

Teachers' Department.

Sabbath School Scripture Lessons.

JANUARY 27th, 1856.

Subject.—CHRIST'S FIRST MIRACLE.—HE CLEANS-ETH THE TEMPLE.

For Repeating. For Reading.
John i. 43-46. | John ii. 1-25.

FEBRUARY 3rd, 1856.

Subject.—CHRIST'S CONVERSATION WITH NICODEMUS.

For Repeating. For Reading.
John ii. 13-17. | John iii. 1-18.

AN ADDRESS

DELIVERED AT WOBURN, BEFORE THE N. E. SUNDAY SCHOOL UNION.

Among the instrumentalities employed for the good of society, it is difficult to exaggerate the importance of the Sabbath school. Statistics cannot reveal all its work. The Sabbath school has a province and a work of its own. As one of the light-houses erected in the sea of time, to warn of its rocks, and guide to its rest, it sheds a light not only brilliant, but peculiarly its own.

In speaking of the relations of the Sabbath school, and the spirit with which its work ought to be prosecuted, the speaker remarked that it impresses those who are instructed at a time when impressions are easily made, and once made, are made forever. Mr. Bayne tells us in his beautiful biography of Samuel Budgett, that "He was but nine years old, when he happened to hear his mother pouring out her soul in prayer for him. His heart was touched, and from that moment it turned towards heaven." In after years that prayer might have fallen powerless upon his heart. Before his life was dimmed by care, or chilled by woe, before the evil days had come, that prayer led him to remember his Creator. There is more hope in throwing seed into young and vigorous earth, than into wasted and stony ground. Who of us cannot discern along the line of our past lives those bright spots which we often pray were thicker, when under the influence of pious counsel or paternal prayers, our hearts were won instinctively heavenward? It is the province of the Sunday school to furnish the most enrapturing spectacle upon which an angel can look with unutterable ecstasy,—a consecrated young man. One such consecration is worth all the money expended, and labor performed, in all the Sunday schools of Christendom.

Its relations to the family. It should assist, not supplant, the labors of home. Many parents seem to commit entirely to the Sunday school, the work of training for celestial worship the young immortals committed to their charge, and engage the Sunday school teacher, just as many churches engage a pastor, to do their own work, pray for them, visit for them, live for them. This is a great mistake. The family thus acting, will counteract in the week the work of the Sabbath; and in their dismal shadows their offspring will sicken and die.—It is the reciprocal influence of the home and Sunday school instruction that will enable the Christian father to see all his children gathered round him on the plains of paradise; the flowers which now shed fragrance through his life, blooming beside immortal amaranths; the voices which are now the music of his being, mingling with the melodies of his eternal home; the light of those smiles which now greet him at his threshold, blending with the light that fadeeth never." In this connection the duty of the Sunday school was enforced towards those poor and friendless children, around whom no family associations, or home influences cluster.

3. Its relations to the church. It has been called the "nursery of the church." The figure is not strictly appropriate. Its primary design is not to form and finish, and instruct, by a labor of years, so that the young saplings may be transferred from the Sunday school nursery to the vigorous orchard of the church. The Sunday school should not be made an educating, refining process, but a theatre for immediate, direct, successful assaults upon sin, and conquests over it. It is well to educate the head; it is better to convert the heart. It is well to

make men scholars; it is better to make them Christians. It is well to prepare them for seats of human distinction; it is better to prepare them for those which will endure, when

"Victors' wreaths and monarchs' gems
Shall blend with common dust."

We labor first for the conversion, and then for the education of the heart. In this light, the Sunday school can do much for the church.

4. To society at large. Society suffers from a want of conscience. A generation of men is demanded, and the Sunday school may furnish them, who will have some conscience, but expediency; some rule, but impulse; some ambition, but power. Such an exercise should be conducted.

1. In a prayerful spirit. It is a work of God, and is to be conducted, not by might or power, but by His Spirit. The instances of a female teacher was related, under whose instruction three successive classes were entirely converted. The secret was disclosed, when it was known that she prayed every day for every member of her class by name. We are only strong when we are near the throne.—Eloquence, genius, logic, without prayer, will only make us blind leaders of the blind.

2. In an earnest spirit. There is no rest for the warrior in the midst of the battle, nor for the competitor on the way to the prize. We have no time to rest. Our work will not be done till we receive the crown. This institution needs earnest workers. It will not prosper without them. If we are dead ourselves, we shall not make others live. If we carry not our light into the Sunday school, we shall not kindle a flame there.

2. With a hopeful spirit. We strive for an immediate impression; we shall not always make it. We desire immediate fruit; we shall not always see it. We must

"Still be up and doing
With a heart for any fate;
Still achieving, still pursuing,
Learn to labor and to wait."

The seed may lie long in the ground, but it will spring up in the blade, the ear, the fruit. So the seed we sow in tears, lying long years under the rubbish of the world, will revive in vernal loveliness, and bloom in an eternal spring.

"Let us who sow in sadness wait
Till the glad day of harvest come;
They shall confess their sins are great,
And shout the blessings home!"

SHADOW AND SUNSHINE.

A STORY FOR OUR YOUNG READERS.

A poor old woman, sad and solitary, sat by the window of her lowly cottage, and while with busy fingers she patched the faded garment she was bending over, her thoughts wandered to other scenes and other days.

Now and then a smile flitted over her wrinkled face, or lingering for a moment where it had been long a stranger. The perfume of the sweet clover or the new-mown hay, borne to her by the summer breeze, had awakened a long train of recollections, and transported her in infancy to her childhood's home.

She stood within the old farm gate, and saw the high gable-roof among the trees; she followed the winding road, and sat on the worn seat of the latticed porch. Her mother was beside her, stroking her flaxen curls, while her father in the doorway, with his pipe, smiled upon his little one. She was a child again at home; and with Rover, the old watch-dog, by her side, she chased the yellow butterflies in the meadow, or played beneath the willow tree, where the long, drooping boughs swept the ground as they swayed to and fro in the wind. Now her happy feet paced with fleet step the garden alleys, and now her merry voice rang with delight as she leaned over the tall boxwood border, and filled her arms with the sweet blossoms that grew beyond it.

Again she entered the vine covered arbour hung with rich clusters of purple grapes, and wove the flowers into garlands for her faithful friend and playmate, or when weary of this she wandered by the brookside, and sailed her tiny boat in the peaceful stream.

The sky had never since been so blue and cloudless, the sun never again had looked so kindly on her, the birds had not sung such joyous strains elsewhere. No wonder that she smiled as she renewed the happy hours of those untroubled years.

But the scene changed, clouds followed the brightness. The angel of death called away

both father and mother, but whither she scarcely knew, even when her tears fell upon the turf above their graves. Strangers could not supply their places, and dreary and desolate had been the years that lay between her and her childhood. Poor soul! no mother had tended her in hours of sickness, no endearing hand had smoothed her pillow, no tender kisses had brought smiles to her burning lips. Poverty had pressed heavily, and friends had been few, where once there had been no lack.

The dream is over,—she is once more in her humble cottage,—she who had been so beloved sits alone,—no one to love her, no one to care for her, her work falls from her hands, and tears, hot tears, are blinding her eyes.

At this moment a little girl drew near and entered at the open gate, blue-eyed, fair-haired, with a clean white apron, and a basket on her arm, singing sweetly as she came. Hark, her song is.

"There is a happy land
Far, far away,"

Light as a fairy's is her step, her voice more tuneful than the thrush's note,—no sorrow nor care have ever cast a shadow on her path.

Her presence is as hope-inspiring as the rainbow, and the words of her song are heaven-directed to the heart of the lonely one. The poor woman had not then to learn that there was a better land. She had believed it long ago. It was the hope of some day dwelling there that had cheered her darkest days, but now, when she had been faithless and forgetful of her heavenly inheritance, this little child had come to clear away the mists of doubt and despondency.

"I have come to see you, Miss Lindsay, and if you like I will stay and take tea with you," were words that fell on her ears like music.

"Bless you, Miss Bessie, you are always welcome, and more than welcome now; take this little chair and let me hear that sweet hymn," was the response, and again the consoling words revived the heart of the listener.

After this the little visitor opened her basket, and turning back the folds of the napkin within, displayed a nice loaf of cake, and drew from their hiding-places the little parcels of tea and sugar, saying, "Mother sent this to you, and this, and I have brought my work, and we will have such a nice time, will we not?"

"Dear child, said her hostess, as her tearful eyes were lit up by smiles of gratitude, "indeed we will have a nice time, and you will make my old heart young again."

The little thimble was put on, the needle threaded, and the nimble fingers made good progress on the patchwork.

"This quilt is for you, Miss Lindsay; mother says I shall make it all myself, and when it is done it will be nice and warm, and there will be a star in the middle too; will you not like it?"

"Ah! I shall be proud to sleep under it, Miss Bessie, but who put it into your head to be so kind to a poor woman like me?"

"Why, I don't know," said the little girl, looking up from her work, "Mamma says I must be kind to everybody; besides you have no little girl, and I will love you instead."

"By and bye Bessie said, "There are wild strawberries in the field opposite. I saw them as I passed, and I will run and gather some for our supper. When I come back I will pick up chips for you to light the fire with," and away flew the glad child, intent upon her errand.

An hour later, had any one looked in the cottage window, they would have seen the table spread, the ripe, red berries heaped on a dish, the loaf of cake in the centre, and the old woman and her youthful guest making a very happy meal together.

The heart that had been bowed down with grief, overflowed with gratitude, that such a ray of sunshine had lit up her path when it seemed most dark and wearisome; and the heart of the child rejoiced in the thought of giving joy, though she dreamed not of half the blessings she bestowed.

The old woman took fresh courage to go on her lonely way, assured that her Heavenly Father had not forgotten her, and content to wait patiently the time when she should find a mansion prepared for her in that land where tears shall be wiped from off all faces.

And the little child went forth into the world to fulfil her mission of making others happy.

Agriculture.

Mental Improvement for Farmers.

SOME men profit by observation more than others, but few know the means by which this power of observation may be increased. How few farmers know that cows and sheep have no upper teeth; how few are aware that cold water will dissolve more salt or lime than hot water. Does one in one hundred know that a gallon of water will dissolve more plaster of paris than it will of slaked lime; that has been long enough exposed to the atmosphere to become carbonate of lime? How many know that water is at its mean of size when at 40° of heat, that if cooled below that temperature it swells, until it becomes ice at 32°, and if heated above 40° it also swells, until it eventually becomes steam, thus occupying more than 1,700 times its original space? Still, all these are facts, and to minds generally observant, they are well known to be true.

The science of farming embraces all Nature's laws, and the habit of observation will soon render the farmer ready to recognize these laws in all their useful applications. Let him know enough of chemistry, which he may do by one week's reading to comprehend the various changes that the integrants of the soil undergo to enable them to enter the plant, and he will soon observe the fact that these chemical changes must include the ability of being dissolved in water before the plant can receive them. He will also soon find that water, in its pure state, will not dissolve the necessary quantity of all these materials, unless it contains carbonic acid. When he observes that water from a spring, applied to plants in time of drouth will not produce the same amount of improvement as is received from a similar amount of water falling through the atmosphere in the form of rain, he will soon understand that the rain-water comes charged with some ingredient from the atmosphere which the spring-water does not contain—this is ammonia, and is received from the decay of former crops, animal exudations, &c. The exercise of the mind in the observance and application of the commonest truths of Nature's laws, will capacitate it for other steps in progression; for the brain, like the arm of the black-smith or the leg of the dancing-master, must increase in energy at least, if not in size, by healthful use.

The inhabitants of the country have this power of observation to a greater extent than those whose tastes lead them to become inhabitants of large cities, and to engage in mercantile pursuits. A boy, who, when asked which was the direction of up stream, answered the question by throwing a stone at a frog, then remarking a frog always jumps up stream when disturbed.

Let any farmer devote the evenings of a single winter to the reading of Geology, Entomology, Chemistry, Natural Philosophy, and Natural History, and apply his acquired knowledge as an amusement, while pursuing his vocation during the following summer, and he will find himself able to observe and comprehend thousands of incidents connected with natural law, which would before have passed by, unobserved. He will then see and understand that the soil is but a debris of the rocks, that in its original formation this occurred from the combined influence of sun and air, and changes of temperature by freezing and thawing, in rendering these rocks a soil. He will see how the convulsions of nature have mixed the soils of different localities; he will see, also, that the earliest vegetable growths were necessarily grosser sorts than those now produced; and that they, by receiving carbon from the atmosphere, for the carbon originally must have existed there in immense quantities, in the form of carbonic acid, by their decay deposited it in the soil, thus improving its quality and rendering it fit for the development of a more advanced class of vegetation.

He will next be able to observe why deeply disintegrated soils can never suffer from drouth, because he will know that when water is absent from the soil it is present in the atmosphere, and will be deposited on the surfaces of colder particles, at greater depths than can be reached by the atmosphere when attempting to percolate shallow plowed land. He can trace the action of this moisture and its office in the soil; he can know what amendments are required to replace those which he may find to be deficient; and, indeed, he can render himself doubly happy and a better servant of his Creator, and his vocation ameliorating to his fellow-men. All this does not call for the tedious exertions of thought as practised by the mathematician and the merchant, but merely for the culture of the power of observation to see truths as they exist, and apply them rightly; and this, and nothing else, he will find to constitute the science of agriculture.—Working Farmer.