

Teachers' Department.

Sabbath School Scripture Lessons.

AUGUST 15th, 1858.

Subject.—FAITH ALONE WITHOUT WORKS IS DEAD.

For Repeating. For Reading,
James ii. 12-13. | James ii. 14-26.

AUGUST 22nd, 1858.

Subject.—THE EVIL CONSEQUENCES OF AN UN-
BRIDLED TONGUE.For Repeating. For Reading,
James ii. 14-17. | James iii. 1-8.

THE QUESTIONER.

Mental Pictures from the Bible.

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

[No. 67.]

In a lowly dwelling, near the shore of the wide Mediterranean, we look on a touching scene. A group of Jewish wayfarers are resting from a weary journey, and seem to seek quiet repose in this obscure retirement. But their retreat has been discovered by a woman, whose golden hair and foreign dress show her to be one of another nation. She kneels before one of the strangers, in an attitude full of reverence and humility, and as she raises her head we see her countenance beaming with the intense earnestness of a pleading heart.

Key to Bible questions in our last.

- 24.—JESUS.—John x. 20. PAUL.—Acts xxvi. 24.
25.—See Isaiah xxvi. 3. Phil. iv. 6-7.

[From the London Baptist Magazine.]

A Passage in the Life of a Country Pastor.

THE UNEQUAL MARRIAGE.

There are few practical questions which perplex me more than whether a professed Christian may marry one who does not give evidence of conversion. Of course extreme cases may be decided without difficulty or hesitation. The believer who should take a partner of openly irreligious or immoral character would violate both scripture and the instincts of the religious life. But these extreme cases seldom arise, and the question is more frequently raised in a modified form. The cases which have commonly come before me and in which I have felt difficulty, have been where a member of the church has had her affections engaged by a young man of unexceptionable moral character, and who, during the period of the courtship at least, has paid respect to the outward observances of religion. Those who take the strict and rigid view of the matter urge the express prohibition of Scripture; as, for instance, the passages in the first and second Epistles to the Corinthians. But this appeal has not struck me as quite decisive, for several reasons; the following among others. The state of society and the relationship between the Church and the world are very different now to those which existed in the Apostle's days. By "unbelievers" are meant not nominal Christians, but Jews or heathen. The language would still apply in all its force to converts from Hindooism or Mohammedanism, and to cases where one of the parties is utterly ungodly or immoral. But I cannot see that the law quite applies with the exactly same stringency and universality in the instances I now speak of. Besides which, the passage generally insisted upon—"Be not unequally yoked"—has no special reference to marriage, but refers to partnership in business with as much force as to the conjugal relation. Marriage is, of course, included, but other relationships are not excluded, and it often happens that those who insist upon the observance of this law in one direction are living in violation of it in another. I am, however, bound to confess that for one marriage of the sort which turns out well, I have known a score the reverse. My own observation has been decidedly unfavourable to the formation of such unions; and, without going the length of saying that they are in all cases sinful, I am sure that, as a rule, they are most undesirable. One instance may serve to illustrate this. I select it not because it contains anything remarkable, but for the very opposite reason; it is a history so commonplace and so often repeated, that it will be more universally applicable than one of a more romantic kind.

Jane Shafton was a portionless orphan at an early age, with no near relative but an old aunt, Miss Priscilla Upshaw, who possessed a moderate competency arising from an annuity which ceased with her life. Jane was a fine, high spirited girl, full of frolic, and with talents of no common order. Her aunt was a good and pious woman, but very prim, precise, and narrow. She tried to do

her duty to the poor friendless orphan thus thrown upon her; but having lived alone for nearly twenty years, with no companions save a parrot and a cat, and reading little or nothing save the writings of Mrs. Rowe, Dr. Johnson, and Mrs. Hannah More, it may be easily conjectured that she was not the fittest person in the world to take charge of a young girl. Her theory of education was to check any outburst of natural vivacity, and to make her charge as prim and precise as herself. The poor child used to stand for two or three hours a day in a constrained posture, in a back-board and stocks, (instruments of torture used in my young days, to turn the toes out and the shoulder-blades in,) till ease and freedom of movement were almost destroyed, in order to produce that artificial deformity called beauty. Back-board and stocks were applied to the mind as rigorously as to the body. But all was vain; mind and body both had too much spring and elasticity to be permanently twisted out of shape, and Jane Shafton grew up a charming young woman.—She was quite sufficiently conscious of her own merits, and her proud spirit could ill bear the constant reproofs which her aunt felt it her duty to administer. It was, therefore, a mutual relief when both parties agreed that she was old enough to take a situation.

It was soon after this that I first knew her. Some kind-hearted but purse-proud people in my congregation engaged her as governess for their children. They treated her kindly on the whole, but could not at all understand her sensitive feelings. They paid her well for her services, and she was their servant. That, in their view, was the whole of the relationship between them. Sometimes they made her a present to mark their approval of her conduct; but it was done in so patronising a manner that she was wounded rather than cheered by it. Her proud spirit chafed at being thus made to feel her dependent position. At the same time the sense of her utter orphanage and loneliness was forced upon her. She saw the children clinging to their parents and to one another in mutual affection, whilst she must stand and look from outside the charmed circle. No family enrolled among its members, no heart throbbled with love for her, to no arms could she fly for refuge, upon no breasts could she weep out her troubles. Her passionate yearning for affection and sympathy sometimes amounted almost to agony. Many a night did she sob herself to sleep as she thought of her utter loneliness and solitude. She told me that she had sometimes stretched out her arms into the darkness, and convulsively called on her never-forgotten mother to come and comfort her. In this utter darkness of the soul she began to turn towards the Saviour; for as yet she knew him not. Her aunt's teaching seemed so dry and cold that it had failed to attract her. But she remembered a death-bed, where a dying mother had told her of the sympathy of Jesus, and had solemnly besought her to take him as her friend. To these words she had hitherto attached little meaning; but now they spoke to her heart with strange power, and as she pondered them night after night her mother's voice seemed again to be heard; and when she fell asleep, revolving them in her mind, that beloved form would often seem to smile upon her in her dreams.

I noticed an alteration in her manner about this time, and was much struck with the intense and eager attention with which she began to listen, especially when I spoke of the sympathy of Christ. In an interview with her soon afterwards, I joyfully heard from her a narrative of the steps by which she had been led to Jesus, and after a brief interval she was "buried with him in baptism." From this time the change in her whole spirit and deportment was most marked. The proud, haughty reserve in which she had hitherto entrenched herself was broken down. Fits of deep depression or of sullen silence no longer annoyed and perplexed the family with which she lived. Her character, softened, refined, and elevated by religion, endeared her to them. They had always esteemed, and now began to love her. She, too, on her part discovered excellencies in them she had never dreamed of before, and what had previously been merely a situation now became a home.

Soon after this, the son of some member of the church returned from abroad. He was a fine, handsome young fellow; had been gay, and had caused his parents much anxiety, but for some time had been more serious, and gave promise of settling down into a steady and respectable man. He met Miss Shafton at my house one evening; he was much struck with her, and in a few days it began to be whispered about that he was paying her marked attention. His parents encouraged the suit; for though

their son would have a good fortune, whilst the poor orphan was penniless, they felt that she would probably be the means of confirming his good resolutions, and leading him to the Saviour. She was admirably suited for him. How far it would be for her happiness I was not sure, but stood almost alone in having any doubt about it. Her aunt, and the family with whom she lived, were delighted at the prospect. She, however, gave him little encouragement, and when he made her a formal offer, she replied that she could not accept it at once, and begged a week before she gave him her answer. He was passionately in love with her, and could not endure the suspense. But she was firm, and he had no alternative but to submit. She came to consult me, and I have rarely been placed in a position of greater difficulty. If I advised her to refuse him, I made myself responsible for inducing a homeless, friendless, portionless orphan to forego a devoted husband, and a most advantageous settlement in life. The hesitation she had already displayed had greatly annoyed her aunt and the family with whom she lived. If she declined his offer, it would be impossible for her to remain in her present situation, such was the intimacy between the families; and her aunt would be so incensed as to refuse her a home. She would thus deprive herself at one blow of the only friends she had in the world. In case her health should fail, what could she do under the circumstances? Then, too, the prospects of her suitor and the hopes of his parents seemed to hang trembling on her decision. If it should be adverse, would he not be consigned to irretrievable ruin? This, at least, was the feeling of his friends, who dreaded the result of a disappointment upon him.

How was I to advise in such a case? It is easy enough to say that if the thing is wrong in principle it ought to be opposed in all classes. Perhaps it was the weakness of my faith which prevented my saying this. Perhaps I ought to have remembered that "wrong never comes right"—that, whilst obeying God she was not friendless or portionless; and that a simple, unquestioning, unhesitating obedience to his commands would certainly prove in the end the wisest course. I am not sure whether I did not show a want of fidelity and courage in my interview with her. I fear I was in fault. But when I found that her affections were deeply engaged to him, I could not force myself to urge to a refusal, and though I did not advise her to an acceptance of the offer, yet my bias in its favour was pretty evident.

"Say ye, severest, what would you have done?"

[To be concluded next week.]

American Bible Union.

IMPORTANT MOVEMENT.

At a Special Meeting of the Board, held on Friday, the 23rd of July, an able report from the Committee on Versions, stated that, Rev. H. B. Hackett, D.D., a member of the Final Committee, in the prosecution of his work as a reviser, had become deeply impressed with the importance of spending six months in Greece, in order to mature his acquaintance with the Greek language, in which the New Testament was originally written, as a living tongue. His views upon this subject were seconded and recommended by a number of distinguished scholars, whose name were embraced in the report, among which were those of Drs. Conant, Sophocles, Caswell, etc.

It is believed that such a measure will introduce into the Final Committee, in addition to the unsurpassed qualifications already distinguishing its members, an element of success hitherto not possessed by any reviser or translator of the sacred oracles since the earliest centuries of the christian era. The Septuagint, which has a reputation for exactness second only to that of the inspired Hebrew, and the Latin version by Jerome, almost equally celebrated, were made by persons acquainted with the originals as living languages. No version in English was ever made with such an advantage.

A scholar, who is familiar with Greek in its printed forms, and who has for many years been accustomed daily to quote it, will, by hearing the constant application of its terms to objects of sight and usages still existing, acquire a vivid perception of their meaning and of the distinctions in their use, which he can never obtain from books. This will be ever present to his mind in the business of revising, and will greatly aid him in transfusing the real meaning of the original into the translation.

Dr. Hackett will spend the year in the employ of the Bible Union and his visit to Greece will be at its expense, and the entire result of the year's labors and acquisitions will accrue to the benefit of the Union.

It was understood by all that this proposition, on the part of Dr. Hackett, was a new pledge of his thorough devotion to the work.

The Board unanimously agreed to the proposition, and, in compliance with Dr. Hackett's wishes, fixed the first of August for the time of his departure.

Agriculture.

August.

A feeling and accomplished writer in the *Edinburgh Review*, many years ago, said, "The Year has now reached the parallel to that brief, but perhaps best period of human life, when the promises of youth are either fulfilled or forgotten, and the fears and forethoughts connected with decline have not yet grown strong enough to make themselves felt; and consequently when we have nothing to do but look around us and be happy. It has, indeed, like a man at forty, turned the corner of its existence; but, like him, it may still fancy itself young, because it does not begin to feel itself getting old. And perhaps there is no period like this for enjoyment in which all true happiness must mainly consist; with pleasure it has, indeed, little to do; but with happiness it is everything."

You cannot spend a few days, at this time, more profitably in any other way, than in ditching and reclaiming.

August is the time for plowing and seeding down such mowing lands as need re-seeding. That is, if the work is done in this month, the grass will gain such growth and strength as to go through the winter with more safety than if postponed to a later day,—it will not be so likely to get winter-killed. The warmth of August will cause the seed to germinate, and get a good start, and be prepared to resist the frosts of autumn.

Plow to a good depth, according to the nature of the land, and spread on a liberal dressing of compost, and harrow thoroughly. Then sow the seed and harrow again, and follow with the roller, leaving the surface smooth as a floor. If the ground is wet, and the surface should be thrown by the frost of the coming winter, pass over it with the roller again in the spring. This will leave it in good condition for the mowing machine.

We have long been convinced that this is the best way of treating grass lands, that are rather low and moist. Success will depend very much on doing the work at the right time,—and now is a good time to be about it.

Keep a watchful eye upon the weeds. This matter is no less important this month, for now the weeds are maturing their seeds, and if you let them ripen, they will make much work for next year.—*N. E. Farmer.*

SEASONABLE INFORMATION.—Apart from the advantages of bathing in salt water, the inhalation of sea air has a salubrious and beneficial effect, which is most apparent upon those who resort to the coast from towns or from inland districts. It has been shown by Prof. Faraday and other chemists that oxygen in the particular condition known under the name of "ozone," exists in large proportion in sea air. Though air impregnated with the saline of the sea is found too strong for some persons, in the great majority of cases an occasional visit to the coast is a capital restorative of vital power to those whose nerves are exhausted by long sojourn in inland towns.—*Scientific American.*

What will stop a cow from holding up her milk?

Treat her gently always, and at milking time especially so, giving her a mess of meal, oats, or grass.

CURE FOR FELONS ON FINGERS.—The *Scientific American* says: "The past year we have known the spinal marrow of an ox or cow applied to three different persons with the most satisfactory results in relieving pain, and securing cures of their felons. The spinal marrow should be applied every four hours for two days."

CURE FOR THE BITE OF A MAD DOG.—A writer in the *National Intelligencer* says that spirits of hartshorn is a certain remedy for the bite of a mad dog. The wound, he adds, should be constantly bathed with it, and three or four doses, diluted, taken inwardly during the day. The hartshorn decomposes, chemically, the virus insinuated into the wound, and immediately alters and destroys its deleteriousness. The writer, who resided in Brazil for some time, first tried it for the bite of a scorpion, and found that it removed pain and inflammation almost instantly. Subsequently he tried it for the bite of a rattle-snake, with similar success. At the suggestion of the writer, an old friend and physician tried it in cases of hydrophobia, and always with success.