

YOUTH'S DEPARTMENT.

Lessons for 1871.

THE WORDS OF JESUS.

SUNDAY, JULY 2ND, 1871.

Mary's Choice.—Luke x. 38-42.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"But one thing is needful." vs. 42.

SCRIPTURE SELECTIONS.—Matt. vi. 24-34; Job i. 13-22.

Into what village did Jesus enter? John xi. 1. Where was it? What brother had these sisters? Tell what you know of the family. John xi. 1-36; xii. 1-11; Matt. xxvi. 6-13; Mark xiv. 3-9.

What is meant by "sitting at the feet" of a teacher? vs. 39. Acts xxii. 3. Luke viii. 35.

What by being "cumbered about much serving"? vs. 40. In what spirit did Martha act? What motives governed Mary?

What was Martha's request? vs. 40. What was Christ's answer? vs. 41, 42. What were the "many things"? Is all care for these and similar matters condemned by the Saviour? What kind of care is proper? Matt. vi. 31-33; 2 Thess. iii. 8-12.

What was the "one thing"? Why is it called "the good part"? What other names are given to it in Scripture? Matt. vi. 20; xiii. 46; Col. i. 12; Gal. iv. 5; Matt. xxv. 46; etc. Why can it never be taken from its possessor? When at latest must all worldly treasures be given up? Is the good part still within reach? Is it yours? Will you try to induce others to gain it?

SUMMARY.—We do most for Christ when we receive most from Christ, and if we now in faith receive from him the Word of Life, we shall forever live with him the life itself.

ANALYSIS.—Mary's Choice.—I. The Description.—1. The reception. vs. 38. 2. The sisters. vs. 39, 40.

II. The Conversation.—1. The request. vs. 40. 2. The reply. vs. 41, 42.

EXPOSITION.—The village.—Bethany, about two miles east of Jerusalem, beyond the summit of the Mount of Olives, on its eastern slope, near the Jericho road. See Mark xi. 1; compare x. 46. Luke xix. 29; compare xix. 1.

The family.—These two sisters had a brother Lazarus. It is not known, that at this time there was any member besides the three. They were evidently sincere, devoted friends of Jesus, and his attachment to them was exceedingly strong and tender. See John xi.

The reception.—vs. 38. "Martha received him into her house." She was very likely the elder of the two. This would show why she, rather than Mary received Jesus, and why the house is called hers.

Sat at Jesus' feet.—vs. 39. To "sit at the feet" of one, meant to learn of him as a teacher. Mary loved God's truth more than all earthly treasures and was drawn to Jesus by the resistless attractions of his heavenly doctrine. She "heard his word," drank it in eagerly, feasted on it delightedly. Ps. xix. 10; cix. 103. If we are children of God we love to hear his Word and to "sit at the feet of Jesus."

Cumbered about much serving.—vs. 40. She was intent on getting up a fine entertainment. She was hospitable and was acting from genuine and generous regard for Jesus. Her hospitality, kindness, and readiness to serve others are commendable and deserve imitation.

The request.—Martha was disturbed, impatient, if not angry, thoroughly so with her sister, almost so apparently with Jesus. "Lord my sister neglects you and neglects me. She does nothing for you, she throws all upon me. Why discourse to her and encourage such conduct? Do you not care? Speak to her, not as thus far to keep her with you, but to send her back to my help." Impolite but natural. She does not charge Mary with habitual neglect as though indolent. She is provoked only by this one fault. How easy to misjudge. How easy quite unconsciously to be unjust and even cruel. From Martha's request we may well learn to be careful alike of our judgments and our words.

The reply.—The rash intrusion broke up the discourse on which Mary had been feasting. "Martha, Martha," the name twice spoken expresses disapprobation, dissatisfaction, reproof. See Luke xxii. 31; Acts ix. 4. Jesus corrects Martha, but in love. He shows her how in this matter she is wrong and Mary right. Christ teaches us the importance of trifles, the greatness of little things, that "large doors turn on small hinges."

Many things.—vs. 41. The "many things" fitly represent the myriad objects of worldly desire, the innumerable forms of outward service. If by such objects

and in such ways we try to please ourselves or to please our Master, we shall be drawn or driven in many directions at once, tossed hither and thither.

Careful and troubled.—She was over-anxious, hurried, unrestful. The Saviour, instead of endorsing her sharp reproof of Mary, administers a fit reproof to her. He condemns excess of care. She fails to give her Lord the highest honor, and best service.

One thing.—Both sisters would please Jesus and do him honor. One would feed him with bodily food; the other would have him feed her with spiritual food. So was it at Jacob's well. John iv. He found in the woman of Samaria a receptive heart. It was enough. His disciples came with food. He said: "I have food to eat which ye know not of." But if the "one thing" which Christ needed to satisfy him with man was to find hunger for God's truth and love, it was only because the one thing which man needs, is the possession of that truth and love. Christ's statement to Martha thus holds both thoughts, and the common application of it is quite correct.

The good part.—When the soul's need becomes the soul's possession, it can be called its portion, or part. And the one thing needful is the chief good, is the highest, purest, best good; is indeed the one only good, for without this nothing else will in the end be found good, but rather evil. Whether God's earthly gifts are blessings to any one depends upon their use. With God's love in the soul, all that life brings becomes good. Rom. viii. 28. Mary chose this good part because she had seen and felt clearly and profoundly her imperative need of it, the vanity and mockery and misery of all things without it. When Christ says Mary has chosen the good part, he neither says nor means that Martha has not. His reproof was aimed at her present temper, not at her Christian character; at a tendency within her rather than at her real relation to God.

Not be taken away.—Other treasures perish. They leave us or we them. This stays, survives death, and lasts forever. Its value and its volume never diminish, but rather increase. Precious as is this "part" in this world, in the next it is "far better."

The lesson.—Choose God as your supreme good. "Sit at Jesus' feet," and drink in his heavenly doctrine.

ILLUSTRATION.—John Bradford was burned at Smithfield, England, in 1555, "for the testimony of Jesus." When in prison, awaiting his end, a servant asked him how he did. He answered, "Well, I thank God; for as men in sailing which be near to the shore or haven where they would be, would be nearer, even so the nearer I am to God, the nearer I would be."

Abridged from the Baptist Teacher. Recite.—Scripture Catechism, 307, 308.

ANSWER TO SCRIPTURE ENIGMA.

NO. LVIII.

Here are the names of the places and persons, in reply to the questions asked.

- J-abesh Gilead . . . 1 Sam. xxi. 11, 13.
- E-lymas . . . Acts xiii. 8.
- S-imon . . . Luke xxii. 31.
- U-za . . . 1 Chron. xiii. 10.
- S-aul . . . 1 Sam. xxviii. 10, 12.
- W-ilderness . . . Mark viii. 4.
- E-leazar . . . Num. xx. 28.
- P-haraoh . . . Gen. xlvii. 10.
- T-imothy . . . 1 Tim. v. 23.

And here are the initials telling in two words "the tale of sympathizing love," JESUS WERT. John xi. 35.

BIBLE QUESTIONS.

- 13. Who are now the children of Abraham?
- 14. Give examples of the use of God's promises as pleas in prayer.
- 15. Give examples of past mercies and answers as the ground for further requests.
- 16. Give scriptural references to the eastern mode of sowing rice.

ONCE TIPSEY.

A young man who has once been tipsy has let himself down. Ah! it is not easy to get up again. It is easier and commoner to slide down another step than to climb up the step that you have lost. The French have a noted proverb, "It is the first step that costs." After one step down, all other steps, even down to the abyss, are made easier.

Which is the harder to manage, an unruly boy, or a giggling girl?

THE PLACE DE LA CONCORDE.

Surely there never was a name of more pacific and inoffensive meaning, applied to any spot on this earth, than that which heads this article. And surely there never was an area of ground more crowded with wild memories of confusion, revolution, and war. The words mean—the Place of Harmony. But it seems as if the very stones might cry out with reminiscences of bloodshed and frightful crime.

This famous square is located almost in the centre of the city of Paris, lying between the palace of the Tuilleries and the Champs Elysees. The corners of the space have been cut off by the balustrade surrounding it, so that the general figure presented is octagonal, and each angle is marked by a splendid statue emblematic of some one of the chief cities of France: Rouen, Brest, Lyons, Bordeaux, Marseilles, Strasbourg, and Lille. High columns with lamps, and lofty staves for flags, are placed all along the line of circumference, so as to be permanently ready for pageants of illumination and floral adornment on days of festival or triumph.

No spectacle more beautiful can be conceived, more fairy-like and enchanting, than that presented when this magnificent space is hung with its usual festoons of glass globes, along continuous lines of gas-pipe, every sixth globe of crimson color, the other five cream-white. Far as the eye can see, the scene appears like a mere succession of circles, or neck-laces of pearls mingled with rubies.

The marvellous group of eminent architecture, surrounding on every side this central area, is enough of itself to rivet attention. The chief imperial residence in the capital, the Tuilleries, fronts full on the open square, an exquisite garden alone intervening, with its statues and fountains and beds of flowers. The Madeleine, almost a cathedral in proportions and glory, shows at the end of the short rue Royale. And to the south, across the fine bridge, the view ends with the grand colonnade of the Corps Legislatif, over the top of which one can just catch a glimpse of the gilded dome of the Hotel des Invalides. Most extensive government buildings, with many noble residences, line the streets close at hand. Up to the western limits of the city, beginning here, runs that avenue, which the world owns to be the fittest on all the planet to pass through the Elysian Fields. No eye of man will ever rest upon a more splendid sight than that presented, when, on some proud day of triumph, the soldiers of France, with echoing music and banners flying, parade in the Champs Elysees, marching along that wonderful three or four miles of radiant beauty, from the palace to the arch of the star, and beyond it to the statue of the old emperor at Courbevois.

But indeed the place suggests more than it reveals. In the centre of it stands the lofty obelisk originally brought from Luxor in Egypt. It is intended to mark the precise locality where, in the dreadful Reign of Terror, the guillotine was erected, and did its unforgetten work. This great stone was a present from Mehemet Ali to the French Government. It took three years to remove it from the great temple of Thebes, in which it had stood since 1,500 B. C. On one side of it are engraved in deep lines the figures of the machinery used in setting it up in Egypt; and on the opposite figures of that which the French employed.

Close to it, north and south, are two enormous fountains, the jets of which are celebrated for volume and effect. These are built with three basins, and the water falls down over dolphins and nymphs, swans and statuesques of children.

History grows solemn over the recital of stupendous events which were wrought out within this enclosure. When Louis XVI. was married, the horses of the pageant got frightened by sudden fireworks, and in the awful panic more than a thousand persons were trampled to death on the same space of ground where, a little more than a score of years afterwards, both bride and groom were beheaded. Here began the popular disturbances, which led to the destruction of the bastille, and here, too, earliest gathered the screaming mob which engendered the revolution forcing the Orleans dynasty out of France.

In the space of twenty months more than twenty-eight hundred human souls here went up to their patient Maker from headless trunks; the knife of the guillotine continually falling, the alleys all the time running blood. Among them were a king and a queen, and a king's sister, and a king's brother. Here Charlotte Corday

met bravely her fate; here Madame Roland prayed her last prayer. Here the Girondists sang their final song—*Veni, Creator*—the terrible axe thinning out their choir until only one voice lifted the strain, and that went into eternal silence. And meetly here the blasted face of execrated Robespierre fell into the executioners basket.

On this memorable acre of earth the best and worst blood of France was poured out in desperate streams. Silently now the mysterious old stone, from the quiet world of the desert, uplifts its pinnacle above covered with hieroglyphics, marking only a spot it knows not how to mention. And beside it a hundred copious jets of clear water, flashing aloft in the air, cannot avail to wash the stained soil; a hundred rainbows, in the spray overhead, give no covenant that another deluge of death may not come.—*Christian Weekly*.

SPREADING GARMENTS IN THE WAY.

This custom, which is spoken of in Matt. xxi. 8, was practiced in the time of Jehu, king of Israel (2 Kings ix. 12), and always has been, and is still found in the East. Josephus tells us that Alexander was thus received, as was Agrippa, according to Philo, when he approached Jerusalem. From the East it was carried to the West. Old writers mention it. Plutarch describes Cato, on leaving the government of his province, as having been thus honored by his grateful subjects. Some old travellers mention this custom as existing in the East in their day.

The most pleasing illustrations, however, of the above-mentioned, occur in more modern works. Mr. Roberts says, "The people of the East have a robe which is like a lady's mantle or cloak, and it may often be seen spread on the ground where men of rank are to walk. I was not a little surprised, soon after my arrival in the East, when going to visit a native gentleman, to find the path through the garden covered with white garments. I hesitated, but was told it was for my respect." "I must walk on them to show that I accepted the honor."

Lord Lindsay, who travelled in the Holy Land, gives us another instance of this custom. He says: "On approaching Bethlehem, the aged inhabitants, with tears and lamentations, came out to me, to beseech my intercession, that the cruelty, then inflicted on them might cease; and eighteen hundred years after the memorable record of that custom, they strewed their garments in my path, which, with my attendants, I literally rode over; while my heart beat, and my eyes were bathed with tears, at such a memorial of past ages, amidst such a scene of present wretchedness."

The inhabitants of this town appear about the same time to have repeated this Oriental mode of showing honor. Dr. Robinson relates the following circumstance: "At that time, when some of the inhabitants were already imprisoned and all were in deep distress, Mr. Farran, then English Consul at Damascus, was on a visit to Jerusalem, and had rode out with Mr. Nicolson to Solomon's Pools. On their return, as they went up the ascent to enter Bethlehem, hundreds of the people male and female, met them, imploring the Consul to afford them his protection; and all at once, as if by general consent, 'they spread their garments in the way' before the horses. The Consul was affected unto tears, but had, of course, no power to interfere."

CHRISTIAN ENTHUSIASM.

No great thing is ever done without enthusiasm. Talents, learning, fine opportunity do not insure success. Thousands who have these, live and die with little advantage to themselves or others. Abundant resources are vain, if the soul lacks the inspiration to put them to service. Men of moderate talents often out-strip their superiors, because they have strong faith and high resolve. The lowest become highest, and the highest become lowest, "the last shall be first, and the first last," through the diversity in enthusiasm. Where one has solid faith in his chosen mission, and his work becomes a part of his life, a constant presence by day and by night; where ardor, fixed resolve, warmth of zeal and steadfastness of purpose, become an abiding habit, great success is inevitable.

A capitalist in Wall street recently said, "A bank never succeeds well until it has a president who takes it to bed with him."

Ecco Homo attributes the wonderful success of the early Christians to the enthusiasm for humanity with which Christ inspired them. That enthusiasm has been a power in the Church ever since, and success has always been measured by the degree of its presence. When that has risen to sublime earnestness, the Church has been invincible; when it has fallen to lukewarmness, it has become like Samson with shorn locks. Whitefield melted and subdued the multitude before him, because he believed and felt what he preached as few men have ever felt it. Ardor gives point and efficiency to truth; a sharp blow from a whip will do more execution than a deliberate swing of a bar of iron.

The great present want of the churches is enthusiasm for Christ and sinners. There are talent, learning, numbers, wealth enough to stir this world with a tremendous impulse, and if they were all set in motion, or warmed into vigorous action, nothing could resist them. At present faith is weak, love is lukewarm, purpose is feeble, the whole life lacks tone and force. We need a new inspiration, an impulse from the heart of the master, which not only begets strong desires to subdue the world to Him, but courage to undertake the conquest and prosecute the work with ceaseless energy and patience.—*The Morning Star*.

IS MY NAME THERE?

In a school which I attended, prizes were offered for the best maps drawn by hand, and I eagerly strove to win one of them.

The decisive day came. My name was not called, and disappointment filled my heart. I had come so near the mark. My work was pronounced excellent. One blot!—just one blot!—had caused the failure. Friends solaced me with the thought that next time I should be successful; but this gave me small comfort.

This incident has often served to illustrate to me things of more momentous import. I read of another book wherein are written names among which I would gladly have my own. And if it be not therein written, there is no "next time" to look forward to for comfort.

How much time, how much thought do we give to these subjects of thrilling import? What eager strivings! what expenditures of time and money and even health are oft given to secure some earthly gain or honor; yet how little to this, our great, eternal well-being!

That blot, too, which had caused the blight of my fond hopes—how many lessons I learned therefrom. As I looked back upon my past life I could see no page without a blot; no day without its sin. I thought, "How can I be saved; for if a man offend in one point he is guilty of all." Can any good deeds ever efface those stains? Nay; but "the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin."

Precious words! Here and here alone is rest. Here and here alone I found peace. And I hope, one day, it will be my happiness to look upon "the Lamb, as it had been slain"—to remember the time when he sought me and called my name, and to cast my crown at his feet, and raise my joyful song unto "Him that loved me and gave himself for me."—*Am. Messenger*.

THE RELIGION OF HAPPINESS.

The religion which is only sunned into being by happiness is a suspicious thing. Having been warmed by joy, it will become cold when joy is over; and then when these blessings are removed we count ourselves hardly treated, as if we had been defrauded of a right; rebellious hard feelings come; then it is you see people become bitter, spiteful, discontented. At every step in the solemn path of life, something must be mourned that will come back no more; the temper that was so smooth becomes rugged and uneven; the benevolence that expanded upon all narrows into an ever dwindling selfishness. We are alone; and then that death-like loneliness deepens as life goes on. The course of man is downward, and he moves with slow and even more solitary steps down to the dark silence—the silence of the grave. This is the death of the heart; the sorrow of the world has worked death.

We take all God's gifts as if we paid for them, or with a worse grace than that, and, yet, He gives us them all "on trust," which, if not real, is mercifully supposed.

A life of idleness is not a life of pleasure. Only the active and the useful are happy. The most miserable are those who have nothing to do.