

Teachers' Department.

Sabbath School Scripture Lessons.

AUGUST 9th, 1857.

Subject.—MISSIONARY LABOURS OF PAUL AND BARNABAS CONTINUED.

For Repeating. Acts xiv. 16-17. For Reading. Acts xiv. 19-28.

AUGUST 16th, 1857.

Subject.—THE DISCUSSION CONCERNING CIRCUMCISION.

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

THE QUESTIONER.

Mental Pictures from the Bible.

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

[No. 24.]

It is a festive occasion; in a large and splendid apartment are seated the chief nobility of the land; upon the table are the remains of a sumptuous feast. The company exhibit looks of the greatest surprise; some are conferring with each other, others are seen leaving their seats. At the head of the table is seated a man of noble appearance, he looks from one to the other of his guests as if seeking some explanation; at his right hand stands a warrior, who is addressing the assembly in a loud and commanding voice; while at the open door stands a young man awaiting an invitation to enter.

QUESTIONS to be answered next week.

59. On what occasion did God speak through the mouth of a King of Egypt?

60. What was useless when used unbidden, but the source of food and wealth when once commanded?

SOLUTION to Picture No. 23.

Abraham's servant and Rebekah. Gen. xxiv.

ANSWERS to questions in our last.

57. Luke iv. 6. Dan. iv. 17.

58. (1.) The drying up of the waters, Gen. viii. 13. (2.) The rearing of the Tabernacle, Exod. xl. 17. (3.) The sanctification of the Temple, 2 Chron. xxix. 17. (4.) The return of Ezra from the captivity, Ezra vii. 9.

The Family Circle.

Ephraim Holding's Homely Hints to Fathers.

THE longer Ephraim Holding lives in the world, the more he is convinced of the advantage of plain speaking, whenever anything is to be said likely to do good. He has spoken plainly to mothers, and now he will do so to fathers also.

There is that in the name of father that disposes me to pay respect. Show me the father who desires, in the midst of his manifold infirmities, to be a guide or protector, and an affectionate counsellor to his family; to promote their welfare in this world, and to lead them to a better; show me, in a word, a God-fearing, affectionate father, and I will respect and honour him, whether he dwell in a lordly mansion, or a lowly cottage.

In whatever light I look at a father, I always regard him as the pivot on which the whole domestic concern moves; the husband, (house-band), the corner-stone that binds the edifice together; the roof-tree of the family habitation. If the father be not looked up to, there is something deficient in his head; and if he be not loved, there is a string out of tune in his heart. Make the best of the matter you can, and after all, if the father plays a second part, there must be an infirmity in his body or his mind—in his judgment or his affections.

I know this is plain speaking and plain dealing, but not a whit the less worth attending to on that account. Ephraim Holding has told you before, that he loves to see things in order; and there can be no order when persons or things are out of their proper places. If I were to paint a family portrait, the father should stand erect in the centre, the wife should lean upon him lovingly, and the children should be gazing on him with affection.

There is something of an ennobling character in this position, whose influence every father ought to feel. It is not the idle vanity, the poor pitiful pride, that a little brief authority too often excites in a weak mind, that I would provoke; but a sense of honourable responsibility, that calls forth the best energies of a man, and prompts him to apply them to the best purposes.

Many a good wife has fallen into the mistake of striving to get the mastery, considering it a kind of credit to her—a plume of feathers in her cap—to rule her husband. Now, Ephraim

Holding is not the man to keep back any honour that can be paid to a good wife, but he dares not give more than God allows. The word of God is a better guide in these matters than our poor opinions. Ephraim will give a text or two that seems to put the matter beyond all doubt, as to whether the husband or the wife should be the head of the family. In the Old Testament it is written thus of the wife—"Thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee; and in the New Testament are the words, "The husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the Head of the church;" "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands." Now, if as many texts can be found in Holy Scripture, setting forth the contrary opinion, then will Ephraim Holding acknowledge that he is too great a stickler for the point which he has not sufficient authority to maintain.

Fathers! your post is the head of your family; but if, instead of affectionate guides, you become tyrannical rulers, you are unworthy the honourable position in which God, in his wisdom, has placed you. Ephraim Holding would willingly raise you to honour; but if you abuse it by pride, tyranny, injustice, cruelty, and unreasonableness to your wives, he would be the first to rebuke you. "Love your wives," as husbands; love them for their sakes and your own; and, as fathers, love them for the sake of your children.

As a bird beat about by the tempest finds an asylum in his downy nest, so should a father find a refuge from care and anxiety, in the peaceful bosom of his family.

Wrangling and jangling, of any kind, is bad enough; but of all wrangling and jangling, that between a husband and wife is the worst. What an unnatural sight it would be, could we behold the members of the same body violently opposing each other; the tongue railing against the foot, the heart burning against the head, the teeth tearing the arms, and one hand wrenching and grappling with the other. And are not man and wife one? Is it not written, "And they twain shall be one flesh?" Again I say, as husbands, love your wives, and, as fathers, love your children.

But let me ask, with all the kindly feeling of a friend, how you are bringing up your children? This is a point in which we ought to be honest and faithful in our observations, because it is a weak point with many of us. Eli of old, was a good man; but what was his sin?—His sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not." Happy is that father who can say, in the integrity of his heart, "I have neither ruled my children with a rod of iron, nor allowed them to do evil without restraining them." It is by no means an easy thing to "train up a child in the way he should go."

The persons who think themselves best qualified to bring up children, are usually those who have no children to bring up. They would do this and that, if they had a son or a daughter; and such and such things they would never allow. Alas! a father's affection often leads him sadly astray, blinding his eyes when he should see clearly, and warping his judgment from that unbending standard it ought to assume. But though instances are too often seen of diligent, moral, and pious parents having idle, immoral, and infidel children, let us not be swift to conclude, on this account, that good example is of little avail.

In these instances it will generally be found that, notwithstanding the diligence, the morality, and the piety of the parents, they have been culpably negligent of some duty that they ought to have performed. They have done nothing, perhaps, which they ought not to have done, but they may have left undone much that they ought to have done.

Fathers, be not weary in training up your young olives; be not satisfied till they bud, and blossom, and bear fruit. Let them see nothing in you to avoid, and everything to imitate. Be not content in pointing out to them the road to heaven, but walk before them in the way that leads to everlasting life.

There is joy, an inexpressible delight, that gathers round the heart of a pious parent when he sees his children walking in the ways of the God of their fathers, and acting an upright and an honourable part among mankind; and there is a joy, too, for the pious parents of pious children, when those children are taken away.

"Parents, reflect! reflect and weep no more! To you the precious privilege is given, Better than adding thousands to your store, Of adding angels to the host of heaven."

O that Ephraim Holding could make the heart of every father glow with the desire that his children, as slips of his right hand planting, might flourish and bloom in the paradise of God!

A Story of real life.

A little girl, whom people may have observed selling violets around the New York Hotel, offered a bunch the other day to a gentleman and lady who were staying at the establishment, as they were returning from a walk.

"Please buy my violets, Sir?" said the little one, holding up a purple bunch that still seemed to have the dew upon it. "Please buy my violets—only sixpence a bunch."

"No! go away, child," said the lady, rather harshly, "I don't want them."

"My dear," remarked the gentleman mildly, you have spoken rather harshly to the poor girl, "see, her eyes are filled with tears."

The lady looked around. The little violet girl, whose eyes were dark as the flowers she sold, was weeping silently. In an instant Mrs. Y's warm Southern nature gushed out, and turning back she clasped the poor child in her arms and endeavoured to assuage her grief.

"How very, very like our poor Alfred, this child is," said Mrs. Y, looking attentively in the face of the poor violet girl. Alfred was their only son who had come to New York some five or six years ago, where he died of dissipation.

Mr. Y, attracted by his wife's exclamation examined the little girl attentively.

"There is a strong likeness," he replied.

They questioned her. She had little to tell Her mother and father were both dead. What was her name! She was not certain but her father's name was Y—. It was enough. The old gentleman and lady took the child between them in a carriage, and straightway drove to the house of her grandmother, with whom she said she lived. There they discovered that their only son had absolutely been married some time before his death, to a pretty sewing girl, who did not long survive him, and who died leaving behind this one child. Mr. and Mrs. Y. were rich and childless. This little creature, ragged and uneducated, was more welcome to them than a fortune. She was instantly washed and dressed, and teachers had for her. Her fortune changed as the seasons changed. It had been Winter with her a long time, and it was now May.

A Madman's Freak.

A curious incident recently occurred to a keeper in an asylum in a neighboring city. He had occasion to enter the cell of a vicious maniac, who had formerly been an evangelical clergyman. He had of late become greatly tranquilized; so much so that the keeper felt no hesitancy in entering the cell to converse with its occupant. He was politely received and requested by the lunatic to accept a seat. The keeper complied, when his adroit host flew to the door, seized the key which the too confident keeper had allowed to remain in the lock, shot the bolt, and then brandished a weapon over the head of the hapless turnkey, "Down on your knees and pray," cried the madman. The turnkey, who supposed his last hour was come, knelt down in mortal fear to prepare for death. The hour was about eight o'clock, and he prayed steadily until nine, when, having pretty well exhausted his voice and his subject together, he stopped short, and undertook an appeal to the maniac's compassion, "Pray on, or I'll brain you," was the maniac's only reply, as he again elevated his weapon over the turnkey's head. The turnkey went back to the place of beginning, and prayed the same thing over again. To cut a long story short, he was compelled, by the madman, to pass the entire night in audible devotions, and when rescued in the morning by the other turnkeys his voice had dwindled down to a gruff whisper, while the forced continuance in one attitude had rendered his limbs entirely powerless.

THE GOOD EFFECTS OF FLOGGING BAD BOYS are well illustrated in the case of the Lord Chief Justice of Great Britain. When he was a boy, the son of a plain farmer, he robbed an orchard with another boy, his brother. Their father was fined for the offence of the boys. The little boys did not mind that, but their father did, and he had accordingly flogged them so severely that they never once thought of robbing orchards again. Now, if on that occasion, instead of punishing the father, the boys had been committed to jail, was it likely that little Johnny Scott would ever have sat on the wool-sack or administered laws for the British Empire? Now, the moral of this story is, if you wish your boy to become Chief Justice or President, give him a good flogging when he steals apples—or any thing else.

Scientific.

A point of Space.

The diameter of the earth's orbit is, as it were, the pocket-rule of the astronomer, with which he measures distances which the mind can no more grasp than infinity. This star-measurer is one hundred and ninety millions of miles in length. This the astronomer lays down on the floor of heaven, and drawing lines from its extremities to the nearest fixed star, or a centauri, he finds the angle thus subtended by this base line to be not quite one second! By the simple Rule of Three he then arrives at the fact that the nearest fixed star is 21,000,000,000,000.

From another simple calculation it follows, that in the space around our solar system devoid of stars, there is room in one dimension; or in one straight line, for 12,000 solar systems; in two dimensions, or in one plane, there is room for 130 millions of solar systems; and in actual sidereal space of three dimensions, there is room for 1,500,000,000,000 solar systems the size of our own.

Nay, good farmer, do not look so unbelievably. Your boy need not graduate from the district school to prove all this. One and a half million million of solar systems, as large as ours, might be set in the space which divides between it and its nearest neighbor. And, if we might assume the aggregate population of our solar system to be 20,000,000,000, then there would be room enough for thirty thousand trillions of human beings to live, love, and labor in the worlds that might be planted in this same starless void.

Nay, good man of the tow frock, hold on a moment longer. Our sun is but a dull, lazy speck of light in the great milky way; and Dr. Herschel says he discovered fifty thousand just such suns in that highway of worlds, in a space apparently a yard in breadth, and six in length. Think of that a moment! and then that no two of them all are probably nearer each other than twenty billions of miles; and then, that the starless space between their solar systems might contain 1,200,000,000,000 of similar systems! Multiply these spaces and these systems by a hundred millions, and you will have numbered the worlds that a powerful glass will open to your view, from one point of space.

Again, multiply these systems by twenty thousand millions, and you will have three billion trillions of human beings, who might dwell in peace and unity in that point of space which Herschel's glass would disclose to your vision.

And you ask despairingly, what is man? We will tell you what he is in one respect; the Creator of all these worlds is his God.

It does one good to think long and deeply on these stupendous facts. By no other means accessible to us can we so well climb toward a just apprehension of the greatness and majesty of the Lord our God. These measurements and estimates seem as a ladder let down to us in our narrow prison-house, up which we may ascend to look abroad a little way over the vast dominions of our great King!

To this contemplation the Bible itself refers us as our means of knowing the greatness and might of our God.

"Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these things, that bringeth out their hosts by number; he calleth all by their names, by the greatness of his might, for that he is strong in power: not one faileth. Isaiah 40: 26. "It is he that sitteth upon the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers; that stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain, and spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in." Isaiah 40: 22. "He spreadeth out the north over the empty place, and hangeth the earth upon nothing. The pillars of heaven tremble, and are astonished at his reproof. By his Spirit he hath garnished the heavens. Lo, these are parts of his ways; but how little a portion is heard of him? but the thunder of his power who can understand?" Job 26: 7, 11, 13, 14.

SINGULAR ANIMALCULE.—There are facts and analogies tending to show that a peculiar state of activity may enable infinitesimal quantities of matter powerfully to affect the senses and the health. We eat animalcules by millions in the bloom of a plum, we also inhale them by millions, (as Ehrenberg has shown,) at every breath, and they neither affect our senses nor do us appreciable harm. Yet there is an animalcule which haunts cascades, sticking by its tail to the rocks or stones over which the water rushes, and which, when put into a vial with above a million times its weight of water, infects the whole mass with a putrid odor, so strong as to be offensive at several yards distance; and this not once, but several times a day, if the water be changed so often.