

Teachers' Department.

Sabbath School Scripture Lessons.

JULY 27th, 1856.

Subject.—MIRACULOUS TESTIMONY TO CHRIST'S DIVINE CHARACTER.

For Repeating. For Reading.
John xii. 12-16. | John xii. 20-36.

AUGUST 3rd, 1856.

Subject.—CHRIST DECLARES HIS DIVINE AUTHORITY.

For Repeating. For Reading.
John xii. 31-36. | John xii. 37-50.

Selections.

A short Story about Honesty.

ONE evening a poor man and his son, a little boy, sat by the way-side, near the gate of an old town in Germany. The father took a loaf of bread, which he had bought in the town, and broke it, and gave one half to his boy. "Not so, father," said the boy; "I shall not eat until after you. You have been working hard all day, for small wages, to support me; and you must be very hungry; I shall wait till you are done."

"You speak kindly, my son," replied the pleased father, "your love to me does me more good than my food, and those eyes of yours remind me of your dear mother who has left us, who told you to love me as she used to do; and, indeed, my boy, you have been a great strength and comfort to me; but now that I have eaten the first morsel to please you, it is your turn to eat."

"Thank you, father; but break this piece in two, and take you a little more; for you see the loaf is not large, and you require much more than I do."

"I shall divide the loaf for you, my boy; but eat it, I shall not; I have abundance; and let us thank God for his great goodness in giving us food, and in giving us what is better still, cheerful and contented hearts. He who gave us the living bread from heaven, to nourish, our immortal souls, how shall he not give us all other food which is necessary to support our mortal bodies?" The father and son thanked God, and then began to cut the loaf in pieces, to begin their frugal meal. But as they cut one portion of the loaf, there fell out several large pieces of gold of great value. The little boy gave a shout of joy, and was springing forward to grasp the unexpected treasure, when he was pulled back by his father. "My son, my son!" he cried, "do not touch the money; it is not ours?" "But whose is it, father; if it is not ours?" "I know not, yet, to whom it belongs; but probably it was put there by the baker, through some mistake. We must inquire. Run." "But, father," interrupted the boy, "you are poor and needy, and you have bought a loaf, and then the baker may tell a lie, and—" "I will not listen to you, my boy; I bought the loaf, but I did not buy the gold in it. If the baker sold it to me in ignorance, I shall not be so dishonest as to take advantage of him; remember Him who told us to do to others as we would have others do to us. The baker may possibly cheat us; I am poor, indeed, but that is no sin. If we share the poverty of Jesus, God's own Son, Oh! let us share, also, his goodness, and his trust in God. We may never be rich, but we may always be honest. We may die of starvation, but God's will be done, should we die in doing it! Yes, my boy, trust God, and walk in his ways, and you shall never be put to shame. Now, run for the baker, and bring him here; and I shall watch the gold until he comes. So the boy ran for the baker. "Brother workman," said the old man, "you have made some mistake, and almost lost your money;" and he shewed the baker the gold, and told him how it had been found.

"Is this mine?" asks the father; "if it is take it away."

"My father, baker, is very poor, and—" "Silence, my child; put me not to shame by thy complaints. I am glad we have saved this man from losing his money." The baker had been gazing alternately upon the honest father and his eager boy, and upon the gold which lay glittering upon the green turf. "Thou art, indeed, an honest fellow," said the baker, "and my neighbor David, the flax dresser, spoke but the truth when he said, thou wert the honestest man in our town. Now, I shall tell thee about

the gold:—A stranger came to my shop three days ago, and gave me that loaf, and told me to sell it cheaply, or give it away to the honestest poor man whom I knew in the city. I told David to send thee to me, as a customer, this morning; as thou wouldst not take the loaf for nothing, I sold it to thee, as thou knowest, for the last pence in thy purse; and the loaf, with all its treasure—and certainly, it is not small!—is thine; and God grant thee a blessing with it!"

The poor father bent his head to the ground, while the tears fell from his eyes. His boy ran, and put his hand about his neck, and said, "I shall always do like you, my father—trust God and do what is right; for I am sure it will never put us to shame."—*Edinburgh Christian Magazine.*

The well watered Garden.

BY THE REV. J. HAMILTON, D. D.

"A fountain of gardens, a well of living waters, streams from Lebanon."

THE plants in Christ's garden, so various and so pleasant, owe their vitality and vigour to the "fountain of gardens;" and this fountain is called both "a well of living waters," and "streams from Lebanon." Even in our own isle, with all its clouds and vapours, there is sometimes danger lest the garden be burnt up; and when the leaves hang flaccid on the newly planted shrub, and when delicate blossoms shrivel up, refusing to open to the scorching beam; as soon as the sun has set, you go to the brook or the fountain and lave the roots with a plentiful libation; and then, when the morning dawns, the leaves spread out so broad and firm, and the reviving blossoms look up, and thank you with a smile. But in sultrier lands they do not even trust to this. In the gardens of Damascus you may see so many channels dugged, and along them all a little rill meandering, and conveying to the foot of each pomegranate or orange tree the streams from Lebanon; the very river which has melted from the snowy peaks, and which, after refreshing the tall cedars, now comes down to these sultry plains, and converts its dusty expanse into an earthly paradise. These world-famed orchards do not depend on any tank or pond; but they drink "living water," and convert into cool shadow and delicious fruits the liquid treasure which the friendly mountain has hoarded since last winter.

The fountain of Christ's garden is the means of grace. A believer droops. In that corner of the garden where he is planted the soil is thin. It is a thirsty land where his lot is cast, a land where Christian society is rare, or where the preaching of the word is vague and vapid. And the good man feels it. His religion shrivels. The men by whose fervour he was wont to be roused or overawed, he now begins to regard as fanatics; and the good objects in which he was once so hearty—missions to the heathen and reformatory institutions—he begins to call Utopian visions, and a useless waste of money. But still there is a little root of spiritual vitality, and as there comes into the region an earnest ministry, or as there settles in his neighbourhood a large-hearted and much-loving Christian friend, his feelings begin to freshen. There is a shudder through the depths of his being as when death re-awakens into life; and shocked at his backslidings, remembering whence he has fallen, he repents and does the first works. And as he begins to distribute tracts and teach a Sunday class, and take an interest in the surrounding cottagers, people would almost fancy that this was the zeal of a young convert; they would scarcely suppose that it was the revival of an expiring life; a return to first love on the part of an Ephesian backslider.

It is dry and dusty weather. The life which the Christian is constrained to lead is much of it too secular. His business takes him chiefly among worldly men, and at times he cannot help being exceedingly engrossed. Trade is precarious, the times are pressing, or he has set on foot a series of experiments, he has struck out a good idea, or commenced a line of traffic with which his mind is busy day and night. And he can hardly disguise it that the true treasure is dwindling, his soul is declining. But just then he is laid prostrate by sickness, or death enters his dwelling; he falls in with some remarkable book, or hears a rousing sermon; and as he reads, and listens, and ponders, he is amazed at his own languor, and yielding to the providential admonition, he renews his diligence in practical piety. The things unseen come to his spirit in closer contact, his prayers acquire a new fulness,

precision, and sincerity, his watchfulness over himself is resumed, and the brightening up of all his piety betokens a secret source of refreshing.

But better than this dependence on such supplies as are brought from the cistern, is the case of the man who is "planted by the rivers of water," whose delight is in the law of the Lord, and who makes it his habitual meditation. In other words, that piety is likely to be the most persistent and most progressive, where the appointed means of grace are steadily employed. The Word of God, the day of rest, the house of prayer, reading, meditation, worship, secret and social; these are the chief of the ordinary means. These are the channels along which the streams from Lebanon are conveyed to every tree in the garden;—the truths and thoughts which, born in the calm, pure regions overhead, flow along down the valley of Revelation, and which when filled and penetrated by the Spirit of God, become "living water." By far the most satisfactory Christians, the most abiding and most growthful, are those who are most steadfast in the use of those stated means; who gladly go up to the house of the Lord, who command their household and their children after them to keep his ways, who do not restrain prayer in secret, who are much and mighty in the Scriptures, and who when they meet with those who love the Lord prize the opportunity to speak together and to call upon his name; not only will their leaf not wither, and not only will what they produce come to perfection, but should it please the Lord to send a season of refreshing, they are the likeliest to profit by the plentiful rain.

Such, viewed by the Saviour, is his Church. Such is the combination of beneficence and beauty, of fragrance and fruitfulness, produced by the good Spirit of God, and brought together in the sacred inclosure of the Christian Church. And such is the Saviour's complacency in viewing the varied excellence of this redeemed and regenerate community.

"My bride! my love! in thee perfection meets:
A garden art thou, filled with matchless sweets;
A garden walled, those matchless sweets to shield;
A spring inclosed, a fountain fresh and sealed."

A Thrilling Incident.

Rev. Mr. Jacobs, a missionary among the Ojibways, relates the following incident:—

There were two brothers, he said, among the Ojibways, who were conjurers. One of them having become a convert to christianity, renounced the profession of his art. This gave great offence to the other brother, and he declared that he would tomahawk the Missionary the first time that he saw him. A threat of this kind by an Indian is not a vain thing. The conjuror came into a meeting where the Missionary was to officiate, with his tomahawk in his hand. One of the Indians came to Mr. Jacobs in the midst of his sermon, and requested him to stop, for the man had come into the meeting to kill him; but he still kept on. The conjuror started from his seat to carry into effect his murderous design. Mr. Jacobs requested him to stop until he had finished his sermon, saying that after that he should be ready. He closed his eyes, expecting every moment to feel the tomahawk. After a few moments he heard a cry of distress, and opening his eyes saw it was the conjuror prostrate and crying for mercy. In about two days he found peace in believing. He is now a preacher of the faith which he once endeavoured to destroy.

SIN.

LOOK now at sin; pluck off that painted mask, and turn upon her face the lamp of the Bible. We start; it reveals a death's head. I stay not to quote texts descriptive of sin; it is a debt, a burden, a chief, a sickness, a leprosy, a plague, a poison, a serpent, a sting—everything that man hates it is; a load of evils beneath whose most crushing, intolerable pressure "the whole creation groaneth." Name me the evil that springs not from this root—the crime that lies not at this door. Who is the hoary sexton that digs man a grave? Who is the painted temptress that steals his virtue? Who is the murderer that destroys his life? Who is the sorceress that first deceives, and then damns his soul? Sin! Who, with icy breath, blights the sweet blossoms of youth? Who breaks the hearts of parents? Who brings grey hairs with sorrow to the grave? Who, by a more hideous metamorphosis than Ovid ever fancied, changes sweet children into vipers, tender mothers into monsters, and their fathers into worse than Herods, the murderers of their own innocents? Sin! Who casts the apple of discord on home hearths? Who lights the torch of war, and carries it over happy lands? Who, by divisions in the church, rends Christ's seamless robe? Sin! Who is this Delilah that sings the Nazarite asleep, and delivers the strength of God into the hands of the uncircumcised?

Temperance.

For the Christian Messenger.

"Prohibition and Anti-Prohibition."

[No. 3.]

MESSRS. EDITORS,

The objection against a prohibitory liquor law, (C. M. Jan. 16, 1856, p. 21.) grounded on its alleged diminution of the revenue, comes with an ill grace from Mr. Bent, after he has been advocating, (p. 10.) admission of all kinds of distilled drinks "free of duty," their sale "without reserve, or any charge for licence. As he is unable to discern the fitness of any of my illustrations, of course he can not see any similarity between the interests of a family and those of a Province, though the only objection to it which he suggests is, (p. 27.) "the more extended relations" of the latter. I have indeed an "extreme desire to kill the hydra of drunkenness;" but I do not "see through such a distorted medium as to render me incapable of perceiving that there are other means of impoverishing and ruining families." I ask him, however, to tell me of any "other means," wholly apart from drunkenness, by which a tithe of the number of families in these Provinces have been impoverished and ruined.

He admits, (p. 17.) that if drunkenness were as prevalent as I seem to think, "no sacrifice of revenue, no privation of comfort"—in drinking intoxicating liquors!—"to the well disposed few, no enactment on the part of government would be thought too great or too stringent to effect a reform." Here he concedes distinctly in principle the propriety of coercion and a prohibitory enactment; but denies that there is in these two Provinces a sufficient amount of intemperance to require it. I am aware that they contain many sober and industrious men; but, after all that has been effected by temperance organizations, in many parts drunkenness undeniably is still rampant. According to his own statement, (p. 28.) the duty on spirituous liquors "in New Brunswick reaches £30,000 a year." In Nova Scotia it is said to amount to £24,000. Add to the great quantity of intoxicating drinks on which the sum of £54,000 is annually paid in duties the vast supplies that are smuggled in, and we have a fearful aggregate. It is moreover, a well known and lamentable fact, that in some parts of Nova Scotia, drunkenness is now alarmingly on the increase. If we wait till the mass of the people become insatiable drinkers of spirituous liquors, how can we hope to obtain from legislators chosen by them, an enactment adapted "to effect a reform?"

I presume my old friend will not assert, that he labours more assiduously than I do, (p. 27.) "to extend education, to raise the moral feeling, and to improve the religious principles" of the people. It is, however, apparent to all unprejudiced minds, that among people who, having ready access to inebriating drinks, use them freely, such efforts are generally unavailing; while in those places whence the temptation is removed, and where the inhabitants are abstinent, they are usually successful.

Mr. B. resided in a wealthy parish, where the poor rates were light; (p. 28.) but in many localities they are heavy. Our insane poor have been supported in the Poor's Asylum in Halifax, and with the other poor elsewhere. That in these Provinces large sums are paid by the people, either directly or indirectly, for the support of paupers, criminals, and insane persons, is undeniable. That a great portion of this expense results from the sale and free use of intoxicating beverages, is equally certain. As an illustration I will relate one case that fell under my personal observation. An individual whose free use of intoxicating drinks had reduced him to poverty, on one occasion especially treated his wife with savage barbarity. Soon after this she gave birth to a son who never could either walk or speak, but constantly appeared like one thoroughly intoxicated. At a subsequent period the same man assailed his wife with such infuriated rage that she was rendered permanently insane. He was then imprisoned for a length of time, and the woman and child were for years supported by the town. Here were a criminal, an insane person, and an idiot, all supported at the public expense, as the result of a solitary instance of the sale and common use of intoxicating liquor.