

Teachers' Department.

Sabbath School Scripture Lessons.

JULY 6th, 1856.

Subject.—RAISING OF LAZARUS

For Repeating. For Reading. John xi. 1-4. | John xi. 17-37.

JULY 13th, 1856.

Subject.—THE RAISING OF LAZARUS.

For Repeating. For Reading. John xi. 25-27. | John xi. 38-57.

Miscellaneous.

Mr. Spurgeon in Bristol.

[From the Bristol Journal.]

What the Jenny Lind furore was in the musical world, the Spurgeon-mania seems to be in the Calvinistic one; for wherever the young declamator goes, people rush to hear him, with a suffocating elbowing, almost fighting vehemence, amusing enough if you happen to be sufficiently high to overlook the crowd, but very choking and alarming if you should yourself be in the midst of the melee.

A placard announced that this Nonconformist prodigy was to be heard and seen on Tuesday evening at these rooms, and that a sixpenny ticket would admit the holder until a quarter to seven, and that after that no money was to be taken at the doors.

I elbowed and pushed into the passage, and came to a dead lock before I had got five yards up it, and quite despaired of getting further, when I looked at the forest of heads far extending before me. I was not two minutes, however, in this fix, before I heard voices crying out behind me, "Make way for Mr. Spurgeon: good people, let Mr. Spurgeon pass."

"Come on, sir, come on, sir," said Mr. Inskip, and panting and elbowing his way, the latter now pushed into sight, having behind him a young smooth-faced, good-tempered, rather mechanical-looking man, in black clothes and white necktie of comely soft features.

"Mr. Spurgeon, Mr. Spurgeon," cried out a tall mechanic, when the preacher and his pioneer, Mr. Inskip, came to a decided fix in front of me, "this is too bad; this is a wrong principle, charging sixpence! For myself, I would rather give a shilling any day than have half the money forced from me."

said, "is there any convenient place in the open air close by, where I could preach?" One advised the steps of the Arcade, and another the Hay market, and I believe he would willingly have gone to either, but that his friends in front, fearing they would lose him altogether, called out to the police to throw open the door of the rooms, and remove the barricade in front, which was instantly done; and then, with a roar and a rush, and a tumult like a burst of waters through an upraised flood-gate, the crowd, men and women, swept in, in impetuous eddies, banked up in the long passage leading to the rooms, women crying out in distress, and men clamouring in anger.

No sooner did I enter the door than I saw Mr. Spurgeon in front of the platform, so speedy was his translation, and some Dissenting minister was giving out the hymn, while the chronic scuffle was continued at the doors. It was a strange and striking scene indeed at that moment: the people who were piled up to the roof of that vast but low building might be counted by thousands, and the oppressive heat imparted on all sides something like a sense of suffocation. On the walls of the immense room, which for the nonce was converted into a Calvinistic chapel, were placards of as varied and motley a nature as are the purposes for which the place is applied multitudinous.

The great majority of those who packed the place were operatives: and once they got in, no people could behave themselves better; a fixed interest, an almost rigid curiosity to hear the "young phenomenon" was on every feature, and when the hymn was given out, all appeared to join in it; not only the crowds in the roof but those at the door caught the strain, which they in turn communicated to those behind them, and thus down the whole length of that long passage, crammed with people, like a vast wave of sound rolled the vocal swell, until the "common metre" was carried back into Broadmead itself.

Guilt and Danger of "Little Sins."

"Take us the foxes, the little foxes, that spoil the vines; for our vines have tender grapes."—CANTICLES ii. 15.

The figurative style of this composition is everywhere such that evangelical principles are of easy application to it. If the prayer of the Bride, in the language before us, be understood as addressed to the Bridegroom, the meaning is obvious. It is a supplication for strength to renounce and resist the first, the smallest approaches of sin. It is a prayer to a superior, not an exhortation to an equal, nor a command to an inferior. Take us the foxes. Take them for us. Take us the little foxes. Cut off the hateful brood while young and feeble, before they acquire cunning of spirit and speed of foot.

LITTLE SINS IN THEIR GUILT AND AGGRAVATIONS.

In strict speech no sin is little; and sin must not be looked at only in its effects on the

society of this world. Greater and smaller sins are simply sins in different gradations of maturity. Take an example: a clerk in a counting-house has acquired sufficient confidence with his employers to put it in his power to abscond with money. On a fixed day he takes his flight, with £5000 in his pocket. Another clerk in the same house thinks proper to be satisfied with smaller gains, and, on a diminished scale, carries on a system of secret plunder. He is always robbing his master, but he is studious of concealment. A third clerk is more abstinent: it suits his purpose occasionally to take sometimes a sovereign, more frequently a few shillings. Supposing all these facts to be disclosed on the same day, and the culprits brought before the bar of justice, what would be the judgement of the master or any honest man respecting them?

I. Little sins are a heinous violation of God's holy law.

The only thing to be looked to here is the authority of the Lawgiver. He has said, "Thou shalt not kill;" "Thou shalt not steal;" "Thou shalt not bear false witness." These injunctions are absolute and general, in the highest degree. The stealth of a turnip from your neighbour's garden is as much a contempt of the authority of the Lawgiver as the murder of a magistrate. In this view all sins are equal although in their effects on society they greatly vary. The very essence, then, of the evil of sin is, contempt of the Divine authority. Such is the view of Inspiration. "Whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all."

2. Little sins indicate even a greater contempt for the Divine authority than great sins.

The measure of provocation is a most important element in the consideration of an offence. Stealth from mere covetousness is one thing; stealth to supply want of famishing nature is another. The stall-fed youth, who demolishes a fence in mere wantonness of mischief, and the friendless orphan, who breaks through a hedge to reach roots or fruits, that he may satisfy his craving appetite, are not to be viewed in the same light. "Men do not despise a thief, if he steal to satisfy his soul when he is hungry," Prov. vi. 30.

Look at the first test of man's obedience. It was a small thing to take of the fruit of the tree of life, say some. Well, was it not a small thing to leave it undone? These small sins, therefore, show the greater contempt of the authority that forbids them.

Try the thing on a different principle. You desire a friend—one who has made frequent and lofty professions of friendship for you—on a great emergency, to advance you £500 on your own security. He declines to do so. Granting his ability, he may see what appears to him sound reasons for so doing. He sees that to give it you would only be to put back a day which, in the existing state of your affairs, must soon come; and to injure himself, without materially or permanently benefiting you. He may do all this without the least abatement of friendship to you. He sees that a time will come when he can step in to much better purpose. You may not lose confidence in his friendship under the circumstances. The very magnitude of your demand is his protection. But suppose that you are destitute of daily food, and that you implore the veriest trifle to keep soul and body together, till your energies be more put in motion for the support of your household; and for this your friend refuses to advance you a sixpence! Would you not feel that the small denial was a much stronger proof of the hypocrisy of his friendship than the greater denial? Would you not reason thus,—If it be a small favour to withhold, it is a small favour to confer; and its being nevertheless withheld proves that man to be at heart no friend of mine?

Wilfulness and wantonness are measures of guilt; whence it is obvious that multitudes who commit only what they call the small sins are the greatest sinners. Satan's chief inducements are pleasure and profit; but where there is neither, what can prompt sin but the love of sinning?

3. Little sins constitute the sum of human transgression.

Great events, like great men, are the pro-

duction of circumstances necessarily few in number; so it is with great sins. Many small gains make up wealth, and form a fortune; and multitudes of sinners grow rich in iniquity, and treasure up to themselves wrath against the day of wrath, by what you term little sins. The soul of the sinner must have some repose. The ocean does not always rage, nor the wind always blow! but the water and the air are always in being. The drunkard is not always intoxicated; it comes in fits upon him. Small sins, then, fill up the space between one great sin and another. No man deals only in great sins—in wholesale transgression! Sharp diseases cut off only a part of mankind, and that part small compared with the remainder. Let us next look at

II. LITTLE SINS IN THEIR TENDENCIES.

One thing here deserves special consideration:

1. Little sins open a passage into the heart of man for the greatest sins.

The little chief that creeps in at the window, and who alone may be capable of little mischief, may yet open the door for others that stand without, who may rob the mansion, and murder the inmates! The tendency of every seed, cast into the earth, is to the maturity of the vegetable that grows from it. Sin is a progress onward to hell! The Apostle James sets forth the matter in a clear but dreadful light: "Every man is tempted when he is drawn away by his own lust and enticed; then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin; and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death."

This is the sinner's progress to perdition where "Fix'd is their everlasting state: Could they repent, 'tis then too late: Justice stands guarding mercy's door: And God's long-suffering is no more!"

The reason of this may be found in the fact that human corruption is of a growing and thriving nature. Small sins, like farze, will grow without the aid of culture, and cover the whole soul. By little and little the heart will get brimfull of iniquity, and, sooner or later, from the fulness of the heart the mouth will speak; and when once iniquity is so far matured as to speak out at noon-day, without a blush, the whole man will soon become its servant. Experience speaks loud on this point. The destroyer of souls always drills his victims by little sins, and thus prepares them for larger crimes! The moment any man comes to look on any sin as little, he is undone! Comparing sin with sin, and not with the law, he is certain to fall into the abyss!

2. There is a bottomless deceit in small sins, which hastens the sinner onward to perdition.

"Failings"—"infirmities" you call them. No; presumptions! rebellions! That is their proper name. "Who can understand his errors? Cleanse thou me from secret sins." Ships may be sunk by sands as well as by millstones. Men shrink at the thought of murder, blasphemy, and the like, but are unconcerned about idle words, petty oaths, small thefts, and comendious lies! It matters little, however, whether eternal fire be kindled by one flaming brand, or by many sparks. Let us look at

III. LITTLE SINS AS A TEST OF CHARACTER.

The allowance and approbation of the least sin is a certain and infallible sign of rottenness and hypocrisy of heart. The Lord Jesus came to deliver us from sin, and destroy the works of the devil. His blood cleanseth from all sin. No man, be his seeming attainments what they may, has ever yet attained to a true state of mind, who does not, with the Psalmist hate even vain thoughts, Psal. cxix. 6. "Then shall I not be ashamed, when I have respect unto all thy commandments." To respect some, and not others, is present hypocrisy, and will be shame and confusion at last. The commission of the greatest sins may consist with the truth of grace, but the approbation of the least is not consistent with it. Be assured that if you hate every false way, if you delight in the law of the Lord after the inward man, this single touchstone reaches to the inmost soul. It is a most sure, an infallible test of heart, state, and character.

REMARKS.

1. You may first learn the awful condition of those who rest on their freedom from gross sins, and reject the atonement of Christ.

You may rely upon it that this is a most fatal delusion. It is destroying many on all sides. Are you steadily resisting all sin? Are you more concerned to be good than to