

Months' Department.

BIBLE LESSONS.

Sunday, May 12th, 1867.

Acts xiv. 18-28: Paul stoned. 2 Kings xv. 21-38: Jotham reigns.

Recite—Psalm lxxvii.

Sunday, May 19th, 1867.

Acts xv. 1-21: Concerning Circumcision. 2 Kings xvi: Ahaz' wicked reign.

Recite—PROVERBS vi. 20-23.

"Playing for keeps."

"Why! my son," said Mrs. Fielding, "where did you get so many marbles?" She had been looking for a string in Paul's drawer, and had picked up a bag full of marbles.

"Wen 'em," said Paul briefly. "How so?" "Playing for keeps."

"And was that what kept you out so late last night, when mother had told you to come in early?" Paul's handsome face sobered a little, and he said, "Well, I can't help it, the other fellows make me."

"How can they make you, if you don't want to?" "They'll kick me 'cause I've got their marbles, and say it's mean not to give them a chance to win back, and then there'll be two folks kicked, Paul added, emphatically.

"But is it right, Paul?" "I don't know as it is," said he, "but I'm in for it, so here goes," and off he ran to school.

Mrs. Fielding carefully thought over the matter. She had aimed to train Paul to a thorough self control, rather than mere submission to authority. So that evening, when Paul had laid aside his books, and sat beside her for his "good night talk," as he called it, she said: "Paul, what would you think of a drinking man who wanted to reform, and yet kept his cups and well filled bottles constantly in sight?"

"I should think it would take him a good while, besides making it much harder for him." "And the only way in which he could reasonably expect to be delivered from the evil of sin would be by giving up what was constantly a temptation?"

"Yes, of course."

"Could you do it?" Paul lifted up his head proudly, and said, "I should rather think I could."

"Could you give up playing for keeps?"

"But where's the harm?"

"Do you pay for them?" asked his mother.

"Course not, I win 'em."

"So does the gambler win the money staked on the game. Can you tell me any difference in the principle of playing for money, or playing for marbles?"

Paul tried his best to think of some difference, but could not. At length his mother said, "You have admitted that you did not think it right, and that alone is enough to make it wrong to you. Then it has become a passion beyond your control. Ought you not to give it up?"

This was a hard question. Paul was a skillful player, always winning, rarely losing, and the game had become so fascinating as to keep him late after school. "But mother," he said, "Fred Kingsley is my partner, and he and all the other boys will say I am a mean sneak to stop playing now, when I've got their marbles."

"It would be rather mean, too," said she. "What can you do about it? Can you not give up the thing that leads you into temptation?"

"What I give up my marbles! The boys would all laugh at me."

"Hasn't my son the courage to do right when the boys laugh?"

Paul felt ashamed, for he had learned that true courage lies in the heart, and not in the fist. "Can you truly pray, 'Deliver me from this evil,' and keep the temptation in your hands? I wish that you would decide that question before you lie down to night; be assured it will be a great gain if you can make up your mind to control yourself in this, even though it should seem to you very much like losing a right hand."

Paul thought it did seem very much like that, and remarked that it was "tough business." The struggle was severe. For one minute he thought he could, and then the thought of tamely playing marbles "just for play" seemed more than he could submit to, besides knowing how the boys would look upon it.

Mrs. Fielding said nothing for a time, but at length spoke softly, "Our Lord taught us to pray 'Lead us not into temptation.' Do you not need that prayer now?"

Paul sprang up, walked up and down quickly, then came and knelt beside his mother, while she, in a few earnest words, besought the strength and help he so much needed.

Afterward, as they sat beside the fire, he said quietly, "I'll do it, mother."

The boys did laugh some, but Paul's consciousness that he was doing right carried him through, and his manly example did more to check this growing evil than all the teachers had said, and no boy really thought less of him for doing what they knew they would not have dared to do.

Money very difficult to get changed—Matrimony.

GOLDEN WORDS FOR DAILY USE.

Selected from C. H. Spurgeon's "Morning by Morning."

12. Sunday. Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning Psa. xxx. 5.

Happy Leliever, to have so sure, so comforting a hope. Thy head may be crowned with thorny troubles now, but it shall wear a starry crown ere long.

13. Monday. Great multitudes followed Him, and He healed them all, Matt. xii. 15.

Whatever our case may be, the beloved Physician can heal us. We may yet be of good cheer, however severe the struggle with sin and infirmities.

14. Tuesday. But now is Christ risen from the dead, 1 Cor. xv. 20.

The silver thread of resurrection runs through all the believer's blessings, from his regeneration to eternal glory, and binds them together.

15. Wednesday. Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, Psa. lxxiii. 24.

There is a word for thee, O perplexed believer. Live on this day, be assured that thy God will be thy Counsellor and Friend.

16. Thursday. Thou whom my soul loveth, Sol. Song i. 7.

Blessed love this, be not satisfied, O my soul, until thou canst speak of thy interest in it as a reality, made sure by having received the witness of the Holy Spirit.

17. Friday. Wait on the Lord, Psa. xxvii. 14.

This may seem easy, but it is one of the postures which a Christian soldier learns not without years of teaching. Marching is much easier to God's warriors than standing still.

18. Saturday. On mine arm shall they trust, Isa. li. 5.

Oh, tempest tossed believer, it is a happy trouble that drives thee to thy Father; see that thou puttest thy full confidence in Him.

The late Mr. Harbottle.

This little volume* cannot fail to be welcome to many pious persons in the North of England, where the late Mr. Harbottle was well known. It may also be read with advantage by others, as helping to throw light upon a class of men to whom religious bodies are indebted for much of their vitality and solid growth. The men to whom we refer are seldom heard of beyond the districts in which they labour; they have as little of the desire, as they are held to have of the capacity, to shine in high places, and they would almost die of terror at the thought of being pushed forward upon the platform of Exeter Hall. Yet their virtues are in some sense heroic. They toil on, year after year, without ambition, without any visible reward, sufficiently solaced by the Master's smile, and rich in the souls they have won. There are parts of England remote from its great towns, where a stranger with an eye for the spiritually picturesque becomes at once aware of unwonted beauty. Amid the lingering traces of an ancient wilderness he sees nature rejoicing and blossoming. He catches a delicate perfume in the air. Some angel, surely, has passed by unseen, and left a blessing behind. He is amazed at the groups of God-fearing men which cluster far and wide; at the number of sequestered spots where humble buildings are set apart for prayer; at the size and the fervency of the congregations, enriched on the Lord's-day by contributions from a score of hamlets all round. He sees religion become in some sense hereditary, an older generation, by God's effectual blessing, transmitting its pious ways of life and thought to the one now springing up. If the stranger inquires into the history of this charming "development" he probably finds that some good man spent fifty years of his life among these quiet scenes, spending and being spent. With no irreverence, we may call such men our "great obscure." They are the hidden saints and heroes of the church, which, in the fulness of the indwelling Spirit, is found to be most rich even where it seemed to be most poor.

A great living master of French fiction has attempted from his own point of view to draw the outlines of a perfect pastor in Monseigneur Myriel. The drawing is exquisite, and is supposed to touch the ideal. We know, however, and many of our readers know too, that, bating the palace which the good bishop exchanged for an hospital, and the costly vestments which he sold for the poor, the picture is one which could be matched almost to the life in many an outlying corner of English Dissent. We have too much respect for the memory of the subject of this memoir to compare him in all respects with Victor Hugo's model bishop, but in some essential points, ambitious as it may seem, a comparison would hold good. For example, we find in both the same simplicity which makes the old man still a child; the same supreme and all-pervading sense of eternal things, disintegrating and crumbling to dust the artificial distinctions which the world sets up; the same entire and glad devotion to the behests of duty; the same tenderness to the poor; the same oddities of manner; odd, because originating in views of life which most of us are too polished or too worldly to venerate; and finally, the same unique store of curious learning. Mr. Harbottle was a learned man, not in a technical or finished sense, but in the breadth and thoroughness of his explorations at the few chosen points where it fell in with his tastes to make inroads upon the realm of knowledge. Dr. Angus vouches for the extent of his attainments in Hebrew. He ranged pretty freely over the domain of Greek literature, pitying much the moral de-

*A Memoir of Mr. Joseph Harbottle, Baptist Minister, Accrington. With Selections from his Literary Remains. By the Rev. THOMAS TAYLOR, of Totterbank. With a Preface by the Rev. JOSEPH ANGUS, D.D. London: Elliot Stock, 62 Paternoster-row.

formities of Hesiod and the dramatists, and exploring the blindness of Plato, who, in later times and with better opportunities, might, he thought, have shone as a Particular Baptist, but still admiring and enjoying them. He corresponded in Latin with some of the learned lights of Germany, and their letters, overflowing with the stately compliments of the schools, afforded him a quiet solace, irradiated perhaps by just one spark of pride. Tradition relates that a clergyman who had grown somewhat excited during a church-rate contest, received from him an epigrammatic rebuke in Greek, which was perhaps less efficient with the worthy rector than it would have been if written in English. It is also said, and we believe truly, that in his early days he was urged forward in his study of Hebrew by a secret desire to be able to expound the evidences of Christianity to modern Jews in the language of their ancestors before the Babylonish captivity. Whether true or not, the story is eminently characteristic of the simplicity and inexperience which blended with, and partly neutralized, his extensive erudition. It was one of his amusements to clothe some favourite hymn in classical Greek, and a half-quizzical smile expressed the pleasure he felt in making Toplady sing in the language of Pindar. Much of this learned sweetness was wasted on the desert air. It made him happy, and it conferred some benefits upon others, but it was useless compared with what it might have been if it had been seconded by systematic training and a larger knowledge of mankind. We are not without some fear that, after this testimony to his attainments, some of our readers will feel disappointed with his "Literary Remains." They are certainly defective in taste, in harmony, in intellectual insight, and even in culture, but precisely for this reason they suggest a lesson which it would be unpardonable not to apply. In his earlier years, parental piety kept him too carefully from all contact with the world, in which, nevertheless, he had, in due time, like all the rest of us, to play his allotted part. He had been hidden from the great strife, and it is no wonder that he afterwards timidly shrank from it, or that he almost failed to comprehend it. He was also to a large extent self-taught, and self-tuition is not wise whenever it is possible to be taught by others.

Mr. Harbottle's conception of the pastoral office was probably not a perfect one, but it was nearly so on that side where the spirit of the present age creates the greatest risk of failure, and where failure is most fatal. He regarded himself as a minister of Christ, rather than as a minister of one of Christ's churches. He held himself to be bound in service to One whom he adored and loved with a heartier passion than any visible object ever inspired, or could have inspired, within his breast. This divine Master and Friend he felt to be always present. The thought of pleasing Him was one of his every-day motives, mingling with and regulating the common mass, but never losing its rightful superiority. The fear of grieving Him had become habitual, not as an abstract notion, to be decorously recognised as part of the furniture of a Christian's heart, but as a living susceptibility ever in action. As Christ's servant he served His church, not with eye service as men-pleasers, not even as merely rendering spiritual things for temporal, but as a service of love to the Master. This produced in him a degree of meekness and deference in his pastoral intercourse which was in danger of being ascribed to a want of spirit, but which really sprang from the elevation of his ideas. Why should he be exacting with his fellow servants? Why should he be susceptible as to his position in the vineyard so long as he stood firm in the favour of its Lord? What sacrifice of even personal dignity need he scruple to make so that he might win souls? In this simple and self-denying spirit he pursued his vocation year after year. His labours were incessant. In the stormiest nights of winter, wrapped in a "Dreadnought" cloak, he trudged along the road to some cottage prayer-meeting, or distant preaching station. The pocket Testament was always at hand, and the word in season, clothed with unction, ever ready. His prayers were uttered on his bended knees, and he poured forth his whole soul in them. A sigh or a fervent ejaculation would often escape his lips as he wended his way homeward, as he thought of some one whose spiritual interests or domestic griefs awoke his concern. He shrank from publicity, but when duty seemed to call him, he could throw aside his timidity, and become a man of war. To say the truth, he was very hard upon all heretics, from open-communionists to Papists. We crave pardon of our open-communionist friends, making the confession, indeed, in our own despite, but the truth is, he looked upon them as dangerous characters. Perhaps, the hardest thing to draw from him was an admission, in good round terms, of the salvability of unbaptized adults. In his heart he could not but admit it freely enough, but in his words he stuck to what he deemed the record. Is it not written, "Whoso believeth and is baptized?" He clung to the "and is baptized," like the Latin Church to its "siquis." The heretics who most plagued him were the Swedenborgians, whose theological relations to his own school of thought he did not perhaps fully comprehend. An eminent minister of this sect, now in London, was then at Accrington. In a controversial lecture, he threw doubts upon the historical reality of the deluge, in order to make way for a mystical interpretation of the sacred text, and drew some of his arguments from Diodorus. Here he was poaching on his Baptist neighbour's own manor, and there was a glorious "set-to." Before a thousand people, Diodorus, in two big tomes, with sundry others, was borne up the pulpit stairs, and solemnly laid upon the cushion. Diodorus, however, was not so much to be blamed as a certain Ctesias, whose historical

fragments he has preserved. To confute Ctesias a dozen pagan writers were summoned from the shades and ushered into the pulpit. The conditions of the controversy hardly permitted of a satisfactory settlement, but towards that unfortunate Greek, on the score of his enormous lies, Mr. Harbottle never ceased to entertain as vivid a sense of personal resentment as it was possible for him to feel towards any human being.

We pass over one episode of Baptist enterprise in Lancashire, with which Mr. Harbottle was closely connected: we refer to the rise and fall of the "Accrington College." It might some day be worth the telling, as a contribution to our denominational history, but it would occupy more space than we can now afford. Mr. Harbottle's home life was ascetic. The voice of woman or of child seldom cheered his lonely dwelling. To do him justice with one half of our readers, it is only fair to hint a suspicion that the fault was not exclusively his own. Twenty years ago chance threw in our way certain verses which are not included in his "Literary Remains." The manuscript, in his neatest hand, had been found, twenty years before, in a room he had just quitted, slipped inside a lady's work-box. A perusal of those verses would probably satisfy any expert in such matters that the dreary isolation of his after life was a misfortune which he made at least one desperate effort to avoid. It was unsuccessful, and he quietly accepted his fate. Among the sisterhood of the Church it was not difficult to find one or two trusting women who could dust a room without disturbing the books, or pitching manuscripts into the fire, or even insisting upon a too precise order. On certain days of the week, at certain hours, when he was away on his pastoral expeditions, the house was left in their hands, and at night, when his latch key let him in, he found it swept and garnished. Sometimes the sisterhood took the liberty of making a foray in force, during the pastor's absence, "siding things," as they called it, and leaving behind them some creature comforts which told him that ministering angels, names unknown, had been there. For the rest, his wants were few, and his ideas primitive. The fire on his hearth never went out. From midsummer to midsummer, all through the nights, it kept on burning deep and slow. Everything he wanted lay within reach, festooned from the ceiling or arranged along the walls, instruments of science and instruments of cookery, Sophocles close to a gridiron, and Herodotus over a pair of bellows. He was happy as an anchorite in his isolation. His companions were his brooding fancies, and, strange as it may seem, his warm affections. A tenderer heart than his never beat. "He prayeth best who loveth best," is a sentiment which he would have denounced if propounded as a dogma, but which nevertheless inspired his whole life. He never harmed a living thing. His pantry was at times invaded and his cheese nibbled, but he caught the thieves alive, and had them conveyed to a wider sphere of action in the fields. The microscope applied to a drop of water embarrassed his logical position, but he was content to be inconsistent. Unkindness sorely pained him, but it seldom drew from him a harsh or reproachful word. His childish memories lived with him day by day, and the forms of all the friends he loved. He had a tea service which had been his mother's. That noble and priceless legacy always figured on the table alone. No other bit of china ware was ever allowed to come near to it. This gradation of ranks extended to his books and all his household gear, the station of every article being determined by some sentiment associated with its history. There were *imperatores, reges, duces, comites*, and so forth, a regular feudal system bound together by ties of subordination and homage. He would quietly laugh at himself as he explained these mysteries to some youthful guest. On Lord's-day evenings, after his work was done, he liked to take a few young friends home with him.—The attraction was strong. He would regale them with his cheerful talk, not unminged with pious cautions, and for their supper he always had at hand the whitest of bread and a pot of the freshest honey.

The poem inserted last in his "Literary Remains" displays a temper sufficiently stern and grim, but this was reserved exclusively for principles and habits of life which he deemed wrong. In his condemnation of such things he was unrelenting and almost fierce. At the expense of oddity he always made his words harmonise with certain fixed ideas. The clock in the tower of the parish church was "the steeple-clock;" a church he could only recognise as an assembly of faithful men. He could not bear to be called "reverend," it gave him pain, a susceptibility which we follow his biographer in respecting. He was once in London acting a fatherly part to a batch of youngsters whom Nonconforming zeal had brought up from Lancashire to attend the first Anti-State Church Conference. Of course, while in London they might as well see the "lions," but alas, there was many a "lion" although perfectly tame, he could not be induced to see. St. Paul's, for instance;—well, he would take them to the door, and they might use their liberty, but, as for himself, he would prefer waiting there till they came out. Within that famous edifice there were the statues of military heroes and worldly philosophers. It was a place consecrated partly to God and partly to man's vain and fleeting glories. He would have nothing to do with anything in which the world presumed to go shares with God. Placable and yielding in all matters affecting merely himself, he paused at the faintest lines which his convictions had drawn as the demarcation of duty, and no persuasion could induce him to go beyond. Perhaps some of these reminiscences will provoke a smile. Assuredly we do not put him forward