

Teachers' Department.

Sabbath School Scripture Lessons.

SEPTEMBER 7th, 1856.

Subject.—THE VINE AND THE BRANCHES.

For Repeating. For Reading.

John xiv. 15-21. | John xv. 1-15.

SEPTEMBER 14th, 1856.

Subject.—CHRIST'S DISCOURSE WITH HIS DISCIPLES CONTINUED.

For Repeating. For Reading.

John xv. 1-6. | John xv. 16-27.

Kind Words.

Kind words do not cost much. They never blister the tongue or lips. And we have never heard of any mental trouble arising from this quarter. Though they do not cost much, yet they accomplish much. They help one's good nature and good will. Soft words soften our own soul. Angry words are fuel to the flames of wrath, and make it blaze the more fiercely. Kind words make other people good natured. Cold words freeze people, and hot words scorch them, and bitter words make them bitter, and wrathful words make them wrathful. There is such a rush of all other kinds of words, in our days, that it seems desirable to give kind words a chance among them. There are vain words, and spiteful words, and silly words, and boisterous words, and war-like words. Kind words, also, produce their own image on men's souls, and a beautiful image it is; they soothe, and quiet, and comfort the heart. They shame a man of his sour, morose, unkind feelings.

Not justice, but Pardon.

One morning, a beautiful girl fourteen years of age presented herself, alone, at the gate of one of the palaces of France. It was when the first Napoleon was Consul. Her tears and woes moved the keeper, a kind-hearted man, to admit her. She found her way to the presence of Napoleon, as he was passing through one of the apartments accompanied by several of the ministers. In a delirium of emotion the child rushed to his feet, and exclaimed, "Pardon, sire! pardon for my father!"

"And who is your father?" said Napoleon kindly, "who are you?"

"I am Miss Lajolia," she replied, "and my father is doomed to die."

"Ah, Miss," said Napoleon, "but this is the second time in which your father has conspired against the State; I can do nothing for you!"

"Alas, sire!" the poor child exclaimed, "I know it; but the first time, papa was innocent; and to-day, I do not ask for justice—I implore pardon, pardon for him!"

Napoleon's lips trembled, tears filled his eyes, and taking the little hand of the child in both of his, he tenderly pressed it, and said: "Well, my child, yes! For your sake, I will forgive your father. This is enough. Now rise and leave me."

This beautiful historical fact may serve to illustrate the way in which sinners are saved. All this world, young and old, are condemned to eternal death by the great God, against whom we have all sinned.

The Apostle Paul says: "Death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." The Evangelist John says: "He that believeth not, is condemned already." You probably think, that as for yourself, such a doom is hard and unjust. But you would not think so if you saw what sin would do, if God did not punish it. It would overturn his government. It would make a hell of every place, and a devil of every rational being. God must punish sin for his own sake, and for the sake of all good beings. There is however, one who can save sinners from eternal death. One who loves them much more than this lady loved her father. He did for us what she could not have done for him. He took our place and died in our stead that we might live. God forgives sinners for Christ's sake. But he does not forgive those who neglect to honour his Son, by asking pardon in his name. It is true, that God will be strictly just with you, though you should remain away from Christ, his Son, who has done so much for you. But then, justice to you will be banishment from heaven, forever. Are you willing and prepared to receive justice? This young lady said: "I do not ask for justice, I implore pardon, pardon!"

The Publican, "standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner." And also the trembling jailor, said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" Go, then, to the Saviour with something like the spirit which the young lady manifested in behalf of her father. Break through every obstacle, cast yourself at his feet, cry pardon, pardon, for a guilty rebel.

"You can but perish if you go, Then be resolved to try. For if you stay away, you know You must forever die."

As none are pardoned, except in virtue of their relation to Christ by faith, and as such an approach is of the very essence of faith, you will be accepted as righteous in his sight only for the righteousness of Christ imputed to you. You will be received into the number and have a right to all the privileges of the sons of God, and enabled more and more to die unto sin and live unto righteousness. At death you will be made perfect in holiness, and immediately pass into glory. "And all to the praise of the glory of his grace."—Central Presbyterian.

AGE.

But few men die of age. Almost all die of disappointment, passion, mental, or bodily toil, or accident. The passions kill men sometimes, even suddenly. The common expression, choked with passion, has little exaggeration in it; for even though not suddenly fatal, strong passions shorten life. Strong-bodied men often die young—weak men live longer than the strong, for the strong use their strength, and the weak have none to use. The latter take care of themselves; the former do not. As it is with the body, so it is with the mind and temper. The strong are apt to break, or like the candle, to run; the weak burn out. The inferior animals, which live, in general, regular and temperate lives, have generally their prescribed term of years.

M. Florens assumes that the growth of man ends at twenty, and that his maturity, as in all animals, should be multiplied by five, to give the duration of life. Thus:—

Table with 3 columns: Animal, Age, and Duration of Life. Includes Man, Camel, Horse, Ox, Lion, Dog, Cat, Hare, and Guinea Pig.

Man is not only the most irregular and the most intemperate but the most laborious and hard-worked of all animals. He is also the most irritable of all animals; and there is reason to believe, though we cannot tell what an animal secretly feels, that more than any other animal, man cherishes wrath to keep it warm, and consumes himself with the fire of his own secret reflections.

THE DEW OF BLESSING.

BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON.

[As reported by a short-hand writer.]

"I will be as the dew unto Israel: he shall grow as the lily, and cast forth his roots as Lebanon. His branches shall spread, and his beauty shall be as the olive tree, and his smell as Lebanon. They that dwell under his shadow shall return; they shall revive as the corn, and grow as the vine: the scent thereof shall be as the wine of Lebanon."—HOSEA xiv. 5-7.

How beautiful the Bible is in regard to poetry! Apart from the weighty matters of which they treat, and their solemn doctrines, the style of the Scriptures is so sublime that if all poets were to bind all their books in one, that one would not contain so many gems as the Bible; and if you culled all the sublime flights of all the poets, they would not soar one-half so high as does Jehovah when speaking to his beloved people. It is in vain for man to attempt to surpass the Bible in anything; it is, as Herbert called it, "Not only the book of God, but the God of books." It is a book of stars, and every page a sun. Mark our text. It may not be so full of beauty as many passages, but still it would, of itself, suffice to show that the Bible was, above all books, the book of poetry, if it had no other claim to honour. The bards of the Bible are the noblest, the world has ever known; before them all other bards must resign or veil their harps. The text contains a promise of grace; the blessed effects of divine grace; and these effects of grace are declared to be not only visible in the believer himself, but also on all those who dwell within the circle of his influence.

I. We have in the text A PROMISE OF GRACE. "I will be as the dew unto Israel." I need not explain to you fully the beauty and force of the figure—"the dew." You have often been told how, at the creation, when "the Lord God had not caused it to rain upon the earth," "there went up a mist from the earth, and watered the whole face of the ground"; and how the Easterns look not to springs of the earth in their drought, but look right up to God's heaven, and ask for the dew to fall.

Supposing, therefore, that you understand the beautiful allusions in these words, we ask you to notice, first, the emphasis on I. "I will be as the dew." It does not mean that the work of God shall be as the dew, so much as that God himself will be as the dew unto Israel. We may preach the soundest doctrine in the world, and yet the souls of the hearers shall be barren. God is the dew. The grace dwells not in the Saviour's garments, nor in the Saviour's works; but the Saviour himself "will be as the dew." Many seek for grace in doctrine, and in experience, or in divers other things; but remember, that the grace comes direct from Christ. Christ is the marrow of his own gospel—the gospel of the gospel—and if that gospel be like the open heaven, Christ is like the dew.

Again, the dew comes from above; so in this respect, God will be like the dew. God's children want something from above—something out of themselves. A hypocrite can water himself any day of the week; a formalist can, like the Egyptians, dig his own artificial wells and canals; but the true believer wants supernatural grace—nothing else will do. Many professors think to grow very nicely without any such dew. Their religion springs from themselves, from their own nature, from their own free will; and, therefore, their own nature can supply all the wants of that religion; and then ascribing all to God, they take all the glory to themselves. But for me, "Drop from on high sweet dew, for my poor well is dry, and I know not where to get it filled." We want something which God himself must cause to distil upon us often, like the dew, as God said to Job, "Who hath begotten the drops of dew? out of whose womb came the ice? and the hoary frost of heaven, who hath gendered it?" so "I myself will be as the dew unto Israel."

Again, the dew falls silently and secretly. Divine grace often comes into the believer's heart in an almost imperceptible manner. Did you ever hear the footsteps of the dew? Did ever any blow a trumpet at its approach? Sometimes, indeed, divine grace comes into the heart like rattling hail. There are doubts, and fears, and innumerable tumults, deep anguish, and terrible sufferings. In many other cases it comes by the still small voice. There are some who wish they had been tempted like John Bunyan, and visited by a like fearful but decisive experience. Perhaps you say I cannot tell the day or mode in which the heavenly dew fell upon me. Never mind. Don't think it was not grace because you did not see it come. Nine tenths of God's people cannot do this. Be content, then, with grace, however it comes. Never get chalking out God's plan; he knows best, and, come how it may, it is still God's grace. Art thou dry and barren now? This is a sweet promise, and in five minutes thou mayest be covered over with the heavenly moisture. Often, when you least expect, God pours his dew into your hearts.

I need only mention that God's grace, like the dew, comes down copiously, constantly, sufficiently for all the purposes of a believer's life.

I must now apply these words. How many are there who have never known that dew? Mark, the promise is not to any one, only to Israel; are you among those who can call themselves by that name? To answer this question let us first ask what is meant by Israel? Secretly and mystically it means God's elect; a people chosen of God and precious. But as you cannot tell beforehand whether you are of this mystical body, I proceed to say that, openly, Israel means a man of prayer. Jacob got his new name by wrestling. Art thou a man of prayer? and cannot live without prayer? Oh, if not, this promise is not thine; it has nought to do with thee; it has to do only with the man who lives by prayer. How many are there who can afford to live without prayer, or with very little prayer? You say a few hurried words when you are half asleep at night, and a few more in the morning before business calls you,

just enough to ease Mr. Conscience, but not enough to make you live—really live; just enough to keep you in spiritual existence, but not with all its proper life and power as those who understand the holy art of prayer.

Again, Israel, openly, is the man who has given up the mess of pottage. It includes all who are saying I love not my life, "neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy"; who can say, one thing I do, I set mine affections on things above; I call this world a poor and pitiful mess of pottage. No man can be serving God and mammon at the same time. I deem it enough to make the best of the next world; I set all my heart on things to come, and leave the things that are to the providence of my God. Are you like Israel in these respects? If so, the promise is yours. Don't take it if it is not for you; but if you be Israel indeed, take it and live on it.

Temperance.

A true and touching Incident.

We clip the following from the Fredrickburg (Va.) Christian Banner:

A young man and his wife were preparing to attend a Christmas party, at the house of a friend, some miles distant.

"Henry, my dear husband, don't drink too much at the party to-day; you will promise me, won't you?" said she, putting her hand on his brow, and raising her eyes to his face with a pleading glance.

"No, Millie, I will not; you may trust me." And he wrapped his infant in a soft blanket, and they descended.

The horse was soon prancing over the turf, and pleasant conversation beguiled the way.

"Now don't forget your promise," whispered the young wife, as she passed up the steps.

Poor thing! she was the wife of a man who loved to look upon the wine when red. But his love to his wife and their baby, whom they both idolized, kept him back, and it was not often that he joined in the Bacchanalian revelries.

The party passed off pleasantly, the time of departing drew near, and the wife descended from the upper chamber to meet her husband. A pang shot through the trusting heart as she met him, for he was intoxicated—he had broken his promise.

Silently they rode homeward, save when the drunken man broke into snatches of song or meaningless laughter. But the wife rode on, her babe pressed closely to her grieved heart.

"Give me the babe, Millie, I can't trust you with him," said he, as he approached a dark and somewhat swollen stream.

After some hesitation she resigned her first born, her darling babe, closely wrapped in the great blanket, to his arms. Over the dark waters the noble steed safely bore them, and when they reached the bank the mother asked for the child.

With much care and tenderness he placed the bundle in her arms, but when she clasped it to her bosom, no babe was there! It had slipped from the blanket, and the drunken father knew it not.

A wild shriek from the mother aroused him, and he turned just in time to see the little rosy face rise one moment above the dark waves, then sink forever.

What a spectacle—the idol of his heart gone, gone forever, and that by his own intemperance. The anguish of the mother, the remorse of the father, are better imagined than described.

This is no fiction, but the plain truth. The parties were known by the friends of the writer, and it should be a warning to those who indulge in intoxicating drinks and resist the pleading of loving wives.

HELL UPON EARTH.—Hon. John C. Walker, says: "A grocery or a place where whiskey is sold, bought, or drunk, it seems to me could only have been gotten up as a miniature representation or likeness of the infernal regions, to terrify men—if they would not be persuaded against going there. How can a moral man look upon such places with any regard for his race or he would set an example worthy of imitation, and not fail now to lend his aid to promote the glorious enterprise."

True joy is a serene and sober emotion; and they are miserably out that take laughing for rejoicing.