

Month's Department.

Bible Lessons.

Sunday, March 3rd, 1861.

Read—MATT. vi. 16-34 : Christ's Sermon on the Mount, continued. 2 KINGS iv. 1-17 : The Shunammite's Son raised by Elijah.

Recite—MATTHEW vi. 9-15.

Sunday, March 10th, 1861.

Read—MATT. vii. 1-14 : Christ's Sermon on the Mount, continued. 2 KINGS iv. 18-44 : The dead-lily pottage healed by Elisha.

Recite—MATTHEW vi. 19-21.

"Search the Scriptures."

Write down what you suppose to be the answers to the following questions.

17. Give instances where unlawful curiosity was remarkably punished, and state an occasion on which persons were charged on pain of death not to indulge the spirit.

18. Can you refer to an instance in which the rash imprecation of a father brought his son under sentence of death, for having taken a little food in the fatigue of battle, and when death would have followed but for the interposition of others in favour of the condemned?

Answers to questions given last week:—

15. "The spider taketh hold with her hands, and is in kings' palaces.

16. The stork, the turtle, the crane, and the swallow, are used to reprove the wilful ignorance of the children of Israel, Jer. viii. 7.

"Woodman Spare that Tree."

The most beautiful and affecting song of the present day, is "Woodman Spare that Tree," as sung by Mr. Russell. It was written by Col. George P. Morris, the editor of the New York Mirror, and is founded upon the following interesting occurrence. When a person hears Mr. Russell tell the story, and then listens to his enchanting strains as he sings the song, he must possess a heart of adamant if he does not feel his bosom swell, and the generous tear of sympathy moistening his eye.

There was a family of opulence residing in the country, not a great distance from New York. It consisted of the parents and a large number of sons and daughters, all united together by those golden ties which no one but a parent, a brother, a sister, or a daughter can feel. They possessed every thing requisite to ensure happiness—their home was an earthly paradise—their hearts the seat of ardent love for one another, and of generous, noble friendship for others.—There seemed nothing wanting to perfect this little community. The pecuniary circumstances were such, that they could indulge freely in the luxury of administering comfort and happiness to the poverty stricken and miserable. The naked were clothed, and the hungry were fed; not with that ostentation which exacts the admiration of the world, but with that kindness and satisfaction, which are the characteristics of a noble soul.—Their acts of generosity were performed for the satisfaction of doing good. And when they had alleviated the distress of one who was almost crushed by the heavy hand of poverty, they experienced that jubilee within the heart which none but the truly generous can feel. Their intercourse with one another was also of the happiest kind. It was the desire of each member of the family to contribute to the happiness of all the others in preference to their own. Sisterly, brotherly, and parental affection, filled up their bosoms to overflowing.

But this little paradise was not long to last. The generosity of the old gentleman impelled him to assist his friends by way of endorsements and their failures swept away every farthing of his earthly riches. The depriving him of his noble farm, his lovely cottage, and the beautiful verdure and lofty trees that surrounded it, was the ill reward of his disinterested friendship. And to be compelled to give all these—to surrender those majestic trees under whose shade he had passed so many pleasant hours with his excellent family—and under whose protection, as it were, his children had endeared every tree, and indeed every shrub to his heart. But they must be all abandoned; and this happy community, which had been linked together by the strongest ties of the human heart, must be torn asunder, and scattered to the four winds of heaven.

This misfortune dispersed them in different directions. Some went to reside with friends, and others to seek their fortunes in distant climes.—But the destroyer of life soon swept away, one by one, the whole family but the youngest son. He went to the south, and by industry and perseverance gained a fortune. He then turned to his old home, determined to possess himself of the "home of his childhood," but it was so situated that he could not. He gazed longingly upon the venerable trees that were planted and nurtured by the kind hand of his father. He lounged upon the green grass beneath their shades as he was wont to do in boyhood; but there were no brothers there indulging in their boyish sports, nor sisters to sweeten the scene with their pure feelings, gushing forth in innocent rapturous laughter; no mother to watch them with a tear of pleasure in her eye, no father whose

"Knee they climbed, the envied kiss to share."

And he turned with a melancholy heart and left the spot. And though his visit can hardly be said to have given him pleasure, he determined to make a periodical pilgrimage to this hallowed place.

He took lodgings in New York, and visited

the sacred grounds periodically. At one time when he was on his way, he called upon Col. Morris to accompany him. The Col. complied with his request; and when they arrive within sight of the trees that surrounded the old cottage, they saw a woodman standing near the roots of the noblest and most venerable one, sharpening his axe. The strangers put spurs to their horses, rode swiftly up to the woodman, and accosted him thus:

"What are you going to do?" "I intend to cut down this tree," replied the woodman.

"What for?" "I want it for fire-wood." "If you want fire-wood," said the stranger, "why do you not go to yonder forest, and let this old oak stand?"

"You see I am an old man," replied the woodman, "and I have not strength to bring my wood so far."

"If I give you money enough to hire as much wood brought to your door as this tree will make, will you forever let it stand?"

The woodman answered "yes." They executed a bond that the tree should remain; and the stranger turned to Col. Morris, and with a generous sparkling in his eye, said: "In youth it sheltered me, and I'll protect it now."

It affected Col. M. deeply as it would any man who had a heart capable of feeling, and he returned home and wrote the following exquisite lines:

Woodman spare that tree! Touch not a single bough: In youth it sheltered me; And I'll protect it now. It was my father's hand That placed it near his cot; Then Woodman, let it stand, The axe shall harm it not.

That old familiar tree Whose glory and renown, Are spread o'er land and sea! And would'st thou hack it down? Woodman forbear thy stroke! Cut not its earth-bound ties— O! spare that aged oak! Now towering to the skies.

When but an idle boy, I sought its grateful shade: In all their gushing joy, There, too, my sisters played. My mother kissed me here— My father pressed my hand— Forgive this foolish tear, But let that old oak stand!

My heart-strings round thee cling, Close as thy bark, old friend! Here shall the wild bird sing, And still thy branches bend. Old tree! the storm shall brave! And, Woodman, leave the spot— While I've a hand to save, Thy axe shall harm it not.

—Schenectady Democrat.

The Beauty of the Heavens.

How delightful it is to contemplate the Heavens! They "are stretched out as a curtain to dwell in!" Not only as far as the eye can see, but beyond the remotest boundary which the highest telescopic power can reach, does the ethereal firmament extend! We can find no limit, no boundary. Millions of miles may be travelled from any given point of space, and still the heavens appear illimitable. And with what gorgeous splendour and magnificence is that curtain adorned! In every direction it is studded with worlds, suns, and systems, all harmoniously moving in perfect and undeviating obedience to the Almighty's will. The soul in such a contemplation is absorbed. Earth ceases to hold us with its silver chain. The mind, set free from its grovelling pursuits, mounts up as on the wings of an eagle, and soars away through the immensity of space, surveying and admiring the innumerable revolving orbs, which, like so many crowns of glory, and diadems of beauty, bespangle the firmament, whose antiquity is of "ancient days," and which so powerfully attest that "the hand that made them is divine." The immense distance of fixed stars claims our attention and awakens most enrapturing feelings in the mind. Reason is compelled to give reins to the imagination, which tells us there are some stars so distant that their light has been shining since the creation, and yet, amazingly fast as light travels, no ray from them has yet reached us! "The heavens truly declare the glory of God," and in beholding such a display of glory and beauty, we are deeply impressed with its manifestation of the power of the Creator, who sustains, upholds, and preserves such myriads of ponderous revolving bodies, each in its orbit, moving in unerring obedience to His will.

How to lead others.

It is a very old saying, that the father who says to his sons, "Come, boys," will draw them much more surely to the field, than he, who sitting still, says, "Go boys." But the most recent illustration of it is found in the story of a good deacon in Maine, who could not persuade his children to go to the Sabbath school, and asked the minister what he should do. He replied, "Suppose you should stay away from meeting on the Sabbath, and say to your children, Go, what would be the result?" This hint he understood, went to the Sabbath school, and then his children came.

From Zion's Advocate.

Who Killed the Prayer-meeting?

No. 2.

One evening we met in the vestry, with the expectation of having a good meeting. A large number were present, and there was in the church at that time more than ordinary religious interest.

The meeting was opened with that animating hymn,

"Arise, my soul arise; Shake off thy guilty tears."

The congregation united in the singing, and rarely have we heard such soul stirring music. And when they came to the last stanza,

"To God I'm reconciled; His pardoning voice I hear; He owns me for his child; I can no longer fear. With fatal trust I now draw nigh, And 'Father, Abba Father' cry,"

it seemed as if every heart was melted in love, and with confidence drew nigh to God, earnestly desiring his favor and blessing.

A short passage of the sacred scriptures were read in a most impressive manner, and a brief but most fervent prayer was offered for the descent of the Holy Spirit, and the manifestation of his power in quickening the people of God and in convincing sinners of their guilt. It was a prayer appropriate to the occasion, and one in which every pious heart appeared to unite. Then followed singing, remarks, and prayers—all in perfect harmony with the spirit of the meeting. There were life, zeal, devotion, and, in fine, everything which gives to a prayer-meeting interest and profit. But when about half the time usually allotted to such meetings had expired, a certain man arose, and wished to give his testimony in favor of religion, saying that it had done everything for him, and he desired to recommend it to others. He spoke some time, but evidently his feelings were not in tone with the spirit of the meeting. A chill seemed to strike the hearts of all, and when he took his seat the spiritual thermometer was down nearly to freezing point, and the meeting evidently was dead. Some attempts were made to resuscitate it, but all in vain. There was no life left, but only the cold marble form. Mr. — killed that meeting. The proof was clear and decisive.

But you perhaps ask how he did it? Well, I will tell you. It was not by what he said exactly, though there was evidently a want of feeling and sincerity in that. His language was very correct, and of itself not particularly objectionable. But the fact was, his daily life was unchristian. He was shrewd in bargains, taking the advantage of others whenever he could. His word in business affairs could not be relied on. His promise was not worth a straw. No one expected he would do as he agreed to, if there was any possible way of avoiding it. And for him to recommend religion, and tell how much it had done for him, and how much he desired others to embrace it, was a mere farce, a serious method of joking. He had no religion when out in the world among men, and it was useless to pretend that he had it in the prayer-meeting; for everybody knew that he would be just as usual the next day.

But some may inquire "What right had such a man to speak in meeting?" In one sense, no right; unless he had a confession to make for his hypocrisy and his guilt. In another sense, he had a right, for the meeting was open to all who desired to take a part in it. Besides, he was a professor of religion. He had not been excluded from the church though he ought to have been years before. But he was one of those slippery kind of men, which you cannot hold very easily; who, when you think you have got them fast, will make everything appear so plausible and fair, that they slide away from you in spite of your efforts. Nobody had any confidence in him, and yet nobody was ready to say that he was guilty at just this point, or in just this thing. And so he was slipping along having a name to live when he was dead, pretending that religion had done great things for him, when in fact he was neglectful of the plainest rules of common morality.

Then I wrote in my journal, the influence of this class of persons is of incalculable injury to the cause of religion. They not only kill prayer-meetings, but they kill the zeal and counteract the efforts of the faithful, and bring a reproach upon the cause of the Redeemer, profess to be his disciples, when they are not even Moses' disciples. They should learn that the world forms its opinion of them by what they are in their daily lives, as well as by what they say in meeting. And if they would have others regard them as christians, they must live like christians. More hereafter. BUNYAN.

Read of all men.

A minister of God from a foreign land once remarked to a Christian assembly in this city, "To one sinner that reads the Bible, there are twenty who read professing Christians." How important then, that we should shine as moral light-houses, that men may not from our shortcomings and sins, make shipwreck of their immortal souls!

TAXES ON WIVES IN NATAL.—In some official correspondence respecting our colony of Natal, just published by the Colonial-office, a tax of 7s. a wife is alluded to as in operation in that colony, "so that a Caffir having six wives has 42s. per annum to pay to Government." The tax was originally imposed by order of the Lieutenant-Governor "as paramount chief over the natives," or father of his country, but was afterwards fixed by a law of the Legislature.

Showing piety at home.

In Portland, recently, a divorce case between Freeman Waterhouse and wife was determined. From the evidence in the case, it appeared that the wife was an "exceedingly pious" woman, and that she left her husband on account of his profanity. Judge Appleton said she should show her piety in a becoming manner by returning to her husband—that she had no excuse for leaving him, and that, if she continued to desert him after this, nothing could be recovered of him for her support.

Agriculture, &c.

Save the Ashes.

Our readers need not be told that ashes, from the amount of potash and other fertilizing matters which they contain, are very valuable for manuring purposes; mixed with leaves and wood or coal cinders, they make an excellent manure. There are many who are not farmers, yet possess small plots of land for gardening purposes. Such persons can use their ashes or cinders with much advantage, and should not throw them into the street to be wasted and raked over by the chiffons. Farmers also can use their ashes with more profit on farms than by selling them.

The virtue of ashes as a manure has been known and esteemed from a very early date. It was a very common practice among the Jews to burn their stubble, while Cato recommended to the Romans the burning of the twigs and branches of trees, and spreading the ashes on their lands. The German treatise on husbandry, by Heresbachius, printed as early as 1578, tells us that "in Lombardy they like so well the use of ashes, as they esteem it farre above any dung, thinking dung not meete to be used for the unholnessme thereof." Their use at the present day is almost universal in some countries of Europe, whereby crops of grass, roots, and grain have in numerous instances been almost doubled. Lands in Belgium and Flanders, which would otherwise be completely exhausted, are kept in a fertilized condition by the constant addition of ashes, combined with other manures. The German farmers not unfrequently go to the distance of twenty or thirty miles after them. It would be impossible for the English farms to support such a large population were it not for the top-dressing afforded by ashes, derived from the burning of wood, coal, turf, peat, and burnt clay. On account of the native richness of their soil, American husbandmen have not in the past set that estimate on the reinvigorating quantities of various manures which they are now coming to from necessity, from the exhaustion of the lands, particularly in the New-England States.

The virtue of bones as a manure arises partly from the large amount of the phosphate of lime which they contain, varying in amount from 37 per cent, in the bones of the ox to 35 per cent, in those of the hare. A careful analysis of the ashes of various kinds of trees show that they possess a large amount of this phosphate of lime; those from the young oak containing as much as 25 per cent. They also contain a considerable portion of the carbonate of lime, which is valuable as food for vegetable life. But their chief value is in the alkaline matter which, acting upon the vegetable matter of the soil, causes it to decay more rapidly, and yield its ammonia for the use of the growing plants. Ashes that are leached, of course lose a portion of their fertilizing properties, but should by no means be thrown away. According to Baron Liebig, one hundred beech trees will furnish as much phosphate of lime as five hundred and seven pounds of the richest manure. Flint, in his recently revised work on grasses, states that land producing one ton to the acre has been so improved by the use of leached ashes as to yield three tons to the acre. Coal ashes, of which so many tons are annually wasted in this and other cities, being composed of a greater extent of earthy materials and less phosphate of lime, are not so beneficial, yet they are far from being valueless. As a top-dressing for many kinds of grasses, Lord Albermarle esteemed them superior to all other fertilizers. For stiff clay land they are excellent, the cinders making the soil more porous, more open to the gases of the atmosphere, and easier of cultivation. On this account they are especially desirable for potato and turnip fields, since by making the soil light and dry they favor the healthfulness of the tubers. It is also said that in the case of early sown peas, when they are covered on the surface of the ground with coal ashes a quarter or half an inch in thickness, they will be three or four days earlier than those to which the ashes have not been applied.—Methodist.

Experiment with Salt.

E. Roberts communicates to the Philadelphia Farmer and Gardener the results of an experiment tried a year ago. When a field of an acre of turnips were putting out the third leaf something like one bushel of salt was applied to about one fourth of the field. A very severe drought succeeded, parching up everything. The turnips did not appear to advance a bit in their growth, except on the portion to which the salt had been applied. Here they did not show the drooping condition so manifest in every other portion of the field. When the leaves of the unsalted portion were dry in the morning, the salted part appeared moist, as though they had imbibed moisture from the atmosphere. The result was, a much better yield of turnips on the eighth of an acre than on the other portion. The fly did not attack this portion at all, though some of the other parts of the other field suffered severely.—N. E. Farmer.