

Teachers' Department.

Sabbath School Scripture Lessons.

JANUARY 24th, 1858.

Subject.—THE ADVANTAGES OF THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION ABOVE THE JEWISH.

For Repeating. Heb. ii. 16-18. For Reading. Heb. iii. 1-11.

JANUARY 31st, 1858.

Subject.—DUTY OF HEARING THE VOICE OF CHRIST, AND DANGER OF HARDENING THE HEART.

For Repeating. Heb. iii. 7-11. For Reading. Heb. iii. 12-19.

THE QUESTIONER.

Mental Pictures from the Bible.

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

[No. 48.]

In an Eastern palace a beautiful woman, well advanced in years, is standing in the presence of the king and his court. A patriarch of near 100 years is brought forward and addressed by the king with great solemnity and earnestness. After making some enquiries of him the king speaks of a communication he has received from heaven, and from his glances at the woman and patriarch it appears to be concerning them. Shame and fear, with the deepest reverence, are alternately depicted on their countenances, as he exposes the prevarication of which they have been guilty. After examination they both admit that they are man and wife, when the king dismisses them with large presents of sheep and oxen and men-servants and women-servants and a thousand pieces of silver. They leave his presence filled with joy and gratitude.

SOLUTION to Picture No. 47.

Christ healing the man with the withered hand.—Mark iii. 1-6

A Winter Story.

NED'S HALF CROWN.

Chapter I.

It wanted only a few days to Christmas. And it was regular Christmas weather. A good hard frost had set in, and lasted more than a week. A considerable quantity of snow had fallen, and the frost and snow together made up what people called a regular old-fashioned winter.

Oh it was brave weather for those who were comfortably circumstanced. Wrapped in soft warm furs, and rich silk velvets, and gauntlet gloves and over-shoes, ladies thoroughly enjoyed it; and as they went with warmly-clothed children, for a walk or a drive, they seemed as if they thought the winter was the pleasantest season of the year.

But it was not brave weather for the poor. It was a sad time for women who were obliged to face the sharp wind and bide the cold with no better clothing than a cotton gown and a thin shawl, and perhaps the best part of that scanty shawl, taken to wrap up a baby that had cried itself to sleep.

There was poor Mrs. Hartley, for instance; she had been well to do once on a time; but her husband had suffered from a long illness, which ended in death, and their business had suffered from unavoidable neglect, and had ended in bankruptcy. So, with her little daughter Milly, just eight years old, and her son Edward (they always called him Ned), she had left her native place and come to London.

Chapter 2.

Mrs. Hartley had come to London to look for work. Thousands of poor women were looking for it also, and many of them found a grave instead. Her prospect among so many was but small. She had no friends to recommend her. Well! Perhaps I am wrong there: she had a friend—in Heaven—who had promised to be as a husband to the widow and a father to the fatherless, and who never broke His word.

At last poor Mrs. Hartley obtained some employment in needlework. It was hard work badly paid; but she laboured incessantly, all day long and far into the night, and little Milly helped her all she could, till her eyes grew dizzy and her poor head throbbed and ached as it never used to do in the country. Now, I have often heard talk of heroism; of brave things done by brave men on a battle-field. God forbid that I should, by word of mine, detract from the honour due to any man; but, really, I do think there was more true heroism in that plying of the needle than in the wielding of a soldier's sword.

All this while Ned was trying hard to get a place. But he was young and unknown. When he went into a shop and said, "Please, sir, do you want a boy?" he received no encouragement, but was generally ordered off without any answer. Sometimes he saw a notice, "Boy wanted;" then he went in more boldly;

but the confession that he had never been out before was commonly fatal to his hopes. The shopkeepers did not seem to see that a boy must have a first place.

His mother might possibly have been more successful on the boy's behalf than he was on his own, but all her time was filled up in the thread-and-needle race for bread. She was a hopeful woman, and she put her trust in God, but her faith was sorely tried. Sometimes work failed, and then the coals and bread failed also. She tried to make the best of everything, and to keep the knowledge of how worn and wasted she was from her little ones. Ned saw it, and Ned's heart was cold and heavy as clay. Then there was poor Milly. Her bright eyes had grown so dim, her merry prattle was subdued, her cheeks were as pale as the snow, and she complained more and more frequently of the pain in her head.

One day Ned was looking as usual for a place, and, as I said at the beginning, it was wintry weather. He was very cold and very weary,—ay, and the truth must be told, he was very hungry too. He had tried and failed, and tried and failed again. He knew his mother had no work, and doubted whether she and Milly would have a crust to eat that day. If they had a crust, they should have it to themselves, Ned thought; he would stop out two or three hours longer, and not go home time enough to share it.

What was he to do? Fix an extra button in his little jacket, give an extra twist to the rainbow-coloured comforter round his throat. It was getting dark. Shopkeepers were beginning to light up their shops. Offices were closing. Troops of people were going home! A muffin-boy was ringing his bell in the back streets. Curtains were being drawn, and the ruddy light of fire and candle began to shine out into the darkness. There were thousands of people about, but poor Ned never felt so much alone.

To be continued.

Benevolent operations in behalf of Seamen.

A history of the Seamen's cause is a desideratum. Some brief accounts of particular efforts in its behalf have been given from time to time in the Sailor's Magazine and elsewhere, but not enough to exhibit the importance and the beneficent results of the work in anything like their just dimensions.

The instrument raised up by Providence to begin this work, was very humble and is little known to fame, but deserves to be enrolled with the name of Howard and Raikes, as among the chief benefactors of the race. His name was ZEBULON ROGERS. He was a shoemaker in slender circumstances, the son of a coal-measurer employed on board the colliers in the Thames.

The first prayer meeting on ship-board was held on the 22nd day of June, 1814. The encouragement afforded by a favorable beginning led to similar meetings on other vessels, mostly colliers from Shields and Newcastle. Besides the Friendship and the Hammond, there were the Robert and Margaret, the Amphitrite, the Xenon, and the John. The captains of these vessels were pious, and in connection with Mr. Rogers held generally two meetings a week as they arrived in the river. After a time it was proposed to extend them to other vessels, wherever a permission for that purpose could be obtained from their masters. The blessing of God manifestly rested on these efforts, and they began to attract the notice of the public.

It became necessary to adopt some signal to apprise the crews in the river on what ship the meeting was to be held for the night. During the winter of 1816-17, a lantern was hoisted at mast-head for that purpose. As the Spring advanced and the hour appointed occurred before dark, some other signal was found requisite. Mr. Rogers accordingly devised a Flag, having a blue ground with the word BETHEL in the center, and a star rising in the east, in red; and the first one was made by his sister. It was first hoisted on Sabbath afternoon, March 23, 1817, on board the Zephyr, Capt. Hindbulp, of South Shields. To this device was afterwards added a dove with an olive branch. This was the origin of the well-known "Bethel Flag," from which religious meetings for seamen have taken the name of Bethel meetings.

Intelligence of these meetings was received by the Rev. George C. Smith, a Baptist clergyman then on a visit to London, who took occasion to attend one of them, and there made an appointment to preach on the next evening. To this gentleman is undoubtedly to be attributed the honor of having done more than any other man to awaken public attention to the wants of seamen.

FIRST PREACHING ON SHIPBOARD.

About 1809 Mr. Smith turned his attention

particularly to the moral condition of the seamen in the British Navy, impelled thereto by his recollections of the frightful immoralities which he had witnessed among them. He preached to them at Dr. Rippon's Chapel, in London, (of which church we believe Mr. C. H. Spurgeon is now the minister,) and made tours for preaching in the open-air along the sea-coast and through the country, besides distributing Bibles and religious tracts. It was on his return from an extensive journey of this description, in 1817, that he heard of the prayer meetings on the Thames under the Bethel Flag; and determined at once, in company with Mr. Philips, with whom he was staying, and who had become greatly interested in the work, to attend. An account of what followed is given by Mr. S. in his own words:—

"We went on board the Zephyr, Captain Hindbulp. I went as a private character and had much conversation with the pious captain. I retired to a corner of the cabin; it was soon filled; and I heard about a dozen sailors, to my utter astonishment, in prayer, while Mr. Z. Rogers conducted the meeting. I was so much affected, and so determined to promote and extend this work, that I pressed to the cabin table and addressed the men with many tears, saying that I also was a redeemed sailor. "After prayer I proposed preaching to them the next night, which I did on board the John, Capt. Robinson. I afterwards preached to hundreds of souls from the ships and the shore. At this time the idea occurred to me of establishing a floating chapel on the Thames, and for two months afterwards I continued to preach to sailors, and to advocate a floating chapel in all parts of London. In all these labors I was greatly assisted by Messrs. Philips, Thompson and Collins, of the Tract Society.

The newspapers took up the subject, and called the public attention to "aquatic preaching," as they called it, on the Thames. The surveyor general of the custom house, I was in hopes would have assisted me in the floating chapel project, he being a pious, zealous, and well-informed man, with whom I was well acquainted, but his avocations would not permit; but he gave me much useful advice. Mr. Philips and myself being shortly afterwards in America Square, we called on Mr. R. H. Martyn, ship-broker, and told him of my preaching on the Thames. He objected to this; and I suggested the idea of a ship being bought and converted into a chapel. This he said was feasible, and I then laid before him all my proceedings and plans. He advised a prospectus and a meeting of friends for a Society. I entreated him to draw up the prospectus, and I would show it to those friends who had acted with me. He agreed to this, and in a few days sent it to me.

Shortly after, a ship was purchased for a floating chapel, of 300 tons, at a cost of £700. On the 18th of March the general meeting was held in the London Tavern, and "The Port of London Society" was organized—the first ever formed to provide the preaching of the Gospel for seamen. The newly purchased ship was visited, and Mr. Smith offered the first prayer in it, and called on the shipwrights to join him in singing the doxology. In a few weeks she was launched and towed to her moorings, with very great joy, by multitudes who thronged to see her; the flags in the river, at the request of Mr. Rogers, flying in honor of the occasion. Mr. Smith preached on board during the succeeding year with great eloquence and success, assisted occasionally by ministers of other denominations. The services in the chapel were crowded, and large numbers gave evidence of being savingly benefited by them.

The Seaman's Cause.

From a recent circular of "The Society for the promotion of Missions to Seamen afloat, at home and abroad," London; we gather some interesting particulars respecting the existing provision for the spiritual welfare of British seamen, chiefly in the colonial ports of that kingdom. The following tabular view is given from returns of the year 1854, corrected where possible to the present year.

Table with 3 columns: No. of British Ports frequent-Seamen annually by British ally frequent-Seamen. Means of religious instruction for them. No provision. A. Sorer, layman. A.S.F.S., Rev. Mr. Harris. Rev. Mr. Carden.

HOW TO BE BEAUTIFUL.—If a man or woman either, wish to realize the full power of personal beauty, it must be by cherishing noble actions and purposes—by having something to do and something to live for which is worthy of humanity, and which, by expanding the capacities of the soul, gives expansion and sympathy to the body which contains it.—Professor Upham.

FASHIONABLE WOMEN.—"Read the biographies of our great and good men and women," says an exchange: "not one of them had a fashionable mother. They nearly all sprung from plain strong-minded women, who had about as little to do with fashions as with the changing clouds."

Correspondence.

For the Christian Messenger.

A Lord's Day Morning with Spurgeon.

It is the morning of March 1, 1857. The place, as usual, is the Music Hall, in the Surrey Gardens. The discourse is on Rahab's Faith, found in the Third Series of Mr. Spurgeon's Sermons. I have before me a letter from a nephew residing in London, giving an account of the service of that morning; as also a reprint of a newspaper letter addressed to the Boston Journal by a Mr. Boyd, who was present at that same service. The whole furnishes a good idea of a Lord's Day morning with the famous young preacher and his massive congregation in the scene of his most striking successes. The letters greatly vary in their estimate of Mr. Spurgeon; but that will only help us to more correct conclusions respecting him.

On the morning specified above, "a bright, sunny morning," it seems, "long before the hour appointed for public worship," writes Mr. Boyd, "we found ourselves amidst a dense mass of human beings, all hurrying to the same point. Having received tickets... we had no doubt of obtaining seats, as the paying public were first provided for. But on our arrival we found every seat in that immense hall taken; and in a short time every foot of room for sitting or standing was occupied, there being in all not less than twelve thousand persons." My relative, as quoted below, reckons the same congregation at eight thousand. The median number, ten thousand, as stated generally by Mr. S. himself, is probably correct. This vast host of worshippers being thus gathered together, my nephew finds himself "in the topmost gallery of the Music Hall, looking down on a very impressive scene: namely, an assemblage of about eight thousand people, wearing their Sunday manners, Sunday faces, and Sunday apparel, and collected in a building peculiarly well adapted to shew them off to advantage."

The service opens. Mr. S. commenced with a very brief ascription of praise to God, offered, as he phrased it, "through the bloody atonement of Christ." He then requested all present who could possibly do so to join in the hymn, (read by one of his church,) "Come, let us join our cheerful songs, &c. Tune, "Mount Pleasant." Hymn and tune well adapted for a large congregation. Effect very fine; so rich a volume of harmony swelling up into the lofty vaulted roof.

He next read the second chapter of Joshua, and commented on it thus:—"Joshua used all the means in his power, although God was with him; shewing thus God's aid does not supersede man's effort. Some of you are lazy, and say, 'The Lord will provide.' So he will—a home for you in the county jail."

Next Rahab's "harlotry" was strongly insisted on, by way of defiance to Pharisaically virtuous hearers, and the Gospel proclaimed as especially intended for the vile.

Then the commentator denounced the lie she told, as utterly inexcusable. But he urged that, as her faith was praised, and her sin not reproached, so all our failings shall be overlooked through Christ's atonement, if only we act in faith and sincerity.

"The king of Jericho shut the gates, but forgot to guard Rahab's window. That's how some of you do with your sins and the window; and the window is quite wide enough to let out enemies that will destroy you."

Mr. S. then argued in favour of special providences; from the fact that the spies were directed to the house of the only woman in the town who would have concealed them.

After this the following verse was sung:—

"Now my soul thy suit prepare, Jesus loves to answer prayer; He himself has hid these pray, Therefore he will not say, Nay!"

Prayer was then presented. The preacher commenced with a reference to the size of the congregation. "Lord! thou hast this day fulfilled one of thy promises, 'I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me.' Here we lift thee up, and lo! all men are drawn unto thee. Fulfill now another promise. 'Gather unto Jesus,' in a higher sense, these multitudes." By and by he had a hit at parliament in his prayer:—"May they do what the people require; and not waste their time, as they have been doing lately." He went on to thank God for a ministry that appoint evangelical bishops. After a few more petitions "in tones," says my relative "the most impressive I ever heard," he supplicated the descent of the Holy Spirit upon himself, that he might preach aright. Mr. Boyd speaks of the close of the prayer as a fervent appeal to the