

Booths' Department.

BIBLE LESSONS.

Sunday, May 31st, 1868.

MATTHEW iv. 17: MARK i. 14-15: LUKE iv. 14-15: JOHN iv. 43-45: iv. 46-54: Jesus teaches publicly in Galilee and heals the son of a Noblienan lying ill at Capernaum.

Recite.—1 JOHN v. 1-4.

Sunday, June 7th, 1868.

MARK iv. 13-16: LUKE iv. 16-31: Jesus at Nazareth, he is there rejected, and fixes his abode at Capernaum.

Poor Matt; or, the Clouded Intellect.

BY JEAN INGELow.

'And could he do anything for the boy?' asked the visitor.
'No, ma'am,' answered the woman, with a sigh; 'he shook his head, and said all we could do was to keep him as warm as possible. He was eight years old afore he could speak plain enough to be understood. The neighbor's children taught him, and a vast deal o' pains they took; for, dear heart! the difficulty is to get anything into his head; when once that's done, there's no fear of his ever forgetting it.'

'But that is an advantage—is it not?'
'Not so much as you would think, ma'am. Now you see how peaceable he is, sitting in the sun as happy as can be, with his jackdaw on his knee; but there are some words that, if he was but to hear them mentioned, would put him into such a fret and a ferment as is pitiful to see.'

'Does he go to church?' asked the visitor, who felt more and more interest in the poor child.

'Yes, ma'am,' said the woman; 'but I reckon he has no notion of praying, and sometimes the organ frightens him a little; but we have taught him to behave very pretty, only sometimes (and that's not often, I'm sure) the poor child will give a little laugh when he sees anybody come in that he knows; and the neighbors never take any notice; but some people in the other hamlet set it about that he disturbed the congregation, and ought not to come. So I walked over to Mr. Green, and I said, "Sir, if it is your wish, I and my sister will take it in turns to stay at home with the boy." "Why should you, Mary Goddard?" says he, "he behaves as well as many children that have all their faculties; and I do not see why you should be kept from public worship on his account; and as for the child," said he, "I should be sorry to baptise him, for who can tell whether he may not learn something, however little? Indeed, it is my wish that he should come."

'And do you think he has learned anything at church?' asked the visitor.

'No, ma'am, because he never seems to understand anything, unless the person that says it stands close to him and speaks to him, and attends to nothing else; but Mr. Green said it was not for us to limit the Almighty and decide whether he could understand or no; we were to do our duty and leave the rest.'

'That is the only way to avoid anxiety,' observed the visitor.

'At one time,' continued the woman, 'we did think he was more sensible, and Mr. Green let him come to school; the neighbors' children used to wheel him there in a barrow, but they could teach him nothing; and at last Mr. Green came and told us, in a very kind way, that he could not let him stay because he disturbed the other children, and wanted so much watching. But Mrs. Green, when she found how much we took it to heart, said she would try what she could do for him; and, sure enough, she was a clever lady, and she made him know more in three months than anybody else has taught him all his life; but she fell ill and died, dear lady; and there was an end of his learning.'

'What did she teach him?' asked the visitor, who was beginning to consider whether she could not take up the work.

'She made him understand that there is a God,' said the woman, 'and made him have a wonderful sort of reverence for God; and you would hardly believe, ma'am, that when that boy has done a wrong thing, such as throwing things in the fire, which he will do sometimes, or overturning the milk, which he knows he ought not to meddle with, he will go and hide himself in the closet till it gets dark, that, as he says, God may not see him; for you know it is too much to expect that poor child to understand that God can see through a door.'

'Poor fellow,' said the lady; 'but what a proof this is of his entire belief of what he has been told.'

'Yes, ma'am, that is what Mr. Green said when I told him. "Mary Goddard," he said, "this ought to put us to shame; how few of us have the presence of God so clearly in our minds, and are so much afraid when we know we have done amiss." Now, Mrs. Green being dead, we cannot exactly find out what she taught Matt, for though he can turn things over in his mind, he cannot tell them to us. However, we noticed from that time that Matt had a great habit of looking up in the sky, and I have no doubt, ma'am, he told you, if you asked him, what he was looking for.'

'Yes, he did; and I felt very much surprised,' said the lady.

'Ah,' remarked the woman, 'I thought so, ma'am. I saw you were surprised when you

came in, and I made up my mind you should know the rights of the story, if you would stop awhile. Well, ma'am, Matt spends the chief part of his time, on fine days, looking for God; and knowing God sees everything, seems to make more difference to him than to us that have our senses.'

'And there he again reproves us,' observed the visitor.

'What you say is very true, ma'am. Now the neighbors never tell him any lies,—that would be a wicked thing,—so I know none of them ever made him expect to see what we shall never see in this world; so I reckon that Matt put two things together, and thought if the Almighty could see him, why He might be seen.'

'And do you know whether he learned any more,' asked the visitor, 'of this kind friend?'
'Mrs. Green told me she had tried to give him a notion of the Saviour,' said the woman; 'but she didn't think he understood her at all. He only knows the name of Jesus Christ, I think; for one day when the sky was uncommonly clear, he told me that Jesus Christ lived up there with God. Mrs. Green showed him pictures, and took a deal of pains, but I don't think she made any more than that out of her teaching; but she taught him to count and say the days of the week; and altogether he has taken much more notice since she instructed him.'

The woman had evidently been so well pleased to have some one speak to her who could sympathize with her, and take a kind interest in her poor charge, that her visitor had staid much longer than she had at first intended. She now prepared to leave the cottage; and before doing so, observed that she could not but think, in spite of the boy's deficient sense, that he might be taught to occupy himself in some slight way, such as netting or plaiting straw; and she offered to come and try to teach him. The woman shook her head, and said,—

'I am very much obliged to you, ma'am, I am sure; but it is not the want of sense that makes me afraid he could not learn, so much as the weakness of his hands; and in cold weather they are so numb that he is more helpless by far than you see him now.'

Still the visitor said she should like to try, and offered to come the following day and begin; the woman thanked her, and consented with gratitude, declaring that if once the boy could be taught anything he never forgot it. The visitor then went away, saying, as she passed the poor child, who was now basking idly in the sun,—

'The next time I come to see Matt I shall give him a penny.'

She said this partly to test his memory, partly to make him anxious to see her again. His face brightened; and as she walked home over the level sands, the consideration of how great a contrast there was between his powers and her own occupied her mind, and she thought of those words of serious meaning: 'To whom much is given, of him shall much be required.'

There was a great deal of comfort in his humble home; his grandfather seemed to be a quiet, sober man; his aunts were industrious women; a healthful breeze came in at the open door, and the two little casement windows supplied two such views as are not often to be met with. From the front casement might be seen the grand spectacle of the open sea; some heavy clouds had come up, and their leaden gray hues were reflected on the shifting waves, while vast flocks of sea-birds were wheeling in great circles, at every turn the white of their wings flashing out; the tide was rapidly coming in, and the wind rising, every beat of the breakers on the soft sand sounding like low thunder. The other casement looked inland, for the kitchen occupied all the lower floor of the little cottage; the clouds hanging only over the sea, there was still sunshine over the open fields and wide marsh of the brightest green; church spires stood up here and there, but the district seemed to be so thinly populated that it was wonderful how they could gather congregations. Behind the cottage was a little garden; its walls sheltered a few rose trees, a number of scented flowers, and some apple trees, from the force of the wind; a sweet brier was trained to climb over one of its trees, and falling blossoms were wafted on to the ironing-table, and dropped among the delicate laces which the woman was smoothing. But the warmth of that day and its steady sunshine were all that gave pleasure to the idiot boy—the grand sea sweeping in, the wheeling sea-birds, the luxuriant fields and towering cliffs, might all have vanished away like a dream, and taken no part of his enjoyment from him.

The lady walked home; and some things that had been said of poor Matt recurred to her mind, especially his own strange words, 'Matt was looking for God.' Alas, how few of us are looking for God! 'although He be not far from any of us.' In His works how few discern Him; but can look on the glorious sun and only consider its warmth and brightness, and on the green earth and only count up the harvest it yields, without thinking of Him who ordained them.

In the ways of His providence, also, how few look for God! Even among those who desire to serve Him, how few search diligently that they may find Him; observing and pondering on the trials and troubles as well as the mercies that he has ordained for them, and considering what effect they were intended to produce on their minds and characters; whether they have worked together for good; whether impatience has caused the more painful dispensations to be merely punishments; or whether submission has received them as discipline, and found them to be blessings in the end!

To be continued.

The Old, Old Story.

PART I.

THE STORY WANTED.

Tell me the old, old Story,
Of unseen things above;—
Of Jesus and His Glory,
Of Jesus and His Love.

Tell me the Story simply,
As to a little child;
For I am weak and weary,
And helpless, and deluded.

Tell me the Story slowly,
That I may take it in—
That wonderful Redemption,
God's Remedy for sin!

Tell me the Story often,
For I forget so soon!
The "early dew" of morning
Has passed away at noon!

Tell me the Story softly,
With earnest tones and grave;
Remember, I'm the sinner
Whom Jesus came to save.

Tell me the Story always
If you would really be,
In any time of trouble,
A comforter to me.

Tell me the same old Story
When you have cause to fear
That this world's empty glory
Is costing me too dear.

Yes, and when that World's Glory
Shall dawn upon my soul,
Tell me the old, old Story,
"Christ Jesus makes thee whole!"

PART II.

THE STORY TOLD.

You ask me for "the Story
Of unseen things above;—
Of Jesus and His Glory,
Of Jesus and His Love."

You want "the old, old Story,"
And nothing else will do!
Indeed I cannot wonder,
It always seems so new!

I often wish that some one
Would tell it me, each day;
I never should get tired
Of what they had to say.

But I am wasting moments!
Oh! how shall I begin
To tell "the old, old Story,"
How Jesus saves from sin?

Listen, and I will tell you;
God help both you and me,
And make "the old, old Story"
His Message unto thee!

Once, in a pleasant garden,
God placed a happy pair;
And all within was peaceful,
And all around was fair.

But oh! they disobeyed Him!
The one thing He denied
They longed for, took, and tasted;
They ate it, and—they died!

Yet, in His love and pity,
At once the Lord declared
How man, though lost and ruined,
Might after all be spared!

For one of Eve's descendants,
Not sinful, like the rest,
Should spoil the work of Satan,
And man be saved and blest!

He should be son of Adam,
But Son of God as well,
And bring a full Salvation
From sin, and death, and hell.

Hundreds of years were over;
Adam and Eve had died,
The following generation,
And many more beside.

At last, some shepherds watching
Beside their flocks, at night,
Were startled in the darkness
By strange and heavenly Light.

One of the holy Angels
Had come from Heaven above,
To tell the true, true Story,
Of Jesus and his Love.

He came to bring "glad tidings;"
"You need not, must, not, fear;
For Christ, your new-born Saviour,
Lies in the village near!"

And many other angels
Took up the Story then;
"To God on High be Glory,
Good-will, and Peace, to men."

And was it true—that Story?
They went at once to see,
And found Him in a manger,
And knew that it was He.

He whom the Father promised,
So many ages past,
Had come to save poor sinners;
Yes, He had come at last!

He was "content to do it,"
To seek and save the lost,
Although He knew beforehand—
Knew all that it would cost.

He lived a life most holy;
His every thought was Love,
And every action showed it,
To man, and God above.

His path in life was lowly;
He was a "Working-man;"
Who knows the poor man's trials
So well as Jesus can?

His last three years were lowly!
He could no more be hid;
And time and strength would fail me
To tell the good He did.

He gave away no money,
For He had none to give;
But He had power of healing,
And made dead people live.

He did kind things so kindly!
It seemed His heart's delight
To make poor people happy,
From morning until night!

He always seemed at leisure
For every one who came;
However tired or busy,
They found Him just "the same."

He heard each tale of sorrow
With an attentive ear,
And took away each burden
Of suffering, sin, or fear.

He was "a Man of Sorrows!"
And when He gave relief,
He gave it like a Brother,
"Acquainted with" the "grief."

Such was "the Man Christ Jesus!"
The Friend of sinful man!
But hush! the tale grows sadder:
I'll tell it—if I can!

This gentle, holy Jesus,
Without a spot or stain,
By wicked hands was taken,
And crucified, and slain!

Look! look!—if you can bear it—
Look at your dying Lord!
Stand near the Cross and watch Him:
"Behold the Lamb of God!"

His Hands and Feet are pierced,
He cannot hide His Face;
And cruel men "stand staring,"
In crowds, about the place.

They laugh at Him and mock Him!
They tell Him to "come down,"
And leave that Cross of suffering,
And change it for a Crown.

Why did He bear their mockings?
Was He "the Mighty God?"
And could He have destroyed them
With one Almighty word?

Yes, Jesus could have done it;
But let me tell you why
He would not use His power,
But chose to stay and die.

He had become our "Surety;"
And what we could not pay,
He paid instead, and for us,
On that one dreadful day.

For our sins He suffered;
For our sins He died;
And "not for ours only,"
But "all the world's" beside!

And now, the work is "finished!"
The Sinner's debt is paid!
Because on "Christ the Righteous"
The sin of all was laid.

O wonderful Redemption!
God's Remedy for sin!
The Door of Heaven is open,
And you may enter in!

For God released our "Surety,"
To show the work was done;
And Jesus' Resurrection
Declared the victory won!

And now, He has ascended,
And sits upon the Throne,
"To be a Prince and Saviour,"
And claim us for His own.

But when He left His people,
He promised them to send
"The Comforter," to teach them,
And guide them, to the end.

And that same Holy Spirit
Is with us to this day,
And ready now to teach us
The "New and Living Way."

This is "the old, old Story;"
Say, Do you take it in—
This wonderful Redemption,
God's Remedy for sin?