

YOUTH'S DEPARTMENT.

BIBLE LESSONS.

Sunday, December 11th, 1864.

Read—LUKE xi. 27-36: The wickedness of the people. I SAMUEL xxvi.: Saul pursueth after David.

Recite—PSALM ciii. 10-12.

Sunday, December 18th, 1864.

Read—LUKE xi. 37-44: Christ rebuketh the Scribes and Pharisees. I SAMUEL xxvii.: David's exploits.

Recite—PROVERBS iii. 13-17.

The Cross on the Old Church Tower.

Up the dark stairs that led to his poor home strode a gloomy-faced young man, with despair in his heart and despairing words on his lips.

"I will struggle and suffer no longer; my last hope has failed, and life become a burden, I will rid myself of at once."

As he muttered wildly to himself, he flung wide the door and was about to enter, but paused upon the threshold, for a glance told him that he had unconsciously passed his own apartment and come up higher, till he found himself in a room poorer but more cheerful than his own.

Sunshine streamed in through the one small window, where a caged bird was blithely singing, and a few flowers blossomed in the light. But blither than the bird's song, sweeter than the flowers, were the little voice and wan face of a child, who lay upon a bed placed where the warmest sunbeams fell.

The face turned smiling on the pillow, and the voice said pleasantly—"Come in, sir. Bess will soon be back, if you will wait."

"I want nothing of Bess. Who is she, and who are you?" asked the intruder, pausing as he was about to turn away.

"She is my sister, sir, and I'm poor Jamie, as they call me. But, indeed, I am not to be pitied, for I am a happy child, though it may not seem so."

"Why do you lie there? are you sick?" "No, I am not sick, though I shall never leave my bed again. See, this is why," and, folding back the covering, the child showed his little withered limbs.

"How long have you lain here, my poor boy?" asked the stranger, touched and interested in spite of himself.

"Three years, sir." "And yet you are happy! What, in reason's name, have you to render you contented, child?" "Come, sit beside me, and I'll tell you, sir; that is, if you please: I should love to talk with you, for it is lonely here when Bess is gone."

Something in the child's winning voice, and the influence of the cheerful room, calmed the young man's troubled spirit and seemed to lighten his despair. He sat down at the bedside, looking gloomily upon the child, who lay, smiling placidly, as with skilful hands he carved small figures from the bits of wood scattered around him on the coverlet.

"What have you to make you happy, Jamie? Tell me your secret, for I need the knowledge very much," said his new friend, earnestly.

"First of all, I have dear Bess," and the child's voice lingered upon the name; "she is so good, so very good to me; no one can tell how much we love each other. All day she sits beside my bed, singing to ease my pain, or reading while I work; she gives me flowers and birds, and all the sunshine that comes in to us, and sits there in the shadow that I may be warm and glad. She waits on me all day; but when I wake at night, I always see her sewing busily, and know it is for me—my good, kind Bess!"

"Then I have my work, sir, to amuse me; and it helps a little too, for kind children always buy my toys, when Bess tells them of the little boy who carved them lying here at home while they play out among the grass and flowers where he can never be."

"What else, Jamie?" and the listener's face grew softer as the cheerful voice went on.

"I have my bird, sir, and my roses; I have books; and best of all, I have the cross on the old church tower. I can see it from my pillow, and it shines there all day long, so bright and beautiful, while the white doves coo upon the roof below. I love it dearly."

The young man looked out through the narrow window, and saw, rising high above the house-tops, like a finger pointing heavenward, the old gray tower and the gleaming cross. The city's din was far below, and through the summer air the faint coo of the doves and the flutter of their wings came down like peaceful country sounds.

"Why do you love it, Jamie?" he asked looking at the thoughtful face that lit up eagerly as the boy replied—"Because it does me so much good, sir. Bess told me long ago about the blessed Jesus who bore so much for us, and I longed to be as like him as a little child could grow. So when my pain was very sharp, I looked up there, and, thinking of the things he suffered, tried so hard to bear it that I often could; but sometimes when it was too bad, instead of fretting Bess, I'd cry softly, looking up there all the time, and asking Him to help me to be a patient child. I think he did; and now it seems so like a friend to me, I like it better every day. I watch the sun climb up along the roof in the morning, creeping up higher and higher till it shines upon the cross and turns it into gold. Then through the day I watch the sunshine fade

away, till all the red goes from the sky, and for a little while I cannot see it through the dark. But the moon comes, and I love it better then; for, lying awake through the long nights, I see the cross so high and bright with stars all shining round it, and I feel still and happy in my heart as when Bess sings to me in the twilight."

"But when there is no moon, or clouds hide it from you, what then, Jamie?" asked the man, wondering if there was no cloud to darken the cheerful child's content.

"I wait till it is clear again, and feel that it is there, although I cannot see it. I hope it never will be taken down, for the light upon the cross seems like that I see in dear Bess's eyes when she holds me in her arms and calls me her 'patient Jamie.' She never knows I try to bear my troubles for her sake, as she bears hunger and cold for mine. So you see, sir, how many things I have to make me a happy child."

"I would gladly lie down on your pillow to be half as light of heart as you are, little Jamie, for I have lost my faith in everything, and with it all my happiness;" and the heavy shadow which had lifted for a while fell back darker than before upon the anxious face beside the bed.

"If I were well and strong like you, sir, I think I should be so thankful nothing could trouble me;" and with a sigh the boy glanced at the vigorous frame and energetic countenance of his new friend, wondering at the despondent look he wore.

"If you were poor, so poor you had no means wherewith to get a crust of bread, nor a shelter for the night; if you were worn out with disappointment, and haunted by ambitious hopes never to be realized, what would you do, Jamie?" suddenly asked the young man, prompted by the desire that every human heart has felt for sympathy and counsel, even from the little creature before him, ignorant and inexperienced as he was.

But the child, wiser in his innocence than many an older counsellor, pointed upward, saying with a look of perfect trust—"I should look up to the cross upon the tower, and think of what Bess told me about God, who feeds the birds and clothes the flowers; and I should wait patiently, feeling sure he would remember me."

With an altered feeling in his heart, and a brave smile on his lips, the young man went away, leaving the child with another happy memory, to watch the cross upon the old church tower.

"I heard singing to-night."

"I'll tell you what, I heard singin' to-night that made me wish I was in heaven, or good enough to get there," said an old backwoodsman to his wife, as, entering their log hut, he sat down to his evening meal.

"Where did you hear it?" she asked.

"At our neighbors', up yonder. They must feel something I don't know about, or they couldn't sing so."

"When they first came here," said the wife, "I thought they were proud and stiff; but they are real good neighbors; and I heard they were good church folks too."

"Well," said he, "I mean to go to church to-morrow and see if I can't hear some singin' like that."

The singer knew that her neighbors were ignorant, rough, and unbelieving, nearing the decline of life, and unwilling to be approached on the subject of religion. The old wife, especially, was so nearly a heathen that she would never enter a church, nor allow the visit of a minister, nor listen to the reading of God's Word, or even to the singing of a hymn.

The man was a poor, but honest day-laborer, who had ruined his worldly affairs by indulgence in strong drink, but had been lifted out of the pit, and been sober for many years. Still he was a rough, swearing man, and his heart unsoftened by any religious influence.

One glorious summer evening, as the sun was going down, the lady seated herself at the door, and involuntarily tuned her voice to Mrs. Hemans' sweet vesper song:

"Come to the sunset tree," See felt the spirit of the heavenly words, and sang with fervor. When near the close of the hymn, she cast her eyes to the field where her neighbor was at work, and saw that he was listening intently. Instantly the thought flashed into her mind, "O, if I could raise that poor man to think of heaven." She closed her refrain, and then commenced,

"On Jordan's stormy banks I stand," singing it "with the spirit and the understanding also." The firmament above her foreshadowed the glories of that state described by the hymn, and the beauty of the green earth reminded her of the pastures above, where the redeemed are walking by the river of life. And as she sang the old man listened, almost spell-bound. The singer did not wish to call admiration of her full-toned voice; she wished to glorify God by leading one of His creatures to think of Him. "I will sing God's praises whenever he can hear me, and perhaps he may be led to praise the Lord himself," was her mental resolve.

The next Sabbath the old man was at church. This cheered the lady, and she said, "I will sing whenever he comes." Ere another week was closed he was at work again. This time she sang—

"Just as I am, without one plea, But that Thy blood was shed for me," Slowly, distinctly she sang, that he might take in the full meaning of the words, and feeling their sweet pathos in her inmost soul, she poured out all the hymn. The listener shook

his head, and rubbed his hand quickly over his eyes.

The next Sabbath evening he was among the praying people of God, earnestly inquiring for the way of salvation. The singer had sowed seed, and earnestly asked the Lord to make him one of His own children. It may be that other influences led him to the house of God; and to think of his soul, but certainly God had blessed the voice of music as one of His instruments.

Seeking further to do good, the lady encouraged his poor, ignorant wife in many friendly ways, and one day invited her into the parlor to hear her piano. She had never seen or heard such an instrument, and was wonder-struck. The lady called her daughters to her side, and all joined in singing—

"All hail the power of Jesus' name," in old Coronation.

"Do you like that?" said the lady.

"O, it's nice. I b'leve I heard that tune somewhere when I was a gal, but I've forgot."

"Probably you heard it at church. It is often sung there. We cannot sing the praises of Jesus too often, for He came to save us poor sinners." Then they all sang,

"Come, humble sinner, in whose breast," etc., The woman rose, and said she must go, and was invited to "come again."

"O' I'll come often, if I can hear you sing."

"Mother, you take a strange way to win souls: do you think you will succeed?"

"Why not, my daughter? Has not God commanded that whatsoever we do should be done to His glory? And if He has given us voices to sing, should we not use them in His service? There are many ears who will listen to a hymn for the sake of the tune, who will not hear a word from the Bible. Our voices and our musical instruments should all be employed in winning lost souls."—American Messenger.

A Lie of honor—the story of a Lawyer.

On entering college, I promised my mother, whom I loved as I have never loved another mortal, that while there I would not taste of intoxicating liquor, nor play at cards, or other games of hazard, nor borrow money. And I never did, and never have since. I have lived well nigh sixty years, yet have never learned to tell a king from a knave among cards, nor Hock from Burgundy among wines, nor have I ever asked for the loan of a single dollar. Thanks to my mother! loving, careful, anxious for me, but not over-careful nor over-anxious. How could she be, when I was so weak, and ignorant of my weakness, feeling myself strong because my strength was untried, and such a life as human life is such temptations as beset the young, before me.

She did not ask me to promise not to swear. She would not wrong me by the thought that I could swear, and she was right. I could not. How can any one so insult the Holy, the All-Excellent, our Father and best friend? Nor did she ask me not to lie. She thought I could not lie. Had she thought otherwise, my promise would have been of little value to her. And I also thought I could not. I despised lying as a weakness, cowardice, meanness, the concentration of baseness. I felt strong enough, manly enough, to accomplish my end without it. I had no fear of facing my own acts. Why should I shrink before my fellows for anything I had done? Lie to them to conceal myself or my acts? Nay, I would not have faults to be concealed. My own character, my own life was more to me than the esteem of others. I would do nothing fit to have hidden, or which I might wish to hide. I thought I could not lie, and I could not for myself.

During my second college year, there was a great deal of card playing among the students. The Faculty tried to prevent it, but found it difficult. Though I never played, my chum did, and sometimes others played with him in our room when I was present. I not unfrequently saw the students at cards. One of the professors questioned me upon the subject. "Have you ever seen any card playing among the students?" "No, sir," I answered firmly, determined not to expose my fellows. "A lie of honor!" I said to myself. What coupling of contradictions! As well talk of "honest theft!" "innocent sin!"

"You are ignorant of any card-playing in the college building, Brown?"

"Yes, sir."

"We can believe you, Brown."

"I was ready to sink. Nothing else could have smitten, stung me, but that. Such confidence, and I so unworthy of it. Still I held back the truth."

But I left the professor's room another person than I entered it, guilty, humbled, wretched. That one false word had spoiled everything for me. All my past manliness was shadowed by it. My ease of mind had left me, my self-respect was gone. I felt uncertain—unsafe. I stood upon a lie, trembling, tottering. How soon might I not fall. I was right in feeling unsafe. It is always unsafe to lie. My feet were sliding beneath me. One of the students had lost a quarter's allowance in play, and applied to his father for a fresh remittance, stating his loss. His father had made complaint to the college Faculty, and there was an investigation of the facts. The money had been staked and lost in my room. I was present.

"Was Brown there?" asked the professor.

"He was."

The professor's eyes rested on me. Where was my honor then? my manliness? and where the trust reposed in me? Did any say, "we can believe you, Brown," after that? Did any excuse my lie? any talk of my honor then? Not one. They said, "We didn't think it of

you, Brown?" "I didn't suppose Brown would lie for his right hand."

It was enough to kill me. But there was no help. I had to bear my sin and shame as best I might, and try to outlive it. No one trusted me as before. No one could, for who knew whether my integrity might not again fail? I could not trust myself until I had obtained strength as well as pardon from God, nor even then, until I had many times been tried and tempted, and found His strength sufficient for me.

The Eighth Commandment.

The eighth commandment is,—"Thou shalt not steal." This commandment is violated, not only when we take and carry away feloniously the personal effects of another; but by idleness, for thereby the public good is deprived of our services;—by extravagance, for thereby we waste what others need; by selling intoxicating drinks, for thereby we take another's money without giving him any fair equivalent, but positively damaging him in return for it; by slavery, for thereby do we rob a man of himself, and make him a mere chattel,—a thing; by fraudulent bankruptcy, for thereby do we defraud another of his rights, sequester his property and live upon it; by borrowing, with no intention of returning, for the lender never lent on these terms, and loses through our dishonesty; by withholding payment of a just debt longer than it is due, a creditor is often much injured by not receiving payment at the time he is expecting it, this is the case too with small debts; and by robbing God, which is done by withholding from Him His due, in refusing to support the gospel, and to contribute of our substance in a degree answering to our income, for the furtherance of the interests of his religion. In these—among many other ways, is the eighth commandment broken.

A Tiger frightened by a Mouse.

A traveller gives the following anecdote of a tiger kept at the British Residency at Calcutta: "But what annoyed him far more than our poking him with a stick, or tantalizing him with shins of beef or legs of mutton, was introducing a mouse into his cage. No fine lady ever exhibited more terror at the sight of a spider, than this magnificent royal tiger betrayed on seeing a mouse. Our mischievous plan was to tie the little animal by a string to the end of a long pole, and thrust it close to the tiger's nose. The moment he saw it, he leaped to the opposite side, and when the mouse was made to run near him, he jammed himself into a corner, and stood trembling and roaring in such an ecstasy of fear, that we were always obliged to desist, in pity to the poor brute. Sometimes we insisted on his passing over this spot where the unconscious little mouse ran backwards and forwards. For a long time, however, we could not get him to move; till at length, I believe by the help of a squid, we obliged him to start; but instead of pacing leisurely across in his den, or of making a detour to avoid the object of his alarm, he generally took a kind of flying leap, so high as nearly to bring his back in contact with the roof of his cage."

Geological Wonder.

About 30 years ago, somebody made the discovery that the ice fields of Siberia contained immense numbers of fossils of elephants and mastodons. Where they came from, or how they got there, is a problem which perhaps may never be solved; their existence, however, was no chimerica, and as ivory is one of the most valuable commodities of trade in all nations, some utilitarian Englishman conceived the idea of turning these vestiges of a former epoch to a profitable account. Accordingly, about the year 1835, Thompson, Penner & Co., a rich London firm, fitted out an expedition to seek for ivory in the Siberian ice. Novel and incredible as it seemed, the expedition was crowned with complete success. The ship returned to England richly laden with the choicest ivory; and even to the present time, although the world knows but little about it, the ivory market is mainly supplied from the ice-fields of Siberia.

ADULT BAPTISM IN THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH.—The following advertisement appears in the columns of a contemporary:—"The incumbent of a parish in which the population consists chiefly of the sect of Baptists, wishes to construct a small baptistry for the baptism of adults by immersion. About 40, in addition to sums in hand would enable him to effect this. The congregation being all of the operative class, the aims of wealthier Churchmen are respectfully solicited.—Address, Rev. W. S. Hoole, Briercliffe, Parsonage, Burnley, Lancashire." With a view to encouraging the Rev. W. S. Hoole in the good way, we give insertion to his advertisement gratis. We hope that "wealthier Churchmen" will respond to this appeal. Freeman.

A giant boy, Joseph Lake, of Chichester, recently died. His chest was 32 inches across and 19 inches deep. It took 116 feet of timber to make his coffin, and the body had to be carried outside of the house to put it in the coffin. The body weighed 385 pounds.

In Paris shops of tobacconists are agencies for the loan of umbrellas. Any one caught in a shower may procure one by depositing its value as security, returning it the next day to any tobacconist's shop, an account being kept between them. Six sous is the price of a day's hire.