

Teachers' Department.

Sabbath School Scripture Lessons.

AUGUST 16th, 1857.

Subject.—THE DISCUSSION CONCERNING CIRCUMCISION.

For Repeating. Acts xiv. 25-27. For Reading. Acts xv. 1-20.

AUGUST 23rd, 1857.

Subject.—THE LETTER OF INSTRUCTION SENT BY THE COUNCIL AT JERUSALEM.

For Repeating. Acts xv. 18-20. For Reading. Acts xv. 21-40.

THE QUESTIONER.

Mental Pictures from the Bible.

Reader, you need but "search the scriptures," to comprehend our Mental Pictures.

[No. 25.]

It is harvest time. In a certain valley the reapers are engaged in their pleasant toil, gathering in the rich abundance around them. Yet their countenances are less joyous than might be expected.

QUESTIONS to be answered next week.

- 61. Where do we have a description of a giant's resting-place and what were its dimensions. 62. Find an emblem in the Bible which equally pictures forth the source of man's sin and the means of man's recovery.

SOLUTION to Picture No. 24.

Adonijah's Feast.—1 Kings i.

ANSWERS to questions in our last.

- 59. 2 Chron. xxxv. 21, 22. 60. The disciples' net. Luke v. 5, 6.

The Family Circle.

Ephraim Holding's Homely Hints to Sons.

How often has Ephraim Holding caught the sunny glance of a parent's eye, as it lighted affectionately and exultingly on a beloved child! How often has he witnessed an expression of joy that almost amounted to pride, in the approving smile of a parent whose heart yearned towards his son?

If children knew better than they do, how much joy and sorrow their good and bad conduct put into a father's and mother's bosom, surely they would do many things which they now leave undone, and leave undone much that they now do.

Bad as the world is, one would think that there was affection enough in the breast of a son to make his parents happy: and so there is in ten thousand instances: let us do all we can to increase it.

I love to see more than common affection between parents and children. Whether their state be high or low, is of little importance, but it is of great importance whether or not they delight to render each other happy. The love of a parent for a child is strong as death. What will not a father do, what will not a mother suffer, to add to the happiness of a beloved child.

Some time ago I was present in a large town when the scholars of a score of Sunday-schools met together to walk in procession to a place of worship. A short woman was bustling about, at one time peeping between the people, at another standing on tip toe, and trying to look over their heads. When she came to the place where I was standing, she could keep silence no longer, but cried out, "That's my son sir, in the blue jacket." Poor woman! her heart was full of her son, and she expected all the world would be as much interested in him as she was.

I remember once sitting beside an old gentleman, when a gold medal was to be given away as a prize for good conduct and attainments in learning. The medal was presented to a boy of about sixteen years of age, who, it was said, well merited the reward. "Can you tell me who that clever young man is?" said I. "Sir," replied the old gentleman, sitting up at

least an inch higher on his seat, "he is my son."

There was all the father at work in his bosom; and no doubt he was much more delighted than if he himself had received the golden medal.

Ephraim Holding notices these things as he moves about in the world, and takes the opportunity of making them known to others.

But shall I tell you?—yes, I will tell you another instance of parental feeling towards a son. It may make your heart ache, but for all that, it may do you good.

In spending a day in a country town, I was led by curiosity to hear the trials of the prisoners in the County Hall. There were three men placed at the bar, who had been found guilty, and the judge was putting on his black cap to pronounce the sentence of the law. One of the three, a young man of decent appearance, who had buried his face in his hands, after sobbing convulsively, lowered his head to the bar and gave a groan. His forehead and hair were wet with perspiration; his body trembled and it was plain that he was enduring the agonies of fear, remorse, and shame.

"What crime has the unhappy man committed?" said I, in a whisper, to one who was leaning against me. No answer was returned; but, as I tried to lift up my hat to prevent it from being crushed, a big tear fell on my hand. I looked up, and saw the horror struck face of a white-headed old man. The truth flashed upon me at once, which was afterwards confirmed:—that white-headed old man was the culprit's father!

Sons, of whatever age you may be, add to your own happiness by adding to the happiness of those who gave you birth. The words of holy writ, that you learned in early childhood, should influence you as much as if an angel cried aloud, with every rising sun. "Honour thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee."

It was but yesterday that I was sitting with my Bible before me, when, turning over the leaves, my eye rested on the book of Proverbs. No wonder that Solomon was called a wise man, when he could write such a work; but his hand was under a holy influence; and, in every verse it may be said, "A greater than Solomon is here."

The counsel he gives to all in this glorious book is excellent; but the advice offered to sons is strikingly beautiful. It should be not only in the hand of every son, but in his head, and in his heart.

"My son! hear the instruction of thy father, and forsake not the law of thy mother." "My son! despise not the chastening of the Lord; neither be weary of his correction." "My son; if sinners entice thee, consent thou not." Why; these three verses are worth three thousand volumes of worldly wisdom; and those sons who put them in practise will reap a richer harvest than they would in gaining the riches of the East.

Sons are usually fond of doing what their fathers do; and fathers will do well to remember this, that a model may be placed before their children, worthy their imitation. When I see a son following his father, looking up to him, respecting his opinions, and honouring him, I have but little fear of his doing well. It is true there are bad fathers, who set anything but a good example; but I trust it is not the case with yours.

Among the Indians of America lived one Taetoo, a brave man; he had a son, Taponee, that he loved, and his son loved and revered his father.

It happened Taetoo was taken prisoner by a tribe at war with him. Taetoo had heavy chains fastened on his hands and his feet, and he was cast into prison with his son, who shared his captivity.

After a time, Taponee, being a fine youth, was taken before the chief whose prisoner he was. The chief, Willahoo, having no child, wished to adopt him as his son. "Taponee," said he, showing him rich ornaments for the wrists and the ankles, "choose which you will—they are all at your disposal." Taponee took them up, one by one, and then replaced them on the ground. "As you give me my choice," said the noble youth, "I had rather wear such as my father wears."

It was a noble answer, a high souled reply, to a tempting seduction; the bonds of his father were more grateful than the gifts of a prince. Sons, refuse not the lesson given by the unlettered Indian.

To you who are young, I would speak earnestly. Let all that is good in your parents be seen in you. The rattle of the earth on the coffin-lid of a parent is a fearful thing; but the consciousness of having been an unfaithful son is yet more fearful. Ephraim Holding has known the one, and humbly blesses God for having been kept in ignorance of the other.

Review of Books.

Grace Truman, or LOVE AND PRINCIPLE. By Sallie Rochester Ford. Price \$1.

Another book of thrilling interest which will be read with even greater avidity than that of "Theodosia Ernest." The principles of Baptist Churches, more particularly with respect to the question of communion, are here exhibited in a beautiful domestic story. It commences where popular story books commonly end,—with a wedding. Grace Truman is a pious member of a Baptist church, who marries into a family of Presbyterians. Her principles are subjected to the most trying tests. Of course the temptations, opposition and argument all fail in accomplishing the object sought. The purpose of the work is to shew that the only authority which a disciple of Christ should recognize in church fellowship is that of his Lord and Master as given in the Sacred Volume. The work will doubtless command an extensive circulation. We had marked several passages for insertion but must content ourselves with two. Nothing less than the whole will satisfy many of our readers.

"Old Aunt Peggy was rejoiced beyond the power of her words to express. She had listened to Grace's arguments with the most earnest solicitude, and her frequent exclamations of "dat's de truth, Miss Gracey, bless de Lord," testified her heartfelt gratification.

"Truth is mighty and must prevail," she exclaimed; as having hobbled to the door of the parlor, she turned round to view the group who sat in abashed silence, after the concluding words of young Mr. Holmes. Her feelings and convictions she detailed to Grace, in a conversation which took place between them a few days subsequent to this memorable morning.

As her husband returned from the village, Grace, having gathered her flowers, joined him in the avenue. As they moved toward her favorite seat, they saw Fannie approaching them from the house.

"What book is that you are reading, Fan?" Mr. Holmes asked, as he took a seat between her and Grace, at the same time reaching out his hand to take the volume from his sister's lap. "Some old love-sick romance, to fill your head with fancies, which can never be realized. A sad waste of time, sis."

She betrayed a slight agitation as she raised the book to pass it to him.

"Well, I do think! Look here, Grace, will you? and see what Fan is reading."

The wife turned to see, but she did not need to scan the title-page to which his finger pointed; the old leather backed "Vindicator" was too familiar, so she laughed and said, "The sin be upon me."

"Why, Fan, are you going to become a controversialist too?" he asked, casting a look of smiling approval upon the arch face at his side. "I would advice father and Mr. Gordon to look out for their standing now," he pleasantly remarked. "Such wise heads must certainly uptrip them."

"I don't wish to argue, Brother John, I'll leave that to Sister Grace; but haven't I a right to my own views about things; and isn't it as necessary for me to be right on all subjects as it is for older heads?"

"Yes, certainly it is your duty to know what is right, and in order to do this, you must study both sides of this mooted question. But don't you think Grace and Aunt Peggy will do to plead the cause of immersion without your aid?"

"Don't I tell you, brother, I don't wish to argue; but Sister Grace's defence this morning is the very thing that has put me to reading. I do believe, after all, she and Aunt Peggy are right, and you, and father, and the rest of us are wrong."

"Come, come, Fan, you don't decide on such meagre evidence, do you? You would make a fine judge in one particular at least, that of expediting business."

"I didn't decide the matter, did I? I only said that I believe they are in the right, and I am trying to find out the truth. Oughtn't I to do this, Sister Grace?"

"Certainly, Fannie, 'Buy the truth and sell it not,' is the injunction of Holy Writ."

"And this is what I wish to do. I have been, thinking of the conversation we had in your room last week, and particularly of Aunt Peggy's illustration of the room with its spread table, and the guests coming in at the windows. I can't get rid of it. And I feel it is my duty to see whether I have come in at the door or through the window; and I have determined to find out. Won't you assist me, sister?"

At length her pastor pays Grace a visit and makes it an opportunity of preaching the Gospel several times. The following extract

shows the commencement of the formation of a Christian Church in the neighbourhood.

"Perfect stillness reigned throughout the assembly, as the old man's voice ceased. His words had passed like an electric shock from heart to heart, and many who went to look on and laugh, came away deeply impressed with the weight of the truths they had heard.

While the last song was being sung, the old man descended from the pulpit, and as it closed, he rose and said, "My friends, I am a stranger in your midst, an ambassador for Christ, sent to bear the messages of my King, to preach to you the unsearchable riches of the gospel of peace. To all, who are in sincerity followers of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whatever name you may be, to you, I come with words of heavenly consolation and joy. To all who are yet in rebellion against the King of kings, I come with words of fearful warning and affectionate entreaty."

These words, how few and simple they were, yet so full of searching power, and their effect was wonderful. All prejudices were overcome, all suspicion allayed, and each heart went out insensibly toward the old man, who in tones of kindness and sincerity had spoken of love and good will to all men.

Appointments were made for the following day and night, and a notice given of the intended meeting on Saturday, at 10 o'clock, for the purpose of constituting a church; and all Baptists present holding letters of dismission, were requested to bring them on that occasion, and become members of that body.

The benediction was then pronounced; after which, many of all denominations, among whom was Mr. Gordon, came forward to be introduced. The old man received each one with a kind smile and pleasant word.

There was preaching again the next day according to appointment, and notwithstanding many had to look after their daily business, the house was better filled than on the previous evening. At night the attendance was greater still. The invulnerable Mr. Holmes, who regarded himself proof against "all such weakness," by the pleadings of his wife, and the promptings of that desire for novelty which inhabits every human breast, was led to attend, much to the surprise of his minister and Brother Deacon Dodge, both of whom were present. On being asked the next day his opinion of the sermon, he answered,

"Well, I reckon it will do. The fact of the business is, the old man seems to be in earnest."

And what praise could he have given more? What higher encomium can be passed on a minister of the gospel, than to say "that man is earnest in his work?"

And he was in earnest too. For he was preaching "Christ crucified" to sinners "dead in trespasses and sins," "the only name under heaven and among men," whereby they could be saved. And that earnestness was accompanied by the influence of the Spirit of truth, and men gave heed to his words. Mr. Ray, who returned home with Fannie, declared he "had never heard such preaching in all his life."

Old Aunt Peggy attended regularly. She could find no words to express her great happiness; she would sit in the corner near the pulpit, and the big tears would chase each other down her sunken cheeks, while her lips unconsciously murmured, "Bless de Lord, bless de Lord."

Sketch of the Life and Ministry of the Rev. C. H. Spurgeon. Sheldon, Blake-man & Co., New York. Price 1s. 9d.

This memoir of one who is how so world-renowned will supply a very satisfactory answer to the question so often asked, "Who is this Spurgeon?"

No effort is made at book-making in the preparation of this volume, but the whole is condensed into 140 pages.

The following from the publishers' preface, may inform our readers of the character of the work better than any remarks of our own:

I. These pages contain a narrative of facts likely to interest many persons.

II. Young persons will find an instructive example in these pages they may imitate with great personal advantage.

III. To young Ministers of the Gospel, the example of the earnest life of this faithful Preacher, as set forth as a model, they may imitate with advantage to themselves and to their churches.

IV. The narrative will suggest many practical lessons which the intelligent reader will adopt for self-improvement.

V. Seeking only to do good by disseminating truth, the narrative is recommended to the Christian church universal, and to the best judgment of the public generally.