

Youth's Department.

BIBLE LESSONS.

Sunday, January 17th, 1864.

Read—ACTS XXIV. 1-16: Paul accused by Tertullus before Felix. 1 SAMUEL II. 1-18: The prayer of Hannah.

Recite—PSALM XXV. 10-14.

Sunday, January 24th, 1864.

Read—ACTS XXIV. 17-27: Paul's defence before Felix. 1 SAMUEL II. 19-30: The iniquities of the sons of Eli.

Recite—ISAIAH XLIX. 9, 10.

A MOTHER'S PRAYERS.

A SKETCH BY MARAINNE FARNINGHAM.

Chapter 3.—The third special Prayer.

What a variety of faces we may see in the railway carriage! What a variety of characters—amiable, pleasant, chatty, agreeable; dark, morose, self-engrossed, crochety. Some begin a light chat immediately after they are seated, some will go the whole length of the country without exchanging a single word. And indeed there is nothing astonishing in this variety of behaviour, for their circumstances are at least as varied. Some have left home with cheerful voices bidding them God-speed, for whose safety many a prayer will go up through the day.—Some have left the house of the stranger, and going where bright eyes will smile their welcome, and home-like arms encircle them fondly. Some going into strange and unfamiliar scenes, where not a heart will care for them, not a pleasant word of greeting reach their weary ears. Some are going with leisurely indifference, on business errands; some are bent upon a pleasure excursion; some, with flushed and gloomy faces, are fretting that the train goes so slowly—are begrudging every minute—for that they are summoned, in hot haste, upon matters of life and death.

The experience of Mr. and Mrs. Smith was something like that of the persons last mentioned. We shall not try to describe the faintness at their aching hearts; it almost overwhelmed them. Now and then Mr. Smith uttered some common-place expression; he remarked that it was very cold; he spoke tenderly to his wife, hoped she was not growing over-wearied, bade her try to say those strong words, "I will trust, and not be afraid."

Poor Mrs. Smith! Her heart was indeed torn. She sat back in the carriage entirely absorbed in her grief. She lived her life over again during that dreary journey. She thought over every incident of that never-forgotten Sunday evening when her boy was lost in the hop-garden. She remembered her special prayer, offered so wildly, and the special interposition of God on her behalf. With a shudder she thought of it now, remembering that she had omitted to add to it, "Thy will be done." Could it be possible that the answer had come in judgment rather than mercy? She remembered, too, her special prayer that Alfred might be successful in procuring the situation. She knew that she had so passionately desired it, that she could not say, "If Thou wilt." She felt sure, in her weak-mindedness, it must be the very best thing for him. She questioned it; how she had been mistaken. What if, after all, she should have to see that it would have been better had they found his little body a lifeless corpse, on that long-past day, in the hop-ground?

There, Mrs. Smith put up her third special prayer. And this time it was different from the others—

"O Lord forgive me. Thou knowest better than I. In this time of my agony I have but one prayer—Lord, take him in thy hands, and by him, and through him, thy will be done."

Ah! such are the special prayers that bring certain blessings. But how often we have to be tried in the fierce fire of affliction before our hearts choose to utter them!

Arrived in London—their hearts quaking with the unknown dread—knowing not whether else to go, they proceeded to Alfred's lodgings.

And Mrs. Smith's pale face and anxious eyes asked of the landlady, ere her lips could frame the question, "What are the dreadful tidings you have for me?"

The kind and motherly woman could scarcely repress tears at the sight of so much silent grief.

"O, Mrs. Smith, I cannot think why Mr. Alfred was so determined to send for you! Indeed, you have been most unnecessarily troubled and alarmed. There is nothing at all of consequence the matter. He is more frightened than hurt."

Mrs. Smith's face grew brighter immediately. "It is not true then? Is not my son in prison?"

"Well, yes, he is, I am sorry to say, but I am sure all be well now his father has come. They are sure to let him out on bail."

"But what has he done? How has it all happened?"

"O nothing. Only one of youth's little peccadilloes. He was at a party the other night, and got excited, I suppose. It was late when the young gentlemen returned—Mr. Alfred and some friends of his. They were full of fun—had, perhaps, drank rather too freely at the party—and one of them rang some street bells, another broke a window. Then a policeman interfered. It seems he spoke insultingly to Mr. Alfred—who knocked him down. He was injured a little by the fall, and wants to make a fuss about it. That is all."

"Quite enough," his parents thought. That Alfred, their noble, intellectual son, should so

have disgraced himself seemed to them almost impossible. And yet when they reflected—What was there to restrain him? He was up there in that city of manifold temptations, far removed from their control, their good influence scarcely affected him there. There was no friend whom he loved and trusted, who had his best interest at heart, in all that vast city! And what was worse than all beside, his heart was unchanged, no fear of God restrained him—no strength of purpose—no consecrated will held in check his evil propensities. After all, might it not have been better had he remained at home, having less money but more principle, less luxury but more comfort, fewer temporal advantages, perhaps, but far fewer temptations? They lost no time in visiting him.

And a sorry spectacle he presented. He was thoroughly overwhelmed by remorse. He felt his disgrace most keenly, making no palliation for his conduct. He dared not meet his father's eyes; he shrank from the touch of his mother's hand. There was no levity about him now; his spirit seemed to be crushed within him. He believed that he had ruined himself and his life-prospects by his own folly. He knew well enough, what his parents knew also, that it would never have happened had he been sober; that the company in which he was tempted to excess must be bad; and that he, who had been so differently reared, had no business whatever in such society. In his hours of solitude he had reflected upon his mode of living—had looked at all the circumstances connected with the unpleasant affair—had weighed himself in the balance and had been found wanting. It was distressing to see his grief and hear his self-upbraiding. But his mother had committed him unreservedly into the Lord's hands now, and her faith grew strong, so that she believed he would bring good out of this apparent evil.

"Mother"—he almost sobbed as he spoke—"you might well have been afraid to trust me. I did not think I could be so bad."

She spoke to him of a pardoning Saviour, she besought him as she never had done before to flee for refuge to the Cross.

"Mother, if that man were to die, I should never know a moment's peace again."

She could have blessed God for her motherly privilege then. She had power to soothe that part of his pain. She told him, with a smile of gratitude on her lips, that he was not much hurt, that he was recovering, that a mighty hand had interposed to save her boy that fearful sorrow.

Alfred was allowed to go out on the next day and accompany his parents to the old home.—But those few hours in prison were the most blessed of his life, for the Lord met with him there. He who alone can touch the hard heart, who alone can awaken the slumbering soul, breathed upon the dry bones, and they lived. The time had arrived when he should know what it was to have offended the Mighty One. The cry was forced from him, as in the prison of old, "What must I do to be saved?" and there the sweet voice rang in his ears, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved."

This was how God answered the mother's last special prayer. He came out a changed young man, having received the only safe-guard for future upright conduct. We talk of excellence of character—they only have that who are Christians—they only are safe who are "strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might."

So Mrs. Smith's tears were dried in a manner she little expected. Her weeping was turned into a glad song, for God had not forgotten to be gracious.

Poor Alfred! It was painful to witness his grief and shame. He shrank from the carresses of his brothers and sisters. He could not bear the greeting of his most familiar friends. For a long time he felt the prison mark upon him, and suffered for his fault a hundredfold in his own spirit.

Afterward he was aroused to wipe out the stain by noble deeds, and a persevering, upright life. The love of the home circle was rewarded at last. He became all that his mother's fondest hopes had pictured, more than all that her prayers had asked. He regained the esteem of his employers—he filled his station as only a Christian can, and steadily rose upward in the social scale a great, because a good man. His mother never, never forgot her special prayers and their answers.

There will be times in all our lives when special prayers are wrung out of our wild hearts, when we too like Mrs. Smith take hold of the Father and cry, "I will not let thee go, except thou bless me." Prayers that are as a wall of agony, in which the overstrung heart may spend its woes. It is sweet to know that a loving parent hears our petitions, and is wise to withhold, as well as to grant. For indeed we know not what would become of us, if he gave us all that we ask for; we make sad mistakes—he only can never be mistaken.

In our deepest need—in our greatest extremity our one prayer should be, "Thy will be done."

"Choose for me, for I know not which is best." Surely we, to whom he has so often been gracious, are not afraid to trust him. O, if we would be safe and happy—if we would have the very best blessings for our loved ones—we shall say for them and for ourselves, "It is the Lord, let him do as seemeth good in his sight."

This be our special prayer:
In all time of our deepest woe or want,
Thy will be done; make us thy loving care,
And what will please thee grant.

For we are blind and weak;
But thou the All strong wilt bless us from the skies;
In our deep need thy strengthening word we seek,
And that shall make us wise.

Nothing is more beautiful in the world of morals than the great man in talents who is a little child in religion.

SHARP PRACTICE.

A shrewd trick was recently practised in London. A dandy, dressed up in the most faultless style, called at a large jewelry store, and after a short examination bought a gold watch for £20, and handed the rejoiced salesman a £100 note. He examined it carefully, and finding it to be genuine, handed him back the required change, £80. Just as he was stepping out of the store he was met by another dandy, equally well dressed, and whom he seemed to recognize. He exhibited his newly bought watch to his friend, and was very profuse in his praises about it and its fine finish. Both stepped back in the store and a short persuasion on the part of the first dandy induced the new comer to buy a similar watch for the same price. He also paid for his watch with a £100 note—the English dandies do not trouble themselves with small change—and received his change after the experienced dealer had satisfied himself that the note was genuine. But just as the last dandy was in the act of pocketing the money and watch, both dandies suddenly appeared very much agitated; they looked into the street, whispered to each other, then suddenly made a dash for the door. But to the dismay and discomfiture of both, a constable jumped out of a carriage, collared them both, and with a triumphant "I have got you at last, you scoundrels!" led them back into the store. Here he informs the dealer that those two gentlemen are two of the sharpest swindlers in London, which was saying a great deal, and asked the jeweller what business he had with them. "These gentlemen have bought two gold watches for £40 and paid for them in good money," said the now frightened dealer.

The constable laughed right out, and asked him if he had not been paid in hundred pound notes. The jeweller said he had, a fearful light beginning to dawn upon him. The constable then demanded to see the notes. The *corpora delicti* were produced, and the constable informed the now thunder-stricken dealer that the notes were forged, and the culprits, overwhelmed with the weight of their guilt, silently acknowledged the deed. The vigilant officer, jubilant over this important catch, seizes watches, money and prisoners, and summoning the jeweller to attend the police bureau in an hour, puts the prisoners in the carriage and drives off on a gallop.

Just as the last round of the carriage had died away in the distance, the jeweller recovered from his surprise. It now occurred to him that perhaps it would have been better if he had accompanied the strange expedition. Breathless he dashed out, but the cab had vanished. He made inquiries at the police-bureau, but the sharp trio had vanished, and neither cab nor men were ever seen again. Deeply hurt at the immorality of the times, which even made the sacred uniforms of the police serve them in their nefarious schemes, the watchmaker returned home a sadder but a wiser man.

LOSING A SEAT IN CONGRESS.

"Sir, bring me a plain dinner," said a melancholy looking individual to a waiter at one of the principal hotels in—N. Y.

The dinner was brought and devoured, and the eater called the landlord aside, and thus addressed him—

"You are the landlord?"

"Yes."

"You do a good business here?"

"Yes!" (in astonishment.)

"And make, probably, ten dollars a day, clear?"

"Yes!"

"Then I am safe. I cannot pay you for what I have consumed. I have been out of employment seven months, but have engaged to go to work to-morrow. I had been without food four and twenty hours when I entered your place. I will pay you in a week."

"I cannot pay my bills with such promises," blustered the landlord, "and I do not keep a poor-house. You should address the proper authorities. Leave me something as security."

"I have nothing."

"I will take your coat."

"If I go into the street without it, such weather as this, I may get my death."

"You should have thought of that before you came here."

"Are you serious? Well, I do solemnly aver that in one week I will pay you."

"I will take the coat."

The coat was left, and in a week afterward was redeemed. Seven years after that, a wealthy man entered the political arena, and was presented by a caucus as an applicant for Congressional nomination. The principal of the caucus held his peace; he heard the history of the applicant, who was a member of the church, and one of the most respectable of citizens. He was the chairman. The vote was a tie, and he cast a negative, thereby defeating the applicant, and to whom he said:

"You don't remember me?"

"No."

"I once ate a dinner at your hotel, and although I told you I was finishing, and pledged my word and honor to pay you in a week, you took my coat and saw me go out into the inclement air at the risk of my life without it."

"Well, sir, what then?"

"Not much. You call yourself a Christian. To-night you were a candidate for nomination, and but for me you would have been elected to Congress."

Three years after, the christian hotel-man was bankrupt, and sought a home in Bellevue. The poor dinnerless wretch that was, afterwards became a high functionary in Albany.

CURIOSITIES OF THE CENSUS.—Much has been said respecting occupations open to women; the census has its disclosures upon that subject. The enumerators found in 1861 among the women of England 10 bankers, 7 money lenders, 274 commercial clerks, 25 commercial travellers, 54 brokers, 38 merchants, 29 farmers, 419 printers, 3 shepherds, 43, 964 out-door agricultural labourers; 13 ladies were doctors 2 were bone-setters, 6 were reporters or short-hand writers, 3 parish clerks, 4 choristers, 4 teachers of elocution, 17 dentists, 2 knackers, 4 conjurers, 1 astronomer, 8 "naturalists." Some of the other sex gave rather curious descriptions of themselves. Fifteen called themselves natural philosophers, one described himself as a lexicographer, another as a chronologist, and one wrote himself down "orator." Of others we have rather mysterious accounts—3 were graphographers, 2 geometers, 9 kamptulicon manufacturers, 8 truffers, 33 boot leggers, 15 peel makers, 29 mungo merchants, 12 beetle makers. It is a novelty in an English census volume to find 42 gold miners; and it is a wonder to learn that there still linger two tooth-pick makers. Among persons blind from their birth were found 4 town-criers, 3 misters, and a scripture reader, a schoolmistress, 2 messengers or porters, 7 shoe makers, a tailor, 10 agricultural labourers, 3 dress-makers, and 3 laundresses. In the work houses were a half-pay officer, a clergyman, 10 solicitors, 15 surgeons, an author, 68 school-masters, and 79 school-mistresses. Not merely poor, but in prison for debt, were 12 officers in the army, 3 in the navy, 9 clergymen or ministers, 4 barristers, 32 solicitors, 2 physicians, 13 surgeons, 2 authors, 17 school-masters, two school-mistresses, 10 "gentlemen." Still worse off, in lunatic asylums, there were 85 clergymen, and 10 ministers, 103 half-pay officers, 22 barristers, 60 solicitors, 5 physicians, 61 surgeons, 3 authors, 54 school-masters and 80 school mistresses.

Agriculture, etc.

SURE CURE FOR RHEUMATISM.—Mr. Fredrick Hubley sends us the following receipt as a sure cure for Rheumatism:—

1/2 an ounce of Saltpetre,
2 ounces of Sulphur,
1/2 an ounce of Gum Arabic,
and 2 Nutmegs.

These articles should be ground together and put into 12 ounces of Molasses, and when well stirred a tea-spoonful should be taken on going to bed.

He adds "If you will give this, which I found in a paper some years ago, a place in your valuable paper, and it proves as effectual a cure to those who try it as it has to me you will oblige many. I took it for three or four nights and have not had rheumatism since."

TIME TO CUT-TIMBER.—A writer in the *Scientific American* says:—I have found the months of August, September and October, to be the three best in the year to cut hard-wood timber. If cut in those months the timber is harder, more elastic and durable than if cut in winter months. I have by weighing timber, found that of equal quality got out for joiners' tools, is much heavier when cut and got out in the above-named months than in the Winter and Spring months, and it is not so liable to crack. I have walnut timber on hand which has been cut from one to ten years—with the bark on—which was designed for axe-helves and ox-bows, and not a worm is to be seen therein. It was cut between the first of August and the first of November. I have other pieces of the same timber cut in Winter months, not two years old, and they are entirely destroyed, being full of powder post and grub-worms. Within the last ten or twelve years I have stated the result of my observation and experience of cutting timber in different seasons of the year, to many of my neighbors and others; and all who have made the trial are satisfied that the above statement is correct.

POULTRY IN WINTER.—Poultry well cared for, pay by the eggs and manure produced. The secret of having eggs all the Winter is, to give the hens the advantages of Summer, viz.: warmth, shelter, light, water, and some animal food to supply the absence of insects which they gather in Summer, with lime enough to make egg shells. They devour and grind up with the weed seeds among the grain tallings fed to them; they eat almost every kind of grain. Bones pounded fine, and scraps of fresh meat they devour greedily and convert them into eggs. We find that a cake of scraps from the fat-boiling establishments, placed where the hens can pick at it, always keep the egg machine in operation; if the supply runs out, the eggs are missing.

It is related in a Belfast paper that a new species of potato has been raised in Ireland from American seed brought by one of the blockade runners, and named "Confederate." In shape they greatly resemble the now almost unknown but once favorite "ash leaf kidneys," being a long oval with flat sides. The size is immense, many weighing a pound each and the quality, when cooked, is excellent.

Carpeting made of cork has been introduced into England; it looks well, and is said to be durable.

Shakespeare's 300th birthday occurs in April, 1864, when there is to be a great time in England in his honour.