

Youths' Department.

BIBLE LESSONS.

(From "Robinson's Harmony.")

Sunday, January 10th, 1869.

MATTHEW xiii. 24-53: MARK iv. 26-34: Parable of the Tares and other parables. Recite.—1 CORINTHIANS vi. 9, 10.

Sunday, January 17th, 1869.

MATTHEW viii. 18-27: MARK iv. 35-41: LUKE viii. 22-25. ix. 57-62. Jesus directs to cross the Lake. Incidents. The tempest stilled. Recite.—MARK xi. 22-24.

A NEW YEAR'S SCRIPTURAL ENIGMA.

Who, by the preaching of Paul knew the Lord, and with gladness his servants received?
Who, taught of Christ, his apostle sought out, and in time of sore trouble relieved?
Who, in the service of Master above, learned his duty to master below?
Who, against God and his high priest rebelled, and met death in confusion and woe?
Who, in the years yet to come saw his Lord, as the child unto us that is born?
Who, came in secret to Jesus by night, nor could meet the Jews' hatred and scorn?
Who, for the truth's sake in Christ was beloved by apostle most dear to the Lord?
Who, in the pride of his heart, forsook God, and was smitten a leper abhorred?
Who, in his doubt went to Jesus, and found that from Nazareth came Israel's king?
Who, as a brother beloved in the Lord, did from Paul news to Ephesus bring?
Who, in the fear of the Lord, hid his saints from the wrath of an impious queen?
Who, when the mob to take Jesus drew near, in their front a lost traitor was seen?
Who, by the aid of his God restored health to a leper, reproving his pride?
Who, bearing witness to Jesus was stoned, and forgiving his enemies died?
Whence came the patriarch, faithful when tried, and the pattern of all who believe?
Whom did our Saviour forewarn of the sin, over which he should bitterly grieve?

Join the initials of each of these names, and a Motto they give for the Year:
Heeding the which in our journey through life, ever safe is our pathway and clear.
Following on where the faithful have led, firm resisting where yielding is sin,
Nearing the goal as time bears us along, the prize at the last may we win!
Kept by the grace of our God, in his strength, with patience the race let us run,
Looking to Jesus, to finish the faith he himself in our hearts hath begun!

[We advise our young friends to try and discover the answer to the above Enigma, and to reserve it until next week when we will give the correct one. This will be found a pleasant task and a source of much interest and pleasure.

We shall endeavour to give something of this nature every week for the benefit of our more ingenious and thoughtful readers.—Ed. C. M.]

COUSIN MABEL'S EXPERIENCES.

BY MISS E. J. WHATELY.

No. I. RITUALISM.

It was with feelings of mingled pleasure and sadness, that, after a long residence abroad, the duties which had called me from my own country no longer existing, I found myself again in England and in the midst of a large circle of relatives, many of whom had been the companions of my childhood, and with all of whom frequent and affectionate intercourse had been kept up by letters, if not personally. All, old and young, were kindly eager to welcome "Cousin Mabel" among them, and I had more invitations than I well knew how to respond to. It was interesting to me to renew the acquaintances of early days, and to form them afresh with young people grown up in my absence; and by degrees I became established in the character of a general confidante, and listener, and a quiet observer of the varied scenes of life that passed before my eyes.

The first visit of any length I paid after being fairly established in an English home, was to my cousin Mrs. Wellwood, a widow lady, settled in a southern county of England, the mother of two grown up daughters, besides several sons already settled in life. On entering her pretty country home, which I did somewhat earlier than the hour at which I had been expected, I came straight into the principal sitting room, a large and pleasant apartment opening into the garden, where several of the family were assembled, and evidently in full occupation. The centre table was covered with prints, architectural plans, patterns, paints, brushes, gumpots, and scrolls of all shapes and sizes, and a young lady was busily engaged in what was then to me the novel occupation of illumination. She was copying a large sheet covered with a variety of fanciful devices, in gold, silver, and bright colours, with letters which to my unpractised eyes were nearly unintelligible. At a side table another was engaged in what seemed to be painting on glass; while a third was busied with some elaborate embroidery of gold thread on a crim-

son ground. Two of the girls, the illuminatrix and the embroideress, came eagerly forward to welcome me and introduce themselves as my cousins and unknown correspondents, Gertrude and Edith Wellwood, and the young artist, who I perceived was some years their senior, was presented to me as their friend Millicent Harrington.

When I had been relieved of my travelling accompaniments, and had declined refreshments, and been informed that mamma had expected me by a later train, and was now in town on business, I was tempted to ask the meaning of the pretty things I saw scattered about.

"Oh, don't you know?" cried Edith with much animation. "We are preparing some things to ornament the new church at M—. You must have passed it in your way; it will be lovely, when it is all ready! Millicent is come from C— where all sorts of things of that sort are going on, and she has been teaching us to illuminate, and she has brought such beautiful patterns and plans with her; and she is showing Gertrude how to work an altar cloth, at least Gertrude has undertaken one part, and several young ladies will each contribute another, and—"

"Oh, Edith," interrupted Gertrude, "you will overwhelm Cousin Mabel if you run on so. I suppose, cousin, you have been out of the way of seeing this kind of things?"

"Yes, my dear, I have seen very little of the church decoration which is much in vogue now."

"But don't you think it a delightful thing to be able to turn all one's talents to God's service?" said Gertrude, earnestly.

"It is always a happiness to work for Him, in any way, however humble, when it is for him really," I replied, somewhat evasively. "But what is Miss Harrington engaged in?" And I turned to the young visitor, whose serious, thoughtful expression of countenance had interested me much, and who, after acknowledging the introduction with a silent courtesy, had returned to her painting, in which she seemed absorbed.

"It is a painted window for M— church, to match the one on the opposite side of the nave. Won't it be a beauty?" were the explanations crowded on each other by my two young friends, each eager to speak first.

"It is a copy from the 'Assumption of the Holy Virgin' by Titian," said Millicent, in a measured, grave and somewhat peculiar though very sweet tone of voice, which contrasted curiously with the quick, animated utterance of her young companions. I looked over her shoulder, and saw that the work, as far as she had proceeded, was executed with considerable talent; but the subject, so utterly absurd and unscriptural in its conception, seemed to me anything but fitted to adorn a Protestant place of worship.

"Do not you think it lovely, dear cousin?" said Edith.

"I do, indeed; I saw the original at Venice, and this is a good copy, and has much of the sweet expression which I remember striking me when I saw it; but I should not have expected—"

"Did you see the original? oh, how happy you were!" interrupted Gertrude; "but only think, do you know Mrs. Henley (the wife of the clergyman of the next parish, you know, Millicent) says it is Popish, and her husband would never allow such a thing to be put up in his church. Isn't it narrow-minded?"

"Yes, and she objects to embroidered altar-cloths and all sorts of church decorations," added Edith: "she would like a church to have nothing beautiful in it of any sort, nothing but bare walls, as like a barn as possible!"

"And then there must be no chants, or musical services, nothing but hymns screamed out of all time and tune by any one who likes, and led by the old parish clerk through his nose. The more ugly a thing is, either by way of sight or sound, the more fit it is supposed to be for a church," added Gertrude.

Millicent looked grave, and returned to her painting; I smiled but made no answer just then; I wished rather to hear what my young friends' views were, at first, than to give out my own; and indeed they were more ready to talk than to listen just then.

"I really think," continued Gertrude, "that some people think that true piety consists in having every thing as ugly and tasteless as possible, as if whatever was to please our eyes and ears must be wrong." Millicent looked up from her painting and observed in a low voice—

"If we really desire to serve God, we shall surely endeavour to consecrate all our talents to his service—surely nothing can be so beautiful, too precious, too valuable, for his sanctuary." She looked to me for assent.

"Nothing can be too good, certainly," I replied; "but there may be things good and pleasing in themselves which may nevertheless be inappropriate."

"Such as what?" cried Edith. "I am sure, cousin, you who have lived abroad and seen so much of art, would be the last person to condemn its employment in things which may really make it a blessing."

"The only question, dear Edith, is to decide where legitimate use ends and abuse begins; and this may be said in many other cases. But I did not mean to enter on a discussion now; besides, I think I hear a carriage driving up. Can that be your mother come back?"

"Yes, that is her little pony-chaise; and my school-children are come to practise the chants for Sunday," said Edith. "Come and help me, Millicent."

And she hastened into the next room to prepare it for her scholars, while her mother came in from the hall to welcome me. In the midst of our first greetings I heard the sound of music in the adjoining room. I looked in, and found

Millicent playing on a small harmonium placed at one end: she was accompanying the children in a single Gregorian chant, to which they were singing the "Venite," led by Gertrude and Edith. It was followed by a hymn from a recent collection. The air and harmony were good, but the words were ones in which I could feel no sympathy. They were chiefly expressions of adoring delight in the "altar," the "temple," etc., which seemed to me more appropriate to the Jewish tabernacle service than to the simplicity of gospel worship. When it was over, and the children were dispersed, Gertrude asked me how I liked the hymn.

"I like the air very much," replied I, "but the words do not satisfy me. I am old-fashioned enough to cling to the old favourites your mother and I used to sing together at our school-meetings, when we were girls.—There is a fountain, 'Rock of Ages,' and such."

"Oh yes, I like them too; but one must have a little variety," said Gertrude; while Millicent observed, in her low voice:

"These old hymns have very little of catholic truth in them. The tone is quite sectarian,—no church views."

"If by catholic truth, dear Miss Harrington, you mean universal truth, as the etymology would imply, that is, I suppose, truth which has been and is held by all true Christians; and I think hymns that dwell so strongly on the One great atonement do put forth truth which is, in this sense, catholic. And as to church views, surely the lines, 'When all the ransomed church of God is saved, to sin no more,' cannot be said to ignore a universal church. But I really did not intend to begin a controversy."

The dressing bell interrupted us, perhaps somewhat to the relief of both parties; and throughout the evening the girls were busied over the volume of patterns for church decorations, and their talk was much as it had been in the morning, Millicent speaking less than the rest, but evidently taking the lead; while Mrs. Wellwood, at the other side of the room, talked over old times with me, and took no part in her daughters' employment.

The next morning I was down early; but my young friends were all gone to a daily service held at a church nearly two miles off. "I would not let them disturb you," said their mother; "for I am sure you would be tired to death. I love a quiet week-day service, and have sometimes found it a comfort; but all this running off daily to such a distance causes a great deal of inconvenience in the house. They are never back in time for prayers, breakfast must wait for them till the whole business of the morning is interrupted, and I am sometimes quite exhausted; as when I am alone, I do not like to take my meals without them. Do you approve of all these new ways, Mabel?"

"I have been so long out of England, that I have had but little opportunity of testing them for myself," then, it does seem to me that the gratification of taste and a love of outward ceremonies are too often mistaken for real earnest piety. But you must know more of these new practices than I."

To be continued.

THE FIRST BAPTIST.

HIS MISSION.

The first Baptist was a messenger sent from God, "to make ready a people prepared for the Lord." His ministry was "the beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ the Son of God." His mission was immediately connected with the coming of Christ. The same prophets had spoken of the ministry of John and the coming of Jesus as connected. The same angel was sent with "glad tidings," to Zachariah and Elizabeth touching the birth and mission of John, and to Mary, touching the birth of Jesus. John was "filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother's womb."

Through the days of childhood and youth, he "grew and waxed strong in spirit till the day of his showing unto Israel." As he was always spiritual, so he was always acceptable to God who is a Spirit. He entered upon his public ministry as one sent from God, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord. In the preparation were included the instructions he gave, the repentance and faith he required, and the baptism he administered.

"In those days came John the Baptist, preaching and saying Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." And John said unto the people, "That they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus." He also "gave the people knowledge of salvation by the remission of sins through the tender mercy of God." By his able ministry, he turned the hearts of many to the Lord, and baptized them in his name. By their faith, their repentance, and their baptism, they were severally prepared to receive the Lord. Whoever did not repent and believe on Jesus was not prepared to receive him, and whoever remained impenitent and unbelieving, Jesus would not receive, consequently John never baptized such. It was no part of his mission to baptize other than those who received Christ, and who would be received by Christ. Many impenitent persons were awakened by his preaching and came to be baptized by him, but he told them plainly that he could not baptize them so long as they remained impenitent and trusted in the righteousness of their father Abraham. When they would "bring forth fruits worthy of repentance," that is, would make it manifest to him that they had repented and did believe on Jesus, then he would baptize them.

In making ready a people he gathered not the moral or self-righteous, but the penitent

who believed on Jesus. None were so good that he would baptize them without repentance and faith in Jesus, and none were so bad that he would not baptize them when he was satisfied that they had repented and did believe the glad tidings he was proclaiming. The same has been true of all Baptists from that day to this. Others have baptized infants and unbelievers. Baptists never.

When the first Baptist had made ready a people for the Lord, every one of whom had repented, believed on Jesus Christ, and been baptized, the Lord for whom they had been prepared, came and received them. He was well pleased with them, and with their minister, and justified both when He was baptized by their minister into their fellowship and so became as one of them. "He was not ashamed to call them brethren." Were they Baptists? so as He.

Heaven approved the deed; for when He came up out of the water, the heavens opened and the Spirit like a dove descended upon Him, and a voice from heaven said to the baptized Jesus, "Thou art my Beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." This baptism by John was from heaven and not of men. It had been administered severally to the people prepared for the Lord. It is the baptism that Baptists have always practiced to the rejection of every other. By rejecting or neglecting it, "the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of God against themselves." Can the reader give the number of those who have since followed their bad example? Is he one of them? If so, let him arise and be baptized. Let him go to a Baptist minister, as Jesus did, and by him be baptized, for thus it becometh him to fulfill all righteousness. Until he does this he is "rejecting the counsel of God" and the example of Christ. Whoever would be made ready and prepared for the Lord must not neglect, much less despise the baptism to which his Lord thought it necessary to submit.

Now that Jesus has accepted the people made ready for Him by the first Baptist, they are no longer to be known as John's disciples but as the disciples of Jesus. Never were a people more blessed by a change of ministry, John was good but Jesus was better. It was an honor to the first Baptist that he had been permitted to prepare a people for the Lord, an honor of which his successors may speak and not be ashamed; but in nothing does he appear more noble than in surrendering his position and his people to his successor. Day after day he stood and directed his disciples to "the Lamb of God." A noble example to all Baptist ministers who, in the providence of God, are called to give up place and people to their superiors. Not less appreciative was Jesus of John and of what he had done. Again and again He commended him, his baptism, and his worth to the disciples and to the multitude; openly condemning all who had not believed him and been baptized by him. This is sufficient of itself to show that Jesus never received from John an unbaptized disciple. That Jesus spoke only good of John, is worthy the consideration of all Baptist ministers who have occasion to speak of their predecessors.

The work of John is now done. With commendable grace he has committed all to Jesus. And as if to render it impossible for the disciples hereafter to hesitate between John and Jesus, the enemies are permitted to shut up John in prison, where they soon behead him. And as the disciples followed Jesus for whose coming and service John had prepared them; and as they beheld with wonder the miracles that Jesus wrought, they said one to another, "John did no miracles, but all things that John spoke of this man were true."—Macedonian.

MY GUIDE.

I know not the way I am going,
But well do I know my Guide!
With a childlike trust do I give my hand
To the mighty Friend by my side;
And the only thing that I say to Him,
As He takes it, is—"Hold it fast;
Suffer me not to lose the way,
And lead me home at last."

As when some helpless wanderer,
Alone in some unknown land,
Tells the guide his destined place of rest,
And leaves all else in his hand;
'Tis home—'tis home that I wish to reach,
He who guides me may choose the way,
And little I care what path I take,
When nearer home each day.

ON SWEARING.

Cowper wrote some lines about swearing, which it would be worth while for every one to learn:

"It chills my blood to hear the blest Supreme
Rudely appealed to on each trifling theme:
Maintain your rank, vulgarity despise—
To swear is neither brave, polite, nor wise."

Some who would not swear by the name of God, think nothing of swearing "By George," or "By jingo," or by something else; others often cry out "Good gracious," or "Mercy on me!" and the like. These are the beginnings of swearing. They are to profane swearers what acorns are to the oak.

Our Saviour said when on earth: "Let your yea be yea, and your nay, nay; for whatsoever is more than these, cometh of evil." This means we should use simple language. David had a short prayer to this point: "Set a watch, O Lord! before my mouth; and keep the door of my lips."