

Teachers' Department.

Sabbath School Scripture Lessons.

MARCH 23rd, 1856.

Subject.—THE MIRACLE OF THE LOAVES AND FISHES.

For Repeating. For Reading. John v. 39-44. | John vi. 1-21.

MARCH 30th, 1856.

Subject.—THE PEOPLE FOLLOW CHRIST AND HE TEACHES THEM.

For Repeating. For Reading. John vi. 1-4. | John vi. 22-43.

Miscellaneous.

The Upright Clerk.

Fifty years ago there was a flourishing store in Groton, Massachusetts, kept by James Brazer. In Mr. Brazer's store in those days there was a custom, which is generally done away with now, the custom of drinking at 11 o'clock. Every afternoon a drink was mixed up, made of rum, raisins, sugar, and nutmeg, with biscuit, and handed round to the master, clerks, and their customers; all partook of it, and relished it, and I dare say smacked their lips and wanted more. At last one of his clerks refused his glass. He had "made a resolution not to take any for a week," he said. It looked very odd. His companions wanted to know why. "The habit is growing on me," answered Amos, for that was his name, "and I am afraid of it; that's why." The other clerks called him foolish, and a coward. They thought that was no good reason at all, for everybody drank. They laughed at him, but they did not laugh it out of him. He made his first resolution for a week, then for a month, and then for a year, and finally for the five years of his apprenticeship; and thus alone and for himself, he took the ground of total abstinence when spirit-drinking was the universal fashion; and during the whole time he never drank a spoonful, though he mixed gallons and gallons for his master. Amos made the same resolution in regard to tobacco; he never smoked a cigar, or chewed but one quid, and that before he was fifteen. A great many years afterwards, he wrote to a young student at college: "In the first place, take this for your motto at the beginning of your journey, that the difference of going right and a little wrong, will be the difference of finding yourself in good quarters, or in a miserable bog or slough at the end of it. Of the whole number educated in the Groton stores for years before and after myself, no one else, to my knowledge, escaped the bog or slough; and my escape I trace to the single fact of my having put a restraint upon my appetite. After leaving school and going into a store, not a month passed before I was impressed with the opinion that restraint upon appetite was necessary to prevent the slavery I saw destroying numbers around me. Many and many of the farmers, mechanics, and apprentices of that day have filled drunkards' graves, and left destitute families and friends."

Let every clerk and apprentice who reads this, and I hope there will be many, stop and note this point—the difference of going just right or a little wrong, in your setting out in life, is the difference between integrity and dishonesty, success or disappointment, happiness or ruin. At twenty-one, in 1807, Amos went to Boston with twenty dollars in pocket. He soon received an offer of a clerkship, in a respectable firm. Here he staid but a few months. His employers failed, and he hired a small store in Cornhill, and furnished it with goods upon the strength of the confidence with which he had inspired merchants who had become acquainted with him. Integrity, industry, and system, were the foundations upon which his business life was built. He practiced rigid economy, never allowed himself to spend a fourpence upon unnecessary objects until he had earned it. During his first seven years in the city, he never let a bill stand against him over the Sabbath. If a purchase of goods had been made at auction on Saturday, he always examined and settled the bill by note or by crediting it, so that in case he was not on duty on Monday, there would be no trouble for the clerks; thus keeping business before him, instead of allowing it to drive him. At the close of that seven years, he was worth fifty thousand dollars.

On his first coming to the city, he took lodgings at a boarding-house which a widow had just opened. Amos asked for one rule to be made for the boarders, and that was, that the boarders in the public sitting room might keep quiet for one hour after supper, in order to give those who wished it, an opportunity for study or reading. "The consequence was," said he in after-years, "that we had the most quiet and improving set of men in town. The few who did not wish to comply with the regulation, went abroad after tea, sometimes to the theatre, sometimes to other places, but to a man, became bankrupt in after life, not only in fortune but in reputation; while the majority of the other clerks sustained a good character, and some are now living who are ornaments to society, and fill important stations. The influence of this small number will perhaps be felt throughout generations. It was not less favorable on myself than on others."

Such were the principles on which was reared a young man who afterwards became one of the princely merchants of Boston, princely in wealth, virtues, and benevolence—AMOS LAWRENCE, who gave in charity, six hundred thousand dollars, and the legacy of whose life is a part of the world's true riches. Such principles never fail a man. Young men, study them well.

For the Young.

"WHAT AM I GOING TO DO?"

One Sabbath morning a young lad set off to go with some thoughtless companions to a place of amusement. "What am I going to do?" he asked. "I am going to break the Sabbath. Suppose God should punish me for my wickedness!" This thought so alarmed him that he turned back, and spent God's holy day in a becoming manner.

One afternoon a boy saw a person drop his purse, which he picked up, and was walking off with it, and the money which it contained. "What am I going to do?" came into his mind, and the answer followed. "I am going away with a purse of money that does not belong to me. This is not honest; I shall be a thief, if I do so. God has said, 'Thou shalt not steal.'" In a moment, he ran after the person, and gave up the purse. The man gave him half a crown; and an honest half crown is worth more than many dishonest pounds.

"What am I going to do?" asks John on Wednesday afternoon. "My mother has given me leave to play with the boys. Let me not get angry, or fight, or swear, or call names, or do any mean and wicked thing. Then shall I be happy."

Little reader, often ask yourself—and never be afraid to ask—"What am I going to do?" A bad act will not bear reflection as a good one will. You will be preserved from many a sin,—many a violation of the commands of the great God,—if you only reflect before you act. Oh, how many who are now fallen and lost, would have been safe and upright if they had only reflected! How many who are now in hell would have been saved if they had but reflected!

"Ponder the path of thy feet, and let all thy ways be established. Turn not to the right hand nor to the left; remove thy foot from evil."

"This is my Home."

"This is my home," cried a little one, a treasured boy of four summers, as fresh and rosy he came in from school at the close of a short winter afternoon.

"Indeed, little Willie," said his mother's visitor, "how is it? Suppose now you go out on the sidewalk, and try the next door. Suppose you step into the entry, throw off your coat as you have done here, and proceed to the parlor, wouldn't that be your home?"

"No, indeed," said Willie, "That wouldn't be it."

"But tell me, why not?" Willie had never thought of this. He paused for a moment, then directing his eyes to the sofa where his mother sat quietly sewing, he replied with an earnest gesture, "she lives here."

Yes, dear Willie, wisely have you spoken; she, the embodiment of your idea of a constant loving presence, is here, and that makes home. Make as free as you will, young monarch, of the manifold privileges involved in this one little word, you have based your claim firmly; because she lives here, therefore are you sure of a constant flow of gentle and protecting love. But your infant wisdom has awakened other thoughts which we would fain indulge.

Long ago did the great Teacher assure his followers of this his settled purpose, "That where I am, there ye may be also." As if he said, in tones suggestive of a love beyond mortal thought, "In my presence at last shall your spirits find rest. Wanderers you may have been, afar from peace and blessedness and God, but coming back to your Father's House, you shall abide forevermore at home."

Yes, even as this trusting child hails this spot as his home, by reason of the presence of one whom he confidently loves, so, on similar grounds, does the believer in Jesus Christ enter upon his heavenly inheritance, "Because I live ye shall live also." From the fact of this life and blessedness does not that of his followers flow as a direct consequence? Yes, life, immortal life, is theirs, on grounds that cannot possibly be wrenched away. What power in the universe can break the union that God himself hath willed? Again, as if to ratify the claim in words that cannot be misunderstood, the Eternal Son declares to our astonished ears, "As the Father hath loved me, even so have I loved you."

Prayer for Strangers.

A correspondent of the Puritan Recorder, writing from Cleveland, Ohio, says:—

"An instance, illustrating the duty of prayer for the stranger, occurred in one of our churches some time since. The pastor, habitually, in some way, prayed for the stranger that might be present. After service, one morning, he observed a lady in mourning in her seat, who, as he descended from the pulpit, arose and approached him. At first her deep agitation prevented her speaking, and he wondered at her appearance; finally she told him, little by little, that she had just come to the place a stranger, to stop a short time; had entered the church by accident, as she was accustomed to worship with a different denomination; that his prayer touched her heart, and she questioned why she should be prayed for; that the sermon had awakened her conscience, and she had resolved to seek Christ. Her life since, so far as known, has given good evidence of a thorough work of grace in her heart."

Agriculture.

Early Tomatoes.

This is one of the most difficult of vegetables to force, and should be started very early in order to anticipate the season. Those who have greenhouses, and hot-beds need no other facilities. But those who have only a stand of parlor plants, and keep up a constant fire for them, can start a few tomatoes with very little trouble. Take a half dozen 4 or 5 inch pots, and plant two or three seeds in each, in rich garden loam. The pots can stand with the other house plants, and receive the same watering and attention. When the plants are well started, pull up all but the most vigorous one in each pot. Stir the earth frequently around them, and they will grow rapidly and fill the whole pot with a mass of fine roots, by the last of May, when they will probably be in blossom. If they have rich soil and a good exposure on the south side of a wall or fence, they will suffer little check in the transplanting, and you will get tomatoes much earlier than from seed planted in the open ground in April.

Sprouted Wheat.

A Correspondent of the N. E. Farmer says, I wish you, or some of your correspondents acquainted with experimental or practical farming, would inform me whether it would be safe to depend upon grown wheat for seed, as I am calculating to sow some next spring, and have a few bushels not quite as good for bread as that not grown. An answer to the above, from a source to be depended on, would be gladly received by me, and perhaps be a benefit to others.

ANSWER.—If we had a field to sow, we would not run the risk of sowing seed that had sprouted, or "grown," as it is called. A gentleman at our elbow says he has tried it, but that it has always failed to grow.

Watering Cattle.

Among the many causes of stock not thriving, as much as might be desirable, during the winter, is their too scanty supply of water. A few have running water in their cattle yards, and their stock drink as nature requires it; but most farmers water their stock either at the pump, or by driving them to a running brook twice, or often but once a day. Watering is done by rule, from fall to winter, regardless of weather or food. I have observed stock so dry as to refuse to eat dry food; but after being watered, they eat it voraciously. Now, it is a well-settled fact, that no animal will thrive well while suffering for want of food, water, or shelter. Let those, therefore, who want to turn out their stock in the spring in good condition, attend to these things, and let them see that the poorer and weaker stock get as much as they want.

Temperance.

For the Christian Messenger.

Hydraulic Engines.

MESSRS. EDITORS,

Those who have read an account of Belzoni's discoveries in Egypt are aware that that persevering and intrepid adventurer first went there for the purpose of erecting hydraulic engines for the Bashaw to assist in irrigating the country. And in spite of the discouragements and opposition arising from the ignorance, selfishness and barbarism of the inhabitants, he at length succeeded admirably in his enterprise;—and but for the superstition of the people whose interests he aimed to promote, he would have conferred upon them a permanent benefit of inestimable importance; inasmuch as with the assistance of those hydraulic machines they could water their soil, and prevent the dread calamities attendant upon the failure of crops, which with a distressing famine are the inevitable consequences of the Nile refusing to inundate its banks with its fertilizing properties.

But alas for poor fallen humanity, when shut out from the blessings of civilized life, and enveloped in heathen darkness! The lucid rays of science cast but a faint light upon its gloomy horizon, and operate but feebly in elevating it in the scale of enjoyment, prosperity or eminence.

Thus it was in reference to Belzoni's hydraulic project in Egypt. No sooner was the intelligence of its completion conveyed to the Bashaw than he repaired to Soubra to witness its operations. He viewed it, as might be expected, with enthusiastic admiration. But for the further gratification of his excited curiosity he proposed to take the oxen out of the wheel, and to put fifteen men into it, to see what effect would thus be produced by the machine. Among the number who entered to test the experiment was an Irish boy who accompanied Belzoni to Egypt. The wheel had turned round but once, when all the men, probably through fear, jumped out, and left the poor Irish juvenile to his fate! The weight of the water overbalancing the wheel, turned it back with such velocity that it threw the boy out with great violence and broke his thigh! The superstitious Turks regarded such an accident happening to a new invention as a very bad omen; and so universally did the popular delusion prevail that even the Bashaw gave his consent to consign the whole affair to oblivion!

Now we are very far from admiring their conduct, or commending their stupid whims. But we think there is, nevertheless, something in this remarkable incident from which pretenders to greater sagacity might learn an important lesson. For instance;—a hydraulic engine of immense power, (invented not by Belzoni but by Belzobub) has for many years been in active operation in our own land.

Its effects, however, are diametrically opposite to those of the one we have described.—It irrigates our country it is true; but the waters it pours forth are poisonous instead of fertilizing,—corrupt instead of pure,—deleterious instead of profitable,—They create famine instead of plenty,—poverty instead of riches,—misery instead of comfort. They promote adversity rather than prosperity; they tend to degrade rather than elevate society; they hasten death rather than preserve life! Not only has the operations of this abominable hydraulic engine broken an Irish boy's thigh; but it has broken thousands of legs, arms, necks and hearts! It has broken the chain that bound together many a once happy circle;—it has broken the peace and tranquility of numberless communities;—it has broken the current of civilization; and interrupted the progress of truth and righteousness, and it has broken the harmony and strength of the machinery designed to overspread the earth with the knowledge of the Lord!

But how amazingly singular that it has been permitted to carry on for ages its work of demoralization, wretchedness, devastation and woe, without any very decisive measures having been enforced to stay its blighting progress!

How long will the lovers of virtue, justice and humanity continue to witness its deeds of darkness, cruelty and death!—How long will they remain unmoved amid the shrieks and wails of innocent, suffering and defenceless humanity before they arise en masse to demolish this prolific cause of their woe; and like the Egyptians consign the hydraulic instrument of death to the tomb of oblivion!

Truly yours, J. C. HURD.

Cape Canso, 1856.