

assuring smile lighted up his face as he laid his hand kindly on Joel's shoulder. "I know it, my lad; I have been with him." The quiet positiveness with which he spoke seemed to destroy Joel's last doubt.

"Many things that he said to us come back to me very clearly; and I see now he was trying to prepare us for this."

"Tell me all about them," begged Joel, "and about those last hours he was with you. Oh, if I could only have been with him, too!"

John saw the tears gathering in the boy's eyes, heard the tremble in his voice, and felt a thrill of sympathy as he recognized a kindred love in the little fellow's heart.

So he told Joel of the last supper they had taken together, of the hymn they had sung, and of the watch they had failed to keep, when he took them with him into the garden of Gethsemane. All the little incidents connected with those last solemn hours, he repeated carefully to the listening boy.

From time to time Joel brushed his hand across his eyes; but a deep calm fell over him as John's voice went on, slowly repeating the words the Master had comforted them with.

"Let not your hearts be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions. . . . I go to prepare a place for you. I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also. . . . If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father. . . . These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world."

Joel made an exclamation as if about to speak, and then stopped. "What is it?" asked John.

"How could he mean that he has overcome the world? Caesar still rules, and Jerusalem is full of his enemies. I can't forget that they killed him, even if he has risen."

John stooped to tie his sandal before he answered.

"I have been fitting together different things he told us; and I begin to see how blind we were. Once he called himself the Good Shepherd who would give his life for his sheep, and said, 'Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again.'"

They walked on in silence a few paces, then John asked abruptly, "Do you remember about the children of Israel being so badly bitten by serpents in the wilderness, and how Moses was commanded to set up a brazen serpent in their midst?"

"Yes, indeed!" answered Joel. "All who looked up at it were saved; but those who would not die from the poisonous bites."

"One night," continued John, "a learned man by the name of Nicodemus, one of the rulers, came to the Master with many questions. And I remember one of the answers he gave him. 'As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.' We did not understand him then at all. Not till I saw him lifted up on the cruel cross, did I begin to dimly see what he meant."

A light broke over Joel's face as he remembered the vision he had had that day, kneeling at the foot of the cross; then he stopped still in the road, with his hands clasped in dismay. There suddenly seemed to rise before him the scenes of daily sacrifice in the Temple, when the blood of innocent lambs flowed over the altar; then he thought of the great Day of Atonement, when the poor scape-goat was driven away to its death, laden with the sins of the people.

"Oh, that must be what Isaiah meant!" he cried in distress. "He was brought as a lamb to the slaughter!" Oh, can it be possible that 'the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all?' What an awful sacrifice!"

The tears streamed down his face as the thought came over him with overwhelming conviction, that it was for him

that the man he loved so had endured all the horrible suffering of death by crucifixion.

"Why did such a thing have to be?" he asked, looking up appealingly at his companion.

John looked out and up, as if he saw far beyond the narrow, hill-bound horizon, and quoted softly: "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

Just as the feeling had come to him that morning by the Galilee, and again as he gazed and gazed into the white face on the cross, Joel seemed to feel again the love of the Father, as it took him close into its infinite keeping.

"Greater love hath no man than this," quoted John again, "'that a man lay down his life for his friends.' He is the propitiation for our sins; and not ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world."

It was hard for the boy to understand this at first; but this gentle disciple who walked beside him had walked long beside the Master, and in the Master's own way and words taught Joel life's greatest lesson.

(To be continued.)

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## Pleasant Hours:

A PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK.

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

TORONTO, SEPTEMBER 12, 1896.

### GOOD AS THE BEST, CHEAP AS THE CHEAPEST.

One of the most interesting features of the late International Sunday-school Convention at Boston was the exhibit of Sunday-school literature, embracing lesson helps, Sunday-school magazines and periodicals. The great Sunday-school publishing houses of the continent were represented by handsomely displayed exhibits of their best products of the press. These occupied nearly the whole of the ground floor of the great "Tremont Temple." They were a magnificent demonstration of the profound interest felt in this great evangelistic and educative work, of the enterprise and energy of the publishers, of the great amount of capital and skill employed in their production, and of the enormous circulation of this literature, instinct with the very spirit of the Gospel, and conveying religious teachings of infinite moment. These countless printed pages are scattered "thick as the autumnal leaves that strew the brook of Vallombrosa," and like the leaves of the Tree of Life, are for the healing of the nations.

It was the testimony of competent ob-

servers, that for excellence of printing, beauty of illustration, quantity and quality of lesson notes and comments, and striking economy of price, the Sunday-school publications of the Methodist Church in Canada were not surpassed by any of the great publishing houses. Indeed, it was asserted, that no such value was given for the money in any paper as in Onward.

The past year has been one of the most successful in the history of our periodicals. In almost every one, there has been marked increase in circulation. Indeed, part of the time the presses have been running overtime, as is the case almost every season, to print extra editions of the papers required to meet the growing demand.

### FURTHER ENLARGEMENT AND IMPROVEMENT.

The Methodist motto of our publishing house is "To go on to perfection." The energetic Book Steward, not satisfied with past progress, has determined to make another stride forward. Although the establishment was employing twenty-one presses, and running overtime frequently, sometimes all night, still it was unable to keep up with the increase of its publications. An additional press-room has, therefore, been built, with all modern improvements, containing three large new presses, of the latest and best pattern, which will turn out an increased amount of work of still better character than that heretofore published. These changes furnish facilities for enlarging and greatly improving the quality of our Sunday-school periodicals.

Onward will be enlarged in size, printed on heavier paper, and otherwise improved in quality, without any increase in price. The lesson notes, illustrations, and poems, throwing light upon the text, will be maintained as heretofore. It will also have serial stories and other attractive articles, without abatement of interest.

In Pleasant Hours the improvement will be still more marked. Its pages will be enlarged to the present size of Onward, and it will be printed on heavier paper, with superior press work.

The Sunday-school Banner will continue to hold its place in the very forefront of the lesson helps of the world. It, too, will be so enlarged, as to give an increased number of pages devoted to help, hints, and suggestions for better Sunday-school work. The wide field of the Sunday-school periodicals of this continent and Great Britain will be gleaned for seed thoughts and suggestions for improved methods. Correspondence is solicited from our Canadian schools, which are not less efficient than any in Christendom. Thus shall our Canadian Sunday-school workers contribute to the improvement of home plans, and furnish, also, suggestions for the consecrated toilers in the Sunday-schools of other lands.

Although these improvements involve considerably increased outlay, yet they are made in the interest of our Sunday-schools, and without any addition whatever in the price of the periodicals, the publisher being determined that those of the Methodist Church of Canada shall be cheap as the cheapest, and good as the best.

The changes thus announced will take place with the October issues of these periodicals. It requires considerable time to order paper of the enlarged size and heavier weight, to prepare new chases, or forms, for locking up the type, and making the other changes necessary for these marked improvements.

The enlarged series will be in the hands of all our Sunday-schools in ample time for them to renew, and, we hope, increase their orders for their periodicals for 1897.

Our schools throughout Canada are, for the most part, thoroughly loyal to the publications of their own church. Let every Methodist school in the country rally round our own papers, and prove that the enterprise and energy and large faith shown in their enlargement and improvement is appreciated.

For our other periodicals we do not at present promise enlargement, but they will be maintained at the highest possible state of efficiency—and improved when possible.

## JUNIOR EPWORTH LEAGUE.

PRAYER-MEETING TOPIC.

SEPTEMBER 20, 1896.

Mount Gilboa, where Saul was slain.—1 Sam. 31.

### THE MOUNTAIN.

This mountain would probably never have been noticed, but for the fact that it was the place where Saul, the first king of Israel, died. Events have often made places immortal. Battles have been the occasion of places being mentioned in history, but for which they would not have been known. Gilboa will always be associated with the tragic end of Saul. Our young people take pleasure in sailing on Lake Ontario, and as they proceed, they see Brock's monument on Queenston Heights. That was the spot where the illustrious General fell, as he was defending his country against invaders.

### SAUL'S TRAGIC END.

Saul's life is full of interest. He was chosen by God to be the king of Israel. Such a great honour should have prompted him to be humble before God. It often happens that when people become rich and honourable, they forget God, from whom all blessings flow. Riches often make people proud and haughty. Should any of you ever become rich, do not set your hearts upon your riches. If you succeed better than some of your associates, do not be proud or haughty, or look upon them with contempt. Had Saul remained as humble after he became a king, as he was before, he would not have come to such an untimely end. "Pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall." Let every Epworth Leaguer commit this verse to memory.

### THE PHILISTINES.

These were a nation of people who gave the Israelites a great amount of trouble. They were frequently at war with each other; sometimes the one, and sometimes the other, was victorious. Just as it is now, both with individuals and nations. They quarrel, often about trifling things. Angry words create strife. Men sometimes go to law with each other, and spend large sums of money, to gain nothing but revenge. Strong nations sometimes go to war with weaker ones, just that they may destroy them, and add more territory to their own country, and though God may overrule these invasions for good, the guilt of those who make the war, is none the less on that account. Let all our young people avoid the first occasion of quarrel. Live in peace. Be kindly affectioned one to another. Leave off strife before it be meddled with.

### SAUL'S RUIN.

"He that sinneth against God, wrongeth his own soul." Saul, at the beginning of his reign, was a God-fearing man. He acted according to the command of Jehovah, as made known to him through Samuel, the prophet. No doubt, when he went to war against the Amalekites, he was acting according to divine instruction, but he neglected to obey the command of God fully. He spared King Agag, whom he was commanded to destroy. We regard this as the turning point of his career, from which he went from bad to worse. Guard against the first sin. Shun the first wrong act. Many young people have been ruined by taking the first glass. With many, Sabbath breaking has led to disgrace, and all the evil consequences of a life of sin. Many young people nowadays devote the hours of Sabbath to riding on their bicycles. This is wholly wrong, and will be sure to lead to bad consequences. Do not allow anything but sickness to keep you from the Sabbath-school and church on the Lord's day.

A self-made man always spoils his job somewhere.

Whoever hinders God's work robs the whole world.

"I had always been an American until I went around a curve in a cable car this morning." "What difference did that make?" "Then I became a Laplander."