

Teachers' Department.

Sabbath School Scripture Lessons.

MARCH 7th, 1858.

Subject.—THE PRINCIPAL ELEMENT OF THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION STATED.

For Repeating. Heb. v. 1-2. For Reading. Heb. vi. 1-10.

MARCH 14th, 1858.

Subject.—ENCOURAGEMENTS TO PERSEVERANCE IN PIETY.

For Repeating. Heb. vi. 1-3. For Reading. Heb. vi. 11-20.

THE QUESTIONER.

Mental Pictures from the Bible.

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

[No. 54.]

A busy scene. The parties at work appear prepared to perform either military service or that which is now more immediately engaging their attention—the fortifying themselves from their enemies. Every man has his sword by his side, and his spear in his hand, and yet he is fully occupied in adding one stone to another, for the purpose of building a high, massive stone wall. Their enemies, who first despise them on account of their weakness, are afterwards very angry when they perceive their perseverance and determination to complete their work, and at last greatly troubled at their success.

SOLUTION to Pictures Nos. 52 and 53.

No. 52.—Achan's trial and conviction.—Joshua vii. 10-21.

No. 53.—The execution of Achan.—Joshua vii. 5, 22-26.

The Singing Student Boy.

Many years ago a student boy was seen and heard in the streets of an ancient town, singing. He was a stout, plainly-dressed boy, but his face was pale and his eyes were sad and tearful. His voice was most musical, and the songs he sang were in beautiful words and about sacred things. Every time he finished a song, he stepped to the door of a house and gave a gentle tap. When it was opened, he said in humble tones:

"Please give a poor student boy a morsel of bread."

From door to door, he sang sweet songs until his body was weary and his heart sad. Scarcely able to stand, he at last turned his steps homeward.

Just at that moment, URSULA COTTA, a burgher's wife who had heard his songs and seen him driven from her neighbors' doors, as he humbly asked for bread, felt her heart yearn with pity towards the helpless boy. She opened her door, beckoned to the young singer, smiled sweetly upon him, and in tones that sounded like heavenly melodies to his ears, said:

"Come in, poor boy, and refresh thyself at my table!"

"Happy little singer! How he enjoyed that delicious meal. And when the good dame and her husband told him to make their house his future home his heart melted. With eyes half-blinded by tears, he looked in the faces of his friends and said:

"I shall now pursue my studies without being obliged to beg my bread from grudging hands. I shall have you, sir, for a father, and you, sweet Ursula, for a mother.—My heart shall once more learn to love. I shall be happier than I can express."

The singing boy studied hard and well. Years afterward the world heard him uttering his voice against Popery. He became the chief of that Reformation, which gave an open Bible to the world. His name was MARTIN LUTHER.—S. S. Advocate.

Politics on Sunday.

The following short dialogue may not be uninteresting or unprofitable to some of our readers. If the garment-fits any, it may be worn—if the shoes pinches, the corns can be shaved off. The parties—preacher in charge and class-member. Place—the country appointment. Time—Sabbath after (and day after) election.

At the first opportunity, a pious (?) brother steps up to the minister smiling, and grasps his hand, when the following colloquy takes place, *verbatim et literatim*.

Brother. (In a low confidential tone.) "Who is elected?"

Preacher. (In an audible voice.) "All who believe on the Lord Jesus Christ."

B. (A little confused.) "I mean, is Mr. — or Mr. — elected?"

P. "Both, if they comply with the conditions."

B. (With his face like crimson and much confused.) "But which is elected to Parliament?"

P. "You mean the place whence our laws emanate?"

B. "Yes."

P. "So do I. One of which laws is, 'Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy.' The place last in sight of which St. John said, 'I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day.' Happy for us, brother, if we felt thus overawed, and were thus possessed."

Rebuked and ashamed, the disciple walked away, as wise as when he first began to question, but we presume, with this lesson learned, "not to bring the 'polls' with him on the Sabbath, to the house of God." Many might learn this, and kindred lessons, but, for their sakes, I hope it will not be blistered on with shame.—Canada Adv.

Too Strong a Test.

Sanctification is attained only in the world to come. The infirmities and sins of the flesh cling to Christians while they remain in a tabernacle of flesh, and any who lay claim to perfect holiness only display an ignorance of the depths of their own hearts. Father Pillsbury, of Maine, gave a practical proof of this truth to a neighbor of his, which has been going the rounds of the papers:

The following anecdote is related of Father Pillsbury, whose memory is revered by a wide circle of Christians in the State of Maine.

Father Pillsbury had a neighbor, who persisted in having argument with him in favor of human perfection.

"Show me a perfect man," the aged elder would say, "let me behold one example."

"I will do it," replied the other, finally, and went out.

Next morning, he re-entered Father Pillsbury's, conducting a stranger, whom with an air of triumph, he introduced as an instance of perfection. Father Pillsbury was at the time washing his hands at the sink. Deliberately lifting his basin with both hands, he dashed the water over the perfect man. Mark the result. The latter flashed up with anger, in his resentment saying and doing that which better accorded with nature than grace. Father Pillsbury waited till the perfect man began to get the mastery over his passion, and then repeated to him, as he shook his gray locks, earnestly:

"If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us."

The controversial neighbor went away humiliated if not convinced, and was ever afterward silent on his favorite theme of perfection.

Domestic Receipts.

TRIPLE.

As soon as it is emptied, it is washed in clean water till it is clean; if it is cold weather, it is put into warm water, and soaked a short time when it is cleansed in this way: Have a kettle of boiling water ready; take the tripe and cut it into pieces small enough to handle conveniently; then take a piece and hold it in the water till it is scaled, so that the skin will start, when it should be laid on a table, and scraped with a knife till it is thoroughly clean; proceed in this way till it is cleaned. It should then be put into cold water, and remain a week, the water being changed every day.

It should then be boiled till it is so tender that a straw can be run through it easily. While it is boiling, a small quantity of saleratus should be put into the water, for the purpose of sweetening it, and to make it tender. After it is cooked, it can be pickled to suit the taste of those who use it.

In this way, it may be prepared in a way which, if suitably cooked, will make a dish of food equal in every respect to any part of the beef.—Country Gentleman.

REMEDY FOR A COUGH.—Take a pint of sharp vinegar, place in it an egg without being broken, allow it to remain forty-eight hours, when it will be found that the shell has been completely dissolved by the acid; then break up the egg in the vinegar, add half a pint of honey, which being well mixed, will be ready for use. Take a spoonful for a dose several times a day.

Table with columns: Shares, Stock, Paid up, Present Value, Latest Sale, Latest Dividends. Lists various companies like Halifax Steamboat Company, Nova Scotia Marine, etc.

Select Sermon.

[Published by request.]

The Wise and Foolish Virgins.

BY THE REV. S. W. EDWARDS.

"Give us of your oil, for our lamps are gone out."—Mat. xxv. 8.

We have here an allusion to a custom of the country in which our Lord lived. It is taken from a Jewish wedding; and a brief sketch of the circumstances which attended the ceremony will better enable us to comprehend the meaning of the passage. The marriage was performed after sunset; and it took place in this manner—the bridegroom, accompanied by numerous attendants, proceeded to the house of the father of the bride, where a feast was held, which lasted for several days. At the close of this period the bride was conducted with great pomp from the dwelling of her father to that of her husband, where another feast was also held. This latter event commonly took place at midnight. A public bridal procession was formed, and, to render it all the more imposing, a number of virgins came forth to meet them, each one bearing in her hand a blazing torch. The procession then moved on to the house of the husband, and the marriage supper began. The invited guests who were present shared in the entertainment; but all others who might come afterwards were pre-emptorily excluded. If you read at your leisure the preceding chapter you will find that our Lord is here speaking of the day of judgment, and he refers to this ordinary usage of society for the purpose of illustrating some of the circumstances and events of that eventful period. The coming of the Bridegroom is intended to represent the coming of the Son of Man; the Bride is intended to represent his church on earth; and the wise and foolish virgins are intended to denote the present imperfect and mixed state of the church—some being real subjects of divine grace, and others having only the form of Godliness without the power.

Now in the parable, of which our text forms a part, the virgins are supposed to have been ignorant of the exact moment when the procession would leave the house of the father of the Bride; in consequence of this they are supposed to have gone out early, and to have lingered on the pathway, until they could perceive the signs of its approach. But a number of these virgins supposing there would be no delay—supposing that the marriage party would come immediately, they only took with them a sufficient quantity of oil to last them for a given period, and their stock having become exhausted, they appeal to the others in the language immediately before us—"Give us of your oil, for our lamps are gone out." Now, to shew the solemn lesson which these few words teach will be our business this evening. Consider, beloved, what we say, and may the Lord give you understanding.

We purpose to consider three things—The persons by whom this request was presented,

The reason upon which this request was founded, and

The refusal by which this request was succeeded. We shall first consider the persons by whom this request was presented. They are called by our Lord "foolish virgins;" but you will observe that their folly was at first imperceptible both to themselves and to others; in fact, they so very closely resembled the wise virgins that, to all outward appearance, there was no difference between the one and the other. They belonged to the same company of attendants; they were dressed in the same wedding attire; they bore in their hand the same blazing lamp; and they were all in expectation of the same approaching Bridegroom. Now, in the language of Scripture, the Lord Jesus, Christ is styled the husband of his church, and the church itself is emphatically styled his bride. By the Bridegroom, therefore, our Lord clearly intends us to understand himself, and by the foolish virgins he evidently means a certain class of persons, who, although closely identified with his people in outward appearance, are yet not of the same mind with them in reality. It is impossible to suppose that these terms have reference either to thoughtless sinners, or to wilful and open profligates, for the entire structure of the parable presents a palpable contradiction of this assumption. It is, for instance, distinctly affirmed that all the virgins went forth to meet the Bridegroom; and how could a statement like this be made of the openly wicked, who, so far from expecting the coming of the Lord, are seldom found to bestow even a solitary thought on the subject. Our Lord is evidently referring not to openly wicked, or profane persons, but to self-deceived professors—to those tares which grow up with the corn, and

which are so much like the wheat that the common eye can discern no difference between the one and the other. They have the lamp of an outward profession, but they have not the oil of grace to keep it burning; they profess to love Christ, and to look for his appearing, but their profession is governed by no vital heavenly influences, sanctified by no indwelling spirit, and distinguished by no abiding principle. Alas! the form of Godliness was theirs, but the power they never knew.

Such was the character of the persons by whom this request is supposed to have been presented. Well would it be for us, brethren, if, in this solemn consecrated hour, with an anxious solicitude for the true knowledge of our condition, and the ultimate welfare of the spirit that dwells within us—each one would ask for himself the question, "Lord is it I?" O, my brethren, if, at this moment, Jesus were to unveil himself in our midst; if, at this moment, Jesus were to stand before us as a visible spectator, would he not look round on this assembly with piercing eye, and would he not raise his hand, and point that hand and fix that eye on some of us, and say, with stern though pitying voice, where is the oil in your lamps? Where is the oil in your lamps? Let us invite his scrutiny ere it be too late to secure his grace; from each heart let the prayer proceed and ascend, "search me, O God, and try my heart, and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting." "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me."

We notice, in the second place, the reason upon which this request was founded—"Give us of your oil, for our lamps are gone out." The procession had begun to move, and the foolish virgins were soon startled from their lingering slumbers at the cry, "behold the Bridegroom cometh," and they were alarmed and confounded by the fact that the lamps, which had served them till near midnight, were just on the point of expiring, and that no oil was left in their vessels, to replenish and kindle the flame. Placed in these circumstances, they appealed to their companions—"Give us of your oil, for our lamps are gone out."

You are doubtless aware that in the language of Scripture light is a common emblem of hope, an ordinary symbol of prosperity; and, therefore, the extinction of that light must of necessity imply the termination of the one and the entire destruction of the other. "How often," says Job, "is the candle of the wicked put out," that is to say, how often is their hope suddenly extinguished. And what says Solomon? "The lamp of the righteous rejoiceth; but the light of the wicked shall be put out." Here you have an explanation of the language. By their lamps having gone out you are to understand that, having reached the end of their journey, they discovered that every hope on which their vain profession rested was swept from underneath them, and that they found themselves at last involved in moral darkness, dense as that which broods over the mind of the rude untutored savage; and it is this that forces the desperate cry—"Give us of your oil, for our lamps are gone out." It was the cry of unexpected surprise. These lamps of the foolish virgins had been burning until midnight; and certain it is that men have assumed to themselves a profession of the gospel like Ananias and Sapphira, and others that we read of in Scripture, who proceed well nigh to the end of their earthly existence in their outward adherence to the gospel, and yet fail at last of the grace God. Though the structure be reared on a false and an unsafe foundation, yet it may brave many a storm ere the last whirlwind shall rise and sweep it from its base. Many a faithful sermon may be heard, many a solemn warning may be uttered, and many a stroke of sorrow may be inflicted, while the victim of a guilty self-delusion may be even reposing in the slumber of a false and perilous confidence, and only be roused and startled by the thrilling peal of the archangel's trumpet—the solemn and alarming summons—"Arise, ye dead, and come to judgment." "Behold he cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see him;" "and many" says our Lord, "will say unto me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works. And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you, depart from me ye that work iniquity."

"Give us of your oil, for our lamps are gone out." So said the foolish virgins, and it was a cry of unanticipated destitution. Their lamps had gone out at the very moment when their gleaming lustre was more especially required; the hour of midnight had come; the bridal procession was approaching; the wise virgins were ready, but at the very moment when their attendance was required they were unprepared! My brethren, though there is not a single hour in human

history who needed, or from his st yet there a consciou it is his p manded, c sciousness gleam on of hope ca When t that you hold most then you help unles Spirit. C looks this tongue th the strean leaving y corpse of your gar grave you have no a have now you enter lies beyo stand nal whom we ing in sol shall fix then you help, un Spirit. grace of ed in the lies; and false con self delu not a sin from the last befor ment thr peccation "Give u out."