

Month's Department.

BIBLE LESSONS.

Sunday, September 10th, 1865.

CONCERN: or Review of the past months' subjects and lessons.

Sunday, September 17th, 1865.

JOHN I. 1-18: The divinity, humanity and office of Christ. 2 SAMUEL XXI.: The hanging of Saul's sons. *Recite*—PSALM cii. 25-28.

A ruling Sin.

There are many sins which have this absorbing character; whose property it is ever to encroach more and more on the regions of the moral and spiritual life, not as yet possessed by them, never content until they have reared their trophies on the wreck and ruin of every nobler faculty and power. All sins, perhaps, have more or less of this character. Yet we may signalize two or three concerning which it is eminently true.

Vanity is such a sin. This may seem to us often little worse than a harmless foible; yet physicians will tell you that there is almost no sin which gives more inmates to the madhouse than does this; and how many through it shall have missed the crown of life, only the last day shall declare.

The *Love of Money* is another such sin, growing by what it feeds on; and ever claiming to exercise a wider, a fiercer, a more relentless tyranny and dominion in the soul where it rules as lord; ever resenting more and more any freedom of action, any generosity in dealing, any open-handedness in giving, any bowels of compassion shown on the part of him who meant indeed to allow this sin, but did not intend at the first that it should bear sway in his heart or life, as sole and absolute and tyrannous lord.

The *Lust of the Flesh*, indulged and allowed, proves oftentimes another such sin; it has a fearful tendency to become such; what a workshop of unholy, impure fancies, will the heart of man be, who has given himself over to the spirit of uncleanness. "Keep thy servant from presumptuous sins, lest they get the dominion over me."—Trench.

Effect of good reading.

A correspondent of the *New York Observer* says;

The pleasure of listening to a good reader was never better illustrated than by a little ten years old girl of our acquaintance a few Sabbaths ago. The circumstances of the household were such as to render it necessary for her to be sent alone to church. That day the theme of the discourse was the Heavenly City. It was distinctly and beautifully read, and when the child returned home she said, "Father, did you ever read the twenty-first chapter of Revelations in the Bible?" "Certainly," was the reply. "But did you ever read it aloud to us here at home?" "I think so," he answered. "Well, father, I don't think I ever did; for Mr. F., the minister, read it in church to-day, and it was just as if he had taken a pencil and paper, and pictured it right out before us."

Which was the richer?

I watched by the bedside of a sick man surrounded by every luxury, with kind friends to smooth his pillow and anticipate every wish. The most skillful physicians hung over him, for he had gold, and lands, and immense wealth. But he was not at peace with God. In the intervals of delirium, he would earnestly implore for life, for mercy, for space to repent.

I left him, and met "old Jacob," a negro of more than fourscore, crippled and in deep poverty. He had outlived every member of his family but one, and she was a sore trial. Even the rude abode he occupied scarce deserved the name of home. Yet, in the midst of all, he was a true Christian. He had but just arisen from a sick bed, where he had been prostrated with inflammatory rheumatism. "Said I, 'Well, Jacob, how are you?'" "Pretty well, thank God, massa, only a little pain in my joints; the Lord is very good to poor old Jacob."—*The British Workman*.

RECOMMENDATION.—Nicholas Biddle, the late President of the Bank of the United States, once dismissed a clerk, because the latter refused to write for him on the Sabbath.

The young man, dependent on his exertions, was thus thrown out of employment by what some would call an over-nice scruple of conscience. A few days after, Mr. Biddle was requested to nominate a Cashier for another Bank, when he recommended this very individual, and mentioned the above incident as a proof of his trustworthiness. "You can trust him," said he, "for he would not work for me on Sunday."

SCOFFING.—To a young infidel who scoffed at Christianity on account of the misconduct of some of its professors, Dr. Mason said, "Did you ever know an uproar made because an infidel went astray from the paths of morality?" The infidel admitted he had not. "then," said the doctor, "you admit Christianity is a holy religion, by expecting its professors to be holy; and thus, by your very scoffing, you pay it the highest compliment in your power?"

The Odor of the Ointment.

BY MRS. J. D. CHAPLIN.

The world is full of philanthropists, now as well as in the days when Jesus walked on the hills and sailed on the sea of Gallilee. Some of these have high and holy aims, reaching far into eternity, and, impelled by love to God, their work and their results are left with Him. Others are mercenary, doing so much labor for a given reward, and regard all as a failure unless they reap a great harvest the first year, and astonish the world with loud cries of "harvest home." They will not work for God, unless the result and the time of proving it be left for their wisdom to decide.

In the days of Mary, the proud Pharisees gave tithes of all they possessed, even of their mint and cummin; they observed to the letter the Jewish laws; even going farther than was required, in their display of charity,—they built sepulchres for the prophets whom their fathers had slain. But where was the love, which alone can sanctify any gift laid on God's altar? It was wanting; for even amid their holiest deeds, they were watching for the life of Him on whose head was poured the hallowed perfume.

The utilitarian philanthropists of our day also do much which avails little; like the boy's rockets, their good deeds shoot up, make a great light and whizzing, and then fall;—they lack the principle whose pure wings would carry them to the throne of God.

How has Jesus rebuked this spirit which attempts or values only great things, in his commendation of Mary and her perfumed offering. No wonder those around cried, "Wherefore this waste?" Was the service of the temple to be kept up by it? Would this mere odor, grateful to the sense, but vanishing in air, feed the hungry or clothe the naked? Nay; and therefore, in their wise estimate of cause and effect, it was lost. It did even the recipient no good beyond the pleasure it gave as the delicate tribute of a loving heart; and surely in their eyes it reflected back no blessing on her who broke the box.

This was the judgment of the carping world, and also of the lifeless disciple; but O, how different the decision of Him who saw in the depths of that heart, the motive which prompted to the offering. He needed not charity from her; He needs it not from us, for the universe is his. But He asks from all, what He received from Mary—that purity of motive and depth of love which can yield the sweetest or costliest things alike to Him.

The gold cast into the treasury that day is not mentioned, nor yet the garments given to the poor, nor the bread to the hungry; but the "odor of that ointment" has permeated the air through all the long centuries between Mary and us; and to-day we feel it rebuking the spirit of the haughty giver and encouraging those who have little else but love to lay upon the shrine.

A little act, which may appear without benefit to any, may work great results; may make for itself a channel which shall go on widening and filling, till the last drop of charity is emptied into the river of life. Let no one dare to despise the "cup of cold water," the widow's mite, or the odor of the ointment; for they are all beautiful in his eyes who needs neither us nor ours to carry on his plans; but who accepts what is in the heart, for service.

A simple word of kindness or act of love in a mother, may make such an impression on the mind of her child as shall work wonders when her head is lying on its last pillow. A simple flower sent to one sick or disheartened may rouse hope and energy which shall tell on the happiness of many. A kind word may keep from breaking, a heart very strong thereafter to toil and love.

A lowly woman in the early days of missions felt her heart burn with love to the souls of the heathen. In her retired New England home she read and prayed and loved. It was very little, nothing in her esteem. But her feet were fettered with home duties, so that she could not go abroad with the story of Calvary; her hands were full, and her heart weary of the toil and care which pressed upon her. Her husband was laboring for Christ with little reward and sometimes little thanks; and her lot, while her great heart aspired for a higher one, was to toil at home and only to look hopefully eastward for the rising of the sun on the benighted heathen. Who ever craved an offering to lay on God's altar without receiving it? He will now, as he did in Abraham's day, provide Himself a sacrifice. He gave this loving mother a son; and in the fullness of her heart she gave him back to God,—asking for him, not a seat at his right or his left hand, but only that he might tell the heathen of Him who came to seek and save the lost. It was like Mary's alabaster box; a costly gift for her, but which the people of that day thought a very useless one. Light was only beginning to dawn, even on Christian minds, in regard to the great work of missions; and while the mass were sceptical as to their results, there were not a few who looked upon the effort to convert the world as sacrilege; as trying to take God's work by force from his own hand and doing it for Him. Some conscientious but narrow souls even felt that it was dictating to God, as to whom He should or should not save; and trembled lest through their false zeal some might slip into heaven who were not of the elect!

As the boy grew up, noble and lovely, and the fact was known that he was "given to God," the old cry, "Wherefore this waste?" was set up. The prudent looked on his broad shoulders and strong arm, as so much capital for the father, who, amid their plenty had always been very poor. They asked, "What will you do in your old age without a son to

lean on?" And he replied, "I may never see old age." They hinted that it would be a waste of bone and muscle; that a "slender man" could teach and talk as well as he, &c. But his only answer was, "He was given to God by his mother, and if God accepts him, I shall not interfere. I may be poor in old age; but poverty will not be a new thing to me, and so will not greatly terrify me."

Did the meek, loving mother know the cost of that silent offering, made at midnight with the unconscious babe in her bosom? Did she believe that God would take her at her word and mark him as a chosen vessel? Yes, with the inspiration of love she saw it all. The odor of the gift rose to Heaven, and then came back upon her own spirit, bringing the peace known only to those who have given their dearest things to God. And in the long years that came and went, as toil embrowned her hand and care lined her brow, she look on that boy—even before his conversion—as not her own. So when the call came to him, she was not startled by it, she had not then to weep, and pray, and struggle till she found submission. She was all those years waiting for the call; and when it came, had only to present herself anew to the Master, rejoicing with Hannah of old, when leading Samuel to the temple,—

"That aught so pure and beautiful was hers To bring before her God."

That consecration, unknown to mortal, made without regard to the opinions of men, was as the odor of a precious ointment. Like Mary, she little dreamed how deeply it was to interest thousands, and to be remembered when she was gone; how it should be wafted on God's breezes who, from that whispered offering, have been gathered home. She little thought of the crowns and the palms of victory, of the songs, "Worthy is the Lamb," and the Hallelujahs, which were to echo over the heavenly plains, in reply to her simple words of love. And none of us know the "weight of glory" which may come to us or to others by one simple offering from the heart.

The strong man went forth like a mighty conqueror, having on the whole armor of God. He called nothing his own, not even his life. The perfume of that mother's sacrifice filled the air he breathed, and its holy influence was ever around him. His life was short, but it was well spent; his work hurried into a few years, but it was more than that of most men of four score and ten. He fell with his armor on, bright and shining from hard service. His weapons were taken up by those he had taught to use them; and they also, encompassed with the odor of the incense which hallowed his life, went from place to place carrying on his warfare against the powers of darkness. Hosts have since that day gone up to glory, carrying their trophies with them; and yet hundreds of the long succession still gird on the armor and wield the victorious sword, waiting for the final day when they too, and all they have won to Jesus, shall be crowned kings and priests unto God.

Then shall be seen the vast result of that mother's gift and prayers, called by the world "useless."

And if our deeds of love have such lasting results, shall those of an opposite character be lost the moment they are done? No, no. The cold or cruel word spoken to one whom Jesus loves, the harsh act or the mere neglect, all have their odor; they all live and move on, and we shall meet them another day.

God save us from withholding anything from Him; our dearest and our best, that which in our loving eye hath neither spot nor blemish, should be our first offering, let the world regard its value as it may. God keep us from speaking a word which may leave a scar on any heart, or threaten us with the reproof of Jesus, "Ye did it unto me." God make us his, and like his blessed Son.

MY LIFE WORK.—I stood by the bed of a dying man, one who had suffered long and intensely, but bravely and cheerfully, even as a cross-bearer of Christ. "What should I do if I were not ready now?" said he, after a paroxysm of pain and coughing. "Thanks be to God, my work is all done. Could I do my life-work now?" Think of this, and see if thy work is all done. Leave not thy life-work undone till death comes.

AN OBJECTION ANSWERED.—A sceptic visited the late Rev. Dr. William E. Channing, and told him that he could not reconcile the terrible denunciations in the twenty-third chapter of Matthew with the meekness and compassion of the Saviour. "Let us know," said the doctor, "what in particular troubles you;" and taking up the New Testament, he began to read the passage with the sweet solemnity of his voice. He had not proceeded far before his critic said, "Ah, if the Saviour denounced in a tone like that, I have nothing more to say."

HOW TO SUBDUCE SIN.—A Scotch warrior, at the hour of battle, thus appealed to his companions in arms: "Noo, lads, there's the enemy; if ye dinna shoot them, they'll shoot you!" Reader, you must be the death of sin, or sin will be the death of you. Sin is the great enemy of man. It hath slain its millions already, and is still insatiable. It is digging a grave for you; and, if not timely resisted, will secure your second and eternal death.

Peace is the flowing of the brook, but joy is the dashing of the cataract when the brook is filled, bursts its banks, and rushes down the rocks.

Agriculture, etc.

SMOKE FOR WOUNDS.

A correspondent of the *Country Gentleman* mentions the case of a horse, which was just ready to die of an old festered wound. Fortunately, he adds, at this stage of the case, an old Pennsylvania teamster came to our relief, and recommended smoking with old shoes. A smoke was made of old shoes, soles and all, cut to pieces in a hog-trough, and placed under the swollen parts. In a few hours the swelling wholly subsided, and the wound commenced discharging matter. The horse was saved.

Some years after this, I heard two persons talking about a horse which had been gored in the abdomen. In this case everything had been tried in vain. The poor creature must die. At my suggestion he was smoked, and when I next heard from him the old horse was well. So much for old wounds.

In the same year, I cut my foot with an axe. The lady of the house, seizing the foot while it was yet bleeding freely, held it over a pan containing smoking tag-larks. In a few minutes the bleeding stopped, and the smoke was removed, and a bandage applied to protect it from accidental blows. The wound never mattered, and consequently never pained me. I have seen this remedy tried in many similar cases, and always with the same results. Let the reader bear in mind that no liniment or salve, drawing or healing should be applied. You have merely to smoke the wound well, and nature will do the rest.

I suppose the smoke of burning wood would produce the same results, but it would not be so manageable. There is a principle in the smoke of wood, which, when applied to the flesh, coagulates the albumen, thus rendering it unsuceptible of putrefaction. The same principle stops bleeding by coagulating the blood. It promotes healing, and may be applied with decided benefit to almost all ulcers, wounds, and cutaneous diseases.

THE TOMATO AS FOOD.

A good medical authority ascribes to the tomato the following very important medical qualities:—

1. That the tomato is one of the most powerful aperients of the liver and other organs; where calomel is indicated, it is one of the most effective and the least harmful medical agents known to the profession.
2. That a chemical extract will be here obtained from it that will supersede the use of calomel in the cure of disease.
3. That he has successfully treated the diarrhoea with this article alone.
4. That when used as an article of diet, it is almost sovereign for dyspepsia and indigestion.
5. That it should be constantly used for daily food. Either cooked or raw, or in the form of catsup, it is the most healthy article now in use.

A HINT TO GARDENERS.

As our houses and gardens are always more or less infested with vermin, it is satisfactory to know that benzoin, an article sufficiently well known as a detergent, is no less efficacious as an agent in insecticide. Two drops are sufficient to asphyxiate the most redoubtable pest, be it beetle, cockchafer, spider, slug, caterpillar, or other creeping thing. Even rats and mice decamp from any place sprinkled with a few drops of benzoin. A singular fact connected with this application of benzoin is, that the bodies of the insects killed by it become so rigid that their wings, legs, &c., will break rather than bend, if touched. Next day, however, when the benzoin has evaporated, suppleness is restored.—*Boston Cultivator*.

WATERING NEWLY-SET TREES AND PLANTS.—Where the soil is rich, deep, and well tilled, and if the planting is done in moist or showery weather, there will be seldom any need of watering. But if necessary, proceed as follows:—Just before setting out the tree or bush, prepare the hole of a generous size, pour water into it and leave it to settle gradually away. Then set in the tree, spreading out the roots and covering them with the best soil at command. This done mulch the surface with leaves or straw, laying over the whole a few flat stones. A tree or plant of any sort so managed, will seldom need any after-treatment. But if the soil is poor and light, and the season is dry and hot, it may be necessary to help the tree along. Take off the mulch, and three or four inches of the soil, and pour in as much water from which the chill is removed, as is needed to soak the ground, then put back the earth and the mulch. Once or twice during an ordinary season will be as often as this treatment will probably be needed.

If trees are watered directly on the top of the ground and with no mulch, the soil bakes hard like bricks; it is worse than no watering.—*Colonial Farmer*.

DRESSING FOR STRAWBERRIES.—Supposing the land to be in good condition, and deeply dug, I know no dressing which will so delight the strawberry as a heavy coat of dark forest mould. They are the children of the wilderness, force them as we will; and their little fibrous roots never forget their longing for the dark unctuous odor of mouldering forest leaves.—*Colonial Farmer*.

A COMFORT TO ROSE GROWERS.—We cultivate the rose for ornament; and nature, as if to further our designs, places upon the leaves the neat, prim, little caterpillar of the vapor moth, which is a more delicate, and elegant object than the handsomest rose that ever grew.—*Pitch's Noxious Insects*.