

Youths' Department.

Lessons for 1871.

THE WORDS OF JESUS.

SUNDAY, MARCH 26TH, 1871.

The Strait Gate.—Matt. vii. 13-23.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"Enter ye in at the strait gate,—v. 13.

SCRIPTURE SELECTIONS.—Luke xvi. 19-31; Rom. iii; 1 Cor. xii.

Of what two gates does Jesus speak in verse 13? What is a "wide" gate? What a "strait" gate? Of what ways does he speak in verses 13, 14? With which gate does he join the broad way? With which the narrow? Why does he put the gates before the ways? To what does the broad road lead? v. 13. To what does the narrow? v. 14. What is meant by "life" Matt. xviii. 8, 9; John iii. 35. What is meant by "destruction"? 2 Thess. i. 9. What then is this broad way? What the wide gate? What the narrow way? What the strait gate?

Which of these ways ought men to choose? Which does Jesus say is chosen by most? v. 13, 14. What reason can be given for this? Which have you chosen? Which does Jesus command us to choose? See golden text. What further command does he make in Luke xiii. 24.

Of whom does Jesus warn men in v. 15? What is a false prophet? What is meant by the description Jesus gives of them in v. 15? Why should we beware of them? What persons are now worthy of this name? How may they be known? v. 16-20. What is meant by "their fruits"?

What is meant by the "kingdom of heaven," in v. 21? Who shall enter into it? v. 21. What persons are meant in v. 22? What will be their fate? v. 23. Will this be your fate?

SUMMARY.—Jesus calls us to enter at the strait gate, and pursue the narrow way to life. This is done by few only, while the most go down the broad road to destruction.

ANALYSIS.—I. Commendation of the Strait Gate. v. 13, 14.

II. Warning against False Guides. v. 15-20. 1. Their description. v. 15. 2. Their exponents. v. 16-20.

III. Warning against False Confidence. v. 21-23. 1. General principle. v. 21. 2. Special illustration. v. 22. 3. Final result. v. 23.

EXPOSITION.—A wide gate.—One that has considerable distance or space between its sides.

A strait gate.—The opposite of wide, that is, narrow, difficult, with its sides close together, so that one may not easily pass.

The ways.—Note the pairing Jesus makes: strait gate and narrow way; wide gate and broad way. The city is supposed to be walled, and can be entered only through the gates; there is a strait gate and a wide gate; the one admits to a narrow road, and the other to a broad road. Jesus supposes men to be considering at which gate to enter, and by which way to journey.

Life.—Here denotes a state of vigor and light and blessedness. It does not mean the natural or the mental life of the hearers addressed, for they had both these, irrespective of the strait gate and of the narrow way. Nor does it mean any other blessing then enjoyed, but one yet to be reached by the road he describes. Christian life here, and eternal life hereafter, are such results. See John v. 40; 1 John v. 12, etc.

Destruction.—The very opposite of "life"; a state of ruin and wretchedness. 2 Thess. i. 9 calls it everlasting, and from the presence of the Lord, and makes it a punishment on them that obey not the gospel.

The broad way.—A wicked life entered through a wide gate, an easy way. The course of this world is all wrong, and Satan urges us astray, Eph. ii. 2.

The narrow way is that taken by those who are saved. The strait gate is not the gate of heaven, nor yet Jesus himself, but it is the gospel plan of salvation.

The choice.—The way which must be condemned is that in which the multitude goes. The reason is found in such Scriptures as Eph. ii. 1, 2. v. 14 also assigns a reason why so many "go in thereat," viz., "because strait is the gate," etc., that is, because men are not willing to deny self in order to enter into life.

Enter ye in.—Not only do we lose life by staying out, but we disobey the command of Jesus, and so aggravate our condemnation.

Strive.—The word rendered strive expresses the intensity of earnestness involved in this order.

False prophets.—Those who without authority claim to speak for God. "Sheep's clothing" does not refer to

their wearing garments of sheep skins, as might be thought, but their appearing innocent, and harmless, so beguiling men, while really they are wolfish, and craving only to devour the unwary. Acts xx. 29.

Beware.—Persons who now tell men there is no God; no danger of hell; or there are ways of salvation by works; may all be ranked as false prophets.

They turn away men from the plain path of gospel salvation. See Matt. xxiii. 13. v. 19 points out the fearful end of all who bear not good fruit, whether they be the false teachers or the erring taught. Their fruits by which we judge are "both their corrupt doctrines and their vicious practices, as contrasted with the outward shows of almsgiving, praying, and fasting, their sheep's clothing to deceive."—Alford. See Matt. xii. 33-35; Gal. v. 19-23; 1 John iv. 1-3.

Kingdom of Heaven.—That government centered in heaven, ruled by Christ, accepted by saints, and which shall eventually rule over all.

Verse 22 describes false professors. They have prophesied, cast out devils, done wonderful works, and all in the name of the Lord, but he never "knew" them, v. 23. On the meaning of "know," see John x. 14, 27; 2 Tim. ii. 19: etc.

ILLUSTRATION.—Dr. Thompson, in The Land and the Book, says, "I have seen these strait gates and narrow ways, 'with here and there a traveller.' Such gates are 'the eye of a needle,' or the needle's eye, of which Jesus speaks in Matt. xix. 24.

A well known fable tells of a hungry wolf, who drew a sheep's skin over himself, and so entered in among the unsuspecting sheep, and slew them at his pleasure.

For instances of evil men who prophesied, see Saul, 1 Sam. x. 5-13. Balaam, Num. xxiv. 4; Caiaphas, John xi. 51.

Abridged from the Baptist Teacher. Recite.—Scripture Catechism, 189, 190.

ANSWER TO BIBLE SCENES.

No. XVII.

King David, suffering from his son Absalom's rebellion, goes up to Mount Olivet weeping, Shimei casts stones at, and curses David and his band. The latter would be avenged, but David restrains them believing that the Lord will requite him. 2 Samuel xv. 30-37; xvi. 1-14.

SCRIPTURE ENIGMA.

No. LXIII.

Find out the words and texts here referred to:—

The place where God appeared to Gideon. The cup-bearer of Artaxerxes. The grandfather of Ichabod. The orator who informed the governor against Paul.

The defater of Abithophel's counsel. The prophet who acted as Hezekiah's physician.

The place from which it was said that no good thing could come.

The city where Samson was imprisoned. The man whose mother chose him a wife. The father of Elisba.

Jeroboam's successor. That which Abiathar took with him when he fled to David.

The paralytic who was cured at Lydda. Rebecca's nurse.

Isaac's age when he was married. The country where Job lived. The city where St. Paul was stoned.

The initials of these words give a saying of Jesus Christ.

THE DISCOURAGED APPLE.

A tiny young apple, so green and so round, Peeped down from his home in the tree, And there just before him, stretched out on the ground,

A pumpkin he happened to see; And admired him so much, That he wished he were such A fine thriving fellow as he.

A week or two passed, and the apple began To murmur because he was small, And he said to himself, "Though I do what I can,

I don't seem to be growing at all; While that sober and steady Old pumpkin already Is such a large grand look ball."

A fortnight rolled by, and then, quite in despair,

Said the poor little apple, "I fear That though the soft rains and bright sunshine I share

I am making no progress up here; For that pumpkin, so strong, And so healthful, ere long More than ten times my size will appear."

He strained every nerve, and he earnestly tried

As fast as the pumpkin to grow; But vain were his efforts, and sadly he sighed

As he gazed on his rival below: "Alas!" he said, "I May just as well die, For my life is a failure, I know."

"Instead of advancing, I really believe I get smaller and smaller each day!"

"Oh, you dear little apple, why foolishly grieve?"

Said a stone near a pumpkin which lay; "It is very unfair, Yourself to compare With my neighbour in this sort of way."

"You really are growing, and must not refuse The comfort which thus is your due; But, of course, when a changeable standard you choose,

It gives of yourself a wrong view; Had you measured by me, Now, for instance, you'd see, That your growth had been constant and true."

So we, as we glance at the past, may suppose That we are not improving; and yet The truth really is, that the faster one grows.

The higher one's standard is set; And thus we are ever Aspiring, and never The prize we are aiming at get.

Take courage, press on; for if daily you strive,

To be loving, unselfish and pure, Though you may not just yet at perfection arrive,

Yet your growth will be steady and sure; And you, though oft fearful, And anxious and tearful, Will the end you are seeking secure.

MY FLOWER GARDEN.

I once passed by a florist, who was digging a long, deep narrow trench, which he filled with rich earth brought from a great distance, with great expense and toil, and said to him, "For what are you preparing that bed with so much pains?" "Flowers," said he; "roses, the choicest of my perpetual roses." "Well," I replied, "I don't think that will pay." "Come along here in two or three years and see." I did. I looked over into that garden. I never before or since saw quite such a sight of beauty. Such fragrance, too, as there was upon the air. Yes, I admit it gladly,—it pays. All that expense and toil of the husbandman was not in vain. It was a good investment.

If I am a Sunday school teacher, my class is my flower garden. A friend steps into my study on Saturday evening. I am putting the last half hour of study on the lesson. I have looked at it, studied it, examined it in every possible manner, with all the aids of the teacher's library, and from my own experience and prayer over it, have made out my brief. My friend exclaims:

"What's all this?" "My Sunday-school preparation."

"You have put some study on this."

"Seven hours of hard, honest study and prayer,—my usual preparation."

"Well that won't pay!"

"If you will look into my class to-morrow, next week, month, or year, you will change your opinion. No work pays better. This is my flower garden. You cannot have a delightful bloom and fragrance like that of heaven, without asking for it.—Rev. W. M. Cheever.

KEEP THE COW.—Never was a better answer made than a poor Irishman made to a Catholic priest while defending himself for reading the Bible. "But," said the priest, "the Bible is for the priests, and not for the likes o' you." "Ah! but, sir," he answered, "I was reading in my Bible, 'You shall read it to your children,' an' sure the priests have got no children."

"But, Michael," says the priest, "you cannot understand the Bible. It is not for the likes o' you to understand it, my man."

"Ah! very well, yer riverance, if I cannot understand it, it will do me no harm, and what I can understand does me a heap o' good." "Very well, Mike," said the priest: "you must go to the church, and

the church will teach you. The church will give you the milk of the Word." "And," said Mike, "where does the church get it from but out of the Bible? Ah! yer riverance, I would rather keep the cow myself."

A PROBLEM TO SOLVE.

A young man, who had graduated at one of the first colleges, and was celebrated for his literary attainments, particularly his knowledge of mathematics, settled in a village where a faithful minister of the gospel was stationed. It was not long before the clergyman met with him in one of the evening walks, and after some conversation, as they were about to part, addressed him as follows:

"I have heard you are celebrated for your mathematical skill; I have a problem which I wish you to solve."

"What is it?" eagerly inquired the young man.

The clergyman answered with a solemn tone of voice, "What shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?"

The youth returned home, and endeavored to shake off the impression fastened on him by the problem proposed to him, but in vain. In the giddy round of pleasure, in his business and his studies, the question still forcibly returned to him, "What shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?"

It resulted in his conversion, and his becoming an able advocate and preacher of the Gospel he once rejected.

THE MINISTER'S SALARY.

There is much practical wisdom in these words of the late Bishop Griswold:

In regard to my pecuniary affairs, though from the first my salary was inadequate to the expenses of my family, yet I made it a rule thankfully to receive what was allowed or given me, and, as already remarked, never to ask for more, or to complain that I had too little. In Connecticut I added to my means of living by cultivating a few acres of land, and by preparing some young men for college; and in Bristol, till my election to the Episcopate, I had the charge of a large school.

Another rule which I adopted, was always to live within my means—never to be in debt, to owe no man any thing but love, and ever to be prepared when called upon to pay my just dues. Never, I believe, have I for the same dues been called upon twice.

Those of the laity who are much engaged in worldly business may not always find it convenient to do this; but I have St. Paul's authority for recommending it to my clerical brethren. Their being in debt is attended with some serious evils. They had better, like the apostle, labor with their hands, or become instructors of youth, than anticipate their resources, or owe that which they cannot pay. In many cases some bodily labor would improve their health, prolong their lives, and increase their usefulness.

"TURN TO THE RIGHT."

Sometimes it is best to disguise the seeming of downright rebuke when dealing with very rude people. The wit of the reply in the case given below by seizing on the double meaning of a word, was probably more effective than a remonstrance would have been under the circumstances.

The late Bishop of Litchfield, who was alike remarkable for wit and learning (he translated into elegant Latin, in one night, the address of the bishops at the late Pan Anglican Council,) was, not long before his death, traveling in a railway carriage in England, when a blustering man exclaimed,—

"I should like to meet that Bishop of Litchfield; I'd put a question to him that would puzzle him."

"Very well," said a voice out of another corner. "now is your time, for I am the bishop."

The man was rather startled, but presently said, "Well, my lord, can you tell me the way to Heaven?"

"Nothing easier," answered the bishop; "you have only to turn to the right, and go straight forward."

When it is seen to imply that the man was going wrong as he was, and must turn before he could go to Heaven, the aptness and severity of the admirable answer become apparent at once.

Pride hides a man's faults from himself, and magnifies them to others.

THE LAST JOURNEY.

In Spain, when a baptized infant dies, a feast is spread, and all the neighbours round come, not to condole with, but to congratulate the parents. "We rejoice with you that you have a child in glory," they say; and the last—nay, the first journey of a sinless babe is a triumphal march, the funeral, a festival, the music is glad. Only the mother weeps. In Greece, the last journey follows quickly upon death. The next day, at dawn the train of white robed priests and choristers may be seen winding along the road toward the church. There, dressed as in life, and having the face uncovered, the dead lie at rest before the altar, until the moment arrives when they must be committed to the earth. It is in the church that the last farewell is taken. What of that terrible journey in the cold North, where the dying Esquimaux is built up in his own snow house and left to die alone? Or of the African tribe who bury their hopelessly sick before death—hurry them out of the world altogether? They have been described as taking an affectionate leave of their relatives and performing this burying with the consent of the person chiefly concerned. Habit is everything, and they are used to it, only one fancies it must fall rather hard upon each individual as it comes to his own turn.—Once a Week.

A REMARKABLE BAPTIST SISTER.—The following is taken from the records of the Baptist Church at Stamford, New York:—

October 8, 1797. Died, at Norwalk, Sybill Whitehead, aged 116 years—a member of this church, baptized October 5, 1780, in the 99th year of her age. She lived at Norwalk, where she kept school, and for years frequently came, on horseback, to Stamford (a distance of thirteen miles from her home) to attend public worship—coming on Saturdays and returning on Mondays. The last time she came to Stamford was in May, 1789, at which time she was 109 years old. She then walked nine miles, and also returned on foot. She was never married.

Mr. Edward Lathrop who sends it to the Examiner says:—

Whether the statement that this wonderful woman was "never married" had anything to do, in the judgment of our fathers, with her longevity—or whether the fact is mentioned in a sort of commendatory way, and as a gentle hint to the sisterhood of other generations—are questions which I have no means of determining.

MAKE A NOTE OF IT.—The Chinese have some notions that might be advantageously adopted by Christians. The way they celebrate their holidays is one of them. The first thing they do is to pay off old debts and square accounts to a fraction. Money matters having been thus adjusted, they next make up old quarrels, and shake hands all round.

Having thus got square pecuniarily and socially, they eat, drink and are merry, finally winding up with a sparkling discharge of Chinese firecrackers. The paying of debts and the making up of quarrels is certainly a good way to begin a celebration of holidays.

DIVISIONS OF HUMAN LIFE.—Flourens's division is 1 to 10 years, infancy; 10 to 20, adolescence; 20 to 30, first youth; 30 to 40, second youth; 40 to 55, first manhood; 55 to 70 second manhood; 70 to 85, first old age; 85, to 100, second and last old age.

KEEP TO THE POINT.—Lord Tenterden had contracted so inveterate a habit of keeping himself and everybody else to the precise matter in hand, that once, during a circuit dinner, having asked a county magistrate if he would take venison, and receiving what he deemed an evasive reply, "Thank you, my Lord, I am going to take boiled chicken." His Lordship sharply retorted, "That, sir, is no answer to my question; I ask you again if you will take venison, and I will trouble you to say yes or no, without further prevarication."

Johnson's Anodyne Liniment is, without doubt, the safest, surest, and best remedy that has ever been invented for internal and external use. It is applicable to a great variety of complaints, and is equally beneficial for man or beast.

We have seen it stated in various papers throughout the country, that Agents for the sale of Sheridan's Cavalry Condition Powders were authorized to refund the money to any person who should use them and not be satisfied with the result. We doubted this at first, but the proprietors authorize us to say that it is true.