

Youths' Department.

BIBLE LESSONS.

Sunday, August 5th, 1866.

JOHN xviii. 15-27: Peter's denial. 1 KINGS xvii 17-24. Elijah restoreth the widow's son.
Recite—ISAIAH liv. 17.

Sunday, August 12th, 1866.

JOHN xviii. 28-40: Christ's trial. 1 KINGS xviii. 1-16: Elijah meets Obadiah.
Recite—PHILIPPIANS ii. 5, 6, 7, 8.

The story of a Day-fly.

A TRANSLATION.

Aristotle relates that there are by the river of Hypanis (now called the Bong) insects whose life consists of only one day. One of these creatures terminating its existence at eight in the morning, dies in youth; one dying at five in the evening, dies in old age.

Let us suppose one of the most robust of these Hypanians to be, according to his race, as old as time itself, having begun to live at early dawn, and, through the extraordinary vigor of his constitution, been able to maintain active life during the immense lapse of time contained in ten or twelve hours. During such a long period, by experience and reflection upon all he has seen, he must have acquired a great degree of wisdom; he has seen his companions die at noon, happily delivered from the number of inconveniences to which old age is subject. He has to relate to his descendants an astonishing number of traditions beyond the memory of the race. The company, composed of beings having lived, perhaps, one hour, approach with respect this venerable patriarch, and listen with admiration to his instructive discourse. Every thing he relates appears a prodigy to a generation whose life is so short. The period of one day appears to them the entire duration of time, and the dawn is, according to their chronology, the great era of creation.

Let us suppose, then, that this venerable insect, this Nestor of the Hypanis, a little before his death, and about the hour of sunset, assembles around him all his descendants, friends, and acquaintances, to give them his last counsels before death. They assemble from all parts under the spacious shadow of a mushroom, and the dying sage addresses them in the following manner:—

"Friends and companions, I feel that the longest life must come to a close. The end of mine has arrived; and I do not repine at my fate, since my great age has become a burden to me, and for me there is nothing new under the sun. The revolutions and calamities which have desolated my country; the great number of accidents to which we are subject; the infirmities that afflict our race; the misfortunes which have occurred in my own family,—all that I have seen in the course of a long life, have only taught me too plainly the great truth that no happiness, placed in things over which we have no control, can be certain or durable. One whole generation has perished through a cold wind; a multitude of our thoughtless youth has been swept into the water by an unexpected gale. What terrible deluges has not a sudden rain caused us! Our strongest shelters are not proof against a shower of hail. A dark cloud causes the stoutest heart to tremble. I have lived in the earliest ages, and conversed with insects of larger size and stronger temperament, and I can say, besides, of greater wisdom, than any of the present generation.

"I pray you believe the last words I utter, when I assure you that the sun, which now just appears above the waters, and seems about to dip into them, I have seen stationed in the midst of the heavens, throwing his rays directly over our heads. The earth was much lighter in the distant ages, the air much warmer, and our ancestors were more sober and virtuous than we.

"Although my senses are grown feeble, my memory is not so. I can assure you that this bright sun is not stationary. I saw it rise above the top of yonder mountain; and my career began with his. For several ages he rose in the heavens with a prodigious heat, and a splendor of which you can have no conception, and which you would not have been able to endure, but now that he is on the decline, and his heat is sensibly diminishing, I foresee that all nature will come to an end in a very short time, and this world be enveloped in darkness in less than a hundred minutes.

"Alas, my friends! how did I formerly flatter myself with the hope of always inhabiting this earth! What magnificence did I see in the cells formed by my own skill! What confidence did I see in the firmness of my limbs, and the strength of my wings! But I have lived long enough, and none whom I leave behind me will enjoy the same satisfaction in this age of darkness and decline I now see approaching."

Having finished this discourse, the patriarch of the Hypanians, his last moment having come, is silent forever; and soon his predictions are accomplished, as the world is enveloped in the shades of night.—*Youth's Magazine.*

"How long will it do to wait?"

I copy the following story from an admirable work just published by the American Tract Society, entitled, *Records of S. V. S. Wilder*, hoping it may accomplish two ends—introduce to your readers a most excellent book, and lead

some hesitating, delaying soul to an immediate surrender to Christ.

Dr. Nettleton had come from the evening service in some country town to his home, for the night. The good lady of the house, rather an elderly person, after bustling about to provide her guest with refreshment, said, directly before her daughter, who was in the room, "Dr. Nettleton, I do wish you would talk to Caroline. She don't care nothing about going to meeting, nor about the salvation of her soul. I've talked and talked, and got our minister to talk, but it don't seem to do no good. I wish you would talk to her, Dr. Nettleton." Saying which, she soon went out of the room.

Dr. Nettleton continued quietly taking his repast, when he turned round to the young girl and said:

"Now just tell me, Miss Caroline, don't they bother you amazingly about this thing?"

She, taken by surprise at an address so unexpected, answered at once,

"Yes, sir, they do; they keep talking to me all the time till I am sick of it."

"So I thought," said Dr. N. "Let's see, how old are you?"

"Eighteen, sir."

"Good health?"

"Yes, sir."

"The fact is," said Dr. N., "religion is a good thing in itself; but the idea of all the time troubling a young creature like you with it, and you're in good health you say. Religion is a good thing. It will hardly do to die without it. I wonder how long it would do for you to wait?"

"That's just what I've been thinking myself," said Caroline.

"Well," said Dr. N., "suppose you say till you are fifty? No, that won't do; I attended the funeral the other day of a lady fifteen years younger than that. Thirty? How will that do?"

"I'm not sure it would do to wait quite so long," said Caroline.

"No, I do not think so either; something might happen. See now, twenty-five? or even twenty, if we could be sure you would live so long. A year from now; how would that do?"

"I don't know, sir."

"Neither do I. The fact is, my dear young lady, the more I think of it, and of how many young people, as well apparently as you are, do die suddenly, I am afraid to have you put it off a moment longer. Besides, the Bible says, *Now* is the accepted time. We must take this time. What shall we do? Had we not better kneel right down here and ask God for mercy through His Son Jesus Christ?"

The young lady, perfectly overcome by her feelings, kneeled on the spot. In a day or two, she by grace came out rejoicing in hope, finding she had far from lost all enjoyment in this life.

A "strange" Preacher.

His name was Strange. Many will think his conduct strange also. He was a zealous preacher, and a sweet singer. Nothing gave him so much pleasure as to go about the country preaching and singing. A gentleman, well-off in worldly goods, desiring to make him and his family comfortable in their declining years, generously presented him a title-deed for three hundred and twenty acres of land. Strange accepted the donation with thankfulness, and went on his way, preaching and singing as he went. But after a few months he returned and requested his generous friend to take the title-deed. Surprised at the request, the gentleman inquired:

"Is there any flaw in it?"

"Not the slightest."

"Is not the land good?"

"First rate."

"Isn't it healthy?"

"Perfectly."

"Why, then, do you wish me to take it back? It will be a comfortable home for you when you grow old, and something for your wife and children, if you should be taken away?"

"Why, I'll tell you. Ever since I've had it, I've lost my enjoyment for singing. I can't sing my favorite hymn with a good conscience any longer."

"What is that?"

"This:—

"No foot of land do I possess,
No cottage in this wilderness,
A poor, wayfaring man."

"I dwell awhile in tents below,
Or gladly wander to and fro,
Till I my Canaan gain."

"Yonder's my home and portion fair,
My treasure and my heart are there,
And my abiding home."

"There!" said Strange, "I'd rather sing that hymn than own America. I'll trust the Lord to take care of my wife and children."

He continued singing, and preaching, and the Lord, said the lecturer, did take care of him, and his children after him.—*Merry's Magazine.*

Learned professors have occasionally been outwitted by the sayings of the simple. Dr. Hill, an Edinburgh professor of the last century, met in the suburbs of the city an inoffensive creature who was generally regarded as an imbecile. Somewhat irritated by the intrusion on the privacy of his walk, the professor said to him: "How long, Tom, may one live without brains?" "I dinna ken," said Tom; "how long has ye lived yerse?"

Not Moses, but Jesus.

A correspondent of the *Examiner* relates the following beautiful and touching incident in the revival in Newark, New Jersey:

Among the young who have been converted, is a young girl of tender years, but of unusual intelligence, brightness and vivacity. She had been in the habit of attending a Presbyterian Sunday-school, although her parents were not attached to any particular denomination. Tidings of the deep religious interest reached her ears, and she came to see and hear. The Spirit of God moved upon her young heart while witnessing, for the first time, the ordinance of baptism. She was soon found at the feet of Jesus, weeping on account of sin; and as it is with the young generally, the joy of pardoned sin speedily followed her awakening. Having seen the administration of baptism, and carefully compared the scene with those mentioned in the New Testament, the path of duty seemed clear.

Her teacher and friends tried in vain to persuade her to accept sprinkling as baptism. But to all their arguments and appeals she would present some well chosen Scripture, and here she was immovable. At last they sought to perplex her mind by directing her attention to that part of God's word where the children of Israel are said to have been baptized in the cloud and in the sea. "There," they said, "does not this prove that they were sprinkled?" The little disciple could not be expected to explain how the children of Israel were *buried*—the sea being as a wall on each side, and the cloud over them—but with all the simplicity of a child she replied, "I may not be able to answer every question, I am but a little girl, but I don't want to follow Moses; I want to follow Jesus." And she did follow Jesus, for a few weeks after this, although but eleven years of age, she was "buried with Christ in baptism."

Seed long buried.

Books and tracts distributed may often seem thrown away, because unread, and earnest prayer and exhortation may yield no immediate fruit. But in due time the laborer shall reap, if he faints not. The *American Messenger* gives the following incident:

A young pastor commenced holding week-day meetings in the retired districts within the limits of his charge. He went to one secluded hamlet where very few were accustomed to attend public worship. His meetings there were attended by constantly increasing numbers. He preached the Gospel to them as simply, directly and earnestly as he could from time to time. The people appeared to give a serious attention to the word spoken, and he labored in hope.

After several of these meetings had been held, two Christian women, helpers of their pastor, devoted a day to calling upon families in that neighborhood. Among other cases of interest, they found in one family a woman nearly seventy years of age, who eagerly welcomed them. She told them that she had attended all the meetings which the minister had held there, and that since the meetings commenced she had begun to read the Bible a good deal; and besides, she added, "I have been reading a book which some one gave me who came round with books to sell or give away about twenty years ago. I never read it before, and I think it is a very good book; it reads just as the minister preaches; it says, 'Turn ye, for why will ye die?' and I want to turn and get religion."

So saying, she went to the shelf and took down a paper-bound copy of Baxter's "Call to the Unconverted," and requested them to look at it, and see if it was not an excellent book, pointing to the page which she had just been reading, and the following words of Gospel truth: "I do here, in the name of the Lord of life, proclaim to you all that hear me this day, to the worst of you, to the greatest, to the oldest sinner, that you may have mercy and salvation, if you will but turn. There is mercy in God, there is sufficiency in the satisfaction of Christ, the promise is free, and full, and universal; you may have life, if you will but turn."

From further conversation with her, there was evidence that she had already turned to God, and that that little book, dropped there so long ago, and so long left unopened, had led her to the Saviour.

Evangelical books and tracts may be laid away in neglect, to wait the time when the Spirit of God will make them the means of salvation to souls. They may be called into use by the awakening of the mind through preaching, or Christian entreaty, or sickness, or striking providences. "Thou knowest not which shall prosper, whether this or that."

The Spirit of God often works to convert sinners when we least suspect it. When we go out to lead souls to Christ, we commonly do not have to go far before we find that the Holy Spirit is carrying on His gracious work.

Ministers should look after the waste places, and seek to gather in the wanderers, who are scattered abroad as sheep without a shepherd. "Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in."

Bad Books.

Beware of bad books. They are traitors in the household. They are "the enemy" who snatches away the wheat, and sows tares in its stead. They are poisoned sweets, destroying the healthy appetite. They have the semblance of knowledge, but not the reality. They are blind guides that lead to the ditch.

Are we known by the company we keep?

Our books are our company. In reading the works of an author, our minds come in direct contact with his mind. For good or for evil, we are under his most direct influence. It has been well said, that we reflect the colour of the rock upon which we lean; and it is so. When Moses came down from the mount after talking with God, how his face shone.

Be jealous, then, of the books you read. Weigh them in the balances of the sanctuary, and if found wanting, discard them from a place in your libraries, homes, and hearts.

A clergyman of New York once visited a State prison, where a young man who had thrown away many advantages was confined for the crime of murder, and was there awaiting his trial. His shelves were lined with books. What kind of books were they? Bibles, tracts, histories, works of science, and true taste? No; corrupt novels, licentious poetry revealed the rock which had imparted its colour to the criminal's life and character. Let the young avoid bad books as they would bad men and bad women.

Influence of Female Society.

It is better for you to pass an evening now and then in a lady's drawing room even though the conversation be slow, and you know the girls' song by heart, than in a club, tavern, or pit of a theatre.

All amusements of youth to which virtuous women are not admitted, rely on it, are deleterious in their nature. All men who avoid female society have dull perceptions and are stupid, or have gross tastes, and revolt against what is pure. Your club swaggers, who are sucking the butts of billiard cues all night, call female society insipid. Poetry is insipid to a yokel; beauty has no charms for a blind man; music does not please a poor beast who does not know one tune from another, and as a true epicure is hardly ever tired of water sanchy and brown bread and butter, I protest that I can sit for a whole night talking to a well-regulated, kindly woman, about her girl coming out, or her boy at college, and like the evening's entertainment. One of the great benefits man derives from women's society is that he is bound to be respectful to them. The habit is of great good to your moral man, depend upon it. Our education makes of us the most eminently selfish men of the world. We fight for ourselves, we push for ourselves, we yawn for ourselves, we light our pipes and say we won't go out; we prefer ourselves and our ease; and the greatest good that comes to a man from women's society is that he has to think for somebody besides himself, somebody to whom he is bound to be constantly attentive and respectful.—*Thackeray.*

Remarkable Case.

A Kalamazoo, Michigan, correspondent of the *Detroit Advertiser*, relates the following:—

A Mrs. Howland, who has long been a resident of this country, and who has been hopelessly insane for nearly thirty years, was sent for by her husband in California. Accompanied by a daughter-in-law, she left here, and proceeded on her journey by steamer. When out about four days from New York, a most violent storm arose, which lasted three days, seriously threatening the destruction of the steamer, and all on board. When, however, the storm abated, what was the surprise and delight of the daughter to find that the old lady had suddenly recovered her mind, and was perfectly sane, though she was at a loss to know how she was in the place, and under the circumstances she found herself on awakening from such a long sleep of the intellectual faculties. On arriving at San Francisco, what was the astonishment of her husband to meet her whom he had not seen for nine years, and whom he deemed hopelessly a maniac, sound and well, and joyfully recognizing him. This was a year ago. Letters recently received by her friends here state that there has been no return of the disease whatever, and that she is well and entirely cured.

An ancient Baptistery.

A Presbyterian gentleman travelling in Italy, in a private letter recently received, speaks thus of his visit to Pisa. After describing the famous leaning tower, he says:

"Near by is the Baptistery. This is a wonderful building, about eight hundred years old, 100 feet diameter within the walls. The walls are eight and a half feet thick, and one hundred and seventy-nine feet high. The dome is superb. The font in the centre, is fourteen feet in diameter, and was used for baptisms when immersion was the mode."

Eight hundred years ago immersion was indeed the mode, and many of the great cities had edifices similar to this for the performance of the rite. Several of these remain to this day to shame the "more convenient" practice of putting a priest's wet finger on a baby's forehead.

A WONDERFUL CLOCK.—A letter writer from Strasburg states that crowds assemble daily in the cathedral in that city, at noon, as spectators, while an angel holding an hour glass, turns it over; the bell is struck by four figures successively, representing child, youth, manhood and old age; death strikes the full twelve; the Saviour appears standing alone; the twelve apostles come out and make their obeisance to him; he lifts his hands to each to impart a blessing; a cock at the same time flaps his wings three times, and crows.