

Months' Department.

BIBLE LESSONS.

(From "Robinson's Harmony.")

Sunday, August 1st, 1869.

JOHN viii. 1-20: Further teachings of our Lord.

A sinful woman forgiven.

Recite.—Scripture Catechism, 35, 36.

Sunday, August 8th, 1869.

JOHN viii. 20-42: Jesus reproves the unbelieving Jews.

Recite.—S. C., 37, 38.

ANSWER TO QUESTIONS ON SCRIPTURE METAPHORS.

Commencing with the letter D.

1. Dogs. Ps. xxii. 16; Matt. xv. 26. This metaphor possesses its force from the contempt in which dogs are held in Eastern towns:—(1). Dogs snarl and gnash with their teeth. So the wicked, Ps. xxxvii. 12. (2). Dogs have to be shut out of doors. So the wicked from heaven, Rev. xxii. 15. (3). Dogs are greedy and dissatisfied. So are the wicked, Is. lvi. 11. (4). Dogs are foolish, Prov. xxvi. 11. (5). Dogs are to be avoided, Phil. iii. 2.

2. DEW. Ps. ex. 3; Hos. vi. 4. DISTILL. Deut. xxxii. 2. DRAIN. Is. xli. 3. DROWN. 1 Tim. vi. 9. DROP. Ps. lxxv. 11; Ezek. xx. 46; Prov. xix. 13. DRINK. Job xv. 16. DROUGHT. Is. lviii. 11. DITCH. Job ix. 31. DEEP. Ps. xlii. 7, or DEPTHS. Mic. vii. 19.

3. DEBTOR. Matt. xviii. 24. For even 10,000 talents of silver were equal to 1,920,000;—while if reckoned in gold it would have been equal to 72,000,000,—a sum which no debtor could pay.

4. DARKNESS. Used for sorrow in Job ii. 2; for death in Job x. 21, 22; for secrecy in Matt. x. 27; for sin in John i. 5; for hell in Matt. viii. 12; 2 Pet. 2. 4.

5. DAY. Used metaphorically in connection with an opportune moment in John ix. 4; Heb. iii. 15; with a time of affliction in Lam. iv. 18; with a season of deliverance in Rom. xiii. 12; with a state of holiness in 1 Thess. v. 5; and with eternity in Rev. iv. 8, compared with Rev. xxi. 25.

A BIBLE PICTURE.

They stood beside the river's ford,
Stern and unrelenting,
With bristling spear and glittering sword,
All escape preventing.

"Friend or foe?" they asked of each,
That trembling would have crossed;
"Friend," he cried,—but by his speech
Hope of salvation lost.

No pity knew those warriors stern,—
Just, but unforgiving,—
One only word the lot might turn
From dying into living.

And they who spake that word aright,
Accepted, passed, and free,
Reader, it was a wondrous sight
It points to me—to thee!

Tell me the scene—tell me the word
That judged those tremblers;
Note well; that neither gold or sword
Saved the dissemblers!

Then tell me where the Lord hath said
That one salvation
Shall 'twixt the living and the dead
Make separation.

LOVE LIGHTENS LABOR.

A good wife rose from her bed one morn,
And thought, with a nervous dread
On the piles of clothes to be washed, and more
Than a dozen mouths to be fed.
There's the meals to get for the men in the field,
And the children to fix away.
To school, the milk to be skimmed and churned,
And all was to be done that day.

It had rained in the night, and all the wood
Was wet as it could be.
And there were puddings and pies to bake, besides
A lot of cake for tea;
And the day was hot, and her aching head
Throbbled wearily as she said:
"If maidens but knew what good wives do,
They would be in no haste to wed!"

"Jennie, what do you think I told Ben Brown?"
Called the farmer from the well;
And a flush crept up to his bronzed brow,
And his eyes half bashfully fell:
"It was this," he said and coming near,
He smiled, and stooping down,
Kissed her cheek—"twas this, that you were
The best
And dearest wife in town!"

The farmer went back to the field, and the wife,
In a smiling, absent way,
Sang snatches of tender little songs
She had not sung for many a day;
And the pain in her head was gone, and the
clothes
Were white as the foam of the sea.
Her bread was light, and her butter was sweet
And golden as it could be.

"Just think," the children all called in a breath,
"Tom Wood has run off to sea!
He wouldn't, I know, if he'd only had
As happy a home as we."
The night came down, and the good wife smiled
To herself, as she softly said:
"Tis sweet to labor for those we love,
It is not strange that maids will wed!"

COUSIN MABEL'S EXPERIENCES.

BY MISS E. J. WHATELY.

No. XXV.

THE TWO WORLDS.

"I will read you one more extract from
Bertha's letters at N—."

"This has been a very dissipated winter. When I look back to it all, it seems a strange, varied dream, so unlike any life I led before. I must own I have greatly enjoyed it on the whole. With a companion whose beauty is so striking as Annette's, I might well have expected to pass unnoticed; but she has taken such pains to introduce me to pleasant people, that I have had no neglect to complain of,—indeed, I have been overwhelmed with kind attentions from all. The only thing that vexes me much is that I am ashamed of having spent my money so fast. The allowance my uncle appointed me when I left school, and which he told me he made a moderate one, to exercise me in prudence and economy, I thought boundless at first, and I had so many schemes and plans of what I was to do with it; and now, this quarter, it seems to have melted away; and yet I got nothing but what they told me I could not possibly appear without. However, I don't mean to pass my life in this whirl; only for a little while it is very agreeable. But I must stop, for Annette and her half-brother, Captain Storey, are waiting to ride with me.

"Poor Bertha, as this letter shows, was too artless and too inexperienced to perceive that the attentions she received—at her guardian's house were in reality due to her fortune. She was pleasing in her person, and, with advantages of dress, looked really pretty at times; but these attractions would have gone, but a little way in making her an object of attention, had it not been well known that she was an heiress. A little more knowledge of the world would have shown her this, and opened her eyes to the real character of the attentions which now almost turned her poor little head. I was much pained by the tone of her subsequent letters for some months. I have not kept them. They were filled with descriptions of her various engagements in the world, and generally ended abruptly with hurried apologies for having no time for writing. She was evidently in a complete whirl of amusement and excitement, and I saw her religious feelings were becoming cold, and her whole tone of mind gradually lowered to the level of those about her, which I believe a thoroughly worldly life will always bring about, sooner or later.

"And yet," said Lucy, "don't think I am standing up for a world's life, cousin Mabel, but I always like to discuss 'pros and cons' with you. I was talking on that very subject with a girl lately,—one who has certainly a good deal of religious feeling in some ways: she assured me that she never felt more serious than she did at her first ball, and had a great many good thoughts in her mind all the while she was dancing. She assured me she did not think going to balls hurt the religious life at all; certainly that she did not find it did in her own case.

"It is very possible she may have had religious thoughts; but that would not prove that the spiritual life was not injured. I think that very often the same thing happens with spiritual as it does with physical life. We see many in the wretched, crowded, unwholesome dwellings in great cities who eat, drink, and sleep in an atmosphere in which we could scarcely breathe; but this is not because they are in a healthier state than we are. The contrary, in fact, is the case. Their physical condition has been lowered and their vitality diminished, so that they are not fully conscious of the vitiated atmosphere they breathe, though it is consuming their very life; they are less conscious of suffering, but they sicken and die. And so, I believe, it is possible with real Christians for the spiritual life to be brought down to so low a level from long residence in a worldly atmosphere, without any attempt to resist it, that they become totally, or at least nearly, unconscious of the harm they are receiving. They have, as it were, become unused to breathe a purer atmosphere, and are satisfied with the vague and indefinite religious feelings and reflections which go under the general term of 'serious thoughts.' Whether this is the case with your friend, or whether she is still among the number of those who mistake a vague 'religiousness' for real Christianity, and the kind of serious thought which may pass dreamily through the mind in the pauses of a dance, for the communion with God which certainly will not agree with the atmosphere of a ball-room, I cannot of course tell, and should be very sorry to attempt to judge, or even to guess, unless I knew her intimately. Poor Bertha's case was the former, I am sure. She had certainly given evidence of being actuated by really Christian principle; but she had gradually sunk to a lower standard. Where real Christians do fall back in this way, I believe God never fails, sooner or later, to send them some salutary warning, often in the form of some affliction or trial, to rouse them from their dangerous security. And this did happen to my dear young friend. In her last letter, you see, she alludes to a Captain Storey, who was the son of Lady Frances by a former husband, and who was at this time just come on a visit to his mother. I had heard of him from some who had known him abroad, and who de-

scribed him as a man of peculiarly attractive manners, and qualified to make himself eminently agreeable, but of very indifferent character,—indeed a confirmed gambler, and deeply in debt. When I heard this, I became very uneasy about Bertha. Her letters were becoming full of allusions to him, and I perceived that she was in danger of becoming involved in an attachment which might lead to the misery of her whole life; for he was evidently paying her great attentions, in which he was of course encouraged by his mother and sisters, who would be careful to conceal anything they knew of his previous character. I felt it my duty to attempt to warn Bertha, though very cautiously, against this danger. I could not say much, as I was not at liberty to give up my authority; but I hinted my distrust of this new acquaintance. She replied by defending Captain Storey as the noblest of men; she knew, she said, he was not a decidedly religious character, but she felt sure he would become so, and thought he was already beginning to grow more serious. I could say no more but I feared the matter would end in a marriage, mercenary on his side, and on her's brought about by a delusion, from which she would only awake when it was too late. I afterwards found that, as I had surmised, Lady Frances and Annette were indefatigable in trying to bring on the marriage. They were really, I believe, fond of Bertha, and did not wish to do her what they considered harm; but they probably persuaded themselves they were doing the greatest kindness to her in promoting a connexion which would bring her nearer to her favourite friends, and that Captain Storey would pay his debts, and settle down into a steady character, and might make his wife very happy. She, poor child, was completely taken in; but, as she has since owned to me, she would not have been so deceived, had not her moral standard been warped by the life she had led. The want of religious principle which she did see in Captain Storey, was not enough to make her draw back. She persuaded herself that she would be the one to bring him to a right state of mind, and influence him for good. Of the sincerity of his love she had no doubt. I was so uneasy that I at last wrote to Mrs. Lawson, begging her to communicate with Bertha's uncle. Her answer informed me that he was already apprized of the affair. Bertha had received proposals from Captain Storey, and had refused to form a definite engagement without asking her uncle's consent. Mr. Westbrook, who happened to know more of Captain Storey's real character than many of us did, took alarm immediately, and appeared at N—, I believe, the day after his niece's letter had reached him. He spoke and acted in the most decisive manner, took definite steps to break off the engagement immediately, made Lady Frances see her son must return without loss of time to the Continent (his debts in England being very considerable), and brought proofs before poor Bertha which could not fail to convince her of the utter worthlessness of the man she had nearly engaged herself to for life. Lady Frances was very angry, and spoke and acted in a way which opened Bertha's eyes to the selfish nature of her schemes. Her uncle was anxious to remove his ward from the Bouverie family; but this, as they were also her guardians, could not easily be done; and the harassment and vexation of mind, and wounded feelings of the poor girl brought on a severe attack of nervous fever. This illness, which was long and very serious, showed even more the real selfishness of Bertha's friends. Annette was now absorbed with a man of rank and fortune, much older than herself but considered a brilliant match. The family had been planning a visit to London as the season approached, and Lady Frances thought it likely to forward her plans for her daughter, and therefore was eager to hasten their departure. It ended in the whole party's going up to town while Bertha's illness was still at its height, and leaving the poor girl alone with the nurse who was attending her, and the few servants who stayed to take care of the house. Annette said they could easily come back if she should be worse; but as it was, as she was ordered quiet, the best thing they could do was to leave the house to herself. Mr. Westbrook was much annoyed at the want of sympathy shown by the whole party; but nothing could be done but to wait till the invalid was able to bear a move; and he then took her to the seaside and placed her in lodgings, under the care of a former nursery governess, a respectable elderly woman, who acted as half sick-nurse, half duenna, a very good care-taker, but not at all a person to be a companion to her. His business then obliged him to leave her, and the poor child had to pass a very sad and solitary time at her lodgings at Seaview. There was severe illness in the Mortdaunt family; Mrs. Lawson was abroad; I was also detained on the Continent by duties which rendered it impossible for me to come to her; and she had no other friend or relative to whom she could look for assistance or companionship in her lonely hours of convalescence.

"She wrote to me when she began to recover, describing her feelings:
"As I lie on the little sofa by the window of my sitting-room, day after day, and watch the broad expanse of sea it commands, the events of the past year come before me vividly, and very painfully. It seems like yesterday, this time last year when I was going with such a light heart from Pelham rectory, and rejoicing at the prospect of the pleasures before me; and now I do feel them all to be vanity and vexation of spirit. I can now see clearly the truth of your warnings when I then thought little of. I had been going wrong all last winter and spring: getting more and more and more into the whirl of dissipation, and further, I am sure, from the 'strait gate and narrow way.' My reading of the Scriptures was often omitted, or done as a mere task; my prayers were mechanically hurried over, my Sundays more and more mispent. I had been growing more and more full

of myself. My thoughts ran on beauty and dress and admiration more than on anything else. Then came that fearful waking up—I cannot dwell on it—finding those one had most trusted, unworthy; and treated unkindly by friends one had so loved. Annette, whom I almost worshipped! left me sick and alone with scarce a word of affection; her whole thoughts were absorbed in her own affairs—and now she is married to a man I know she did not really care about, merely for his wealth and rank; but after all, I am more to blame, for I had greater advantages than she had, and I had turned away from the right path. I thought so much about disagreeable ways in really good people, and then I overlooked real serious faults in friends I liked. I am sure I don't deserve anything better than I have had—bitter disappointment and mortification, and a sorely wounded spirit; and now I do indeed desire to turn back like the prodigal son, from feeding on husks, but then I feel as if I were so unworthy to be received after such a course of self will and self-seeking! Still, there are cheering words even to those who have been backsliders, and that should comfort me."

"There is more in the same strain I need not read. Bertha was indeed going down into the valley of Humiliation. I wrote to her often and tried to bring before her the promises and encouragements of the gospel, and I believe she was truly enabled to find pardon and peace where alone it can be found. But as was natural, the trials, mental and bodily, she had gone through, had left her in a state of very deep depression, and I could not but fear that in the solitary and unoccupied life she was compelled to lead, this depression might be increased till it became really morbid. I had no power to do anything to help her, except by committing the poor child to better hands than mine, and trusting that some one might be raised up to be the friend and helper she needed."

THE PET LION?

About a hundred years ago there was a great king who had a fancy for collecting wild beasts of every description, and made a large garden for them, with rows of iron cages along the walls on either side, not far from his palace, which is still to be seen at the present day. And the other kings and princes who lived near him, knowing his taste in this way, used to send him presents of strange animals every now and then, till he had quite a large menagerie of them. At last there came to him one day a present of a little lion-cub, no bigger than a dog, which was said by the man that brought it to be of a very rare breed; and the little beast seemed so gentle and playful that the king thought it would be a very good idea to keep him for a pet, and instead of locking him up in a cage, to let him run about the palace. So the man who brought him got a handful of gold pieces, and went away very well contented; only said, "Mind you don't let him scratch you, for if he once tastes human blood, he'll be worse than any lion in the desert."

So the little cub had his rough coat washed and combed, and a ribbon tied round his neck, and was fed every day with great pieces of raw beef; and at night he slept on a warm carpet by the king's bedside. He would follow his master all over the palace, and put his nose into the king's hand in search of something to eat; and at dinner he would sit up and beg like a dog, with his funny little eyes turned sideways to see if there was anything good coming for him; and altogether he made a famous pet.

This was all very well so long as he remained a cub; but when he became a full-grown lion, strong enough to break a man's back with one blow of his paw, the gentlemen of the court began to think that he had better be shut up. Indeed, to meet an enormous lion at every turn, who might take a fancy to bite one's head off at any moment, was not very pleasant for anybody. But the king would not hear of shutting him up; so things went on as before.

At last, one night, as he lay asleep, with the lion stretched upon the carpet by his bedside, the king had an extraordinary dream. He dreamt that he was having his velvet coat brushed by his servant, and that the man suddenly began to draw the brush across his master's hand, hurting him not a little. The king cried out, but the brushing still continued till at last it grew so painful that he started, and awoke.

And what did he see? Ah! his dream was not all fancy; for the lion, reared on his hind paws against the side of the bed, was licking the hand which hung down over the coverlet; and his huge rough tongue, fraying the skin, had just begun to make it bleed. And then it might have been seen how the old savage nature awoke all at once, after lying hidden for years! At the first taste of human blood the lion's mane had begun to bristle like iron wire, and his teeth grated against each other, and his eyes were fixed on the king's face with a fierce, hungry look, which made them glow in the dim light like two live coals. It was a terrible moment; but the king was not easily terrified, and saw instantly his only way of escape. He knew that if he attempted to move the hand which the lion was licking, the beast would be upon him in a moment; so he quietly slipped his other hand under the pillow, where his pistols always lay, and, still looking the lion straight in the face, he aimed right between the two glaring eyes—fired—and the huge beast rolled heavily over upon the floor.

And after that the king never again tried to tame a lion.—*London Kind Words.*

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