

Sunday Reading.

Only Asleep.

Oh, be not ashamed of tears: The Lord did not blush to weep, But do not give way to distressing fears: Your darling's only asleep. Yes, only asleep through the hours of night: He'll greet you again in the morning light.

The Master's Touch.

In the still air the music lies unheard; In the rough marble beauty hides unseen; To make the music and the beauty needs The Master's touch, the sculptor's chisel, keen.

The following article from a late number of The Evangelical Churchman contains some thoughts of much beauty and value, although we do not endorse every word and form of expression:

Every Thing a memorial of Christ.

All objects around us are to be regarded by us as being symbols and memorials of our Lord. Bread and wine are very common things; the act of eating and drinking is not a very elevated one; a supper-table is by no means a very holy place.

There is one mind in the universe, one Spirit working through all things; and all creatures, on their various platforms and in their different degrees, receive the impression of the same will, and are set to testify of the same Lord.

the wise has embodied it. The natural impulse of us all is to find shadows and symbols of spiritual life in natural existence. He who spake as never man spake, spake in parables, and, knowing all things, took bread and said, "This is my body."

Patching the Old Garment.

BY REV. THEODORE L. CUTLER.

Some of our Lord's parables are to be weighed rather than measured. Brief as to space, they are most profound and practical in their significance.

No sensible man would patch an old, threadbare, outworn garment with a piece of undressed and unfulled cloth, and for two good reasons. The ill-matched patch would make an ugly appearance.

This parable has a very practical bearing upon the vital point of character, and the vital process of conversion. Hardly any simile describes character better than that of a fabric, made up of innumerable threads, and put together by numberless stitches.

We ministers make a sad mistake when we direct our main efforts against particular sins, instead of striking at the source of all sins, a godless, unrenewed heart. Make the tree good, and the fruit will be good.

Christ's method of dealing with human character is the only thorough and successful method. He says, "Behold I make all things new."

has been discarded, and the complete righteousness has been put on so that the shame of his nakedness might be hid. How sharply Jesus clove to the core of the matter with Nicodemus!

It is quite in line with this idea of spiritual clothing that the Apostle exhorts every one to "put on the Lord Jesus Christ." That signifies the entire enveloping and enfolding of ourselves in the holy texture of his perfect righteousness and all-sufficient grace.

With such a beauty of holiness offered to us, why should so many professors of religion be content to be only a bit of shreds and patches? Certainly no unconverted worldly is ever so charmed by them as to come and say to them—"Where did you find that? I want something just like it."

New York Evangelist.

If there is within your house, within your sphere, one sleeping soul which you could awake, and yet allow to sleep on, you will be held responsible. I do not say for the entire loss of that soul, but at least for not awaking him.

He that is good will infallibly become better, and he that is bad will as certainly become worse; for vice, virtue, and time are three things that never stand still.—Colton.

The Christian Messenger.

Bible Lessons for 1883.

FIRST QUARTER.

Lesson III.—JANUARY 21, 1883.

THE BELIEVING PEOPLE.

Acts ii. 37-47.

COMMIT TO MEMORY: Verses 38-41.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"Then they that gladly received his word were baptized."—Acts ii. 41.

DAILY HOME READINGS.

- The Lesson, Acts ii. 37-47. T. Man's Need of the Spirit, 1 Cor. ch. ii. W. Regeneration by the Spirit, John iii. 1-13. T. Indwelling of the Spirit, Rom. viii. 1-17. F. Apostolic Baptism, Rom. ch. vi. S. Baptism and the Risen Lord, 1 Pet. iii. 12-22. Church Life, Eph. iv. 1-16.

THE HOLY SPIRIT'S WORK IN SAVING MEN.

LESSON OUTLINE.—I. Conviction, Vss. 37-40. II. Conversion, V. 41. III. Union in One Body, Vss. 42-47.

QUESTIONS.—What sin had Peter charged on his hearers? (Vs. 23). What had the Jews reason to expect? (Luke ix. 42-44; 2 Thess. ii. 8, 9).

Vs. 37-40.—What guilt did Peter's hearers feel? What did these inquirers ask? What was Peter's answer? What is it to repent? What do we learn of baptism? What blessings were promised, if the inquirers would obey?

Vs. 41.—What is the natural state of men? If unchanged, what will become of them? What makes the gospel effectual to salvation? What class of persons were baptized on the Day of Pentecost? What is baptism? Who ought to be baptized? What does baptism express? Can baptism do any good without repentance and faith?

Vs. 42-47.—In what four things were the converts faithful? How did the disciples show brotherly love? What is related of their worship and manner of life? What power united them all in one body? What is the purpose of the communion? Who are qualified to partake?

Scripture Searchings.—Find Paul's account of the lost condition of men. What does Jesus teach in the "Great Commission" about the way of salvation?

NOTES.—I. The Inquiry Meeting, (Vs. 37).

When they heard this. That is, the discourse of Peter, in which he set forth so powerfully the Lordship and Messiahship of Christ, and charged upon them his death, (vs. 23). Pricked in their heart. It is not said that they were awed by Peter's eloquence; nor excited in their imaginations; nor gratified in their taste; the result was infinitely grander: They were pierced in their hearts.

II. Gospel Directions, (Vss. 38-40).

Vs. 38.—Peter opens, at once, the gospel. That is, the good news of salvation to the lost. Repent, means a change of mind, and of our whole view of Christ, so as to receive him as the Messiah and Saviour.

Vs. 39, 40.—For the promise. Not of baptism, as one would be led to suppose from the use of this text in some Confessions of Faith, but of the Holy Spirit. See vs. 17, 18. Unto you and to your children. The word translated children is correctly rendered in the sense of descendants; to all that are afar off, i. e., to the Gentile nations, they stand in the same category as the children. The apostle, while widening out the promise of the Holy Spirit as

broad as the world, yet limits it to such as are called out of it by the Lord our God. The teaching is that the Holy Spirit is for no nation or people, exclusively, but for all who will receive the gospel. With many other words. He expounded to them fully the way of salvation, and urged them to save themselves, or be saved, from this untoward (crooked) generation.

III. Conversion and Baptism, (Vs. 41). Gladly received the word. The gladly is omitted in New Version. Yet those that receive the good news are glad; and these were no exceptions. They accepted the words of Peter as true. Both head and heart received them. Were baptized. At once, faith first, baptism immediately succeeding. Three thousand souls. It is not said that the three thousand were baptized that same day, though it is most likely they were. There is no difficulty in the matter of the baptism of so many, either in time, or sufficiency of water. These converts were received into the church, as is the fair inference, (although the language is, were added, and may mean simply to the company of believers,) upon their profession of repentance, and their baptism, without further instruction,—the church itself being the fold in which the lambs of Christ's flock are to be fed, and to grow.

IV. Christian Walk, (Vss. 42-47).

Vss. 42, 43.—They continued steadfast and firm; for this was the work of the Holy Spirit. In the apostles' doctrine, or teaching they were not neglected after coming into the church, but were carefully taught. Fellowship. A community in sympathy and brotherly love, and also in worldly goods. In the breaking of bread. The Lord's Supper, with the early church, came after faith and baptism. And in prayers. Not simply private prayer, but social religious gatherings. And fear. Awe and reverence. Their service was no gay, holiday matter; but conducted with seriousness and decorum.

Vss. 44, 45.—All that believed were together. Bound by the closest of ties. Not in one room, as was impossible; but in one community of brotherhood. Had all things common. Each placed his property in a common fund, for the benefit of all. And sold their possessions, etc. A voluntary act, evincing a great love for the Master, and for one another. And parted them to all. That is, to such of the brotherhood as had need. This communism of the early church was not commanded, grew partly out of local circumstances, was only temporary, and was afterwards abandoned. And while the spirit of it, the free disbursement of our goods to brethren in need, is in accordance with the spirit of the gospel, their action is not related as having binding force upon us.

Vss. 46, 47.—In the temple. Not at once did they cut loose from all Jewish forms of worship. Breaking bread. Evidently referring to the Lord's Supper. Gladness and singleness of heart. A beautiful picture of a daily life in Christ. It was a period of spiritual ecstasy. Having favor with all the people. Even as Christ had before them. But not with the Jewish ecclesiastics, who soon began to persecute them, as they had their Master. The Lord added to them daily. Such spiritual life as this Jerusalem Church had, will always produce like results.

SUGGESTED LESSONS.

It is not enough to pierce the intellects of our hearers; our great aim must be to pierce their hearts.

A tongue of fire, like Peter's on the day of Pentecost, will find hearts in the congregation to be set aflame with conviction.

Great wisdom is needed in dealing with inquirers.

The way of salvation is very simple. The work of atonement is done, and our cry should be like that of Peter,—"Repent and be baptized, every one of you."

The apostles were careful in teaching their converts after, as before conversion. This accounts for their steadfast continuance in Christian "fellowship, in breaking of bread, and in prayers."

Love to Christ begets love to the brethren.

A vital faith is both joyous and fruitful; and a living church will have constant additions from the Lord, of such as are being saved.

Help for Parents, or for the Teacher of the Primary Class. TRUTHS TO BE TAUGHT: 1. Need of being cleansed from sin. 2. Repentance. 3. Baptism of the believer. 4. Christian fellowship. Peter charged them with crucifying Jesus, who was both Lord and Christ. When they realized this, they were very