

Booth's Department.

BIBLE LESSONS.

(From "Robinson's Harmony.")

Sunday, May 16th, 1869.

MATTHEW xvi. 21-28; MARK viii. 31-39; ix. 1; LUKE ix. 22-27: Our Lord foretells his death and resurrection and the trials of his followers.

Recite.—Scripture Catechism, 16, 17, 18.

Sunday, May 23rd, 1869.

MATTHEW xvii. 1-17; MARK ix. 2-13; LUKE ix. 28-36: The transfiguration, and our Lord's discourse to the three disciples.

Recite.—S. C., 19, 20.

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON SCRIPTURE METAPHORS.

Commencing with the letter B.

7. BLOOD. Used metaphorically of wine in Gen. xlix. 11; Deut. xxxii. 14, because it is the strength of the body, as wine is of the grape: of life in Gen. iv. 10; Ezek. iii. 18, because it ends with the taking away of the blood: of sin in Ezek. xvi. 6, because of its staining and defiling character.

8. BONE. Prov. xxv. 14. Illustrated by Abigail, 1 Sam. xxv. 24, etc.

9. BOOK. Used metaphorically of God's omniscience in Ps. lvi. 8; Mal. iii. 16; of God's providence in Rev. v. 2; of God's election in Phil. iv. 3; Rev. xx. 12.

10. BRANCH. It is applied to the human nature of Christ in Is. xi. 1: to the Christian in John xv. 2: to the king of a great empire in Ezek. xvii. 3: to children in Job viii. 16: compare Ps. cxviii. 3: to the Jews in Rom. xi. 11: and to the church in Is. lx. 21.

11. BRIDEGROOM. Matt. xxv. 5, 6. BISHOP. 1 Pet. ii. 25. BREAD. John vi. 48.

12. BROOKS. Used metaphorically of wisdom in Prov. xviii. 4: of prosperity in Job xx. 17: of consolation in Ps. xliii. 1: cx. 7.

13. BALANCES. Dan. v. 27.

SCRIPTURE TEXT ILLUSTRATED.

No. IV.

Who in the temple stood and sadly prayed, Whilst other's blame upon her sorrow laid?

Whose friends came to him in his hour of grief, With misplaced words that brought him no relief?

Who shrank when neighbours used her household name, Because no household joy remained the same?

By these three stories prove a text Which warns us ne'er to try, To read those thoughts of other's hearts Which hide from human eye.

SCRIPTURE ENIGMA.

No. X.

Who proved mere pleasures can no comfort give? Where did a suffering holy patriarch live? Who slew three mighty men and one wild beast? Who gave a conqueror a solemn feast? What hapless prince upon his couch was slain? Where did some property of Paul remain?

By these initials we may find The duty of a Christian mind, When pointed by God's guiding hand, To ways it cannot understand.

THE LITTLE ONES.

Do you ever think how much work a little child does in a day? How, from sunrise to sunset, the dear little feet patter round—to us—so aimlessly? Climbing up here, kneeling down there, running to another place, but never still. Twisting and turning, rolling, and reaching, and doubling, as if testing every bone and muscle for their future uses. It is very curious to watch it. One who does so may well understand the deep breathing of the rosy little sleeper, as, with one arm tossed over its curly head, it prepares for the next day's gymnastics. A busy creature is a little child.

PREACH PLAINLY.

Cowardice in a minister is baser than in a soldier, by how much our warfare is more honorable. A faithful reproof will get more love and honor at the last than a sinful and fawning dissimulation. Though Paul reproved the dissimulation of Peter, yet Peter praised the wisdom of Paul. A man can have no worse enemy in the world than a flattering and fawning minister, that dares not deal plainly with his conscience. We are in much more danger to wrong the souls of men by our oil than by our salt—by our praises than by our reproof.—Bishop Reynolds.

New York thieves are training dogs to steal packages of notes from the counters of the banks. Let the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals rescue the dogs from such a fate.

A baby, recently advertised for adoption in London, was applied for by 370 persons, all of whom sent money as a pledge of good faith.

It is conferring a kindness to deny at once a favor which you intend to refuse at last.

COUSIN MABEL'S EXPERIENCES.

BY MISS E. J. WHATELY.

No. XIV.

HOME OPPOSITION.

"I will ask you, then," I began, in compliance with Marion's avowal, "if you think, honestly, that you have always tried, when putting what you felt to be truth before your family, to do it in a manner likely to be acceptable to them? If you wished to give a sick person some remedy which you were sure would cure him, you would not throw it in his face?"

Marion could hardly help smiling through her tears at my simile. "I see," she said, "you think I have flung good words at my friends instead of speaking them in season."

"If the apples of gold Solomon tells us of, instead of being put into pictures, (or vessels) of silver, were served up in a repulsive looking cup or plate, they would often be rejected. But one more question: do you not sometimes provoke needless opposition, by making a stand in matters to which you might yield without sin?"

"Such as—," said Marion.

"Such as, for instance, thwarting your mother in matters of dress, and such like."

"You are thinking about my not liking to wear a low dress and flowers the other night, like Adeline. Mamma was annoyed, I remember; but it did not seem to me a trifle, dear Miss L—, for are we not told 'not to be conformed to this world?'"

"I think, dear, that the conformity with the world has more to do with the spirit than the letter."

"But are we not warned against gold and pearls, and costly array?"

"Yes, but as the ornament the apostle puts forward in contrast with these, is not a different style of dress, but a meek and quiet spirit; I think it shows that he is speaking of a reliance on worldly ornaments rather than spiritual ones. And if we made our Christianity depend on the absence of ornament, it would still be placing it on an earthly basis. If 'the kingdom of God is not meat and drink,' neither is it dress."

"But do you think it consistent in a Christian woman to dress very smartly and expensively?"

"Certainly it would not be consistent or right in such an one to spend a large portion of time, thought, or money on her dress; and an exaggerated following of new fashions, and love of ornament, even where the means of a woman admit of it, do seem very unbefitting one who professes godliness. But for the rest, details must be left to each person's own judgment and conscience. What would be a very unsuitable dress in one case would be quite suitable in another; station, rank, and a thousand other matters must modify it. Let every one be fully persuaded in his own mind. I would not constrain any one's conscience in such things: but while in some cases a woman has only her own feelings and convictions to consult, you are not so free; it is your duty to dress, in general, as your mother wishes, as long as it does not imply anything really wrong, such as incurring expense beyond your means, etc. In the case of the other evening, I must say it appeared to me that her wish you should dress as the other young people present, was perfectly reasonable; they were all of them suitably and not expensively attired, and the wreath had been provided by herself; it was giving her unnecessary annoyance to refuse to wear it."

"Well, I never thought of that before. I thought the only danger to Christians was that of giving too much attention to such a trifle."

"And if it is a trifle, it is not worth a vexatious dispute. Make one rule for yourself; namely, never to dispute about trifles. If there are some things in which it is your duty to stand firm, take care they be as few as possible, and show at all times that it is principle, not merely love of opposition, which makes you resist. If not, you cannot blame others for thinking you oppose for the sake of opposing. I do not know whether you will think me hard on you if I own I was sorry you refused to play. I saw it annoyed your mother, and gave a disagreeable impression to others present; and what good was gained by it?"

"But, dear Miss L—, I really feel that public display of music to be merely a fostering of vanity and pride; ought we not to use our talents to glorify God, and not to gratify our own love of admiration?"

"Certainly, my love; but I maintain that we are glorifying God in satisfying our parents, and even in giving innocent pleasure to those about us."

"Do you really believe I should have given pleasure to any one that night?"

"Why not? To me, certainly, you would; probably to others; why not suppose that some, at least, are sincere in expressing it? Remember that there is a great difference, as has been justly observed, between aiming to please, and to give pleasure. The first relates more to yourself, the second to others."

"But in such little things, dear Miss L—?"

"Well, my dear, and does not God minister in little things to our pleasure? Has he not decked the gardens and meadows with flowers? has he not constructed the eye and ear, and even the inferior senses, to find enjoyment from the objects around us in the daily course of our lives? and are we not acting most like his children when we try to scatter flowers instead of thorns in the path of others?"

"That is true, indeed; it reminds me of what somebody says about the two heaps, one of misery and one of happiness, in the world; so I suppose in playing to old Lady D—and Mrs. M—, I may be adding a trifle to the heap of happiness, and though it is only for this world, I should not despise it."

"Especially as you can never say it is only for this world; for the influence you may gain over others by kindly and courteous compliance with their wishes in little things, may lead by God's blessing to their higher good."

"I see that; but are there any other things in which you thought I was too 'contradictious,' as Adeline calls it?"

"As you ask me, dear, I should say from your own account, that you sometimes provoke and almost invite opposition, by the way in which you make objections, or refuse compliance. There are many things, too, which you might wish otherwise if you were the mistress of the house; but in which your plain duty, while you are not the mistress but the daughter, is to conform to the wishes of your parents. Always avoid everything which can even have the appearance of dictating to them. Your feeling about family worship was quite right; and by careful tact and good management, you might in time have carried out your plan as to the maids, which in itself would have been excellent; but your abrupt proposal must have appeared uncalculated for, not to say impertinent, to those who could not understand your feelings or read your heart; and I cannot wonder your mother was displeased, for it seemed like trying to set her right. The case of the father and son in your favourite story may have happened, but if it ever did, it must still be regarded as an exception; the rule would be against such an attempt, made in such a way, succeeding; it would certainly displease most parents seriously."

"But it seems so wrong to carry on a household in such a careless, godless way."

"It would be in you, if you were mistress, certainly; but the responsibility does not rest with you. It is a case in which for the present you can do nothing. All that is in your power is to be ready to take any private opportunity of influencing the servants by a word in season, or a book lent or given. If God saw fit for you to do more, he would open a way for you; whenever the right time comes, he will, without your out-stepping those boundaries which he has ordered for all who stand in the position of children with parents."

"But should I never protest against anything I see wrong?"

"In a father's house, dear, I think such protests should be made very sparingly, if ever; there should be very strong cause to justify it, and if done it should be very delicately and cautiously; with regard to that novel, for instance, the other night."

"Oh! I thought you were going to speak of that; but you cannot think how foolish, and worse than foolish, some of those novels are which are always on the drawing room table at home. The very sight of them is painful to me."

"Still, dear, remember you are not the person entrusted with the choice of your family's employments. I quite agree with you in your dislike of the kind of reading in which many people spend their time; but the strictures you made in your mother's presence were only likely to irritate. If you had been distinctly called on for an opinion, of course you would have been bound to speak the truth; but even then it should have been done in a gentle and humble tone, so as to disarm censure. The tone has more to do with the success or failure of your endeavours to do good than you are at all aware. A trenchant, dogmatic manner does more harm than can easily be conceived before-hand. In a young person especially, a respectful, deferential tone is essential; and a gentle and courteous manner to your companions may surely be reckoned among the things which the apostle calls 'lovely.' And we must remember that if a Christian makes himself disagreeable, it is not on himself alone, but on his religion, that the discredit falls. And the same may be said of what we may call 'bad taste'; we should always be ready to speak of those things which belong to our peace; they should be the most precious theme to a Christian; but forcing them on others at all times,—dragging in such topics, as to saying is, 'by the head and shoulders,'—is no part of Christian wisdom."

"But," said Marion, "do not think me cavilling,—but this is just the point which puzzles me most. My friends at H— all told me I ought to speak out plainly and directly to every one; and the books I was mentioning are full of anecdotes of young Christians, sometimes even quite children, speaking to their parents and older friends even more plainly than I did, and being made the greatest blessing to those to whom they spoke,—while I only gave offence. I dare say Miss Simpkins mentioned to you my speaking to her niece; I assure you I wound myself up to the effort with the greatest difficulty. She was going away, and and I thought I might never see her again; and so I just asked her something about the concerns of her soul. I forget my exact words; but I know she was very angry, and said it was a great liberty to pry into other people's spiritual concerns."

"I am sure the books you allude to—all have read many such—are written with the best intentions, and in a truly Christian spirit; but I cannot but think they have done harm in some cases, by leading young people to adopt a mode of action totally unfitting. If they would look to their Bibles, they would see that St. Peter encourages the believing wives to win the unbelieving husbands 'without the word,'—that is, as we are told by the best commentators, 'without conversation.'"

"But would you, then, say one should never speak directly, or unasked, on such subjects to parents?"

"Never is a strong word, and a word I am very slow in using. There are exceptions to every rule, and cases may occur which may call for a very decided and clear open confession of our faith; but I must say that, in the case of

children and parents, I believe them to be exceptional ones. They occur oftener among those classes where an irreligious father is often an open drunkard or swearer: with such, the word spoken by a child has sometimes had great effect. And I would not say that with others the same thing may not occur. I only maintain that the cases are very rare, with parents or near relatives, in which a direct appeal of this kind does not do more harm than good."

"But is there not a special blessing on an open confession of Christ?"

"Certainly, if God calls us to it; but we must make very sure he does. In many instances—and, dear Marion, I speak from personal and sad experience—we think we are confessing Christ, when in fact we are only confessing ourselves."

Marion paused. "This does set the matter in a new light," said said: "but how, then, can one influence one's nearest and dearest for good?"

"By the silent, powerful influence of a Christian life."

IS THERE A DEVIL?

BY THE REV. HENRY WARD BEECHER.

I know that there are many who disbelieve in spirit-agency. It is inconsistent with their conception of a benevolent God that He should permit a devil to exist. I wonder what such people do with their eyes. I wonder what they have been living about and in and for. Did you ever think that on every side there are just exactly that kind of spirits in the flesh which you disbelieve to exist out of the flesh, and that it is not, in point of fact, inconsistent of a benevolent God, in whom you believe, that there should be men who do, or attempt to do, all that which is ascribed to the great master Spirit of evil? Are there not men whom you may see on every corner almost that will deliberately, and for the sake of a pitiful pelf, lead men to drink up their property, to destroy their reputation, to utterly ruin their household—yes, and at last, yield up their loathsome lives? Are there not men going through this process? and are not pearls dissolved in liquor before their eyes every day? And God spares them, and lets others come when they die; and the world is never without them. Look upon these men who live by the destruction of their fellow-men, and who may be said in some sense to drink the blood of their sustenance—look upon them, and say if you can, "I do not believe a benevolent God would permit a devil to exist; it is inconsistent with Divine benevolence!" What will you do with those facts? Look upon the men who lie in wait all along the ports of our country. If there be one creature that might be supposed to touch with pity the heart of the most obdurate, it is the sea-sick, weary, over-spent emigrant, who has left his home and all his associations behind him—his country and his life as it were—and is cast upon a new shore, and comes needing whatever there may be of kindness and forbearance, and gentleness; and yet there are men who set their traps for that game! As there are hunters for the beaver and fur-bearing animals, so all along our ports there are hunters after these miserable, pitiful, suffering emigrants. They skin them alive, and they eat them bodily! and they do it, knowing that they turn them out into pain, into suffering, into untold agonies. Women are plunged almost of necessity into the very caldron of men's lusts, and men are driven to be paupers and to become criminals; and these men, confederated, lurk and lie in wait to destroy and devour; and you look on that scene, and know it to be existing, and know that it is being enacted in wholesale and in retail, and do not believe that a benevolent God could let a devil live! Why, society is knee deep with men who have no other function in life but to destroy their fellow-men. There is a large class, in the army of men, the whole power of whose brain is directed to wasting substance, to perverting principles, to destroying good habits. They study men's weaknesses as robbers study the weak point of a house where they would commit burglary. Men there are who are trained to wickedness, who are professedly wicked, who are scoundrels scientifically. And so they live; and so society is perpetually gnawed and ratted with these very men. And men say they do not believe a benevolent God would let a devil live. They say, "It is not consistent with His attributes." Oh, be ashamed of yourself, if you have ever reasoned so! Never hang out your own folly against such reasoning as that. If there is a devil incorporeal, if there is a mighty spirit that does mischief, and loves mischief, it is only the same thing in the spirit world that you see in the bodily world, that you know to exist, whose mischiefs are manifold, intricate, continuous, wide-spread, self-propagating, and about which there can be no contradiction. God suffers these things here; and where is the presumption that He does not, for reasons which we do not know, but which will seem infinitely wise, doubtless, when we shall know them, permit spirits of evil elsewhere?

THREE DAYS FROM BOSTON TO BURMAH.—While the Baptist Missionary Convention was in session in Rangoon, a telegram, dated October 26, was received October 29, from the Mission Rooms at Boston, directing the transfer of two of the missionaries to other stations. The convention must have realized that the ends of the earth had indeed been brought together.

The flooring of the Episcopal Church, in Thomaston, Me., gave way on the evening of the 28th ult., precipitating one hundred and fifty persons into the unfinished basement. Two persons were seriously injured, and many slightly wounded.