

Youths' Department.

Lessons for 1871.

THE WORDS OF JESUS.

SUNDAY, MAY 21st, 1871.

Self-Denial for Christ.—Mark viii. 34-38.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"Of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed."—Vs. 38.

SCRIPTURE SELECTIONS.—Parallel passages; Matthew xvi. 24-27; Luke ix. 23-26. Also Romans vi. vii.

To whom were these words spoken? vs. 34. For whom then is this lesson meant? Who are meant in vs. 34, by "whoever"? What in the same vs. by "will come after me"? How does this differ from, "come unto me," in Matthew xi. 28? Have you obeyed either of these calls?

What three things must be done that we may come after Jesus? vs. 34. What is meant by "deny"? What by deny himself? In what things must a man deny himself so that he may come after Christ? Have you ever done so?

What is the second thing to be done? vs. 34. What is a "cross"? What is it to "take up" his cross? What is your cross? Have you ever taken it up? What is the third requirement of Jesus? vs. 34. What is it to "follow" a person? How can we follow Jesus? Do you follow him? How many of these three duties have you done? Do you then "come after" Jesus, or not?

Repeat vs. 35. How can one's life be lost when saved, and yet saved when lost? Prepare carefully to answer the question in vs. 36; also in vs. 37. Repeat vs. 38. Are you "ashamed" of Jesus, or of his words? What proof have you that you are not? Of whom will "the Son of man" be ashamed at last? vs. 38. Will he be ashamed of you? What then will become of you? What is your present duty?

SUMMARY.—To really be a Christian, one must give up everything for Christ. Otherwise, everything is lost for ever; but in this way, all good is gained.

ANALYSIS.—Self-denial for Christ.—I. Demanded. vs. 34. Three self-denying duties specified.

II. Enforced. vs. 35-38. 1. By argument. vs. 35-37. (1) Without it, death is certain. vs. 35. (2) Without it, life is a failure. vs. 36. (3) Without it, hope is extinguished. vs. 37. 2. By warning. vs. 38.

EXPOSITION.—This was spoken near Caesarea Philippi.

Let several pupils have their Testaments open at the parallel passages to detect and state every variation in the phrases, some of which will add materially to the understanding of the subject.

To whom spoken.—"The people," and to "the disciples"; therefore to all classes. Here then is a message for every one.

Will come after me.—As a learner, a friend, an obedient pupil, as one ready to identify himself and his interests with me. Peter did not see just what the coming after Jesus involved, hence Jesus tells him this, and he tells all others also.

Come unto me, tells of the beginning, while the "come after" tells rather of the following on. Some who profess to have come unto Christ, do not come after him very closely. Are we following him closely? Mark xiv. 54.

Deny himself.—To refuse a request or appeal. In the case here supposed the request or appeal is from the man himself. Some part of his nature urges it. Another part, which acts obediently to Jesus, denies the appeal, absolutely refuses to grant it. This is the spiritual nature which they have who are born again. John iii. 3, 5; Matthew xi. 28-30. The part denied is the natural, sinful part, which loves wrong, and loves sinful ease, etc. Rom. vi. 19; vii. 22, 23.

Take up his cross.—The cross, as spoken of in Christ's day was equivalent to "the gallows," among us. The term "cross," came therefore to have a new figurative use as any very severe ordeal, or trial. Each one coming after Jesus is required to take up his own cross. For the nature of their crosses, see Matthew x. 34-38; John xvi. 1-3. Persecution, opposition, misrepresentation, neglect, etc., have ever since been freely allotted to Christ's followers. The phrase "take up his cross" comes from the requirement then prevailing that a criminal should carry his own cross to the place of execution. He who will come after Jesus must not shrink from trial, even though it be a means of death to him, but he must take it up, promptly, cheerfully, and for Jesus' sake. John xix. 17.

Follow me.—Some followed Jesus in this way from merely selfish motives. John vi. 26. Others because they honored, loved, and trusted him. John vi. 28. He was more to them than all the world besides. If we are like these followers, we will delight to walk in all his appointed ways and ordinances.

Life.—A natural life pertains to the body, and spiritual life to the soul, and is the result of a new birth, and is the possession of believers. John iii. 15, 16. Seeking to save the natural life, many refuse to follow Jesus, and lose eternal life, while those who pursue eternal life at all hazards, gain it, and gain all needful things besides. Matt. vi. 33. In comparison with the service of Christ, however, our natural lives are not worthy to be considered for a moment. Luke xiv. 26.

Verse 36.—No more important question was ever framed. Ask scholars for their deliberately formed judgments upon it. The loss of the soul is a penalty, first, for sin committed, and secondly for neglect of the only salvation. If the whole world were gained, it would be but for time, and it would be with many a care and anxiety, and yet for this, the better, sinless world which stands forever, is forfeited. The soul lost, all is lost.

Verse 37.—"What shall a man give &c. The price which the earthly-minded gives for the world is his soul. But having laid that down as a price, what has he for a counter-price to buy the soul back again? "Whoever" shows that the text reaches every one. "Ashamed," means put to shame or confusion. Whoever is made to feel thus by the name, or the words of Jesus, and who hence shrinks from acknowledging him in the world, shall find Jesus at the judgment shrinking from an acknowledgment of him and of all such. Surrounding sinfulness nowise excuses from fidelity to Jesus. Repeat the hymn "Jesus and shall it ever be."

ILLUSTRATIONS.—He who clings to a very small sin, is held by that sin and lost.

A wise man once seeking to explain a cross, took two slips of wood, a long and a short one, and said: "The long piece represents the will of God, the short one your will. Lay your will in a line with God's will, and you have no cross; lay it athwart, and you at once have a cross."

Abridged from the Baptist Teacher. Recite.—Scripture Catechism, 205, 206.

ANSWER TO SCRIPTURE ENIGMA.

No. LV.

G-aza's strong gates Samson bore quite away. Jud. xvi. 2.

O nesimus' debt Paul said he would pay. Philémon 19.

D-agon before the ark fell flatly down. 1 Sam. v. 3.

I-chabod's father died beneath God's frown. 1 Sam. vi. 21.

S-anballat's servant bore a letter forth. Neh. v. 5, 6.

L-aban's large flocks were blessed for Jacob's worth. Gen. xxx. 30.

O-thniel by bravery won his cousin's hand. Jud. i. 13.

V-ashti refused to obey her lord's command. Esth. i. 12.

E-gypt for many years the Hebrews fed. (Gen. xlvii. 27).

till forth from thence they were by Moses led.

That God is Love should cheer each anxious heart.

And from that nought love can his children part.

God is LOVE.—1 John iv. 8.

ANSWERS TO BIBLE QUESTIONS.

1. Amos was among the herdmen of Tekoa. Amos i. 1; vii. 14; "I was an herdman, and a gatherer of sycamore fruit."

2. Amos, the father of Isaiah. 2 Kings xix. 2. Isa. i. 1.

SCRIPTURE BIOGRAPHY.

No. III.

The Bible gives biographical sketches of a good many different sorts of women as well as of men. Here is a description of some touching incidents in the life of

A GRACIOUS WOMAN.

1. We first hear of her as hospitably entertaining an eminent servant of God at her house. Whenever he passed that way she constrained him to be her guest, and, with thoughtful care, made special arrangements for his comfort. She sought no favour at his hands when he was anxious to prove his gratitude, and, knowing her prosperous lot, he felt at a loss, till he found that God had withheld from her one great gift. His prayer that this joy might be her's was answered, and she received the blessing in honour of her loving ministry.

2. Some years later, a great and sudden blow fell on this happy home. The stricken one bore it meekly; and, after arranging

how best to spare another the anguish she felt, she hastened to the holy man, and poured out her full heart at his feet. Touched by her pleading, he came to the quiet room which had long ago been set apart for himself, and, alone with the dead, he wrestled with God for the precious life. The prayer of faith was heard, and grief was changed to adoring ecstasy.

3. Being warned by this man of God to escape disasters about to fall upon her people, she and her family retired to a place of refuge for several years. In her absence, all her possessions were seized, and she was obliged on her return to present herself at court to claim their restitution. The king was listening at that moment to an account of the great works wrought by the holy man on this woman's behalf. Suddenly the narrator recognised the suppliant, accompanied, too, by him on whom the miracle was performed, and pointed her out to the king, whose appeal to her drew forth confirmation of the wondrous story. The deeply impressed monarch gave strict orders not only for the restoration of her lands, but also that their entire produce during her long absence should be given her.

While we are ignorant of this woman's name, we have a clear idea of her nature. She possessed strength of character, tenderness, faith, and piety. It is very noteworthy that the greatest blessings of her life flowed from her loving reverence and hospitality to God's servant.

Find who were the persons referred to in this narrative, and find a declaration of our Saviour's which this history strikingly illustrates.

SHAN'T AND WON'T.

Shan't and Won't were two little brothers, Angry and sullen and gruff;

Try and Will are dear little sisters, One scarcely can love them enough.

Shan't and Won't looked down on their noses,

Their faces were dismal to see;

Try and Will are brighter than roses

In June, and as blithe as the bee.

Shan't and Won't were backward and stupid,

Little indeed did they know,

Try and Will learn something new daily,

And seldom are heedless or slow.

Shan't and Won't loved nothing, no, nothing

So much as to have their own way;

Try and Will give up to their elders,

And try to please others at play.

Shan't and Won't came to terrible trouble,

Their story is too sad to tell;

Try and Will are now at the infant-school,

Learning to read and to spell.

THE RIGHT SORT.

Our Thomas dropped a large, fine red apple out of the front window, which rolled very near the iron railing between the grass-plat and the street. Thomas forgot to pick it up. Shortly after two boys came along.

"Oh, my!" cried one; "see that bouncing apple. Let's hook it out!"

The other boy whispered, "Oh, don't; there's somebody looking;" and on they went.

A little girl next passed. She spied the apple, and stopped, looking very hard at it, then put her hand through the rails, and tried to reach it. Her fingers just touched it. She looked round; a man was coming down the street. The girl withdrew and went away.

A ragged little fellow came by soon after.

"That boy will grab the apple," I said to myself, peeping through the blinds.

His bright eyes at once caught sight of it, and he stopped. After looking at it a moment, he ran across the street and picked up a stick. He poked the stick through the rails, and drew the apple near enough to pick it up. Turning it over in his grimy hands, I could not help seeing how he longed to eat it. Did he pocket it and run? No.

He came up the steps and rang the door-bell. I went to the door. "I found this big apple in your front garden," said the boy, "and I thought maybe you had dropped it out, and didn't know it was there; so I have brought it to you."

"Why did you not eat it?"

"Oh," said he, "it is not mine."

"It was almost in the street," I said, "where it would have been hard to find its owner."

"Almost is not quite," replied the boy, "which Mr. Curtis says makes all the difference in the world."

"Who is Mr. Curtis?"

"My Sunday-school teacher. He has explained the eighth commandment to me, and I know it; what is better, I mean to stick to it. What's the use of knowing unless you act up to it?" Here he handed me the apple.

"Will you accept the apple?" I said.

"I am glad you brought it in; I like to know honest boys."

I think you will agree with me, that he is the right sort of Sunday-school scholar. He squares his conduct by the instruction which he gets there.

BEN-ONI.

Once upon a time, a great many years ago, in a distant land a mother lay dying. She was very sorry to have to go and leave the dear little baby boy God had just given to her. So, as she looked at him and thought of this, she said, "Call his name Ben-oni." That means "Son of my sorrow." But his father could not bear that such a name should cling to him all the way through life, so he said, "No! let us call him Benjamin." That is, Son of the right hand, a great comfort, a blessing, a help. How you would miss your right hand if it were cut off. Can any of you tell me who this little boy was? And what were the names of his father and mother?

Are any of you named Ben-oni? Are you disobedient, or idle, or selfish, or bad-tempered? Or are you the opposite of these,—a Benjamin, a child of joy, of comfort, of blessing? The wisest man who ever lived (who was he?) says, "A wise son [a Benjamin] maketh a glad father; but a foolish son [a Ben-oni] is the heaviness of his mother." Which are you?

UNFORTUNATE SPEECHES.

By unfortunate speeches we do not mean any that are made on the platform, in the pulpit or at the bar. Many of those are unfortunate enough as everybody knows, but we refer to those which may be heard by the fireside, in the social circle, on the streets, and wherever men and women meet together. The speeches we call "unfortunate" are those short utterances which give pain and make mischief. They are generally marked by thoughtlessness, rudeness, and a want of respect for the feelings of others. Sometimes they are the expressions of a spiteful or malicious heart, and sometimes they are only the evidence of a "giddiness in the head." Sometimes they are accompanied with a contemptuous turn of the lip or an indignant flash of the eye, and sometimes they are made with a bland smile and with an air of indifference. But, however made, they give pain and produce evil results. An example or two will illustrate the kind of speech we mean. A friend of ours who lectures occasionally for the benefit of other people—and himself—was returning with an acquaintance from a lecture given by a stranger. On the way home the acquaintance who had often heard our friend lecture, very emphatically remarked, "The lecture I have just listened to was by far the best I ever heard in all my life." We remember, too, the speech of a young lady who called to see her pastor soon after his settlement over the church of which she was a member. It is sometimes the case when a clergyman goes into a new parish that he has to hear all the scandal about his predecessor which has been talked over by his people for the past few years. But this is not always so. Some people welcome a new pastor by incessantly praising the old one. They seem to think the surest way to make the new man happy is to let him know on every possible occasion how deeply they are attached to the man he has succeeded. "Mr. S." say they—was an excellent preacher, and a better pastor never could be found. Visit him when you would, call him out when you would, he was always ready to receive you. He was unselfish and so good. I've made up my mind we shall never have such a man again." And after a speech like this, people will go home and think what a pleasant visit they have made. O very pleasant! such speeches give a wonderful appetite for one's dinner, and greatly cheer a new pastor's heart. The young lady to whom reference has been made seems to have thought so, at any rate. For after a long paucity on her former pastor, she finished her remarks by looking steadfastly in the eye of her present one and saying slowly, "O dear, I wish he never had left us."

These illustrations are sufficient to show what we mean by "unfortunate speeches," and also to show how careful we should be to avoid them.—N. Y. Musical Gazette.

A Temperance Column.

HOW THE WIFE FELT.

A man at whose house I was a guest, told me that he had been a hard drinker and a cruel husband; had beaten his poor wife till she had almost become used to it. But, said he, the very moment I signed the pledge, I thought of my wife; what will my wife say of this? Strange that I should think of my wife the first thing; and, as I was going home, I said to myself: Now, if I go home and tell her all of a sudden that I have signed the pledge, she'll faint away, or she'll up and do something; and I must break it to her by degrees. Only think of it; why, the night before, I'd have knocked her down, just as like as not, if she had not looked to please me; and now I'm planning to break good news to her, for fear it would upset her. As near as I could gather from what he told me, he found his wife sitting over the embers waiting for him. As he came into the house he said:

"Nancy, I think that—"

"Well, Ned, what is it?"

"Why I think I shall—that is—I mean to—to—Nancy I mean—"

"What's the matter, Ned? Anything the matter?"

"Yes," said he, "the matter's just this—I have signed the temperance pledge, and, so help me God, I'll keep it!"

She started to her feet, and she did faint away. I was just in time to catch her; and as she lay in my arms, her eyes shut and her face so pale, thinks I, she's dead, and I've done it now. But she wasn't dead; she opened her eyes, and then she put her arms round my neck; and I didn't know she was so strong, as she pulled and pulled, till she got me down where I had not been for thirty years before—on my knees. Then she said: "O God! help him!" and I said, "Amen," and she said, "O God! help my poor Ned; and strengthen him to keep his pledge," and I chattered "Amen!" just as loud as I could holler. That was the first time we ever knelt together, but it was not the last.

THRILLING INCIDENT.

At a temperance meeting in Philadelphia some years ago, a learned clergyman spoke in favor of wine as a drink, demonstrating its use quite to his own satisfaction to be spiritual, gentlemanly, and healthful. When he sat down, a plain elderly man rose and asked leave to say a few words. "A young friend of mine," said he, "who had long been intemperate was at length prevailed on, to the great joy of his friends, to take the pledge of entire abstinence from all that could intoxicate. He kept the pledge faithfully for some time, struggling with his habit fearfully, till one evening in a social party glasses of wine were handed around. They came to a clergyman present, who took a glass, saying a few words in vindication of the practice. 'Well,' thought the young man, 'if a clergyman can take wine, and justify it so well, why not I?' So he took a glass. It instantly rekindled his slumbering appetite, and after a downward course, he died of delirium tremens—died a raving madman." The old man paused for utterance, and was just able to add: "That young man was my son, and that clergyman was the Rev. Doctor who has just addressed the assembly."

"I'll take what father takes,"

"What will you take to drink?" asked a waiter of a young lad, who, for the first time, accompanied his father to a public dinner. Uncertain what to say, and feeling sure he could not be wrong if he followed his father's example, he replied, "I'll take what father takes."

The answer reached the father's ear, and instantly the full responsibility of his position flashed upon him. "Waiter, I'll take water." And from that day to this strong drink has been banished from that man's home.

A young man at Hopkinton, noticing that his tobacco didn't "chew right," dissected the plug and found that a lizard had been pressed between its folds, and that it was its dried flesh and bones which made the weed taste so queerly.

FARMER.—Pat, do you see the wind has blown the scare-crow down?—Get away and set it up. Pat.—It's better as it is, master; the crows 'll think its stoopin' to pick up a stone.