

Months' Department.

BIBLE LESSONS.

(From "Robinson's Harmony.")

Sunday, January 17th, 1869.

MATTHEW viii. 18-27; MARK iv. 35-41; LUKE viii. 22-25. ix. 57-62. Jesus directs to cross the Lake. Incidents. The tempest stilled.

Recite,—MARK xi. 22-24.

Sunday, January 24th, 1869.

MATTHEW viii. 28-34; ix. 1; MARK v. 1-21; LUKE viii. 26-40: The two Demoniacs of Gadara.

Recite,—1 JOHN iii. 7-9.

ANSWER TO NEW YEAR'S SCRIPTURE ENIGMA.

L-ylia Acts xvi. 14, 15.
O-nesiphorus 2 Tim. i. 16-18.
O-nesimus Philemon, ver. 10, 11.
K-orah Numbers xvi. 32, 33.
I-saiiah Isaiah ix. 6.
N-icodemus John iii. 1.
G-a-ius 3 John, ver. 1.

U-z-ziah 2 Chron. xxvi. 19, 20.
N-athanael John i. 45-49.
T-y-chicus Ephesians vi. 21.
O-b-adiah 1 King xxviii. 3, 4.

J-udas Matt. xxvi. 47.
E-l-isha 2 Kings v. 10-14.
S-tephen Acts vii. 59, 60.
U-r Genesis xi. 31.
S-imon Luke xxii. 31-34.

"LOOKING UNTO JESUS."—Heb. xii. 2.

SCRIPTURE ENIGMA.

No. II.

What did the sons of Jonadab refuse?
Where did the risen Lord his servants cheer?
Whose husband doubted certain joyous news?
Who fell to falsehood through his guilty fear?
Whose ruin by his simple wealth was wrought?
Whose bride did from her sire a boon-require?
And where were children by their parents brought,
And offered unto idols in the fire?

By these initials let us find
A sweet command that Jesus spake,
To be remembered in the hour
When bitter griefs the spirit shake.

THE SNOW STORM.

Announced by all the trumpets of the sky,
Arrives the snow; and, driving o'er the fields,
Seems nowhere to alight; the whited air
Hides hills and woods, the river and the heaven,
And veils the farm-house at the garden's end.
The sled and traveller stopped, the courier's feet
Delayed, all friends shut out, the housemates sit
Around the radiant fireplace, enclosed
In a tumultuous privacy of storm.

Come see the north wind's masonry.
Out of an unseen quarry, evermore
Furnished with tile, the fierce artificer
Curves his white bastions with projected roof
Round every windward stake, or tree, or door;
Speeding the myriad-handed, his wild work
So fanciful, so savage; naught cares he
For number or proportion. Mockingly
On coop or kennel he hangs Parian wreaths;
A swan-like form invests the hidden thorn;
Fills up the farmer's lane from wall to wall,
Maugre the farmer's sighs: and at the gate
A tapering turret overtops the work.
And when his hours are numbered, and the world
Is all his own, retiring as he were not,
Leaves, when the sun appears, astonished Art,
To mimic in slow structures, stone by stone,
Built in an age, the mad wind's night-work,
The frolic architecture of the snow.

Ralph Waldo Emerson.

REPENTANCE DELIGHTFUL.

"Humble yourself in the sight of the Lord,
and he shall lift you up."—James iv. 16.

"Which is the most delightful emotion?" said an instructor of the deaf and dumb to his pupils, after teaching them the names of our various feelings. The pupils turned to their slates, to write an answer; and one with smiling countenance wrote *Joy*. Another, with a look of thoughtfulness, put down *Hope*. A third, with beaming countenance, wrote *Gratitude*. A fourth wrote *Love*. At length one turned back with a countenance full of peace, and yet a tearful eye, and the teacher was surprised to find on her slate, "*Repentance* is the most delightful emotion." He asked, "Why?" "O," said she, in the expressive language of looks and signs, "it is so delightful to be humbled before God!"

There is dew in one flower, and not in another, because one opens its cup and takes it in, while the other closes itself, and the drop runs off. God rains goodness and mercy as wide as the dew, and if we lack them, it is because we will not open our hearts to receive them.

There is a time coming in every man's history when the knowledge of having been the instrument to pluck a single brand from the eternal burning will yield more real satisfaction than the certainty of having accomplished the loftiest objects of literary ambition.—J. A. James.

COUSIN MABEL'S EXPERIENCES.

BY MISS E. J. WHATLEY.

No. II. RITUALISM.

"Well," said Mrs. Wellwood, "I am no theologian; I cannot understand the arguments I hear brought forward for these things. I never was fond of discussion or controversy; but my girls are now perfectly enchanted with all these new observances and ceremonies. They have learned them partly from the clergyman of M—, whose service they are now attending, and who has introduced a great many novelties (though he calls them antiquities) into his church, and partly from their friend Millicent Harrington. She has a sister who belongs to one of the 'sisterhoods' which have been lately commenced, and I believe she has thoughts of joining one herself. Since she has come to stay in the neighbourhood I hear of nothing but church decorations, lighted candles, and a variety of observances, which it quite puzzles me even to enumerate. I am sure I cannot judge whether they are right or wrong. All I can see is, that the girls are so absorbed in them, that I can hardly get them to attend to anything else. They are always receiving fresh importations of little books covered with crosses and fanciful devices, with red leaves and curious borders, and their talk is half of it unintelligible to me,—I feel as if I were in a strange country. However, I suppose old people must expect young ones to take a rage for something or other. My great fear is lest the girls should wish to join some of these religious orders, which seem to have quite taken hold of their imaginations. Could not you talk to them about it, dear Mabel? You were always more clever at reasoning and arguing than I."

"My dear cousin," I replied, "I fear my influence would go for very little, as opposed to Miss Harrington's."

"Ah, yes; she is at the bottom of it all. And yet really she is a very nice person, extremely amiable, accomplished, and clever, and seems very devoted; but some of her ideas are so very strange—"

Mrs. Wellwood was interrupted by the appearance of her daughters and their friend. Breakfast was nearly over; for we had found it useless to wait. The meal was quickly dispatched, and the girls, apologizing to their mother for taking me from her, pressed me to come with them to a nursery garden at some distance, where they wished to procure some flowers of a rare kind, which could not be had nearer home. I consented, glad of a country walk, and we were soon on our way.

"For what purpose are you getting these flowers?" I asked, as we arrived at our destination.

"To decorate the church for next Wednesday," replied Gertrude. "It is a special festival day."

We reached the garden, and purchases were made which astonished me by their costliness. Some red camellias were bought at a high price; and the young ladies explained to me that the day to be celebrated (I am sorry to say I have forgotten the name) was that of a martyr, and in consequence red flowers were to be chosen to commemorate his death.

"I believe you think all this great nonsense, cousin Mabel," said Edith, as we turned our steps homewards. "Don't you think she does, Millicent?" she added, playfully.

"Does your cousin think it nonsense," said Millicent, in her quiet voice, "to employ God's lovely gifts, the flowers he has made, in adorning his church on a solemn day? Could we have a more suitable adornment? If pictures and embroidery are to be condemned as man's work (though I cannot see why), surely the works of God might be admitted into his own blessed sanctuary."

"Cousin Mabel has not said a word either against painting, work, or flowers for churches, Millicent," said Edith, "and it is too soon to condemn her unheard. You speak as if she were opposed to you."

"I have never said that," replied Millicent, drily; "but it is easy to see that Miss Selwyn does not agree with us."

"Do not misunderstand me, dear Miss Harrington," I said, seeing that my opinion was called for. "I never meant to condemn the use of flowers in themselves. I like to see a church adorned with evergreens at Christmas; and I think the foreign custom of laying garlands on a tomb a very pretty and touching one. The objections I see to what you have just been doing, as you wish for my opinion, are—first, that all this extreme attention to outward decoration is too apt to call off our minds from the real object of worship,—spiritual communion with God himself, who is a spirit, and should be worshipped in spirit and in truth; and, secondly, that the great expense to which one must go to purchase, for instance, these rare flowers, must in many cases cripple one's means of doing good to the poor, and helping missions, schools, etc."

"But surely," said Gertrude, "if we decorate our houses and table with beautiful and tasteful objects, are we to leave God's house alone unadorned and tasteless? And may we not be—are not many—just as extravagant, and more so, in adorning their dresses and person?"

"Yes, my love; and of course it is wrong to spend on any of our own pleasures money which is needed for more important objects. But the great difference is this: no one can think he is doing a thing specially pleasing to God in decorating his own house; but in ornamenting the church, we may be led to believe that we are really doing an act peculiarly acceptable to God, when in fact we are only gratifying our own taste. And in this way I am sure many may deceive themselves. Though I have not personally seen much of these practices, I know from

the testimony of others that large sums have in many cases been spent on the decoration of an altar or a chancel, when places near at hand have been actually in want of churches and school-houses."

"Oh, of course, that wouldn't be right. But would you have all the churches reduced to hideous white-washed buildings, like that fright of a place in Mr. Henley's parish?"

"As I have not seen that 'fright of a place,' of course I can't judge; but I would certainly always wish to see everything arranged 'decently and in order,' and also made as attractive and pleasing to the eye as can be done without either taking money from more important objects, or drawing off the attention from the real end and aim of Christian worship. God looks, I believe, at the 'living stones' first—those who meet to worship him in heart and soul; and he would surely be better pleased by a congregation of earnest and faithful Christian worshippers in a barn, than with the most magnificent and splendidly adorned building attended by those who came only as a form, or were attracted by the outside."

No answer was made. The girls looked surprised and puzzled, and Millicent heard all with her usual quiet and imperturbable demeanour.

"I never can get Millicent to argue with any one," said Gertrude, when we were alone together;—"she always says she dislikes and disapproves of arguments, and thinks they seldom do good."

"Have you known Miss Harrington very long?" I asked.

"For some months. The clergyman of M— and his wife are her great friends, and she was staying with them when Gertrude and I first met her. Millicent's parents live chiefly in London; they are very rich and fashionable, and very much in the world;—and see a great deal of gay company. Millicent and her sisters had a first-rate education, and when they came out they were very well introduced and greatly admired; they are all handsome, elegant girls; but now Millicent and her sister Cecilia have given up everything of that kind. Cecilia has joined an order of 'sisters of mercy' in London; and Millicent wishes to join either the same or another more in these parts, whose superior is a friend of hers. But her mother, who was dreadfully hurt at Cecilia's resolution, cannot bear the idea of Millicent doing the same; she says, after all the advantages they have been given it is too bad that her daughters should throw all away—that, you know, is her view—but as they have two daughters left to go out and keep up all the gaieties, I think they might spare Millicent; and I fancy she will end by gaining her point."

"Is it as a kind of sister of charity, or what they call a Deaconess, among the foreign Protestants?" I asked. "I have known something of the Protestant establishments of Deaconesses abroad, and know they have done good; but they are of a different kind, I fancy, from these English sisterhoods; and as far as I know, they do not encourage any to join them whose families do not wish to spare them, or whose duties at home ought to prevent it."

"Cecilia is a 'sister of mercy,' and nurses the sick, but Millicent wishes to join a contemplative order."

I felt more and more surprised; all this seemed of savour of Romanism, and I could not help saying something to that effect.

"Well, dear cousin, I am sure you are not so narrow-minded as to disapprove of everything that is Romanist merely because of the name. Surely the church of Rome may have good and noble things in her. You would not altogether condemn everything that resembles Romanism?"

"It is not because of the name of Romanism that I could condemn any practice, dear Gertrude, but because of its being unscriptural; and it is on that ground I condemn the church of Rome as a church. I do not attempt to judge individuals who belong to it; many, I am sure, are better than the system in which they have been brought up; and in general, it is systems, and not men, we should oppose. As a church I believe the church of Rome is opposed to the word of God, and not least in those very monastic institutions which these sisterhoods appear to imitate."

"But, surely, to leave the world and devote oneself to God's service, must be pleasing to him?"

"To devote oneself to his service is what we are all called on to do, dear Gertrude, if we are truly his."

"Yes, of course," said Gertrude; "but I mean, to be set apart and turn away from all earthly pursuits, and just give oneself entirely up either to helping the poor and sick, or to praying and meditating. That kind of life—I don't know that I could bear it myself—but it does seem to me such a noble, beautiful self-separation. I dare not talk of it before mamma, she would be so horrified; but I think, to be a real 'sister of charity,' (I should like that better than the meditative kind of life), and to be all day devoted to doing good, would be a glorious vocation."

"I can understand its attraction for young people," I replied.

"But you speak as if you thought it a dangerous attraction!"

"Do you wish me to say exactly what I think? Well then, my dear child, it seems to me that when God sees it fitting to set a woman apart, either to a life exclusively of active service out of her family, or to 'contemplation,' as you call it—that is, a life of outward stillness and comparative isolation and solitude, he does it in his own way; and for us to undertake to do it for him, and to walk one way when he has set us to walk in another, is not only an act of great presumption, but of positive disobedience and insubordination to his will."

To be Continued.

THE UNSAFE BRIDGE.

A young lady, in giving her reasons for preferring a particular Church, remarked that she "liked it best because it allowed its members to dance." She had been brought up to regard this as inconsistent for a professor of religion. She could not help feeling that it was running a risk to try to get to heaven and carry the world with her. But here was comfort. She had found a religious guide on which she could, as she fancied, shift off the responsibility. Instead of deciding for herself in the light of Christ's teachings, she chose to take a second-hand opinion of a mere man as a rule.

One is reminded of an incident related by Dr. Whatley, of an old bridge which had long been thought unsafe even for foot passengers. People usually went a considerable distance around rather than venture upon it. But one evening a woman in great haste came up to the bridge before she reflected on its unsafe condition. It was late, and she had yet to dress for a party. She could not go all the way around, though still afraid to venture. At last a happy thought seemed to strike her. She called for a sedan chair, and was carried over! Now the young lady who desired to follow the world and go to heaven too, was afraid to trust her own judgment on the subject of dancing. She feared the tottering arch might give way, and she be lost forever. To make all safe, she added to the weight of her own chance of error the additional chances of her human authority being wrong also.

Oh, it is a fearful thing to be a blind guide of the blind. For destruction must await us both. We cannot take as infallible any human leader. We must "prove all things and hold fast that which is good." One who studies the Bible much, with a prayerful, humble mind, will not be apt to go wrong in these matters. It is not what the Church "will let you do," but what Jesus Christ sanctions, that must be your guide.—Sunday-School Times.

The following is probably the most remarkable specimen of alliteration extant. Any one who has written an acrostic, and who has felt the embarrassment of being confined to particular initial letters, can appreciate the ingenuity demanded by the following, where the whole alphabet is fathomed, and each word in each line, exacts its proper initial:—

An Austrian army, awfully arrayed,
Boldly, by battery, besieged Belgrade.
Cossack commanders canonading come,
Dealing destruction's devastating doom.
Every endeavor engineers essay,
For fame, for fortune—fighting furious fray.
Generals 'gainst generals grapple;—great God!
How honors Heaven heroic hardihood!
Infuriate—indiscriminate in ill,
Kinsmen kill kinsmen—kindred kindred kill!
Labor low levels loftiest lines—
Men march 'mid mounds, 'mid moles, 'mid murderous mines.
Now noisy numbers notice nought
Of outward obstacles, opposing ought;
Poor patriots, partly purchased, partly pressed,
Quite quaking, quickly quarter, quarter quest.
Reason returns; religion's right redounds,
Swarrow stops such sanguinary sounds.
Truce to the Turk—triumph to thy train!
Unjust, unwise, unmerciful Ukraine!
Vanish vain victory, vanish victory vain!
Why wish we warfare? wherefore welcome were
Xerxes, Ximenes, Xanthus, Xaviere?
Yield, ye youths! ye yeomen, yield your yell!
Zeno's, Zarpater's Zoroaster's zeal,
And all attracting—against arms appeal."

SCRIPTURE ILLUSTRATION.

GOING TWO MILES FOR ONE.

In the Sermon on the Mount, our Lord says, "Whosoever shall compel thee to go one mile, go with him twain." We can all of us easily understand the other part of this command, that when struck upon one cheek we should in humility offer the other, because unfortunately we know what striking is. But many must have wondered what can have given rise to the command of going a second mile with the violent man who has already compelled you to go a mile. Nobody now, in this country, is ever injured by this treatment. But we learn from coins and inscriptions that the couriers in the service of the Roman government had the privilege of travelling through the provinces free of expense, and of calling on the villagers to forward their carriage and baggage to the next town. Under a despotic government this became a cruel grievance. Every Roman of high rank claimed the same privilege; the horses were unyoked from the plow to be harnessed to a rich man's carriage. It was the most galling injustice which the province suffered. We have an inscription of the frontier town of Egypt and Nubia, mentioning its petition for a redress of this grievance; and a coin of Nerva's reign records its abolition in Italy. Our Lord could give no stronger exhortation to patient humility than by advising his Syrian hearers, instead of resenting the demand for one stage's "vehiculation," to go willingly a second stage.

Lost wealth may be restored by industry; the wreck of health regained by temperance; forgotten knowledge restored by study; alienated friendship smoothed in forgetfulness; even forfeited reputation won by penitence and virtue; but whoever again looked upon his vanished hours, recalled his slighted year, stamped them with wisdom, or effaced from heaven's record the fearful blot of wasted time?