

YOUTH'S DEPARTMENT.

BIBLE LESSONS.

Sunday, August 12th, 1866.

JOHN xviii. 28-40: Christ's trial. 1 KINGS xviii. 1-16: Elijah meets Obadiah. Recite—PHILIPPIANS II. 6, 7, 8.

Sunday, August 19th, 1866.

JOHN xix. 1-16: Pilate delivers Christ to be crucified. 1 KINGS xviii. 17-46: Elijah prays for rain. Rain comes. Recite—ECCLESIASTES IX. 16-18.

The early home of Jesus.

Four miles south of the strong Greek city of Sephoris, hidden away among gentle hills, then covered from the base to the crown with vineyards and fig-trees, lay a natural nest or basin of rich red and white earth, star like in shape, about a mile in width, and wondrously fertile. Along the scarred and chalky slope of the highest of these hills spread a small and lovely village, which, in a land where every stone seemed to have a story, is remarkable as having had no public history and no distinguishable native name. No great road led up to this sunny nook. No traffic came into it, no legions marched through it. Trade, war, adventure, pleasure, pomp passed by it, flowing from west to east, from east to west, along the Roman road. But the meadows were aglow with wheat and barley. Near the low ground ran a belt of gardens, fenced with loose stones, in which myriads of green figs, red pomegranates and golden citrons ripened in the summer sun. High up the slopes, which were lined and planted like the Rhine at Bingen, hung vintages of purple grapes. In the plain, among the corn and beneath the mulberry trees and figs, shone daisies, poppies, tulips, lilies and anemones, endless in their profusion, brilliant in their dyes.

Low down on the hill side sprang a well of water, bubbling, plentiful and sweet; and above this fountain of life, in a long street straggling from the fountain to the synagogue, rose the homesteads of many shepherds, craftsmen and vinedressers. It was a lovely and humble place, of which no poet, no ruler, no historian of Israel had ever yet taken note. No Rachel had been met and kissed into love at this well; no Ruth had gathered up the sheaves of barley in yon fields; no tower had been built for observation on this height; no camp had been pitched for battle in that vale. That One who would become dearer to the fancies of men than either Ruth or Rachel then walked through these fields, drew water at this spring, passed up and down the lanes of this hamlet, no seer could have then surmised. The place was more than obscure. The Arab may have pitched his black tent by the well, the magistrate of Sephoris must have known the village name, but the hamlet was never mentioned by the Jewish scribes. In the Bible, in the Talmud, in the writings of Josephus we search in vain for any records of this sacred place. Like its happy neighbors Nain and Endor, it was the abode of husbandmen and oil pressers, whose lives were spent in the synagogue and in the olive grove, away from the bright Greek cities and the busy Roman roads. No doubt it had once been possessed of either an Arab or Hebrew name, but we do not know that name except in its Hellenic form.

The Greeks call the town Nazaret or Nazareth.—"The Holy Land," by W. Hepworth Dixon.

Child-prayer.

"O God! bless father and mother, and sister Mary, and please make my boots go on easy," was the prayer of a little boy that prayed for what he wanted. He did not use a great deal of circumlocution to pray for things he did not want. His boots were the things that troubled him most; and it was very natural he should tell his Father about them.

To be sure, they were only boots—low, earthly things, that many good people would think not fit to take to the throne of grace. Not so thought the little boy. He thought he had a right to go to his Father with anything that troubled him. Maybe his pinching boots had made him say bad words, and put him in a bad humor. At any rate, he wanted them to "go on easy," and why not pray for the thing he wanted?

How very natural for a child to say what it thinks and tell what it wants!

It seems to me that often children have a truer idea of prayer than many grown people. They pray for what they desire with a beautiful simplicity of faith and trust. Older people pray more for the things they suppose they ought to pray for, than for the very things they really do want. If they get an answer to their prayer, they are more surprised than they would have been had they not obtained it.

Many people pray for the heathen, for their country, for the prosperity of Zion, for the suppression of wrong and wickedness in general, and for the hastening on of that "glorious day when all shall know the Lord, from the least even unto the greatest"—leaving their own individual needs and wants quite out of the category of their supplications.

They pray for many good and desirable things; but they too often omit to pray for those very things that more than all others have a positive and immediate relation to their own individual life. They pray long and loud for many things they really care but very little about—things that to them are a mere abstrac-

tion, having no life or power over their own hearts and consciences.

How many enter their closet and bend their knees to say something after this fashion: "O thou adorable Father! thou art the infinite, eternal, unchangeable Jehovah, the only wise God! who holdeth the earth in a balance, and the nations are as dust before thee; this world is thy footstool, and the inhabitants thereof are as vile worms in thy sight! Be pleased, gracious and Almighty Lord, to look upon the work of thy hand, and upon a vast multitude of miserable sinners, and forgive the trespasses of a whole world lying in sin and wickedness."

Would it not oftener be a more real expression of need and want to pray sometimes in this manner: "O God! be merciful to me a sinner. I have been angry and done wrong. Forgive me, O my Father, for cuffing my child beside the ears, when she tripped her foot, broke the platter, and spoiled my breakfast. Forgive me for speaking a hasty word to the servant and a cross word to my wife. Make me more tender and patient, loving and forbearing. Keep me from wrong motives of action, from greed of gain, and from overreaching bargains. Give me true and honest success in business; enable me to live a better man, and make a holier, happier home."

Let us have more child prayer. Let us pray more earnestly for the things we really want, and not be surprised if we obtain them!—Independent.

Slow of Speech.

Many are ready to offer Moses's excuse of "slow of speech," when urged to do their duty in speaking to the impenitent. But it is not eloquent words that we need so much as a feeling heart. All the brilliant rhetoric in the world could never melt an icy heart. It wants the warm sun's rays of Jesus' love flowing out from a heart that is wholly his and falling directly on the heart we seek to influence.

Love for Jesus, and love for poor, lost souls speeding down to eternal burnings, give the most effective eloquence to the slowest lips.

A dear young girl, whose heart Jesus had touched, was burdened with sorrow and anxiety for her worldly, impenitent father. She prayed for him in agony, but how dare she approach one she so deeply loved and revered upon the subject so near to her heart? But at length, summoning all her courage, she resolved to speak with him on the all important matter.

"Father, I wish to speak to you," she said, with a beating heart and faltering lips.

"Well, daughter, what is it?" he asked pleasantly.

The burdened heart could contain itself no longer. Bursting into an agony of tears, she said, only.

"Your soul, father, your soul!"

That man of the world felt his heart pierced as with one of God's own arrows. He could only answer with choking voice, "Daughter, I will." And she led him to Jesus.

Remember this, dear lamb of Jesus, when you think you can say nothing to win sinners to him.—Sunday-School Times.

Sunday-school Teachers.

Any one who has had much experience in Sunday-schools, as teacher or superintendent, must be convinced that there are many engaged in this work who cannot say that they really love and enjoy it. Some are teachers because they did not like to refuse when called upon. Some because they feel that it is somebody's duty, and it might as well be they as any one else. Some because they are driven by a stern sense of duty to do something, and select this as the easiest they can do. And some, but comparatively few, are led by love for the Master and a sincere desire to do good for his sake. And this may be the great reason why not more is accomplished by the mass of teachers. Great and glorious as are the results of this kind of labor, and as much as we should rejoice over what has been accomplished, still it must be admitted that Sunday-schools are not doing what we have a right to expect from the blessing which God promises to all faithful laborers in his vineyard. How many pastors and superintendents have been left to exclaim, Oh for teachers who love their work, and who pray without ceasing for the children God has committed to them! Oh for teachers who labor to win souls, and whose strength in their work is "the joy of the Lord!"

To few are there such inducements held out as to the Sunday-school teacher. He labors generally among the select children of the land, he can sow the good seed of the word under the most favorable circumstances, and if any one should be "constrained by the love of Christ" it is he.

May teachers who are disposed to halt in their calling, feeling that they have toiled all night and caught nothing, and who may be yet uninfluenced by love for souls, or love for Jesus, hear a voice calling them to come up higher, and to experience a joy like that the disciples felt when they obeyed the command, "launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught."—National Baptist.

Is it a sin.

1—It is a sin for men to disfigure their bodies, injure their health, corrupt their minds, and shorten their lives by taking intoxicating liquor. 2—It is a sin for men to neglect their families, punish their wives and children, and increase misery at home by drinking intoxicating liquors. 3—It is a sin to associate with persons who

frequent grog-shops, where disputing, swearing, and quarrelling are carried on through drinking the drunkard's drink.

4—It is a sin to set a bad example to your children in getting drunk, or partly drunk, by which they may become drinkers and bad children, or perhaps get into prison.

5—It is a sin to favor evil practices by having any thing to do with strong drink, and thus neglecting the cause of sobriety, virtue, religion, and goodness.

6—It is a sin to convert as much good grain into poisonous drink, as would feed all the poor in America; and this you encourage by drink-intoxicating liquors.

7—It is a sin for you to war against the warnings of conscience; and this you often do when taking intoxicating liquor.

8—It is a sin to drink those liquors which fill our work-houses with paupers, our jails with prisoners, and our mad houses with insane people.

9—It is a sin to squander your money for the drunkard's drinks with which you should pay your old debts, support your families, and provide for infirmity and old age.

You already feel the punishment for these sin; but unless you repent and forsake them, what an awful reckoning may you expect in another world!

No course is safe for you or any other person but *teetotal*.

Trying Preachers in Missouri.

The *Christian Index* is responsible for the following:

It is well known that some of the Judges in Missouri are very reluctant to enforce the law against ministers of the gospel for exercising their profession without having taken the test oath, and avail themselves of every pretence to discharge those who are accused. We tell the following tale as 'tis told to us, vouching for nothing;

Three ministers, charged with the crime of preaching "the glorious gospel of the Son of God," were arraigned before a certain Judge. They were regularly indicted, and it was understood that the proof against them was very clear.

"Are you a preacher?" said the Judge to one of them.

"Yes, sir," replied the culprit.

"To what denomination do you belong?"

"I am a Christian, sir." (With dignity.)

"A Christian! What do you mean by that? Are not all preachers Christians?"

"I belong to the sect usually called, but wrongly called, Campbellites." (Not so much dignity.)

"Ah! Then you believe in baptizing people, in order that they may be born again, do you?"

"I do, sir." (Defiantly.)

"Mr. Sheriff, discharge that man! He is an innocent man! he is indicted for preaching the gospel, and there isn't a word of gospel in the stuff that he preaches! its only some of Alexander Campbell's nonsense. Discharge the man!"

Exit Campbellite, greatly rejoicing.

"Are you a preacher?" said the Judge, addressing the next criminal.

"I am, sir," said the miscreant.

"Of what denomination are you?"

"I am a Methodist, sir." (His looks showed it.)

"Do you believe in falling from grace?"

"I do, sir." (Without hesitation.)

"Do you believe in sprinkling people, instead of baptizing them?"

"I believe that people can be baptized by sprinkling." (Much offended.)

"Do you believe in baptizing babies?"

"It is my opinion, sir, that infants ought to be baptized." (Indignantly.)

"Not a word of scripture for anything of the kind, sir!" shouted his Honor. "Mr. Sheriff, turn that man loose! He is no preacher of the gospel! The gospel is the truth, and there isn't a word of truth in what that man teaches! Turn him loose! It's ridiculous to indict men on such frivolous pretences! Turn him loose!"

Methodist disappears, not at all hurt in his feelings by the judicial abuse he had received.

"What are you, sir?" said the Judge to the third felon.

"Some people call me a preacher, sir?" (Meekly.)

"What is your denomination?"

"I am a Baptist." (Head up.)

His Honor's countenance fell, and he looked sober and sad. After a pause he said:

"Do you believe in salvation by grace?"

"I do." (Firmly.)

"Do you teach that immersion only is baptism?"

"That is my doctrine." (Earnestly.)

"And you baptize none but those who believe in Jesus Christ?"

"That is my faith and practice." (With emphasis.)

"My friend, I fear it will go hard with you; I see you are indicted for preaching the gospel, and it appears to me, that by your own confession you are guilty."

Baptist looks pretty blue.

"May it please your Honor," said the Baptist's counsel, springing to his feet, "that man never preached the gospel. I have heard him say a hundred times that he only tried. I have heard him try myself."

"Mr. Sheriff, discharge that man! He's not indicted for trying! There's nothing said about the mere effort! Let him go, sir! Turn him loose! Send him about his business! I am astonished that the state's attorney should

annoy the Court with such frivolous indictments!"

Exit Baptist determined to "try" again. Court adjourned.

"God save the state and this Honorable Court!" exclaimed the Sheriff.

"Amen!" said the three preachers.

And after all, say we, as ridiculous as the story may seem, it has a moral. If the state has a right to prohibit the preaching of the gospel, it has a right to decide what the gospel is; and when this is done, we have a national church; and the adulterous connection between church and state becomes complete.

Written Prayer.

THE PROCESS OF MAKING FORMS OF PRAYER IN THE ENGLISH CHURCH.

An article in the *Cornhill Magazine* gives the following programme:

One archbishop is first ordered by the queen to prepare a prayer on a given subject; this done, he is required to submit it for approval to the lords of the Privy Council; these gentlemen, we are told, commonly make some alteration in it, sufficient at least to maintain their right to alter what they please. It has been said that a member of the Privy Council, many years ago, anxious to re-assure the minds of those who feared "such Puseyite nonsense as the independence of the church," remarked, "No one who had ever been present at a meeting of Privy Council, and seen the archbishop stand waiting while the lay members of the Council were reading and altering his prayer, would ever again talk about that." The prayer, after being duly operated on, is sent, as it were, bleeding from all its wounds, to the queen's printer, and is thence dispatched to the parochial clergy, who are ordered to read it aloud in their respective churches, and read it is accordingly. Certainly it seems at first sight, strange, that having appointed an archbishop, and given him a subject for prayer, we yet cannot trust him to compose a fitting form without correction; and no doubt there are those who deem the ungodly creatures and lax theologians to be found in the Privy Council wholly unfit either to suggest or criticise in such matters. But as yet our people prefer to be in bondage to the State rather than to the bishops, and we like, though indirectly, to have some say as to what we will pray for, and how we will do it.

The word "Selah."

The translators of the Bible have left the Hebrew word *Selah*, which occurs so often in the psalms, as they found it, and of course the English reader often asks his minister or some learned friend what it means. And the minister or learned friend has most often been obliged to confess ignorance, because it is a matter in regard to which the most learned have by no means been of one mind. The Targums and most of the Jewish commentators give to the word the meaning of *eternally, forever*. Rabbi Kimchi regards it as a sign to elevate the voice. The authors of the Septuagint translation appear to have regarded it as a musical or rhythmical note. Herder regards it as indicating a change of tone; Matheson as a musical note, equivalent, perhaps, to the word *repeat*. According to Luther and others, it means *silence!* Gesenius explains it to mean: "Let the instruments play and the singers stop." Wocher regards it as equivalent to *sursum corda*—up my soul! Sommer, after examining all the seventy-four passages in which the word occurs, recognizes in every case "an actual appeal or summons to Jehovah." They are calls for aid and prayers to be heard, expressed either with entire directness, or if not in the imperative "Hear, Jehovah!" or "Awake, Jehovah!" and the like, still earnest addresses to God that he would remember and hear, etc. The word itself he regards as indicating a blast of trumpets by the priests. *Selah*, itself, he thinks an abridged expression used for *Higgaion Selah*—*Higgaion* indicating the sound of stringed instruments, and *Selah* a vigorous blast of trumpets.—*Bibliotheca Sacra*.

The Invitation and the Conversion.

In the family of a pious deacon in London boarded a young mechanic of foreign birth, an amiable, but not pious youth. For some time, the laying of the Bible upon the table for family prayers was the signal for his leaving the room. Further acquaintance led him to linger occasionally during this service. One evening, as he was preparing to go out to a place of amusement, the deacon said:

"I think that if you will go with me to our prayer meeting you would get more good, and I trust, more pleasure than you will find at the place to which you are going."

"A prayer meeting! What is that?"

"Why we meet to sing hymns, read the Scriptures, and to ask God to bless us."

The young man hesitated.

"You had better go," said the deacon's wife, in a kind and inviting tone.

"So I will," was the reply.

He went, and in that meeting of a dozen persons on Maize Hill, Greenwich, God began a work which led a now noted man to the Saviour of sinners. That young man's name was John G. Oncken.

Religion was always Faith and Obedience: under every dispensation.

He who sends the storm, steers the vessel.