

Youth's Department.

Bible Lessons.

Sunday, May 26th, 1861.

Read—MATTH. xii. 14-30: The opposition and malice of Christ's enemies. 2 KINGS xxiii. 1-20: Josiah's destruction of idolatry in Judah.

Recite—MATTHEW xii. 10-13.

Sunday, June 2nd, 1861.

Read—MATTH. xii. 31-50: Christ instructs and reproves the Pharisees. 2 KINGS xxiii. 21-27: God's final wrath against Judah.

Recite—MATTHEW xii. 14-21.

"Search the Scriptures."

Write down what you suppose to be the answers to the following questions.

41. Where is the sun-dial first mentioned?
42. Quote one passage which proves, unquestionably, that public records were anciently kept, where in every one's genealogy was registered.

Answers to questions given last week:—

39. That dedicated to the false god Baalberith, at Shechem, Judges ix. 4.
40. Eighty years.

The London Anniversaries.

BAPTIST MISSIONARY SOCIETY.

The annual meeting of this society was held at Exeter Hall on Thursday, the 25th ult. Sir MORTON Peto, Bart M. P., in the chair. After singing and prayer, the Chairman submitted the usual balance-sheet, showing a total income for the year of 30,468*l.*, and a balance in hand on the general account of about 3,299*l.* As the treasurer—continued Sir Morton—I feel bound to acknowledge from this platform the liberality of the churches. I do so because treasurers are too apt to complain on these occasions, and to give a sort of lecture with regard to the finances of the societies which they represent. But, dear friends, allow me to say to you that although I believe the result of last year in regard to our own society will bear a favourable contrast with some other societies, yet I cannot feel that it would be right to withhold from you the fact, that if all our churches were interested the result would be very different from what it is. Allow me to call your attention to the following statements, for which I am indebted to the kindness of a friend. We have in our denomination upwards of 2,500 places of worship, and more than 2000 distinct and independent Churches. Out of this number, seventy-five give one half of the income of the society. The other half is given by 925, but there are upwards of a thousand churches at the present time in our denomination who do nothing. Now I cannot but feel that that arises from a great many of these churches not really understanding the action and operations of the society; because I cannot believe of my brethren that if they did understand them—if they really understood that our missionaries went forth unfettered to declare the whole counsel of God—that we say to no missionaries going out there, "This is the creed from which you are to take your teaching," but that we give them simply the Word of God, leaving it to the guidance of the Spirit of God and their own views of Scripture, to teach what they believe to be the entire Word of God: I say, if all our churches understood this, I do not think there is one Baptist church—at least I never met with one—which might not be a cheerful contributor to the funds of the society. The committee have appointed an agent to visit these churches. With regard to London, we have sixty-five churches who do subscribe, but we have 180 who do not; and I have thought it right, as the treasurer of the society, to write a letter to the pastor of each of those churches, and they will also be waited upon by the agent of the society specially appointed.

My dear friends, I am sure it must be highly gratifying to you that your treasurer not only stands with a balance in hand, but with 1,500*l.* received on account of the expulsion from Fernando Po. and which your committee will, I feel most religiously apply to the furtherance of the Gospel in Africa. And now, my dear Christian friends, we will leave what one may term the secular part of the subject—and it is now my duty, as your treasurer, to leave the whole matter with you, simply and earnestly praying that you will tell to your brethren in membership with the Baptist churches of London and the country, that there is a great work to be done, and inflame them with the zeal which you, I trust, manifest in your own persons on behalf of the Master. We will proceed, therefore, to the immediate object of our meeting. We are a family of our Lord Jesus Christ—His brethren and sisters—and we are met here to-day to consider our obligations and duties with regard to His last will and testament. The last thing He commanded was, that the disciples should go forth and preach the Gospel in every part of the world, and He added that which you never yet could experience of any earthly friend, "Lo, I am with you always." Now my friends, we have the Lord Jesus Christ present with us to-day, and the spirit in which we would desire this meeting to be conducted, is, the consciousness of His presence and His blessing resting on each one of us.

After speeches from several ministers, the Rev. H. Wilkinson, late of Orissa was introduced to the meeting as the representative of the General Baptist Missionary Society. After read-

ing the resolution committed to his care, he said:

It is a common thing for missionaries, when in their field of labour, to have long conversations with the natives among whom they sojourn, and especially with native Christians, and those conversations frequently refer to Christians at home, and not unfrequently to missionary meetings. Many a time, at the request of native Christians in India, have I attempted to describe what sort of meetings those are which are held in England to promote the missionary enterprise, and I have told them how people's hearts were kindled in love towards the benighted heathen at these meetings. At such times, those native Christians have said, "Oh, how we should like to go to a missionary meeting!" One of our native ministers said he would make the journey to England to attend a missionary meeting if I would take him; but he added, "Oh, Sahib, it is so cold." And he wanted to know how cold it was. I endeavoured to describe it to him by action, as no words could be used to convey a correct idea to his mind. I brought in an old suite of English clothes, and I put them on to him, one coat, and then an overcoat, and a comforter round his neck, which made him feel exceedingly uncomfortable, and I was about to put a travelling cloak over all, when he exclaimed, "Ah, Sahib, Sahib, I will never go to England, it would kill me to carry the clothes necessary to keep me warm." He would like to have made a speech, he said, if he ever could have attended such a meeting. I told him of the presence of a chairman at these meetings, and of the order of proceedings, and I asked him what sort of a speech he would make—what he would say? After reflection, he said, "First I should make salaam. Then I should tell them that it was much better to make salaam than to shake hands, because I could make salaam to all at once, and it would take a long time to shake hands with every one of them. Then I should ask what meaning is there in shaking hands? and say there is a meaning in salaam, for the Bible says Melchisedec was king of Salem." And what else, I asked, "would you say?" "Then I should say, You all know what a fire-fly is?" (he presumed that this Indian insect was well known in England)—"Well, you see the fire-fly in a dark night, and it is a beautiful bright object, as it flies here and there, with its 'Jula, jula,' but if you get a fire-fly and look at it in the day-time, it is only a black beetle. Then I should say, Now in my own country, where all is dark, I can show a little light and say 'Jula, jula,' but when I come to your country where there is the day-light of the Gospel I can only appear to you as a black beetle." I desire to present this as my apology for being here, for having been twenty years away from England labouring among the darkness of heathenism, and preaching and praying and dreaming in a foreign language, I am not the man exactly to speak to you from this platform. There are many reasons why we should feel interested in the missionary work. One is because we derive much benefit from it ourselves. Before I left England twenty years ago, a gentleman in my native town said to me, "Well, you are going to India as a missionary; I shall pray for you and contribute towards your support. I have for a long time been interested in missions to India, and I will tell you something for your encouragement. I had a wayward, unfortunate boy who enlisted for a soldier and almost broke my heart. He went out to India and soon fell a victim to the climate. When he was sick he was met by a Baptist missionary, who directed him to his Father's God and Saviour, and before he died he charged the missionary to write a letter to me, and say that he had become a penitent, and hoped that he died a saved believer in the Lord Jesus Christ. When the letter came to me, I said, 'Here are all the prayers and all the money I have ever contributed to the missionary cause come back to me a thousandfold!' I rejoice to be able to say that there are many Europeans in India who have found the gospel there. I might show you, did time permit, and were this the occasion, that in a commercial point of view, England does well to send the Gospel to India, for just in proportion as you propagate your civilisation and Christianity among the people of that country you will develop the resources of India and augment the commerce of England. But, leaving this by no means unimportant part of the subject, let me say that one of the first things that strikes a missionary in India is the mass of the people who are idolaters. It is easy to talk about millions, but we can really form no idea of what is meant by even one million. I have stood upon an elevated spot near the temple of Juggernaut on the occasion of the great festival of that idol, and have been perfectly overawed by the dense mass of immortal beings as far as the eye could travel; and when they shouted the praises of the deity I have felt the very earth tremble beneath my feet, and have vividly realised the emotions of the apostle Paul when he stood upon Mars' Hill and saw the whole city of Athens given to idolatry, for my spirit has indeed been stirred within me. There is another view of idolatry, I mean its antiquity, especially as it exists in India. Nothing gives you a deeper impression of that than their old temples. In England you may go into a country village, and perhaps look with interest upon various objects of antiquity to be found there, but the most antique of all will be the village church, green with moss and ivy-crowned, and the stone steps worn with the feet of the successive generations of worshippers. You begin to think how many centuries the church has stood and how many generations have passed away into eternity since the church was built; and the thought comes pleasantly to the mind. All these people went into that temple and paid their homage to the God who made them. But you experience very different emotions when you go among the old temples of India. Some of them are so old that they must have

been standing when the Redeemer Himself walked upon this earth. When standing near them I have feared to speak, lest the air, convulsed by the sound of my voice, should bring down the tottering mass upon my head; and I have looked down and seen that the solid rock on which they were built was worn with the naked feet of the worshippers; and the thought has come over me, All those masses of people, who during those long ages have gone into these temples, have presented homage which belonged justly to heaven's Eternal King to an ugly and abominable image! Be assured, friends, that heathenism is not the harmless thing that some people would have you believe; but that it is a powerful influence dragging men down to perdition. It was an axiom of the philosophers that "no nation can rise higher than their gods;" and the Hindoos say, "As are the gods, so are the people." The Bible says with respect to idols—"They that make them are like unto them, and so is every one that trusteth in them." We must all admit that man has the religious faculty—that he wants a religion; but he wants to worship and sin at the same time. Old divines have said, "A man cannot pray and sin too: he must either leave off sinning or giving up praying." But the Hindoo wants a god that he can pray to and yet sin; and so he has made a god and surrounded him with all the impurities of his own imagination. The Sepoy could go and worship his god, and then murder your little boys and girls.

The religious faculties of men are something like a locomotive engine with the steam up and the valve open, and it will go whether it rests upon rails or not, and may rush to destruction. Now what the Missionary Society has to do is to lay down the rails for these locomotive-engines to go upon; and once upon the rails they will proceed smoothly and with safety to their heavenly home. So you may say that your Missionary Society is a railway company—not the Eastern Counties, but the Eastern Counties, and designed to extend throughout the length and breadth of the world. There are many difficulties with which the Missionary has to contend in India. The Hindoos are very suspicious—they think that the missionary is coming to cheat them. They cannot believe in the existence of an unselfish principle, and so they watch the missionary to see what he is doing, and it is only after the lapse of some time that he gains their confidence. They are disposed to be inquisitive, and as they began to know me they would come and ask questions. I took some of them to see a steam engine, to which they gave the name of "smoke machine," and they looked at it with astonishment, exclaiming, "Wonderful!" One of the Christian natives remarked that if a temple were built over it thousands of the people of India would worship it, and declare that it was a bigger god than Juggernaut. No matter how you may preach you will not gain their confidence if you do not—as our dear brother has just said—prove by your conduct that you sympathise with them. Then the missionary will begin to get at their hearts. I am happy to tell you that the missionary work is now in the reproductive stage. Native ministers have arisen from the ranks of our converts, and I should like you to see some of them. They are sometimes very clever at illustration. One of them was saying on one occasion, "The time will come when Christ will have the whole of India." A lordly Brahmin said to him, "Do you mean to say that this country will ever become a Christian country?" "Yes," was the reply, "the Word of God declares that all nations shall become Christian, and I believe it." The Brahmin pointed to a huge jungle, saying, "Go and chop that all down with your axe," and then I will believe that what you say is possible." The native Christian replied, "With every stick I cut down I shall make a handle for another axe to cut down more." So the missionaries are clearing the dense jungle of heathenism, and they seek to make their converts agents in the work. When a brother discovers to us that, as the Americans say, he has some "snaps" in him, we encourage him to preach. One of these brethren was about to preach his trial sermon, and he read and prayed well; but having given out his text he seemed as if he would utterly break down. He looked at one side and then at the other, and sighed heavily, and was in a most unhappy state of mind, when suddenly there was a twinkle in his eye which showed that he had thought of something, and he said:—"You have all seen a little child trying to walk. It takes a step and it falls; it gets up, but falls again; but look at that child in three or four years' time, and how firmly it walks." So in preaching I am a little child. It is very likely I shall fall down. If I do I will try to get up again; but look at me in three or four years' time, and by God's grace and blessing, I shall not fall down in preaching then." It not unfrequently happens that Europeans in India doubt the value of our mission, just because they know nothing about it. I will give you an illustration. I was in the tent of a British officer, who said to me, "I believe your coming to India is a regular forlorn hope." "I should believe the same," was my reply, "only God has promised to accompany all I do in His name." "But," he added, "the Hindoos won't make Christians, they are so cunning, they are downright liars; I would not believe a Hindoo was a Christian if I saw him." I told him I had some good native converts that I should like him to see. "Well," he replied, "I should like to see them, and I would show them up to you." Just then our missionary Gonga, who had been a Brahmin, was coming up the walk to the tent, and I said to the officer, "Here is one of our native preachers coming, perhaps you would like to show him up." "Well," he said, "I should like to ask him a few questions." I said to Gonga, in the native tongue, "This gentleman don't believe in your Christianity." "Well, I can't help that," said

Gonga—the lordliness of his Brahminical character breaking out. "He wants to ask you a few questions." "What is it he wants to ask me questions for? Does he want to know the reason of the hope there is in me, or to find fault?" Softening, he added, "Let the gentleman ask me any questions, and I am prepared to answer them." The first question the officer put was, "How did you get your living before you were a Christian?" Gonga did not quite understand this, and he said, "Sir, I was an officiating Brahmin." "But how did you get your living, tell me that?" Now, just suppose that somebody were to stop the carriage of a gentleman with lawn sleeves, as it was passing along the streets of London, and to say to him, "How do you get your living?" It might be a very awkward question for him to answer, but it would be known very well that he did have a good living. And the officer ought to have understood the case of the Brahmin in the same way. When he did understand that brother Gonga had had the temple revenues and the offerings of the people, and that he had given them up to become a Christian, he said, "Well, I did not expect that anyhow." He wanted to show that this man had become a Christian just to get a living. Old Gonga then related the history of his conversion. He was first impressed with the statements he had found in a religious tract, which led him to put Juggernaut to the test, whether he were a God or no. First he spent a whole day and night in praying to him, and then he spent the same length of time in cursing him. "Nothing came of it," said Gonga, "and I did not believe he was a God; but to make it more certain still, I went and poked him with a spear, and my arm was not withered." Then he told of the happy change which had come over his own feelings, and how, by faith in Christ, he had a good hope through grace. The tears stood in the officer's eyes, and he seized Gonga's black hand, saying, "God bless you, I am glad to have met with you." Then it was Gonga's turn. "You have claimed the right," said he to the officer, "to examine me, and now perhaps you will allow me to examine you a little! You come from a Christian country,—you call yourself a Christian, now I want to ask if you are really a Christian?" The officer got up and walked into an inner room. Gonga followed him saying in a gentle voice, "I did not mean to offend you, and I would only ask you, as a Christian, to pray to God that I may be found faithful until death." I am happy to tell you that officer dated his conversion to God from that time. The resolution speaks about prayer. Now, of all things that missionaries most desire is, the knowledge that the Christian church is praying for them. When I was in India, during the mutiny, there came a letter from the secretary of our society, which said, "Cheer up, brethren, the Church of God is on her knees praying for you." These words were like a flash of light in the darkness that surrounded us. On one occasion, when we were in great suspense as to our fate, the few Europeans at the mission station and the native converts met for special prayer, and they did pray with as much fervency as if they would bring down an Almighty arm to our rescue. I had just read the second psalm, "He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh, the Lord shall have them in derision," when I saw a Sepoy marching up the gravel walk, and my thought was, "He comes with a message of death." My wife, who sat near the door, stepped into the doorway to stop him. To our great relief, he put a letter into her hand, which she brought to me, and I translated it to the people. It told us that Delhi was entirely in the possession once more of the British power, and that we were safe. When I read the news to the native converts, they got up and sang—

"Praise God from whom all blessings flow."

They got through two lines only, and then said to each other, "Is it not wonderful? Just as we were praying, relief came." The Sepoys themselves had a meeting next morning and contributed for the benefit of those who had suffered during the mutiny. The people amongst whom I lived were much interested in the electric telegraph, which they call "the lightning mail" and they wished me to explain it to them. I did my best, but it was not easy to make them understand, because there is no word for electricity in the language. But they had seen a magnet, which they call a "kissing stone," and I tried to make that useful in the explanation I gave in a sermon that I preached to them about it, taking for my text, "The eyes of the Lord run to and fro in the earth." When the service was over, I found a good many of the congregation waiting about outside, and one of them said, Sahib, we don't understand it now, for you never told us the way it goes along the wire." I said, I had told them all I knew, and one man said, "Well, when it comes here, we must go and look, and listen, and then we shall know how it is." But I assured them that they might look and listen, and news might come, and they would know nothing about it; and one good native brother remarked, "It is almost as wonderful as that when we pray our prayers go right straight up to heaven." All were struck with the thought. It is a privilege to have a telegraph to communicate in an instant with our friends, but a more blessed privilege far to have the electric telegraph of prayer, which goes right up to the throne of the Eternal. You may be praying here, and the next moment India or China may feel the answering pulsation. Prayer moves the Hand that moves the world. May God help and direct you to pray for the missionaries, and then there will be no fear of your continued interest in the missionary work!

After a good speech from the Rev. E. Paxton Hood, the Dextology was sung, and Dr. Acworth pronounced the benediction.