

Teachers' Department.

Sabbath School Scripture Lessons.

APRIL 6th, 1856.

Subject.—CHRIST'S DISCOURSE WITH THE PEOPLE CONTINUED.

For Repeating. For Reading.
John vi. 27-29. | John vi. 35-52.

APRIL 13th, 1856.

Subject.—CHRIST CONTINUES HIS DISCOURSE WITH THE JEWS.

For Repeating. For Reading.
John vi. 35-40. | John vi. 53-71.

Practical Education at Home.

THE remarks we made last week, under the head "Agriculture," have led us to think of the difficulties experienced by some of our industrious, intelligent farmers in committing their thoughts to writing, so as to satisfy themselves and benefit others. Those who have been accustomed to labour, think and read, more than to write, may have accumulated a vast amount of knowledge and experience, yet from an indisposition to come forward in the capacity of writers, or perhaps in some cases from thinking they have not had a sufficient amount of early educational training to be able to put their thoughts in language suitable to appear before the public, are deterred from the attempt, and thus others are deprived of the stores in their possession; whereas, by a little effort properly directed, they might become as capable of doing so, as those more accustomed to writing.

It has occurred to us that we might make a few suggestions under the *Teachers' Department* which whilst they might be of service to young persons, who are striving to get all they can from their present opportunities, might at the same time aid such as find themselves more advanced in life, yet less perfect than they wish, in these respects. With the ability to write freely a fair hand, all other obstacles may be removed with but little difficulty where patience and perseverance are exercised. A method by which this may be accomplished probably better and more quickly than any other, is to read over carefully a short paragraph until the thoughts, and many of the words are pretty familiar, then endeavour to write the substance in as near the exact words as possible, without looking at what has been read; after that has been done a comparison may be made between that which is written and the original; carefully correcting all the errors in spelling, punctuation, and capitals. With very young children, a sentence at a time may be sufficient. The quantity read may be increased, as greater facility is acquired, until, after exercises in grammar and composition, subjects may be taken and written upon fully, in the form of short essays. We venture to say if this plan be adopted and acted upon two or three hours every week, a facility in original composition will be acquired in a few months, highly beneficial and satisfactory, and many persons would be able to indulge in correspondence with their friends without its being so difficult a task as it frequently is, which renders the ability to write comparatively useless.

"Strike the Knot".

When we were boys, little fellows, our father began to teach us to work, and we were anxious to perform the allotted tasks. We were splitting wood. A rough stick, with a most obstinate knot, tried all the skill and strength of a weak arm, and we were about to relinquish the task, when father came along. He saw the piece of wood chipped down and the knot backed round, and took the axe saying—"Always strike the knot." The words have ever remained safe in memory. They are precious words, brethren; never try to shun a difficulty, but look it right in the face; catch its eye, and you can subdue it as a man can a lion. It will cower before you, and sneak away and hide itself. If you dread difficulties, they will grow upon you till they bury you in obscurity.

FRIENDSHIP.—A virtuous friendship is the sweetest charm of life; the source of everything that is good and excellent on earth.

When the wheels of a clock move within, the hands on the dial move without; so when the heart of a man is sound in conversion, then his life will be fair in profession.

Selections.

"I have cast myself away."

A young lady whose mind was seriously impressed with the subject of religion, had received an invitation to a wedding-party, at which, according to the prevalent custom of the place, there was to be full and free enjoyment of the fashionable amusements of the day, including dancing.

Her cousin, who had recently professed faith in Christ, and who was also her bosom-companion, endeavoured to dissuade her from accepting the invitation. "Oh," said she, "that party may cost you your soul; God is now striving with you, and if you grieve his Spirit you may perish for ever."

She replied, "I am going to that party from a sense of duty they will think it so strange of me if I do not go; but no one can induce me to engage in dancing."

Said her cousin, "It matters little what man may think of you; but what will your Saviour think of you, if you go? Indeed, indeed, I tremble for you."

"I don't see things in the same light with you," she replied; "I must go to the wedding." On next Sabbath I will see you at church, and will then tell you all about myself. I have not lost my serious impressions, nor relinquished the hope of being a Christian. Do not then, dear cousin, give me up; but pray for me."

"When you give yourself up to pleasure and to sin, God may give you up," answered her friend, "and then vain will be all human sympathy."

To the wedding she went, although the weather was excessively cold, and the place was six miles distant from her home. That whole night was spent in a whirl of excitement, and from midnight until 3 o'clock in the morning she was the "gayest among the gay" in the merry dance. She retired to her room, but not to sleep; and when the gay party met again at the breakfast-table, she was not among them. The exposure of her frail person in light costume, on that cold night, together with the unusual physical and mental excitement of those few hours, had proved too much for her; and there she is upon her bed with burning brow, inflamed eye, and parched lips, and by night-fall she is in a delirium.

Her mother and her pious cousin soon arrive, but she does not know them; and yet she often calls her cousin's name. On Sabbath for about one hour her reason returned; and looking her cousin intently in the face, she said in the most plaintive tone and affecting manner, "You did not cast me off—but I am cast off. I cast myself away, and God has let me go." These were the last rational words she ever spoke, and in less than an hour her soul went to meet the retributions of eternity. Oh, that men were wise, that they would consider that God has said, "He that being often reproved, hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy."—Be ware, all ye with whom God's spirit is now striving; cherish his gracious impressions of truth upon your mind by immediate repentance, and return to your long abused and neglected Saviour.

Chinese Scenery.

Two American gentlemen have recently penetrated the country for some distance, in the neighbourhood of Shanghai. They write as follows:—The country has been charming—hills, valleys, groves and streams being found in pleasing variety. The sides of the mountains are sometimes terraced very neatly, each ascending step a cultivated field. The mountains have a naked appearance, though many of them are covered with the bamboo, so common in the country. The streams are all rapid and clear, flowing over a pebbly or rocky bed. On their banks are numerous small paper manufactories. The principal machinery consists of an overshot water wheel, with a huge trip-hammer, which pulverizes the material, chiefly bamboo, of which the paper is made.

Of a view from the top of Heaven's Eye Mountain, which is 200 miles southwest of Shanghai, and which is nearly a mile above the level of the sea, they write:—The view surpasses all that we had previously seen. As far as our vision extended, in all directions, there were mountains. The intervening valleys were cultivated; many of them ornamented by a streamlet, which glittered in the rays of the morning sun like a thread of silver.

"Jesus wept."

Among the lovely traits exhibited in the character of Jesus Christ, none shines forth in greater splendor, than his sympathy for suffering humanity. In his pilgrimage here on earth, he frequently came in contact with objects in distress, which touched his heart with feelings of compassion.

Behold him approach the tomb where his friend Lazarus was laid, and as he hears the lamentations of the bereaved relatives and weeping friends, "He groaned in spirit, and was troubled." And as he hears them mourning as those who "would not be comforted," his heart was made full to overflowing, and his tears mingled with those around him. "Jesus Wept."

Here we have a striking illustration of "God manifest in the flesh." He was susceptible of being "touched with the feelings of our infirmities," and his yearning soul flowed out in sacred tears for the suffering and distressed.

Is it any wonder, those who gazed upon this affecting scene, cried out, "Behold how he loved him!" Although the stoical philosopher might dare pronounce it weakness in the Son of God to weep; yet the compassionate Jesus thought it not a shame to suffer his benevolent heart to be touched by feelings of pity, and give vent to his pent up sorrow, by a gushing of tears.

And this is the affection he bears all his friends on earth. Although their hearts may be wrung by bitter anguish, yet there is one dear Friend, who shares their grief, and commiserates their suffering.

Have you experienced the loss of friends? Has death entered the domestic circle, and claimed some dear friend for his own?—Have you felt your heart-strings snapping asunder, as the dearest idol of your heart has been torn away by the grim destroyer? Have you wept, and do you still weep for the departed? Then, indeed, are you acquainted with grief, and you have tasted the "wormwood and the gall" of life's fluctuating water. But amid this general desolation of thy soul, suffer one reflection to quell the raging billows of thy troubled heart—Jesus, there above, is thy friend, he looks down in tender compassion upon distress, and feels deep solicitude in all thy trials.

Dry up thy tears, then child of sorrow, for Jesus has gone to prepare a place for thee. Soon shalt thou quit this "low ground of sin and sorrow," to reign with him above. There shall he "wipe away all tears from thine eyes, and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying."—There shalt thou bask in the smiles of thy Redeemer, and enjoy heaven's unsullied bliss forever and ever.—*Examiner.*

A Word to the Ladies.

Every female, who can possibly do it, ought to walk in the open air, from one to two hours every day. If suitable clothing was worn, and especially if the feet were properly protected, a daily walk, even in winter, would be more conducive to health and loveliness than all the panaceas ever concocted, or all the drugs prescribed by the faculty. It would give elasticity to the step, bloom to the cheek, brilliancy to the eye, gay spirits, brightness of intellect, sound slumbers, every blessing, in short, that vigorous physical health bestows. Vitality would be strong and high; the deficiency of which, in most cases is the beginning of consumption. The lungs, too, would have needful play; for no one can go out, on a bracing winter morning, without inflating the lungs fully; and the air, at such times, is always the purest. If you would escape pulmonary complaints, ladies; if you would live to a good old age; if you would enjoy life while living; if you would add to your personal charms; dress warm and dry, and take daily exercise in the open air.

Imperceptible Improvement.

A gentleman was once riding in Scotland by a bleaching ground, where a poor woman was at work watering her webs of linen cloth. He asked her where she went to church, what she had heard the preceding day, and how much she remembered. She could not even tell the text of the sermon. "And what good can the preaching do you," said he, "if you forget it all?" "Ah, sir," replied the poor woman, "if you look at this web on the grass, you will see that, as fast as ever I put water on it, the sun dries it all up; and yet, sir, I see it gets whiter and whiter."

Correspondence.

For the Christian Messenger.

PAST AND PRESENT.

CHURCH MUSIC.

The changes that have occurred within the last half century, in the order of worship in our Baptist churches, are not confined to the pulpit, the social, or conference meeting, but may be traced also to the *music and singing.*

In many of the Baptist congregations, with which I am acquainted, the former practice was, singing without a choir, or what was called congregational, a leader was usually selected, who commenced and was joined by a large number in all parts of the assembly, lifting their voices to praise God. Then with propriety might be used Dr. Watts' expressive verse—

"Lord how delightful 'tis to see,
A whole assembly, worship thee,
At once they sing, at once they pray,
They hear of heaven, and learn the way."

The music thus produced, might not have been so skilfully performed, as with modern arrangements. But as continual practice of simple times, gave a degree of correctness, so the number who sung were able to join with a degree of union, that would do credit to our advanced progress. One thing was especially noticed that the words were usually sung out clearly and with a hearty feeling which seemed to correspond with the object of Praise.

The congregation and the Christian worshipper's family are nearly connected; what is practiced in one usually acts on the other, consequently as old and young joined in singing God's praise in the sanctuary, they followed it up by raising their voices night and morning at their family altar; and in the few tunes there used, the lisping infant began to utter the praise of God, and so when old enough to visit the sanctuary, was expert in joining in the hymn with the already initiated. Now in too many instances the old tunes are laid aside, and a few are expected to sing instead of the many, the young grow up without an interest in the matter, the heads of the family feel left alone with their obsolete music, and drop it at their morning and evening devotions. How the choir seated in a gallery, came to be formed, I do not know; 'tis likely it led to much discussion and was gradually introduced, but soon it became universal.

Instrumental music followed more gradually. A few years only elapsed when the ideas, held by many, objecting to instrumental music, were becoming obsolete, and only held by a few of the aged, in our denomination. Choirs had advanced from flutes to pitch the tune, to base viols, and from these to serepinas; but a considerable time elapsed before an organ was thought of, or would be tolerated; the arguments for and against its introduction, were frequent and lengthy. It was judged by some that to praise God was an act of the affections expressed by the voice and to use an organ was worshipping God by machinery. Organs have, however, been introduced and the principle admitted, for want of funds many churches are yet without them;—with the removal of singing from the congregation to the orchestra, and the introduction of instrumental music, another innovation followed. It had been the practice for the church to select the chorister and it would have been considered little less than sacrilege, for one to fill that situation, but a member of the church or other godly person. The choir also was considered to be filled with the pious of the congregation; a few thoughtful persons might sit with them, but were hardly considered the choir; as it was considered improper to offer—"solemn praise upon a thoughtless tongue." But soon an advance was made, and it was judged right to fill the choir from any class provided the leader was pious. But ere long a new difficulty arose; there were better leaders of music frequently found among non-religious persons, than in the church, and the question was: had not the church a right to the best musical talents, wherever found? and as it was considered that music was not intended so much to praise God, as to please the assembly, the result was, that talents and not character was the qualification sought in the leader of the musicians, and to be engaged six nights of the week in the theatre, or in singing songs in a drinking saloon, (partaking occasionally of the intoxicating glass) or performing on instruments for balls and parties; was not a serious objection to a leader who could