

Youths' Department.

BIBLE LESSONS.

(From "Robinson's Harmony.")

Sunday, December 12th, 1869.

CONCERT.

Sunday, December 19th, 1869.

LUKE XVII. 20-37: Christ's coming will be sudden.

Recite.—S. C., 64, 65.

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON SCRIPTURE METAPHORS.

Commencing with the letter O.

1. OIL. Of joy, in Psa. xlv. 7; of abundance, in Job xxix. 6; Psa. xxiii. 5; and of the Holy Spirit, Matt. xxv. 4.
2. OINTMENT. Descriptive of Christ's name, in Cant. i. 3; and of brotherly unity, in Psa. cxxxiii. 2.
3. ORPHANS. Lam. v. 3; John xiv. 18 (margin); and OUTCASTS, in Jer. xxx. 17.
4. OLIVE-TREE. Used of God's covenant people, in Rom. xi. 17.
5. OVERFLOW (verb). With the invasion of a land, Isa. viii. 8; Dan. xi. 22; punishment of false hopes, Isa. xxviii. 17, 18.
6. ORNAMENT. 1 Peter iii. 4.
7. ODOUR. Phil. iv. 18.
8. OAK. In Isa. vi. 13; Amos ii. 9.

SCRIPTURE ENIGMA.

No. XXV.

Hard by a desert frontier
A nation's thousands stand,
And send their scouts to look on
The fair but hostile land,
Two gallant spirits only
Durst bid them "Fear not; go."
These finals and initials
These faithful warriors show.

1. A principedom of Assyria,
By Judah's prophet doomed.
2. Godsent, he found a brother,
And restless eyes illumed.
3. For her, the maid he loved not,
One toiled full wearily.
4. Heiress of Nature's treasures,
Death was her legacy.
5. A town in the land of Israel,
By blue Tiberias' wave,
Which the pleading left unheeded
Of Him who came to save.

CHARLEY'S ESCAPE FROM THE FIRE.

A family lived in a house which stood near to a wood. On a dark night they went to bed. The wind blew among the tall trees, and large black clouds passed over the full moon. While all were asleep, a fire broke out in one of the rooms of the house. The father soon heard the loud cry of "Fire!" At first he did not know what it meant; but the cry was louder and louder, and soon there were many people, who cried, "Your house is on fire; get up and come down!" Then they knocked at the door. The father now sprang from his bed, and great was the alarm when he found his own house in flames. He ran again to his room and awoke his wife. Then he took the babe and they got out by a back door. His eldest little boy, about ten years old, was in another part of the house, near to the room where the maid slept. The father cried, "O, what shall I do to save my poor boy?" He did not care about his goods; his dear son was all he thought about. He made his way to that part of the house, and met the maid flying from the flames. "Where is Charley?" cried the father. "He is in his room," said the girl. In her alarm she came away, and forgot to bring the child with her.

And now the stairs were in flames. The wind blew on the fire, and made it burn wildly. The doors and the roof were all red and burning. In a short time poor Charley was seen at one of the windows. "O, father, dear father," he cried, "how shall I get out?"

He could be seen by the fire in the room, but the thick black smoke kept him from seeing the people below; but he heard their voices, and he cried, "O, save me!"

"Here I am, my son," said the father, and he held out his arms for Charley to jump into them. "Here I am; don't fear. Drop down, and I'll be sure to catch you."

Charley crept out of the window, but hung fast by it. He knew it was very high from the ground and he was afraid to let go.

"Drop down, my dear boy," cried the father. "O, I can't see you, my dear, dear father?" "But I am here. You can trust me; I will save you."

"I am afraid, father, I shall fall."
"Let go, and don't fear," cried the people;
"Your father will be sure to catch you!"

And now Charley felt the flame. He was certain that if he hung there he should be burned. He knew that his father was strong, and that he loved him, and that he was waiting to save him. Then he drew in his breath, let go his hold, and in a moment he was in his father's arms. Charley was saved from the fire, and there was great joy among the people who saw the sight. As you read this true story, do you not see

how great was the danger of little Charley? There was only one way to be saved from the fire. He could not see his father, but he heard his voice. He knew that his father loved him and wished to save him, so he fell into his arms and was saved.

Do you not know that every child is in danger of being lost forever? It is the loss of both soul and body. And why? Sin has brought us into danger. How glad we should be that there is a way known to us in the Bible in which we can be saved! Jesus saw our sad state, and he came into the world to seek and to save that which was lost. And to save us he died on the cross. But now he is in heaven. Though we can not see him, he sees us. And in his holy Word he says that he is able and willing to save all who go to him by faith. It is as if his arms were wide open as the arms of the father were when Charley fell into them. He tells us to come to him, and trust him with all our heart, and be happy.

BLIND JOHN NETHERWAY.

CHAPTER IX.

The beginning of Mr Singleton's banishment from his home he had passed abroad, going farther and farther away from the scene of his misery, that he might not be reminded of it by the faintest possible echo of report. As time wore on he grew more restless. His son, to whom he had confided his sorrows, had pledged himself to give his life to their removal. He was consoled in measure, he began to hope, and in the exercise of the most rigid self-denial to derive some comfort from existence. He gradually returned, step by step as it were, to his native land, and at length settled in a dreary spot in the north of Cumberland. There he might hide—there he might labour—there he might pray for a blessing on his efforts to repair the wrongs he had done.

The village was a long, straggling, narrow street, often intercepted by patches of common; it seemed to emerge from the wilderness and re-enter the wilderness, being closed in at the end by broken land, half rock, half tangle, ascending till it rose into the mountainous line that skirts the northern lakes. It was a silent place in which melancholy might live unchecked, the houses, mere cottages and sometimes little beyond huts, were all solitary. Their separation from the rest of the world had not made the inhabitants more social among themselves. Nearly all were natives as completely so as several generations, possessors of the same spot of land and dwelling place, could make them. There was a strong feeling of kindred among them; any one would have been missed from his homestead, but he would have been just as the little whitewashed church would have been missed, or the falls that roared hoarsely over the rocks, inasmuch as that 'use' had made these to them 'second nature.'

Mr Singleton and his wife had found it no easy matter to get a dwelling among them; money, though much prized, was less cared for than independence, and the intrusion of strangers as lodgers was not to be compensated by the slender payment they were able to make. At length they got sheltered, and Mrs Singleton, to help their main design, reported herself as a dressmaker and needlewoman, and offered to teach the children of the place reading, writing, and the art of making and mending. Mr Singleton, who saw no way in which he could add to the general fund, for he could obtain no employment without divulging his name, made long and painful journeys among the districts round, in which were many spots where the means of grace were few and difficult of access, and with his Bible in his hand sought to sow the seed of the word. At first he was received with jealous distrust or indifference; but by degrees his visits began to awaken an interest among many, and far beyond what he was aware of he was doing the work of an evangelist.

By the request of Mr Singleton's relative to whom the fortunes of their son had been entrusted, they were able not only to live but to set by a portion of what they received towards the liquidation of the debts; and miser never more fondly viewed and counted over his hidden store, than did they the slowly but still increasing sum of their savings.

A little man in spectacles, with a carpet-bag in his hand, encountered Mr Singleton one evening as he was returning from one of his mission rounds. He has been out beyond his time, and although it was by the hour still early, the day had departed; and together with the darkness, recent rains had made the rough roads neither easy nor pleasant to travel over.

"Who goes there?" said the little man, as he bumped up against Mr Singleton, hardly knowing whether he might be a man or a tree.

"One who can put you in the right way," said Mr Singleton.

"I don't know. I'm not aware that I'm out of it!" said the little man.

"You are going from the village. Unless you want to spend the night among the hills, you have let your way," was the reply.

"Oh! the last thing I should desire; be kind enough to put me right, if you please, sir," said the traveller.

"I am going to the village: if you will follow me closely I will take you there," said Mr Singleton.

"Humph! I suppose these roads are safe—not infested by thieves? I have nothing to lose but a shirt or two that wouldn't fit anybody else, and a tooth-brush which thieves wouldn't use; but for all that, I should like to keep clear of them on my own personal account," said the stranger.

"I have traversed these roads for many years now, by day and by night," said Mr Singleton, "and never met with interruption."

"Oh, indeed," said the little man; "but I notice we are going on a very—very—dear dear, I got such a slip; the surface is so irregular; I suppose you are right?"

"I believe I am," said Mr Singleton. "I have often gone across this shorter cut to save distance; the light from the hill farm will soon shine; that is my landmark."

"Well, taking you to be an honest man, by your speech, I will follow you; but this is an uncommonly ugly road, and if I had been aware—there! I was nearly down again!"

"I will be honest to you, if I can," said Mr Singleton, helping him up; "another mile and we shall see the light."

"Another mile! patience, patience! why was I overpersuaded to walk from the coach? better have stayed all night at that smoky little inn," said the traveller; "they told me it was a pleasant half hour's walk, and I thought to stretch my legs. Well, well, I'd never travel at this time of year in these wild places again unless the business is urgent and unavoidable."

Mr Singleton could not help smiling at the constant bursts of fretfulness and apprehension his companion indulged in till the light appeared, when he exclaimed, encouragingly, "There it is!—our beacon—our light of assurance!"

"That!—that glimmer! it looks just like a cigar going out. Are you sure it is a light?" said the traveller.

"In five minutes more you will be," said his companion; and so he was, for the light increased in brilliancy, continually, till it was evidently arising from some spacious window, within which blazed a noble fire.

"Comfortable, very comfortable; shall we stop there?" said the traveller, whose courage strengthened with the light.

"I go on beyond; there is a small inn—at least a house where a stray traveller may find a bed for a night—the accommodation is indifferent I should think," said Mr Singleton.

"I am in search of one Mr. Marquis," said the traveller, "you can probably direct me to him."

"Yes," said Mr Singleton, with some hesitation, "I can; but you will meet with little more of comfort here than at the inn."

"No! how's that? a gentleman—gentleman of property, he is?"

"He lives, like the rest of these people, on porridge, oat-cake, and water, chiefly, and his house is as bare of luxuries as the poorest among them," said Mr Singleton.

"You don't say so! Then what could Haffenden be thinking of? Are you sure it is the same person that I mean?" said the little man, anxiously.

"Quite sure—for I am the man and this is my dwelling," said Mr Singleton, stopping at a small stone cottage, the door of which opened into the apartment in which he and his wife lived.

"You?—this?—patience, patience!" ejaculated the little man.

"I am William Marquis Singleton; is it I whom you seek?" said his companion, pausing at the door beside which the one window, curtained, emitted a dim light.

"Ahem! yes, certainly—that is the name; but—but what brings you, my good fellow, into such a wretched hole as this?" said the little man with some warmth, arising more at the moment from the dislike he felt to having been brought into such a "wretched hole" himself than from sympathy with his companion.

"You like honest men; as an honest man I dare not fare better until the work you have come to do is finished, for you, I presume, are Mr. Dimond," said Mr Singleton.

"Well, well; but now when things are clearing up (I've heard the case from Mr. Haffenden), and a nice balance will be left, surely you can indulge a little and come out of penance!"

"Sir, it is not for penance sake I do it, but because I dare not sin by injustice, and until the uttermost farthing is paid I have nothing," said Mr Singleton.

"Very good, very good. I wish—" said the little man, half turning towards the road.

"You wish you had tried the inn! we can reach it directly."

"Inn! beggarly hole!—no; no, I saw that, you showed it me. No—I wish your son had appointed to meet me at Ullswater, where we could have had comfortable, human accommodations, and we could then have travelled on together; as it is, we have missed each other. Talk of back settlements and jungles, why this place is every bit as bad—all but the lions and tigers."

"I am sorry—very sorry," began Mr Singleton.

"And so subject as I am to lumbago!" said the little man.

"Dear me, I am grieved," said Mr Singleton.

"And a poor queasy stomach, can't eat everything—oatmeal and porridge, and poison like that—and nothing but water," said the little man, almost groaning at the accumulation of his misfortunes.

"At last!" said a voice which Mr Singleton thankfully hailed as his son's—"I have hunted you, Mr. Dimond, from place to place, and almost despairing of finding you. I am rejoiced to succeed at last and find you on the very spot."

"Oh, you are young Mr. Singleton, I presume. My good sir, how came you to have so little consideration as to put a man in peril of his life by exposing him to such privations at this time of year? you are glad to find me here? I must say I wish you had found me somewhere else, I do indeed!"

By this time Mrs Singleton, hearing the voices without, had opened the door, and the inside of the house appeared to so great an advantage from the dreary outside that the little man was the first to make a move to enter. The fire, that had shone so dimly through the thick curtain, was bright and cheerful; and although

luxuries there were none, such conveniences as womanly skill could introduce without cost or ostentation were there. And when Mr. Dimond was settled in the low chair, with a cushion for his back, enjoying the warmth, and heard the wind and rain, which had violently returned, pattering and rattling against the casement, without a breath of draught being able to penetrate the well-secured and lined curtain, he began to think he might be worse off. Mrs. Singleton's hair was snow-white. Her dress was in keeping with her dwelling, but there was an air of dignity in her movements which many years of sorrow and of banishment from the society of her own class had not lessened, and which a growth in grace had confirmed and refined. Mr. Dimond watched her occasionally through his spectacles as she quietly performed the necessary household offices, and provided, so far as her means went, for their comfort. "What a pretty woman she must have been!" was his first thought; "What a clever creature she is!" was his second; "What a wife she must have made!" was his third; and his respect and admiration rose higher and higher as the evening advanced.

"Tea! Oh, come, you can give me some tea! Well, that's something," he said, getting a little merry as he grew warm, and saw the dainty tashers put to the fire.

William Singleton, knowing his father's simple habits, had furnished himself with several possible requisites, remembering that Mr. Dimond, who seldom quitted his comfortable old bachelor life in London, might not be able to fall in with the primitive fare that awaited him. So after all his fears and horrors, he escaped 'porridge and poison,' and, considering his queasy stomach, made a capital meal.

"And now, my friends, since I must be off home to-morrow" (he was not so well satisfied as to be seduced into a longer stay than necessary)—"let us get through what business we can to night," he said, when Mrs. Singleton had removed the little table, so unusually burdened and graced.

Mr. Singleton began a relation of his story. "Yes, yes; I have all that down," said Mr. Dimond, referring to his note-book. "Yours is no uncommon case. I must say the only remarkable feature in it is your anxiety to pay everybody."

"Is that remarkable in one who made so open a profession of religion?" asked Mr. Singleton.

"In truth, I'm sorry to say it, but a loud profession and common honesty are not as inseparable as they ought to be. I don't know a more searching outward test of a man's spiritual soundness than his worldly dealings. Don't be surprised—don't misunderstand me. Many men pay their debts and shake their purses before their fellows, and challenge them to claim a shilling of them, who are not followers of the gospel—I know that. Very likely Demas, much as he loved money, never got into debt; but at the same time there is a strange looseness among your men of high profession—some of them—they almost seem to think that common honesty is 'legal'; and because keeping out of debt won't take them to heaven, they are safe to get there while they recklessly and self-indulgently incur it."

"Yes,—all, and more, was said of me," said Mr. Singleton, sighing.

"Pish! pooh! nonsense! (Excuse me, madam, but don't you think another of your logs?—how cleverly you have kept them! so dry!—they go off like gunpowder, without the noise.) Nonsense! my friend. They fell foul of you, of course. And no doubt you did wrong in over-trying to do right. But you are now making worthy restitution—showing that you were so true a believer in what you professed that the best years of life spent in absolute want" (he looked round the little room) "and the accumulated fruits of self-denial are freely offered to pay for the past. I wish of those that fall more would rise as you rise."

"We can never undo wrong," said Mr. Singleton, dejectedly.

"We can't—we can't. Therefore we ought to be careful not to do it—unquestionably; but, having done it, the next thing is how best to repair it?" said Mr. Dimond.

"I question if we can repair it," said Mr. Singleton, in the same tone.

"We can do our best; that is all. God, who can do all things, and makes good come out of evil in an astonishing way, when he sees we are truly anxious to do what is right, helps us on and works for us, and brings things round; and often, when we think we are fairly at 'the mouth of the pit,' comes the escape; and when we think there is nothing but wilderness, he brings us out into 'a wealthy place.' I don't speak without having seen this, I assure you." And pushing up his spectacles, little Mr. Dimond, drawing closer to the fire, began relating several instances of the same, which he had witnessed in his professional career.

"But I was trying to do good honestly, my wife knows!" said Mr. Singleton.

"There was a screw loose somewhere. It may have been you were growing secure, and trusted others from want of energy and industry; and so you were taken away from that sphere."

"But see the years of life wasted since!" said Mr. Singleton.

"Wasted! I deny it. If you had been wasting your life God would not have brought it to this honourable close. No, no. You have in this interval been taught, no doubt, mistrust of self-humility, and that the gospel is a grand reality altogether—real in its blessings, in its promises, and in its requirements. You will go back a better instructed man, and will teach the people that not all who cry 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven—that the crucifixion of the will and heart is necessary to make a Christian."

"I shall never go back!" said Mr. Singleton, sadly.