

Teachers' Department.

Sabbath School Scripture Lessons.

APRIL 13th, 1856.

Subject.—CHRIST CONTINUES HIS DISCOURSE WITH THE JEWS.

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

APRIL 20th, 1856.

Subject.—CHRIST GOES TO JERUSALEM.

For Repeating. For Reading.
John vi. 53-56. | John vii. 1-18.

Presentation Service in London.

On Monday, February 11, the Teachers of New Park Street Sunday School invited the Rev. C. H. Spurgeon to take tea in their New School-room. The object of the meeting was, to afford the teachers an opportunity of expressing their Christian love to their esteemed pastor, who, notwithstanding his many other public and pastoral duties, has, from the commencement of his labours in the Church, manifested a warm interest in the prosperity of the Sabbath School. The tables were decorated with the finest greenhouse plants of the season. It was strictly a teachers' meeting, and no pains were spared to give their kind pastor and his beloved partner a hearty welcome. In all respects, it was a season of joy that has never been surpassed in the history of the Sunday School. After tea, Mr. Cutler, the Superintendent of the school presented to the Rev. C. H. Spurgeon the celebrated picture of "Liberty of Conscience," representing the Assembly of Divines at Westminster in the time of Cromwell. It was a proof impression, and most elegantly framed. The handsome present was most feelingly acknowledged by Mr. Spurgeon. After the Presentation Service had concluded, the teachers adjourned to the chapel, where several hundreds were already assembled for prayer. The Rev. C. H. Spurgeon requested that the prayer meeting should be especially on behalf of the Sabbath schools. At the conclusion of the prayer meeting nearly the whole of the congregation retired into the school-room, and expressed their admiration of the teachers' gift to their pastor.—*Bapt. Messenger.*

"Let me pray first."

A little girl was passing quietly through the streets a short time since, when she came to a spot where several idle boys were amusing themselves by the very dangerous practice of throwing stones. Not observing her, one of the boys, by accident threw a stone towards her, and struck her a cruel blow in the eye. She was carried home in great agony. The surgeon was sent for, and a very painful operation was declared necessary. When the time came and the surgeon had taken out his instrument, she lay in her father's arms and he asked her if she was ready. "No, papa; not yet," she replied. "What do you wish us to wait for, my child?" "I want to kneel in your lap, and pray to Jesus first," she answered. And then kneeling, she prayed a few moments, and afterwards submitted to the operation with the patience of a woman. How beautiful this little girl appears, under the trying circumstances! Surely Jesus heard the prayer made in that hour. He is every child that calls upon his name! Little reader, do you call on him?

Selection.

The True "Sister of Mercy."

BY THE REV. W. P. BALFERN,

[Author of "Glimpses of Jesus"]

"Tis but an attempt—a sketch,
At best imperfect—faint."

SHE was not what the world would term an interesting woman; she had not "decidedly a beautiful face on which the lines of sorrow were deeply traced," but she had a homely, English-looking countenance, full and fair, motherly, open and ingenuous; her mild eye beamed affection, and some said it ever seemed to swim in the tear of sensibility. Womanly feeling, frankness, and intelligence were its prevailing features, and you felt safe, while speaking to her, that she might be trusted with your sorrow, and was possessed of a heart that would sympathise with your trouble.

Her neighbours, too, had discovered this, and

made her the repository of their griefs, as well as their guide, in times of perplexity. She was wise in counsel, and, though she seemed to be quite unconscious of the possession of wisdom, and made no pretension to learning, yet her sound common sense, and, above all, her rich experience in the things of God, and close acquaintance with the Scriptures, enabled her to speak most acceptably to the poor.

She had the peculiar art too, of quieting people down when excited by sickness or trouble; and, notwithstanding her deep feeling, wonderfully maintained her firmness in time of great trial. Hence, though her rich relations seldom came to see her in their prosperous days, they generally sought her in times of affliction, and her name was with them the synonyme of kindness and consolation.

But though she was thus a sister of mercy to many, there was nothing, as we have said, striking in her appearance. She looked like an ordinary common-place person; she had never been disappointed in love, nor was she romantic. As she walked through the streets, people did not stare at her, for there was nothing peculiar in her gait or dress; she did not make a practice of going from house to house to gather up fragments either for herself or the poor; she gave much away, but observed most scrupulously our Saviour's words, Matt. vi. 3, 4.

She never wore a black cloak with a hood, nor passed along with a band of mendicants at her heels. She had not a dreamy eye, nor downcast look, nor a simpering, sentimental smile; but she looked up, brightly and cheerfully, as she tripped along with something of a bustling gait. If you looked her in the face, she would look at you again, and if you laughed or smiled at her, it was generally returned in kind again. She was neither young nor single, but married and in the prime of life. Her husband was an industrious tradesman, and she had several children. Her house was a very pattern of cleanliness and order; there appeared to be a place for everything, and everything was in its place. A nameless air of cheerfulness and peace pervaded the dwelling, and so communicated itself to all who entered it, that they invariably felt happy and at home. There was, too, a sacredness about the cheerfulness, so that the mind almost unconsciously to itself came to the conclusion that the occupants of this house are a privileged and favoured people—there is an influence at work in this dwelling, and of that character which does not exist everywhere.

Our sister of mercy was indeed what the neighbours termed a "good woman." And the origin of her goodness as they termed it was simply this; in her young days, through the Gospel, she had been brought to a knowledge of herself as a sinner, and after having passed through a lengthened period of mental distress and trouble, she was at length led by the Spirit of God, through the same Gospel, to Christ, as a great and all-sufficient Saviour. Beneath the shelter of his cross she found pardon and peace, and experienced the virtue of his blood to cleanse from all sin, and to afford rest to the troubled conscience. By precious faith she received his righteousness, and had her heart filled with love and joy in believing. Having thus experienced the unmerited mercy of Christ, she became merciful, and having tasted of his divine compassion, she became compassionate. The grace which conquered her made her conquer herself, and, overcome by the love of her Lord in seeking her when she was at a distance, his love manifested towards her in her lost state, she was led to imitate him, and to labour to save others even as she had been saved. Devoted she was to the service of the poor and the miserable, while in all that she did, she moved with the unconscious grace of the true aristocracy of heaven.

From these features of her history, it will be seen that she did not get her inspiration from a peculiar institution or dress, from pulpit eloquence or poetry, from a cathedral or a church, from any bishop or curate, from puseyite refinements or papistical performances, from high church romance or low church influence. Her life was one scene of labour, but the love of Christ was the root from whence all her efforts sprang. Every hour she could get, and every shilling she could spare, were freely and cheerfully devoted to the service of those who needed help. It was enough for her that they were children of suffering and sorrow.

The Sabbath was to her a day of delight, and the house of God a Bethel to her soul. No music so sweet to her as the sound of the Gospel. How

regularly she filled her place, and what deep feeling and heavenly intelligence beamed from her face as she listened to the glad tidings of a Saviour's love. She said but little in general, and was not a woman of many words. A sweet humility characterised, however, all she did say, and her pastor was wont to say of her, that she was like the dove, ever seen in her place, but seldom heard. She paid but little attention to the weather when intent upon the house of God, or any mission of mercy. It must have been a severe day which kept her in-doors when duty declared she ought to be out. Her Sabbath afternoons were generally devoted to the sick, by whom her voice was frequently heard in reading God's Word and prayer.

She was called suddenly home. Having missed her for some time, we made inquiries after her, and were pointed to her lowly grave in a little quiet burial ground, near the chapel where she had so frequently worshiped God. A small head-stone recorded her name, her age, the day of her death, and also informed the reader that she died in the Lord, relying upon his merits, and in hope of a glorious immortality. The green grass-covered the lowly mound where she slept, and we observed some of the flowers, which in life she loved to tend, blooming above her grave, sweet emblems of her pure and saintly life, and of the fragrant memorial she had left in the experience of numbers. The nature of her pious children did well this to let nature celebrate her virtues, who was so fair and beautiful a sample of divine workmanship, whose character was so unsophisticated, so meek, and yet so strong and true.

Few, it may be, will ever mark the spot where she lies; but when the archangels' blast the elect of God shall gather home; and from each nook and cranny of this vast universe, its hills and dales, its deserts vast and cheerless solitudes, its frozen steppes and burning sands, the merciful shall come and gather round the fount from whence all mercy springs; then, from this lowly grave, a sister true shall rise, in robes of light and immortality, and blushing find her deeds were more than fame. The lips of him who never errs, who saved her by his grace, shall welcome her and say, "Come in, ye blessed of the Lord;" while she astonished at his grace, shall lowly bow, and with adoring gratitude, shall blend her voice with myriads round the throne. Sisters of mercy from each tribe and tongue, their birth, their parentage, their work, their heaven now one. Aloud they sing, in sweet and lofty strains they sing, and shall for ever sing, "Unto him that loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father, to him be glory and dominion, for ever and ever."

Sweet scene of bliss! Sisters of mercy, all hail! Exalted your position now before the throne of God. No more the pinching winds of tribulation upon your path; no tear of sorrow now bedews your cheek. The days of your adversity are passed—for ever passed—and you're at home. No more the outcast child of sin and shame shall hear your voice seeking to lure him from the paths of vice, and guide him safely through the tangled wilderness of life; no more your hand shall gently raise the aching head, or minister to those who cry for bread. Into the bleeding wounds of conscious guilt ye will not pour again the healing balm, nor sigh o'er suffering ye could not remove. The days of sorrow now are passed away. Redeemed by blood divine, 'tis yours to gather round the throne of him who stooped from heaven to save the lost, and taught you by his grace to follow in his steps until at last you now behold his face, and shall for ever sing his praise.

The character we have but attempted to depict, ever has been and ever will be found where the Gospel is preached and is accompanied by the power of God's Spirit. Such sisters of mercy have been, and are now, the glory of Britain, and the true source of her dignity and strength. Next to the Gospel of Christ, our future hope rests upon her Christian mothers. No incipient monastic institutions are required to produce them. And if they are wanted to produce nurses let it be said so explicitly. Monastic institutions of every shape and form are alien to the genius and feelings of the British people, and will not be tolerated by them, whatever things may be written about them by interested theologians. Priests and Puseyites can only repeat themselves, and we have no wish that their images should be multiplied either in picture-frames or living automata in the streets; nor shall we ever admit that the Christian Church ever has been, or will be, indebted to them for the formation of the character we have attempted to describe, as the true sister of mercy.

Temperance.

For the Christian Messenger.

TOBACCO.

MESSRS. EDITORS,

The use of this article is I conceive a great evil in our world although practised by so many good men and women. I myself was also a partaker of it for about thirty years, but having since abstained entirely, and seeing so many around me both old and young who continue to smoke, chew, and snuff tobacco—has led me to offer a few thoughts upon the subject. First upon the cause of our using tobacco—second, its effects—and third, the means by which the evil may be removed.

1st. The cause of our using tobacco, we need only say is *example*; for there is nothing in our nature nor in the nature of tobacco to incline us to use it. One uses it merely because he sees another, without any regard to its effects.

2nd. Its effects, on treating upon this part of the subject, much may be said both from experience and observation. The use of tobacco is like a contagious disease, very infectious in its nature and fatal in its consequences, for but few that have taken the disease have ever recovered again, it was from a Mr. C's pipe I caught the contagion when quite young. The same person had five sons on whom his example or that of others had the same effect, however I trust I have been cured of the malady, as I have now no desire to return to its use,—still I may be in danger, for there are some we have thought were cured have since taken a relapse. When we first began to use tobacco it was very unpleasant to our taste, its odor so offensive to many that the persons smoking, and the persons smoked have to separate for the time being. The breath also of those who use tobacco, especially the smoker, is very offensive to those who do not use it, often even to our bosom friends; again, when we see the filth that the chewers of tobacco cast about the hearths and floors, it is disgusting to every beholder, but especially so to those on whom the trespass is committed. Again when we see the same upon the face and clothes, the sight is not only disgusting but disgracing to human nature, still the influence of those that use tobacco has been such, that all these would not prevent many from following the example, and such have been its effects that we have spent our money more freely for tobacco than for food to eat or raiment to wear, but with all that has or may be said of the polluting and injurious effects, still, I feel rather to pity than despise those to whom these remarks may apply, for much of the same would at one time apply to myself, however, I desire to feel very thankful that it is now different. The use of tobacco is very injurious to our health, and whatever we partake of to the injury of our bodily health is also injurious to the mind. Still there are some that think the use of tobacco does them good, some for one complaint and some for another. I recollect hearing one person say that a piece of tobacco did him as much good when hungry as a good meal, however, our opinion is that in most cases tobacco is injurious even to those that use it as a medicine; the remedy is worse than the disease, for if we once begin to use tobacco we may consider it is for life, and I wonder what father or mother who uses tobacco would say to his children "It does me good, I want you to follow my example." However, if fathers and mothers use tobacco we must expect the children will do the same, and I think there are but few men or women who wish to retain the use of this nauseous weed for all the good it has ever done or ever will do. This practice is very injurious to our wealth; if we consider the amount it costs in cities, towns and villages, the sum is enormous, or to families, and even to individuals the cost in many cases would be incredible. If the money that is spent for tobacco in Nova Scotia, was given for the support of the gospel or education it would be sufficient for one if not both throughout the Province, I do not mention this to dictate to others what they should do with their money neither to be judge of another man's conscience, still I think I may be permitted to ask the question if it would not be much better that we should spend our money for such a purpose or some other, in doing good, than for tobacco, to impair our physical, mental and pecuniary condition. Again, if we by our precept or practice have injured ourselves or others, reason and religion both tell us we ought to endeavour to produce a reform, especially if we re-