

Months' Department.

BIBLE LESSONS.

(From "Robinson's Harmony.")

Sunday, February 7th, 1869.

MATTHEW ix. 18-26; MARK v. 22-43; LUKE viii. 41-56: The raising of Jairus' daughter.  
Recite.—Hebrews xi. 1, 3, 6.

Sunday, February 14th, 1869.

MATTHEW ix. 27-34; xiii. 54-58; MARK vi. 1-3: Two blind men healed and a dumb spirit cast out. Jesus again at Nazareth and again rejected.  
Recite.—Luke iv. 24-27.

ANSWER TO SCRIPTURE ANAGRAM.

No. I.

1. J-a-e-l . . . . . Judges v. 24.
2. E-a-r . . . . . Luke xvii, 50; 51.
3. R-e-u-e-l . . . . . Exod. ii. 18.
4. U-r . . . . . Gen. xi. 31.
5. S-a-m-u-e-l . . . . . 1 Sam. ii. 18.
6. A-l-m-s . . . . . Luke xii. 33.
7. L-a-m-e . . . . . 2 Sam. iv. 4.
8. E-l-a-m . . . . . Gen. xiv. 1; Dan. viii. 2.
9. M-e-a-l . . . . . 1 Kings xvii. 12.

JERUSALEM.

SCRIPTURE ENIGMA.

No. IV.

- Find 1. A father of a martyr.  
2. A priest.  
3. A son of Japheth.  
4. A king of Israel.  
5. One who experienced great deliverance.  
6. A doorkeeper.  
7. A prophet.  
8. A pious mother.  
9. A Hebrew captive.

The initials give the name of a town celebrated both in the Old and New Testaments: the final letters name one of the royal house of David.

A GIFT TO JESUS.

A little girl standing in the doorway of a house in the city of Montreal, in the early days of summer, when the gardens were all in blossom, saw another about her own age passing by on the sidewalk with a bouquet of flowers in her hand. As the little girl lingered a moment by the door, little Mary, as we will call her, asked her "where she was carrying her flowers?"

"To place them before the picture of the Virgin and her Son," she quickly answered. Mary knew that she meant by this that she would place them in the church before a painting of the infant Jesus and his mother Mary. It seemed a pleasant thing to her to place flowers before even the picture of the Saviour.

Running back to the house, Mary told what she had seen and heard, and asked if she might gather flowers and place them before the picture. Mary's mother asked her which she would rather do, place flowers before a picture of Jesus, or place them in his hand and give them directly to him.

"I should rather give them to him, if I could see him, and was not afraid to do it," little Mary answered.

The mother told Mary she would show her how to do it, and assured her that she would not be afraid.

In the afternoon, as her mother directed her, Mary gathered as beautiful a bouquet of flowers as she could collect in the garden, and she and her mother went out for a walk together.

Mary wondered where her mother was going, and was thinking about the talk she had with her in the morning, but she hardly knew how to speak of it again.

They walked some distance, and finally her mother stopped before a humble-looking house. An old lady answered the knock, and whispered, in return to her mother's question about her daughter, that "Jane was a very low, and could not remain with them a great while."

The room into which they entered was very plainly furnished, but everything was neat. Sitting up in the bed, supported by pillows, was a young woman, looking very pale and feeble. A pleasant smile lit up her face as Mary's mother drew near her bed and took her hand. Then she sat down and talked with her about her sickness, and about the heavenly land where the inhabitants are never sick, and the weary are at rest. Tears fell down the cheeks of the sufferer; not from pain or grief, but tears of love and joy; and she said "It was a great comfort to her to hear these words."

Her mother then led Mary up, and placed her little hand in the hot, white hand of the sick young woman. She leaned over and kissed the little girl, and told her it did her good to see her bright, young face. The mother said nothing, but she was pleased when she saw Mary hand to the sick girl her bouquet of flowers. "What a beautiful smile they brought upon that pale face!" "It had been so long," she said "since she had seen the flowers growing; it was almost like a walk in the garden to have this beautiful bouquet." After she had breathed its fragrance a few moments, she asked her mother to put it in water and let it stand where she could see it as she sat in bed. "She should think of little Mary," she said, "every time she looked upon it."

This made Mary feel as she had never felt before. She could hardly help crying, and yet she was certain she never felt so happy before.

As they walked home she told her mother that she was glad they had carried the flowers to the

sick woman, but she timidly added that she had not seen Jesus.

When they reached the house the mother took the Bible, and, drawing her little girl to her lap, she read, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these, . . . ye have done it unto me." Then little Mary saw that, in placing her flowers in the hand of the sick disciple of Jesus she had really given them to himself; and that whenever her heart was warm toward the dear Saviour that loved her and died for her, and she desired to bestow some gift upon him, expressing her love to him, she could do so by offering to any one that was suffering around her. No act of gentleness or kindness, or kind word to a suffering or unfortunate person, no gift to send the Bible to those who have it not, is unnoticed. It is like placing the bouquet before him.

In this way Mary's mother taught her how she could offer her gifts to Jesus; and then they sung together the beautiful hymn of Montgomery, of which this is one of the verses:

"Then in a moment to my view  
The stranger started from disguise—  
The tokens in his hand I knew;  
My Saviour stood before my eyes!  
He spake, and my poor name he named,  
'Of me thou hast not been ashamed;  
These deeds shall thy memorials be;  
Fear not; thou didst it unto me.'"

COUSIN MABEL'S EXPERIENCES.

BY MISS E. J. WHATELY.

No. V. A VISIT TO AN INVALID.

I am not addicted to morning visits; indeed, many of my friends think me very remiss in this respect; but there are a few houses where I love to spend any spare hours I can command, and among these is the humble dwelling of my invalid friend, Lydia Franklin. Though still young, she has long been a sufferer from a spinal affection, which leaves no hope of cure. She and an elder sister were left orphans in narrow circumstances, under the protection of an aunt who brought them up. This aunt and the elder niece, eke out their slender means by receiving a few pupils daily; and consequently poor Lydia, though the object of the tenderest devotion and care of both, would spend the chief part of every day in solitude but for the visits of some kind friends. But the abode of Miss Maynard and her nieces, in spite of the double trial of sickness and narrow means, and I fancy some other subjects of heavy care and anxiety, is a more cheerful one than many a more outwardly prosperous dwelling. The two working members of the family are too busy to be sad, and too truly Christian-minded not to be thankful and content; and when I enter the modest little room (the most sunny in the house), with its pleasant window, looking on green fields and trees, its stand of flowers, and the low couch placed close by on which the invalid is laid, with her work-basket and a few books within reach, and a sweet pale face that lights up with a placid smile at my entrance, I feel that I am entering an atmosphere of much peace in the midst of trial. Her's is the true peace of a chastened Christian spirit, who has learned to bear her sufferings as from a Father's hand.

One morning, however, when I came to her (which I usually did at the time her aunt and sister were engaged with their pupils), I found her generally calm brow clouded with an air of depression, and before I had time to ascertain the cause, a knock announced a visitor. As often happens with invalids, her friends were apt to come all together when they did call, and I saw she was wearied; but she begged me so earnestly to stay, that I retreated into a recess in the window with a book. But in my quality of a silent looker-on, I could not help paying some attention to the conversations which followed, and I am tempted to record them as examples of the way in which really kind and Christian friends may sometimes, from want of tact and judgment, give pain where they mean to comfort. The lady who first entered, as Mrs. Elmsley, was one whom I knew by character as much engaged in works of benevolence. She was a tall, portly, good-looking woman, in a very voluminous silk dress, which seemed to spread over the chief part of the little room as she rustled up to the invalid's couch.

"Good morning, my dear Lydia," she said, in a voice rather too loud and rapid for a sick room; "I was wishing all day yesterday to come to you; but have really been too busy. Well, how is it with you?" she continued, when the first salutations had been exchanged.

"I know what a sufferer you are, but only think what a privilege is yours, to be set apart for prayer and meditation. What leisure you must have for real spiritual communion, which we busy people in common life cannot attain to! Indeed I was saying only the other day, when things I had to do were so crowded one on another that I could hardly get a moment's breathing time from early morning till late at night—I said to my daughter, 'Well, I really envy Lydia Franklin! I would willingly undergo some of the pain she suffers, to be able to command the precious hours for quiet thought she must enjoy!' I look on you as really a privileged person—your quiet time is what many might long for. Now I am sure you have had many delightful thoughts to tell me about, do now read one, and give me your opinion of this paper, it is a manuscript my dear friend, Mr. P. has just sent me. Some thoughts on prophecy. Shall I read it to you, or leave it for you to read?" and she drew from her bag a thick envelope filled with several sheets of closely written note paper in a very small hand-writing.

My young friend looked round at me in evident dismay. I could see by her heavy eye and contracted brow that she was suffering from one

of her severe headaches. "I fear, dear Mrs. Elmsley, I should not be able to follow this if you read it aloud; I am not up to much to-day," she said, gently.

"Well, my dear, just as you like. I'll leave it with you till to-morrow, and then I must come for it again. I promised to send it on, so you will tell me what you think of it then. I always look for your opinion; and you know you have such leisure for thought."

So saying, Mrs. Elmsley laid the manuscript on the little table beside the invalid, and took her departure, saying to me as she passed out, "Ah, I see this is a favourite haunt of yours, too; visiting the sick is quite a vocation of mine, and I see it is yours also. It is so delightful to be able to cheer a sufferer?"

As the rustle of Mrs. Elmsley's silk dress died away on the ear, Lydia turned to me with a look of weariness. "It is very kind of Mrs. Elmsley," she said, "and I do love things of this kind when I can read them; but my head is so tired, and this handwriting so small, I fear I can never get through it before to-morrow! I must try this evening if my head is any better."

At this moment another arrival interrupted us. Miss Wilson was a quiet-looking, plainly-dressed person, the very opposite to Mrs. Elmsley in appearance and manner. She was an excellent and devoted woman, of deep piety, and often called on the invalid.

"Dear friend," she said, as she came gently in, "I have been longing to see you for a week past but was prevented: I fear you are suffering much to-day."

"It is rather a bad day with me," said Lydia, with a faint smile.

"Ah yes! I know how you are tired, but; dear friend, I know, too, you are able to rejoice in the midst of tribulation. I am sure you can sing songs of triumph and thanksgiving in the furnace, can you not? I knew that memoir I left you would just apply to your case—a touching account of a young girl," she turned to me, "who had such wonderful joy vouchsafed to her when in actual agony of pain. You should read it, it is quite a remarkable account, but to our dear friend here it is only, I dare say, what she has often and often experienced; have you not, dear?"

I interrupted her, seeing the invalid looked not only weary, but agitated and depressed.

"Perhaps another day, dear Miss Wilson, she can talk to you better; but I think she has a headache, and we had better not tire her any more. I was sitting with her not as entertainer, but as nurse, till her sister can come up to her."

A less broad hint would not have sufficed, for good Miss Wilson seemed unaware that it was possible to fatigue an invalid who was not actually too ill to see visitors at all.

"Well, then, dear, I will only just read you this lovely hymn I have brought with me—a leaflet sent this morning by a friend. I thought it would just suit your case."

She read it, and was going on to another, when I touched her arm. I saw the invalid seemed more distressed than soothed, and suggested her being left quite quiet and alone for the present. The good lady prepared to go, and I to accompany her down stairs; but as she passed the little shelf on which some of the invalid's books were arranged, she took up a volume which lay, as if lately used, on the ledge of the bookcase. "Pardon me, dear," she said, "but I really feel I must be faithful with you: it is quite consistent for an invalid in your state to be reading such a completely secular book as this?"

"I brought it, Miss Wilson," I interrupted, smiling. "I found our young friend one day suffering with neuralgia, and thought that something which would entirely take off her mind would be best for her. But it is not a novel, I assure you, if you are alarmed on that head."

"Oh, no, I did not suppose that; but I own I can't understand an invalid reading for mere amusement. Surely sickness was meant to give us leisure for something higher. But I know how our dear friend's real affections are set, and I need not worry her now. So good-bye." And, laying down the little store of "leaflets" she had brought, Miss Wilson accompanied me down stairs. When I had seen her pass the little garden gate I returned to my charge, and found her weeping quietly.

"Your friends have over-fatigued you, dear child," I said. "I will not stay to trouble you, unless I can be of use in bathing your poor head."

"Yes, dear Miss Selwyn, do stay," said Lydia, struggling with her tears. "I want to talk to you, and tell you what it is that distresses me. I have been feeling so wicked all day."

"How so, dear? I saw you were looking troubled when I came in."

"Why, I had been reading all yesterday that memoir Miss Wilson left me. It depressed me dreadfully; I'll tell you why afterwards. And when you came in this morning I was feeling as if I could hardly be a Christian. It seemed as if I could only say, with the Psalmist, 'My soul cleaveth unto the dust.' Well, I was just under this cloud when those kind friends came in. They are both such really Christian women; and both did really mean to be so very kind! I would not have had them know for the world what pain they were giving me. And when Miss Wilson left I seemed to have no power to struggle longer against it. They thought they were comforting me, and almost every word had a sting!"

"I saw they were neither of them on the right line," I answered. "But now, dear, if you do not mind telling me, how did they chiefly pain you? Perhaps talking over it may clear it up a little."

"Why, did not you see, dear Miss Selwyn,

that they were both treating me as if my illness must set me on a kind of pedestal above all human weaknesses—at least as if it ought to make me much more spiritual than others; and I suppose it ought. God sent it for that, I am sure; and it is my own fault, my own great sinfulness, that prevents me. But Mrs. Elmsley thought I had so much quiet time that I must be able to pray a great deal, and think of the best things a great deal; and she seemed to think I should even be able to understand these meditations on the Bible better than another, because I had so much time for thought and prayer and communion with God. Now, dear Miss Selwyn, I had not courage to contradict her; I knew she would have thought me so wicked. But it is not so, indeed! I have the leisure, certainly. There are hours when I might be full of these things; and I do try; but, oh, no one can tell how hard it is sometimes! Many and many a day I attempt to concentrate my thoughts in prayer, and I can't—the thoughts all seem to slip away from me. I feel that I want a great deal from God, and I long to ask him; and when I begin it seems as if I had not a word to say to him. I forget what I was wishing to pray about, or I get into a dreamy state, as if my mind was hardly awake. I cannot describe it to you. At other times I can scarcely believe it myself; and it seems so strange, and so ungrateful. But just in those hours when I would most earnestly desire to keep my mind steady on God, my head grows so confused that the power of prayer seems gone. I know Mrs. Elmsley would think this quite impossible if I told her; she is always saying how I can work by prayer, and how I ought to be a 'praying missionary'; and so, very, very often I find myself quite unable. I do not mean I am always tried in this way. Thank God, there are times when it is different; but I have this inability to make the best use of my time much oftener than any one thinks. And as to understanding those 'Bible Thoughts' she gave me to read, I am sure I should not know what they meant if I tried to give my mind to them now. I know it is very wrong of me; and if I were different—"

She stopped to struggle with her tears. "If you were different, dear Lydia, you would have one trial less, which you now have to bear. But is there no blessing in patiently bearing what God lays on you?"

"If it were only a question of bearing bodily or mental suffering, I think I can say I feel that blessing. I do try to bear whatever pain and weariness I may feel—though not half well enough, I know. But this is not a matter of bearing; it is a sin which I ought to struggle against; and indeed I do struggle, but all my efforts seem to fail. What can I do?"

"Shall I tell you, dear child? Just let your struggles alone, and bear, instead of fighting."

"But is it right to give way, and neglect such a privilege?"

"Is it neglecting, dear child, when you know your heart longs after God—that your desire is to him; Surely not. He knows it is not from want of willingness, not from coldness of heart towards him, but from inability, that you fail. You are reproaching yourself with that as a sin which is, in fact, the result of your infirmity of body. Just keep in mind that God does not need many words; that he knows your inward 'groanings that cannot be uttered.' All your wants are known to him. Raise your heart continually to him, tell him he knows your needs, but do not distress yourself because your words must be few, or even none at all; and, above all, do not reproach yourself because you cannot follow out all the wishes of your various kind friends, who do not really understand your state."

"Thank you, dear Miss Selwyn; but that is not all. Miss Wilson, too, distressed me. She spoke of my being able to rejoice and sing in my heart. And ah! that is just what I can't, at least now. I do desire with all my heart to submit myself to God's will. I would not desire to change. I think I can say with my heart, 'Thy will be done!' but joy and gladness I cannot feel. I know that, as a pardoned child of God, as I humbly trust that I am, I have cause for rejoicing, and that the glory which awaits us is unspeakable joy. But though I know all this, oftener than not, I cannot feel it as I ought. I long to praise; but when I try, it often seems as if the voice of praise was dumb. I seem like a poor little wounded bird, that tries to fly upwards, but its wings droop, and it falls down from weakness. Have you ever known what such a feeling is?"

"Often and often, dear child; and now I want you to take comfort, and not look on this as a sin either. It comes, just as your difficulty in prayer does, from your physical suffering and weakness of nerves."

POWER OF BAPTISM.

Dr. Wayland once remarked, "I am sometimes astonished at the effect produced on the condition of a church by a baptism. A writer in one of our exchange relates the following:

"Three more followed Christ in baptism a few days ago; one an aged sire of eighty-seven years, and the other two our chorister and his wife. The first, a worthy member of the Congregational Church many years, has long felt dissatisfied in regard to his baptism. Within two or three years he has felt he must be immersed, and at times so anxious has he been to follow Jesus that it seemed he could not be denied the blessing. But his children and relations felt they could not have him leave their church. Yet, finally, he came to our covenant meeting and related his experience, and recently he did bow his silvered head in baptism. As he was raised up out of the water he exclaimed, 'Blessed Jesus, I am coming.' It was indeed a precious day to this church."