

Youth's Department.

BIBLE LESSONS.

Sunday, June 11th, 1865.

LUKE xix. 28-48: Christ enters and laments over Jerusalem. 2 SAMUEL xii. 1-14: Nathan's parable. David confesses his sins. Recite—MATTHEW xxiii. 37, 38.

Sunday, June 18th, 1865.

LUKE xx. 1-18: The parable of the vineyard. 2 SAMUEL xii. 15-31: Death of David's child. Birth of Solomon. Recite—ISAIAH v. 1-7.

The two homes.

Two houses stood within sight of one another; but they were so different that you might think it strange to hear them spoken of together. One is a large, beautiful house with marble pillars, round which twine rare vines. Statues and vases of flowers adorn the grounds, mingled with dark evergreens; and winding paths stretch far away through a beautiful park. Within, all is splendor and luxury; and the one little child who gladdens the house is clothed in costly garments.

There, just outside the edge of these grounds, stands the other house—a small, low cottage. There is no garden around it, no shading trees, no lovely flowers—nothing to attract the eye except its great neatness. Within, bare walls, and only clothing and food enough to sustain life, and that earned by hard labor. But here, too, is a baby, only the more loved and rejoiced in that the mother must deny herself to make even the plain dresses it wears.

So different can life be within the circuit of a few rods!

In one day, a messenger came to both houses, a messenger from the Great King, who cares not for the distinctions of rich and poor: and he was commissioned to take the babies from their mother's arms, and carry them to a better home.

So in hall and cottage there was weeping, and in each the darling of the household lay pale and still in its little coffin.

In the finest linen one little child was dressed, and rare flowers, filled the small rosewood coffin. A long train of carriages followed it to the grave, where a marble monument was raised over the little form.

In the other home, with much effort and sacrifice, a plain coffin, a white dress, and a few sweet lilies were given as an offering of affection to their darling, and a small band of friends followed the little coffin on foot to the quiet graveyard, where no stone will ever mark the spot.

But here the contrast ends. The babies are now in one home, the exceeding glory of which is such that the difference of their earthly homes sinks to nothing in comparison.

They are both clothed in the glorious garment of Christ's righteousness, and together sing before His throne, "Glory, glory, glory be to God on high."

Weeping mother, when you think of all you meant to do for your baby—of all the riches he was heir to—remember that your child has entered on a richer inheritance—has a more glorious home, and far better teachers than your love could give him. And so be comforted by the thought of his infinite gain.

And you, poor mother, when you feel that the light of your humble home has gone out, and the one joy of your dreary life is lost, remember the blessed change for your darling. The want and labor which crush your heart can never reach him; he will never be tired or hungry. And when a few more years of toil shall be passed, you may rest from your labors, and have your darling back again.

"They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of water, and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."

About Retrenchment.

"I must economise somewhere," said Mr. Jacob Norris, and filled his pipe from a fig of the best tobacco. Then, while the blue curls of smoke wreathed his forehead, the farmer began to decide what he could do without. He had no wife, but he had two little boys, and his household affairs were under the charge of an elderly housekeeper, who was truly economical.

"What can I cut off that I have now? I wonder what I can do without."

"Here's your paper, sir," said the housekeeper, laying down the parcel upon the table by the farmer's side and leaving the room again.

Now Mr. Norris was not a literary man by any means. His library was only composed of the Bible, Watts' Hymns, and a stock of well preserved almanacs, besides, a few dilapidated school books. It may therefore be supposed that he did not care for the paper on his own account. He did, it is true, try to read it upon the Sabbath and during the long winter evenings, but, somehow, the elaborate editorials had a somnolent effect, and the war news and State items got mixed up with his own calculations about crops and profits—yes, he could do without that as well as not. He would stop it the next week.

"Father has the paper come?" eagerly asked the boys, as they came in flushed and beated from their boisterous out of door play.

"Here it is—take it and make much of it. It's the last one that you'll get," and the father tossed the unopened paper across the table, puffing out an unusual quantity of blue smoke, as if in its cloudy veil he would seek to shut out the reproachful faces of his boys.

"Why not?" asked John, with half indignant surprise.

"We can't do without it," asserted Tommy, just ready to cry as he remembered that his father's decisions were usually as unchangeable as the laws of the Medes and Persians.

"Can't afford it. Every thing is so high," and the smoker, a little uncomfortable, hid his face again in the blue cloud.

Tommy, though the youngest, was always the spokesman. So he soon began again.

"Father, you said that everything was high, didn't you?"

"Yes."

"Eggs, butter, cheese, apples, potatoes, and corn and wheat, everything you mean?"

"Yes, of course."

"Then I should like to know why you can't take the paper, for you have not lost anything by the hard times?"

"Boy, keep still. You don't know what you are talking about."

Tommy was silenced but not convinced. John looked sullen, and that paper was read with many tears. But yet the father kept his word. Nor did the retrenchment end here. The boys wanted to attend a singing-school; but it would involve some little expense, so this too was forbidden. And thus also with other equally innocent pleasures. But the father did not give up his strong tea and coffee, nor even the tobacco to which he was so devoted, although its increase of price was proportionally larger than that of any other article. In deed, the village grocer said that he bought more than ever, which we do not doubt, for, in the evenings when he had nothing to do but to calculate profit and loss with such new and strange figures to reckon from, he found the narcotic stimulant quite an aid in the preservation of mental quietude.

All this while, where were the boys? Mr. Norris stopped his family paper, a religious paper too, the favorite of his deceased wife, two years ago, leaving his children with no home recreation, and with no way of obtaining the news except the objectionable one of hanging around the stores. Mr. Norris himself cared but little about the progress of any part of the world save the markets, which he weekly visited.

In the Crimean war, on listening awhile to discussions relative to the respective merits of the officers of the Russian and allied armies, he had electrified the company by declaring himself in favor of the Russian officers, saying among other like wise things: "There's old Sevastopol; he'll give 'em some." Nor was he much wiser with regard to the war for the Union and liberty. So the boys could gain no correct information about public events at home, and were driven to the stores and post office.

Had they learned nothing there but the news; could they have been deaf to all save the political discussions, all might have been well. But alas, they heard and learned far more! There was coarse ribaldry, heartless irreverence, and often profanity—vices against which Mr. Norris had given his children no safeguard. The counsels of the religious paper might have done them some good. At all events it would have supplied reading for an evening or two. The singing school might not only have saved, but also have employed profitably two evenings more, and then there were a few books of history and biography, with a few innocent games, for which they had asked with no effect; how useful they would have been. But Mr. Norris could not afford it. Let us see what these safeguards would have cost, for one winter, at the highest estimate. First, the paper, which was then but two dollars. That, then, would have been but fifty cents for three months. The singing-school, including books, could not have been more than three dollars, very likely not so much; and juvenile histories of England and the United States, with one or two other profitable books for boys could have been obtained for a like sum. Allow one dollar more for the games which the boys desired—they would not have asked so much but for the dearth of all other amusement—and we find an agreeable and useful provision made for the evenings of three months at an outlay of only seven dollars and fifty cents. Now, could not Mr. Norris afford this? Let us consider what he afforded for himself. Not to mention the strong tea and coffee, which injured his nerves and his digestion, rendering necessary an annual doctor's bill of ten or fifteen dollars, we will look at his tobacco alone. As he not only smoked, but chewed, all will grant that he must have expended for that luxury, at least twenty-five dollars a year. His grocer, who ought to know, called it thirty. But placing it at the lowest estimate, in one quarter—the three months of which we speak, he would have dissolved in smoke and saliva six dollars and twenty-five cents—nearly all for which his boys had asked, and they doubtless desired more than they would, had their first and most reasonable request been complied with. Thus it will be seen that the giving up of tobacco alone, and a trifling reduction in the strength of his tea and coffee would have more than supplied sensible recreation for his children through the winter. If we take into the account the probable reduction in his physician's bill, had he denied himself of his nerve destroying luxuries, we see at once that it would have furnished, in addition to the above, a daily paper and some useful books of general information, for which, though he would not see it, he was suffering himself. Surely ought for this was needless.

Now, we do not assert that because two years ago, Jacob Norris chose the above method of

retrenchment—cutting off the mental food of his family, rather than deny himself of that which was neither food or raiment—we do not say that it is altogether because of this that John and Thomas Norris are to-day in the State Reform school. The cause lies back of that. Their mother had been dead four years, and all that while they had missed the gentle hand that had led them toward heaven and holiness. But their father had, up to the "hard times" indulged them a little in the tastes and fancies which they had been taught by their mother. Their way had been too thorny, but there was here and there a blossom, too dark, but there were occasional gleams of light, and over the roughness of the way they had found a little aid.

When, however, the war and kindred topics clothed dangerous resorts with a new fascination; when vice grew bold and unrebuked in street, store, and office, then the boys were cast into the vortex with nothing to save them from contamination.

Parents, guardians, in times like the present, retrenchment is necessary, but see that you pamper not your own selves at the risk of the souls beneath your charge. Better that your tea and coffee should be weak, better that the fire in your pipes should go out, than that the fires of vice should burn in the heart of your sons, far better that you should even suffer from self-denial than that, too late you should take up the sad wail of King David: "Would God I had died for thee, Oh Absalom, my son."

Such was the inscription under a picture of Christ on the cross.

A young man stood gazing upon it. He was the son of Christian parents; had been trained in the knowledge of truth and duty; had from childhood been an attendant at the sanctuary and on the means of grace, and at times more or less thoughtful, though he had not given himself to his Saviour.

But now as he read that inscription, "This have I done for thee; what hast thou done for me?" it went like an arrow to his heart, and the thought of a wasted and wasting life rose up before him, with all its guilty ingratitude, its neglect of the Saviour, its unfulfilled obligations, and its pressing duties; and he resolved, in dependence on divine grace, to begin from that day a new life in Christ Jesus, devoting himself to love and serve him, and do his will for time and eternity.

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Oil Fountains 3000 years ago.

"The rock poured me out rivers of oil."—Job.

So said Job respecting his days of prosperity. He was very rich in sheep, and oxen, and gold and silver. And why should he not be, when the "rock poured him out rivers of oil"? We have no particular description of Job's Oil fountains, but they must have been abundant, and of great value. The favored people of our times, and especially of our land, can learn some good lessons of encouragement from these words of Job. Especially may the enterprising "Oil producers" find incentives here for property prosecuting their plans.

Notice, first, Job became the richest man in all that Eastern world. His wealth did not destroy his reverence for God, and his obedience to his holy law; for he was a just man, that feared God and avoided evil—a good example for all rich men.

Secondly, he was benevolent. He did not allow the laborer to work without pay; nor the poor to go without clothing, nor to lodge in the street. Here, observe, those who like Job increase in riches, should increase in doing good.

Thirdly, Job was a perfectly honest man. He did not misrepresent matters. While the rock poured him out rivers of oil—fountains of the Lord's providing—he did not take away by fraud or force from others, but set a bright example for the imitation of others.

Fourthly, Job did not make his wealth his chief good. He conscientiously affirmed that he had not made the "most fine gold his confidence." How well for all who are seeking gain at the present day, if they would regard his pious example, and keep their conscience clear at this