

Teachers' Department.

Sabbath School Scripture Lessons.

MAY 25th, 1856.

Subject.—CHRIST CONTINUES HIS DISCOURSE WITH THE JEWS.

For Repeating. For Reading.
John viii. 28-32. | John ix. 39-59.

JUNE 1st, 1856.

Subject.—THE BLIND MAN HEALED.

For Repeating. For Reading.
John viii. 56-58. | John ix. 1-17.

Open-air Services for Children and Parents.

In the suburbs of London, during the past winter, service had been conducted on sabbath evenings in the school room, for children and their parents.

As the summer evenings came on, the attendance fell off to about forty, the children, with their parents, being found in the fields. As the fields and fresh air had greater attraction than the school room, it was resolved to carry the gospel there. Instead of 40 children, about 150 assembled, and 50 to 60 parents and adults. We had the pleasure of being present the other sabbath evening, and were delighted with the cheerful, orderly, and attentive appearance of the youthful throng. The superintendent took his stand at the upper corner of the field, the scholars assembling in front of him; the boys one side, and the girls on the other, some standing, and others sitting on the green grass. He remarked, in a word or two, that they were met for the worship of God. Three melodies were sung, and a portion of scripture read: these occupying about twenty-five minutes. Then an address for about fifteen minutes, and another hymn. Then followed another address, which was about the same length as before, a hymn, and prayer. Afterwards, several hymns were sung; some being selected by the scholars. Several friends took part in conducting the service. The scene was strikingly impressive; as the superintendent stood reading the Word of God, the scholars gathered round him, some with their open bibles, some standing, some sitting, others wending their way across the field; at the back, a number of adults—parents with their little ones, and passers-by attracted to the spot. Outstretched below, lay the cool meadows, covered with verdure, or new-mown hay, or in which were sheep and cattle at pasture; on the other side of them, appeared the gloomy walls of the new city prison; beyond were the rising pinnacles of several churches, and the massy dome of old St. Paul's; and far away in the distance, the glowing rays of the setting sun were illuminating the tall towers of the Crystal Palace. Who could behold such a scene unmoved, or without being forcibly reminded of those days when the Great Teacher taught the listening multitudes who thronged around him.

Last sabbath evening, there were about 500 children and adults present. This enterprise is worthy of imitation.—Reporter

The Birmingham Sunday School Canvass.

England has 1 in 8 of the population in the Sunday school, and many towns in the manufacturing districts have 1 in 4 or 5, London, the centre of intelligence and christian activity, has only 1 in 17, and if 100,000 were added to the roll-books of the several schools in the metropolis, the proportion of scholars to the population would only be 1 in 10.

The friends of Sunday schools in Birmingham having observed from the Census returns that the proportion of scholars to the population was far below the average of other towns, called a meeting of ministers, teachers, and others, to take into consideration the amount of the deficiency, and the remedy to be applied. They found that, though some towns had one-fifth of the population in the Sunday school, Birmingham had less than one-tenth; and they came to the conclusion that a general canvass would be the most likely means to remedy the evil.

The Rev. J. A. James wrote an address to parents, and 718 canvassers were appointed, some teachers and others, members of churches, who volunteered to assist on the occasion.

The canvass commenced on the 15th of April, and was continued for three Sundays; 28,698 houses were visited, 17,121 children were found to attend no Sunday school, and promises were obtained from the parents to send 8,450 to some school of such denomination as the parents preferred.

Pastoral care of the Young.

Friendly guidance, in relation to the subject of religion generally, and more especially to that of christian fellowship, is, to young people, a matter of urgent and absolute necessity. Many of them, like Nicodemus, are imperfectly informed, and timid, although full of good intentions and desires. Some of them will, while others will not, make known their difficulties, and seek for information. Whether they do these things or not they ought to be distinctly told, that however amiable and accomplished in some respects, yet they "must be born again." Nor is it less necessary that they should be induced to avail themselves of the ordinance of christian fellowship; if the course which begins in the new birth is to end in that glory which Christ had with the Father before the world began. When many of our Sunday scholars, like the young ruler mentioned in the gospel, are informed that the way to eternal life is to keep the commandments, they can reply, as truly as he did, "All these have I observed from my youth." These persons need to be plainly told, not only that they are to begin by leaving all for Christ, but also that they are required by him to become members of his church, and to avail themselves of the advantages resulting from christian communion, in order that they may escape the evil which is in the world, "endure to the end," and be finally "saved."

It is obvious that young Timothy had not only been instructed in religion by his mother at home, but had also become connected with the christian church at Lystra. He was well reported of by the brethren there to the apostle Paul, and this implied intimate acquaintance with his spirit and conduct, and renders it probable he was a member of the same religious community. Timothy, you all know, became an eminent minister, and an abundant blessing to mankind. There are youths at the present day who ought to become voluntary members of the church, and who, should they grow up in the "fellowship of the saints," will prove, in an eminent degree, "the lights of the world," and the "salt of the earth."—Catechism Reporter.

Selections.

"FOLLOW ME."

About fifty years ago, an officer of the French Army, a gentleman of distinguished connections, was taken prisoner in the war between France and England, brought to Liverpool and put upon his parole. Strolling one fine sabbath afternoon, in company with some brother officers in the same situation with himself, outside the city, he saw a company gathered around a small sheet of water, where baptism was about to be administered. Curiosity led him to approach, when he perceived some boys annoying those present, by throwing pebbles into the water. There were several ladies going to be baptized, and, Frenchmen-like, a feeling of gallantry induced him to persuade his brother officers to join with him and form a "guard of honour" round the water. He could not understand much English, but he soon gathered that these persons were consecrating themselves to the service of their Saviour. He noticed also that the minister, a gentleman of superior education, appealed to the NEW TESTAMENT as the foundation of all that he said and did; not to the authority of the Church; not to reason, but to THE WORDS OF CHRIST and his Apostles.

Brought up in Paris during the fervor of the first French Revolution, not only was he an utter infidel himself, but he did not know that any persons of education now believed in the New Testament. He supposed that Christianity might do to amuse children and uneducated people, but that no intelligent persons in the nineteenth century believed the New Testament to be true.

His chief surprise was that the minister, candidates and people, all so evidently considered the word of Christ and his Apostles to be of binding authority in this matter. So deep

was the impression this made that he resolved to do what he had never done, "read the New Testament for himself." From the moment he began, the truthfulness of the narrative became to him unquestionable. The majesty and authority of the words of Christ laid hold upon his heart. He read on and on, retired for a fortnight from the company of his fellow officers, and at last to save himself from further interruptions, wrote a card, and fastened it on the door of his own room.—"M. De—engaged reading the New Testament." He rose from the study of that book, a converted man, and soon was himself "buried with Christ in baptism."

At first his friends would ridicule the New Testament in his presence. But he soon silenced them thus: "Gentlemen, have you ever read this book?" "No." "But I have, and it is not what you imagine. Read it through, and then ridicule it as much as you please. But, until then, unless you wish personally to hurt me, ridicule it no more." In that way, by the earnest conviction of its divine authority which had first impressed him at the water's edge, he persuaded at least one brother officer to read that blessed book, who also became a christian, and united with the same church.

In his youth, the writer of these pages remembers well to have seen him. Kind, gentlemanly, polished to the highest degree, he became bold, earnest, and active as a christian, beyond most around him. From being a soldier under the greatest of earthly generals and potentates he became a soldier under the Captain of Salvation. So strong was his attachment to his religion and his religious friends, that, on the restoration of peace, his brother who became Keeper of the Seals of France, procured him an appointment as consul at one of the English ports. Throughout the whole remainder of a long life, but recently closed, he retained, to a singular degree, and with a touching fidelity the impression first made at those baptismal waters, that an implicit allegiance of heart and life to Jesus Christ, and submission to the system of religion taught in the New Testament alone is christianity. He was never ordained. But, while French Consul, he opened his house each day and conducted worship, preaching to his family, and such private friends and countrymen as his station gathered round him. Meeting on one occasion with a note which pleased him, written by a pastor to a member of his church, he addressed him a letter, such as one of the christians of early times might be supposed to have written to another. "Dear Sir and Brother," it began, "I shall not apologize for troubling you with this letter. If you are a true minister of the Lord Jesus Christ, as I take you to be, you will be glad to aid a brother soldier in his great conflict." He then narrated the history of his conversion, and requested a correspondence, which continued for about twenty years.

Having invited the minister to come and visit him, he had, like Peter, calculated the hour of his arrival, made an appointment for service, sent and gathered his friends and acquaintances, employing even the bell-man of the town to give the matter publicity.

Visiting London, the minister insisted that he should preach an evening lecture to the congregation. With a heart full of love to Christ, he took for his text these words of the Saviour, "Follow me."

This, he said, WAS THE WORD OF COMMAND given by the great Captain of our Salvation. He frankly spoke then of his own former life as a soldier, and how he had been led into allegiance and obedience to Christ, proceeding to show that this was a Captain who was never conquered, but went forth conquering and to conquer, on which account he had a right to say "Follow me." A Captain who had never retreated an inch of ground, and therefore He said, "Follow me;"—who had never lost a soldier—who had never bidden one to go where he had not gone before, but through suffering and death, had led the way, and therefore said, "Follow me." His broken English, his military air, his sharp accent, as he gave out, over and again the word of command, left deep the impression on many a heart that night, that he had learned the great lesson of baptism at that water's side, as but few even of Christ's followers learn it—that IMPLICIT OBEDIENCE AND ALLEGIANCE TO JESUS CHRIST IS THE FIRST REQUISITE OF CHRISTIANITY.—Curtis's "Progress of Baptist Principles."

Concern for others.

During a heavy storm off the coast of Spain, a dismantled merchantman was observed by a British frigate drifting before the gale. Every eye and glass were on her, and a canvass shelter on a deck almost level with the sea suggested the idea that there yet might be life on board. With all his faults, no man is more alive to humanity than the rough and hardy mariner; and so the order instantly sounds to put the ship about, and presently a boat puts off with instructions to bear down upon the wreck. Away after that drifting Turk go these gallant men through the swell of a roaring sea; they reach it; they shout; and now a strange object rolls out of that canvass screen against the lee shroud of a broken mast. Hauled into the boat, it proves to be the trunk of a man, bent head and knees together, so dried and shrivelled as to be hardly felt within the ample clothes, and so light that a mere boy lifted it on board. It is laid on the deck; in horror and pity the crew gather round it; it shows signs of life; they draw nearer; it moves, and mutters—mutters in a deep, sepulchral voice—"There is another man." Saved himself, the first use the saved one made of speech was to seek to save another. O! learn that blessed lesson. Be daily practicing it. And so long as in our homes, among our friends, in this wreck of a world which is drifting down to ruin, there lies an unconverted one, there is "another man;" let us go to that man, and plead for Christ; go to Christ and plead for that man, the cry, "Lord save me, I perish!" changed into one as welcome to a Saviour's ear, "Lord, save them, they perish!"—Dr. Guthrie.

Christ in Gethsemane.

It was, indeed, an awful moment, during which he gasped out the words, "Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me." He had tasted of its first drops and they were the great drops of the bloody sweat; he had looked into its contents, and seen them bubbling up like the springs of hell, and he gave one start backward, and the cup just passing out of his hands; passing into whose? Into ours, to be drained for ever, and ever, and ever. But, blessed be his name, the start and spasm were momentary; he grasped the cup again, and said, in tones which thrilled every leaf in the garden, "Nevertheless, not my will, but thine, be done."—Gillian.

The other Side.

Once, in a happy home, a sweet, bright baby died. On the evening of the day, when the children gathered round their mother, all sitting very sorrowful, Alice, the eldest, said, "Mother, you took all the care of baby while she was here, and you carried and held her in your arms all the while she was ill; now mother, who took her on the other side?" "On the other side of what, Alice?" asked the mother. "On the other side of death; who took the baby on the other side, mother; she was so little she could not go alone?" "Jesus met her there," answered the mother. "It is he who took little children in his arms to bless them, and said, 'Suffer them to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven!'" He took the baby to the other side.

Punctual Paying.

Those who give employment are utterly unconscious of a tenth part of the pain a master tradesman feels when Saturday arrives,—his men anxious for their earnings, he not having one pound in his possession,—his boys out in all directions with unpaid accounts to three times the amount of what would set his mind at ease, by relieving all his wants. His messengers go out; his hopes are high. Alas, they return one by one. "Mr. A. will call in a few days," says one. "Mr. B. pays all his accounts at the end of the year,—you need not send until then," says another. Thus his spirits sink,—at last the hour of payment advances,—his men stand looking at him, he scarce knowing where to look. All other endeavours having failed, he goes huddled in spirit to some friend or acquaintance, and in a subdued voice, begs the loan of a few pounds,—after numerous attempts he is successful,—pays his men with borrowed money,—rendered a beggar by the want of that money kept from him by those who need it not, merely from not knowing the misery their lax payment causes.—Blackwood.