

Teachers' Department.

Sabbath School Scripture Lessons.

APRIL 4th, 1858.

Subject.—THE SUPERIORITY OF THE PRIESTHOOD OF CHRIST TO THE JEWISH, FURTHER ARGUED.

For Repeating: Heb. vii. 11-12. For Reading: Heb. vii. 20-23.

APRIL 11th, 1858.

Intended to be committed to memory and recited by all.

Doctrine.—OMNIPRESENCE AND OMNISCIENCE OF GOD.—1 Kings viii. 27; Ps. cxxxix. 7-10; Jer. xxiii. 23, 24; 1 Chron. xxviii. 9; Ps. cxxxix. 1-4; Prov. xv. 3.

THE QUESTIONER.

Bible Questions.

- 1. Give three examples of heartfelt prayer mentioned in the Bible, where no words were uttered.
2. Where is the passage of Scripture in which the Christian's life is compared to the progress of daylight.

Solution to Mental Picture from the Bible No. 57. Jonah preaching at Nineveh.—Jonah iii.

Shining up Above.

In the graveyard of a little village that nestles among the hills of New Hampshire, a grey, moss-covered stone bears the inscription: "AGNES K.—Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."

Agnes K.—"Aunt Agnes," as I always called her, was one of those favored mortals who seem always to carry about with them a kind of portable sunshine. As of old the children of Israel had light in their dwellings when thick darkness was everywhere else; so in the darkest day there was sunshine, heart-sunshine, in Aunt Agnes's house—to the most threatening cloud she could see the "silvery lining."

I said I called her Aunt Agnes; but no mother could have watched over my young life with a love more unwearied or unselfish than did she.

I never knew my own mother—she died when I was too young to feel her loss; but there was a warm heart and a pleasant home ready to receive the little orphan, and I was motherless but in name.

Dear Aunt Agnes! It is many a year since she went home to God; but her face is as clearly before me as if I had seen it but yesterday;—the kind, sunshiny face that was always so cheerful, so full of that peace "which passeth all understanding;"—I sometimes wonder if the one she wears among the angels can be pleasanter to look upon.

How well I remember one rainy day in the early summer. The tall elms that shaded our old brown farm-house were tossing their arms about wildly, and the wind went sweeping over the field, bending the long grass before it, or moaning round the corners of the house as though in search of something lost; while the rain fell thick and fast, hiding the distant hills, that yesterday had looked so green and smiling.

I was standing by the window, sighing for the bright June sunshine, my face reflecting back no doubt the cheerlessness out of doors, when a hand was laid on my shoulder, and I turned to find Aunt Agnes's pleasant eyes looking into mine. "'Tis shining up above, dear," she said.

"Shining up above;"—it was true, and yet I had not thought of it. Our eyes could not see it; but only a little way above us—just the other side those dark clouds, heaven's own sunshine was as warm, and bright, and glad as ever.

It was a dark, wild night in mid-winter. Great snow-drifts had been piled up during the day, and now that the darkness had come on, we could hear, though we could not see, the storm still raging.

Doubtly dreary it was to us that night, for a shadow had fallen on our home, and from the circle gathered round the fire, one was missing.

All through the pleasant summer and the golden autumn, Aunt Agnes's only son—her first-born, and her darling—had been slowly but surely fading away, and when the merry Christmas time came, they had opened a grave through the white snow and buried him—buried him in one of those cheerless graveyards that disgrace New England, where the grass grows rank and tangled above the sleepers, and the dismal poplar trees stand like sentinels. To night our hearts were with him in his grave; so when little Alice, the household pet, laid her curly head in her mother's lap, she was but giving utterance to our own thoughts, as she exclaimed, with a sob, "Oh mother hear how the wind blows, and only think of Willie all alone in the graveyard!"

For a moment the mother's heart was wrung, and she thought only of the child, her child, alone in the darkness and the tempest—the next, she caught a glimpse of the sea of glass, the streets of gold, the gates of pearl—of that city where there is no night, and of Him who is the light thereof—of Him in whom her dead boy trusted; and drawing the sobbing child closer to her, she whispered, "Allie, dear, 'tis shining up above."—Independent.

Withholding Corn.

Between eighty and ninety years ago there lived, in the Connecticut River valley, two farmers, one of whom was named Hunt, and the other Clark. The former, in early life, had been a man of strong will, and somewhat hasty and violent in temper. Sometimes he had been seen beating his oxen over their heads with the handle of his whip in a way to excite the pity of the bystanders, and when expostulated with, he excused himself by saying that he had the most fractious team in the town. By-and-by an alteration took place in the temper of farmer Hunt. He became mild, forbearing; and what was remarkable, his oxen seemed to improve in disposition at equal pace with himself. Farmer Hunt joined the church, and was an exemplary man. His neighbors saw the change, both in himself and his team. It was a marvel to the whole town. One of his townsmen asked him for an explanation. Farmer Hunt said, "I have found out a secret about my cattle. Formerly they were unmanageable. The more I whipped and clubbed them, the worse they acted. But now when they are contrary, I go behind my load, sit down, and sing Old Hundred, and strange as it may appear, no sooner have I ended, than the oxen go along as quietly as a man could wish. I don't know how it is, but they really seem to like singing."

In the course of a few years, the two farmers were chosen deacons of the church, and they both adorned their profession. About the time of their election a grievous famine prevailed in the valley, and the farmers generally were laying up their corn to plant the ensuing season. A poor man, living in the town, went to deacon Hunt and said, "I have come to buy a bushel of corn. Here is the money. It is about all I can gather." The deacon told him he could not spare a bushel for love or money. He was keeping double the usual quantity for seed corn the next year, and had to stint his own family. The man urged his suit, but in vain. At last he said, "Deacon, if you do not let me have the corn, I shall curse you." "Curse me!" replied the deacon, "how dare you do so?" "Because," said the man, "the Bible says so." "Nonsense," exclaimed deacon Hunt; "there is no such thing in the Bible." "Yes there is," replied the poor man. "Well," said the deacon, "if you can find any such text, I'll give you a bushel of corn." They went into the house, when the man went to the old family Bible, turned to Prov. 11: 26, and read, "He that withholdeth corn, the people shall curse him; but blessings shall be upon the head of him that selleth it."

The deacon was fairly caught. "Come along," said he, "and I will be as good as my word." He took him to the corn-house, measured out a full bushel of corn, helped the man put it into his bag, assisted him in slinging it upon his shoulder, and just before his departure, being somewhat of a wag, he said, with a twinkle of the eye, "I say, neighbor, after you have carried this corn home, go up to Deacon Clark, and curse him out of another bushel."

No Jew Farmers.

The Friend, published at Honolulu, Sandwich Islands, contains the following curious statement:—

Passing along the very busiest street of Honolulu, in the very busiest part of the day, a shopkeeper called our attention to the statement, which he asserted as a fact, upon the authority of the last census of the United States, that out of several hundred thousand (700,000) Jews residing in the United States, only one was registered as a farmer. He desired us to account for the fact. Upon the ordinary principles governing the migration and settlement of different nations resorting to the United States, this fact is unaccountable. It has no parallel. It stands forth marked and isolated. Other nations emigrating to America, gradually become absorbed, and mingled with the general population, but not so the Jews. Singular fact. Rare exception. How shall it be accounted for? Let us open the Bible, and read the 9th verse of the 9th chapter of the prophet Amos:—

"For, lo, I will command, and I will sift the house of Israel among all nations, like as corn is sifted in a sieve, yet shall not the least grain fall upon the earth."

Here is a pledge or promise of God, that the Jewish people shall be lost. They are scattered abroad, but not lost or forgotten. They have wandered among all nations, but they do not find a home among the nations.

Transmigration of Souls.

The true notion of transmigration is that the soul or immortal part of a man, after its departure from the body, passes into the body of some lower animal. "How degrading," says Mr. Culberston, "this dogma which reduces a man to a level with the beasts that perish; The poor Buddhist can certainly have no very high conception of the dignity of human nature. Today, indeed, he is a man; a thinking, intelligent being; but tomorrow he may be a poor whining dog or mewling cat." Mr. Culberston quotes an anecdote of the old Jesuit missionary, Le Comte, who, while in China, was once called on to baptize a sick person, an old man of seventy. The old man gave his reasons for desiring baptism:

"I have for some time past," said he, "lived on the Emperor's benevolence. The priests assure me that after death I shall be obliged to repay the Emperor's generosity by becoming a post-horse to carry dispatches. They exhort me to take care not to stumble, or wince, or bite. They tell me that if I travel well, eat little, and am patient, I may excite the compassion of the gods, and be born into the world a man of rank. Sometimes I dream that I am ready harnessed for the rider, and I awake in a sweat, hardly knowing whether I am a man or a horse. They tell me, Father, that people of your religion continue to be men in the next world as they are in this. I am ready to embrace your religion, for I had rather be a Christian than become a beast."

"The Jesuit baptized him, and the old man died, happy in being delivered from becoming a post-horse! But it would seem that there is no necessity for any laws being enacted in reference to cruelty to dumb animals in China, since to treat animals well is the same as being kind to men, for their bodies are animated by the spirits of men."—W. & R.

The Religion of Epitaphs.

I spent some time in the churchyard, spelling out the names of some of the old inhabitants of our early days, and beholding with pleased surprise, from the (as usual) truthful epitaphs, that many of them were garnished and decorated with virtues of which, while they lived, I had not had the smallest suspicion, so artfully had Christian humility concealed their excellencies!

Superstition no longer deifies the dead, but affection angelizes them. For my part, I think if I were bedaubed and bedizened with one of the tawdry epitaphs I have sometimes seen in a country churchyard, it would be enough to make me get up in the night and scratch it out. There was our old acquaintance, farmer Vessey's fat wife, who resembled (as some said of her), "a fillet of veal upon casters," decked out in a suite of virtues which might not have misbecome a seraph. Several others of our old acquaintances I found were such wives, mothers, neighbours, friends; so charitable, gentle, forgiving! Surely the parson in our time must have had an easy time of it, an absolute sinecure, with such a flock.

It is really odd to see so much wickedness above ground, and so much goodness under it. Ah! if they could but change places, what a pleasant world it would be! Or rather, perhaps, we ought to say, "Who can wonder that so much iniquity is left among the living, when such cart-loads of all the cardinal and other virtues are thus yearly shoveled into the earth by the undertaker?" Any way, however, it is a pleasant thing to find our old friends improved by keeping, and looking better in their winding-sheets than ever they did in silks or satins.—The Greyson Letters.

The Queen of France.

The Dublin University Magazine, commenting upon the lives of the royal and imperial wives of France, states that there are but thirteen out of sixty-seven on whose memory there is no dark stain of sorrow or of sin. A cotemporary, in summing up the statement, says:—

"Of the others, eleven were divorced; two died by the executioner; nine died very young; seven were soon widowed; three were cruelly traduced; three were exiles; three were bad in different degrees of evil; the prisoners and the heart-broken made up the remainder. Twenty who were buried at St. Denis since the time of Charlemagne, were denied the rest of the grave. Their remains were dragged from the tomb, exposed to the insults of the revolutionary populace, and then flung into a trench and covered with quicklime."

Women and Temperance.

A petition signed by nineteen hundred and thirty three ladies was presented to the Maine Legislature a few days since, setting forth the immense amount of suffering growing out of the repeal of the law of '55, and praying for the enactment of an efficient Prohibitory law. Several smaller petitions like this have been presented, showing that the ladies have an interest in this matter which should be respected. The wives, mothers and daughters are really the greatest sufferers in this rum business, and have a right to be heard, even in the halls of legislation.

Correspondence.

For the Christian Messenger.

Language. No 2.

1. Let us now advert to the natural conditions under which this diversity is perpetuated and multiplied.

The gift or faculty of speech, may be regarded as natural to man, as such a part of his nature as intelligence or reason. The power of sounds is from its very nature, almost boundless in extent and variety. Hence the very different sounds which are adopted as the medium of communication between men. Accident, climate and the physical power of enunciation, with the passions and affections, all have an influence on the sounds which are employed as signs of ideas and feelings. The modification of these, as experience shows, is subject to perpetual change. This tendency to variety and change may be observed and studied in any family of young children.

Let a colony go out from any tribe or people and remain for some years entirely disconnected with their father land, and the language of one will be scarcely intelligible to the other. We have a striking example of this in the French descendants in our country and the inhabitants of old France. We have here, then, a theory, which develops a partial probable cause of the actual variety of human speech, whilst we must admit, with Professor Stuart, that "a fact of this great problem remains without any satisfactory solution."

2. What is the probable number of languages spoken by the millions of intellectual and moral beings, that people our planet? All are aware that "the babbling tongues of earth," are many, but their actual number surpasses even the dreams of most persons.

Adelung, the German professor of Erfurt, treating of this subject, reckons 3064 languages and dialects which exist or have existed. Balbi, of Genoa, the geographer, enumerates 860 which are entitled to be considered as distinct languages; and 5,000 embracing the different dialects. Of these 860 distinct forms of speech, Balbi assigns to

Table with 2 columns: Region and Number of Languages. Europe, 53; Africa, 114; Asia, 153; America, 423; Oceania, 117.

3. A hasty glance at the different families of languages will not be devoid of interest. Great light has been shed of late years, on human history, by the investigations of the philologist. Nations separated far from each other, and between which no affinity was suspected, have been shown to be connected, by the marked relationship of their mutual languages. The researches of the linguist give strong confirmation to the fact of the original colonization of Europe from Asia.

Our own form of speech, or the Indo-European family, extends from India along western Asia and into Europe, which it entirely fills. Thence it flows on in the line of European colonization, into America and elsewhere.

We learn from those acquainted with oriental literature, that the Sanscrit, or ancient language of India, the parent of all the dialects of that great peninsula, is radically the same, or from the same stock as the Greek and Latin, the affinities between them being remarkable clear and decisive. To the Indo-European class is assigned the Celtic, which was spoken by the first occupants of Europe of whom we have any record. The Gothic mingled with and became a component part of the Greek and Latin. The Slavonic occupies Russia, Poland, Hungary, and Northern Turkey. The second great class of languages, prevailing in China and other countries of eastern Asia, is usually called the monosyllabic class, because every word in them consists of only one syllable. These words may be combined, as in the English words, welcome and welfare, but every syllable is significant and is therefore in itself a word.

The Chinese, though they have long been in some respects a refined people, possess such a speech as, in many particulars, we might expect to find among a primitive savage tribe; whilst the Indians of North America, and our own Mic-Macs in particular, who have made no advance in the arts, in literature or instructions, possess a language remarkable for its richness in words, and for its greatly complicated grammatical forms. This latter remark I think our Mic-Mac missionary will confirm.

One feature pervades all the American forms of speech, found between Greenland and Cape Horn, which has caused them to receive the designation of the Polysynthetic class. Fragments of words are taken, and as it were patched