in two thoughts called forth by the concluding verses of the chapter. 1. The secret of Moses' greatness was goodness. See this in the words, "whom the Lord knew face to face." Fellowship with God is the thought. Moses lived in close touch with God. That is the source of all goodness. "Abide in me and I in you," said the Saviour. There is no goodness without communion with God. This must be the habit of our lives. Prayer is its medium. We cannot be good without praying. It has always been true. God's truest and most successful servants have lived very near to him, and thus have found and kept their holiness of character and power to serve him. 2. The way Moses became great as well as good. "Which the Lord sent him to do." That is, he was obedient to God's command. He did what God commanded him. Obedience is as necessary as prayer. It grows out of true prayer. We pray to God that we may know his will. We prove our love and loyalty by doing it. Goodness and greatness with Moses went hand-in-hand. Do not try to separate them. Goodness is greatness. Greatness is impossible in God's sight without goodness. Moses was not working for fame, but he became very famous, more so, we are told, than any other prophet in Israel. His name and character live still in the hearts of millions. "The true secret of success lies in doing our best without a thought of fame." Apply this to ordinary every-day duties. Show the Juniors that to do one's best we must be at one's best. We cannot be this without living near to God. We cannot do our best without the help that God thus gives us. He made Moses strong to do and to endure. He will do the same with us. Then, death will be to us as to Moses, the glorious end of a busy life of service for God and our fellow-men. If you desire to extend your study, cite illustrations from the record to show Moses as a man of

**Meekness.**  
**Obedience.**  
**Service.**  
**Enthusiasm.**  
**Self-sacrifice.**

July 23.—"A courage meeting." Joshua 1. 1-9.

After Moses, came Joshua. His task was by no means an easy one. God knew that there would be many difficulties in his way; so he spoke to him to strengthen and encourage him. The repeated advice and appeal is, "Be strong and of a good courage." "Be thou strong and very courageous." It was but a simple matter to find out the reasons for this counsel. But it is not just with Joshua that the lesson deals. The need of to-day, our own circumstances, make the same advice appropriate. What was it in general terms that Joshua was to do? See v. 7. He was to take a straight course of obedience to God's Word, turning neither to the right nor left. God asks just as much from us still. Sometimes it is easier to go a little to one side than to keep straight ahead. Nothing justifies compromise. Joshua was to do right always. So are we. There is no excuse for wrong. There is no apology for not doing right. We cannot say, "I can't," and we dare not say, "I won't." If we say, "I will," we shall prosper and have good success. See this in the text of the lesson. The last clause of the lesson gives us the secret of success. "The Lord is with thee." Not only is this true in a general sense, but it is correct always. "Whithersoever thou goest," are the words of the promise. That is, if we go straight on in doing God's will, we may count on his being near to help and encourage. We need courage. We must be strong. Faith in God and obedience to his will at all times are not easy things to get and manifest. But God does not ask us to do impossible things. If we will we can. Show that Joshua was strong in faith. He did not ask for reasons; but did what God said, though it seemed impossible. Crossing the Jordan, besieging Jericho, taking Ai, and many other instances go to show how strong his faith was in God's presence and guidance. He was strong in doing as well as believing. He did because he believed.

July 30.—"A lesson in kindness." Joshua 2. 12-14.

This is the story of Rahab. Tell it or have it told in simple words, as given in the earlier verses of this second chapter. The modern adage is that "one good turn deserves another." The truth is that a kind word or act is a seed that bears fruit after many days. "Kind words can never die." Whether or not Rahab was disinterested in her kindness to the spies is of no particular moment here; but it will be well to advise the Juniors not to do kind things just in the hope or expectation of getting something for so doing; but to cultivate kindness for its own sake. This means the possession of a Christ-like spirit in our hearts. He is the great and only perfect example of kindness. "He came not to be ministered unto, but to minister." He "gave his life a ransom for many." So we are exhorted to do good to all, hoping for nothing in return. So shall our reward be great in the Kingdom of God. (See Matt. 5. 43-48.) Examples of kindness may be cited, and the call to kindness voiced from such passages as 2 Chron. 10. 7; Luke 6. 35; 1 Cor. 13. 4; Eph. 4. 32, etc. It pays to be kind; but we should not be kind simply for that reason. We must do as he does towards others. Cruelty, malice, hate, never pay. We should not refrain from doing them simply because of this, but because they will make us unlike God and unworthy of be-

ing members of his kingdom. Kindness is a virtue we all wish to cultivate therefore. It should be shown to all people. It should include all animals. Even the dumb brutes recognize, and in their way love a kind person. Never speak roughly when a gentle word will do. Never act so as to inflict pain if mild measures will prevail.

August 6.—"Crossing the river."—Joshua 13. 14-17.

The means taken to provide a road across the Jordan, which ran between the Israelites and the fulfilment of God's promise of Canaan, was one to test Joshua's faith and obedience to God. It was a most unusual way of crossing the river. But Joshua did not hesitate. What God had said, he believed, and what God commanded, he obeyed. (Read verses 9-14.) And the river presented no real obstacle. As the people went forward, the way was opened up and they found free passage. So it always is. Many of the difficulties we conjure up exist only in our own imaginations. As we advance the difficulties vanish. As to the crossing of Jordan is at once a memorial to the faithfulness of both God and Joshua. Nothing failed. It is always so. God is always as good as his word, and if his people implicitly trust and obey him, he will neither disappoint nor deceive their hopes. But we must be certain that we are in the way of duty. Remember, that while the River Jordan represented an obstacle that appeared to be humanly impassable, the way of God's appointment was over his banks, across its waters, and the Israelites were safe in going ahead. As long as we are in the way of his appointment we are safe. We may hardly expect to involve ourselves in trouble and then have God work a miracle to deliver us. The price of success in any enterprise is trust and obedience. If we will pay it we shall succeed. God will never leave his obedient servants, his trustful children to suffer loss. This is the great lesson of to-day, and this spirit in history may be such a topic for the next week possible. It is clearly associated with this.

August 13th.—"Lessons from monuments." Joshua 4. 1-9.

Twelve men are appointed to take twelve stones out of Jordan for a memorial of God's merciful deliverance of his people. The story of this and other monuments is simple, but the lessons are profound. (See other monuments, e.g., Bethel, Gen. 28. 16-19; Mizpah, Gen. 31. 45-52; Ebenezer, 1 Sam. 7. 10-12, etc.) The main purpose of Joshua is shown in verse 9. These stones are to be a "sign" to future generations of the mercy of God. We need such reminders, for we are very forgetful. On the one hand, it is Divine providence. On the other, it is human obligation. Every faithful mercy is a call to gratitude. This is the basis of Paul's appeal in Rom. 12. 1. "By the mercies of God . . . a reasonable service." So we are reminded by the monuments of the past of our continued dependence on God; and as the result of this, of our duty to him likewise. "Do not forget" is an old appeal. "Forget not all his benefits." What made the Israelites forget God so easily and so often? Just the same things that make us do so still. Worldliness, selfish arrogance, preoccupation, many selfish lusts came into their hearts and shut God out. Show that the trust and obedience of Joshua, as seen in the last topic, made the erection of this monument possible. So will our trust and al- ment of stones possible. So will our trust and al- ment of stones possible. So will our trust and al- ment of stones possible. So will our trust and al-