

## Youths' Department.

## BIBLE LESSONS.

(From "Robinson's Harmony.")

Sunday, January 9th, 1870.

MATTHEW xix. 16-30; MARK x. 17-31; LUKE xviii. 18-30; The rich young man.

Recite.—Scripture Catechism, 70, 71.

Sunday, January 16th, 1870.

MATTHEW xx. 1-16; Parable of the Labourers in the Vineyard.

Recite.—S. C., 72.

For the Christian Messenger.

## TIMOTHY PLAYFAIR'S LETTER TO YOUNG PEOPLE.

A Happy New Year to you my young friends. The Editor tells me you are not so stupid as a good many boys and girls, and that consequently you prefer sensible reading to the trash sometimes written for young people. I was glad to know this, as I much prefer writing to those who can distinguish between the two, and especially to those who prefer sense to nonsense.

As this is the beginning of the year you will be very proper to tell you that it was a very difficult work to determine what is the exact length of a year, and when it should properly begin. The Jews formerly began it at the autumnal equinox which agrees with our 21st day of September. The first idea of a year might be gathered by observing the changes of the seasons occurring in the twelve changes of the moon, or months. But twelve of the moon's changes are less than a year—the time for the earth to pass around the sun. The ancient Romans and the Persians, began their year on the 25th of March; in the time of Julius Cæsar the change was made to the 1st of January. This was done forty-seven years before the birth of our Saviour. There was then a more exact arrangement made of the length of the year and of the months, making a year to consist of 365 days, and on every fourth year of 366 days. This was not, however, quite perfect, and in 1582 the Pope of Rome ordered that 10 days should be omitted to make up for the days lost in the fifteen centuries. Other alterations were made in England in 1752 bringing the commencement of the year back again to the first day of January, from which we now reckon.

So you see that in this very simple matter, relating to the world, which was left for man's observation, experience and wisdom to determine, there were nearly six thousand years required before a proper adjustment was made. What a mercy it is that the way of salvation has not been left for us to find out for ourselves; "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in him might not perish but have everlasting life."

We have now fairly commenced the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and seventy, and should prepare to fill up its days in the best manner possible so that it shall have a better history written in our memories and hearts than the past. A thing well begun is half finished you know, and a determination made now and adhered to for the first days of the year will make it comparatively easy to continue all through.

I shall not trouble you with a long letter, I wish it to be long enough, however, to tell you the secret of good and bad habits so that you may form the one and avoid the other.

By learning to use a very easy and simple word, whenever your conscience whispers to you a thing is wrong, you may avoid much evil and sorrow. That word is composed of two letters, one formed by three straight lines, and the other by one curved line. Some people have not courage to use this word, and to act accordingly, and so they are led on in the ways of sin and ruin. I hope it will not be so with you. I shall write again shortly.

YOURS,

T. PLAYFAIR.

## ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON SCRIPTURE METAPHORS.

Commencing with the letter Q, R.

1. QUIVER, Psa. cxxvii. 5.
2. QUICKEN, See John v. 21; John vi. 63.
3. QUENCH: Love, Cant. viii. 7; life, Isa. xliii. 17; 2 Sam. xiv. 7; xxi. 7; temptation, Eph. vi. 16; Holy Spirit, 1 Thes. v. 19; Divine wrath, Isa. i. 31; 2 Kings xxii. 17.
4. ROE, Cant. ii. 9, 17. ROOT, Is. xi. 10; Rev. v. 5. ROSE, Cant. ii. 1. ROCK, 1 Cor. x. 4. REFINER, Mal. iii. 3. ROD, Isa. xi. 1; REFUGES, Isa. xxv. 4. RANSOM, 1 Tim. ii. 6.
5. RAZOR. See Psa. lii. 2; Is. vii. 20.
6. REED. Used for instability, Luke vii. 24; despondency, Isa. xlii. 3; and disappointing hope, Isa. xxxvi. 6; 2 Kings xviii. 21.

7. RIVER. Used of the Holy Spirit, John vii. 38, 39; and heavenly joys, Rev. xxii. 1, 2.
8. RIGHT HAND, Exod. xv. 6. ROD, Psa. li. 9.
9. REAPING. See John iv. 36-38; Matt. xiii. 39.
10. RAIN. See Deut. xxxii. 2; Psa. lxxii. 6.
11. RACE, 1 Cor. ix. 24; Heb. xii. 1.

## DOUBLE ACROSTIC.

No. I.

A region mentioned only in one place,  
Of which no modern traveller finds a trace?  
A city, built on Arno's fertile shore,  
Which the rude Amorite possessed of yore?  
A queen, the victim of her husband's ire,  
Forced from his royal palace to retire.  
That which ascends to God from out the hands  
Of him who by the golden altar stands.  
A youth, who passed an ordeal without blame,  
"God's judge" the meaning of his noble name.

The initials—A king, who praise to God  
In lofty numbers sung.

The finals—The city where he dwelt,  
Expressed in mystic tongue.

## BLIND JOHN NETHERWAY.

CHAPTER XIII.

Mr. Dimond proceeded. Well, I called to ask if you could furnish me with the names of any among the poorer classes who were sufferers from that remarkable bankruptcy.

Miss Pillings straightened her back and screwed up her mouth, and began with several names, to each of which Mr. Dimond nodded, saying, "Seen to, and settled with."

While she was trying to add to them, Mr. Dimond said, "I should think the memory of this affair will never die out."

"Never! never!" said Miss Pillings, with energy.

Mr. Singleton's inadvertence—want of knowledge of business—or carelessness—call it what you will, was certainly great.

"Call it rank hypocrisy, sir; that's what we call it," said Miss Pillings, with decision.

"Why hypocrisy?" asked Mr. Dimond, as if much surprised at the expression.

"Why? Wasn't it all done under the mask of religion? I respect your honest man who doesn't profess anything; but I hate your hypocrites—making believe that nobody's so good as themselves. Of course I don't remember it but I've heard say that to hear Mr. Singleton talk you'd have thought he was an angel; but I always look out for something extra bad in such people."

"Well, well, he is acting something like an angel now. Don't you think so?"

"Too late, sir; many he has injured past repair," said Miss Pillings, with virtuous indignation that knew no forgiveness.

"Ah, it doesn't sit well on the kindly face of a lady to look such severe things!" said Mr. Dimond. "However, there are other rogues in the world besides Mr. Singleton, allowing him to be one, and greater, in my opinion. A case I have engaged to show up is an example."

Miss Pillings looked curious.

"Oh, I needn't trouble you about that. It is one of too many others—false allegations—which will bring down severe exposure and penalty, too on the culprits," said Mr. Dimond, putting up his pocket-book, as if preparing to go.

"Is there any particular case?" inquired Miss Pillings.

"Yes, there's a Mrs. Williams—most iniquitous. However, that has nothing to do with you. If you can't furnish me with more names, I must continue my inquiries, with many thanks for your assistance so far."

"Mrs. Williams of the mill?" asked Miss Pillings.

"The same," said Mr. Dimond, rising.

"My particular friend," said Miss Betsy, starting from her seat.

"You don't say so! Well—but you will shortly hear the sad particulars from public report," said Mr. Dimond. "Pity she had been so ill advised."

"Pray explain yourself sir," said Miss Betsy.

"I shall only distress you, and do no good," said Mr. Dimond.

Miss Betsy entreated him so earnestly to tell her what was laid to her friend's charge, that he hinted the facts of a demand having been made—which there were substantial proofs was false—and that Mrs. Williams would have to be brought into court under circumstances in which no 'rogue' would think it enviable to appear.

Miss Pillings was electrified. "I have heard her complain of her father's loss repeatedly," she said.

"A false charge. And she has been told she cannot prove it, but still maintains it. Therefore, as a warning to all others who may try to victimize Mr. Singleton we mean to make her an example," said Mr. Dimond.

"How shocking!" exclaimed Miss Pillings.

"Very—a clear case of swindling," said Mr. Dimond. "And much worse than anything Mr. Singleton did, because she does it with intention to defraud."

Miss Pillings looked much troubled.

"I am sorry you are her friend. It will be disagreeable to be a witness in such a case," said Mr. Dimond.

"I? Not I. I wouldn't have anything to do with it believe me," said Miss Pillings.

"She will be sure to subpoena you. It will be very unpleasant—very," said Mr. Dimond.

"But she shan't!" said Miss Pillings, getting much excited.

"I wish she may not," said Mr. Dimond, oracularly, "because, to appear as a party in a

conspiracy, which this can clearly be proved to be, would be a disgrace never to be forgotten. It would stick to a young lady's name in a very distressing manner."

"But why doesn't she withdraw her demand, if she knows it is a false one?" said Miss Betsy, getting more agitated.

"Why indeed! But she does not do it, and it won't answer our purpose to wait longer. As I said, she must serve for an example. Perjury, forgery—I don't know what she won't have to answer for!"

Miss Pillings was ready to cry.

"Don't distress yourself," said Mr. Dimond. "I should really be glad if she were to come to a proper arrangement. I sympathize with you; but no steps can be taken in that direction by us; and you—you will be cautious as to mentioning the subject to any, I am sure. She ought not to escape."

Miss Pillings would tell nobody, at least, she looked as much.

"There are some people who require the stern teaching of the law," said Mr. Dimond, in a severe tone, buttoning his coat. Miss Pillings thought he was a long time doing it, and would never go.

"One or two cases of this kind settled, and all will be right," said Mr. Dimond; and most politely bowing, he left Miss Betsy, advising her not to venture out in so raw an air, but feeling quite sure that her bonnet and clogs would be on before his back was well turned.

Before he had arrived at the Old Banks, Miss Betsy was at the mill.

"My dear creature," she began, "I have been dreadfully agitated. I'm sure you wouldn't do a dishonourable thing for the world, if you know it! but that debt of your father's, my dear, it's all proved that he was paid. How could you go to advance the claim without having plenty of proof?"

Mrs. Williams was electrified, and declared she had plenty of proof; for she remembered well how her father joined in the hue and cry against Mr. Singleton at the time of his flight, and there was no entry of payment in his books.

"As to that dear," said Miss Pillings, who was much too earnest to mince matters, "you know your poor father was known to have a very bad memory in those things, and he may have forgotten—I only say he may, dear."

Mrs. Williams flew out at the insinuation; but Miss Betsy stuck to the point, that she had heard her father, who had known Hercules Williams well, say his word wouldn't stand against black and white.

"Let them show black and white," said Mrs. Williams, much excited.

"They can, my dear; that's the very thing," said Miss Betsy, whose fears had given a strong colour, and put into shape Mr. Dimond's dim and misty hints; and, stimulated by her excitement, she worked so energetically on the mind of her friend on the subjects of perjury and false allegation, and the terrible penalties of loss of character arising from them, that the widow began to quail. She had been perfectly aware, all the time, that her father never had kept correct books, and that the supposed debt of Mr. Singleton was quite as likely to have been paid as not. Indeed, from a little memorandum which she had discovered while searching his accounts, she had a misgiving that it was so.

If, indeed, a receipt should be forthcoming, which Miss Betsy positively declared she knew existed, the business would have a very unpleasant look, and although very angry, she began to consider what was best to do.

"Take my advice," said Miss Betsy, "write a note, and say you've just found (by accident, you know) that the bill was paid."

The agitation of Miss Betsy, and the remembrance of a certain trial which her father underwent on a charge of fraud, and which cost him a very heavy sum, and very nearly a prison, decided the widow; and after some hesitation, to her intense relief, Miss Betsy saw the letter written, signed, and sealed, and, for fear of any accident, undertook to see it delivered; which she did, for, while she was considering how best to do it, she met blind John, and determined at once to send it by him.

"How d'ye do? all well up at the house?" and began, in a very cheerful tone.

She was no friend of John's; he didn't know her voice, and the salutation took him by surprise.

"I was going to take this letter to Mr. Singleton, for it is of great consequence it should be given to him at once—at once, you understand—and I can trust you to put it into his hands."

"Aging your pardon, mum," said John, "who may you be? and is the letter a pleasant one? Master's letters goes first to the lawyer."

Very good; take that to the counsellor, it will do just as well. And here, John, here's a shilling. Now go at once, there's a good man, it's a very nice letter, and no manner of harm in it."

"I don't want never a shilling, mum," said John. "It's my place to wait of my master. I'll go to the lawyer straight."

But Miss Betsy wouldn't take back the shilling. She even added to it her best wishes for the health and prosperity of all the Singleton family, taking in John himself; and having parted from him, she followed him up till she saw him up at the house door, and then she turned and went home, rejoicing in her escape.

When the letter was taken to Mr. Dimond, he was equally pleased and amused at the quick effect of his diplomacy. "I must give a look and a word to Miss Pillings on her own account," he thought.

CHAPTER XIII.

And now came on the great events of life to those who, if they have appeared less in our story, are not the least important parties in it. Dora Farquhar and William Singleton became man and wife; and on the same day the happy young sailor, Mrs. Crisp's son, took to himself little Miss Dodd.

The church was well attended, although the rising water portended another flood. Isaac looked in bad spirits, but nobody could charge him with going to sleep; and in the long talk he had with John afterwards, the old man began to think his severe rebuff by Peggy had led to hopeful results. Mr. Haffenden looked supremely happy. Certainly he was occasionally diverted from the cause of their meeting by the appearance of the church, and could hardly help pointing out to Walter, while they were waiting for the brides, what wonderful improvements might be effected, at a slight expense, in various parts. Mrs. Haffenden was beaming with delight; so much exertion to make others happy had made her own cup run over, and her husband declared she had grown so young in the last few months he began to hope she would be a little more indulgent to his renovating hobby, and that they might "improve" together.

Mrs. Crisp rejoiced with deep, but silent joy. If her son's marriage had not been "in the Lord," all the propitious circumstances of it would have been as shadows to her.

Mr. Dimond was there, with a lady, and who she was we will tell. He had taken the trouble, in spite of the wet and the cold, to walk to Miss Pillings' on the morning of the wedding. It so happened she was looking out at the door as he reached it.

"Most opportune, my good lady! I called to fetch you to see the wedding this most joyous morning. All the ladies at the Old Banks either have husbands, or are on the way to having them, and I shall have to walk alone unless you take pity on me."

Miss Betsy was taken by surprise. She could have cried with delight. But to be dressed in time!

"Never mind you adornments. I assure you I must wear my thick top-coat, for I wouldn't have lumbago for all the finery of all Vanity Fair; so you must match me. Put on your warmest cloak, and a good bonnet that will keep out the cold, and away."

He would take no denial; and, to the astonishment of those of the party who were at liberty to think of it, Mr. Dimond and Miss Betsy brought up the rear of the procession.

Mrs. Jenkins was a spectator, and so was Becky, whose eyes and ears were opened beyond precedent that day. And old John stood behind his master and mistress, whose appearance created a strong sensation among the assembly, and there were murmurs of praise and admiration at the wonderful way in which the Lord had led them and dealt with them.

When the service was over, and the congregation expected to see the bridal party form to leave the church, Mr. Dimond stepped forward, being the only one of the party whose nerves were unshaken, and said, "All persons who are disposed to give glory to God, and unite with us in praising him are invited to remain, and worship him with heart and voice in this anthem."

"Glory to God in the highest;  
On earth peace, good will towards men."

Never was anthem on earth more heartily sung. John felt sure it must be the angels he heard, and always said he did not expect to hear such like again till he was in the courts of heaven.

Mr. Dimond declared that all the people looked as if it had been an universal marriage; they seemed so full of kindness. He had a suitable word for one and another, as he went among them. Indeed he did most imprudent things that day, and forgot his lumbago in a surprising manner, and never was he any the worse for it, but the better, and so was every one else.

Miss Betsy was in tears, and was sure that she would read diligently the book Mr. Dimond gave her before he left Clayton; and begged at one of Mrs. Crisp's working parties for the poor, and did her utmost to soften Mrs. Williams. And many a heart was touched with emotions of sympathy.

"The prettiest sight was the brides," said one; "they did look nice!"

"The best of all was the old master and mistress," said another. "It warms my heart to see them!"

But, reader, the best, and fairest, and sweetest of all was to hear the people give glory to God, who brings light out of darkness, turns sorrow into joy, and works for our good all things according to his own will, through his blessed Son Jesus, to whom be praise for ever and ever!

CHURCH FURNISHING.—We consider it one of the grandest measures a church can adopt, to put three hymn and tune books at public expense in every pew, as a part of the furnishing. Better do without cushions and carpets and pew backs, than do without these books. While pastor, we thus used them for more than eight years. They paid immensely every way.

"Let the people praise thee, O God; let all the people praise Thee!"—Macedonian.

A SCIENTIFIC MUSICAL FACT.—It is a scientific musical fact that in the singing of a thousand voices or a hundred voices, or fifty voices, the totality of sound that comes to the ear, is melody. The cracked voices, and the defective voices of all kinds are drowned and lost, if the volume of sound from all those present be full and resonant. All that pastors need to do therefore, to procure first rate congregational praise, is to work away at it till they induce all to sing with a will.

Heart congregational singing is a great religious power. Choirs may fail, but they should not be allowed to monopolize. Resist the devil, just at this point.

It is said that the Sultan has revoked the law which forbade Christians to enter a Mohammedan mosque, so that travellers may not visit the mosque of Omar in Jerusalem and St. Sophia at Constantinople without fear or molestation.