

YOUTH'S DEPARTMENT.

Lessons for 1871.

THE WORDS OF JESUS.

SUNDAY, AUGUST 6TH, 1871.

The Good Shepherd.—John x. 1-18.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"I am the good Shepherd; the good Shepherd giveth his life for the sheep." vs. 11.

SCRIPTURE SELECTIONS.—Ps. xxlii; Ezek. xxxiv.

Where were the words of our lesson spoken? ch. viii. 59. Of what does it treat? Is there any break in our Lord's discourse? vs. 6. In which part does Christ explain his meaning?

What is a shepherd? Were sheep cared for in the East as they are in this country? In what respect differently? See vs. 1-5. "Sheepfold," "porter," "by name," "goeth before," "know his voice."

What, think you, does Christ mean by "the fold"? vs. 16; Micah ii. 12. What by the sheep? vs. 7, 11. What by the sheep "not of this fold"? vs. 16. What by the thieves, the robbers, and the hireling? vs. 8, 13. What by the pasture, leading out, feeding?

What does Christ declare himself to be? vs. 7. What else? vs. 11. For what did he come? vs. 10. What does he do for the sheep? vs. 11, 15, 17, 18. Why is this act mentioned so many times? When and how was it done? How could he say no one takes his life? vs. 18; Matt. xxvi. 53. Did Christ's death leave the sheep without a shepherd? vs. 17.

To whom does the flock belong? vs. 14. By what right is it his? John i. 3; Acts xx. 28. How does he regard the flock? How is he regarded by the flock? vs. 14, 15. What reasons that we should wish to be of his flock and to keep close to him? Had he a flock before he came in the flesh? Psalm xxiii; lxxx. 2; c. 3; Is. lxiii. 11; Ezek. xxxiv; John viii. 58. Will he continue to have one? When and where will all his sheep be gathered? Matt. xxv. 32-34.

SUMMARY.—Christ took on himself death that he might give us life, and retook to himself life that he may ward from us death.

ANALYSIS.—The Good Shepherd.—I. In General.—1. Entering into the fold. vs. 1, 1. 2. Leading out the flock. vs. 3-5. (Verse 6 explanatory.)

II. Of the Spiritual Flock.—1. The office. vs. 7-10. 2. The sacrifice. vs. 11-14. 3. The reward. vs. 14-18. A triple union (a) vs. 14, 15. (b) vs. 16. (c) vs. 17-18.

EXPOSITION.—The place.—Christ was at Jerusalem.

Shepherd.—The raising and tending of flocks were far more common in the East than among us, especially where society had not become settled, and the country thickly inhabited. In an open, unfenced, and wild country, great and constant care had to be taken of the flocks. The shepherd was obliged to be with them all the time, by day and by night. Often the shepherd was the owner of the sheep; sometimes, however, he was hired,—an hireling. When one man owned too many sheep to be kept in one flock and tended by one man, he employed under-shepherds for the various flocks, and either employed in addition a chief shepherd, or himself acted as such. Gen. xlvii. 6; 1 Peter v. 4.

THE SHEEP-FOLDS were "low, flat buildings, erected on the sheltered side of the valleys, and when the nights were cold the flocks were shut up in them. They were defended by a wide stone wall, crowned all around with sharp thorns. The Porter was the one who in the night watched the entrance or door of the fold,—a sort of night-shepherd. The Shepherd leads his flock. The shepherd gives to each sheep a name so that he can call them to him separately, one by one. A beautiful symbol of Christ's care for each individual Christian.

To understand our Saviour's meaning, we need to remember that he was at the Hebrew capital speaking to Hebrew teachers, the nation had been by God separated from all others, guarded, led, and tended, as are the flock by their shepherd. Only a few of them really loved God.

(1) The fold. God assigned the Jews, a place into which he gathered them permanently, and walled them in both by their peculiar laws and rites. While they trusted God they dwelt safely in their land. The spiritual fold as here conceived is the kingdom or church of God on earth.

(2) The sheep, therefore, were God's chosen and loved ones. Of these some were Jews, and are called the "sheep of this fold." vs. 16. (3) The thieves, strangers, robbers, hirelings, were religious teachers who pretended to know and teach and do God's will, but who hated God, his truth and Son and people, and who misled and ruined the people. They were men who

loved self, sought selfish ends, and did not know what it was to love God and have God's love for men. (4) The pasture to which the sheep were led forth and on which they were fed, was the truth of God in its inner spiritual meaning. (5) The wolf is the representative of every enemy of our souls, and especially of Satan. No Christian lives who is not in constant danger, tempted in a thousand ways, ways to him often unknown and unsuspected. It is so easy to sin! And we have no power to protect ourselves. We are like sheep in the open fields about which prowling, cruel beasts of prey, and we are most in danger when we feel most secure.

Christ the door.—Vs. 7. This verse begins the explanation of the preceding parable or allegory. Here, however, we find the Saviour to be not the shepherd, but "the door of the sheep," the door into the fold both to the sheep and for the sheep. Shepherds and sheep went through the same. Christ is the door by which first of all the sheep entered the fold, because no man comes to the Father but by him. John xiv. 6. The shepherd and sheep. Both find the same access into the kingdom of God, the spiritual church. This explains what is said of "climbing up some other way." vs. 1. Multitudes since Christ go before him, multitudes before him followed after.

Christ the Shepherd.—He is both Door and Shepherd. He thus shows how the earthly fact failed to symbolize adequately the heavenly reality. One man might be both porter and shepherd, but not door and shepherd. Christ calls himself the good shepherd. Rejected by the Jewish teachers, he was accepted of the Father. As divine, he can boldly claim to be the One of whom David in the 23rd Psalm sung. He is Chief Shepherd.

The purpose.—Christ came that the sheep might have life and have it more abundantly. vs. 10. The purpose is presented as two fold, (1) to impart life, (2) to strengthen the life imparted. This is Christian life. Thus if Christ had not come no man would have been saved.

The sacrifice.—Christ gives his life for the sheep; false teachers take the life of the sheep for themselves, or at best flee and abandon the flock in danger. The flock were not by his death left without a shepherd, but he laid his life down that he might take it again. He did both of his own free will and divine power.

The purchase.—The sacrifice is regarded as also a purchase. The sheep are Christ's both by creation and redemption. Jesus carries out the Father's will, and the love of Father, Son, and Spirit is the same.

"ONE-FOLD," in the Greek "one flock." Jesus is the bond of union, binding into a loving oneness all Christians of whatever nations and names. Eph. ii. 14-22.

ILLUSTRATION.—Many adventures with wild beasts still occur. There are wolves in abundance, and leopards and panthers exceeding fierce prowling about those wild wadies in the region of Tyre. They not unfrequently attack the flock in the very presence of the shepherd, and he must be ready to do battle at a moment's warning. And when the thief and robber come (and come they do), the faithful shepherd has often to put his life in his hand to defend his flock. A poor, faithful fellow last spring between Tiberius and Tabor, instead of fleeing, actually fought three Bedouin robbers, until he was backed to pieces with their kbanjars, and died among the sheep he was defending.—Thomson's "The Land and the Book," p. 302.

Abridged from the Baptist Teacher. Recite.—Scripture Catechism, 319, 320.

ANSWERS TO BIBLE QUESTIONS.

17. The disciples were called Christians first in Antioch. Acts xi. 26.

18. Jesus told Peter beforehand that when he became old, another should stretch forth his hands. By this he signified by what death he should glorify God. John xxi. 18, 9.

19. Demas forsook the Apostle Paul "having loved this present world." 2 Tim. iv. 10.

20. Great is the mystery of godliness, God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of Angels preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.—1 TIM. III. 16.

SCRIPTURE ENIGMA.

No. 1x.

What Hebrew wife her rival taunted sore? What king lost power unwisely seeking more?

Who was a ready scribe in Moses' law?

What prophet wrote of Syria's overthrow? Who from her husband's mother would not go?

Whose servant tried his master to deceive? Where did St. Paul his books and parchments leave?

What king of giant race did Israel slay? Who did with pleasing skill the timbrel play?

What priest first used a pulpit made of wood?

Who sought at risk of life her people's good?

Where did a servant slay his lawful king? What friend did Paul request his cloak to bring?

What king to Solomon rich trees did send? A title given to Paul's Philippian friend?

Who thresh'd, and by a winepress hid the wheat?

What mount oft bore the Saviour's sacred feet?

What loving father, in a touching strain, Mourn'd for a rebel son ignobly slain?

Now, children, search your Bibles, and you'll find

Each name is there which I had in my mind;

Take the initials, and note down with care; And may the text you see incite to prayer.

THE DAYLIGHT AND THE SUNSHINE.

The Daylight complained to the Sunshine, one day, About an old rock which they chanced to survey.

"I am not severe," said the Daylight, "and never

Find fault just to make people think I am clever,

Nor can I be charged with a wish to defame

Any neighbor of mine, nor to blacken his name;

And yet I must say that for years and for years,

This rugged old rock which before us appears,

I have known and have watched in the hope—ah, how vain!—

That its features a lovelier aspect would gain;

But the barren old rock still a rock doth remain."

The Sunshine looked up, but no answer she spoke;

Then she peeped round the edge of her cousin's gray cloak,

And soon, by the bright, winning smile of her eye,

She met a soft glance from a violet, so shy,

That, by dint of hard living, and being but thin,

To a small, narrow crevice had squeezed itself in.

It fluttered with joy at the warmth o'er it cast,

And the gladness it felt was unselfishly passed

To a tuft of dry grass that was drooping behind,

And had long for a look of encouragement pined.

And then the bright sunbeam her charms threw across

The red and gray cups of some lichen and moss

That had crept into corners; but now, at the least,

They thought they were wine-cups set out for a feast.

Weeks glided away; and one beautiful morn'g

The Daylight came past the same spot at her dawning,

And she said to the Sunshine, with critical air,

"That barren old rock, I suppose, is still there;

How foolishly sanguine about it you were!"

The Sunshine was silent, and Daylight's gray eyes

Awoke to the fact, in unquestioned surprise,

That the fair grassy knoll, with its flowers full in view—

Tiny rock-plants, all freshly baptized with the dew—

And its rich-tinted mosses of delicate fold,

Was the very same rock he had slighted of old!

"O Sunshine!" he cried, "you are right; I believe it;

One way to make beauty is just to perceive it!"

Then an angel sang softly, "Sweet triumph love wins,

For she veils from our sight such a number of sins."

And the rock and its treasures replied in full chorus, (Though the words, I do not think, were exactly like ours), "And under the exquisite veil love spreads o'er us, Spring up, as by magic, God's own precious flowers"

"VEILED ANGELS."

Angels' visits are neither so few nor so far between as most people pretend to consider them. They knock at our door, and we do not open unto them; they pass us in the daily intercourse of life, but our eyes, turned ever earthward, miss the comfort and inspiration of their glance. I very seldom go out that I do not meet them—calm-browed women whose "eyes are homes of silent prayer;" faces on which the dove broods visibly, natures like those "lands towards sunrise," warm with love and fragrant with the incense of good deeds; lips on which the creed of the beloved disciple seems always trembling "God is love;" hands always ready to help the impotent into some Bethesda; feet beautiful on every mountain of difficulty, swift to bring good tidings. The rich and the happy pass them by, but those who have watched out the night with sorrow, and those who beg with hungry eyes and dumb quivering lips, know them. They look for them in the crowd, and if they can but touch the hem of their garments they know they will be helped.

A few days ago I saw an angel's visit on a side street off the upper part of Broadway. A young girl who was walking before me stopped suddenly at the sight of three children sitting on the curbstone, the eldest of whom was crying violently. "What is the matter?" asked the young girl in gentle and sympathizing tones. "I've gotten the toothache, miss, an' I'm in sair pain w' it." "Poor little one!" Thoughtless of her pretty spring suit and dainty kid-gloves she helped the child to her feet. "Come with me now, and I will get you something to ease it." I followed slowly until I saw them go into a druggist's, and when they came out again the child was no longer weeping.

"Now what else do you want, dear?" "Me an' the barns are awfu' hungry, miss, there was nae meal i' the house to mak' parritch the morn; and mither has gane out to gather the clathes she washes."

Quickly the little purse was opened, and its contents examined. "I have fifty cents I can spare; will that buy meal enough for 'parritch'?"

"Mair than enou', miss. Doubtless the Lord Jesus sent you."

"Thank you, child," she said reverently, and smiling a "Good-by," walked thoughtfully on.

I followed her, pondering much as I went that wonderful casting out of fear and suspicion which true charity drives away like an evil spirit. No questions as to whether "they were worthy." The suffering and the want were titles clear on her sympathy and her purse. Their appeal was to the divine nature within, and those cruel words, imposition and imposture, were not heard. It is often well to give and ask no questions, as the gentle "Ella" says: "Act a charity sometimes. When a poor creature (outwardly and visibly so) comes before thee, rake not into the bowels of unwelcome truth to save a halfpenny."

We know that an innumerable company of angels in heaven are ministering spirits to our wants and sorrows; but we cannot come in direct contact with them—human nature would shiver and faint under such an ordeal, so God, pitying our weakness, uses the pure and tender in heart to fulfil his will. These men and women—these hands of God, are busy in all the streets of this great city. I have seen them buying the last few newspapers from some cold and hungry child, and sending him home with a glad heart; or taking a little child into the store and filling its hands with the cake it was wistfully looking at through the separating glass; and the misery which faces them from sightless eyes, recalls too vividly the Judean hills and the compassionate Saviour, to be passed carelessly by. They come upon you in such strange places, and in such strange guise, that their visits make life full of pleasant surprises.

Last Saturday night I met one in my butcher's shop, while I was waiting for my small steak. He was black with the toil and dust of machinery, he was old and homely and meanly dressed; and he would have been hid from sight if a little child had not come in and lifted the veil. "How's father to-day, Polly?"

"He's worse to-day, and mother's down too," and the weary little thing began crying softly to herself. Then the man stooped and said something in a low voice, to which she only shook her head and cried more bitterly. So he took the basket from her, saying, "Run away home, Polly, or that baby, he'll be in mischief. I'll bring the basket." She offered him a twenty-five cents, but he hurried her away and would not touch it. Then he chose some good beef, a piece of bacon, and plenty of vegetables, and having paid for them, walked off towards a large-tenement house in sight. I gave him silent reverence as he passed me, for I know that he was one God's messengers, unconsciously, but oh! how blessedly taking a share in the ministry of angels.

So all in our intercourse with strangers let us be generous and kind. We know not what message they may bring us, nay, I think it will only be in the light of eternity we shall fully understand why and wherefore certain acquaintances were ever made. In that day of revealing, when the veil of flesh falls from ourselves and others, we shall know them; and the one who bore a rod, and the one who brought us the cup of consolation, will alike prove to have been "Veiled Angels."

IF.

IF THOU HADST BEEN HERE, MY BROTHER HAD NOT DIED. JOHN II: 21.

Oh, that if—how it repeats itself in all our hours of affliction. "If," says the mother, "I had not sent my boy to school, he would not have caught that fever and died." "If," says the husband, "my wife had not gone out that cold and blustering night, she would not have caught the cold that ended in her death." "If," says the invalid, "I had cared for my health in my youth, I would have been hale and hearty in my manhood."

The western city, which for a time constituted my home, was once visited with a fearful tornado. Nothing in its path was able to withstand its ravages. Houses were lifted up in its strong arms, carried for rods, and set down again in a new location. Metal roofing was stripped off, and carried for miles, as paper blown in an ordinary gust. A strongly built engine-house, brick, and firmly ironed, was crushed as one would crush an empty eggshell in his hand. I went out the following morning to look at this scene of fearful devastation. A fellow-townsmen met me there. "Some people," said he, with a sneer, "say God did this."

"And who," said I, "do you think did it?" "Nobody," said he; "it just happened so."

Oh, the torture of this "if." Oh, the bitter, bitter thoughts bred of this false philosophy, which rack the mind that believes in the hour of grief that sorrow is an accident which wise precautions might have prevented. High above our earthly thoughts and purposes sits God supreme. The winds run their courses at his command. Disease and death are but his servants, and do his bidding. Chance is not his master. There are no accidents. There is no "if." God sitteth on the throne, and ruleth all things well. Away, then, O sorrow-tossed one, with thine ifs. When thine hour of Gethsemane has come, and the cup of anguish is pressed to thy lips, though Judas, Caiaphas, and Pilate combine to mix the draught, it is, nevertheless, "the cup which thy Father giveth thee." Let not thy cry, then, be, "If it had happened otherwise, my Lazarus would not have died," the cup which my Father giveth me shall I not drink of it?"

NEVER TOO OLD TO LEARN.—As a rule, children who enter the Sabbath schools in Wales continue in them as members till old age. A Welsh minister writes: "We have in our Sabbath schools some who have seen fourscore years; and we have many who cannot see to read, yet attend to hear the Word of God read, and explained." This is as it should be everywhere. There ought to be no such thing heard of as a scholar leaving the Sabbath school because he may think himself too old to be instructed in Christian truth, or to instruct others in it. What an idea! Children in our Sabbath schools, consider yourselves life-members of them; never think of outgrowing them.

The editor of a religious paper, which had one month's precarious existence in Chicago, says that it is a good city for a religious paper, provided Satan has three pages of it and the other page is mixed.