

Boys' Department.

BIBLE LESSONS.

Sunday, January 3rd, 1869.

MATTHEW xiii. 1-23: MARK iv. 1-26: LUKE viii. 4-18: The Parable of the Sower. Recite.—GALATIANS vi. 7, 8.

Sunday, January 10th, 1869.

MATTHEW xiii. 24-53: MARK iv. 26-34: Parable of the Tares and other parable. Recite.—1 CORINTHIANS vi. 9, 10.

For the Christian Messenger.

The Child's Dream.

I dreamed a dream last night, mother, Of heaven's bright, shining shore; And I never, never saw, mother, Such glorious sights before.

You have often told me tales, mother, Of the white-winged angel band; And your little boy saw, last night, mother, One from that blessed band.

And O! such glorious wings, mother, They bore him from world's afar; And a crown on that broad, white brow, mother, That shone with many a star.

There were stars on that angel's breast, mother, And they sparkled with delight, To think they were always there, mother, Where all was pure and bright.

I saw on his long white robe, mother, Great, shining clasps of gold. It never soiled, though it swept, mother, In many a snowy fold.

I saw a harp in his hand, mother, And its strings were wreathed with flowers; And their sweet scent made the room, mother, Just like our garden bowers.

And the room was full of light, mother, Though the night was drear and dim; For one of God's lamps, I know, mother, He must have brought with him.

The light did not blind my eyes, mother. Like the great, round sun's, at noon; But, 'twas calm and soft and cool, mother, Like the dear, old silver moon.

I looked at the angel long, mother, For his smile was sweet and kind; I looked, as I look at God's stars, mother, He brought them to my mind.

Till at length I heard his voice, mother, And it thrilled through all my frame; For who do you think it was, mother, That last-night to me, came.

Come near, till I speak his name, mother, Speak the name to us so dear; Twine your kind arms round my neck, mother, 'Twas father who was here.

And O, I know you will weep, mother You will miss your little boy; I love you: but, I must go, mother To that home of light and joy.

To tell me, father came, mother, There was work in heaven for me; I am going to see God's smile, mother, Light up the crystal Sea.

That sea, where the angels bathe, mother, You told me about one day; Where you said dear father had gone, mother, I am going there to stay.

I feel your tears on my cheek, mother, And your heart is aching now; But, do not be lone and sad, mother, When glory lights my brow.

And when God wants you too, mother, Your patient brow to crown, I will come in robes of light, mother, To bear his message down.

A child's argument.

One day a little girl was reading the third chapter of Matthew, in a silent and thoughtful manner. After a while she looked up to her mother, who was sitting near, and said:

"Mother, were you ever baptized?" "Yes, daughter, I surely was."

"Well, mother, I did not know that. When were you baptized?" "Oh, it was a long time ago, when I was a little child."

"Mother, how were you baptized?" "Well, the minister baptized me out of a bowl; he sprinkled the water upon me, and I was baptized."

"Why? mother! I read in this chapter that John baptized Jesus 'in the river,' and, mother, it seems to me if I were going to be baptized, I should want to be baptized 'in the river,' the way Jesus was. Wouldn't you, mother?"

This was a view of truth from a new standpoint. It startled her. It came with power, for she loved the Saviour. She made no reply. She could make none. She left the room, and tried to dismiss the subject, but could not. The words rang in her ears—"If I were going to be baptized, I should want to be baptized in

the river, the way Jesus was, wouldn't you, mother?" She prayed and wept over it, and gave up her opposition to the truth. The example of Jesus prevailed. And in a few days that mother and both daughters were baptized "in the river," the way Jesus was. All little boys and girls, when they think on the subject of baptism, should remember that Jesus was baptized in the river. If we love Jesus we will want to be baptized like Jesus was, in the river.—Child's Delight.

Look to me for Rent.

"Have you ever thought of the great salvation?" I asked one evening of a working man who had been hearing the gospel preached, and with whom I had to walk some miles.

"O yes," he replied; "I have often thought about it."

"And are you saved?" "Well, I could not say that,—I don't feel as I would like."

"I quite believe that; but do you think any of us could ever feel perfectly right here? But are you at peace with God?"

"I never could say that I am satisfied with myself."

"But, my friend, I never asked if you were. It would be a very bad sign if you were satisfied with yourself. But are you at peace with God?"

"Well, I never could feel that I have peace."

"But I don't ask if you have peace with yourself, I hope you never will. Have you peace with God?"

"To tell you the truth, I am not right?"

"How long is it since you began to think of these things?"

"About seven or eight years ago, in the north of Ireland, I was first awakened by a minister preaching on 'Ye must be born again.' And often since that time, I have been trying to feel God's Spirit working in me."

"And you never have?" "No; I could not be sure."

"How could ever any one be sure of what was going on within him, especially as our enemy comes as an angel light. That is God's part, not yours."

"Well, what am I to do then?" "Jesus was the one, you remember, that said, 'Ye must be born again.' Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God."

"Now, at the end of all this conversation, Nicodemus knew nothing about how to be saved for himself, but only said, 'How can these things be?' even when Jesus himself was the great Teacher."

"That's just where I am."

"Now, what did Jesus do? He took him away to the picture-book for children, and showed him the picture of a dying man looking away from himself to a serpent on a pole and thus living; and then told that 'as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have eternal life.' Now, all you have to do is to look and live."

"But that is just what I've been trying to do, and which I don't know how to do;—what is it to look to Christ?"

"Now I understand your difficulty,—you cannot see Christ with the eyes of your body,—you can't feel his presence within you,—you can't feel that you have faith."

"Exactly; what am I to do?" "Allow me to give you an illustration." In some such words I spoke with my friend, and gave him the substance of the following illustration, which seemed to clear away his difficulty; and I thought I would write it for you, as by God's blessing it may enable you to receive God's simple plan, and accept God's salvation for nothing.

"You have a rent,—say £10 a year to pay,—having to maintain a large family, and having been recently in distress and out of work, you find it impossible to pay it. Suppose that I was able, and knew your difficulty, and took pity on you, and said to you,—

"John, I hear you have a heavy rent, and have had very hard times. you will never be able to pay it. Now I wish you to use your money for your most pressing wants, to get food and clothing for your wife, and look to me for the rent. You, knowing me, and hence believing me, would go away home with a burden off your mind, and a happy heart. When you came home next Saturday with your wages, you would tell your wife to spend all the money in getting food and clothing."

"But, John," she would say, "are we not to lay aside something for the rent?" "Oh, no," you would answer, "I met a man whom I know, and who said, 'Look to me for the rent and I know him and believe him.' And thus weeks would go on, till a month before the rent-day a neighbor comes in, and says,—

"John, I have got only £5 gathered for my rent, and I don't know what I'm to do. How much have you?" "None at all."

"What! are you to do nothing?" "Oh, a friend of mine said, 'Look to me for the rent.'"

"And are you not getting anxious about it?" "No."

"Why?" "Because I trust him."

"Why?" "Because I believe him."

"Why?" "Because I know him."

Soon the rent-day comes and even your wife begins to be suspicious and doubtful, but you have implicit trust in what I said—you have difficulty in understanding what look to me for

the rent means, and so at the appointed hour I walk in and make my word good, and you would be happy to find that, against all your neighbor's doubts, against all your wife's fears, and even against all your own tremblings, you had trusted my word and looked to me for the rent. This of course is only an illustration, as I have no doubt you are at the present quite able and willing to pay your own rent; but in the matter of our salvation, though we might be willing, we are totally unable; so the Lord now says, 'Look to me, and be ye saved.'

Christ on the cross is God's fulfilment of this. He paid the debt of the sinner. Men are doing right enough things; praying, living moral lives, giving money, etc., but all for the wrong end—all will never save. God says, 'look to me for salvation,' and then begin to use your time, talents, money, powers, etc., for their legitimate end, to glorify God. Don't try to be holy in order to be saved. That would be like a man laying up for a rent which he could never pay. 'Look to me and be saved,' says God, and then be holy, because you are sure of salvation on the authority of God. Religion will never save you—even pure religion. God defines pure religion in James i. 27, 'Pure religion, and undefiled, before God and the Father is this, to visit the fatherless and the widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.' By the deeds of the law we cannot be justified; therefore by doing all this we cannot be saved. But religion is the life of a saved man, not the efforts of an unsaved man to get saved. The work is not to the cross, it is from the cross to the crown. Jesus did ALL to save. He brought the cross to our level. Get saved by looking to him and then work for God. Don't look to the feeling of being saved—look away from what is being wrought in you to what is being wrought for you. We are not saved on account of the Spirit working in us but by means of his work—we are saved on account of Christ dying for us. 'Look to me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth.'—British Herald.

Some females had met in the house of a friend in the city of St. Louis for an evening visit, when the following scene and conversation occurred.

The child of one of the females, about five years old, was guilty of rude noisy conduct, very improper on all occasions, and particularly so at a stranger's house. The mother kindly reproved her:

"Sarah, you must not do so."

The child soon forgot the reproof and became as noisy as ever. The mother firmly said,

"Sarah, if you do so again I will punish you."

But not long after Sarah "did so again."

When the company were about to separate, the mother stepped into a neighbor's house, intending to return for the child. During her absence, the thought of going home recalled to the mind of Sarah the punishment which her mother told her she might expect. The recollection turned her rudeness and thoughtlessness to sorrow. A young lady present observing it, and learning the cause, in order to pacify her, said, "Never mind, I will ask your mother not to whip you."

"Oh," said Sarah, "that will do no good. My mother never tells lies."

The writer who communicated the above for the St. Louis Observer adds, "I learned a lesson from that child which I shall never forget. It is worth everything in the training of a child to make it feel that its mother never tells lies."

One day last winter, a little boy from the South, who was on a visit to the city, was taking his first lesson in the art of "sliding down hill," when he suddenly found his feet in rather too close contact with a lady's silk dress. Surprised, mortified, and confused, he sprang from his sled, and, cap in hand, commenced an apology:

"I beg your pardon, ma'am; I am very sorry."

"Never mind that," exclaimed the lady; "there is no great harm done, and you feel worse about it than I do."

"But, dear madam," said the boy, as his eyes filled with tears, "your dress is ruined; I thought that you would be very angry with me for being so careless."

"Oh, no," replied the lady; "better to have a soiled dress than a ruffled temper."

"Oh, isn't she a beauty?" exclaimed the lad, as the lady passed on.

"Who, that lady?" returned his comrade; "if you call her a beauty, you shan't choose for me. Why, she is more than thirty years old, and her face is wrinkled."

"I don't care if her face is wrinkled," replied the hero, "her soul is handsome anyhow."

A shout of laughter followed, from which the little fellow was glad to escape. Relating the incident to his mother, he remarked: "O, mother, that lady did me good. I shall never forget it; and when I am tempted to indulge in my angry passions, I will think of what she said: 'Better to have a soiled dress than a ruffled temper.'"

Sinful security is the forerunner of sudden destruction to nations, as well as to families and individuals.

Sinner! can you endure that "furnace of fire" which "shall not be quenched night or day," and whose smoke "shall go up forever?"

The good Old Year

is about closing its accounts with us. On the first of January, 1868, it opened its rich stock, and generously put it at our disposal. There were months, weeks, and days; mornings, evenings, and nights. It was a new stock, new and fresh, never before in the market, never to be again. Everybody fared alike, the rich and the poor, the high and the low, the old and the young. Each had a minute at a time, no more, no less, for minutes are more precious than gold. Gold cannot buy them. Once lost, they can never be found; once wasted, never repaired. On the old year's books is registered our use or abuse of them. What is our record there? Where have our evenings been spent? How about our mornings? What will night report of us? What the day? What the fifty-two Sundays, holy time, stamped all over with God and his love for us, what report do they make?

A little time is left us in the old year. Let us thoughtfully improve it, that we may enter upon the new year, if God spares our lives, prepared to make a better improvement of its precious gifts than in the year going by.—Child's Paper.

Parental Firmness.

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A handsome soul.

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