

Teachers' Department

Sabbath School Scripture Lessons

SEPTEMBER 12th, 1858.

Intended to be committed to memory and recited by all. Doctrine.—FAITH IN CHRIST.—John i. 29: iii. 14-18; Math. xvi. 16; Acts x. 48: xiii. 39; Rom. i. 16; Gal. ii. 26; 1 John iii. 23.

SEPTEMBER 19th, 1858.

Subject.—CHRIST THE ONLY RIGHTFUL LORD AND LAW-GIVER OF HIS CHURCH.

For Repeating. For Reading. James iv. 1-3. James iv. 9-17.

THE QUESTIONER.

Mental Pictures from the Bible.

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

[No. 68.]

A magnificent feast is spread before a splendid company of princes and nobles. The furniture is of that splendour and gorgeousness seen only in an eastern palace. The drinking vessels are all of gold, of every variety of pattern. The variegated floor is composed of marble, in blocks of different colors—red, blue, white, and black. Even the rings of the curtains are of silver, and the pillars by which they are upheld are of marble. All eyes are turned towards the servant who has just entered and is addressing the king. On receiving the message, the king's countenance is changed from exultation to that of deep mortification and anger. He turns to seven of his chief princes and consults with them, on the vengeance which shall be pronounced on her who has refused obedience to his command.

Key to Bible questions in our last.

28.—Acts i. 14.—These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication with the women, and Mary, the mother of Jesus. 29.—Laba.—GEN. xxx. 27.

The Twin Sisters :

DUTY AND KINDNESS.

There was an angry frown on the countenance of Deacon Jonas Browning. There were tears on the sad face of his wife.

"He shall be sent to sea!" said Deacon Browning sternly.

There was a pleading look in the eyes of Mrs. Browning, as she lifted them to the iron face of her husband. But no words passed her lips.

"He shall be sent to sea! It is my last hope."

"Philip is very young, Jonas," said Mrs. Browning.

"Not too young for evil, and therefore, not too young for the discipline needed to eradicate evil. He shall go to sea! Captain Ellis sails in the Fanny Williams next Monday. I will call upon him this day."

"Isn't the Fanny Williams a whaler?" The lips of Mrs. Browning quivered, and her voice had a choking sound.

"Yes," was firmly answered.

"I wouldn't send him away in a whaler, Jonas. Remember—he is very young, not thirteen till next April.

"Young or old, Mary, he's got to go," said the stern deacon, who was a believer in the gospel of law. He was no weak advocate of moral suasion, as it is familiarly termed. He went in for law. Implicit obedience was the statute for home, and all deviations therefrom met the never withheld penalty.

Mrs. Browning entered into no argument with her husband, for she knew that would be useless. She had never succeeded in changing his purpose by argument in her life. And so she bent her eyes meekly to the floor again, while the tears crept over her face, and fell in large bright drops upon the carpet. Deacon Browning saw the tears, but they did not move him. He was tear-proof.

Philip, the offending member of the Browning family, was a bright, active, restless boy, who from the first had been a rebel against unreasonable authority, and as a matter of course, not unfrequently against authority both just and reasonable. Punishment had only hardened him; increasing, instead of diminishing, his power of endurance. The particular offence for which he was now in disgrace was, it must be owned, rather a serious one. He had, in company with three other boys of his age, known as the greatest reprobates in the village, rifled a choice plum-tree, belonging to a neighbor, of all the fruit it contained, and then killed a favorite dog which, happening to discover them at their wicked work, attempted to drive them from the garden. The neighbor had complained to Deacon Browning, accompanying his complaint with a threat to have Philip arrested for stealing.

"If you don't do something with that boy of

yours," he added with considerable feeling, "he'll end his days in the prison, or on the gallows."

Hard words were these for the ears of Deacon Browning, the rigidly righteous! Hard words, and with a prophetic conviction in them! He had not a very creative imagination; but in this instance the prediction of his angry neighbor conjured up in his mind the image of a prison and a gallows, causing a shudder to pass along his nerves, and the cold perspiration to start upon his forehead. From that moment the resolution of Deacon Browning was taken.

The boy was on the brink of ruin, and must be saved at all hazards! As to the means of doing this it never entered into the heart of Deacon Browning to conceive any other than harsh discipline. "He shall be sent to sea!" That was the last desperate remedy. In his mind, as in the minds of many like him some years ago, a ship was the great school of reform; and when a boy was deemed incorrigible, he was sent off to sea, usually to have his evil inclinations hardened into permanent qualities.

When Deacon Browning met his son Philip, after receiving intelligence of his great offence, it was with a stern, angry repulsion. He did not see the look of appeal, the sign of repentance, the plea for mercy, that was in his tearful eyes. A single word of kindness would have broken up the great deep of the boy's heart, and, impelled by the warmer impulses inherited from his mother, he would have flung himself, weeping, into his father's arms. But Deacon Browning had separated duty from kindness. The one was a stern corrector of evil, the other a smiling approver of good.

From his home to the wharf where the Fanny Williams lay, all equipped for sea, Deacon Browning bent his steps. Captain Ellis, a rough hard man, was on board. After listening to the father's story and request, he said bluntly:—

"If you put your boy on board the Fanny Williams he'll have to bend or break that's certain. Take my advice, and give the matter a second thought. He'll have a dog's life of it in a whaler. It's my opinion that your lad hasn't stuff enough in him for this experiment."

"I'll risk it," replied the Deacon. "He's got too much stuff in him to stay at home, that's the trouble. The bend or break system is the only one in which I have any faith."

"As you like Deacon. I want another boy, and your's will answer I guess."

"When do you sail?" was inquired.

"On Monday."

"Very well. I'll bring the boy down to-morrow."

The thing was settled. The Deacon did not feel altogether comfortable in mind. Philip was young for such an experiment, as the mother had urged. And now, very opportunely, a leaf in the book of his memory was turned, on which was written the story of the poor boy's wrongs and sufferings at sea. Many years before his heart had grown sick over the record. He tried to look away from the page but could not. It seemed to hold his eye by a kind of fascination.

Still he did not relent. Duty required him to go steadily forward and execute his purpose.—There was no other hope for the boy.

"Philip!" It was thus he announced his determination, "I am going to send you to sea with Captain Ellis. It is my last hope. Steadily bent as you are on evil, I can no longer suffer you to remain at home. The boy who begins with robbing his neighbor's garden, is in great danger of ending his career on the gallows. To save you, if possible, from a fate like this, I now send you to sea."

Very sternly, very harshly, almost angrily, was this said. Not the smallest impression did it seem to make on the boy, who stood with his eyes cast down, an image of stubborn self-will and persistent rebellion.

With still sharper denunciation did the father speak, striving in his way to shock the feelings of his child, and extort signs of penitence. But it was the hammer and the anvil—blow and rebound.

Very different were the mother's efforts with the child. Tearfully she pleaded with him—earnestly she besought him to ask his father's forgiveness for the evil he had done. But Philip said,—

"No, mother; I would rather go to sea.—Father don't love me; he don't care for me. He hates me I believe."

"Philip! Philip! Don't speak that way of your father. He does love you; and it is only for your good that he is going to send you to sea. Oh how could you do so wicked a thing?"

Tears were in the mother's eyes. But the boy had something of the father's stern spirit in him, and showed no weakness.

"It isn't any worse than he did when he was a boy," was his answer.

"Philip!"

"Well it isn't; for I heard Mr. Wright tell Mr. Freeman that father and he robbed orchards and hen's nests; and did worse than that when they were boys."

Poor Mrs. Browning was silent. Well did she remember how wild a boy Jonas Browning was when she was a little girl, she had heard all manner of evil laid to his charge.

Very unexpectedly—at least to Mr. Browning—the minister called in on the evening of that troubled day. After some general conversation with the family, he asked to have a few words with the deacon alone.

"Is it true, Mr. Browning," he said, after they had retired to an adjoining room, "that you are going to send Philip to sea?"

"Too true," replied the father soberly. "It is my last hope. From the beginning that boy has been a rebel against just authority; and though I have never relaxed discipline through the weakness of natural feelings, yet the resistance has grown with his growth and strengthened with his strength, until duty requires me to use a desperate remedy for a desperate disease. It is a painful trial; but the path of duty is the only path to safety. What we see to be right, we must execute with unflinching courage. I cannot look back and accuse myself of any neglect of duty towards this boy through weakness of the flesh. From the beginning, I have made obedience the law of my household, and suffered no deviation therefrom to go unpunished."

"Duty," said the minister, "has a twin sister."

He spoke with a changed voice, and with a manner that arrested the attention of Deacon Browning, who looked at him with a glance of inquiry.

"She is lovely and gentle as he is hard and unrelenting."

The deacon still looked curious.

"When the twin sister of Duty is away from his side, he loses more than half of his influence; but in her beautiful presence, he gains a dignity and power that makes his precepts laws of life to all who hear them. The stubborn heart melts, the iron will is subdued; the spirit of evil shrinks away from the human soul."

There was a pause.

"The name of that twin sister is Kindness."

The eyes of Deacon Browning fell away from the minister's countenance, and drooped until they rested upon the floor. Conviction flashed upon his heart. He had always been stern in executing the law—but never kind.

"Has that beautiful twin sister stood ever by the side of Duty? has love been in the law, Deacon Browning?"

Side by side with the minister stood Duty and Kindness—the firm unshrinking brother, and the mild, loving sister—and so his word had power to reach the deacon's heart, without giving offence to pride.

"Kindness is weak, yielding, and indulgent, and forgives when punishment is the only hope of salvation," said Deacon Browning, a little recovering himself from the first emotions of self-condemnation.

"Only when she strays from the side of Duty," replied the minister. "Duty and Kindness must always act together."

Much more, and to the same purpose, was urged by the minister, who only made a brief visit, and then withdrew, that his admonitions might work the effect desired.

When Deacon Browning came in from the front door of his house, after parting with the minister, he drew a chair up to the table in the family sitting-room, and almost involuntarily opened the large family Bible. His feelings were much softened towards his boy, who, with his head bowed upon his breast, sat a little apart from his mother. The attitude was not so much indicative of stubborn self-will as of suffering.—Deacon Browning thought he would read a chapter aloud, and so drew the holy book closer, and bent his face down over it. Mrs. Browning, observing the movement, waited for him to begin. The deacon cleared his throat twice. But his voice did not take up the words that were in his eyes and in his heart. How could they?

"As a father pitieth his children"—

Had there been divine pity in the heart of Deacon Browning for his rebellious and unhappy boy? Nay—had there not been wrath instead?

"As a father pitieth his children"—

From a hundred places in the mind of Deacon Browning there seemed to come an echo of these words; and they had a meaning in them never perceived before. He closed the book, and remained in deep thought for many minutes; and not only in deep thought, but in stern conflict with himself. Kindness was striving to

gain her place by the side of Duty; and cold, hard imperious Duty, who had so long ruled without a rival in the mind of Deacon Browning, kept all the while averting his countenance from that of his twin sister, who had been so long an exiled wanderer. At last she was successful. The stern brother yielded, and clasped to his bosom the sister who sought his love.

From that instant new thoughts, new views, new purposes ruled in the mind of Deacon Browning. The discipline of a whaler was too hard and cruel for his boy, young in years, and by no means as hardened in iniquity as he had permitted himself to imagine. A cold shiver ran along his nerves at the bare thought of doing what a few hours before he had so resolutely intended. Kindness began whispering in the ears of Duty, and crowding them with a world of new suggestions. The heart of the stern man was softened, and there flowed into it something of a mother's yearning tenderness. Rising up, at length Deacon Browning said, in a low voice, so new in its tones to the ears of Philip that it made his heart leap,—

"My son I wish to see you alone."

The deacon went into the next room, and Philip followed him. The deacon sat down, and Philip stood before him.

"Philip, my son!"—Deacon Browning took the boy's hand in one of his, and looked him full in the face. The look was returned—not a defiant look, but one of yielding wonder.

"Philip, I am not going to send you to sea with Captain Ellis. I intended doing so, but, on reflection, I think the life will be too hard for you."

Very firmly, yet kindly, the deacon tried to speak, but the sister of Duty was playing at his heart-strings, and their tone of pity was echoed from his voice, that faltered when he strove to give it firmness.

The eyes of Philip remained fixed upon the countenance of his father.

"My son!"—Deacon Browning thought he had gained sufficient self-control to utter calmly certain mild forms of admonition; but he was in error; his voice was still less under his control, and so fully betrayed the new-born pity and tenderness in his heart, that Philip melted into penitence, exclaimed, as tears gushed from his eyes,—

"Oh! father, I have been very wicked, and am very sorry."

Involuntarily, at this unexpected confession, the arms of Deacon Browning were stretched out towards his repentant boy, and Philip rushed, sobbing, into them.

The boy was saved. From that hour his father had him under the most perfect subordination. But the twin sister of Duty walked ever by his side.

Therapeutics of the New Testament.

An eminent physician of this city recently excited my curiosity by saying—"I have been trying the therapeutics of the New Testament! The therapeutics of the New Testament! What does he mean? He relieved my curiosity thus:

"A lady came to me complaining of neuralgia. She had been affected thus for years, and had consulted many physicians in vain. Her bodily symptoms had produced settled melancholy, and by the reaction of this melancholy, those symptoms have been aggravated. To relieve this mental depression she was going into scenes of gaiety. I directed her to abandon all such scenes. I next advised her to seek out some fellow-being who was suffering more than herself, and go forth daily for the purpose of administering aid and comfort, and continue her visits till the sufferer was relieved. She followed my prescription. Her sympathies were called out, and she forgot her own troubles, as she could not have done either at home or in circles of fashion. On each visit her nerves were thrilled by expressions of gratitude from the sufferer—her active emotions were started into healthful exercises—her blood increased in circulation. Her chilly sensations ceased. She is now no longer in need of medical treatment. This," said he, "is what I mean by the therapeutics of the New Testament." He is not a professor of religion. He spoke merely as a man of science.

That, such practice would always be equally successful is not asserted; but his statement suggested a principle worthy of consideration by the gloomy Christian.

The motionless graces, like stagnant water, are covered with film, through which the evidence of piety, lying at the bottom of your soul, cannot be seen. Let active exertion turn the stagnant pool to a running stream, and the film passing off, your title to heaven will be disclosed. As inertness of body produces depression, so does inertness of the graces. Active exercise imparts elasticity and delight.

Moreover, be not always looking within for evidence, but often looking without for liberty. The former practice may be indulged to a disheartening excess—the latter cannot be engaged in too frequently. It not only cheers, but humbles and sanctifies.

Diligent and well directed efforts to do others good, and meditation on the glory of God, as it shines in the face of Jesus Christ, will be the best means of removing your spiritual maladies, and giving you the joy and peace that passeth all understanding.—True Witness.