

Youths' Department.

Lessons for 1871.

THE WORDS OF JESUS.

SUNDAY, APRIL 23RD, 1871.

The Two Debtors.—Luke vii. 39-50.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"Thy faith hath saved thee."—Vs. 50.

SCRIPTURE SELECTIONS.—Psalm xli; Matt. xvi. 1-13; Luke vii. 36-50.

Tell all you can about the Simon mentioned in this lesson, vs. 36-50. What led Jesus to speak to him as vs. 40 tells? vs. 36-39. What is meant by this woman's being "a sinner"? vs. 37, 39. What by "an alabaster box of ointment"? vs. 37. How could she stand at his feet "behind him," as vs. 38 says? When Simon saw this how did he speak? vs. 39. How did Jesus know what he said? What does this teach us?

Repeat the words of Jesus in vs. 41, 42. What answer would you give to this question? Why so? Repeat vs. 43.

What did Simon do for Jesus? vs. 44-46. Why should he have been expected to do these things? What did the woman do for Jesus? vs. 44-46. What did her acts show? vs. 47. What did Simon's? What do you say?

What did Jesus say about her sins? vs. 47. What does this mean? When was she forgiven? vs. 47, 48. Was she forgiven because she loved Jesus, or did she love Jesus because she was forgiven? vs. 42, 43, 47. What two things does he say in vs. 50? Explain them both. Has Jesus ever spoken so to you? Will he ever?

SUMMARY.—Great devotion to Jesus, is the result of great gratitude for his forgiveness of great sinners, who believe upon him.

ANALYSIS.—I. A Case Supposed. vs. 40-II. A Confession Elicited. vs. 43.

III. An Application made. vs. 44-50. 1. For Simon's benefit. vs. 44-47. 2. For the woman's benefit. vs. 48-50.

EXPOSITION.—Time and place.—Simon's invitation to Jesus to eat with him, vs. 36, followed immediately after Jesus spoke the words of our last lesson. This narrative must not be confounded with that in Matt. xxvi. 6-13; Mark xiv. 3-9; John xii. 1-3.

Simon.—Call out and note each fact stated in the lesson, e. g., name; a Pharisee; a householder; a complacent, self-opinionated man, vs. 39; yet reasonable, vs. 43; but negligent of Jesus, vs. 44-46, likely because he felt that he was honoring Jesus sufficiently by taking him to his house. Simon was a very common name in that day. At least twelve persons of this name are mentioned in the Bible.

A sinner.—In the sense common among us "a sinner" is a transgressor of the law of God. It implied that she was a notoriously irreligious, or perhaps abandoned woman, v. 39. It is however proper to remember that this idea was expressed by the haughty Simon, and may have been groundless. This woman has usually been regarded as Mary Magdalene, who is first introduced in this immediate connection. Ch. viii. 2. The identity is however by no means clear.

Alabaster box.—Alabaster is a beautiful species of marble, quite easily worked and quite easily broken. The word "box" is more like our word vase, or phial or flask. Perfumes and oils for anointing were transported in long-necked, sealed flasks, which were opened by removing the seal, or breaking the top off the long neck. Hence in the account of the other anointing, Mark xiv. 3, we read "she brake the box." Rubbing perfumed oils upon the head and body was a common practice in that day, and is still extensively observed in the East.

Stood at his feet.—Neither the Jews nor the Romans wore stockings or shoes, but sandals merely, which were put off their feet when they entered a house. At meals they reclined upon couches, resting their weight upon the left elbow, the feet extending away from the table. Thus she approached his feet, coming toward his back, and so stood behind him, and also at his feet.

Spoke within himself.—All the thoughts of men are similarly known to Jesus. John ii. 24, 25.

The parable of "The Two Debtors" should be so committed to memory that teacher and scholar could recite them with ease and accuracy. "Pence," the denarii of Roman currency, equal each to about fifteen cents of our money.

Why should one forgiven much love much? His love, or gratitude will depend upon his anxiety about his debt. If he grieved under it, labored to be rid of it, "had nothing to pay," and consequently was in fear of severe punishment, then

would he be prepared to appreciate pardon as no other man could. Among men of equal sensitiveness the greater the debt, the greater would be the distress; and the greater distress, the greater would be the gratitude for pardon. This woman, conscious of much guilt, would be correspondingly grateful when forgiven. The greatest sinners, however, as judged by men, are not always the most sensitive as to the sinfulness of their sins, or the greatness of their debt. Therefore it does not at all follow that the "greatest sinners become the greatest saints."

Simon's neglect.—I. No water with which to wash his feet, according to the custom of the day, and as was really necessary for comfort and cleanliness on the part of those who merely wore sandals. See Gen. xviii. 4; xix. 2; John xiii. 5. 2. No kiss, this being an ordinary salutation where affection was supposed. See Gen. xxvii. 26, 27; xxxiii. 4; Matt. xxvi. 49. 3. My head with oil thou didst not anoint. Anointing was a matter of ordinary use. Deut. xxviii. 40; Ruth iii. 3; Matt. vi. 17. In neglecting these things, he neglected matters of common courtesy, such as offering a chair, taking one's hat, etc., with us.

The woman's attentions.—1. She washed his feet with tears, not of hopeless sorrow, but of grateful love. Wiped them with the hairs of her head, not waiting, or looking for the ordinary towels. 2. She kissed his feet, not once only as courtesy demanded a welcome guest, should be kissed upon the cheek, but continuously: "Since the time I came in hath not ceased." She began at once and continued. 3. Used ointment upon his feet, not presuming to approach his head. These acts showed the deepest love, as vs. 47 declares.

Simon's reason for asking him to his house was probably mere curiosity, or a desire for celebrity. Simon did not love at all, therefore he had not been forgiven, therefore he is not even represented by the debtor who was forgiven the smaller sum. Consequently vs. 47 speaks distinctly of the woman, but not of Simon.

Forgiveness was complete. She was not exposed to deeper woe. When Jesus called "Come unto me," she probably came and found rest. She wants to thank Jesus. Her heart overflows with love. Faith saved her, vs. 50; so John iii. 14-16; Acts xvi. 31; etc. Believing on Jesus, she was forgiven; being forgiven much, she loved much.

ILLUSTRATION.—Scripture instances of salvation by faith may well be cited. Scholars may be asked to seek such cases and report them in writing. E. g., Matt. ix. 22; xv. 28; Mark x. 42; Luke xvii. 19.

Abridged from the Baptist Teacher. Recite.—Scripture Catechism, 197, 198.

ANSWER TO SCRIPTURE ANAGRAM.

- 1. G-ebal Ezek. xxvii. 9.
2. A-biel 1 Sam. ix. 1.
3. B-era Gen. xiv. 2.
4. R-eba Num. xxxi. 8.
5. I-ra 2 Sam. xx. 26.
6. E-li 1 Sam. xx. 27-30.
7. L-a-el Num. iii. 24.
GABRIEL.—Luke i. 19.

SCRIPTURE QUESTIONS.

- What father sent his son some news to learn, And sorrowing heard he would no more return?
Who to God's temple brought her infant fair, And for her Master's service left him there?
Who parted from a king in wrath and pain, Nor till his death beheld his face again?
What friends kissed weeping with a woeful heart, Because necessity compelled to part?
Who, mobs below, and blackening skies above, Gave the last charge of sacred human love?
Who are the persons described in these couplets?

ENTIRELY TOO APROPOS.—A clergyman in a village of Baden recently made himself so obnoxious to his parishioners by engaging in various squabbles which brought on several lawsuits, that he was obliged to resign his post. During his farewell sermon he said, "I have been really happy but three times in my life; the first time was when I made my first communion; the second was when I said my first mass; and now comes the third, which is the occasion on which I take leave of you, my well-beloved!" At that very moment the organist drowned the preacher's voice in the solemnly cheerful strains of "Great God be praised," and the whole congregation, rising to its feet, joined in singing the words.

THE FASHIONS A HUNDRED YEARS AGO.

Modern Fashions are by some regarded as more foolish than any that have preceded them, but we can hardly think that in every respect our forefathers were the embodiment of wisdom in these respects. Read the following description of a Bride and Bridegroom of 1770. The bridegrooms of the present day are, at least, an improvement on this specimen of the days of long ago:

To begin with the lady. Her locks were strained upwards over an immense cushion that sat like an incubus on her head, and plastered over with pomatum, and then sprinkled with a shower of white powder. The height of this tower was somewhat over a foot. One single white rose-bud lay on its top, like an eagle on a haystack. Over her neck and bosom was folded a lace handkerchief, fastened in front with a bosom-pin rather larger than a copper cent, containing her grandfather's miniature set in virgin gold. Her airy form was braced up in a satin dress, the sleeves as tight as the natural skin of her arm, with a waist formed by a bodice, worn outside, whence the skirt flowed off, and was distended at the top by an ample hoop. Shoes of white kid, with peaked toes, and heels of two or three inches elevation, enclosed her feet and glittered with spangles, as her little pedal members peeped curiously out. Now for the swain. His hair was sleeked back and plentifully flourished, while his queue projected like a handle to a skillet. His coat was a sky-blue silk lined with yellow; his long vest of satin, embroidered with gold lace; his breeches of the same material, and tied at the knees with pink ribbons. White silk stockings and pumps, with laces and ties of the same hue, completed the habiliments of his neither limbs. Lace ruffles clustered around the wrist, and a portentous frill worked in correspondence, and bearing the miniature of his beloved, finished his truly genteel appearance."

A LETTER FROM FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE.

The following characteristic letter was recently written by Miss Florence Nightingale, the celebrated Crimean nurse, to the "Chairman of the French Relief Fund," in London:

MY LORD: May I be permitted to contribute through your hands my mite—£5 a week, for four weeks—to the most appalling distress this century has seen—that of the starving population in Paris, where, on the opening of the gates, a million and a half of non-combatants, principally women and children, will have to be fed like babies? But the charity of England will be equal, under your auspices, to the emergency. For this terrible new year what can one wish but that there never may be such another to the end of the world? Still, England's "generosity and magnificent charity," as has been truly said by a princess very dear to us, has risen equal to the wants. I do not believe that there is one man, woman or child above pauperism who has not given, I will not say according to their means, but far above their means, for Germans and French who can never give again to them; and all for love and nothing for reward. I should like the working people of England to know that the working people of France and Germany feel this. One expression of it—it was from a German—struck me particularly. It was to the effect that the Prussian elementary education was far superior to the English (let the London School Board show them that this shall not be the case long); but for the "education of the heart," continued my correspondent, "give me the English working-people." I fully endorse this. Pardon me, my lord, this long note, for the sake of the declaration of feeling, which I think, must please you; and believe me to be, my lord, your obedient servant, FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE.

WHO ARE THE GIVERS?—The experience of nearly all benevolent societies confirms that of the private charitable institutions of New York, whose managers state that about three per cent, of the donations for their support are in sums of \$100 and upwards, and about twice that amount in sums of from \$20 to \$25, but that by far the larger part is in sums of less than five dollars. A grate menny of our people go abroad to improve their minds who hadn't got enny minds when they war at home; knowledge, like charity, shud begin at home, then spread.—Billings.

The Sabbath School.

For the Christian Messenger.

A LETTER FROM MISS NORRIS TO SABBATH SCHOOL CHILDREN.

HENTHADA, JAN. 28th, 1871.

Dear Young Friends,—Sitting at the open window of my room this pleasant Sabbath evening I am not satisfied with thinking of home scenes, I want to speak a word to my Sabbath School Classes, and since I cannot do that I must try to reach you with my pen.

I want to tell you that I taught my first class of Karens this morning. Seven little Karen girls, children of Christian parents who once were heathen, were given to my care. They had been taught to read and the lesson they had learned was the 19th Psalm. Those seven little girls one after the other, repeated that Psalm from first to last, some without needing to be told a single word and only one having to be corrected more than twice.

Did you know your lesson so well and study it so patiently to-day?

You would think these children very strangely dressed, they do not wear their dresses as we do but merely wrap them around them, but they are quiet in school and seem so glad to have some one to teach them, they know there are hundreds of little girls like them that no one will ever teach. One of them who knew her lesson perfectly was only six years old, her name is Ruth, or as her friends call her, Naw Rutha. She knew in a moment when another made a mistake and seemed surprised at it but not at all vain because she knew better. After the Bible Lesson we had the "Happy Land," which these children sing in Karen just as you do in English.

I want my young friends in Sabbath School Classes at home to work and pray for heathen children. Never forget to pray "Lord, thy kingdom come."

Your friend in Jesus, H. M. NORRIS.

STIR versus WORK.

BY REV. J. W. WILLMARTH, N. J.

Indolence and sluggishness, on the part of professed Christian workers, in the Sunday-school or anywhere else, ruin everything. Where these and a want of enterprise prevail, it is much to be desired that dormant energies should be roused; that drones should be excited, and even goded into activity. But these are not universal faults. Many Christian laborers are abundantly active. They are moving, talking, planning largely and continually. There is, however, some danger even here, there is danger that they will mistake stir for work.

A locomotive may make as much noise and puffing when it is drawing nothing as when it leads on a heavy train. Who has not seen men perpetually busy in their worldly affairs, boiling over with apparent energy, flying this way and that; and yet, mysteriously enough, when all is done, we find they have accomplished little or nothing. So there is danger, perhaps, that Sunday-school laborers may sometimes mistake stir for work. You can do nothing without some stir; but you can have a very great stir and accomplish little or nothing.

Besides our work is exceedingly real, solemn and important. Young minds cannot be trained in the truth, the school made attractive, its exercises adapted to the conversion of the impenitent and the up-building of the converted, without means; nor without energy and effort; but neither can these results be reached unless the energy be rightly directed and the efforts divinely blessed.

It is well, therefore, often to pause and inquire just concerning this point. Let us try to have "live teachers," varied and interesting exercises, good music, pleasing papers and books, good speaking, and all the rest. That is well. But are our "live teachers" living the life that they now live in the faith of the Son of God? Are our varied exercises all adapted to teach the truth and to make salutary impressions? Is our music, are our papers and books, our speaking and all other means, fitted to promote the end in view? For it is useless to toil and attract and increase members and interest, and prosper outwardly, unless our work is really done. And our work, under God, is to lodge truth in susceptible hearts and to lead them to obey it.

By no means would we in the least repress enthusiasm or foster apathy. But we

would have enthusiasm and activity rightly applied, accompanied with fervent prayer, exercised so that God can own and bless the labor. There may be much stir, but no saving good accomplished, without true Christian work. We ought to exercise our very best judgment and ask divine direction, in order that the ardor and enterprise now characteristic of our Sabbath-school work may result, not in vanity, but in substantial good—in the salvation of souls, and in the glory of our Heavenly Father.

A CHILD'S IDEA OF A TEE-TOTALER.

A little boy six years old, a member of the Band of Hope, was one day returning home from school, when he suddenly stopped to watch an old man breaking stones by the roadside. The dress of the old man betokened poverty and neglect, and the child stood for a few moments looking earnestly at him, pitying his wretched condition. At last the little fellow said "Good morning!" and the old man returned his salutation. The child still hesitated, as if some other thought was in his heart, and at last he asked very brightly, "Are you a teetotaler?" "No, indeed, I am not," replied the old man, smiling, "What makes you ask me that, child?" "Oh! because I thought you were not," answered our little hero, as he pleasantly passed on his way, leaving the old man to his work and the musings of his own heart.

TO SUPERINTENDENTS.

I have watched the movements of the superintendents of several Sunday-schools with great interest. As a general rule they are men who have the worth of souls on their hearts,—and they labor with great energy and self-denial for their benefit.

Permit a suggestion of two:

- 1. Guard the extremes of levity and solemnity when talking to the children. I think the latter extreme is quite as dangerous as the former in some respects. If the superintendent is always solemn, extremely so when he speaks to the children, they soon get the impression that he is dull. It will not injure the school to laugh once in a while.
2. Make your remarks short. Say what you have to say upon the lesson, or other matters in short, sharp and brisk sentences and when you have said it don't repeat it. It is killing to the school to listen to long talks no matter how good. An older sister said "How good brother—, did talk to the school!" but the little daughter replied: "Dear me, he talks so long and so sober," Receive this kindly from A PASTOR.

AN ILLUSTRATION OF FAITH.

One day when Bonaparte was reviewing some troops, the bridle of his horse slipped from his hand, and the horse galloped off. A common soldier ran, and laying hold of the bridle, brought back the horse to the Emperor's hand, when he said to the man: "Well done, captain." The soldier inquired: "Of what regiment, sire?" "Of the guards," answered Napoleon, pleased with his instant belief in his word. The Emperor rode off; the soldier threw down his musket, and, though he had no epaulettes on his shoulders, no sword by his side, nor any other mark of advancement he ran and joined the staff of commanding officers. They laughed at him, and said: "What have you to do here?" He replied: "I am captain of the guards." They were amazed, but he said: "The Emperor has said so, and therefore I am." In like manner, through the Word of God; "He that believeth hath everlasting life," is not confirmed by the feelings of the believer; he sought to take the Word of God as true, because He has said it, and thus honor Him as God of truth, and rejoice with joy unspeakable.

A TEACHER, who had been greatly blessed in bringing in and retaining young men, was asked what the magic spell of his influence over them was. He replied, "Putting my arms around them." It was the power of a loving faith.

THERE is no argument, either in Scripture or reason, for gathering children into classes and teaching them God's Word, which does not apply, with equal force, to adults.

Kind and cheering words come to us from all parts of our land. We are glad that Baptists are so happily harmonious in work for Jesus. Nearer to Jesus, brethren; nearer to Jesus, and so get nearer to each other!—Baptist Teacher.