

Teachers' Department.

Sabbath School Scripture Lessons.

NOVEMBER 25th, 1860.

Read—JOHN xix. 1-22: The Crucifixion: 1 KINGS x. 1-15: The Queen of Sheba's visit to Solomon.

Recite—JOHN xviii. 19-23.

DECEMBER 2nd, 1860.

Read—JOHN xix. 23-42: Circumstances attending the Crucifixion of Christ. 1 KINGS x. 14-29: The richness and greatness of Solomon.

Recite—JOHN xix. 1-4.

MESSENGER ALMANAC.

From November 18th to December 1st, 1860.

Table with 2 columns: Full Moon, Last Quarter, New Moon, First Quarter. Rows: November 28, December 5, 12, 20.

Table with 4 columns: Day, SUN., MOON., High Water at Halifax. Rows: 18th to 30th.

For the time of HIGH WATER at Pictou, Pugwash, Wallace, and Yarmouth add 2 hours to the time at Halifax.

For HIGH WATER at Annapolis, Digby, &c. and at St. John, N. B., add 3 hours to the time at Halifax.

The time of HIGH WATER at Windsor is also the time at Parrsboro', Horton, Cornwallis, Truro, &c.

For the LENGTH OF DAY double the time of the sun's setting.

Thomas Cooper, the converted Sceptic.

Great good is being done by this person in Great Britain. He was for some time a professed sceptic, but some few years ago he became convinced of his error; and has since been using every effort in his power to counteract the evil of his former course...

The two last numbers of the London Freeman contain articles from him respecting his operations and experience in Scotland.

The following extracts will deeply interest our readers:

Scepticism in Scotland.

BY THOMAS COOPER.

I am in Aberdeen, "the granite city," as the inhabitants delight to hear it called, being very proud of it. And one does not wonder at that. Five hundred miles north of London, and in Britain, one is surprised to find such a city. There cannot be a nobler street in Europe, of its kind, than "Union-street" here. It is nearly a mile long, being continued by a bridge thrown over a ravine; the street is of ample breadth, and the buildings on either side—all of white granite—are of stately height. The sparkling clearness of the houses in the sun, and the lines of gas-lights by night, are equally pleasing. The shops are as richly and plentifully stored as in London; and, as you glance over the abundant contents of the numerous booksellers' windows, you feel yourself surrounded with the same civilisation in this remote corner of Scotland, as in Fleet-street or the Strand. Yet, after the first two or three days' acquaintance with them, these perpetual straight lines of the streets, and the utter absence of irregularity in the style of buildings, grow dull, to an Englishman. An American, no doubt, would feel himself at home amidst this rectangular uniformity; but, I confess, my heart rather yearns to be among the queer corners in darling old York, or Lincoln, or Canterbury, or Conventry; the loveable quaint gables of Chester, or Tewkesbury, or Bristol: or even the more modern bay and bow-windows of our English towns. Take all this straight line and right-angle way of building, for your own share, and welcome, I say to the Aberdonians but give me a walk along that grand old High-street of Exeter, or a saunter round the piazzas of that superb market-place of Nottingham, or a stroll through magnificent old Norwich, and I shall feel I have the richer treat.

These Aberdonians, as they call themselves, are regarded, like their city, as something unique. Not even a Scotchman, it is understood, can overreach them, if he tries. They are a "canny" people, ye ken! And it is really true. They "know what's what," as we say in England.

increasing; and too many of the poor toilers You feel yourself surrounded by a thinking people while you are talking to them. Usually, in England, I witness the liveliest attention while I speak of the organisation or habits of animals, or relate some anecdote, to relieve attention. It is very different here. The greater number of hearers seem to say, by their looks, "We know all about that; go on!" But touch these prying of thought which they prefer—the metaphysical—and what a waking up there is! Every eye is fixed, every feature still; all is breathless; even that eternal "mitchkin," the taking of snuff, which is such a constant nuisance all over Scotland during worship or lecture—it matters not which—I say even the everlasting "sneeshin," is suspended, right on to the end of the train of argument; the intensity of attention even growing to the end. And then the tornado of "sneeshin," and hem-hem-ing, and rolling of the shoulders, and relief of the limbs, and looks and nods at each other, as much as to say, "That's it, ye ken!" at the end of the train of reasoning, give corroborative evidence of the unquestionable relish for metaphysics there is in the mind of a genuine Scotchman, and, above all, of an Aberdonian. While I started the a priori argument for God's existence and attributes, the other night—a process of at least fifteen minutes, length, and requiring the most absorbed attention in the hearer, if you expect him to comprehend it without any rehearsal—not an eye of the large body of young men before me seemed to wink, or a feature of their faces to move, or even a breath to be heaved, while I spoke. I had no need to summon or exert attention—no need to relieve attention, as I so often have in England. The thinking was unbroken all the time; and, at the close, the most triumphant and gratified conviction glowed in the faces of the majority.

There is scepticism, however, in Aberdeen, notwithstanding the clear conviction of mind with which the majority of the audiences evidently listen to the proofs of natural and revealed religion. On our opening night there were phenomena which seemed ominous of a stormy week. An elderly woman, greatly deformed, poorly clad, and with marks of severe suffering in her face, rose in great apparent wrath, and severely scolded me. On account of her antique dialect, and the merriment with which others heard it, I could not understand more than two or three words she said. "Gospel history—gospel history," she talked about; but what else she said I could not tell. On the next night it was not thought advisable to admit her, and friends brought me strange reports of her—that she was a confirmed Atheist, a disturber of death-beds in spite of praying ministers, and other alarming accounts. Who should insist on making her way into my lodging-room, on the third morning, but the old woman herself! She stayed an hour, and talked very volubly—and, very often, sensibly—for I got her to interpret what she called her "auld Saxon." She was born in 1796, had experienced great suffering all her life, had been tied to a brutal husband for part of her life, and, in short, had gone through great trouble—but had preserved an independent spirit amidst it all. She is not an Atheist, but speaks eloquently of God's attributes; the tear rolled down her poor discoloured and withered face as she spoke of the wisdom of His works. But she rejects miracles and a written revelation. She admires CHRIST—"and HOWARD as much" she said—but does not believe in His divinity or Messiahship. In fact, I found, by her own confession, that the burthen of the scolding she had given me, on the opening night, was, that I had given up STRAUSS. She had possessed some numbers of "Cooper's Journal" of 1850—in which I detailed and advocated the mythical theory of the "Leben Jesu"—until "a weaver mon" had purloined them. She is also a stout Chartist; and there, I discovered, I had had a strong hold of her admiration long before she had seen me. The scold, she assured me, was one of regard and regret, not of anger—though she had seemed angry at the time. This first long conversation with her convinced me that there was a large heart in this poor despised woman—a large heart for good, if she had only been treated with sympathy and kindness, instead of condemnation and distrust. She promised me she would call again, and I promised her that she should not be excluded from the lectures.

All had been so very quiet on the second and third nights—every sceptic present so silent—that I anticipated no more attempts either at chiding or discussion. But our fourth night showed us we were mistaken in supposing the week was to end so easily. First, a strong-built man—a smith as I afterwards found—a professed Atheist and materialist, got up at the end of

the lecture and demanded to know—"How God made Himself out of nothing?" I saw the poor man's difficulty, although he had expressed it so clumsily, and strove to help him; but, unfortunately, he was not willing to be helped. He wanted a foolish triumph, and replied scoffingly, I besought him to be kind, and to remember that we were all seeking truth, and that to scoff and sneer would only injure himself. It was in vain. He grew defiant and boisterous, and so provoked the audience to hiss him down. I tried him again, but he was worse than at first; and I could not restrain the audience from again hissing him down, although I told them it was wrong and that Christ never hissed.

Another working man now rose, but in a very different spirit. He strongly condemned the spirit in which the other man had spoken, and kindly asked me to help him out of his difficulties respecting a future state. I answered him, and he replied, and I answered again—and our friendly conversation might have gone on longer but as it was now more than half-past ten o'clock the chairman thought it better to close the meeting. As I returned to my lodging, a group of men were waiting for me in the street; and the smith, who headed them insisted on recommencing his attack. I took him by the arm, very quietly, and the man walked along as we talked together. I besought him to listen, that I might clear up his difficulties. But that did not square with his notions. He would talk, though he talked nonsense; and when I strove to get a word in, he would interrupt me. Again I recommenced to argue with him; but, at last, the sad truth gleamed in upon me, that the man was talking to please the party who accompanied him, and not for truth. My work was vain; and so I left the poor spiritual wanderer, and got home to my lodging on the quay—standing near the door, before I went in, to gaze on glorious Orion just ascending the horizon, and the rest of the host "so wildly, spiritually bright;" and remembering that thousands of years ago that host shone down as brightly on the spiritual wanderers of Chaldea and Persia, and Egypt and India, and "the heavens declared the glory of God, and the firmament showed his handy-work," and "the invisible things of Him, from the creation of the world, were clearly seen, being understood by the things which were made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they were without excuse"—the poor wanderer are "without excuse" now. God have pity on all such poor wanderers, and reclaim them from their wanderings—let every Christian soul pray; but none can utter the prayer with the feeling of those whom God has reclaimed.

Yesterday afternoon (Friday, 19th October) the poor aged woman called again. It was really wondrous to hear her talk of the beautiful contrivances in the human frame (she, a born a cripple) and of its mysterious tenant, the soul. Her reading, by her own account and it must be so, from her rags and poverty—has only been small; but she must be able to remember all she reads. I turned the conversation to the communion of the soul with its Maker. I asked her if she did not perceive it must be delightful to breathe the altar God, and feel communion with the Divine Father. There was an instant glow of fine meaning in her worn face, but she seemed to resist my appeals when I spoke of CHRIST as "the way, the truth, and the life." Her old sceptical habit is not easily to be overcome. Yet, I am sure, there is hope for this poor aged creature. I wish some good Christian people would seek her out, and persevere in talking to her. They say she has great influence on the minds of her acquaintances, in spite of her poverty. And I do not wonder at it: the Scotch feel and acknowledge the power of mind, let its garb—the poor body—be as plain as it may, let the lot of the wearer be ever so lowly.

To-night (Saturday, October 20) we are compelled to go to the new Music Hall, a very spacious building. Last night, not only the chapel, but the court in front of it, was filled with people, and hundreds had to go away. Such excitement has not been witnessed for some time in Aberdeen. My lecture last night ("The Bridge of History") occupied so much time that we broke up without inviting discussion; but, to night, I have promised to conclude early, and we expect the discussion will be eager. Letters in abundance have come in from sceptics, the greater number of them couched in respectful terms, a few abusive and prejudiced.

DUNDEE, although containing a larger population than "the granite city," is evidently lower in intellectual culture. Only a few years ago, Dundee was a proverb for its masses of famished and discontented weavers. Their mere physical condition is certainly improved. Thrift in manufacture is manifest here, as it is in our Lancashire and Yorkshire towns. Large mills are rising on every side; the wealth of employers is increasing; and it would be grievous indeed if the working classes did not get better bread and clothing than formerly. Yet there is no corresponding advancement in the intellectual and moral condition of working men, in this hive of Scottish industry—nor, indeed, in their social or domestic condition. The habits of the labouring classes in Dundee are not so wholesome—shall I call it!—as could, at all times, be wished. No doubt there will be an improvement in this respect when their sewerage is completed. For two years this necessary work has been progressing, and will be a very effectual improvement in the end—for Dundee is most favourably situated for drainage; and the broad Tay—the most princely river in Scotland—presents a volume of waters sufficient for the purification of the town, should its inhabitants be increased twenty-fold.

Reading and thinking habits have not increased among working men. say intelligent observers; but prostitution and drinking habits are

spend their Sabbath hours in smoking and idle talk on their own thresholds and in their working-clothes, instead of putting on clean apparel (which they can now very well afford) and joining in public worship according to the good old usage of their Sabbath-keeping fore-fathers. Scepticism does not make a noise here; there are no leaders of sufficient intelligence to be able to stand out and claim public attention. But there are hundreds of working men who have no settled belief, and who readily listen to any theory of irresponsibility: passion pleads, and they easily conclude that it is as they wish it should be. This is the lowest and most degraded kind of scepticism; the daily presence of one man of subtlety and energy amid such a mass would play fearful work with them.

A word or two more about the interesting old woman at Aberdeen. During my last lecture she was very close to the platform in the Music Hall, and I observed her looking very "pawky" now and then as I defended the miracles of CHRIST from the attacks of WOOLSTON and STRAUSS. There was such an odd, ludicrous cast of expression in her face as I discussed the objections of WOOLSTON to the casting out of the devils and permitting them to enter the herd of swine, that I expected she would be uttering some sort of derisive protest before I had done. But the droll old creature kept perfect silence to the close; and when I intimated that any sceptical friend might express his doubts, or put a question, she looked up and said, "Wid ye hev' onny objection to tell the folk that ardent sperrit is the deevil in a liquid form?" Peals of laughter and hearty cheers from even the Christian part of the audience rewarded the old woman for her wit, and the seemed perfectly satisfied to let the argument alone.

Her presence, as near to the platform as before, on the Sunday night, gratified me much. She heard me tell of "the unsearchable riches of CHRIST;" and I pointed many an invitation to herself. She seemed to listen, however, as if she had made up her mind not to be moved. I would not let her go away, as the meeting was breaking up, without a final appeal to her. I beckoned her to come nearer to me, and a crowd soon formed round us. "Oh, will you try to come to the Saviour?" I said; "do you not feel that you could love him?" "Hum!" she replied, drily! "I canna say but that I like him verra weel as a mon." "Nay, she answered, "I'll hae naething to do wi' him i' that shape: I'm a sceptic, I tell ye; and sae dinna fash me!" Some of the crowd seemed shocked. But I turned to them, while I kept hold of the poor old woman's hand, and said, "Will not some of you Christian people promise to see this dear old woman and talk to her and pray with her? I shall never forget her, but shall often pray for her. Do not imagine by what she says that you will never be able to reach her mind. God can save her; and you must not leave her to herself. Take pity upon her, and visit her. Never give her up. God will most assuredly save her." None answered me; but the tears stood in all eyes, and I feel sure the old woman will not be forgotten by praying people. She looked very firm while she bade me good bye: but I could not help thinking that she was more deeply touched than she chose to confess, and I hope to hear good of poor ANN BRADSHAW.

Agriculture.

Shingling.

MR. EDITOR:—A correspondent in the Farmer asks, "What will make shingles last longer?" Twenty-three years ago I found I had quite a lot of refuse shingles on hand, 163rd sappy and shakey, and I laid them on the back kitchen and woodshed.

I have just examined them, and think they will last at least seven years longer. The building has not leaked, to my knowledge.

I soaked these shingles in a very thin white-wash made with brine instead of clear water. There has been nothing done to them since, although I have no doubt that to have white-washed, or served a coat of dry-slaked lime or fine salt once in two or three years on them, would have been of great advantage to them.

As I shingle differently from almost any one else, I will give you my method, and my reasons for it.

However wide the shingles may be, I do not allow the nails to be put more than two inches apart.

Reason.—If your shingles are wet or green and the wide ones are nailed at the edges, the shingle must split, or one of the nails must draw when the shingle shrinks. If the shingle is dry it must huff or crowd the nail out when it swells. Thus our nails are kept in constant motion by every shrink or swell of the shingle, till they are broken, pulled out, or the shingle is split.

I do not want the nails drove quite in, or so as to sink the head.

Reason.—The heads of the nails hold up the butts of the next row of shingles, and give the air a free circulation.

I lay all my shingles in whitewash. I prefer brine for making it. I line with red chalk. I then whitewash the last course laid down to the line, and after the building is shingled I whitewash the whole of the roof.

Reason.—To make the shingle last twice as long as they would without the whitewash, and I consider it much better than just whitewashing the roof after shingling.

Carpenters often object to shingling in this way, as it is rather dirty work, and declare they know it does not do any good—that it is just as good to whitewash after shingling, &c.

ED. EMERSON, in N. E. Farmer, Halifax, Sept. 29, 1860.