

Months' Department.

BIBLE LESSONS.

(From "Robinson's Harmony.")

Sunday, March 7th, 1869.

MATTHEW xiv. 1-12: MARK vi. 14-29: LUKE ix. 7-9 - Herod holds Jesus to be John the Baptist whom he had beheaded.

Sunday, March 14th, 1869.

CONCERT.

ANSWER TO SCRIPTURE ANAGRAM.

No. II.

- 1. Z-erah Joshua vii.
2. E-zra Ezra vii. ix. x.
3. R-azia 1 Chron. vii. 39, 40.
4. U-r Genesis xi. 28, 31.
5. I-ra 1 Chron. xi. 26, 28, 40.
6. A-sheer Deut. xxxiii. 24, 25.
7. H-ur Exodus xvii. 11, 12, 13.
"ZERUAH."—1 Chron. ii. 15, 16. 2 Sam. ii. 17-23. 1 Kings ii. 28-34. 2 Sam. ii. 15, 16.

SCRIPTURE ENIGMA.

No. II.

Who for a falsehood was deprived of life?
What Roman governor had a Jewish wife?
What king's presumptuous messengers were slain?
Who from his nephew did hard service gain?
Whose wife her husband's confidence betrayed?
What was the wilderness where David stayed?
Who saw a stranger gleaming in his field?
Who knew her husband was from pity steeled?
Beside whose open grave did Jesus stand?
What mighty runner fell by Abner's hand?
Who wished to win God's love, nor lose his king's?
Who to his daughter gave some water springs?
Where did a sinful king see mystic things?

By these initials something find,
Most odious in God's sight,
By which, for sake of paltry gain,
Men steal a neighbour's right?

ABEL'S SACRIFICE.

A BIBLE SONNET.

An altar rude of turf meek Abel piled,
And laid a spotless lamb on the cleft wood,
And sprinkled round the typifying blood;
While on that shadow God looked down and smiled.
Then Cain arose with envious anger wild,
That swept along like an unbridled flood,
Drowning all fear of God or thought of good,
And with a brother's blood his hands defiled.
Earth shuddered when that cruel deed was done,
Heaven heard that righteous blood in silence crying;
By that first death a martyr's crown was won—
He died—but, like a vapour upward flying,
Caught the slant beams of our Unrisen Sun.
And he, being dead, yet speaks of Jesus dying.

A YOUNG MAN'S HISTORY IN BRIEF.

I first saw him in a social party; he took but a single glass of wine, and at the earnest solicitation of a young lady to whom he had been introduced.
I next saw him, when he supposed he was unseen, taking a glass to satisfy the slight desire by his sordid indulgence, and thought there was no danger.
I next saw him, late in the evening, in the street, unable to walk home. I assisted him thither, and we parted.
I next saw him reeling out of a low groggery; and a confused stare was on his countenance, and words of blasphemy were on his tongue, and shame was gone.
I saw him once more. He was cold and motionless, and was carried by his friends to his last resting place. In the small procession that followed every head was cast down. His father's grey hairs were going to the grave with sorrow; his mother wept that she had ever given birth to such a child.
I returned home musing on his future state. I opened the Bible and read, "Drunkards shall not enter the kingdom of heaven." When a boy, our poor friend was as happy and bright as any of you. More than once, when students together, did he sneer at my teetotalism; when I urged him to sign the pledge, he laughed and scouted at the bare suggestion of danger. Poor Fred! his father had the glass on the table, and there the appetite was formed. Beware of the first glass!
A very talkative little girl used often to annoy her mother by making remarks about visitors that came to the house. On one occasion a gentleman was expected whose nose had been accidentally flattened nearly to his face. The mother cautioned the child to say nothing about this feature. Imagine her consternation when the little one suddenly exclaimed, "Ma you told me to say nothing about Mr. Smith's nose. Why, he hasn't got any!"
Whilst temperance societies try to keep men from the bottle, they might as well also endeavor to win women from the glass.
A fault of much infant-class teaching: Too long sessions and too little rest and variety.

COUSIN MABEL'S EXPERIENCES.

BY MISS. E. J. WHATLEY.

No. VII.

WOMAN'S WORK, ITS HINDRANCES AND HELPS.

And if a woman has no definite and special duties like those of a wife and mother, or like those of many, who, without being wives and mothers, have in some sort analogous duties—if there are no such claims, I think a woman is intended by God to make to herself duties, as His providence may lead her to do.
" But how then comes it that mamma cannot see this?"
" Just because she has never been placed in your situation; and to some, perhaps to most natures, it is extremely difficult to figure to themselves the difficulties of a position they have never held. Your mother was the eldest of a large family in narrow circumstances, as I know well; she was called on to devote herself to pressing family claims from early childhood to her marriage; consequently she knows nothing of the trial of those who are seeking something to do; and being accustomed to long for a leisure hour as her greatest treat, she cannot understand how a life of leisure can hang heavy. Most of us would probably feel the same in her place.
" I suppose so," said Ella, thoughtfully.
" And then it is a common, and a very natural tendency with parents to forget that their children are grown up, and passing out of early youth. Till you have come to middle life, and see those you remembered as babes growing into men and women around you, you can hardly appreciate the difficulty of practically realizing the effects of the change which years bring. And it is often a real trial to parents who have seen their children, while young, happy and satisfied with the simple pleasures and occupations of the nursery and schoolroom, when the truth begins to dawn on them that the birds are fledged, and looking outside the nest, and seeking pursuits and interests out of their own home. That time always will come, in the course of nature, but we must appreciate the trial; and unless you endeavour to enter into the way in which your mother naturally views this subject, you may be tempted unconsciously to judge her harshly for refusing to allow you to work in the way you think right.
" Dear cousin, you would not suspect me of complaining of mamma. I know all she does is in love to us, and that her strongest desire is for our happiness; and if it were only a question of personal privation, of giving up some pleasure or diversion, I would cheerfully submit; but what harasses my mind is the doubt if I am right, when souls are perishing around me, to resign myself to live only for my own amusement.
" That is a subject which needs careful handling, dear Ella. You know well that I fully take your view as to duties in general, and as to what the life of a woman not occupied by engrossing family cares should be. The general rule is that such a woman should make positive duties to herself, if she has no natural ones to engage her time. But the question is, what are those duties to be? We have a world of suffering, struggling human beings around us, and if the way be open to us to labour among them, we should consider it as a precious privilege. But the way is not open to all. God does not require our aid, and He calls on us to serve him in different ways. Our duty is to follow his leading, and not our own. We are to do what our hand findeth to do, not what our will might choose. And certainly, as a general rule, we may consider that while our lot is cast in a home, a course to which our family are strongly opposed is not likely to be the course which is marked out for us by God. In your case, he may, perhaps, call you for a time to serve him in a way less pleasant to our nature than working actively. They also serve who only stand and wait; and this is often the most wholesome discipline to those to whose nature it is most trying.
" I am sure it is trying to mine," sighed Ella.
" It is to most active and intelligent minds; but not the less useful, perhaps, for that. Have you ever remarked how the most honoured servants of God mentioned in his word have been disciplined by long waiting at some period of their lives? Our Lord himself set the example during the long years he spent in his parents' house at Nazareth; but it is a path his servants, too, have often had to tread. Think of Moses' forty years in the land of Midian; of St. Paul's three years in Arabia; of David going back to keep his father's sheep, after he had been declared by God's messenger the future king of Israel. Doubtless these waiting times were times of great trial to these holy men, and they may often have wondered why they were considered needful; but we may be very sure they learned afterwards to acknowledge that it was just the right discipline for them. I believe most Christians of much experience will look back to some such times of waiting in their lives, and depend upon it, they are often times of blessing, though they may not be felt such at the moment. And you may be working in a certain sense even while waiting. You have the power of prayer left you, if all other openings be cut off; and how much may we help God's work by prayer! Often far, far better than by our poor weak efforts!"
" Yes; I believe I too often forget that."
" We all do, far too often; and we forget, too, that in seeking to cultivate Christian graces—patience, meekness, watchfulness over ourselves,—we are working for God, and far more acceptably in his sight than if we were abounding in activities, and neglecting the real fruits of the Spirit. We are told, you know, of many who will have 'done many marvellous works'

in Christ's name, and yet are 'none of his.' We must remember that they who 'best bear his mild yoke, they serve him best.'
" Yes, I know you are right, dear cousin, only I know I am so inconsistent, and fail so in Christian graces, I cannot help being discouraged if that is the only thing left to me, for I know that is just the point in which I break down, and I am sure hardly any one would believe that I do really try."
" Dearest Ella, I do not doubt; do not be discouraged; you are no judge how you may be progressing; God would never have us go beyond the need of being kept humbled in our own eyes; but often we are really going forward when we are not conscious of it: we must just go steadily on; prayerfully, humbly, and trustfully."
" You are right, dear cousin, and I will try and keep it in mind. But the management of my time is a great difficulty to me. I feel constantly that I am wrong in wasting and frittering away my day; and yet, having nothing to do but to read without an object, it is an effort to me to give my mind and attention to study. I look back often with regret on my schoolroom days, when I had definite lessons to do."
" I feel and enter into all your difficulties, dear; for I have gone through them myself. But, remember, I never mean you should acquiesce in a life of idleness; that would be as wrong on the one side as to rush impatiently into work before the right time was come would be on the other. Your part, I think, and that of many in your circumstances, is to act as the captain of a sailing vessel would do when his ship was becalmed at sea—to watch for a fair wind, and get all his sails ready to take advantage of it. That is your part; you never can tell when God's word for action may come; and if your arms are bright and in order, you will be ready when the time comes. And this will give you just what you need most—an object to work for. Your work will be, then, preparation for future usefulness; and you will find that all you do in this way will, sooner or later, turn to account. Like you I once seemed put aside from all active effort: I had only to prepare myself. Afterwards, in God's providence, I was permitted the privilege of being in a sphere of great activity; and I assure you I found a use for all I had learned in my studying days, and could well have used more. You have had a careful education; but on examination you will probably find, as most do, that there are some blanks which need to be filled up, it may be in arithmetic, or history, or the rudiments of some science. Try to instruct yourself, and should you be one day called on to teach, you will find the use of having learnt. Try to improve your style in writing English; this may be an import help to you. Keep up what you know of foreign languages; all may prove a means of usefulness in future life-work. In this way you will not be 'reading without an object,' but really qualifying yourself for any work which may present itself. Above all, seek to gain a practical acquaintance with the Scriptures. Many begin to teach in Sunday-schools and Bible-classes when they really need to learn first; and it is almost incredible how many serious errors arise from inaccurate knowledge of Scripture. Study with a Concordance, with references, and all the helps you can obtain, and endeavour to ground yourself thoroughly both in Scripture history and in knowledge of where to find the most important doctrinal texts, etc. All this is real work, and work for God, too. If you were studying in a missionary training school, you would not consider your time wasted; now, the only difference is that the training will be self-imposed."
" That is true, certainly. I will try your plan."
" I have been going all along on the assumption that you have nothing at present you can do for others; but I am not prepared to admit even this without a question. We often hastily conclude we have nothing to do, because we have not a distinct and clearly defined course of action. Now a woman's work especially needs very often to be picked out in small bits here and there, and from each bit being so insignificant, it is overlooked."
" Give me an instance, please."
" Have you never thought how you could be useful to Minnie? She is warm-hearted and affectionate, but very impulsive, and seems to have some dim consciousness of a want of something in life. Could you not find some way of influencing her for good, and leading her to habits of useful study and employment? The same with young acquaintances, and with servants."
" I did try reading with Martha and Lucy, but Ferris said it hindered their work, and altogether so many obstacles were put in my way, I had to give it up."
" But often where direct teaching is not practicable, a word in season may be received, or a book opportunely lent. I know the kind of watchfulness this requires is very difficult. We are apt, when prevented from working as we wish, to get discouraged, and give up the point altogether, and so overlook opportunities which might be used for good. Above all, be prayerful as well as watchful. Let your constant request be, 'Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?' and he will open a way, in time. There may be a real desire to spend and be spent in his service, and yet there may be much of self-will and other wrong feelings mixed up with this desire, as often happens with our best aspirations; and it takes a long time to purify the real metal from the dross: this may be the reason why so often we have to wait long for evidence of an answer to our prayers. God wants to cut away, bit by bit, all that is sinful and earthly in our desires, and to bring us really to say, 'Thy will be done;—not mine, but thine.' Pray, and wait on God, dearest

Ella; be willing to be useful in his way, and not your own, and the light will come by-and-by."
Ella thanked me warmly and promised to keep it in mind; and during the remainder of my stay I had the pleasure of seeing she really was trying to act on my advice.
TEMPTATION RESISTED.
A boy was going to school, one day, all by himself. On his way he passed by an orchard. The trees in it were loaded with apples, which seemed very nice and tempting. He felt thirsty. He thought it would be very pleasant so he went on his way. There was a fence between him and the orchard; but it was not very high, and by stepping on the stones that lay at his feet he could easily spring over into the orchard and get as many apples as he wanted. He put his hand on the top of the fence, and his foot on the stone. He looked round to see if there was anybody in the road, but he could see no one. He hesitated a moment. He said to himself, "Shall I jump over or not?" What an important moment this was; for that boy! he had never taken any thing that was not his own before. If he begins to go wrong now, who can tell what the end of it may be? But this was a Sunday school boy. Just as he was hesitating, a text of Scripture came into his mind. It was one that he had often seen on a printed card that was hung up in the school. The words were, "Thou, God, seest me."
This decided him. He took his hand off the fence in a moment, and hastened on to school, feeling thankful that God had kept him back from committing sin.
There are three important lessons we may learn from this little story. In the first place we learn from it the benefit of committing texts of Scripture to memory. David said, "Thy Word have I hid in my heart, that I may not sin against Thee." By hiding God's Word in his heart he meant committing it to memory. There was only a small part of our Bible written when David was on earth. But he made the best use he could of what he had. He committed a good many of its nice texts to memory, and when he was tempted to do any thing that was wrong he found that it helped him to resist temptation when he thought of those texts; just as this little boy did, when he was tempted to steal the apples.
Another thing that this story teaches us is the way in which God answers prayer.
Before this boy left home in the morning, after getting through with his own prayer, he finished with the Lord's Prayer. He had said, "Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil." Sin is the greatest evil that can happen to us; and deliverance from it is the greatest blessing. God delivered this boy from the evil of committing sin by bringing that text of Scripture up to his mind just at the very time when it kept him from doing wrong.
And then the third lesson we learn from this story is the importance of resisting temptation. God did not send an angel to hold this boy's hand or foot; or to carry him away by force from the orchard. He only sent a text of Scripture into his mind. That was enough. Then the boy had to do the rest himself. He made up his mind not to go into the orchard, and not to touch the apples. In that way he gained a victory over sin and Satan, and this would make it easier for him to do right the next time.
THE SERVICE OF PATIENCE.
Betty was a match-seller. She was brought in her old age to believe in Jesus as her Saviour, and from that time thought she never could do enough for Him who had washed her sins in His own blood. Ever ready to speak of her Master to all she met, and of unwearied kindness, she was one "who went about doing good." "Always abounding in the work of the Lord." But in the midst of her labors she caught cold, with rheumatism, and was confined to her bed for days and weeks.
One day a minister called on her. He was surprised to see his old, active friend and neighbor so happy in her bed; and said, "I little expected to find you so patient in bed, when you have always led such an active life. It must be a trial to lie there so long."
" Not at all, sir, not at all, sir," said Betty; "when I was well I used to hear the Lord say to me daily, Betty, go here; Betty, go there; Betty, do this; Betty, do that; and I did it as well as I could. Now I hear Him say daily, Betty, lie still and cough."
The poor woman had not only "learned in whatsoever state she was therewith to be content"—her homely words showed that she understood the service of patience.
WHAT IS THE USE?—Don't go round bemoaning the woful condition of business, &c., in your place; for what is the use of grumbling or lamenting? Nobody will take courage from what you say; none will be moved to wake up and stir about, by such doleful tales. Who that cares anything for his own business or interests, wishes to have the worst side of his affairs continually thrust before him? No; that is not the way to better times.—Talk thus, and you will only make matters worse. Stop your croaking, and go ahead in some useful thing that will make a stir. Don't worry the life out of others, by your forebodings about the place where you live!
Up and doing, is the true principle. Say the best, and keep the flag flying!
Everybody knows good counsel except he who hath need of it.
Poverty is the sixth sense.