

YOUTH'S DEPARTMENT.

BIBLE LESSONS.

Sunday, November 5th, 1865.

JOHN IV. 27, 42: Many of the Samaritans believe. 1 KINGS I. 41-63: Adonijah bows to Solomon. Recite—PSALM XV.

Sunday, November 12th, 1865.

CONCERT: or Review of the past months' subjects and lessons.

What is Religion?

A little child is supposed to answer this question as follows:— "Well, let me see: It's very plain as mother talks to me,— It is all love, and being good and kind, And meek and patient, with an humble mind; Not discontented, though we may be poor, And glad that other people should have more; And never to be proud of what we know, Or scorning others who are dull and slow: But to assist them, and without pretence, And never looking for a recompence. And mother says we always should be glad When folks do right, and sorry if they're bad: She tells us to go on and persevere, And keep a cheerful face and never fear; And if things do not happen as we would, To bear it patiently and trust in God. And mother says it never is a loss To follow Jesus and take up His Cross: For if we do His will then we shall know His blessed truth, and like our Saviour grow."

Thin place in the ice.

Hürrah for the skaters! How they wheel, how they skim over the clear, smooth ice! The air is still, the sun bright; the trees, fields, and fences, are gemmed with brilliants; and the earth looks like a snow palace, with broader halls and richer roofing than ever Queen Catharine of Russia had, in her famous ice-palace on the Neva.

A winter scene like this reminds me of a skating scene long ago. There was always a thin place in the ice on our river near the dam where the boys were warned not to go, and where there was a post up with "Danger!" painted on it. "Give a wide berth to the thin ice yonder," was said to the little boys and new recruits among the big lads. But it was singular how almost every boy liked to try his skates near that dangerous spot. One would skim along, and look over it. Another—he didn't believe there was danger—would take a bolder sweep, and just escape its edge. Another—he didn't care for danger, not he!—would shoot across it, bending and cracking under him, and only save himself by the swiftness of his flight; until the leader of a gang of boys, in the high excitement of a chase, dashed boldly on the thin place in the ice, every one at his heels. Crack, crash! plunging, leaping, splashing—and half-a-dozen were struggling and gasping for life in the icy waters. Two were drowned; two were rescued by the utmost efforts of some men who came to help; and two got out themselves.

I often am reminded of that thin place in the ice, for I see many just such thin places on the surface of society, where in spite of all warning, many and many a boy drops through, and is hurt, or perhaps lost altogether. When I see a boy idling with bad companions in the evening, or sinking into doubtful places, and thinking it makes him grand to drink and smoke,—ah! then I say, he's getting on a thin place, which will certainly let him down if he does not beat a retreat, and that speedily.

When I see a youth's seat at church empty, and find him despising the wish of his father and refusing to obey his mother, and complaining of the strictness of his clergyman, then I say that youth is on a thin place in the ice, which will surely give way under him, and leave him to sink in the cold and dreary waters of despair.

There are very many thin places in the ice; the devil is always tempting us to try them. He would have us believe there is "no danger;" but if we are wise, we shall give them a wide berth—secure solid footing, and then press on, right on and on for the right!

Christ our Refuge.

There were six cities in the land of Canaan which were set apart as places of refuge, to which a man might flee if he had, either by accident or design, killed another. These cities were easy of access. Three were on the west side of the river Jordan, and three on the east side. Every year the roads leading to them were examined, to see that they were in good condition, and that there was nothing in the way to stop the manslayer as he was running from his pursuer. At different points there was a guide-board, and on it was written, Refuge, refuge!

If a man by accident killed another, and reached one of these cities before his pursuer, he was allowed to stay there until the death of the high priest who was then living. But if in anger a man had purposely killed another, then, although he sought refuge in one of these cities, he was given up to the avenger of blood to be slain. You will find more about these cities and their names if you will read the thirty-fifth chapter of Numbers, the nineteenth chapter of Deuteronomy, and the twentieth chapter of Joshua.

But what interest can the boys and girls have in these old cities?

I will try to tell you. God has different ways of teaching. A great many things about which we read in the Old Testament are what are called types. A type, in Scripture language, means a pattern, or a likeness to a person, who is to come, or to an event which is to take place. It points forward to something more valuable than itself. Thus, for example, the blood of the Lamb which was slain on the Jewish altar was a type or foreshadowing of the crucifixion of Jesus Christ for our salvation. Hence John the Baptist, pointing to the Saviour, said to his disciples, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (John i. 29). The paschal Lamb, which was slain to commemorate the deliverance of the Jews from the bondage of Egypt (see Exodus, chap. 12), and the Lamb which was offered daily, both morning and evening, in the service of the temple, were representations of the greater sacrifice which Christ came from heaven to make for our salvation.

So the land of Canaan was a type of heaven. The lifting up of the brazen serpent on a pole was a type of our Saviour's crucifixion; and the cities of refuge were a beautiful type of Jesus Christ, who is the sinner's refuge.

You know, my dear readers, that we have all sinned, and that we all need a place of safety. The avenger says, "Thou shalt surely die." Escape for thy life. But that we may not die eternally, God has given to us the Bible as our guide-board; the Bible is constantly pointing to Jesus Christ as the sinner's refuge. He is our hiding-place. It is to Him Isaiah refers when he says, "And a man shall be as an hiding-place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest; as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land" (Isa. xxxii. 2).

The way to our city of refuge is plain. "I am the way," is the Saviour's own direction. The gate is always open, and the assurance is, "Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out."

I want you to remember, my readers, that it is a great deal easier to run to this City of Refuge when you are young, than it will be if you put it off until you are old. The promise of the Saviour is, "They who seek Me early shall find Me." Will you not flee to Jesus as your hiding place? Will you not seek Him when He may be found? How sad it will be if you should neglect to do so! You will need a refuge when the tempest of God's judgments shall burst on the wicked. Oh, then, how glad you will be if you can say, as David said of his trust in God, "Thou art my hiding-place; Thou shalt preserve me from trouble; Thou shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance" (Psa. xxxii. 7).—Sunshine.

Heathen Sacrifices.

In a little work on Heathen Mythology, by the late Dr. Eli Noyes, who was a Free-Will Baptist missionary, occurs the following passage descriptive of a class of heathen devotees. "The dark places of the earth are full of the habitations of cruelty."

An interesting inquiry now arises. If the Brahmans of India are foreigners, and have converted the Hindoos to their religion, are there still remaining in India any people who have till this day remained unaffected by the Brahminical priesthood? There are—and such a class is to be found scattered throughout Hindostan, among the hills—a people that may be considered the very aborigines of the country. Though dispersed over so wide a territory, and known by quite different names, such as Santals, Bhoomejas, Coles, and Kunda, their language, manners, customs and religion are nearly the same, and differ widely from those of their Hindoo neighbors. These hill people have no books, priests, temples or images; but the master of a family conducts worship in the open air, by sacrificing fowls and goats to the sun, which luminary they hold to be the Supreme Being. Some of these people make human sacrifices in honor of certain fancied deities or demons. The Kunda, for instance, a people who live in the south part of Orissa, have long been accustomed to the purchasing or stealing of children, and fattening them several months, or for as many years. On some propitious day the child is brought out and confined to a post. A large company of men gather around, each one holding a sharp knife in his hand, and at a signal given by the chief, they all rush upon their victim, and it is believed that he who cuts the first piece of flesh from his body will have the most abundant harvest. In this manner the child is destroyed piecemeal. They regard this as a decidedly religious institution, as will be seen by the following song which they sing on the occasion:—

Hail, mother, hail! Hall, goddess Bhobanee, Lo, we present a sacrifice to thee, Partake thereof and let it pre-serve give, And in return let us thy grace receive, With music's varied sound on festive day, Lo! thee we honor and thy rites obey. Hail, all ye gods who in the mountain dwell, In the wild jungle, or the lonely dell, Come, all together, come with one accord, And taste the sacrifice we have prepared, In all the field and all the plots we sow, O, let a rich and plentiful harvest grow, O, all ye goddesses give ear, And be propitious to our earnest prayer, Behold a youth for sacrifice de-ceived, Blooming with tender flesh and flushed with blood, No sire, no matron view him as their own, His flesh, his blood, his life his all are thine, Without the pale of sacred wedlock horn, We took and led him for thy rite alone, O, now with rites from all pollution free, We offer him, O, Bhobanee, to thee! Taste now this offering, satisfy thy heart, And we will joyful to our homes depart, Taste now the offering and propitious be, And let us all marks of thy favor see.

I have seen many of these children who were intended for sacrifice, but had been rescued by a British army and placed in Christian schools. With a small force the English might put an end to this horrid custom, and that, too, without the effusion of blood; and does not humanity and justice call them to the work?

AN ECCENTRIC LANDLORD.—A gentleman of considerable wealth, including a large amount of house property at Stratford, where he resided, has recently died. During his long residence there he had acquired considerable notoriety from his peculiar notions as regards letting his houses, every applicant having to agree to the following conditions before entering upon the tenancy:—1st, "There must be no children;" 2dly, "The tenant must not smoke;" 3rdly, "Nor keep birds;" 4thly, "Nor exhibit flowers in pots or otherwise in any or either of the windows of the house;" 5thly, "If a bachelor, or widow, or spinster, he or she must not enter into matrimony during his or her tenancy."—Essex Standard.

Thou mayest as well expect to grow stronger by always eating as wise by always reading. Too much overcharges nature, and turns more into disease than nourishment. 'Tis thought and digestion which makes books serviceable, and give health and vigor to the mind.—Fuller.

Missions in Ireland.

NOTES OF A VISIT TO SOME OF THE STATIONS, WITH SOME WAY-SIDE SKETCHES.

Ballymena, July 18.—Under the most favourable circumstances, there is nothing very attractive in the mere exterior of a third or fourth-rate Irish town, with its irregular streets of cold, colourless, heavy buildings; but in wet weather, the aspect of such a place is positively dreary. The rain came down freely as I went from the railway-station in Ballymena, but the reader's time must not be taken up with a description of personal discomfort, nor of depressing reflections on the past and present of this place. It occupies a prominent position in the great awakening of 1859, being one of the earliest scenes of that ever memorable visitation, and the centre of an unparalleled excitement for many miles around. Many of the converts were baptized, and formed into a church. It was in the month of January, 1860, that I paid a short visit to the town, and preached the Word in the rude and uncouth building which had been fitted up as a temporary place of worship. The night was intensely dark, the fog so dense that hand lanterns were of little use, and the fine, drizzling rain soon penetrated the thickest clothing; but with all these disadvantages, a large congregation, about twenty of whom had travelled on foot several miles, met to hear the Gospel. It was a season of wonderful enjoyment. There appeared to be the materials of a large and flourishing interest. A commodious, and really attractive chapel was erected, the expense of which was met within about £200; but circumstances, for which neither the Irish Society, nor any persons connected with the Denomination in Ireland were responsible, transpired to hinder the work, and for a time to disappoint our hopes. However, by the firmness of a few gentlemen in the locality, the chapel was secured, and put in trust for the use of the denomination. It was a heavy blow, and a great discouragement, but such temporary reverses, and apparent defeat are common in all ages of the Christian Church. The Society wisely resolved not to abandon the station. Mr. Keen was there for a time; after his departure, Mr. Eccles took charge of it, and there are probably few who by experience, knowledge, character, kindness, and energy, are better fitted to raise the fallen tabernacle, than our brother. The population is large, and many are well-disposed towards our principles; and with the right man, the use of wise means, that indomitable energy which is strengthened by difficulties, and God's blessing, we shall witness the consummation of our hopes, and the answer of our prayers. Dear readers, pray for Ballymena and William Eccles.

On the morning, Wednesday, 19th, journeyed through a glorious country towards the banks of the world-famed Lough Neagh, through which the waters of the Ban are said to flow, without mingling with those of the lake. It is hardly necessary to inform our young friends of the dimensions of this inland sea, for a collection of water twenty miles long, and from six to ten broad, may well claim to be called by that name. It is curious to see how sober writers sometimes suffer themselves to be imposed upon by fiction. The author of a well known book on Geology, when describing the encroachment of the water on the land, refers in support of his assertion, to the submerged round towers in Lough Neagh, and quotes the well-known lines of Moore—

"On Lough Neagh's banks as the fisherman strays, When the clear cold eve's declining; He sees the round towers of other days, In the waves beneath him shaling, Thus shall memory oft, in dreams sublime, Catch a glimpse of the days that are over; Thus, sighing, look through the waves of time, For the long faded glories they cover."

Moore knew that he was giving utterance to one of the popular legends of the locality founded on certain appearances caused by the petrifying properties of the water. But we must not linger on the lovely banks of this lake, but retrace our steps to Lake View House, get a hasty cup of tea, and walk to the little Baptist Chapel at Grange Corner. The place is comfortably filled, a considerable number of the hearers having walked long distances to be present at the service. I cannot convey to the reader anything like a correct impression of the attention

and earnestness with which the people listened to the truth. They never complain of the length of sermons if they are pervaded with Christ, and preached with fervour of spirit. For them, life presents but little variety. 'Week in, week out,' like Longfellow's village blacksmith, they have to toil, toil for a scanty pittance. To such persons, the Gospel appears all the more precious from the very monotony of their existence, and the privations which they have to suffer, and thus, even their condition, wretched as it often is, is not without compensating circumstances. The service over, no one leaves the place without stopping to shake hands with the preacher. The missionary cultivates a wide field of Christian labour, preaching and teaching as frequently as opportunities offer, at nine or ten stations. It may be said of this "little hill of Zion" that it is united and peaceful, but in common with all others in Ireland, it is frequently weakened by emigration and removals. During two years, the church has lost no less than eleven members, from these causes. Such a constant drain on our churches retards their progress, and prevents them from reaching that position of independence of pecuniary assistance which is so desirable.

Coleraine, 20th.—There are few towns in Ulster where the Revival was felt with greater power than in Coleraine. The daily prayer-meeting in the town hall is still carried on; and there is a solemn yearly observance of "that great day of the Lord," when the excitement seemed to reach its culminating point, "and fear fell on them all, and the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified." Under the pastoral care of Mr. Tessier, the Baptist Church in this respectable and enterprising town is doing well. The congregations are good, and the additions from March, 1864, to 1865 were nineteen. In addition to the services in the chapel, our brother has several out-stations, where he is well received. After preaching at Coleraine, I met the members of the church for conference, and the interview was of a satisfactory character. The state of this Christian community furnishes a living vindication of the Revival of 1859.—From the Chronicle of the British and Irish Baptist Home Mission, September, 1865.

Scientific.

GEOLOGISTS IN HASTE.

Sir Charles Lyell may be a very learned geologist, but he shows himself but singularly ill-informed of the views of Biblical scholars on the relations between science and the Scriptures. In his observations at the annual meeting of the Geological Society, he tells us that some able scholars regret that the recent discoveries of geologists affecting Scripture were not published in Latin, as they would have been four centuries ago. It was quite right that these discoveries should be made and thought out to their just conclusions. But these novelties cannot be safely entrusted to the multitude. Such a notion as this, he thought, ought to receive no sympathy. On the other hand, scientific laymen ought to communicate freely all such new truths. They ought to encourage such of the clergy as ventured to set aside the traditional opinions, and honour them for the sacrifices they make. Above all, they should protest against the exclusion of these new light clergymen from the Church, against the idea that they should resign their posts, and give place to some ignorant fellow, who would go on, conscientiously it may be, teaching the old doctrines; or, if not himself ignorant, would reconcile it with his sense of duty to teach others what he does not believe himself. Now in all this Sir Charles Lyell mistakes the question. Biblical scholars do not object to the publication of the discoveries of geologists, but to the theories of geologists being, in the present stage of discovery, regarded as indubitably true, and as if so applied to the setting aside of the Word of God. Their theories have been so numerous, so often disproved by some new fossil or strata, for a little while accepted and then discarded, that Biblical scholars simply ask geologists to wait until their science is more perfect and their data more complete. The changes of opinion Sir Charles Lyell has himself undergone, ought to warn him against all dogmatism and hasty conclusions in such a matter.

THE LAST WORD OF PHILOSOPHY.

Philosophy, not satisfied with the solutions given by Revelation, has long busied itself with the problems of the origin of the universe, of the conception of the Infinite, of the self-existence of God, of the source of life and of matter. Modern science has revived the hope of determining these momentous questions. Effort after effort to penetrate the mysteries of being has been made, the Word of the Being of beings alone being thought unworthy of regard. The last analysis is that of Mr. Herbert Spencer. He sums up all knowledge, all life, all existence, in the mysterious phrase, "The law of the Persistence of Force." This is the great principle of nature which the latest scientific research has disclosed. For this phrase we are to set aside all the grand revelations of God in the Scriptures; all our hopes of immortality; all the discoveries of the future made by Jesus Christ; the past, the present, and the future, nature and man, are resolved into a blind law called the "Persistence of Force." This impersonal unappreciable, invisible thing, which no mind can grasp, no experiment test, is the God of the new philosophy. In other words, this new attempt of Philosophy to unravel the problems of existence ends where all other attempts have ended,—those of the savans of Germany as well as the sophists of Greece, in a blank, cheerless scepticism.—Baptist Magazine.