

Doubt's Department.

BIBLE LESSONS.

SUNDAY, JANUARY 3RD, 1864.

Read—ACTS XXIII. 1-11: Paul's defence before the Jewish Council. 1 SAMUEL I. 1-17: The prayer and vow of Hannah.

Recite—PSALM XXXIV. 13-14.

SUNDAY, JANUARY 10TH, 1864.

Read—ACTS XXIII. 12-35: Paul's vision. 1 SAMUEL I. 18-28: The birth and dedication of Samuel.

Recite—PSALM XXXIV. 4, 10, 11.

"SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES."

Write down what you suppose to be the answer to the following question.

51. A young woman in Old Testament history heard her name called by a stranger and her occupation mentioned. What was her name and who was the stranger?

Answer to question given last week—

50. In Samson's. See Judges xiv. 12-19.

Home.

Two birds within one nest;
Two hearts within one breast;
Two souls within one fair
Firm league of love and prayer,
Together bound for aye, together blest.

An ear that waits to catch
A hand upon the latch;
A step that hastens its sweet rest to win;
A world of care without,
A world of strife shut out,
A world of love shut in.

To-day and To-morrow.

To-day, a lipping child, with hair sun-golden,
And blue of Summer morning in his eyes,
And cheeks aglow with kisses of new loving,
Sees old things new, with ignorant surprise;
To-morrow, and he knows the songs they sing
in Paradise.

To-day, a youth, in pride of early manhood,
With light of far-off hope upon his brow,
With eager expectation of the coming,
And wild impatience of the loitering now;
To-morrow, he hath touched the throne at
which all angels bow.

To-day, she stands beside the bridal altar;
All joy and promise round about her shine;
All truth is in the heart of him she loveth,
And her pure faith makes bright the flower-
wreathed shrine;
To-morrow, hark! a fairer bridegroom, maiden,
must be thine.

To-day, an old man lingers in his sadness;
Great griefs have dug deep furrows in his
cheeks;
A cold grave with the long-ago departed,
In stammering words, is all the boon he seeks;
To-morrow, with an altering lips the joy of
heaven he speaks.
—Christian Inquirer.

Catching the Squirrel.

Johnny Ray had set a trap in the woodlands for squirrels.

The "woodland" was a large plot, of many acres of land, covered with beautiful trees, most of which were walnut. The squirrels loved that place. It was home for a great many families of them. Johnny thought he would like one of the sprightly little things for his own; and as it was in the spring, when there were no nuts on the trees, and when it might be supposed that the squirrels had eaten up all, or nearly all their winter's store of provisions, he thought one of them might be tempted by a nice yellow ear of corn, to go into his box-trap. He set it in the woodland one fine afternoon, and having dropped a few grains of corn about it for "decoys," as he called them, left it there. A large rock stood not far from the place, and behind it he could creep up quietly, now and then, to see if his trap was sprung.

Two days passed, but no squirrel was caught. On the third day, Johnny asked his sister Maud to go with him to look at his trap. They approached it very carefully, keeping behind the rock, and then Johnny, taking off his cap, peeped cautiously through a crevice. An exclamation of joy almost escaped them, but he checked it, and with a motion of his hand hushed his sister, and beckoned her to come and look. A bushy-tailed little fellow was nibbling the scattered grains near the mouth of the trap. They watched him almost breathlessly. He finished eating the decoys, and, lifting up his head, looked around. They could see his bright eyes. He gave a hop or two toward the trap, and again looked about him. Then he looked in, then around again, seemingly in doubt whether it was safe to venture further. But at last he walked into the trap, nibbled at the ear of corn, the cover fell, and he was a prisoner!

Now, before I tell you what became of him afterwards, I wish to say that I have seen more than one boy and girl who seemed to me very much like that squirrel. When I see a child beginning to be a little disobedient to parents, because he thinks it pleasanter to have his own way than to obey them; when I hear a boy using words which, though not the worst, perhaps, that might be spoken, but such as he would feel unwilling his parents should hear; when I learn that a girl does or says things,

when out of sight of her mother, which would grieve that mother's heart, then I think—that girl, that boy, is picking up the decoys which have been dropped by a being very different from little Johnny Ray, for he did not wish to harp the squirrel; they are picking up the shining grains, which the great trap-setter, who is the evil one, has made to look very inviting to the young and thoughtless, and strewn about the entrance to a place where he hopes to make those dear children his prisoners for ever.

The little squirrel could hardly be blamed, for he could not think, as you can, and the corn was sweet to his taste. So the beginnings of sin may be sweet to you, but you know to what they lead.

Johnny took up the trap to carry it home. He could hear the imprisoned squirrel scratching and struggling in his fright at being shut up in that strange dark place, and before he reached home he began to feel some misgivings about keeping the poor little fellow there. "I almost wish he was back in the woodland," said Johnny to his sister Maud.

"Well, so do I; I'm sorry that he should be there in that box, when he has been so happy all day long."

"I mean to let him go!" said Johnny.

"Oh, that will be nice!" cried Maud. "But do you think he could find the way from here?"

"I'm afraid not; but we can go back to the woodland gate." And back again they went. Johnny set the trap down on the grass; then he lifted the cover a little way and looked in. The squirrel put his nose to the opening, and thrust out one of his pretty slender paws, as if begging to be let out. Johnny opened the trap wide. The squirrel sprang out, and was off in a twinkling, never stopping to look back till he was safely up in a walnut tree, and then he perched on one of the branches, giving his tail a whisk, as if he would say, "I will never be caught so again."

But the great trap-setter, of whom I have told you, is not so willing to let precious souls go out of his snare, when he has once caught them. Look out, carefully, and prayerfully, for his decoys. He tries to make little sins appear quite harmless. He makes them very attractive, and thus he tempts one to go nearer and nearer destruction. Our Lord has taught us to pray, "Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil." And the voice of Wisdom to every child is, "My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not."

A Mother's Prayers.

A SKETCH BY MARAINNE FARNINGHAM.

Chapter 1.—The First special Prayer.

Not really the first prayer she ever offered on her children's behalf—for her first-born was now six years old—and a prayerless mother, a woman who for six years never asked a blessing from the Highest for the children of her love, must be such a woman as Mrs. Smith certainly was not. She was a Christian woman, and, morning, noon and night, she carried her little ones to Jesus; but the special prayers and the answers, which we have to record, are those which, perhaps, most mothers know something about; prayers wrung out of an agonizing heart by some great, some unutterable sorrow; a prayer which takes hold of the Infinite, and says, in wild perseverance, *I will not let thee go except thou bless me.* Perhaps many a mother now reading these lines can remember times like this, and has erected Ebenezer stones over those spots of her memory, for that surely, in answer to her importunate supplication, the Lord appeared to help.

Mrs. Smith had erected her stones—some of them rather blotched and blurred by years—and plain, and prominent—so prominent she never can forget them. It is not a new idea—but it may as well be mentioned—that we know not what great events hang upon little things. In like manner we know not, often for what we ask; because the answer, in itself longed for, may be the precursor of so many events following each other through a long course of years which we never expected to see. And some of us have to be taught by painful experience one lesson, that it is safer to couple all our prayers with the proviso, *"Thy will be done."*

One bright Sabbath in September, Mrs. Smith passed an unusually happy afternoon with her little ones. The Bible pictures were gazed at more eagerly than ever, and her judicious, interesting words of explanation listened to with the greatest attention. They clung to her, looking into her face with their bright eyes, while the mother's heart yearned towards them as perhaps it had never done before. With Alfred, whose sixth birthday had been celebrated the day before, she was especially pleased. His intelligent remarks, his questions, his thoughtful face, where now and then the boyish sparkle of his dark eyes was quenched by a tear, all touched the woman's heart beating so thankfully beside them, as only a mother, perhaps, could describe. The last picture was one best of all calculated to move the little ones—a picture we all love to look upon; only a picture, after all, and very far removed from the reality, could we but have gazed upon that—Jesus laying his hands upon the children, and blessing them. Then they all knelt beside her—Alfred leaning his curly head on his mother's clasped hands, while she prayed that Jesus would also bless her little ones.

Afterward, in the years which followed, she remembered that sunny afternoon, with every one of its incidents.

Immediately afterward came the pleasant tea-time—serious, so that the children should not forget it was Sunday, but full of love, full of happiness, so that they might

"Love that blessed day,
The best of all the seven."

Then the children were left in charge of the servant, while the parents went to sit around the Lord's table.

Many felt it good to be there; it was a time of refreshing to many. But, perhaps, no heart was so entirely at peace that evening as that of Mrs. Smith. Her lines had fallen in pleasant places, her life was full of joy; and she brought a thank-offering into the Lord's house that night—a grateful, contented spirit, that was happy to leave its all in the hands that had never failed her hitherto. It was almost like heaven itself—that perfect trust—that entire reliance, sincere and very strong. She felt thankful for it then, and ever after; but she was only a weak woman after all, only human, never dreaming how soon her trust was to be put to the test.

The calm moonlight evening tempted her and her husband to take a walk after service; rather an unusual circumstance, but they wanted to mingle with nature a little before seeking their home. Mr. Smith, a shrewd intelligent man of business, had no thoughts for the coming week that evening; he was softened and sympathetic more than usual, and he listened, pleased and thankful, while his wife described the pleasant afternoon she had spent with their children.

It was getting late when they reached home and they were, therefore, the more astonished when they reached home to see their door open and several persons standing there evidently in earnest conversation. These persons all seemed to shrink away at their approach—they were apparently undesirous of speaking to them—for they turned their faces and passed out.

"Is anything the matter?" asked Mr. Smith, not liking the appearance of things; and his wife stepped forward anxiously, for she had caught sight of the tearful face of Ann, the servant who had been left in charge of the children. No one replied for some seconds, but, upon Mr. Smith repeating his question somewhat sharply, a man stepped forward.

"No Mr. Smith, I don't think there is anything very serious the matter; but Alfred—ahem—we can't find Alfred. Doubtless he is not far away; but your servant has missed him, and was inquiring of us, if we had happened to meet him anywhere."

"O, Ann!" It was a cry that went piercingly through every one's heart. It broke from the lips of Mrs. Smith, blanched and trembling in a moment.

"We will not be frightened, dear," said the firm voice of her husband, "and we will leave Ann's scolding, with an attempt at a smile, 'until we have found him. Now, Ann, tell me all about it—hide nothing."

"After you were gone, sir, I took the children into the garden, and they walked about until it was near dusk. I did not notice that Alfred was gone until I called them in—then we could not find him anywhere."

"What time was that?"

"About seven, sir."

"Well?"

"I thought he must have gone into the meadow behind the garden, but I could not see him there; and ever since I have been looking for him as well as I could, while being afraid to leave the house. Now you are come home, sir, pray let me go and look for him."

"We will all do that," he said quietly, "except you, darling; we had better leave you at home."

"No, no, George, I could not stay; I must look for him too."

The persons at the door volunteered their assistance.

"We shall find him somewhere near," he said; "he would not go far from home, so we will not alarm our neighbours, or make a fuss about it in any way; but as you know of it I shall be glad of your help."

They were organized, each taking a district for himself, Mr. Smith reserving the one in which he felt almost sure his boy must be.

Before he started, he drew his wife into the room, to say one word.

"Alice, the Master has been with us at the table; do you feel that he will forsake us now?"

"No, no; but let us make haste, George."

"You were so sure of his love an hour ago, you felt that he loved you. Has he changed, think you, in a little hour?"

"No, George, no."

"Then let us trust him, my darling. He cannot do wrong. All will be well."

They went into the meadows behind the house and beyond that into the hop-garden: where they sometimes walked, calling his name, peering into every corner, hastening to every dark object, which might be their child—Mr. Smith speaking encouragingly to his wife.

"I am glad it happens to be moonlight; if it had been dark there would be less chance of our finding him."

"But the hop-garden is very dark."

"Yes, it would be dark by seven, so I think he would scarcely have ventured there. The overhanging branches make it dull, even in the day-time."

Presently the mother's calmness grew less and less; she separated from her husband, going anxiously in every likely direction, frequently fancying she saw him, always doomed to disappointment.

So they walked, and searched, and prayed until presently there came booming through the silence the loud sounds of the church clock striking ten.

Then she cried aloud. But the steady voice beside her said, "Alice, you must not give way; we shall surely find him."

Yet a longer search, and then they returned home, hoping for the best, yet trembling with fear of the worst.

"Had he come?"

"No."

"Had no one found him?"

"No."

But some one had heard of him.

"The porter at the railway-station declares that he saw him," says he went by the seven o'clock train to Holton, with a lady and gentleman."

"That was strange news. They could not understand it. 'He knows no one at Holton,' said the mother; 'Did the porter know the gentleman he was with?'"

"I think he said he did not, but he seems sure it was your boy."

Away to the railway-station, where the porter described the persons, especially Alfred—of whose identity they felt certain, from his description.

"I will go to Holton at once," said the father. "I cannot understand it; but doubtless it will be all right at last."

A train would start in a few minutes, and they prepared to go, Mrs. Smith being determined to accompany her husband.

What a change from the stillness of the sanctuary, where Jesus was, to the bustle of the railway-station, the noise of the engine!

Arrived at Holton, their course was full of difficulty; they could not go and arouse the town, by this time nearly asleep in quiet security; they could not go and search every house. What was to be done?

They made inquiries at the station, but could learn nothing, the ticket-collector positively declaring that no such persons came to Holton by the train in question. He was certain that only two elderly persons got out. Not content with that, they went to the hotels, to the police-station, everywhere they could think of, but could hear no tidings of the lost one.

There was nothing to be done but to return by the midnight train, with sinking hearts and hollow eyes, and scarcely a ray of hope left to them.

What passed in that mother's heart during that dreary midnight ride no one can describe! Only she herself, and the God who sees us at all times, ever knew. Her husband guessed, and feared to break the silence.

So sure had they been that the child would be found at Holton that they had given up search for a time. The sad faces that looked from the carriage-window told its own tale. And they walked the fields and lanes, through the night, until the gray morning came, and still they searched in vain.

Then the mother's agony broke through all the barriers.

"O God," she cried, "I must have my child. I cannot live without him, whatever else thou deniest give me back my child?"

Half-an-hour afterwards they found him in a pit near the hop-garden, very faint, and cold, and ill, but living.

He told them afterwards he wanted to show Fred Jones the picture of Jesus blessing the little children, and stole out for fear Ann should object. Fred Jones lived at the next village. He did not see the hole, and could not remember how he came in it.

But there were shouts of rejoicing that day, fervid thanksgiving too. For God had answered Mrs. Smith's special prayer.

Agriculture, &c.

HOW TO MAKE A FOOT-MUFF.—Those who take long rides in winter, are often obliged to resort to artificial means to keep their feet warm—hence hot bricks, heated blocks of wood, and jugs filled with hot water are variously used. The foot-muff is a great improvement on all these. It may be made in different ways, one of the cheapest and most simple of which is as follows: Let the tinman make a square box, about one foot square and two inches thick, so as to hold water. A screw, turned by a button, is inserted into one of the narrow sides—the screw-hole should be large enough to admit a funnel. The box should be perfectly water-tight, the screw-hole being the only place for the admission and egress of the water. If a suitable screw cannot be procured, solder in a short tin tube about an inch long to receive a cork, which is to be tightly pressed in. This box, when filled with hot water, which may be done in a few seconds, will retain heat a long time; but its efficiency may be greatly increased by encasing it with a muff. The box itself may be first covered with a piece of coarse carpeting, and then a sheepskin, tanned with the wool on, sewed on the upper large flat side of the box, somewhat in the form of a broad shoe, with the wool towards, and large enough to receive both feet. This essentially completes the foot-muff. The more expensive ones are covered with furs, instead of sheepskin; and if the skin extends around the whole box the heat of the water will be retained a longer time. A well made muff of this kind, filled with hot water and placed in the bottom of a sleigh, will continue warm for half a day.—Country Gentleman.

DEPTH TO WHICH ROOTS PENETRATE.—A correspondent of the *N. E. Farmer* sends to that paper a lot of roots of grass which were taken from three, four, and five feet below the surface, where they formed a complete mesh work, hanging in large masses. The soil, for eighteen inches from the surface, was a strong loam; below that, mostly mineral matter, made up of a loose hard pan. The location was somewhat elevated. The entire section, of a hundred feet or more in extent, presented the same phenomenon of the roots.

CURE FOR CHAPPED HANDS.—The following is said to be a cure for chapped hands: Dissolve three cents worth of pure clarified bees-wax in three cents worth of pure sweet oil, by heating over a slow fire. Apply at night, before retiring.