

Months' Department.

BIBLE LESSONS.

(From "Robinson's Harmony.")

Sunday, April 11th, 1869.

JOHN vi. 44-71: Discourse continued. Many disciples turn back. Peter's profession of faith.

Recite.—S. C., 4, 5.

Sunday, April 18th, 1869.

MATTHEW xv. 1-20: MARK vii. 1-23: Our Lord justifies the disciples for eating with unwashed hands. Pharisaic Traditions.

Recite.—S. C., 6, 7, 8.

ANSWER TO SCRIPTURE TEXT ILLUSTRATED.

No. II.

Aaron Exod. xxxii. 22-24. Peter Mark xiv. 66-72. Joshua and Caleb Num. xiv. 6-9.

"The fear of man bringeth a snare; but whose putteth his trust in the Lord shall be safe." Prov. xxix. 25.

How often do we leave the right, Because we fear a neighbour's spite, Perhaps a comrade's blame: And thus with those who watch to see What sort of people Christians be, Religion comes to shame!

Strange that a human seer should grieve A heart which doth in God believe, And on its Saviour rest! Strange that a long life, full of prayers, Which many a holy blossom bears, Should shake before a jest!

Oh, when we feel our hearts grow weak At bitter words which others speak, Let us the memory wake Of Christ, as on his cross he hung, The theme of many a mocking tongue,— And all for sinners' sake.

SCRIPTURE ENIGMA.

No. VIII.

Who Christ's glad tidings to a traveller showed? What elder brother spared a younger's life? Who left her home, and then retraced her road? What Roman governor had a Jewish wife? Who in the sunset meadows met his bride? What patriarch's son before his father died? By these initials we may find What work is sure to gain, Although the tasks we have to do So often seem in vain.

THE TRIAL OF ABRAHAM.

A BIBLE SONNET.

Crowned as for sacrifice, he takes his son, His only well-loved son,—at God's command; With fire and knife (soul-piercing) in his hand, Their three-days' death march is at once begun: That face so dear to him he seems to shun, That voice to dread,—but bears with patience grand The long-drawn anguish for his trial plann'd, Till it is finished, and the blessing won. Oh! let us think of his obedience stern, When our own daily cross we shrink from bearing; Let that sweet son, on whom his soul did yearn, So freely yielded up, shame our self-sparing; Thus, while we bow to each Divine behest, We too "with faithful Abraham are blest."

For the Christian Messenger.

HOW CHEBUCTO HARBOUR WAS FROZEN OVER.

A PIECE FOR THE BOYS.

"Tell me," said Old Winter to his boy Jack Frost one day, "how shall I freeze up Chebucto harbour?" "By making a vigorous effort, Sir," replied Jack. "I am continually making vigorous efforts," said Winter, "but I never succeed." "You must persevere, Sir," said Jack Frost. "Persevere," exclaimed Winter, "have I not persevered? That sheet of water has given me more trouble than all my other work together. See what I have done to it this very season: I have bound up the south wind on its account, and added keenness to west wind; I have chilled it with the east wind; and made it hoary with the north wind; I have hung black clouds above it, and forbidden the sun to shine upon it, but all to no purpose: It will not freeze." "Perseverance," Sir, said Jack, "is something more than blind effort: It is thoughtfulness, patience and effort combined; You must watch well your opportunity, and take advantage of every circumstance." "Hold, hold, my boy," cried Winter, "since you seem to understand this business so well, perhaps you will undertake it yourself, and save me further trouble?"

"With your leave and assistance, Sir," said Jack, "I shall be happy to do so." Jack Frost had not long to wait for an opportunity. One beautiful evening when the winds were all at rest and the sky was as blue as indigo, and the stars glittered like diamonds, he stole out from his dwelling place.

"They will hardly suspect my designs on a night like this," said he, so quietly he crept down to the banks of the beautiful water. There it lay before him like a great sheet of glass, with its pure, shining surface stretching from shore to shore, its only motion being a deep, quiet swell, like the heaving of the breast of some strong sleeper.

"The giant is slumbering," said Jack, "and my work is to seal up his eyelids for a while."

Then to work he went in good earnest; And how do you think he began? Do you suppose he dashed off from the shore at once, flying hither and thither, like fussy people sometimes do at their work? Nothing of the kind. He began at the beginning. All around the shores of the beautiful harbour he quietly yet swiftly glided, congealing the briny fluid as he went, thus proceeding gradually outward from either shore until his work met and united at the middle of the flood. And this was not the work of an hour or two, but of a long winter night.

Morning dawned at length, and with light and buoyant step Jack hied off to tell his master what he had done. Old Winter was much pleased, and exclaimed "How in the world, Jack, did you ever accomplish so difficult a task?"

"Well, Sir," said Jack Frost, "I will tell you: I not only worked well, but I began at the right time, at the right place, and in the right way."

COUSIN MABEL'S EXPERIENCES.

BY MISS E. J. WHATELY.

No. X.

PARTY SPIRIT IN MISSIONARY WORK.

"But how can Christians act so?" exclaimed my two friends almost at once.

"I do not think that any Christian says to him or herself, 'I had rather men should be left in darkness and ignorance than that So-and-so should go and teach them;' he would be shocked at such an idea. No; but he persuades himself that So-and-so is going on in a very unlikely way to succeed; he prophesies failure as people prophesy the death of a patient who, they think, is very badly managed, and at last they are almost disappointed if, in spite of their predictions, he recovers. No Christian will say deliberately, 'I wish no one but my Society to work in such a place,' at least few would venture to go so far in so many words; but they will unconsciously get into the way of thinking that no agency but their's can work effectively. Now, I ask you, have we not all in our several ways been tempted to some such kind of feeling?"

"I am afraid I have, for one," said Margaret. "We forget, too, that party feeling takes different forms in different people."

"But don't you think, cousin Mabel," rejoined Julia, "that some are more prone to it than others? You would not reckon all as alike on that point. I am sure, Margaret, no one but yourself would say you had the smallest tendency to party spirit. I never observed it in you."

"Have you perceived it in yourself, Julia?" said Margaret, smiling.

"I suppose you want me to make a modest reply, and say, yes! But I must be truthful; I cannot honestly say that it is one of the faults to which I am most liable; I do not say it is any merit in me; I have not been in a position to be tempted. Miss Dorrington and her clique have let me alone."

"I am sure one may get plenty of annoyance without their help," interposed Caroline, who had been looking over a little account-book with a rather troubled face. "Did I tell you, Margaret, that my collection for the Bible Society has been spoiled this year by that provoking Miss Thompson? Two of my best subscribers, who regularly used to give their contributions through me, have refused this time because they have given to Miss Thompson. Is it not too bad? I shall have the worst collection of the whole set in our Auxillary Association, and I used to have one of the best."

Margaret and Amy both smiled. "I know what you are thinking, both of you," said Julia, "and I suppose it is true—if we were all free from that sort of party feeling, we should be only anxious that the subscriptions should be given, and Caroline would not care whether it were through her or another; and Miss Thompson, on the other hand, would not have been led to do her out of old Lady W—'s and Mrs. C—'s subscriptions, to swell her own list."

"I think it would be hardly human, if one does collect for a Society, to be quite indifferent whether one's collection be large or small," replied Caroline in a tone of some pique: "Now my card really looks as if I had taken no pains in the business, when I worked hard enough, indeed; and poor Mrs. Smith's five shillings' subscription is the largest now on my list, all the rest half-crowns, shillings, and my school-children's pence."

"And perhaps in the eye of Him who looks at the motive, those pence, dear Caroline, saved with real self-denial, are more precious than the ten pounds' subscription of the rich man."

"Yes, I do believe that," said Caroline, feelingly. "That dear little suffering Annie Evans keeping under her pillow, and wishing me to take the pence given her to buy oranges for her parched lips! These are little incidents which do give a sweetness to the drudgery of collecting. But I think you must own, cousin Mabel, that mine was a trial, for all that. Miss Thompson knew perfectly that Lady W— and Mr. C— always had given to me; and I must think it was very mean in her to go and ask them to give to her."

"Dear Caroline, do not suppose me so unsympathising a judge as to deny that yours is a trial. Nor could I wish to see a collector indifferent about the success of her collection. It is a most legitimate subject of anxiety, that whatever we undertake in a good cause should be as complete and as successful as possible. I only meant, that in the midst of our perfectly mutual and right solicitude we have to be on our guard lest it should lead us, as feelings right in themselves often do, into dangerous extremes; and the annoyance you have been subjected to, may just serve to point out where the danger lies."

"It shows us, I suppose, in how many ways the temptation comes to us," said Margaret, "to make an idol of one's own work in some way or other."

"In short, to think of the means instead of the end," I added.

"Then," said Julia, "I must not venture to say that it may not be my turn. But here is Miss Ray already."

This was a young friend who came to call Caroline and Julia to accompany her to a singing-practising of their choir for the church. "I hope," said she when she had explained her errand, "that you are both well prepared, for I must tell you we mean to come out in great force for Christmas; and by the way, Julia, Mrs. Brown says that the members of the Broad Street Chapel choir have been getting up at their last singing meeting the very chorale we were practising, and they sang it wretchedly, it was a complete failure?"

"I thought it would be!" exclaimed Julia with a brightening face and tone of exultation. "I was sure they would fail in that; so ridiculous in them to attempt it! Not one of that choir knows anything of music except Mrs. Tollemache, and she has no voice at all."

Margaret and I couldn't help laughing. "Now then, Julia," said her cousin, "I think you have shown us another corner where the old enemy, party spirit, lurks!"

"Julia joined good-humouredly in the laugh. "But I believe you are right," she added more seriously; "I always used to pride myself on being free from that sort of thing, and I never thought it could make its way into a church choir. I have had a lesson in my turn, and I will not forget it. Come, Fanny, we will go to our practising, and try and keep our besetting sin in mind. All flings at the Broad Street Chapel choir shall be interdicted. Good-bye, cousin Mabel. I wish you success in hunting down our foe."

"Julia speaks lightly," said Margaret, when the party had left the room; "but she feels more seriously than she expresses herself. I am sure she will remember what has passed, and so, I hope, shall we all."

Amy had been sitting in silence during this conversation; but Margaret's remark roused her from her reflections. "Yes," she said, "I fear I have been cherishing some such feelings unconsciously; I know I have been ready to say, 'I told you so,' when those who were carrying on their work in a way I disliked or thought unwise, failed; though I am sure I should have rejoiced sincerely to see them working more wisely. But I suppose even such a feeling is the first step to something more, and so we are led on."

"Just so, dear; I have felt it myself."

"But what puzzles me, Miss Selwyn, is this. It seems to me that the kind of esprit de corps, or attachment one feels to the society, or school, or congregation, or whatever associated work we may be connected with, is a kind of feeling which could not be rooted out without destroying virtually one's interest in one's work. I know that the ruling motive for all these efforts should be love to Christ and zeal for the spread of his kingdom; but it does seem to me that if these secondary motives were entirely, or could be entirely destroyed, we should lose a stimulus which, especially in little things, our weakness requires: does it not?"

"I quite understand and agree with you, dear Amy; and what is more, I believe the kind of feeling you describe to be as much a part of our nature as love of home and family or loyalty of subjects to a king. I believe all our instinctive feelings are implanted by God, and all are intended for good purposes; it is the abuse alone that does harm. Just as every true Christian should be a good patriot and good citizen, so I would have every Christian worker love and support heartily the agency or association with which he or she may be connected. And after all, many may pride themselves in keeping clear of all exclusive feeling, who do so merely by not working at all. It is small gain, to escape the evils of party spirit by idleness and indifference. The love we bear to our own association or fellow-workers, and the desire of its success, is a motive which we cannot afford to part with; and it need not degenerate into party spirit, though certainly it requires watchfulness."

"But how can we know," said Margaret, "where the right kind of feeling ends and party spirit begins?"

"I think there are certain signs by which we may perceive that our love of our own work is

assuming the character of party spirit. As soon as we begin to look coldly on the efforts of others in the same cause—as soon as we find ourselves more anxious for the advancement of our own special agency than of the work of God generally—then I think is the time to be on our guard, to pray and watch against an exclusive spirit, and to take pains to cultivate a broader and deeper interest in Christian work. I am sure it is very useful for those who are active at home to read accounts of foreign mission work, and that not exclusively of their own church or denomination. For this exclusive feeling often becomes denominational. People are afraid of rejoicing in the conversion of a soul to God unless it be in their own special section of the Christian church. This is only another form of our old enemy."

"Some Christians," said Margaret, "think the only way of keeping clear is to avoid all connexion with particular churches or organizations, or work for societies, and each to go on in his own way."

"Some are more fitted for independent work than work in connexion with others, and if the way is open for them to undertake such a work—if they have the means themselves, or have friends able and willing to help them—there can be no doubt that such independent agencies may possess many advantages which they might lose, and escape many evils they might incur if they were connected with societies. But it is like the case of work by hand and work by machinery. The finest work is done by hand; but if we had no machines we should have sadly little done; and it is very certain that in the great majority of cases in the present day, practically speaking work must often be done in connexion with societies or not at all. And after all, in avoiding such agencies we do not avoid the evils. In working with even one individual we may incur the very same inconvenience, for after all, societies are composed of individuals, and if some evils are increased, others are modified, when many are gathered together. An individual will often display as much love of rule, or more, than a body; and certainly I have nowhere seen more sectarianism than in persons who professed to eschew sects, or more bigoted attachment to special organizations than in Christians who were opposed, in principle, to all associations."

Scientific.

A DYNAMOMETER (strength-measurer), is an instrument for registering the powers of the muscles. It consists of an oval spring, of which the two ends approach each other. When they are pulled in opposite directions, a needle working on a dial marked with figures indicates the force exercised on the spring. It has been found, from the use of Regnier's instrument, that "the muscular effort of a man pulling with both hands is about 124 lbs., and that of a woman only 74 lbs. The ordinary effort of strength of a man in lifting a weight is 292 lbs., and a horse in pulling shows a strength of 675 lbs; a man, under the same circumstances, exhibiting a strength of 90 lbs." From these results it appears that the average weight of man being 142 lbs., the proportion of weight he can draw to the weight of his body is only as 87 to 100. With the horse the proportion is not more than 67 to 100; a horse, therefore, can draw but little more than half his weight, and a man cannot draw the weight of his own body. This is a very poor result, if compared with the strength of the common cockchafer, which possesses a power of traction equal to more than fourteen times its own weight.

CLOCKS—HOW TO TREAT THEM.—When the clock stops, don't take it to the repair shop till you have tried as follows: Take off the pointers and the face; take off the pendulum and its wire. Remove the ratchet from the tick wheel, and the clock will run down with great velocity. Let it go. The increased speed wears away the gum and rust from the pinions—if you have any pure sperm oil, put the least bit on the axles. Put the machine together, and nine times in ten it will run just as well as if it had been taken to the shop. In fact, this is the way most shopmen clean clocks. If instead of a pendulum the clock has a watch escapement, this latter can be taken out in an instant, without taking the work apart, and the result is the same.—Country Gentleman.

GLUE FOR READY USE.—To any quantity of glue use common whiskey instead of water. Put both together in a bottle, cork it tight, and set it away for three or four days, when it will be fit for use without the application of heat. Glue thus prepared will keep for years, and is at all times fit for use, except in very cold weather, when it should be set in warm water before using. To obviate the difficulty of the stopper getting tight by the glue drying in the mouth of the vessel, use a tin vessel with the cover fitting tight on the outside, to prevent the escape of the spirits by evaporation. A strong solution of isinglass made in the same manner, is a very excellent cement for leather.

THE SURE SIGN OF DEATH.—The French Marquis d'Ourches, by his will, founded a prize of 20,000f. for the discovery of a sure and simple means of recognizing if death be real or apparent. Dr. Carrière intends to claim the money for a process which he has employed for forty years. This system consists in placing the hand, with the fingers closed, before the flame of a lamp or candle. If in the living person the members are transparent and of a pinkish color, it shows the capillary circulation and life in full activity; while in that of a corpse, on the contrary, all is dull and dark, presenting neither sign of existence nor trace of the blood current.