

Months' Department.

BIBLE LESSONS.

(From "Robinson's Harmony.")

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.—Scripture Catechism, 19, 20.

Sunday, May 30th, 1869.

MATTHEW xvii. 14-21; MARK ix. 14-20; LUKE ix. 37-43: The healing of a demoniac whom the disciples could not heal.

Recite.—S. C., 21, 22.

ANSWER TO SCRIPTURE TEXT ILLUSTRATED.

No. IV.

Hannah 1 Sam. i. 9-16
Job's Job ii. 11-13; xvi. 2, 20.
Naomi Ruth i. 19-21.

"The heart knoweth his own bitterness, and a stranger doth not intermeddle with his joy.—Prov. xiv. 10.

God only knows the hearts he made;
How wild the thoughts, and hot the tears
Of some, who in a single hour
Live more than others live in years.

A passing smile—a falling word,
That others notice and forget—
Remain to sting their future days
With sharp and passionate regret.

And yet they smile—they smile the most—
But when the floating sunbeam dies,
We see the shadow on the cheek,
The wistful watching of the eyes.

God help them all: his angel Death
Those restless hearts will one day tame;
And some who see their empty chair
May pity what they used to blame.

SCRIPTURE ENIGMA.

No. XI.

What did a dying mother name her son?
Who to rebuild Jerusalem begun?
For what might some good Timothy despise?
What queen proved noble, resolute and wise?
What ruler left no record but his name?
Who with sad tidings to his mistress came?
What king from warfare would not be deterred?
From whom a fearful truth a monarch heard?
Whence went the spies the promised land to view?
Whose heart neglected truths his judgement knew?
Who through an intrigue perished in a fight?
What mournful volume did a prophet write?

By these initials let us find
A precept to be borne in mind,
Through every changing scene:
And if obeyed, it cheers us so,
That come what may, or weal, or woe,
Our souls remain serene.

A MISSIONARY DOG.

"The editor of the *Band of Hope Review* some time ago received a letter from Charles Payne, the servant of a gentleman in Norfolk, in which the writer stated:—'Having occasion to put my horses up to be baited at a small inn, at Frosdisham, in Cheshire, I thought I would take the advantage of attending a missionary meeting, which was going on in a chapel close by; but finding it already crowded, I was obliged to remain outside. One of the speakers was reading over the amounts collected during the year, and amongst the names mentioned was 'Master Jowler,' for £1 13s. and some pence, but I was not able to catch the exact amount from my being outside. Now this Master Jowler, I learned, was none other than a dog belonging to a Mr. Jones, living in that neighborhood. Jowler had been taught to collect money for foreign missions. This he has done, I was told, some years. The manner in which he goes about his work is most peculiar. He is supplied with a basket, which he carries in his mouth, and his knock and bark at the doors are well known by the people who live in the village. As soon as the door is opened, Jowler gives a bark, and wags his tail; and the people of whom I made inquiries informed me that there is no getting rid of the dog until some sort of money is put into his basket. He is a small white bull-terrier. I have heard of men, women and children being pressed into the missionary cause, but never before heard of dogs. I do not know whether he was present to hear the cheers and loud clapping that were given for him by the meeting, but certain it is that he seems to manifest an interest in his duty, though unconscious of the end for which he labors. I think, sir, that you will not fail to teach a lesson to your readers from this fact. Jowler certainly belongs to the *'Clever Dogs, Horses, &c.'*"—From

THE ONION TEST.—A bluff old farmer says: "If a man professes to serve the Lord, I like to see him do it when he measures onions, as well as when he hollers halleluay." This remark will apply to more transactions than measuring onions.

COUSIN MABEL'S EXPERIENCES.

BY MISS E. J. WHATELY.

No. XV.

HOME OPPOSITION.

"I know" said Marion "one is always told of the power of Christian example; but, dear Miss L., do not think me cavilling, but the subject of example is a great difficulty to me. It seems as if the good we could do by example was chiefly negative,—I mean, that we may do great harm by a bad example, but not much good, in the way of religious influence, by a good one. I know I have no right to speak of this, because I am so inconsistent and faulty; but the difficulty I am thinking of would be just as great if I were far better than I am: I mean, that anything wrong or foolish I do or say is ascribed to my religion, and anything I may do right to my early education, or my natural good disposition, or good teaching, or anything, in short, rather than to my religious views. It is the same with much better persons than I am. That friend of mine of whom Miss Simpkins was speaking, Ellen Wilmot, is a far more consistent Christian, I am sure, than I am; but I constantly hear her family and my own ascribing all her virtues to her natural character, and even speaking as if she were good and lovable in spite of her religion."

"Just as the Madagascar people used to say of the converts: they were very good people in everything but their praying. I have often observed this, dear child, and felt painfully the difficulty. All I can say is, that I believe a long continued and consistent course of Christian holiness will, sooner or later, make itself felt. I have seen a persevering, humble Christian live down in time the prejudice against her religion, and convince her friends that it had a practical effect on her conduct. Still, that is a work of time. In respect of influence, I was alluding just then to a power which will be felt much sooner, and after a much shorter acquaintance,—I mean the insensible influence which every really earnest, praying Christian will, whether he is aware of it or not, carry about with him, and which will have a more powerful effect on those about him than we are apt to acknowledge. I believe, if we maintain a constant communion with our God and Saviour, there will be a kind of atmosphere of spiritual life about us, which will insensibly influence those who come within our circle."

"I am sure that is true with some Christians. I know I used to feel when I was with Miss Williams that her very presence seemed to help me, even when she did not speak a word, and I felt this before really knew what was the source of her power. But this could hardly apply to such weak, imperfect beginners in the way of truth as I am."

"Why not, dearest? The power I speak of is not yours, or any human being's individual power: it is God working in and through us. Try to draw very near to him; let the words you say to others come from a heart full of prayer. Lift up your heart to God for help at the very moment you have to speak or listen to others who differ from you; imitate Nehemiah when he 'cried unto the Lord his God' secretly, before he even answered the king's question; and, take my word for it, you will find that, by the guiding and quickening power of the Holy Spirit, you have a power you never had before; and sooner or later, you will find that you have been sowing seed which will bear fruit."

"But I should like to know more about your opinion on those direct, home questions about the state of a person's soul. Would you say they should always be avoided?"

"Certainly I would not. It all depends on time, place, and circumstances. I have known myself several cases in which such questions were made the turning point in a person's life; but it requires that Christian wisdom which can only be gained by watchfulness and prayer combined, to see when the right moment for such a question is come. In general, if it be used, it is more likely to do good to those much younger than ourselves than to older persons, and to uneducated rather than educated hearers. But we cannot lay down general rules. We are bound, as Christians, always to be on the watch for opportunities to win souls to Christ; this should be, next to the care of our own soul, our first concern; but we should act like a wise and skilful general, always looking out for the moment when we may attack the enemy with advantage. He would not be wise if he bade his men fire right and left in all directions, without looking where they were going."

"No, I see that."

"Let us try, dear Marion, to be as wise as the children of this world are in their generation. Our Lord meant it as a reproach to 'the children of light,' that they were less wise than others. Let us bring every talent and power we possess, however humble, to bear on our life-work, not only by direct exertions in God's cause, but by trying to be as amiable and agreeable in our daily life as we can, without taking part in anything really wrong. Let us show our friends who do not think with us that a Christian can be a pleasant, cheerful companion, without compromising his position as a Christian. And in time, you may be sure, his influence on really important matters will make itself felt, and his religion will be loved for his sake."

"Thank you, dear Miss L., I see what you mean; I am afraid it will be uphill work with me, but I will try. But I want to know what you think about worldly amusements? You would not surely think it right to give way?"

"It is a difficult question to answer, dear Marion, in the case of so young a person as you are. If you were of an age to act for yourself

legally, I should certainly not hesitate, but say, refuse mildly, quietly, but firmly; do not pronounce any judgement on others, but simply say, you feel such amusements to be hurtful to your own soul, and you must altogether, decline them. But in the case of a very young person, whose position with her parents is more that of a child, and who is legally under their control, it is generally her duty to obey in everything which does not involve actual sin."

"But would it not be sin, at least in me, with my views?"

"It would be sin to do anything, of your own free will, which you thought would be hurtful to your soul. There are many acts not sinful in themselves which yet lead to sin often, both in ourselves and others, because they involve much of what would be called 'revelling' by the apostle, viz., late hours, expensive dress, and many other habits and practices unbefitting a Christian, and lead us into society which cannot profit our souls in any sense. It would be wrong, feeling this as you do, to take part in such scenes of your own free will; but the case is altered when your parents desire you to accompany them; at least, it is not a parallel case with your being desired to frequent idolatrous worship, or to say what was false, etc., in which case, of course, the youngest child would be bound to disobey."

"No; of course it cannot be classed with that; but, dear Miss L., does it not very much depend on the person concerned how far one can join without sinfulness? Now I know Ellen Wilmot thinks it her duty to obey her father, and go to balls with him, though she disapproves of them as much as I do: but, in the first place, he does not care about her dancing; only wishes she should be there, as he considers their position requires it: then, to her it is now temptation, for she dislikes dancing; she is naturally shy, and retiring, and quiet, and not at all the kind of girl likely to find any pleasure in such a gathering. But I naturally enjoy these amusements intensely. Before I went to Miss Williams, I was much with friends who were always having dancing at their house: I was considered among the best dancers there, and I enjoyed it heartily, and used to feel quite carried away with excitement and could think of nothing else. Now, though, thank God, I am, I trust, really changed; still I know, if I let myself go back into my old ways, I should find myself, as one says, 'carried off my feet;' and so with going to the theatre. The sight of the play, and the hearing the music would, I know, quite absorb me. I could not turn away my attention, as Ellen could; and, though I know all things are possible with God, I don't think—at least I have never found—that he helped one to be altogether of a different nature in little things, from what one has been created; I mean, I don't think I observe that Christians, who naturally observe outward things much, get to be unobservant, or, in other such matters, to be unlike themselves, though they are changed in their conduct and their motives."

"I quite understand you, dear; it is a very serious difficulty; but I have often advised young people, in cases like yours, to go quietly to their mother, and ask her, calmly and humbly, if she will allow them to give up amusements which they feel to be really hurtful to their souls; and appealing to her whether, in such cases, she would insist on her daughter's going? In many cases, I think, such an appeal would influence a mother so far that she would not like to insist."

"Ah, but I am sure mine would; and not only insist on my going, but on my dancing as often as I was asked. I can try the experiment; I will do so; but I have no hope of success."

"You are right, at all events, in resolving to try; for she ought to understand that your objection proceeds from no caprice on your part; then, if that fails—"

"If it fails, then, must I give up, and make up my mind to swim with the stream and do like others?" interposed Marion, in a tone of deponency.

"No, no, dear child, I have never said that; I only spoke of obedience as being generally the duty of a child; but if your attempt fails—wait; simply put yourself in God's hands, and ask him what you are next to do. I cannot tell you how a way can be made for you; in no two cases, perhaps, would he help in precisely the same way; but that he will open a path by which you may escape hurt to your soul, I am sure, for I have his own word for it."

"Where?" asked Marion. I opened the Bible at 1 Cor. x., and read the 13th verse: "'God is faithful who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able, but will with the temptation make a way of escape, that ye may be able to bear it.' Observe, not only give you strength to resist, but make a way of escape from a temptation which he sees to be hurtful for your soul to encounter. Lay hold of that promise, dear Marion, and let no perplexing history of another's case that you may hear of, shake your faith in it. I speak advisedly, dear; for when I was younger, both in years and as a Christian, I used often to perplex myself with painful cases I heard of: 'If I was in such a situation,' I thought; 'or if such or such a thing happened to me, how could I act rightly? what could I do? how could any one do right in such or such a case?' These speculations often troubled me; but now I put all these thoughts from my mind. I take God's promise that he will not suffer any one of his people to be tempted more than they can bear; but then, if they do not wait on him, ask him constantly for help, they cannot expect to enjoy the full benefit of his promise. It is his will that we should be his 'remembrancers,' reminding him, as it were, of his promises, and laying our claims to an interest in them; and this rule would extend even to the little outward things which may often bear upon our daily life, and

have an important influence on its course. Remember how our Lord exhorts his disciples to pray that their flight might not be in winter, or on the sabbath-day. This may encourage us to ask that all, even these apparently earthly matters, may minister to our final good; and I believe that we lose many blessings of this kind, as well as more directly spiritual ones, because we have not faith to ask freely, boldly, and perseveringly. We are honouring God by such faith; and he has said, 'Him who honours me I will honour.' How he will help you in this matter I cannot foresee, but in some way I am sure he will, if you ask in faith."

THE LAST DOLLAR.

He gave it to his wife with a sigh, yet with a look of resignation.

"It is our last dollar," he said; but the Lord will provide.

Rev. James Spring was minister in the little mountain village of Thornville. He was poor, and his congregation were poor. Often before he had been very near his last dollar, but he had never actually got to it until to-day.

"So you've been always saying," sobbed his wife; "but what is to become of us when this is gone? They won't trust us any more at the store; and your salary won't be due these three weeks, even if you get it then. Why do you stay here, James, where the people are so poor?"

"I have no other place to go to; nor money to travel to it if the Lord opened a way. My work for the present is here. He feedeth the young ravens; He will surely feed us."

"I wish I had your faith, but I haven't, and it won't come to me. O, what shall we do!" And she wrung her hands despairingly. "My poor children!"

"Once I was young and now I am old," solemnly said her husband, speaking in the words of the Psalmist, "yet never have I seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread."

As if in answer to his pious ejaculation, there came a sudden knock at the door. All the while the minister and his wife had been talking, a storm had been raging outside. On opening the door, a traveller, quite wet through, entered.

"I was coming through the forest from Maryville," he said; "and ventured to stop at the first house I saw. My horse is in the shed. Do I take too great a liberty?"

"Not at all," answered the master of the house. "We have but a poor shelter, as you see; but such as it is you are welcome to it; there is a good fire at any rate."

For it was in the kitchen where this conversation took place. Indeed, this humble home boasted no parlor, and the kitchen was dining-room, drawing-room, living-room and all.

The stranger proved to be a man of education and intelligence, and in conversation with him the minister forgot his trouble and was reminded of earlier and brighter days, when intellectual companionship had not been the rare thing it was now, up among these hills.

At last the storm abated, and the stranger arose to go. His host accompanied him to the gate, and watched him till he disappeared behind a turn of the road.

"See here, James," said his wife, eagerly, when he returned to his house. "I found this on the table near where the gentleman sat."

It was a fifty dollar greenback, wrapped hastily in a bit of paper that looked as if it had been torn from a pocket-book, and on the inside of a paper was written the verse of the Psalmist, which it was now apparent the traveller had overheard.

"I thought he was writing the directions he asked for," said the minister. "He means it for us. Thanks be to the Lord! Did I not say, my dear, He would provide?"

His wife burst into tears. "God forgive me!" she said. "I will never doubt again. The Lord surely sent this stranger to our aid."

"And He will still provide," replied her husband. "Whatever my lot may be, here or elsewhere, in Him I trust."

A month after a letter, a rare event, came to "Rev. James Spring." It was as follows: "Rev. and Dear Sir—The church at Maryville has unanimously called you to its pastorate. The salary is fifteen hundred dollars and a good parsonage house." The letter concluded by saying, "The writer of this first came to know you by your hospitality to him during a storm, a few weeks ago. He overheard you, in a moment of great distress, speak with such full faith that he feels you are just the person for this charge, and on his recommendation this call has been made." Maryville was the county town, a rich and thriving place, in a broad and fertile valley, at the foot of the hills. It was a far fitter sphere of labor for a man of ministerial abilities than the wild village in the mountains. So a young man, as yet without a family, took the missionary church among the hills, and Rev. James Spring accepted the call.

But he does not forget the past, and often, when people show want of faith, tells the story of his Last Dollar.—*The Church.*

THE SCOTCH WOMAN'S SHREWDRINESS.

"Sir," said an old Scotch woman to her minister, "I didna ken a part of your sermon yesterday." "Indeed; what was it?" "You said the Apostle used the figure of circumlocution; and I didna ken what it means." Is that all? It's very plain. The figure of circumlocution is merely a periphrastic mode of diction. "Oh! oh! is that all?" said the good woman; "what a pair fool I were not to understand that!"