

Youths' Department.

Lessons for 1871.

THE WORDS OF JESUS.

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 24TH, 1871.

The Pharisee and Publican.—Luke xviii. 9-14.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"God be merciful to me a sinner." vs. 13.

SCRIPTURE SELECTIONS.—Psalm li; Rev. iii. 14-22.

To whom was this parable spoken? vs. 9. Why spoken to them? Was it intended only for them?

What was the temple? vs. 10. Why is it said "went up"? Why go thither to pray? The general character of the Pharisees? Of the publicans?

What among the Jews was the usual posture in prayer? See 1 Kings viii. 54; 2 Chron. vi. 13; Dan. vi. 10; Ex. xxiv. 8; 2 Chron. xxix. 29; Psalm xcv. 6; Matt. xxvi. 39. What is meant by "with himself"?

What was the Pharisee's prayer? vs. 11, 12. What fault is there in the prayer? What is its spirit? Is it certain that the man was outwardly other than he describes himself? The Mosaic law of fasting? Levit. xvi. 29; Numb. xxix. 7; Zech. viii. 19. Of tithes? Levit. xxvii. 30; Numb. xviii. 21; Deut. xiv. 22.

What was the publican's prayer? vs. 13. What is meant by "standing afar off"? Why did he not lift up his eyes? Why is it said "so much as" his eyes? 1 Tim. ii. 8; Psalm cxliii. 1, 2; John xvii. 1. Smitting the breast was a sign of what? Show the contrast of the publican's prayer with the Pharisee's.

What is meant by "justified"? vs. 14. Was the Pharisee justified at all? What is the general principle announced by Christ? Is it elsewhere given? Ch. xiv. 11. Why should all men have the publican's spirit? Rom. iii. 9-20. Have you ever truly offered this prayer?

SUMMARY.—Boasting to God of our own righteousness we are condemned. Pleading for pardon in self-abhorrence, we are justified.

ANALYSIS.—An Introductory Remark. vs. 9-1. To the Temple. vs. 10.

II. At the Temple. (a) The Pharisee. vs. 11, 12. (b) The publican. vs. 13.

III. From the Temple. vs. 14.

EXPOSITION.—The Introduction tells us to whom, and by implication for what the parable was spoken. It was spoken for us and applies to us. "Trusted in themselves," exactly, "upon themselves," not upon God. "That they were righteous." They built upon their own goodness, not God's grace. Every Christian is partly the Pharisee, and partly the publican, but only in the Christian is there anything of the publican. "Despised others," literally, and far better "the rest," i. e., of mankind. Those few had a monopoly of virtue, in their own estimation.

Alike, and not alike. vs. 10.—Both were men, both religious, both recognize the true God, both honored his temple, both doubtless were Jews, both "went up," both entered the temple, both prayed. So, too, both were alike sinners and in need of God's mercy, and ought to have offered the same prayer, but they were not alike in seeing this, for one was Pharisee, the other a publican.

The Temple stood upon a rocky eminence on the eastern part of Jerusalem, separated from Zion by the valley of the Tyropoan. Hence in going to it one "went up," as cended. The word translated "temple," in our lesson and elsewhere, includes the temple proper, a surrounding "court" or enclosure, 180 by 240 cubits, and less elevated, still another outer court surrounding this and 400 cubits square, as measured on the outer side. The whole is called "a house of prayer," (Is. lvi. 7; Matt. xxi. 13.) though Gentiles could go only into the outer court, and the Jews as a whole no further than the second court. Into this second court doubtless came both Pharisee and publican, according to Jewish custom. The house of prayer, of worship, is demanded by our social religious nature. The words of Christ in John iv. 21-24 do not teach that we need no outward service, and meeting-houses dedicated to God. Disregard for the appointed place of public worship is the sign of religious insensibility or of positive hostility to God.

The posture. vs. 11.—Standing in prayer was the common posture. See references in questions, though kneeling and prostration were also known. Hence it does not here mark the Pharisee's pride. The publican also stood. vs. 13. It does not appear that sitting in prayer was a custom known to Scripture. We may conjecture of the Pharisee, contrasting the word "stood" with the "afar off" of vs. 13, that he either stood alone, by himself, as bolier than the rest, or stood very near the

entrance to the temple proper, the holy place.

The manner.—"With himself." He says, "to himself," i. e., silently. In this view the Saviour gives what passed in his heart, not what came from his lips. Lip-prayers may be sham; heart-prayers are real. Often the two are exact opposites.

The loftiest pride often hides under the mask of the most profoundly humble words. When one uniformly obtrudes in prayer and conversation terms of self-abasement, experience may justify a questioning of their genuineness. The Pharisees as a class were as proficient in hypocrisy as in self-righteousness, and it is perhaps intimated in the form of expression, "with himself," that the words really uttered were very unlike the thoughts thought. Another possible translation, by some preferred, "with reference to himself," as the whole prayer though to God, was about himself as "the chief good."

The analysis. vs. 11, 12.—The prayers consist of an introduction and three main divisions. The introduction is an address, somewhat familiar, to the Almighty. 1st Division is an avowal of satisfaction with himself as better in God's sight than "the rest of men." 2nd Division is a statement of the first sphere of this superiority, his relations to men, the second table of the law. 3d Division gives the second sphere of his superiority, his relations to God (vs. 12), the first table of the law. It is thus a very comprehensive prayer.

The spirit.—It is that (1) of absolute self-satisfaction; (2) of moral superiority to all his fellow-men; (3) of practical independence of God. He is a very good, i. e., a truly representative specimen of the class who style themselves "perfectly sanctified." It makes not the least difference whether the representation of himself here given be true or false, and that probably, is the reason why nothing is said on that point. If true it shows strikingly how, with only "one thing lacking," everything may be lacking.

The items.—"Extortioner" here denotes one who injures another by force; unjust one who overreaches him by fraud, or renders a semblance of justice.—"Adultery" is referred to as being a great and prevalent sin of the time. "The only fast prescribed by the Mosaic law was that on the great day of atonement, the tenth of the seventh month. Four others were instituted after the captivity. The fasts of this Pharisee must, therefore, have been voluntary ones. These, as appears from the Rabbis, were observed on Monday and Thursday. No tithes, i. e., tenths, for God, except of the fruit of the field and of the cattle, were required by law. Thus the Pharisee enumerates only what he had done over and above the law's demands." He was a great deal better than God asked him to be! Oh yes, no doubt. "Overmuch righteous," surely. Compare Matt. xviii. 6. Show its application to the present state of things, etc. "I possess," of verse 12, should read "I acquire," i. e., of my income.

The publican. vs. 13.—See profound conviction of sin as committed against God expressed every way. He has come to the temple, for God's Spirit drew him and his conscience drove him hither, but to him it is "none other than the house of God," and he stands "afar off," i. e., from the holy place, in profound awe, "far-off," too, from the Pharisee, whom he very likely reveres as being an eminent saint. He does not lift up his hands, nor with bold brow look confidently into God's home; "not so much as his eyes," say nothing of hands, does he raise. Nay, even he "smote," more exactly, was smiting, kept doing it, "upon his breast," in token of his sense of sin, and of punishment. See chap. xxiii. 48. His lips move. He must have help or die, and he knows God only can help. His first prayer, most likely, and that first word of prayer, what struggles has it cost him to speak! It is not mercy in general that he wants, but reconciliation with a wronged and angry God. He is trembling beneath the wrath of God, and he cries out "be appeased," "be propitiated," according to the whole Jewish doctrine of sacrifice. According to "the glorious gospel of the blessed God," propitiated by thine own sacrifice, thine own Lamb, pardon, pardon, because of thy sacrifice:

"Just as I am without one plea. But that thy blood was shed for me," in this spirit came the publican. Be merciful "to me, the sinner." "The sinner," not as in the English, a sinner, not one of a class, but the "only one,"—"me the sinner." Oh, what a prayer. So little and yet so much.

The result. vs. 14.—"Justified," accepted of God, and this acceptance signified to the soul, so as to give peace, "the peace of God;" as, far from the miserable self-satisfaction of the unforgiven Pharisee as is truth from falsehood,—the unforgiven Pharisee, for the thought is not that the publican was justified more than the other, for there are no degrees in justification, but he was justified and the Pharisee was not. God took the one to his heart and thrust the other from him. Let us "beware of the leaven of the Pharisee."

ILLUSTRATION.—In the Great Revival in Ireland in 1859, "On some the conviction of real present danger came like a thunderbolt, and they were compelled to shout for mercy in total disregard of place or circumstance. Others were less violently impressed and the evidence took the milder form of weeping. As a general rule, however, a deep anxiety was felt for a longer or shorter time before the crisis of strong conviction."

"But while some were drawn gently, God dealt differently in a majority of instances. Most passed through a terrible ordeal and received like Bunyan a fiery baptism. Spectre-like, their sins affrighted them. Mill-stone-like their sins pressed them down. For days, for weeks, we have known parties suffering distracting doubts and fears. At last came relief in the consolation of the Holy Spirit, in the sweet whisper of peace.

"In my hand no price I bring Simply to thy cross I cling.

Abridged from the Baptist Teacher. Recite.—Scripture Catechism, 333, 334.

Our readers will remember the incidents of the following stanzas from the *Janetville Gazette*, as the story appeared in our pages a few weeks ago. The versification of the narrative is as pleasing as the poetry of the thing was, when given in plain prose.

PLUCKY SUSAN, OR LUCK AT LAST.—A LEAF FROM THE LIFE OF A WESTERN INVENTOR.

You think I'm nervous stranger? Well I am If 'twasn't for making illy people talk I'd get right off this pokish train and walk from here to where I'm going—Amsterdam. That's where I live, you see. As for Lacrosse, (Excuse me, neighbor, I must talk or bust), Since I've been there it's three years certain, just: And now to laugh or cry is just a toss.

"Married?" Why, yes, that's where it is, you see; I've telegraphed her I was strong and well, And coming to her; but I didn't tell That I was rich. I thought I'd let that be.

It's too good luck, this is, to last, you know And, stranger, if I wasn't kind of rash, I'd bet my bottom dollar that we smash Before—but, shaw! excuse me, I'll go slow.

You see, when we were married, Sue and I, I was a good mechanic, and not poor Until I struck it, as I reckoned, sure, In an invention I was working sly.

All I could make went into that concern; And peeps called me crazy for it, too, And said I'd better stick to what I knew; But folks will talk, and have to live and learn.

In all this world I had but one friend then, But she stood by me nobly, through and through, And said 'twould come out right at last, she knew— One woman stanch is worth a dozen men.

'Twas tough sometimes, though, when a loaf of bread Stood on the table—all the meal we had— I should have gone, alone, quite to the bad; But, through it all, my Susan kept her head.

'Twas her advice that sent me off at last— She said she'd work her fingers to the bone And live for twenty mortal years alone, Rather than give it up—thank God, that's past!

A hundred thousand and a royalty Is what I've got for going far away; She cheered me by her letters every day; A million could not pay such loyalty!

She knows I'm coming; but she doesn't know That I am rich; and she will be there, too, Dressed in her best—her best, my poor, dear Sue I'll bet a hundred 'twill be called!

"'Til dress her now?" You bet it!—but go slow, This luck's a heap too good to last, I fear; I shan't believe it till I'm fairly there; The train may smash up, easy, yet, you know.

The only reason, if it don't, will be That I'm so strongly thinking that it will. I'm nervous, say you? Just a little, still The luck is none too good for Sue, you see.

Hello! we're here!—there's Sue, by all that's grand Stranger, excuse me, sir, but would you mind To go ahead and tell her I'm behind? I'm choking; see my eyes—you understand.

SHE WAS A STRANGER.

A missionary was requested to go out to a new settlement to address a Sabbath school. He had preached in the morning, and was wearied and felt quite unfitted for the task, but reluctantly consented to go.

When he found himself at the spot, he looked round the assembly with great misgivings, not knowing what to say to them. He noticed a little girl very shabbily dressed and barefooted, shrinking up in a corner, her little sunburnt face buried in her hands, the tears trickling between her small brown fingers, and sobbing as if her heart would break. Soon, however, another little girl, about eleven years old, got up and went to her; whispered kindly to her; and, taking her by the hand, led her towards a brook, then seated her on a log, and kneeling beside her, she took off her ragged sun-bonnet, and dipping her hand in the water, bathed her hot eyes and tear-stained face, and smoothed the tangled hair, talking in a cheery manner all the while.

The little one brightened up, the fears all went, and smiles came creeping around the rosy mouth.

The Missionary stepped forward and said—"Is that your little sister, my dear?"

"No, sir," answered the noble child, with tender, earnest eyes, "I have no sister, sir."

"Oh, one of the neighbors' children," replied the missionary; "a little school-mate, perhaps?"

"No, sir, she is a stranger. I do not know where she came from; I never saw her before."

"Then how came you to take her out, and have such a care for her, if you do not know her?"

"Because she was a stranger, sir, and seemed all alone, and needed somebody to be kind to her."

"Ah," said the missionary to himself, "here is a text for me to preach from. 'Because she was a stranger and seemed all alone, and needed somebody to be kind to her.'" The words came to him, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these, my brethren, ye have done it unto me." So, taking the little girl by the hand, he went back to the school-room, and told the people the simple story; then spoke of the great love that all should bear to one another, even as the dear Saviour sought out those who were humble and of low estate, making them his peculiar care. The missionary forgot his weariness, and felt that God had put a good word in his mouth.

THINK I DON'T KNOW YOU!

A few days ago a rather amusing scene took place in one of our well-known drug stores. A small boy entered, to purchase a bottle of blood searcher, when he was asked by one of the clerks in attendance to walk back into the doctor's office, and he would show him something.

The boy went back, and was directed to look at a particular closet. So soon as his eyes were fixed on the same, the clerk pulled aside the screen, and behold! a skeleton of huge proportions presented itself to the astonished vision of the boy who, not waiting to ask any questions, turned and ran for the door for dear life.

In this way he happened to run against the doctor on the pavement, who was coming in to attend his office hour. The doctor, not knowing what was wrong with the boy, thinking perhaps he was a patient, inquired of the clerk, who at once told him of the joke, at the recital of which the doctor, who is a kind, goodnatured man, grew quite indignant, and desired the young man to go at once and bring the lad back, so that the whole matter might be explained.

The young man went as desired, and found the poor little fellow on the opposite side of the street, gazing across at the drug store, nearly frightened to death. He was entreated to come back, but he would not. Hearing this, the doctor—who, by the way, is a very thin man, and resembles a living skeleton—said he would go and bring the poor little fellow himself; and with that intention he went out on the pavement, waving his hand, saying:

"Come over here, sonny; nobody will hurt you."

The lad, almost afraid to stir, hallooed back:

"No you don't; you can't fool me, though you have got your clothes on. You think I don't know you?"

A boy may preach, but only an able man can question skillfully.

WHY SHE REFUSED.

Some one writes: We were highly pleased with an incident a friend related to us about a little girl who with her parents went to visit the fair at the American Institute. While there one of the managers took a fancy to the little miss, who was of a lively and social turn, and to make her visit more pleasant, himself conducted her around the hall, showing her the various points of interest. He left her for a short time, to attend to something in another part of the building, and when he returned, immediately sought the little girl, offering his hand to conduct her around again. To his astonishment, she refused to accompany him. "Why," said he, "you have not seen half the pretty things yet. Come, and I will show them to you." Still she refused, and clung as if affrighted to her mother. Surprised at such conduct, her mother remonstrated and bade her be polite to the kind gentleman. "Mother," said the little girl, whispering in her mother's ear, "I cannot go with him,—he smells of rum." Was she to be blamed, children?

DON'T BEGIN.

If you wouly not be a swearer, Don't begin; In the first low-uttered oath Lies the sin! If you would not be a drunkard, Don't begin; In the first glass lies your danger, Don't begin!

The Sabbath School.

TRIALS OF SABBATH-SCHOOL TEACHERS.

Desiring to ascertain the peculiar trials of my Sabbath-school teachers, I asked them some time since to express in writing their various difficulties, and as their answers may interest others, I venture to transcribe a few extracts herewith: From a teacher of an infant class: "Every member of my class is a little darling. I have no complaint except against myself. I do the best I can, and leave the result with our Father." Another, a teacher of a class of boys, says: "The indifference of some of the mothers who allow their children to come without a lesson is the chief difficulty with which I have to contend." Another faithful student and earnest worker says: "I am troubled with the levity and indifference of those old enough to know better, and by ill-prepared lessons. At times I have been inclined to give up the class, but now I am determined to keep them and pray for them till they are converted or ruined." Still another, the teacher of a class of restless lively boys says: "The boys are not always as attentive as I should like them to be, but it is my fault, not theirs. Of course they will not be attentive unless I compel their attention; their eyes will wander unless I exert such a magnetic power as will chain them to myself while I attempt to teach them. They will not try to think unless I inspire them to do so, as they are not old enough. I always find the reason in myself if on Sabbath they are less attentive than usual. Either I have not studied enough, or have prayed less for the little ones, or have been more engrossed in other labors." This last extract gives the key to success.—Prayer and Labor.

THE BANES AND ANTIDOTES.

The banes of domestic life are littleness, falsity, vulgarity, harshness, scolding, vociferation, an incessant issuing of superfluous prohibitions and orders, which are regarded as impertinent interferences with the general liberty and repose, and are provocative of wrangling or exploding resentments. The blessed antidotes that sweeten and enrich domestic life are refinements, good temper, forbearance from all unnecessary commands or dictation, and generous allowances of mutual freedom. Love makes obedience lighter than liberty. Man wears a noble allegiance, not as a collar, but as a garland. The graces are never so lovely as where they thus dwell together; they make a heavenly home.

SCATTER SUNSHINE.—A worthy Quaker thus wrote: "I expect to pass through this world but once. If, therefore, there be any kindness I can show, or any good thing I can do to any fellow human being, let me do it now. Let me not defer or neglect it, for I will not pass this way again."

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