

Youths' Department.

Lessons for 1871.

THE WORDS OF JESUS.

SUNDAY, AUGUST 20TH, 1871.

Joy over Penitents.—Luke xv. 1-10.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth." vs. 10.

SCRIPTURE SELECTIONS.—Psalm liii. Acts ii. 1-6, 37-40.

What did our last lesson teach? What is the main thought in this lesson? State some points of contrast in the two.

How many parables in Luke xv? Does the last seem to be closely related in its teaching with the two of our present lessons? Show how.

What led Christ to give these two? vs. 1, 2. Who were the publicans? Who the sinners? How did Christ receive them? Why were the Scribes and Pharisees displeased that Christ received and ate with them? Does this teach us to choose wicked people for our associates?

Read the first parable. vs. 4-6. What is meant by "the wilderness"? Need we suppose the ninety-nine sheep to have been left without a keeper? Why should "the lost" one be taken on the shoulder? Who is the shepherd? The lost sheep? Who are the ninety-nine? What is the seeking? The finding? Why do the angels rejoice? Heb. i. 14; xii. 22; Mark viii. 38; Luke xvi. 22. At what other events have they rejoiced? Job xxviii. 7; Luke ii. 13, 14. At what will they hereafter rejoice? Matt. xxiv. 31.

Wherein does the second parable differ from the first? Have you been lost? Rom. iii. 9-11. Have you been found? What is the value of your soul? Ought you to be less interested for yourself that God's angels are for you?

SUMMARY.—Only divine love will seek the lost, only divine power can save the lost, but all the holy, though only the holy, share the joy.

ANALYSIS.—I. The History.—(a) Mercy. vs. 1. (b) Murmuring. vs. 2. (c) Transition. vs. 3.

II. The Discourse.—1. The Parables. (a) The lost sheep. vs. 4-6. (b) The lost coin. vs. 8, 9. (a) Loss. (b) Recovery. (c) Joy. 2. The Explanation. vs. 7, 10.

EXPOSITION.—The contrast.—In the last lesson, we saw self seeking self, the result failure and shame; in this we see God seeking the sinner, the result success and holy joy; in that, unloving human self-exaltation; in this, loving, divine condescension.

The three parables in this chapter form one whole, and must be studied in connection. In the first two is presented divine love seeking the lost, in the third the lost responding to this love; in the first two the motive of ownership endangered, in the last the result of spiritual relationship sundered; in the first two, one party rejoicing at success, in the last the joy in each other of both parties reconciled.

The three parties.—vs. 1, 2. They are (1) Christ. (2) The publicans and sinners. (3) The Pharisees and Scribes. (1) The Son of God. (2) The collectors of the publican i. e., the tribute money, hence the name publicans; as a class hated from their occupation, their character, and their practices. (3) The notoriously moral and religious, proud of their wisdom and piety, and avoiding the preceding class as they would the pestilence.

The three deeds.—Of the parties here, the first are teaching, preaching, making known God's truth, rebuking sin, persuading sinners, saving men; the second, crowding eagerly around Jesus to hear his strange, sweet words, attracted alike by his doctrines and his person, drawn as never to Scribe or Pharisee; the third, standing back, huddled together, scorn and wrath in eye and feature, curses in their hearts and tongues, muttering, murmuring among themselves, one to another, passing the word of complaint along.

The charge.—It lies wholly against Christ, and is twofold. 1. He "receives" publicans and sinners, i. e., welcomes them to hear his doctrine, as we have just seen, encourages their coming, does not repel. 2. Lets them in turn receive him. Some of them invite him to their homes and tables, and he accepts, just as when a chief of the Pharisees invites him. Luke xix. 2, 5, 7. This charge, unlike many brought by the same party against Jesus, was as to its letter true, as to its spirit, however, utterly false. They would have it that he so received and fraternized with profligates, as to fellowship their sins, not as seeking to free them from their sins.

The Shepherd.—He is of course God as Redeemer, and hence, specially, Jesus Christ, in a lower sense an under shep-

herd, a Christian pastor, with Christ's spirit, such as the Jewish doctors should have been, but were not. They stood scowling at what they ought to have been doing; not seeking, but avoiding, not receiving, but repelling,—false shepherds. Explain that every Christian is in a certain sense and measure a pastor, and every man is more or less his "brother's keeper." Hence the practical personal bearing of the matter.

The ninety-nine and the one.—Among the views we have (1) the ninety-nine, unfallen angels, the one, mankind; (2) the ninety-nine, Christians generally, the one, the grossly erring Christians; (3) the ninety-nine, persons from birth regenerate, the one, the adult unregenerate sinner; (4) the ninety-nine, Christian deceased, "spirits of just men made perfect," the one, man still imperfect; (5) the ninety-nine, the self-righteous, the one, the conscious sinner; (6) the ninety-nine, the outwardly moral, the one, the outwardly immoral; (7) the ninety-nine, Jews, the one, Gentiles; (8) the ninety-nine, not real but supposed cases, i. e., mankind as they would have been but for the fall, the one, man as he is. Compare Matthew ix. 13.

The seeking.—Christ's incarnation was a girding of himself to go after his lost sheep. His whole life upon earth, his entire walk in the flesh was a following of the strayed one; for in his own words he was come, this was the very purpose of his coming, namely, to seek and save that which was lost." Thus he followed "after," or "upon," his mind and heart fixed intently upon the lost. Persistently, "till he find."

The return.—The sheep borne on the shoulders, his own shoulders, the sinner "without strength," powerless to save himself, taken up by God's arms and carried. Christ went "home" to glory by the way of the cross. He takes with him every saved soul. Luke xxiii. 43; Phil. i. 23; Psalm. lxxviii. 18.

The joy.—"Shall be," Jesus was in the flesh when he spoke, and was at the time trying to persuade sinners to repent. The friends and neighbors rejoice with the shepherd. The Bible makes the angels to be deeply interested in man and his salvation, "all ministering spirits" rejoicing at the birth of Jesus, his helpers in the flesh, and his attendants at the second coming. They share God's joy, and he joys over "one sinner that repents." Every soul is precious.

The second parable.—vs. 8-10. Many regard "the woman" as God in the person of the Holy Spirit, or as the church inspired by the Spirit, and carrying forward the Redeemer's work after his ascension.

ILLUSTRATION.—Lady Huntingdon was trying to lead the despondent brother of Whitfield to Christ. To her urgent entreaties he answered, "Oh, it is of no use! I am lost! I am lost!" "Thank God for that," said she. "Why?" exclaimed the man in astonishment. "Because," she replied, "Christ came to save the lost, and if you are lost, he is just the one that can save you."

Abridged from the Baptist Teacher. Recite.—Scripture Catechism, 323, 324.

ANSWER TO BIBLE QUESTIONS.

28. See 2 Kings xx. 17, 18, where Isaiah, speaking from God to Hezekiah, says, ". . . Of thy sons which shall issue from thee, which thou shalt beget, shall they take away; and they shall be eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon."

29. 1 Chron. xiii. 9-13. ". . . Uzza put forth his hand to hold ark, for the oxen stumbled. And the anger of the Lord was kindled against Uzza, and he smote him, because he put his hand to the ark: and there he died before God. . . . And David was afraid of God that day, saying, How shall I bring the ark of God home to me? So David brought not the ark of God home to himself to the city of David, but carried it aside into the house of Obededom the Gittite.

30. See 1 Chron. xv. 2, 12, 13. "David said, None ought to carry the ark of God but the Levites; for them hath the Lord chosen to carry the ark of God, and to minister unto him for ever. And (David) said unto them, Ye are the chief of the fathers of the Levites; sanctify yourselves, both ye and your brethren, that ye may bring up the ark of the Lord God of Israel unto the place that I have prepared for it. For because ye did it not at the first, the Lord our God made a breach upon us,

for that we sought him not after the due order. 31. See 2 Chron. ii. 17. The strangers that were in the land of Israel.

SCRIPTURE ENIGMA.

No. LXI.

Whose coming gladdened much the heart of Paul?

Man's happy home ere Satan caused his fall.

Who in an idol house helped slay his sire? Whose flock graz'd near the bush that burn'd with fire?

What angel to a prophet said, "Fear not?" Who kissed her friend but would not share her lot?

Who dwelt and judged beneath a stately palm, And 'midst the din of arms felt no alarm?

If God's own word you search, as all should do,

My rhyme will not a puzzle prove to you; Each name's initial only will you need To form a text which he who runs may read.

THE TWO PETITIONS.

BY MRS. BRADLEY.

There wasn't a church for miles around, and there never had been a Sunday-school in the neighborhood of the place where John and Harriet Mowbray went to live after their father's death. It was a straggling settlement that could not be called a village, down in the far South. There were negro cabins, and shabby cottages hardly better looking, that were occupied by white people very poor and very ignorant. But the only comfortable or respectable dwelling was the house where John and Harriet were staying, and which belonged to their uncle. He was the rich man of the community, and landlord to most of the white people. The cabins and cottages belonged to him. He lived alone in his large house with only servants around him until the orphan children of his sister came to find a home with him; and though he was not unkind to them, it was a still dismal sort of home for the brother and sister.

They had been used to cheerful and refined companionship, to schools and books and churches and all the advantages of education, religion, and society. It was hard to give up everything and live in a place where the sound of prayer or praise was never heard. Their uncle Mowbray did not believe in such things; he scoffed at piety and declared that ministers were hypocrites, and schools and books did more harm than good. But for all that, John and Harriet, who were true Christians, and tried to serve their Master wherever they went, took it into their minds to establish a Sunday-school. There were many ignorant people, and poor little children running wild, who had not even heard of their Saviour; and they could not rest happy until they had tried to do something for them.

So they talked and planned together all the ways and means, and pondered anxiously how they might get their uncle's consent to their project. He had said so many harsh things about "canting hypocrites and whining psalm-singers," as he called all professing Christians, that they trembled at the thought of asking his permission to begin the school. They shrank from the angry looks and words which were sure to follow such a request? and at last, through their dread of speaking to him, they decided upon making their petition in writing. They could say in that way all they wished without being frightened and silenced, if he should grow angry. And accordingly they composed a letter very carefully and anxiously, in which they begged permission to bring the poor little neglected children, and negroes into the empty weaving-house, and teach them on Sundays.

They left this letter in a place where he would find it, on Sunday night, and both of them prayed earnestly for a good answer to it, before they went to sleep. In the morning they came down to breakfast with anxious hearts and timid looks, not knowing how they would be received; but to their great happiness their uncle met them with kindness and granted their wish without a single objection. The petition, showing such sincere desire to do good, had touched the old man's hard heart. If they had merely spoken to him, he would doubtless have refused, from his first impulse; but the written prayer lay before him, and its earnest, simple words, so full of faith and love, proved irresistible. The result was full permission to carry

out their cherished plan. The Sunday-school was begun, gladly and prayerfully; the people sent their children and came themselves willingly, to hear the precious truths which no one had taught them before; and by and by a veritable Bethel grew up in the wilderness. The uncle himself was converted from his scoffing and wickedness and became a believer—as humble and true as his niece. He used all his influence and authority to continue the good work begun by those young disciples, and thanked them on his death-bed for the letter which had been the means of his repentance and salvation.

Somewhat similar were the results, through widely different means, of another petition. Many years ago a band of pious men, who had been sorely tried and persecuted for conscience sake, drew an eloquent petition, setting forth their wrongs and asking redress. They were Baptist ministers, who in company with hundreds more of their denomination, had been denied the right of worshipping God according to their own faith and conscience, and had been driven from their pulpits, imprisoned, and persecuted most cruelly because they refused to renounce their belief and doctrines.

They gained admission to the king, and presented their petition; asking that their friends should be released from prison, their ministers restored to their churches, and their congregations allowed to worship in their own way without interference. They were scornfully denied by the despotic king; and instead of liberty and peace, new oppressions and injuries were heaped upon the devoted Baptists.

But their petition though rejected of men, was acknowledged of God, and destined to bear good fruit. The brave men who had presented it as a last effort to obtain justice peacefully, were stirred up now to use other means. They no longer counselled patient submission and long suffering; but they went about in secret and roused the people to revolt against a tyranny that had too long disgraced the nation. The seeds of revolution were sown, secretly but widely, and they sprang up and blossomed abundantly in good time. A wicked king was driven from his throne, and another was sent in his place who could understand the great truth that Christ alone is the head of the church on earth, and neither king nor priest has the right to fetter conscience, which is the gift of God to each individual soul.

The Baptists grew and multiplied in spite of every effort to crush and destroy them; for God blessed their faith and their devotion. To-day in the light and liberty of the nineteenth century, they may well give thanks to him for the blood of their martyrs, which proved to be the seed of a mighty victory. Young Reaper.

SCIENTIFIC EXPEDITION TO BRAZIL.

On the 17th ult., Prof. Ch. Fred. Hartt, of Cornell University, a form graduate of Acadia College, and son of J. W. Hartt, Esq., of St. John, N. B., started from New York on the Merrimack, bound with scientific intentions to Para and Rio Janeiro, the same being his fourth expedition of the character to Brazil. His first was in 1865, as an assistant to Prof. Agassiz in the Thayer expedition, when the provinces of Bahia Espirito Sancto, Minas, and Rio de Janeiro, were explored with a thoroughness that is fully attested by thousands of specimens at Harvard University, collected by Prof. Hartt, and illustrative of the nature and distribution of the strata. Two years later, in 1867, the gentleman paid a second visit to the country in question, and on his own account made a survey of the coast from Alagoas to Rio Janeiro, the Abrothos Islands, noted for their immense coral reefs, and the interior of Bahia, through the line of the San Francisco Railway. The results of these investigations were subsequently published under the title of "The Geology and Physical Geography of Brazil." The third expedition undertaken by Prof. Hartt was made last year, being improperly known as the Cornell University Expedition, inasmuch as Cornell did not contribute a dollar towards the expenses. On that occasion it was his intention to study the formation of the valley of the Amazon, for the purpose of proving some of his theories which did not agree with those of Prof. Agassiz. With a steamer furnished by the Provincial Government of Para, he went up the Amazon and the Tocantins so far as possible by steam, afterward pursuing his journey by boat and canoe. He also ascended

the Xingei and the Tapajos, and, on a third excursion, up the Amazon again, remaining a month at Erero and Monte Aelgre, where immense Devonian beds were first discovered in Brazil. During the expedition Prof. Hartt made a very extensive collection of fossils, and a small one of Indian Pottery.

On the present occasion the intrepid explorer proposes to complete his survey of the eastern part of the Amazonian valley; to trace out the limits of the various formations with more care than it was possible to do in his last expedition; to search for Palaeozoic rocks; to measure the system of table-topped hills, and continue his studies of the Indian general language of Brazil.—Boston Journal.

THE WINE QUESTION IN BIBLE LANDS.

Rev. J. H. Shedd, of Ooroomiah, Persia, speaks to this question in a letter to the Interior:

As a missionary I have taken a deep interest in the discussion of the temperance question which has appeared in the papers the past few weeks. In our missionary work in the "Far East" we have the demon of Intemperance to fight as well as in America. The difficulty of the problem is not removed because we are in Bible lands. Perhaps a brief account of our experience with this fearful subject may contribute to a right understanding of the Bible method of dealing with it.

First. Our experience gives no comfort to those friends of temperance who think they find in an abundance of pure and cheap wine a remedy for intemperance. We never have found wine an ally to the temperance cause. The region around the lake of Ooroomiah is the land of vineyards. Grapes often sell at three pounds for a cent, and a gallon of wine costs but a pittance. Ever since the days of Noah that region has been the home of the vine. For the fall months grapes form one of the chief articles of diet. The preserved products of the vineyard are raisins, grape molasses, and wine. The wine is made in a very primitive manner, and is entirely unadulterated. All the varieties are very light, I believe, compared with those of Europe. If any in the world are harmless they are.

But the fact remains—that beastly intemperance is the besetting sin of the people. The habit of the nominal Christians—Nestorian and Armenian—when no reformation is effected, is to drink wine as the camel drinks water, in enormous quantities. There is this peculiarity, also, that usually the drinking is done up between the vintage and spring. The wine is exhausted at the Easter feast. During the wine season beastly drunkenness is too common to excite comment. I have been in large villages on a feast day when it was nearly impossible to find a sober man in the place. The corruption of morals, the degradation of mind, the midnight carousals, the losses from riotous living, from idleness, quarrelling and crimes are too enormous to be exaggerated. The wine weddings with their train of evils are the enemy of the Christian peasant, and the source of death and misery that often crush him and break up his home. Many acquire the passion for stimulants, and pass from wine to arrack, a rum distilled from raisins. Thus wine is a mocker, and multitudes are in the road to ruin through the curse of strong drink. Among the nominal Christians of Persia, and many other parts of the East, the worst destroyer of the soul and obstacle to the gospel is wine and the attendant intemperance.

Second. The evil cannot be met by a feeble and half hearted resistance. He who has an idea that the followers of Christ can indulge as they please, can pass the wine-cup with every guest, attend the convivial feasts and weddings, and still keep themselves undefiled, is utterly in error. The remedy must be decisive and complete antagonism to that demon which is doing more than any other one thing to dishonor God, and destroy the souls of men.

The conviction among the most devoted and thoughtful native Christians of the East is that total abstinence—not enforced by an outside pressure, but adopted as a principle of conscience, is the only remedy. Anything short of this opens the way for so many exceptions, lapses and disastrous examples that it is unsafe, and in our day, at least, never can produce a pure and self-denying church, nor stem the destroying tide of intemperance. But on what ground shall total abstinence be argued and enforced?