

Youths' Department.

BIBLE LESSONS.

Sunday, February 7th, 1864.

Read—ACTS XXV. 1-12; Paul's defence before Festus. 1 SAMUEL III. 1-21: The Lord's call to Samuel. Recite—LUKE IV. 18, 19.

Sunday, February 14th, 1864.

Read—ACTS XXV. 13-27: Paul brought before Agrippa. 1 SAMUEL IV. 1-11: The ark brought into the camp of Israel. Recite—ISAIAH III. 5, 6.

Amusement for the thoughtful.

Answer to Scripture Puzzle No. 45.

'RICH IN FAITH.'—James ii. 9.

- R-abshekah,—2 Kings xviii. 30, 31.
- I-bzan,—Judges xii. 8, 9.
- C-a-in,—Gen. iv. 10.
- H-annah,—1 Sam. i. 26, 27, 28.
- I-saac,—Gen. xxvii. 33.
- N-abal,—1 Sam. xxv. 9, 10, 11.
- F-elix,—Acts xxiv. 25.
- A-dam,—Gen. iii. 8.
- I-shboseth,—2 Sam. iv. 5.
- T-innath-serah,—Josh. xxiv. 30.
- H-abakkuk,—Hab. iii. 17, 18, 19.

Grammatical Puzzle No. 46.

We give our youthful readers a little change in the puzzle for this week, for the sake of variety, and yet this is one in which their ingenuity and skill in the use of points and capitals may be well exercised. Some of the children of a larger growth, may find in it a few minutes pleasant employment.

This puzzle is taken, with a trifling alteration, from a Maine paper, and is intended to show the opposite sense conveyed by the same words when pointed differently. In one case it would describe an exceeding wicked man, whereas, by a slight change in the pointing, it makes the person a pattern of all that is excellent. The answer should be in two columns placed in juxtaposition. The following is the puzzle:

"He has had much experience in vice and wickedness he is never found opposing the works of iniquity he takes delight in the downfall of the neighborhood he never rejoices in the prosperity of his fellow creatures he is always ready to assist in destroying the peace of society he takes no pleasure in serving the Lord he is uncommonly diligent in sowing discord among his friends and acquaintances he takes no pride in laboring to promote the cause of Christianity he has not been negligent in endeavouring to stigmatise all public teachers he makes no exertion to subdue his evil passions he strives hard to build up Satan's kingdom he lends no aid to support the gospel among the heathen he contributes largely to the evil adversary he pays no attention to good advice he gives great heed to the devil he will never go to Heaven he must go where he will receive the just recompense of reward."

AMEN.—Dr. Gulick, of the Micronesian Mission, says that, when translating selections from the Gospel, the translator was long in doubt what native word to use to signify "Amen." After careful inquiry among the natives, he hit upon what he supposed most nearly gave its idea. What was his surprise to find, awhile later, that his synonym for the devout word which ends the Christian's prayers had the equivocal sense of *dry up!*—*Boston Recorder.*

ANECDOTES OF DR. JOHNSTON.—Boswell complained to Johnston that the noise of the company the day before had made his head ache. "No, sir, it was not the noise that made your head ache; it was the sense we put in it," said Johnston. "Has sense that effect upon the head?" inquired Boswell. "Yes, sir," was the reply, "on heads that are not used to it."

Dr. Johnston was in company with a very loquacious lady, of whom he took but very little notice, and in pique she said to him, "Why, Doctor, I believe you are not very fond of the company of ladies." "You are mistaken, madam," he replied; "I like their delicacy, I like their vivacity, and I like their silence."

How long Eve, the first woman, lived, we do not know. It is a curious fact that in sacred history, the age, death, and burial of only one woman, Sarah, the wife of Abraham, is distinctly noted. Woman's age ever since appears not to have been a subject for history or discussion.

How natural it is for all infants, in their first attempts to speak, to say, *ab-bub-ab*, or *em-mem-em!* How few know that these sounds were used by the first children in the world to express words dear to all! In Hebrew *Ab*, or *Abba*, means father, and *Em* means mother.

A witty doctor says that tight lacing is a public benefit, inasmuch as it kills off all the foolish girls, and leaves the wise ones to grow up to be women.

The rolling stock of the railroads of Great Britain would reach, if linked together, from one end of the country to the other.

"ONLY A LOOK."

AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY.

I was a very wild, headstrong boy. My father, who was a physician in extensive practice, was a stern, severe man. He was little at home, and I was mortally afraid of him. My mother was all kindness, but did not know how to manage me. Her very love for me led her into error. My heart aches to this day when I remember my ingratitude to one who would gladly have laid down her life for me. I broke her heart! Early in life, whilst yet a mere lad I fell in with godless companions. My character afforded a field only too valuable in which to sow the seeds of evil. Soon, alas! those seeds bore fruit a hundredfold, and I became, whilst yet a mere youth, a ringleader among them. My mother soon discovered my evil habits, and pleaded with me to forsake them; but I needed sterner discipline, which she could not exercise herself, and she shrank from letting my father suspect my real character. She feared lest he should adopt some harsh measures which would drive me to desperate courses. Often did she wait till long past midnight for my return home, to screen me from detection. It was the heart of a loving mother which prompted her to this, and perhaps, if she had handed me over to my father's severity, it would but have hardened me yet more.

In the midst of my evil courses, one thing never failed to touch me, filling me with shame, and, to a certain extent, with contrition. Often, as I returned home at an unreasonable hour, would my poor mother come out of her room to meet me, her eyes red with weeping, her cheek pale with weary watching, and taking me by the hand, look into my face with an expression of love and pity and expostulation which pierced my heart. I knew that she had been praying for me. I knew that I deserved no such kindness. It would have been a relief to me at such times if she had loaded me with upbraidings. Anything would have been better than those mute appeals. I used to remember how the Lord turned and looked on Peter. Sometimes I thought of a saying I once heard, that "When at the day of judgment impenitent sinners meet the eye of Jesus resting upon them, its look of upbraiding will be enough to make them fly into the outer darkness, in order to escape that intolerable gaze." Like Peter, I often went out and wept bitterly. I resolved that I would grieve her no more. But alas! I feared the taunts and sneers of my companions. I could not bear to hear them call me a milkop, or to lose my pre-eminence among them; though, like that of Satan in Pandemonium, it was merely a pre-eminence in wickedness. I had now entered at the medical school, and my father cherished the hope that I should speedily be associated with him in his profession. But long impunity in vice had emboldened me. I became less fearful of detection, and he gained some knowledge of my habits. The explosion was terrible; my loved mother did not escape his anger. He charged her with deceiving him, and keeping him in ignorance of what he ought to have known before any one else. He denounced and threatened me in the most terrible terms, and for some weeks kept me prisoner in the house. This treatment made me reckless, and as soon as I could escape I plunged into yet wilder excesses. Meanwhile my beloved mother sank. My misconduct, my father's upbraidings, and the bitter conviction that she had not pursued the right course toward me, killed her.

For some weeks my father had not spoken to me. I was allowed to remain at home, but he would not meet me at the table, or permit me to sit with him; he insisted that my misconduct was such as to render me unfit to associate with the rest of the family. I know that I deserved all this, and more. I do not reflect upon him; but I think different treatment might have had better effect upon me. I went on from bad to worse. At length I was sent for one night to my mother's room. My father was there. She was very near her end. Stretching out her poor thin hand, she said, "Charles, I must very soon leave you. I see my error now it is too late. I allowed you to begin wrong, and did not check you as I ought. It was my love for you which led me astray; and now I ask you to forgive me before I die." I fell upon my knees by the bedside, and covered her hand with tears and kisses, imploring her not to speak so, or my heart would burst. I besought her forgiveness, and heaped curses upon myself for sinning so terribly against the best mother that ever lived. When I grew more calm, she begged me to ask my father's pardon, so that she might see us reconciled before she died. I could not refuse. At such a moment I felt as though I could have gone through fire and water to have gratified her slightest wish. I did as she requested me, and we were reconciled by her deathbed. In a few hours she had passed away where "the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest." Oh! that I had possessed sufficient courage or humility to tell my father all. What years of agony would it have saved me! What bitter reflections should I have escaped now!

For some weeks after my mother's death I went on well, at least as far as outward conduct was concerned. At last, on one unhappy day, a demand was made on my father for a large sum of money—I forget how much—for a gambling debt I had incurred. He sent for me to ask an explanation. I was compelled to confess that I did owe this, and several similar sums lost in the same way, and that I had lacked courage to tell him of them before. "Unhappy youth!" he exclaimed, "you have broken your mother's heart, and now you will bring down my grey hairs in shame and sorrow to the grave." He was not a rich man, and could ill afford to discharge the obligations in which I had involved myself; but he resolved to do so.

He had to sell a valuable library—the only luxury in which he indulged himself—and retrenched at every point till he had paid all my debts. He did not reproach me now; but made me feel that I had forfeited his respect and confidence. I could see that what he most keenly felt was not the pecuniary loss, heavily as it bore upon him, but the thought that I had deceived him, and sought his forgiveness in the presence of my dying mother, whilst I kept back part of my conduct. God knows that I did not intend this, though appearances were against me.

For some time I did try hard to reform, and not altogether without success. I had an additional motive to impel and sustain me in this endeavour. My uncle had lately come to reside near us. He had an only daughter, who, like myself, had lost her mother. She was a most lovely girl, and as good as she was beautiful. In her presence I felt abashed and humbled. Milton's lines often came into my mind—

"Abashed the devil stood,  
And felt how awful goodness is."

Whilst with her I felt all the loathsomeness of my past life; her angelic purity, her elevated and unaffected piety, filled me with shame:

"Like a devil of the pit I seemed,  
Mid young-eyed cherubim."

Yet her manner toward me was so gentle and confiding; that I was unconsciously elevated and strengthened by it. I was accustomed to be treated as a reprobate; to be distrusted and repelled by all. No one believed in my sincerity, or gave me credit for even good intentions. That one so pure and holy should treat me with confidence and kindness, should greet me with sisterly affection, and help me to rise to something nobler and more worthy of myself, inspired me with hope and energy amidst manifold discouragements. That I loved her passionately and devotedly I now know; but I did not know it then. My feelings were rather those of admiration than of love; she seemed so immensely and unapproachably above me. Proud to all others, I could have crouched in humility before her. And when she would timidly tell me of Jesus, who was and is the friend of sinners, it appeared as though an angel had come to me with words of mercy.

As hope sprang up within, the load that had weighed me down grew lighter, and the thought flashed upon me that some day I might ask her to be my wife. My heart whispered that she would not refuse. But one fatal day my uncle overheard some of my old companions in vice jesting about my courting his daughter. He was rich, and she was his only child. They supposed that this explained my change of life, and laughed at the cleverness with which I played the reformed rake. On his return home he found me there, and sternly forbade me his house. He heaped reproaches upon me; called me a scoundrel and hypocrite; asked me how I dared to seek the love of his daughter, and seek to sully her fair name by allying it with mine. What more he would have said I know not, for I abruptly left him in the torrent of his invective. I went home, and sought an interview with my father. I resolved to humble myself to the utmost, entreating him to intercede with his brother for me. I would have promised anything—have borne anything; but I had hardly commenced my plea when he stopped me, saying, "No more of this, sir. You broke your mother's heart, you have deceived and impoverished me, you have been the bane of my life. I would rather follow you to the grave than that you should involve that innocent girl in the irremediable misery of union with such an one as you." His stern voice and manner told me that I had nothing to hope from him. One chance only remained—to see my cousin. This I succeeded in doing, but failed to bend her to my will. She confessed that she was not indifferent to me; that she had hoped for me, and for herself; but that she could not act in opposition to her father's commands in the matter. My passionate entreaties were vain. She implored me to be patient, and try the effect of time; assured me that perseverance in the right course could not fail to succeed; but would not disobey her father. I grew desperate.—What I said in my mad passion I do not know; but, terrified at my invectives, she flew from me.

All was now over. Perhaps it was well. For some time I should have remained steadfast to my purposes; then the absence of any radical change would have been manifested in my sinking down into my old habit, and I might have sent her, too, a broken-hearted victim to the grave.

The old fiendish spirit was now revived within me. Nay, I found the truth of our Lord's words: seven devils seemed to have replaced one, and my "last state was worse than my first." I left home, resolving to return to it no more, and plunged into a course of terrible vice. For four years I was a vagabond on the face of the earth. I have been an inmate of low grogeries for weeks together. In the frontier States, on the edge of the wilderness, I have plied almost every calling which the wit of man has invented. I could rest nowhere. Only in ceaseless change, or in the stupefaction of drink, could I find even a moment's respite from the mental agony which goaded me almost to madness. At intervals I used to gather some home news, as my wanderings led me into the neighbourhood of my native town. I heard of my father's death, and that a stranger had succeeded him in his practice. This did not move me, so hardened and callous had I become. At length I fell in with a friend of former days, who told me that my cousin was thought to be dangerously ill, for that symptoms of rapid decline had manifested themselves. I hastened homeward without the loss of an hour. Alas! what right had I to call it home? My father's house where I was born, and where my mother

had died, was occupied by a stranger; and my name, if not forgotten, was only remembered to be execrated.

As I walked through the streets, few recognised me; of those who did, fewer still would speak, but, with a look of pity or indignation, walked on. I dared not go to my uncle's house to inquire, and was, therefore, dependent for information upon such scraps as I could pick up from servants. At length I mustered courage to accost the physician as he was leaving the door. My worst fears were confirmed. She could not live many days. He did not know me; but, moved by my earnestness, he told me this much, and passed on. The next day he told my uncle of a strange interview he had with a dissipated-looking fellow, who had insisted on knowing how Miss — was. The poor girl overheard the conversation, and felt that her prayers were now to be answered. In the excited questioner she was quite sure she recognised the returning prodigal. Day by day had she remembered me in her prayers, and had clung to the hope of seeing me once again before she died.

Scarcely had the physician left the room, when she begged her father to seek me and bring me home. He knew I was in the town, for he had seen me once or twice hanging about the house. Though he would not refuse his daughter anything she might now wish, he, not unnaturally, shrank from the interview, for he dreaded the effect of excitement upon her exhausted frame. He, therefore, endeavoured to waive her request, and affected to believe that she was mistaken as to the person. But she was not to be deceived; and at length, after consulting the medical man, he consented to send for me. The interview I can never forget. Her bodily frame, refined and attenuated by long illness, looked almost spiritual in its ethereal beauty. Her eye had acquired an unearthly lustre. She could scarcely speak; but speech was needless. It seemed as though the body had become transparent, and that the mind shone through its attenuated tabernacle. As I entered the room she looked upward for one moment, as though to thank God for this answer to prayer, then stretched out her hand to meet mine. She could not utter a word; but she fixed her eyes upon my face with a longing, yearning look, which thrilled me. I felt them searching my heart, and I trembled beneath their gaze. I shrank and trembled before them as I had never done before. Still that mournful, pleading, eloquent gaze remained fixed upon me. I left their remonstrance and warning and entreaty, and a love stronger than death which shone through all. Terror-stricken, I cried, "For pity's sake don't look at me so!" But the look did not change; it only seemed to grow more mournful, more intense, more beseeching. Her lips moved in prayer, though no sound was audible. I sank upon my knees, and began incoherently to pray God to have mercy on my poor lost soul. Then the look changed into one of ineffable gratitude and joy. A heavenly radiance seemed to float over her pale face, and I saw it "as it had been the face of an angel."

The excitement had been more than she could bear. She motioned to me to take farewell; and, pressing my lips to hers for the first time, I left the room. A profuse discharge of blood from the lungs came on, and in an hour she was a corpse.

As I was the only near relative, my uncle wished me to remain with him for some days, and attend the funeral. I did so of course. This led to a yet longer residence with him, till I became his adopted son. Many still doubted my steadfastness or sincerity; but this affected me very little. I felt that I had merited distrust, and my old spirit of proud defiance had passed away. I can hardly describe the change which had passed over me. I wondered at it myself. When I rose from my knees at the bedside of my beloved cousin, I felt a strange calmness and composure, such as I had never known before. When I took my last farewell of her in this world, I was indeed overwhelmed with sorrow; but there was nothing of that mad rebellion against God and man which had hitherto been my bane. The past seemed to me like a frightful dream, from which I had just awoken. I remember once to have recovered from an attack of fever, during which I had been raving in delirium for many days. As I lay on my bed, weak and languid indeed, yet calm and rational, my feelings then were just those which I experienced after my cousin's death. I could not understand it. I spent hours in wondering what strange change had passed over me, and I feared lest the old devilish temper should break out again. Now I know that He, who once said to the stormy winds, "Peace, be still!" and there was a great calm, had spoken to my storm-tost spirit, and given me that "peace which passeth all understanding."

The rest you may know. He who leads his people by "a way that they know not," watched over me through all my wanderings, and at last brought me to himself when I had resisted all other influences, by an instrumentality apparently so weak as the imploring look of a dying girl.

To see Death on his pale horse is dismal, but to see hell following after him is dreadful. To look into the grave and see the worm of corruption is sad; but to look lower, and see that never dying worm, is insufferable.

It is not by great deeds, like those of the martyrs, that good is to be done; it is by the daily, quiet virtues of life, the christian temper, the good qualities of relatives and friends, and all that good is to be done.