

Months' Department.

BIBLE LESSONS.

Sunday, December 20th, 1868.

LUKE xii. 41-49: Jesus' discourses continued.
Recite.—JOHN ix. 39-41.

Sunday, December 27th, 1868.

LUKE xiii. 1-9: Slaughter of certain Galileans.
Parable of the barren Fig tree.
Recite.—MATTHEW iii. 8-10.

How God makes Rain.

Mary H——, a bright eyed little girl, about nine years of age, was standing by the window, watching the rain, which was then falling rapidly. She stood quietly for some time, then turning round, she said very seriously:

'I wish I knew how God makes rain.'

'Rain comes from the clouds,' answered Jane, the children's nurse, who was the only person in the room.

'I know that,' said Mary; 'but I want to know how it gets in the clouds—how God makes it rain.'

'God can do anything,' was the answer nurse could give.

This did not satisfy our little Mary; so she left the nursery and went into the library, where her father and brother were sitting at the table reading.

Going up to her brother, she said:

'Harry, do you know how God makes rain?'

'Rain is made by the evaporation of water on the surface of the earth,' replied Harry, a boy some four or five years older than Mary, who, like a great many big boys, would use words that little girls could not understand.

'I don't know what evaporation means,' said Mary.

'Evaporation means dry up, or something like it,' replied Harry.

'I don't see how water drying up can make rain,' answered Mary, looking more puzzled than ever.

Mary's father, noticing the unsatisfied look on her face, said, 'Mary, if you will wait until I have finished reading the paper, I think I can help you some.'

Mary was pleased to hear this: she knew her father could make everything so plain; so she took up a book and amused herself with the pictures until her father was ready to talk.

Before long, Mr. H—— said: 'Come, my little girl, we will go into the kitchen and learn how God makes rain.'

'When there, he asked Ann, the cook, whether they would be in the way if he put some water on to boil. Ann replied, 'Oh no, sir: there is the tea-kettle just ready to boil now.'

Mr. H—— took down a small tin pan, which was hanging on the wall, and, taking off the lid of the kettle, placed the tin pan so as to entirely cover the top of the kettle. He talked for a short time to Jane; then, taking off the pan, he told Mary to see if there was anything inside of it. Mary said it was covered with little drops of water. Her father told her to turn the pan upside down on a part of the table which was perfectly dry. He then said:

'Do you know what made these drops?'

'No, papa,' answered Mary.

'Do you know what makes water boil?'

'The fire, papa.'

'Yes; the heat from the fire makes the water become very hot, or, as we say, boil, and when water becomes boiling hot it goes off into steam or vapor. This vapor made these little drops you saw in the pan. Now raise the pan from the table.'

Mary took the pan carefully up, and saw that the table was quite wet on that part where the pan had been placed. Her father asked:

'What makes that table wet?'

'Why, all those drops of water have fallen out of the pan,' said Mary.

'Now listen carefully, my child: heat makes everything expand—you will understand better if I say grow lighter. The heat from the fire turned part of the water into steam and vapor—vapor, being lighter than air or water, rises up. If there had not been any cover on the kettle, it would have gone much higher. The pan prevented the vapor escaping, so it rested there. The air in the room, being colder than that in the kettle, condensed this vapor or made it heavier than air, so when we placed the pan on the table it fell down again in the form of water. Can my little girl understand this?'

Mary was very quiet for a few minutes; then said: 'Yes, papa; I think I can.'

'Well, then,' answered her father, 'I think you can understand how God makes rain. The heat from the sun turns the water from the lakes, and rivers, and ponds, etc., into vapor: this vapor, as I said before, being lighter than air, rises until it reaches a portion of air which is colder than the air near the earth. This cold air condenses the vapor; that is, makes it heavier. It collects into clouds, and when the clouds become too heavy for the air to hold, they fall to the earth in the form of rain. Now, Mary, I think you can understand how God makes rain.'

'I can understand now,' answered Mary, while a bright, happy expression passed over her face. Then, looking very serious, she said:

'Papa, God must be very wise to think of that way.'

'Yes, darling,' answered her father, while he laid his hand gently on her head; 'God is very wise and very great; yet, great as he is, he

watches over every little child.' Then, taking her by the hand, he returned to the library. Going to the table, he opened a large Bible at the Book of Job.

'Now, Mary,' said he, 'find the fifth chapter, and read to me the 8th, 9th and 10th verses.'

Mary soon found the place, and then slowly read: 'I would seek unto God, and unto God would I commit my cause; which doeth great things and unsearchable; marvellous things without number; who giveth rain upon the earth and sendeth water upon the fields.'

'Is that too hard for you to learn, Mary?' asked her father.

'It is pretty hard,' said Mary; 'but if you will help me, I will try to learn it.'

Her father was very willing to help; so, before Mary went to bed that night, she knew these verses perfectly.

After this, whenever there was a storm, Mary watched it with great interest, because she knew how God made rain.—*Children's Hour.*

Widow MacLean; or, Lending to the Lord.

BY JEAN INGELow.

CHAPTER III.

Concluded.

The surgeons had done their best, but for several days no light was to be admitted to the eyes; the case was still doubtful, and they let her have so little food, and kept her so cold, that she was very faint and feeble.

There was often a lady in the ward, a visitor, who spoke very kindly to her, and to the other patients. She liked to hear her voice, and learned to recognize her step. Sometimes a gentleman came with her, whom she did not like so well, but she could hardly tell why. He was extremely kind to the patients, reading to them, and comforting them. He often sat by the widow, and repeated to her any little piece of news concerning her fellow sufferers that he thought might encourage her. By degrees, therefore, she lost the first feeling of dislike that she had felt towards him, and was sorry one day to hear him remark that his fortnight for visiting the hospital was over, and that he should not come again for some time.

While he still sat by her bed that day, and she felt very weak and low, some one came in, who said in a clear voice, 'Is there any one in this room of the name of Maclean?'

'Yes,' she answered faintly, 'that is my name.'

'Why, your name is written on your card M. Lane, widow,' said the nurse, examining the card at the head of the bed; 'why have you let yourself be called Mrs. Lane?'

'What did it signify?' she answered. 'I noticed that they called me so, but I did not know why.'

Then followed a discussion between the gentleman who had spoken and the nurse. They said hers was a Scotch name, and he wondered why they troubled themselves about it; they looked again at her card, and said that perhaps the subscriber who had recommended her had written it M. Lane, 'for that,' said one, 'is how she pronounces it, and it is very commonly spelt so in Scotland.'

'I pronounce it as my husband did, of course,' said the widow, a little fretfully.

'Well, Mrs. Lane—Mrs. Maclean, I mean—a foreign letter has been sent on here from some village; if it is for you, you will know the name of the post town.'

The widow mentioned it.

'You have come a long way for advice,' said the gentleman; 'yes, the letter is certainly yours; so you lived seventy miles off. Well, I hope it will prove that you have not come for nothing.' Saying this he took up one of her thin hands and put the letter into it. 'Perhaps you have a son at sea,' he observed; 'this is a ship letter.'

'No, sir, I have not,' said the widow; 'but true it is that there is a lad at sea who is very dear to me.' She took the letter in her hand and felt it all over with eager interest. She had heard that other gentleman, the visiting gentleman, who still sat by her bed, reading letters in a low voice for the patients, and her desire to know what was in this one overcame her wish to keep its contents to herself; so she asked him to read it.

The nurse withdrew; he took the letter from her hand; she noticed that his trembled and was very cold, and when he began to read his voice was so husky that for the moment she thought more of that than of the reading. But she soon gathered that a misfortune had occurred, for the letter was from a shipmate of poor Roger Hillary, and was to tell her that he was dead. She was too much agitated to notice how the brief story was told, but the manner in which the letter was read it was impossible not to notice, for the reader had the greatest difficulty possible in getting through with his task.

Yes, the young man was dead; there was no doubt of that; but his shipmate in a rough way gave an excellent account of him, and said that his only sorrow was that he was not to live to repay her, for she had been the saving of him, and he owed her everything. Some simple expressions concerning his faith and hope then followed, and finally the exact latitude and longitude of the spot in which his body had been committed to the deep.

A long, dead silence followed, then the nurse came near and said, 'If you're in trouble, ma'am, give it words: I have had losses myself, and can feel for you.'

'I want my letter,' said the poor woman;

and the cold trembling hand put it into hers—it was so very cold and it trembled so much, that even in the moment of her sorrow her observation was attracted. The gentleman got up silently and went away, and when she became calmer she asked the nurse his name.

The nurse's sympathy had become slight now she knew that this young sailor was no relation to her patient, only an acquaintance whom she had nursed when he was ill. 'Well, to be sure,' she answered; 'you seem to take as little notice what other people are called, as of what you're called yourself. Why, that's Mr. Smith, to be sure,—our Mr. Smith; he's a life governor; he gave fifty pounds this spring to the hospital. It's seldom, indeed, that he goes away without paying some sort of a compliment to the nurses on the place being so clean, and the patients being well nursed; but to day he looked ill, and he is ill, I'm sure, or something has put him out.'

'I wish I could see him,' thought the widow; 'she showed as much feeling about Mr. Roger as if he'd been her brother.'

And then she got the nurse to read over again the precious letter, and though she was sad, it did seem such a blessed thing that she should have been instrumental in saving the young man from going back to evil ways, as she was then told was the case; such a blessed thing that her poor advice should have been taken, and her humble prayers answered for him, that though this world was then quite dark to her, a light seemed to break in her heart. 'It's true enough,' she thought; 'I lent to the Lord, and in what a blessed way I am paid it, and over-paid it again.'

'Mrs. Maclean,' said the nurse, the next day, 'Mr. Smith has sent to know how you feel yourself, and he would have come himself, only he's ill, and he's sent you these grapes.'

The nurse spoke with a certain respect of manner, and the patient listened with surprise. A suitable message was returned, and the next day Mr. Smith came himself.

'How do you feel to-day?' he inquired.

The widow expressed herself much better, said the doctors gave a very good account of her, and returned him many thanks for his kindness.

'Don't mention it,' he replied, with some perturbation. 'My wife has sent you some new laid eggs. She would have come herself, but she is ill; in short, she was confined three days ago. We have a large family; this is our eighth, our eighth living, I mean.'

He said this rather hurriedly, and the widow listened with such surprise that she could not keep her thoughts to herself. 'Sir,' she exclaimed, 'did you know young Mr. Roger Hillary?'

He paused for a moment, then he answered, 'I did not know him.'

'Then what does it all mean?' thought the widow; but she did not venture to ask any more questions, though she remained perfectly certain that somehow or other this Mr. Smith must be connected with the Hillary family. 'I only wish I could see him,' she thought. And one day, one happy day, she did see him. The operation was declared to be successful; light came again to her eyes, and with one of them she could see as well as ever. To describe her rapture would be impossible. She quite forgot Mr. Smith; she even forgot for several days to observe that he did not come to see her; and she forgot how much she had been surprised at his kindness, when one day a tall dark man came and stood before her, and the nurse said it was Mr. Smith.

'I'm told that you are to leave the hospital to-morrow,' he said, 'and I'm going—I'm thinking of taking you to-day for a short drive.'

'He doesn't look more than forty,' thought Mrs. Maclean, 'or I should think he might be a brother of poor Mrs. Hillary's; he is dark, and not so very unlike what she was.'

She put on her bonnet, and he took her down stairs and got into a fly, and drove away with her.

It was not till after they had reached a pretty house some way out of the town, and he had taken her into a well furnished room and shut the door, that she found the continued silence intolerable, and broke it by saying:

'Well, sir, what is it that you have to say to me?'

'In the first place,' he answered, 'I ask your pardon.' And, as he spoke, he took off his hat and came nearer.

'Richard!' exclaimed the widow; 'is this you?'

'Some men,' said he, 'would think that having done all they could to make reparation to the woman they had injured, and having brought her to a good home where nobody knew, or could know anything against her, and having been true to her these fifteen years, there was no occasion to ask forgiveness; that is not my feeling. I humbly ask forgiveness of you.'

'Oh, my Pamela!' exclaimed the widow; 'Oh my dear, dear child!' And in the confusion of the moment, she knew not what to think or what to do.

'My wife,' proceeded the visiting gentleman, 'my wife, mind, is very anxious to see you. I did not know you till I heard your name, and then I recognized you directly.'

The widow trembled, put her hands before her eyes, and there flashed into her mind a never-forgotten scene of misery that had chastened her for many long years. She saw again her beautiful child at her feet, and heard the poor father making moan over her.

'I don't understand,' she said, pitifully, 'Shall I see my poor child again? Oh, I cannot understand.'

'I was a coward,' said the visiting gentleman, bitterly; 'that is what you have to understand. I was afraid of my uncle; he wanted me to

marry above me, as he was so rich, and she was beneath me in some measure, though you had educated her well.

'I thought he would never forgive me; but when she ran away, poor child, and hid herself from us, I was to the full as much to be pitied as she was. I had never meant that it should come to that. I got into a melancholy way, as you know, and after your poor husband's death and your going away I told my uncle all. I said I must find her and marry her, and he was in a great rage, and desired me to choose between him and her, and I did. I felt that I cared very little, with that thorn in my heart, about his money, or the shop, or the grocery business, and I went off, and he told me I should see him no more. It does not matter now to tell you how and where I found her. I did find her, thank God, at last; she was in the very depths of poverty; and if any man or woman in this world ever repented, it was ourselves. We had made a bad beginning, and spoilt our lives for nothing at all; but we met over a little coffin, and I took her to church before it was laid in the ground. It was a miserable wedding for me, and she cried all the time. I had lost my best friend, she had lost all hers, what more could have happened if I had married like better men.

'We struggled on for three years and then went to Canada; but I was barely maintaining my family when I got a letter to say that my uncle was dead and had left me everything. I sold the business and came here, far from any one that ever knew us; we have been settled five years, and you are not to think that we have made no efforts to find you, for we have.'

'Only let me see my child,' said the widow, 'and I thankfully forgive all.'

'He that has pity on the poor lendeth to the Lord, and that which he hath given will be paid to him again.' Here we have a direct assertion, and a most singular challenge to the world.

I wonder whether we believe that assertion. Let us consider. We certainly believe that a loving, charitable spirit is pleasing to God, and that upon those who cultivate it He bestows a blessing. Is that enough?

It is not enough if we have a right to believe and expect something more. Let us consider further. It would not be right to bestow one's goods as loans to the Lord, and expect to have them paid back in kind—that is agreed.

It would not be right to expect in every case to know how the loan was returned, and whether it was to be returned in this world or in the next. That is also agreed.

But are we agreed as to whether this woman's case was exceptional, or what might naturally have been expected under the circumstances? This question is less easy to answer; we have not many recorded instances of such joyful, conscious lending by one who all the time was perfectly content to make the loan a gift. And we have no experience of our own to go by. We cannot say what the GREAT ACCEPTOR of the loan would do in such a case, for we never tried. I never tried, and you never tried.

Scientific.

A Parisian speculator sent a large number of carrier pigeons to Lisbon, to replace the telegraph, when all communication with Spain was interrupted.

A recent English improvement in safety valves not only allows the escape of steam when the limit of pressure is reached, but when the water gets too low in the boiler it opens a valve and floods the fire with water.

A submarine lamp has been invented by M. E. Cretin, which consists of a strong glass cylinder placed vertically on a brass pedestal from which projects a brass socket, terminating in an ordinary gas burner, to which a supply of gas is led from the vessel by a combination of india-rubber and brass tubing. Atmospheric air is admitted through another supply tube, and the products of combustion escape through another tube at the top, their escape being facilitated by means of a small fan put in action by spring clockwork.

A FAST MACHINE.—A builder of one of the new aquatic velocipedes has issued a challenge of 10,000fr., that he will cross the channel from Boulogne to Folkestone in three-quarters of an hour upon one of his velocipedes.

Noah's ark was 574 feet long, 91 feet broad, and 54 feet high, measuring 72,525 tons.

Essex, Mass., has a little girl three years old, who plays over two hundred pieces on the piano. She ought to be in the back yard mud pies.—*N. Y. Mus. Gazette.*

'That man,' said Sidney Smith, 'is not the discoverer of art who first says "be thing"; but he who says it so long, so loud, and so clearly, that he compels mankind to hear him.'

Persons who have become thoroughly chilled from any cause, may have their circulation at once restored by taking into the stomach a teaspoonful of 'Johnson's Anodyne Liniment' mixed in a little cold water, well sweetened.

Every farmer who owns a good stock of Horses, Cattle, sheep, and intends to keep them through the winter, should get at once a good stock of 'Sheridan's Cavalry Condition Powder.' One dollar's worth will save at least a half a ton of hay.