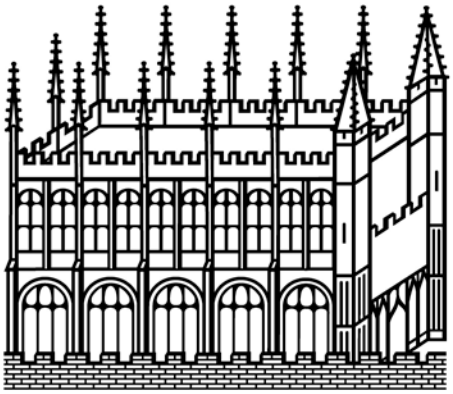


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The Sunday-school worker

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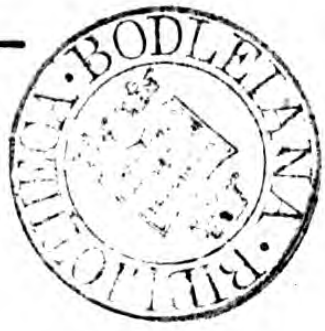
SUNDAY-SCHOOL WORKER,

A MONTHLY MAGAZINE

FOR THE

Help and Encouragement of those engaged in this branch of Christian Service.

"Cast thy bread upon the waters: for thou shalt find it after many days.
Ecc. xi. 1.



VOL. II.

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The Sunday-school Worker.

OUR WORK IN THE SUNDAY SCHOOL.

A TWELVEMONTH has rapidly passed away since we issued the first number of the "Sunday-school Worker." It is a short time to look back on now it is passed, and yet who can count up the mercies of one twelvemonth? Every morning they are new, and every evening they are constant. Oh for hearts to praise Him, the giver of them all! What grace too we have been met with in all our shortcomings and our failures, but HE has been and ever is the same.

What changes too have taken place! Teachers have gone home to be with Jesus; others have removed to different fields of labour; and others, alas, have looked back and given up; but, thank God, others have stepped forward for the Lord's work. The work is the Lord's, and the workmen are His. He was *the* Teacher when down here, and when He ascended up on high, He gave gifts to men, and He is now the Lord and Master of all teachers. How good it is to know we are not beating the air, or engaged on some work of our own that may or may not turn out a success; we trust *all* our readers can say humbly but confidingly, "We serve the Lord Christ." What a privilege to be under such a Master! and to know we are engaged in a work that shall yield fruit to eternity. God's word *shall* ac-

complish that for which He sends it. He sends it: we carry it for Him.

But what about scholars? Are there plenty of children, or are there too many schools? Do Sunday-school teachers lack work? Certainly not, where the Lord has bid any to work, and where there is a real love for souls. A lack of children? Why, in London alone there are born over two thousand three hundred every week; and it has been calculated from statistics, that in London only one-fourth of the young attend any Sunday-school. There is no fear then that the *material* will run short. Work on, teachers! there are thousands more growing up ready to fill your classes as vacancies arise, and *every one has a precious immortal soul to be saved.*

Fellow labourers, our work is a great work. Let us not be diverted from it. Nehemiah of old, when one wanted to divert him from building Jerusalem, replied that he was doing a great work and could not come down (Neh. vi. 3), and yet it was building only the wall of a city; true, but it was God's city, and so the work *was* great. We too work for God, and build for Him; and the work *is* great, very great; we must not be diverted.

Nehemiah had an enemy, and so have we. God has lifted the veil and given us a picture of that arch enemy of souls catching away the seed before it can take root. Who is to be a match for him? Who can stay his hand when stretched out to catch away the seed? Thank God, there is one that can do it, and who does it. There is a great Shepherd who drives away the wolf, and who claims this one and that one as His own little

lambs, and the seed takes root, and springs up to life everlasting.

Thus the kingdom of God grows and increases, spite of all that deadly array of principalities, and powers, and wicked spirits in heavenly places, which is constantly at work to hinder and to mar. Thank God, the work is not ours in any way apart from Him; we work for Him; and more—infinitely more—is He that is for us than all that can be against us. Let us take courage then, and labour on.

Ah, but we hear the sighs of some over their disappointments and their discouragements. They had looked for fruit and have seen none; indeed in some scholars they seem to see an increase of evil. Well it *is* good and pleasant to see the fruit; but we are sowing seed, and we are expressly told not to withhold the hand morning or evening; for we know not which shall prosper, this or that, or whether all shall prosper alike. The Master will bring forth the fruit in His own time. We must go on in patience, and be not faint in our hearts, for we *shall* reap in God's due time. And we often think of how our blessed Lord laboured on here patiently and enduringly with scarcely any fruit; even His disciples misunderstood Him, and one actually tried to hinder Him. But He could always look up, and find there above, One who was well pleased in all He did. So we too have One to whom we can always look, with whom we can always have fellowship, and whom we should try to please; and then all is well.

But what manner of workmen ought not we to be who do such a work and serve such a Master? Is there any one of us that thinks he has made too great

a sacrifice, been too zealous, too self-denying? Alas! it is the very reverse. One blushes to think how unfaithful we have been; how little zeal, how little self-denial we have manifested in the Lord's work.

How careless we have been at times as to our punctuality, regularity, and all the details of what should characterize one chosen to serve the Lord God Almighty. Would any one but God have borne with such servants as some of us are, and permitted them to do His work at all? We judge not. But we write not to condemn, but to stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance. Such a work and such a Master demand workmen who will not mar the work, or dishonour the Master.

Our Lord is coming soon: our labour here will then be over. Oh let us value it as a privilege to work for that One who gave Himself for us. It is often wearying to this poor body; but we are exhorted not to faint. There remaineth a rest for us in the glory. We call ourselves "Workers," then let us *work:* by-and-by we shall rest.

May the Lord stir us up to a more single-eyed devotion to Himself, and then to the work He has given us to do; and to Him shall be all the praise and the glory. Amen.

Ten thousand talents once I owed,
And nothing had to pay;
But Jesus freed me from the load,
And washed my debt away,
Yet since the Lord forgave my sin,
And blotted out my score,
Much more indebted I have been
Than e'er I was before.

NOTES ON SCRIPTURE.

MATTHEW.

As has often been remarked, the gospel as given by Matthew appears unmistakably to have been written to meet the need of the Jews: to point out that Jesus was the true Messiah, the Christ of God. On the other hand we must guard against the thought that in giving a *character* to any of the Gospels we exclude other titles of the Lord Jesus.

Thus, while bringing out that which belongs to Him as Son of David in Matthew, it is not in any way to exclude that which belongs to Him as Son of God, Son of man, &c. Because of not noticing this, it has been thought by some that the principle of a characteristic difference to each of the Gospels does not hold good, because the other titles of our Lord are also brought out in each. But nothing more is meant by a characteristic difference that that *one* title gives the character to each Gospel, yet in no way to exclude the others. The titles which mark the differences of the four Gospels we believe to be these:

MATTHEW . . . . . Son of David.
MARK . . . . . The faithful servant.
LUKE . . . . . The Son of man.
JOHN . . . . . The Son of God.

As we might suppose, if Matthew was written more especially to meet the need of the Jews, we should find more quotations from the Old Testament in this Gospel than in any one of the others: and this is the case. In a list of the quotations we find about thirty-five in Matthew, and not more than about nineteen in any one of the others.

CHAPTER I.

The very first verse of Matthew gives us the key to the Gospel. "Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the son of Abraham. "David" and "Abraham" were names with which every Jew was familiar, and in which he took the deepest interest. And this is the more to be noticed, because in Luke the genealogy does not stop at Abraham as it does here; but is traced up to Adam. Surely all can see how beautifully the stopping at Abraham agrees with the character of Matthew; as also how going back to Adam agrees with Christ being shewn as the Son of man in Luke. It was not left to the fancy or discretion of the writers. God had a wise design in it all. It is for us to learn His mind and to profit by all *His* differences.*

Verse 3. "Thamar." This is of course the daughter-in-law of Judah. It seems at first sight very strange that such a connection should have been brought into this genealogy. The shame attaching to this name would surely have been studiously avoided by man. But God's thoughts are not man's thoughts, and one of the deepest lessons man has to learn is *grace*, and grace altogether apart from and above everything good in man. The mention of such women as "Thamar" and "Rachab," mark out the triumphs of grace, and the humbling of man.

Verse 5. "Rachab." There can be no doubt that this was Rahab the harlot, of the book of Joshua. In the Greek there is the article to her name, which has

* Those unacquainted with the characteristic differences of the four Gospels are referred to a small book, "The Gospels: why are there four? Why do they differ? And are they fully inspired?"

been supposed to point out "the Rahab" or "that Rahab" of whom they had heard in Old Testament history; but that this is the force of the article here seems doubtful, as it is also placed to several other names. However, there is only one Rahab named in the Old Testament, and there can be no doubt that Rachab is the same person.* As we have said, the name of such a woman should greatly humble man while it exalts grace.

Verse 5. "Ruth." Though there is nothing morally against Ruth, yet she was a Moabitess, and of these God declared that they should not enter into the congregation unto the tenth generation. They were farther removed than even the Edomite or the Egyptian. (Deut. xxiii. 3–8.) This too was humbling to Israel.

Verse 6. "The [wife] of Uriah." Bathsheba is not named here, but she is referred to in a way which brings the sin of David to light in a striking manner. Man would have passed this over and hidden it from sight: not so God; man must be humbled. Thus we find in a few verses a catalogue of evil brought to light, and all in connection with the Jews, and with their long-looked-for hope of a Messiah. In Thamar we had incest; in Rachab, a Gentile harlot; in Ruth, a Moabitess; in the wife of Uriah, David's adultery and murder. Where sin abounded, grace hath much more abounded.

Verse 16. "Joseph, the husband of Mary." It will be noticed that this does not trace the genealogy to Mary, but to her husband; though Joseph was *not* the father of our Lord. This is according to the principles

* The name Rahab is also used for a *place*, doubtless typical of Egypt. Psalms lxxxvii. 4; lxxxix. 10; Isaiah li. 9.

of Jewish genealogies. Mary was espoused to Joseph, and he is here called her husband, and in verse 20 she is called his wife: in the eye of the law, they were husband and wife. Joseph was a lineal descendant of the royal house of David; and our Lord must be a "Son of David." Thus the requirements of the law are met; whereas our Lord is not really the son of Joseph, or He could not have been our Saviour. All was divinely ordered: He is the Son of God, and yet He is the Son of David legally.

But a difficulty will naturally present itself here, namely, how could our Lord be said to be in reality the Son of David, if the genealogy could be traced only to Joseph, who was not really his father? Supposing the betrothal of Mary to Joseph enabled Jesus to be looked at from a Jewish point of view as Joseph's son, yet He was not his son in reality, and He was to be *really* the Son of David.

We doubt not the difficulty is met by the genealogy in Luke, where we believe *Mary* is also shewn to be a descendant of David. It is quite true that this is not stated in so many words, but there is ample room for it. In Matthew it is stated that Joseph, the husband of Mary, is the son of Jacob; but in Luke he is spoken of as [the son] of Heli. Now Jacob and Heli could not both have been his father; but then it is important to notice that while in Matthew it expressly says "Jacob begat Joseph," it does not say so in Luke, nor are there any words implying as much. It will be seen that the words "the son" are in italics, so that there is ample room here for Heli's being *Mary's* father, and Joseph's father-in-law, without in any way doing violence to the

scripture. The genealogy all through in Luke is put in an indefinite way. Doubtless "the son of" is the true sense in most places, though in some places it *may* be "grandson of," and in Joseph's case it would be "Jesus . . . . being (as was supposed) the son of Joseph, which was [the son-in-law] of Heli." It really reads, "the son of Joseph, which was of Heli, which was of Matthat, which was of Levi," &c., the definite relationship not being stated.

This, we believe, fully meets the difficulty, and allows for our Lord being in reality the Son of David through Mary His mother, and legally the Son of David through Joseph, Mary's affianced husband.

Verse 17. In this verse three generations, of fourteen each, are named: not that there were *only* fourteen in these periods, except in the first, but there is a selection made of fourteen names which form a chain in three divisions, from Abraham to Joseph, the husband of Mary. All the names could have been given; but God, for some wise purpose of His own caused this selection to be made. There were really fourteen in the first period, and the others are made to agree therewith, being divided at the carrying away into Babylon. Of this last punishment too they must be reminded, and it was needful surely for a people who could so boastfully declare that they were never in bondage to any (John viii. 33), though proofs of their then existing bondage were plainly staring them in the face. The Son of David, their true Messiah, was come to them, with every blessing to bestow; yea, salvation; but they must be humbled into their true place. He gave mercy to the poor and humble, but the rich He sent empty away.

Correspondence.

ONE DAY IN A SUNDAY SCHOOL.

Dear Mr. Editor,

I should like, with your permission, to contribute a short article to our magazine, under the head of "*encouragements.*" I suppose from the fact of instances of conversion of children being so eagerly read, that this theme has no small interest for Sunday-school teachers, but I think that when an instance of real conversion to God comes under one's own notice, it has a peculiar interest and blessedness that we do not see in cases which we *hear of* only.

The case I am about to mention is that of a young girl, about fifteen years old, who came to our school for one Sunday only; I suppose what she heard on that one Sunday roused serious thoughts within her, for, when shortly after she was taken ill, she tried to get the address of her teacher, but failed to do so; so the Sunday following, her mother came to the school, requesting that her teacher would visit her at once. This she did, and, it being the Sunday when we usually stay behind for a little prayer, she returned to the school, saying, she had seen the girl, who was still unsaved, but that she had earnestly requested that prayer might be made for her: this we were very glad to hear, believing that the Lord was working in her soul.

During the week, the teacher found opportunity to visit her again, and found her in the same state, very anxious about her soul; but, blessed be God! ere she rose to leave, our prayers were answered, and she

left the dear girl rejoicing in the Lord, able to say intelligently that she was saved.

Beloved fellow-workers, let us take courage; if we do not at once see the fruit we would wish, may we not be faint-hearted, but work on, knowing that we shall reap if we faint not. N. S.

SPECIAL GOSPEL MEETINGS.

DEAR MR. EDITOR,

That my dear fellow-workers in the Sunday school, may be encouraged and cheered in their "work of faith and labour of love," and may be led to expect more blessing in the conversion of their scholars, I venture to send you a simple account of a meeting we held here for our children last winter.

We have, the last two or three winters, given a tea, on one day to the parents of the children, and on the next day one to the children themselves; our aim being the glory of God in the salvation of their souls.

We had the parents' meeting one Monday; they were godless souls, for the most part; many of whom perhaps never hear the gospel except on such an occasion. But we were especially looking out for the children's meeting, and had been crying to God for some time that He would give much blessing at this meeting. And we felt sure He would do it.

We had about one hundred and twenty children present, and after tea was over we re-arranged them for being spoken to. Two then addressed them very sweetly, by which time it was about half-past seven, when we sent the infants home. Then the others were again addressed by three other speakers, who spoke to

them of the precious Saviour, and their own lost state as sinners; and they were earnestly pleaded with to come to Him and let Him save them.

And, as one after the other spoke, we could see many of the dear children wiping away the tears that would roll down their cheeks. Several had been anxious about their souls for some time past, and now they were thoroughly broken down. The Lord was evidently working in their midst. It was nearly nine o'clock before the last address was finished; a hymn was then sung, prayer offered, and we dismissed them.

But as they went out and were spoken to individually, many of them broke down altogether. One girl about thirteen years old found peace whilst being spoken to by an earnest worker. Her face lit up with joy; there was no mistaking her having passed "from death unto life." Five or six girls went out together, all sobbing about their sins, and all very anxious; but they came back again in about five minutes. They could not rest—could not go home—could we pray for them? And then, as about twenty girls and boys were staying behind, nearly all of them very anxious about their souls, we prayed with them; and oh, what a scene! They wept aloud; they interrupted our prayers with their sobbing and crying. It was a glorious after-meeting. The Lord's presence and power were most manifest. We prayed with them, and spoke to them of a finished work, of a present salvation, of One waiting to save them; and several of them were enabled to trust in Him. It was ten o'clock when we at last got them to go home: some of them as bright as possible; some most unhappy and anxious.

The next morning, a dear little girl about eleven years old came to tell me that she was happy. "But you were not happy last night," I said to her; "how is it that you are happy now?" "Oh," she said, "Jesus has done it. I was so miserable last night; but now I am so happy: all my sins are gone."

She was very bright: one could not doubt her salvation for a moment. And several of the others came soon after to the teachers, at different times, and confessed Christ. Within a month, two boys and nine girls, between eleven and sixteen years of age (five of the girls being in one class) had professed to find peace; all of whom have gone on very nicely, manifesting in their walk that they are really saved.

Thus did the good Lord allow us the blessed privilege of seeing the seed which had been sown, spring up and bring forth fruit.

And to His dear name be all the praise. M.

THE IMPORTANCE OF PRAYER.

Dear Mr. Editor,

In commencing another year, and if the Lord tarry, I trust one of even more cheerful labour, I should wish to say a few words on the subject of prayer. If ever there was a time when prayer, real, deep, earnest prayer was needed, it is in these last days, when things are growing darker and darker, and the world is drifting into cold indifference, or open infidelity.

I feel convinced that if we spent more time on our knees in private before the Lord, we should see far greater blessing in our schools; and that if we did so

we should be better prepared too for the public meetings for prayer. If He, our great Exemplar, did this, how much more need have we!

Surely none engaged in evangelistic work, whether it be the Sunday school or preaching the gospel to adults, can avoid noticing the indifference manifested by many of those who listen; how the speaker's words seem to fall on stony ground, or as idle tales; how little do children even appear to be affected by the sweet tale of the cross; and how they get off a few texts by heart, but think very little of what they are saying.

True it is, blessed be God, there are cases of conversion in our schools, some of which were mentioned in our magazine; but what I want to press is, that if we were more faithful—if we sought to get more into the current of the thoughts and mind of God as to our work—there would be richer blessing. Oh, that He may stir us up to the vital importance of our task!

I was much struck with an incident that came under my notice while reading, some little time since. Some of your readers may not have seen it, and in the hope that it will be a word in season to us all, I give it.

"A young lady was requested to take a class in a Sunday school; she complied, and was seen to be very earnest, faithful, and affectionate with her young charge. In a little while one scholar after another became thoughtful, serious, and anxious, until every member of her class was converted to God. She was then asked to give up that class and take another. After due consideration, she consented. She had not been long in her new class before similar effects were produced. She was finally requested to give up this class also and

take another of unconverted children. She had not laboured long, when the same results followed.

"This faithful servant's work was now done; she soon after fell asleep in Jesus and entered into that rest which remains for the people of God; and how doubly sweet it will be to those who have laboured unwearyingly here. After her death her friends on examining her journal, found the following determination registered, '*Resolved, I will pray once every day for each of my class by name.*' On looking further into the journal, they found the same resolution re-written, and re-adopted, with a slight addition, 'Resolved, I will pray once every day for each member of my class by name, *and agonize in prayer.*' On still further examination, the same resolution was again found re-written and re-adopted, with another addition as follows, 'Resolved, I will pray once every day for each member of my class by name, and agonize in prayer, and *expect a blessing.*'" Surely this was a servant who knew and felt the importance of her work and kept to it!

Oh! beloved fellow-workmen, how far are you and I found "agonizing in prayer? and expecting a blessing!" Are our souls alive to the immense importance of our work? Are we so in communion and fellowship with the Lord that we can look up and count upon a blessing at His hands? Surely this is the "secret of success." May He in His infinite mercy so rouse us up that we too may "agonize in prayer." The Lord says, "Surely I come quickly." Soon, very soon, the last time in our classes will be here; soon we shall be telling for the last time "The old, old story of Jesus and His love." Will it be as a living reality? Soon

we shall be singing the song and bearing the palm; but what about the children in our classes, will they be among the number? Will there be one missing? Shall we soon hear Him say, "Well done, good and faithful servant?" What blessed reward will that be for our little service and toil down here. May we then,

"Work while the daylight lasteth,
Ere the shades of night come on,
Ere the Lord of the vineyard cometh,
And the labourer's work is done."

U. K.

PRACTICAL HINTS, VII.

The Superintendent.—The main duty of a superintendent is to utilise the teaching elements to the best advantage. He must keep each teacher well supplied with work, and where necessary, as unfortunately it very often is, must keep the teacher "to the yoke:" *provoking* unto love and to good works. He will require to be energetic and intelligent; be instant in season and out of season, to reprove and exhort.

But then he will have to do that "with all long suffering," "making a difference," as James says. Just as you will see a clever coachman smack his whip with an encouraging word to "old Bess," as she struggles in every muscle to keep her paces, doing her best; but again to young "Dick" lagging and shirking his work, he makes the whip curl with a crack round the lazy fellow's loins, and urges him onward.

"Making a difference." It will not do to deal in the

same way with Mr. Despondent, as with Mr. Fast-and-loose. Despondent wants stimulation, Fast-and-loose wants remonstrance, perhaps reproof. Despondent *has* got some kind of a conscience, and strives to overcome the difficulties of domestic impediments, bad health, an unmanageable class, and most of all, his own apprehensive and sluggish temperament. Encourage him, help him ; pray for him.

But Mr. Fast-and-loose has an unhappy knack of going down to the seaside from "Saturday till Monday," or something of the sort occasionally, and never sends a substitute, nor even sends word. He is waited for till twenty minutes past the time (for he often trips in then, very airily and indifferent), his boys meanwhile sadly disturbing the adjacent classes. It is a mystery to me where Fast-and-loose keeps his conscience. Altogether, he treats the work in a manner entirely at variance with its solemnity and importance.

Now you must remonstrate with such a one, by so doing you perhaps accomplish one of two things : either you bring him to a self-judgment, and stimulate him into a useful servant ; or he retires offended ; but either is better than his continuing on in the present way. Such teachers go far to ruin any school : they are flies in the ointment.

Generally speaking, there is no admissible excuse for any teacher's being away from his class without sending a substitute, or, in default of this, giving the superintendent proper notice. Nothing is so embarrassing as to begin the school while one or two classes are unprovided for ; and then everything is delayed, and other classes annoyed, by some being drafted here, and

some there. Now there is too much of this kind of thing in our schools, notwithstanding all that has been said about it; and I ask such teachers, How can you be so scandalously lax in this work of the Lord; this work of solemn importance? And I ask superintendents to set a proper example themselves, first, and then that they should firmly weed such looseness out of the school.

But then again, "making a difference," I would speak to young Lackadaisy very differently from poor dear Mrs. Hubbard, who has several children, and one of whom is ill, in addition to which in wet weather Mrs. H. is but ill provided with umbrella and suitable clothing.

Stimulating, encouraging, and praying for everyone engaged in the school, the superintendent's post is most onerous; and he that omits these duties is unlikely to be very successful or fruitful. But he that has a large, prayerful, loving ardour in the work all round does well. He studies the difficulties and weaknesses of each that he may help them the more. He encourages Nervous: he helps Timid: he inspires Despondent: he cools down the strange zeal of Boanerges: he quiets Didactics: he meets Crotchety with scripture and its principles: he lends books to Ignoramus (with the leaf turned down and the margin marked where needed), and he gives Fast-and-loose serious remonstrance. He "warns, comforts, supports," is "instant in season and out of season to reprove, rebuke, and exhort with all long suffering and doctrine."

The School-cure.—I would just add that it is a pity that people are so very susceptible to being "unwell"

on Sunday afternoon. A good deal of this can be easily thrown off; and an earnest, exciting afternoon's work in the school is just the medicine I should prescribe for nine-tenths of these "indispositions." I do not say it is always the case, but, speaking experimentally, I invariably find the school-cure in a very short time successful; having frequently dragged myself there in a general state of collapse, but, before half-an-hour elapsed, I have found myself quite recovered, and set up for a hard evening's work besides. I am not prepared to say *how* the cure works, but it does work. For a teacher to stop away from his Sunday work for a less cause than would prevent his attending his secular labour is altogether inexcusable. Q. E. D.

TEACHING TO SING.

Dear Mr. Editor,

Will you allow me a small corner in our magazine just to suggest a thought and ask your opinion of it. I heard a little child only a few days ago, as she was passing through the street, singing aloud that beautiful hymn, "There is a happy land." To my own mind it was very sweet, and I thought it much better to hear that than those songs which are generally heard from the mouths of a great number of children, and even Sunday-school scholars.

The thought has crossed my mind, since hearing of a Sunday school that had adopted the plan, whether it would not be well to bring the children together at times, say once a week to practise singing, by which they would learn the hymns, also the truth contained

therein. A word or two about the truth in the hymn at the same time might be profitable.

In some of our schools the teachers find it difficult to come together until rather a late hour; would it in such a case be right and proper to stay for a short time after the close of the school?

I am not quite clear as to whether it would interfere or carry off the mind, from that which had been pressed upon them by their teachers.

A LOVER OF THE YOUNG.

[We should doubt the desirability of calling children together for the object of teaching them to sing; but we see no difficulty in their learning to sing hymns without its being a definite aim in view. For instance, in some classes the scholars are encouraged to learn certain hymns, but where this is not the case, by their singing one or two hymns every Sunday, they soon pick up both hymns and tunes, especially the favourite hymns that are often repeated. Again, there is generally a little singing at any week day meeting that may be held for the scholars; so that it seems very unlikely that a scholar could come to school for any length of time without learning at least parts of hymns. These hymns may contain statements of the gospel which may be blessed to those who hear the scholars singing them or to the scholars themselves; but at the same time we think scholars ought to be cautioned against singing *thoughtlessly*. We have been shocked by hearing children singing very solemn words in their play without, apparently, having the least thought of what they were singing.—ED.]

HINTS TO THE UNINSTRUCTED.

We have been surprised, and grieved we may say, to find how uninstructed in even the letter of the word some Sunday-school teachers are.

When it is remembered however that many persons are until their conversion mostly, if not entirely, unacquainted with the Bible—and that soon after their conversion they desire to work for their Lord, and feel led to take up the Sunday-school work—it is not so much to be wondered at that they make sad mistakes as to that blessed book.

And yet all mistakes are to be lamented when they come from one called a *teacher*, and especially when they are concerning the word of God.

It is not a very uncommon thing for a scholar to know more about the letter of the Bible than his teacher, and for him to repeat at home with astonishment and often contempt the mistakes he detects in his teacher.

We have heard of teachers who could not even read and yet they had hearts burning with love to souls, and went on with their work perseveringly.

We should recommend all such to learn to read. A fellow teacher or a christian friend could surely be found who would devote some evening in the week to such a desirable end. We need not say that the help this would be in the study of the word would amply repay all the toil and labour necessary, and we hope that there would not be a forgetting to look to the Lord for ability to learn. We should recommend the

teachers who *can* read to suggest kindly and recommend strongly this to any who cannot.

To those who can read, let them early learn the order of the books in the Old and New Testament. It has a very bad effect on the scholars when the teacher does not know where to find any particular book; but there is a higher motive: it is God's volume and each should be familiar with it all.

The order of the books can best be learnt from the Bible itself. It will be found a help if the books of Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Song of Solomon be taken as a centre of the Old Testament, the historical books being *before*, and the prophetical books *after*.

But besides the mere order of the books as they occur in the Bible, there are certain terms applied to *parts* of the scriptures: terms which are in common use among Christians, and, though they do not occur in the Bible, they ought to be understood by every Sunday-school teacher. We run through the books and give those terms more commonly in use.

THE PENTATEUCH. The first five books in the Bible are called "the five books of Moses," or "the Pentateuch," which term simply means five implements or books.

THE HISTORICAL BOOKS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT include all from Genesis to Esther. It must also be noted that some of the prophets contain portions of history.

JOB. This book contains the history of Job, and though placed after the historical books, is believed to refer to a very early time, even before the events recorded in the book of Exodus.

THE PSALMS. These are divided in the original into five books—there being something peculiar to each book. The whole are divided thus:—

Book	I.	Psalm	i.	to	xli.
,,	II.	,,	xlii.	,,	lxxii.
,,	III.	,,	lxxiii.	,,	lxxxix.
,,	IV.	,,	xc.	,,	cvi.
,,	V.	,,	cvii.	,,	cl.

We should recommend teachers to mark these divisions in their Bibles. They may not see the value of them at present, but we think they will by-and-by as they study the Psalms more minutely.

Christians sometimes speak of a psalm being one of the 'Messianic' psalms, by which they mean that the psalm is a prophecy referring to the Messiah. Another term is 'Penitentiary' psalms, by which is meant psalms that were uttered by David when he was penitent for his sins, though doubtless in many instances they are prophetically the language of the Jewish remnant by-and-by. 'Imprecatory' psalms is another term used, which refers to those psalms that call for the punishment and destruction of the enemies. These have sadly puzzled the commentators, who have not discovered how to put such desires into the mouths of Christians to be in agreement with the spirit of the gospel. But these psalms also refer prophetically to the Jewish remnant in a future day, whose deliverance will be effected only by the destruction of their enemies.

PROVERBS AND ECCLESIASTES. These call for no remark.

SONG OF SOLOMON. This book is often called THE CANTICLES, which means 'The little song.'

THE PROPHETS. These take in from Isaiah to Malachi.

THE MINOR PROPHETS comprise Hosea to Malachi. They are simply called 'minor' because they are shorter than the others.

THE NEW TESTAMENT.

This term, as well as that of "the Old Testament," is not a part of scripture, but has been added by those who put the books together. There is however a decided break between the Old and the New Testaments, and perhaps no better terms can be found for them.

THE SYNOPTICAL GOSPELS. Matthew, Mark, and Luke are often referred to under this title because they are supposed to contain a more general view of the whole (or synopsis) of our Lord's labours than is contained in John's gospel.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES. In learning the order of the books in the New Testament, the Acts may be taken as the centre—the gospels being before, and the epistles after, with the Revelation at the end.

THE PAULINE EPISTLES. This is simply the Epistles written by the Apostle Paul, and which bear his name; to which is added the Hebrews; though this epistle does not contain his name, it is generally believed to have been written by him.

THE PASTORAL EPISTLES are those addressed to Timothy and Titus. The term is used with the thought that the persons written to are *pastors* or shepherds of Christ's flock.

THE CATHOLIC EPISTLES. This term is commonly

applied to James, the two epistles of Peter, the three epistles of John and Jude. They are called 'Catholic' or 'General' because they are not addressed to any particular churches.

THE REVELATION. This is often called THE APOCALYPSE, which is the Greek word that is translated 'Revelation.'

There are also a few things connected with the letter of the word, with which all should be familiar.

Sometimes in the Old Testament we find the word Lord printed LORD. This signifies that in the original the word is Jehovah; and when it is printed in the common type (Lord) it must be understood by the context.

Some words are printed in *this type*, called 'italics.' In ordinary books, as is very generally known, such words are so printed to shew that greater emphasis is to be placed on those words; but in the Bible they are used for quite another purpose, namely, to shew that they are merely added to make good English, there being *no* corresponding words in the original, and are therefore not really a part of scripture.

(A scholar once ran home saying that her teacher had told the class that words printed in *italic* in the Bible were more emphatic, and *she* knew better than that. Though a mistake natural enough to those unacquainted with the scripture, we can all see how such an incident was calculated to lower the teacher in the estimation of the class.)

Teachers generally use reference Bibles and make a frequent use of the references. In the main these are useful, but teachers ought to know that as these re-

ferences are the work of men, who were liable to mistakes, some of them are calculated to mislead, and turn the enquirer into an entirely wrong current.

The headings to the pages and the headings to the chapters are also the work of man, and in some cases would mislead the reader; such as "God's mercies to his Church," which is the heading to Isaiah xxx. The chapter does not refer to the church.

The short headings to the Psalms, however, are a part of scripture; such as "Maschil of David; a prayer when he was in the cave." Psalm cxlii.

The division also of the scriptures into chapters and verses is the work of man, and is apt to mislead in a few places. Such as in the Revelation, the last verse of chapter xi. ought to be joined to chapter xii. When you meet with any such thing as this, having it on good authority of course, it is best to mark it in your Bible.

But we forbear. The Bible is God's book, and is worthy of all our attention. Of course to understand its letter is with us only a means to an end; but it is a means which ought not to be neglected. The end is to understand the scriptures. May God give us all an increased and more earnest desire to know and understand all that God has been pleased to reveal to us in His own blessed book.

NOTES ON SCRIPTURE.

MATTHEW I.

VERSE 20. "Joseph, thou son of David." This manner of speaking of Joseph occurs here only. It agrees with the genealogy being of *him;* he had just before been proved to be the son of David.

Verse 21. "Thou shalt call his name Jesus; for he shall save his people from their sins." He was to be called "Jesus," *for* He would save His people from their sins. Thus Jesus signifies "Saviour," or rather, "Jehovah the Saviour." He claims the people as *His* people, and the people belonged to Jehovah. The name "Jesus" is the same as "Joshua" (Acts vii. 45; Heb. iv. 8), or Jehoshua, "Jehovah the Saviour." It is to this name of "Jesus" every knee will have to bow. (Phil. ii. 10, 11.) What remorse will then fill the rejecters of the gospel, when they are compelled to bow to the One named *Saviour*.

Notice, in this verse it is "save *his* people," the Jews. This is quite in keeping with the character of the gospel; even as "on *earth* peace; good-will to *man*," and "a light to lighten the Gentiles," is in keeping with the character of Luke.

Verse 23. "Behold a virgin." It should be "*the* virgin"—the virgin in the mind of God, and the one prophesied of. In both the Hebrew and the Septuagint, —as here, it is "*the* virgin."

"They shall call his name Emmanuel, which, being interpreted, is "God with us." This is remarkable as occurring nowhere else in the New Testament. The Jews were looking for a human Messiah, who should redeem Israel nationally. It was of the greatest importance that they should be taught that this their Messiah was *God*, and that Jesus was God with them.

CHAPTER II.

Verse 1. "Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem." These words would naturally convey the

thought that the visit of the wise men was soon after the birth of Jesus; but on comparing this visit with the Gospel of Luke, it will be seen that this could not be the case. For instance, this visit of the wise men could not have been *before* the presentation in the temple (Luke ii. 22–39), because after the visit Joseph flees with the child Jesus into Egypt, and so could not have been present at Jerusalem for the presentation. Neither could the wise men have come soon *after* the presentation, because after the presentation they proceeded to their own city, Nazareth (ver. 39), and could not have been found at Bethlehem. It is probable that the wise men saw the star at the birth of our Lord, and, as they came from far east, it would have taken them a long time to perform the journey, and so could not have arrived till several months after the birth. It may be that Joseph paid, as we say, a casual visit to Bethlehem; or, as we read, that "his parents went to Jerusalem every year at the feast of the passover" (ver. 41), they may, on one of these visits, being comparatively near to Bethlehem (about six miles), have paid a visit to the birthplace of our Lord, twelve or fifteen months after the birth; at which time the wise men arrived, and found them at Bethlehem; all being ordered as to time and place by God. This visit of the wise men is often confounded with the visit of the shepherds, which was at, or soon after, the birth. (Luke ii. 15–20.) The order of events would then be thus:—

Birth at Bethlehem.
Adoration of the shepherds.
Presentation in the temple.
They go to Nazareth.

Return to Bethlehem at a later period.
Visit of the magi.
Flight into Egypt.*

This later visit of the magi is confirmed by the age of the children put to death by Herod. He diligently, or accurately, inquired concerning the time of the appearing of the star, and then fixed upon "from two years old and under," which would agree very well with the above, leaving a margin of a few months for Herod to make sure, as he thought, of his victim.

This does no violence to scripture—for we must bow to that in everything;—the words are *better* translated, "Now Jesus having been born in Bethlehem," leaving the time *when* altogether indefinite.

"Wise men from the east." The phrase, wise men, is indefinite; the word in the Greek is magi, from which we derive our words, magic and magician. These we use now mostly in a bad sense, but the word magi was used formerly in a good as well as a bad sense, and Daniel, we find, was made "master of the magicians." (Dan. iv. 9; v. 11.) We read of Simon (Magus) in Acts viii., and of a sorcerer (magus) xiii. 6, 8, where the word is used in a bad sense; but in our passage it may be used in a good sense. We doubt not the magi who visited our Lord were wise men, or philosophers, who studied the stars, but further than this we are not informed.

Verse 2. "We have seen his star in the east." All sorts of objections have been raised as to this: How did the magi know anything about a king of the Jews

* From "Dates and Chronology of Scripture."

going to be born? Was the star they saw an ordinary star, or a supernatural one? How did the magi know it was *His* star? &c. We know little but what scripture tells us. The Old Testament prophecies would be more or less known by the carrying away and scattering of the Jews. Daniel received his revelation as to the seventy weeks in Babylon, and the Old Testament had long before been translated into Greek, in which was Balaam's prophecy, that a STAR should arise out of Jacob. (Num. xxiv. 17.) We need know no more. It was all brought about by God Himself, and it was *His* way of informing Herod and the heads of the nation that their long-looked-for Messiah was come.

Verse 3. "Herod . . . was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him." What a picture of the state of the Jews morally! There was news brought that the King of the Jews had been born, and His birth had been pointed out from heaven; but instead of hailing the tidings with delight, all Jerusalem was troubled! Contrast this with the *joy* of the heavenly host, in Luke.

Verse 4. This new-born King was at once, and rightly, connected with "the Christ," and the question was asked where He should be born. This brought the subject before the heads of the nation, for notice, that "*all* the chief priests and scribes of the people" were called into counsel. They knew the scriptures, and they answered correctly where the Christ should be born; but we do not read that they had any desire to accompany the magi. Another scripture tells us plainly that He came to His own, and His own received Him not.

Verse 5. "Bethlehem of Judea." A city about six

miles south of Jerusalem, also called Bethlehem-Ephratah, because Ephratah was its ancient name, not to be confounded with another Bethlehem, about six miles east of Nazareth.

Verses 9, 10. It would not appear from these verses that the star had been kept in sight all their journey. They had seen it when they were in the east, and when they left Herod they saw it again, and were very glad when it re-appeared to them.

Verse 15. "Out of Egypt have I called my son." This is a reference to Hosea xi. 1, but where literal Israel is spoken of, "When Israel was a child then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt." At first sight this presents a difficulty, namely, how that which was written of Israel can be thus applied to our Lord. But it is true of *both:* Christ passed through what they passed through. They went into Egypt, and He went into Egypt; they were called out of it, and He was called out of it; and in Isaiah xlix. 3 Christ is plainly referred to as "Thou art my servant, O Israel;" and in verse 5 the people are called Israel, thus uniting the two under one name. Christ *was* the true Israel of God.

Verse 16. The slaughter of the children is a remarkable proof of the determined effort to get rid of the Son of God at the very outset; and here, note, it is *man*, a Gentile, and not a Jew.

Verse 23. "He came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth; that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, he shall be called a Nazarene." This presents a difficulty when compared with Luke ii. 4, which represents Nazareth as the dwelling-place of

Joseph and Mary *before* the birth of our Lord, and to which place they returned after the presentation in the temple (ver. 39), and where it is called "their own city, Nazareth." It is entirely an unworthy way of meeting the difficulty by supposing, as some Christians do, that Matthew wrote what he did because he was unacquainted with the fact that Joseph had resided at Nazareth before the birth of our Lord and that it was Joseph's ordinary place of abode. But this shuts out God. *He* is the author of each of the gospels, and He knew it all. We believe the solution of the difficulty to be, that it is looking at the matter from an entirely different point of view. As the Gospel of Matthew was written, as we say, for the Jews, it was important that it should be shewn how Christ fulfilled the many scriptures that referred in any way to Him. For this purpose He must go and lodge there, entirely irrespective of whether He had ever been there before or not. Joseph may have gone to Nazareth because it was "his own city" at other times, and even at this time (though *now* he may have been inquiring whether he should locate at some other place), but he must go there now for another reason, namely, that the scripture may be fulfilled. And this is greatly strengthened by the fact that we further read in this same gospel that He afterwards left Nazareth, and proceeded to "dwell in Capernaum, which is upon the sea coast, in the borders of Zabulon and Nephthalim," that *another* scripture might be fulfilled. (Matt. iv. 13–15.) He must go to Nazareth, that some portions of scripture might be fulfilled; and he must leave it, and go elsewhere for the same purpose. At every turn the very

scripture, in which the Jews thought they had eternal life, was being fulfilled before them. But, alas! they knew not the day of their visitation, and saw it not.

"That which was spoken by the prophets; he shall be called a Nazarene." There is a difficulty here, inasmuch as neither these words, nor any nearly like them, can be found in the prophets; indeed, neither Nazareth nor Nazarene are to be found in the Old Testament. Some have supposed that the meaning is that "He shall be called a 'Nazarite,'" in reference to Christ being the true Nazarite of God. But there is no connection between the city of Nazareth and any one being a Nazarite. Christ went to dwell at Nazareth because it was said of Him that "He shall be called a Nazarene." We believe the solution to be in the fact, that to be a Nazarene was a term of contempt, as is proved by John i. 46: "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" uttered by one in whom was no guile. And the prophets had given abundant evidence that Christ would be held in contempt.

It will be noticed that it says "the prophets," in the plural. Therefore it is not what any particular prophet had said, but it was the testimony given by various prophets, that contempt should be poured upon Him; and Nazareth was not only held in contempt by those of Judea, but by those even of Samaria. And whereas our Lord is spoken of sometimes as Jesus *of* Nazareth, he is frequently called "*the* Nazarene."

The sense, then, is, that He went and abode in Nazareth, that contempt might be thrown upon Him as a Nazarene, as the prophets had foretold, that He should be held in scorn and contempt.

Thus in this chapter we get the trouble of all Jerusalem on the news of their true King being born, the indifference of their leaders, and the murderous design of the Gentile king. We see also how God watched over His anointed. He directs the flight into Egypt, and warns the wise men not to return to Herod. He tells Joseph when to return, and then warns him to turn aside into Galilee; and the despised Nazareth must be resorted to, that those who would could call the Holy One and the Just, as they did, "the Nazarene;" and once we read that His followers are called "the sect of the Nazarenes" (Acts xxiv. 5), thus sharing in His reproach.

Correspondence.

FOR WHOM ARE YOU WORKING?

One of the many striking features of the day in which our lot is cast, is the great attention which is now being paid to the important subject of education. We do not at all propose to enter into this question in these pages, but the conflict raging around us seems destined to bring into greater prominence the work of the Sunday school and to add greatly to its importance.

The Sunday school is undoubtedly a most important field of christian labour, and it is precisely because it is so important, that we desire to press two solemn and weighty questions upon the attention of every Sunday-school teacher. The first is "For whom are you working?" and the second is, "How are you doing the work?"

In the third chapter of the first Epistle to the

Corinthians there is some most important instruction as to these questions, and it becomes all who labour in the Sunday school to ponder it well.

The first thing we notice in that deeply interesting chapter is, that God Himself is at work in this world. There is such a thing in the world as "God's husbandry, God's building." In spite of what Satan is doing and has been doing for so long to corrupt what God has set up in this world, we may rest assured that God is still at work. He has a work to do and He will accomplish it, "who shall stay His hand?" Not all the powers of earth and hell combined can hinder for one moment the onward progress of God's work. His *work* must be done, His *husbandry* must be attended to, His *building* must be completed.

But not only has He a work in this world but He is the Master, the Director of it. He is the Lord of the vineyard, and in this position He will permit of no rival. He may have, and no doubt has, many servants, but there is but one Master. "Ye call me Master, and ye say well, for so I AM." This is a truth of great importance in these days. There are "lords many" in what is going on around us, and men of different opinions are everywhere in conflict as to who shall have the mastery; but in the vineyard of the Lord there is but one Master, and that one is the Lord Himself. Whatever may be the nature of our work—and surely all have not the same work to do—in one thing we, who labour for God, are all alike, we have but one Master, "we serve the Lord Christ."

But this chapter also teaches us that if God has a husbandry—a building—in this world, and if He is the

Lord of the vineyard, we, who do His work, must be content to be nothing, but let God be, in this as in all else, everything. If any one deserved to be thought much of because of the work he had accomplished, it was the apostle Paul. The history in the Acts of the Apostles and the Epistles which he wrote testify to the immense amount of actual labour he performed in the great work to which God had called him. And yet he says in this chapter "who is Paul and who is Apollos?" but "ministering servants." "The planter is *not anything* and the waterer is *not anything*." Not masters, not lords, but ministering servants, content to be "not anything." Surely this is not a hypocritical humility which would court applause by under-rating what one had really done; but that true sense of one's own nothingness which springs from being a labourer "together *with* God" in the great work He has given us to do. Thus will it ever be with the true servant of God. He will rejoice to hide *himself* behind the one who is "the giver of the increase." He will not be anxious for praise from those outside, but will be content to know that he is toiling for one who has promised that he shall in no wise lose his reward. The Christian worker does not labour for praise but for the glory of God, and while he works he knows that the time is coming when the Master will say "Well done," "enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

Again, this chapter tells us that whatever we do for God must be done "according to the grace of God which is given us." We can only really serve God when we are conscious that He has given us grace so to do. With this assurance we shall be strong; without

it we shall be weakness itself. This we take to be a most important question for all who, professing to be servants of God, have become Sunday-school teachers. In no branch of Christian service has this point been so frequently and so sadly overlooked. It is perfectly well known to all who are acquainted with modern Sunday schools that this matter is, in many instances, if not ignored, practically lost sight of, and the result is that many so-called teachers have need to be taught "the first principles of the gospel." We most earnestly call upon all Sunday-school teachers who may read these pages to take up this question for themselves. Make it a personal matter, do not let anyone or anything turn it away from you. Are you conscious that you are labouring according to the grace of God which is given you? If you are thus conscious, then we may expect consistency and firmness as the characteristics of your service. You will be like a man acting under his master's direct orders. You will have an answer to give to any who may challenge you as to what you are doing. "I am doing a work the Lord has given me to do: at His command I am letting down the net. He has said to me, Go work in my vineyard, and I am obeying His word." Such should ever be the testimony of the Christian servant, and those who cannot give such testimony have certainly no right to the name of servant. They are running before they are sent, they are undertaking a warfare at their own cost.

But to those who have the assurance that they are working at God's command this chapter teaches another thing, namely, the grave responsibility which belongs to those who are seeking to do God's work in this

world. We do indeed hope that none of our readers are afraid of the word "responsibility." If any are afraid of it they have but poorly understood what it is to be a Christian. Depend upon it that we cannot have Christian privileges without their accompanying responsibilities, and whoever has been called of God to do certain work for Him, must remember that God has given him grace, and according to that grace he is to labour: but in labouring he is to take care *how* he does the work. Paul had "laid the foundation" at Corinth according to the grace which was given him. On that foundation others were to build. The rearing of the building on the foundation he left to others, with this exhortation, "Let every man take care how he buildeth thereupon." Here comes in then the grave and momentous matter of the individual responsibility of each of God's servants. "Let every man take heed." This is not collective responsibility, important as *that* may be in its place, it is not the responsibility of the assembly, but it is the individual responsibility of each servant doing the Lord's work.

We desire to press this point, for many teachers are too apt to merge *their* responsibility in that of the "school." Now the school is what the teachers make it. It derives its character as a whole from what they are as individuals, and the point for each teacher to notice is, his or her own conduct as one working for a Master to whom each servant is directly responsible. It is true the work is God's, but looked at from another side it is ours, for Paul says "*every man's* work shall be made manifest what sort it is." God is working, but He is using human instruments; and though "*He* only

gives the increase," yet Paul *plants* and Apollos *waters*. Now it is in planting and watering that man's work is seen, and for the way in which this is done the person doing the work, the "man," is responsible. This leads us to the second important question named at the beginning of this paper, but we must reserve the consideration of it till a future number.

SCRIPTURE ILLUSTRATION.

DEAR MR. EDITOR,

Will it be permitted to one, who is not at present engaged in Sunday-school work, and who has only seen one or two numbers of your magazine, to make a suggestion ?

There are very many who enter on the work of Sunday-school teaching, whose time during the week is almost entirely taken up by their various employments. They have little opportunity for reading anything beyond the word of God, and that only sufficient for their own spiritual growth ; getting a little help perhaps from one or two meetings in the week, or a magazine such as yours.

I would not seek to bring before such anything that would hinder their own growth or spirituality. But it has occurred to me that it would help such in their *work*, were a small portion of your periodical devoted to the *illustration* of scripture ; by short notes relating to the geography, topography and history of the countries mentioned, as well as to the manners and customs of their inhabitants.

Surely the conversion of the unsaved, and the

instruction in the ways and will of the Lord of the converted, ought to be the great objects before every Sunday-school teacher, but is it not well also to *interest* children in the word of God itself? How often, for example, has the attention been arrested and engaged to that beautiful chapter the fourth of John, by simply pointing out to the class, on an ordinary Bible map, the relative position of Judea and Galilee, shewing the direction in which Jesus walked, with the locality of the well!

Again, would it not help the little ones, when that wonderful scene is before them—the wise men worshipping the infant Jesus—to have explained to them, what sort of wise men these were?

It is true, all that is needed for a Sunday class does not require research, but very many of the young teachers have not the necessary information nor have they the means of obtaining it.

Teachers connected with the schools where all the lessons are prescribed and arranged, can have the information, needed to illustrate their lesson, supplied. But believing, surely, that each teacher ought to be left to choose his portion of scripture, and to communicate in his own way as the Lord may give him ability, dealing with his scholars in responsibility before the Lord, I think real help might be given to the class of teachers I have named, in the way suggested.

ONE INTERESTED.

[The need, pointed out by our friend, has been felt by others, but we hope it will be met in some measure by the "Notes on Scripture" commenced in our last number.—ED.]

THE SEPTUAGINT.

The Septuagint being often referred to in books on scriptural subjects, and, as we believe, by many readers it is not understood, we give a short paper on the subject.

The Old Testament was written in the Hebrew language; but it was early translated into Greek. This translation is what is called the Septuagint.

There is a tradition respecting this translation which runs as follows: When Ptolemy Philadelphus, king of Egypt, was forming a large library for himself, he was advised by his librarian to add to his collection a copy of the Hebrew scriptures. Philadelphus first purchased the liberty of more than a hundred thousand captive Jews to bring himself into favour, he then sent Aristeas and another to Jerusalem with a letter requesting the high priest to furnish a translation. Eleazar is said to have sent seventy-two men as interpreters, six out of each tribe. They took with them a beautiful copy of the scriptures, and were entertained by the king for several days. Demetrius the librarian then led them to an island where they were lodged, and the translation was completed in seventy-two days. Demetrius himself afterwards wrote down the translation piece by piece as it was agreed upon by mutual consultation. It was then publicly read over to a number of Jews, and approved of, and imprecations were uttered against any who should presume to alter it. The interpreters were richly rewarded and dismissed.

The above is said to be the account given by the Aristeas who went to Jerusalem to fetch the translators.

That there is such a document in existence is quite true; but its authenticity is now almost entirely disbelieved. Another tradition said that the seventy-two translators were confined in seventy-two cells; each translated the same part, and on comparison the translations were found to agree exactly. This is now entirely discredited.

Still the translation *was* made, and it was made early; for it was in use among the Jews in the time of our Lord. Josephus (Ant. xii. 2) gives a long account of the translation similar to the one above ascribed to Aristeas. So that there seems no doubt that it was begun to be translated about the time the tradition names (280 years B.C.), and it must have been more or less, and perhaps in parts, multiplied by repeated copying. The tradition that it was translated by seventy-two has given rise to its name, the Septuagint, which is from the Latin word *Septuaginta*, seventy. In printed books the Septuagint is often put "the LXX."

It is this translation our Lord often quotes in His travels. The Greek empire had extended to all Asia Minor three hundred years previously, and the Greek language was very generally spoken after the Roman empire was set up. So that very many of the Jews doubtless understood the Greek language better than they did the Hebrew, and to whom the Septuagint would be *their* scriptures.*

Our Lord when He went into the synagogue in Luke iv. 16–19, had a copy of Isaiah handed to Him.

* The Mishna says the Jews were not allowed to write any book except in the Greek language.

It was a copy of the Septuagint. So the Ethiopian eunuch of Acts viii. He was reading from the prophet Isaiah: his copy was the Septuagint. Apollos, too, was one mighty in the scriptures. He was a Jew of Alexandria.

Doubtless therefore the reason why the Septuagint is so often quoted in the New Testament is that that translation was more familiar to the people generally. It is even quoted in places where it differs from the Hebrew, provided the sense is the same. It was used in a similar way to what we believe our English Bible would be used were our Lord to visit and quote scripture to us, except where in any place the true sense may not be the same. We should all recognize the Authorized Version and know it at once to be the scripture.

But it will be asked, Of what use is the Septuagint now? Is not our English Bible translated from the original Hebrew, and so we have a more direct translation than if made from the Septuagint?

True; yet the Septuagint is of great value. In the first place it explains in many places what would appear to be inaccurate quotations of the Old Testament in the New. If compared with the Hebrew, they do not agree, but if compared with the Septuagint they do: they are unquestionably copied from that translation. *Some* quotations do not agree exactly with either the Hebrew or the Septuagint. As we may say, the *words* of neither are quoted; but the sense is given in other words.

Another great value of the Septuagint is as to the *use* of Greek words. Suppose for instance a Greek

word is met with in the New Testament, the literal or usual meaning of which does not appear to be appropriate; the sense seems to demand another meaning. Well, if it can be ascertained that the LXX used this word in this other sense, it is a good authority that the word had this second meaning as well as the first.

Another use of the LXX is that it sometimes throws light upon obscure passages in the Hebrew. We see how those translators understood the passage, and which may help to explain it to us.

On the whole, the LXX is a link in the chain of God's providential dealings respecting His book. As the Greek language was so widely spoken in the time of our Lord, and as the Jews had been so scattered abroad, and many knew no other language, here was God's word ready to their use, as well as for the Gentiles who knew that language.

NOTES ON SCRIPTURE.

MATTHEW III.

Verse 1. "In the wilderness." It was not in the midst of the people that John took his place; but he went outside into the wilderness, and the people "went out to him." (Ver. 5.) A very important principle is here maintained. When all is in apostasy, it is no use endeavouring to mend the old thing. We must go outside of it, and call to others to "come out."

Verse 2. "Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." A very different message from what the gospel is now; *then* it was to prepare "the way of the

Lord." There was, as he said, a mightier than he coming; *now* He has come, and has completed the work of redemption on the cross.

"The kingdom of heaven." It is really "the kingdom of the heavens," and is remarkable as being a phrase which occurs only in the Gospel of Matthew. In some places "the kingdom of the heavens" is referred to the same parables as are connected with "the kingdom of God" in the other Gospels.

We cannot enter here into a full consideration of "the kingdom;" suffice it to say that the first allusion to it is in Daniel ii. 44, &c. Then "shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom;" and in our Gospel it is "the kingdom of the heavens." It is not heaven: it is that kingdom reigned over by Him who dwells in heaven; perhaps in a similar way to our saying "the court of St. James's" for England, because the court used to be there; and as it used to be "the court of the Tuileries" for France, because that was its principal seat. We doubt not the term "the heavens" is specially given in Matthew because the Jews were emphatically an earthly people, with all their hopes and expectations connected with the earth, and an earthly Messiah. All this must be corrected. As we saw, their Messiah was to be "*God* with them," so the kingdom which He would set up must be to them emphatically "the kingdom of *the heavens*." As yet it was only "at hand:" to faith it was there, but had to be entered by force because of the opposition of the rulers (chap. xi. 12); when Christ entered heaven it fully became "the kingdom of the heavens." But it is not heaven, neither is it the church which is Christ's

body; but it is the great outward mass which professes allegiance to Christ.

Verse 3. "Prepare ye the way of the Lord." This is a quotation from Isaiah xl. 3, where it reads "Prepare ye the way of *Jehovah*" (which is another proof that "Jesus" was "Jehovah the Saviour"). In our passage the Greek has no "the" before the word Lord, though it cannot be so translated in English, but the absence of the article was the means used to point out that "Lord" here refers to Jehovah, as in many other places in the New Testament.

Verse 4. "And the same John had his raiment of camel's hair and a leathern girdle about his loins." From 2 Kings i. 8, we find that Elijah was similarly dressed; and from Zechariah xiii. 4, we learn that "a rough garment," or "garment of hair" (margin) was the clothing of a prophet; and in Matthew xiv. 5, we read that all counted John "as a prophet." It was a garment made of *hair*, not the skin with the hair on; the hair was woven into a cloth, which Josephus calls "hair cloth," and puts it in contrast to good clothing.

"His meat was locusts and wild honey." In Leviticus xi. 22 the locust was allowed to be eaten, and many travellers have witnessed to locusts being eaten in the East.

Verses 5, 6. John meets with a large response; but we learn from Matthew xxi. 32; John v. 35, 42, that it was in great part profession.

Verses 7–9. The profession in some was so hollow that it called forth this sharp rebuke of John. It is the more solemn here because it was addressed to those who claimed to be leaders of the people, the Pharisees

being the most religious of any. But God must have reality now.

"Generation of vipers." "Generation" is too full a word: it is better "offspring" or "broods." The same word is translated "fruit" in chapter xxvi. 29, and elsewhere.

Verses 10, 11. Judgment is now proclaimed. Notice the word "laid" or "applied:" the axe was there ready but not yet actually being used. "He that cometh after me" was of course Christ, who "shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire." Some have thought that this was altogether fulfilled at Pentecost because there the Holy Ghost took the form of "tongues like as of fire." (Acts ii. 3.) But notice that there the "tongues" are the main thought; and they "began to speak with other tongues," and though those who spake were Galileans, the numerous sojourners each heard them speaking in his "own tongue;" whereas the fire is only alluded to in the tongues being "like as of fire." We believe rather that "the Holy Ghost" in our verse refers to the Christian at Pentecost, and the "fire" to judgment of the wicked by-and-by. And this entirely agrees with the double character of the result of the threshing in verse 12: the wheat will be gathered into His garner; and the chaff be burnt up with unquenchable *fire*.

"Fan." This is a sort of shovel by which the grain having been gathered together in a heap is thrown into the air, when the chaff is blown on one side by the wind, and the wheat falls of its own weight.

Verse 13–17. The baptism of our Lord by John. Christ takes His place with those who were real among

those who responded to John's preaching. To Christ it could not be a baptism to repentance; but He came to it as a matter of righteousness; and notice the word *us*; "thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness." He thus graciously associates Himself with the godly of those days.

"Like a dove." The form adopted here is very beautiful as marking out the lowliness and meekness of obedience in our blessed Lord. He was like the dove. See the contrast to this at Pentecost, where the same Holy Spirit descended: "and there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire." (Acts ii. 3.) Here it was for a living testimony to both Jews and Gentiles.

"The heavens were opened." This was quite a new thing, and could now be because Christ was on earth.

This scene of the baptism of our Lord is also remarkable as exhibiting the TRINITY. The Lord Jesus is here being baptized. The Holy Spirit descends and rests upon Him. The Father declares "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

CHAPTER IV.

Verse 1. "Led by the Spirit." The temptation proceeded from God, as we know also did the trial of Job, and doubtless so do many of our trials.

Verse 2. "When he had fasted forty days." By Luke iv. 2, we learn that our Lord was *tempted* during these forty days, the details of which are not given us. Those which are afterwards given are such as may and do befall us.

Verse 3. This marks temptation as to *circumstances*

and bodily wants. Christ had been led by the Spirit into the wilderness; now He hungered; and Satan asks Him to work a miracle to satisfy His hunger. In other words, to help Himself out of the circumstances in which God had led Him. This is a temptation common to the Christian: namely, to remove himself out of the circumstances in which God has placed him *before God's time has come.* It may be quite a right thing in itself. It is right for the hungry to eat; and for the naked to be clothed; but if God has placed you where you are, you must wait His time for deliverance.

Verse 4. "It is written." Christ answers as *we* can and should answer by appealing to the word. Bread was only a part, and small part, of "living." Every word of God was food for Christ. It was God's will He should wait: He would feed upon *that*, and wait for the bread.

Verses 5, 6. This is, we may say, a *religious* temptation. Satan quotes scripture to our Lord. "God has said so-and-so; try now and see if He will be as good as His word." Thus too we are tempted. When walking in obedience we can always count on God, and believe He is with us. But to doubt His presence or in any way distrustingly to try if He will be as good as His word, would indeed be sin. Satan misquotes the scripture (Ps. xci. 11); but, as we see, Christ did not stay to parley with him on this ground. He took the broad ground that Satan was altogether wrong.

"Pinnacle." Rather "edge," or "parapet."

Verse 7. "It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God." This does not here mean that Satan was not thus to tempt Christ; but that *man*, and

Christ as a man, was not to tempt or try God by distrusting Him.

Verses 8, 9. This is a *worldly* temptation. Satan shewed Christ the world and its glory, as he does to the Christian to this day, and he stated his terms—to fall down and do him homage. If his terms are the same to-day, how solemn for the Christian to give a lingering look to the world and its glories; he must be falling into the snare of the devil, who is emphatically "the god of this world."

Verse 10. "It is written." Again, as all through, our Lord uses the weapon which is available for the weakest saint—the word of God. God, and God only is to be worshipped. The three portions of scripture quoted by our Lord are all taken from the book of Deuteronomy—from instructions given them for their godly walk when they were in the land, but as yet without a king.

Verse 11. "The devil leaveth him." The temptation was over. Our blessed Lord had been tempted in all points as we are; but without sin. What a blessed example for us; and what encouragement to use against Satan "the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God." (Eph. vi. 17.)

"Behold, angels came and ministered unto him." God's time was come, and now Christ must be ministered to. Unparalleled stooping of One, who created those heavenly messengers, to be in such circumstances as to need their help! It shews too the "dread campaign" gone through by our blessed Lord; and it was all for us.

HOW ARE YOU DOING YOUR WORK?

We direct the reader's special attention to the question at the head of this paper, and we hope that what we have to say upon it will lead him to see the responsibility which rests upon him as one of the Lord's servants. If it is important to know for whom I am working, it must be equally important to ascertain how I am doing the work.

The gravity of this question will be seen more fully if we bear in mind the character of the Master whom we profess to serve. What sort of a Master is He? We have already seen that He is and ever will be the *Lord* of the vineyard. He will not give up this place to any one, and happy is it for us if we have been brought fully to own this and to act upon it. Not a conference, not a committee, not a synod! but the Lord Himself is the one we serve.

Now it is impossible for us to exaggerate the claims which He has upon us—claims which arise because He is the *Lord* Jesus Christ. He emptied Himself to become a man, and when a man He took also the form of a servant, and He was such a servant that now God has highly exalted Him and given Him a place the most exalted, and a name the most honoured. (Phil. ii.) Such was, such is, the one whom we serve. Holding the highest place He is yet able to sympathize with and to support all those who in His name go forth to do His work.

Now it is because we are connected with such a Master that we are to take care how we do His work. In a certain way the character of the Master is seen in

the work that is being done, as well as the character of the servant; and we are persuaded that if this thought were more present to our minds, it would make all of us better servants. Does what I do for the Lord harmonize with the character of Him for whom it is done? Is my general deportment and behaviour such as to shew that I have a due sense of the high and dignified person who has set me the work to do? We are persuaded that if such questions as these were more constantly before our minds, their effect upon us as Sunday-school teachers would be most marked. There would be no late-coming to school, no neglect of prayerful preparation for the work, no carelessness in the manner of conducting the lesson, no neglect of visiting the children on a week-day. The sense of what was due to the Lord would lead us to do everything that would in any way tend to promote His glory and further His work.

In 1 Corinthians iii. Paul is speaking of the building which was being reared at Corinth, and he says that he himself had laid the foundation. This was Paul's part of the work of God in that city. But others were to build upon the foundation which had already been laid, and it is to those engaged in this work of building that he says (ver. 10), "Let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon." Now in building, he says, it is possible to use widely different kinds of materials. We may either use gold, silver, or precious stones; if we do, then the work shall abide in the day of trial; but if on the other hand, we use wood, hay, and stubble, the work shall be destroyed.

Now these are momentous words for all who profess

to be building upon the foundation of which this chapter speaks. Surely the foundation is all right, for other foundation can no man lay than that *is laid*, which is, Jesus Christ. Thank God there is a foundation already laid, and oh, what a rock it is! Amid the shifting scenes of earth and time, amid the uncertainties of this present evil world, how precious to know, and how blessed to be on, such a foundation! We have not got to lay the stone; we have to bring souls on to it, to *build* upon it. Surely this is the grand object we have in all our Sunday-school work. Not to educate children, not to teach them to read, or to write, or to spell; but to save their souls, to bring them, by God's help, on to this foundation, which is Jesus Christ. We take it that this is the *special work* of the Sunday school, and in our judgment this should be *the object* of the Sunday-school teacher.

In doing this, then, let us take heed how we do it. There is a right and a wrong way to go to work; there are right and there are wrong materials with which to build. The right materials will stand in the day of trial; the wrong work will be consumed.

We are persuaded that this matter is not sufficiently looked to, and that many teachers are too apt to build wood, hay, and stubble, or to mix these things with the gold, silver, and precious stones. Let us never forget that no soul can be said to be on this foundation unless it is converted to God. It may be outwardly connected with it, as thousands are, by baptism, by family ties, by outward profession; but it cannot be said to be *on* it unless it is truly saved. Hence our object, as builders, must be to be satisfied with no-

thing short of real conversion. Less than this will not suffice for the Master, and should not for the servant. To be satisfied with anything short of this is to build improper materials.

Everything depends on the object for which we labour, and we do urge on all who are engaged in this important work, to have the true object of such labour clearly and distinctly before their minds. The purposeless style in which so many engaged do their work shews but too plainly how much wood, hay, and stubble is mixed up with what they do.

Another important thing is to teach the children a simple yet full gospel—the glad tidings of a full, free, completed salvation through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. This, perhaps, we shall find the most difficult thing of all to do, for here Satan will use every effort to turn us aside. Alas, when we look at what is taught in many places in catechisms and creeds, we can see how well Satan has succeeded in perverting the truth as it is in Jesus. Such have been, and such will be his tactics; and if we would defeat him we must teach that gospel, and that gospel alone, which is found in the New Testament. To add to this, or to take from it, is to dishonour Him who is its author.

The object of building with gold, silver, and precious stones is that the work may endure. As in building a house endurance should be the chief feature of the work done, so it should be in building for God. If the work will not endure, it is of no value; for "every man's work shall be tried of what sort it is." How He will try our work is not made known, but the Lord in this chapter most plainly declares that it shall be

tried, and it should be ours to labour on, keeping that trial in mind. A day of trial is coming—a trial that is called of "fire;" "the fire shall try every man's work," and alas, for the work if it is not of the right kind! Many a man has given his time, talents, and money to a work which, when the trial comes, will be destroyed, leaving not a trace behind! Alas! how many precious hours and valuable lives have been wasted in this way! The work has proved itself worthless, because the building was of rubbish. Let us seek to keep this out of our Sunday schools. Sad indeed is it when in such a work there is a particle of rubbish.

Beloved brethren, we are working amidst young immortal souls. Each one of our scholars has a soul, and our purpose should be to seek the salvation of that soul. Let us take heed then how we go about this work; let us beware of trifling; let us beware of the wood, hay, and stubble; let us remember that a day is coming when our work will be tried by fire; let us remember the terrible consequences of a hollow profession; let us see to it that we lose not our reward; and above all, let us remember Him whom we serve, who has said, "it is not the will of your Father which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish."

Go labour on,
And rest upon
The strength of One above;
He means to bless,
For nothing less
Will satisfy His love.

Correspondence.

SINGING.

Mr. Editor,

I suppose the time has gone by for Christians to think that there should be no singing in Sunday schools. The objection arose doubtless from the thought that all singing ought to be worship, and as unconverted children could not be called upon to worship, so they ought not to be called upon to sing.

But all singing is not worship and is not intended to be. We read in the scripture of "teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs," and so all hymns for Christians even are not worship, though we may sing them with grace in our hearts to the Lord.

Surely we should not invite the scholars *en masse* to sing 'worship' hymns, but there are now plenty of hymns that make no pretence to be such, and which we believe the scholars may safely be asked to sing.

But it was not so much the hymns—every school has its hymn book—as the tunes that were before my mind. In some schools they sing only the same tunes as are used at the meetings for worship, and those may happen to be the slowest and heaviest of tunes, and so you hear the children singing a lively hymn at the bottom of their voices in slow measured tones that remind one of a funeral dirge.

I believe this is a great mistake: children like lively tunes, and will take a great deal more interest in the singing when it is in character with the words.

"We know no other tunes," is the reason commonly given.

Well, even this is not a satisfactory reply. Suppose, for instance that no long metre tune is known except Old Hundredth, with a little practice this tune may be sung by any one who knows it, rather higher than it is usually pitched and *much faster*, and the effect is so very different that it would scarcely be recognized by some as the same tune.

Nearly any tune can be altered in the same way, and the singing be made much more suitable to the words. Therefore supposing you know such tunes only, by a little practice you may have very different, and I believe, better singing.

But why not learn some livelier tunes? Like everything else, if this were sought it would be attained. It sometimes happens that those who start the tunes know nothing of music, and sing only by ear, so that a music book is of no use to them—well, I will suppose such is the case; but if such looked around among their friends they would surely find some one who could teach them a few lively tunes suitable for children, as well as tunes suitable for the odd metres which are to be found more or less in nearly all hymn books, and which many teachers are obliged to avoid because they do not know any tunes for them.

I know of no tune book that contains all the tunes I should want for the Sunday school. They have to be gleaned from many—one here, and one there. But your musical friends would doubtless be able to supply your wants, at least to a great extent.

I have found that where dull heavy singing is in the

Sunday school it has not been so much from the difficulty of obtaining other tunes as from indifference to the singing altogether, as if anything was good enough.

As I have said, I believe this is a mistake. Everything connected with the Sunday school should be done in the best manner because it is the Lord's work.

Then let us have good singing, and in order to have good singing let it be *suitable* singing; and for this purpose, besides suitable hymns, let us have suitable tunes.

W. L.

THE PARENTS OF THE SCHOLARS.

Dear Mr. Editor,

Is it not a good plan to try and let "the branches run over the wall" of the Sunday school, and thus running over to reach the parents of the scholars? It should be remembered that many of them never attend the preaching of the gospel; should we not then send the gospel to them? Where this is really at heart, means will easily be found to reach them. A few are named that have been tried, it is hoped with success. A great thing is to repeat it at stated intervals so that it may not be postponed and forgotten.

1. Send a short tract home by the children once a month in an envelope directed to the parents.

2. Once a quarter have a short note printed, inviting the parents to come to the gospel preaching, or let the teachers write them, each for his own class, or enclose in an envelope one of the bills which are usually given away, inviting to the preaching.

3. By visiting the parents in the week and speaking to them of Christ, the fact of being the teacher of their child is at once a good introduction.

4. Once a year have a tea meeting especially for the parents of the scholars, when short gospel addresses can be delivered, and the opportunity taken of telling the parents how much they can aid the teachers by seeing their children are clean, sending them in time, asking them to repeat what they have heard, &c. Such meetings also give a good opportunity of explaining any plans that may have been adopted for the purchase of boots or clothes for the children, &c.

5. By means of a lending library: the books being often read by the parents as well as by the scholars.

6. By the teachers sending home short sentences to the parents by the scholars. Such as "Now children, this is good news, is it not? Do you think your parents ever heard this good news? well I want you each to take home this message to your parents. Tell them that I sent it, but it is really God's message: "*Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.*" Make them each repeat it till all have learnt it, and do not neglect to ask them the next Sunday if they had carried the message.

As we have said, we believe that if the parents of the scholars are really before the hearts of the teachers, means will be found to reach them.

And we should not confine our attention to the unconverted parents of the scholars. We may be the means of helping and bringing into blessing many of God's dear ones who are now, from bad teaching and various other causes, "not reading their title clear to

mansions in the skies;" who are longing for *peace* through the blood, though really sheltered under it. What a blessing would deliverance be to such! Should not we then who know the way of this deliverance be anxious that all God's dear ones should be entering into the liberty He would have them enjoy?

On the other hand, many of the converted are so hand in hand with the world that their children cannot tell whether their parents are Christians or not, and which children if converted are in great danger of being drawn into the vortex of "the christian world." *Such* parents ought to be reached, and the word of God be brought to bear upon their consciences. Now for various reasons, those they are ecclesiastically associated with may not be able to do this; but why should not we, who by God's grace have been taught that the friendship of this world is *enmity* with God? (Jas. iv. 4.) Seek to deliver such from their worldly associations, and at least get them to *aim* at a more entire separation from the world.

Thus various states of christian life may be met, and valuable help afforded, which shall surely redound to the praise and honour of God. Some cases could be at once handed over to some one in the assembly not connected with the school, but who would be well fitted to visit and help such.

Again then let me repeat the fact, that the scholars being under our care gives an open door to the parents in a way that surely we ought not to overlook or neglect.

C. R.

BIBLE CLASSES.

We are strongly impressed with the importance of a more general adoption of a Bible class in connection with every Sunday school. It may be held in the same building or not according to circumstances, but by all means let it be held somewhere.

Next, while it may be associated with the Sunday school, let it be markedly distinct. There are many who will not come to a Sunday school who may be induced to come to a Bible class if it is kept distinct from the Sunday school.

There are many young men and women who ought to be searched after and invited to attend. This can often be done by enquiring of the scholars in the school if they have any elder brothers and sisters. There are also ways which a love for souls will not overlook. It is a good plan to have a few tickets or small cards printed (or written would do) similar to this: "A Bible class is held for . . . . at . . . . on . . . . at . . . . o'clock, to which you are invited," with a text of scripture added. If the teacher or superintendent goes into a shop in the neighbourhood to purchase anything and notices a young man or young woman, he could present one of these invitations. Another good opportunity is sometimes offered as the teacher goes to the class in the afternoon by giving one here and there in the street to any person thought to be suitable. Domestic servants are often going out for the afternoon just about that time, and could be invited. Of course a word of encouragement can be added; such as "We shall be glad to see you," "Will you come now?" &c.

Apropos to this, we remember reading of the teacher

of a Bible class, who was on her way to the school one Sunday afternoon, when she noticed a respectable young woman loitering about, apparently not going anywhere in particular. The teacher was attracted by something in her features, and she thought what a pity it was for a young woman of her age and respectability to be in the way of temptation, and her conscience at once chid her for not trying to rescue her. The teacher at once turned back in search of her, and to her surprise found that she had been following her, having resolved to see where the teacher was going, because she had a Bible in her hand, and because she had noticed her before. The teacher invited her to attend the Bible class. She said she was too old. Oh, no; the Bible class was composed of young women. She went, and attended regularly, and the teacher had good hopes of her conversion.

This was just embracing an opportunity which doubtless many have had, but which they have let slip. We exhort our readers to act in a like manner as opportunities may present themselves. We should all remember how busy Satan is in drawing aside our young men and young women; and we are strongly convinced that, while a great deal is now being done for children, this branch of the work has greatly been overlooked or thought to be impracticable.

It doubtless requires a special gift for such a work; but we think a worker, with an ardent love for souls, with a small measure of gift, should not let difficulties stand in the way. His gift, if rightly used, would become developed as he proceeds. We greatly desire to see a male and a female Bible class in connection

with every Sunday school, and indeed there might be such classes held at any preaching station where circumstances may prevent a Sunday school being held.

As has been frequently pointed out, the Bible classes also form a valuable means of retaining our elder scholars when they become too old for the ordinary classes of the Sunday school.

But there is still another branch running out from the Sunday Bible class, namely, *a similar class held on some evening in the week.* In some places this has become a special and peculiar work. Young men and young women may be found to come to *this* meeting who would never come to a similar meeting on a Sunday. Various are the reasons for this. One reason is *dress.* Some young women are able to spend a good part of their earnings in dress, whereas others who have poorer parents cannot do so, and these latter would on no account come to the same class with the former on a Sunday. They can work together in the same room in the week, and walk home together; but their pride would not allow them to be seen on a Sunday by those dressed so much better than themselves. But on a week day this is not the case. It is an understood thing that all come in their working dresses, and though there is often a marked difference in their week-day dresses, yet the disparity is not felt in the same manner, and all can mingle together.

Now in all large towns there are hundreds and hundreds of young men and women, who work in factories and workshops, open to all the temptations of this wicked world, and apparently no special agency at work to reach them. They cannot be expected to

go to the Sunday school, unless they have gone there previously and have been induced to continue in connection therewith. Dress alone would prevent many attending any class on the Sunday; but classes in the week have been owned and blessed of the Lord.

They must be held comparatively late in the evening in order to allow such persons to attend after they leave their work. It is easy to make it known. On the evening the class is held, let a worker stand at the door of any workshop and distribute the small invitations as the work-people leave. Or, a good plan, where the employer is a Christian, is to give the invitations to him, and he will generally see that they are properly distributed. Then when the thing is started and an interest is awakened, one tells another, and it thus becomes known.

Let none be discouraged, or prevented from commencing such a class because only two or three attend at first. God can bless independently of numbers. *He* never said the people were too few or too feeble; whereas He has said, "The people are too many." (Jud. vii. 2.) And we are all apt to indulge in the thought that we shall have blessing if we have a good attendance, and be thrown off our dependence on Him.

Of course the salvation of those attending is the great aim in view, and to this end the gospel is the power of God. But how can people of such an age as is here contemplated be so interested as to sit for an hour over the word of God? will be a question that many a one will ask. We may return to the subject at another time. Suffice it now to press upon our readers the importance of the work, as a branch of the

Sunday school. The work has been tried and God has owned and blessed it. Souls are perishing all around us: will He not own and bless it again? May the Lord stir up the hearts of His dear ones to work for Him while it is called to-day: for the night cometh when no man can work.

NOTES ON SCRIPTURE.

MATTHEW IV.

Verse 12. John is no sooner cast into prison than our Lord leaves Nazareth, and commences His humble ministry and His preaching. (Ver. 17; Mark i. 14.) The fore-runner has done his work; and the MESSIAH now presents Himself. His more private service up to this time is here passed over in silence.

Verses 13–16. Jesus now goes and dwells in Capernaum that the scripture "might be fulfilled." This scripture is from Isaiah ix., which follows the sad revelation of the state Israel had fallen into: "And they shall look upon the earth: and behold trouble and darkness, dimness of anguish; and they shall be driven to darkness. *Nevertheless*, ..." a light shall spring up in the person of Christ their Messiah. It is in the outskirts of the promised land as yet possessed, "Galilee of the Gentiles," with a mixture of the lowest of the Jewish people. As in many other prophecies this was only a partial fulfilment of Isaiah; it will have yet another and fuller fulfilment, both as to the distress of the Jews and to the deliverance wrought out for them by their Messiah, though of course all will be based upon what He accomplished on the cross.

The "sea coast" of verse 13 is on the lake of Tiberias.

Verses 18, 19. The call of Simon and Andrew. We know from John i. 35–42 that this was not Christ's first interview with these two. Andrew had already declared Christ to be the Messiah, and he had also brought Simon to Him. After that they went back to their fishing, and we find in Luke v. that our Lord wrought the miracle of the draught of fishes which arrested their attention and drew them to Himself. He now calls them *to service:* to be "fishers of men."

Verse 20. The One who called could make those He called willing to obey. He drew them to Himself: they followed *Him*. Boats, nets, and fish enough to sink the ship are all left when He calls.

Verse 21. James and John are called to service. They also saw the miraculous draught of fishes, for they "were partners with Simon." (Luke v. 10.)

Verse 22. They immediately left their father and all and followed Christ. Meditate on this as to how far we are called to leave all at our call to service. We are not called to follow Christ as a man down here; but are we not fully called morally to leave all that in any way hinders our service to which He calls us? May we thus seek "*first* the kingdom of God and his righteousness."

Verse 23. Jesus is still working at the outskirts—in Galilee; and He takes His place as a good Jew, enters their synagogues, and teaches therein. He now too adds the "carrying of their sickness" which was foretold of Him, as He entered into the sorrows of those He relieved.

Verse 24. His fame reaches throughout all Syria; that is, Israel's ancient territory, which we call Palestine.

Notice here what a catalogue of *evils* man is subject to on account of sin. Remark too that being possessed by demons (not devils; there is one devil, but many demons) is a distinct thing from being a lunatic. This is important because many dispute any actual possession, though scripture is quite plain on the point. There was clearly a possession by demons and the demons were turned out. (See Mark v. 1–15.) The demons were addressed as distinct from those possessed (ver. 8, 9). They *spoke*. They knew Jesus in a manner which those possessed did not. Some addressed Him as "Son of the most high God" (ver. 7), and others begged not to be tormented before their time. (Matt. viii. 29.) And in one case they begged permission to go into the herd of swine. There may have been cases where the mind was affected *as well as* the person being possessed by a demon, as seems intimated in Luke viii. 35; but this in no way clashes with our text where the being a lunatic is put as a different and distinct thing from being possessed by a demon.

But in all this evil there was now One to overcome it: One who could bind the strong man, and spoil his house. He annulled Satan's power fully at the cross.

Verse 25. The whole country was now aroused. Some notable One was now among them. This is important because He came to the nation. It was not simply in Jerusalem among the leaders that He was known, and afterwards condemned; neither was it simply in some corner, the people of which alone might be responsible. The whole country heard His fame, and "great multitudes" followed Him.

WATCHWORDS.

No. 8.

BE COOL, FIRE LOW, FIRE SLOW, AND CHARGE HOME.

THERE is something so suggestive in these words, which form part of Sir Garnet Wolseley's "general orders" to his little army, that we feel constrained to adopt them for *Watchword No.* 8. Let us take the four several injunctions in their order.

1. BE COOL. This is a most important order for the "Sunday-school worker." Let not inattention or disorder on the part of the children cause him to betray a hasty spirit; but, in the calmness which bespeaks a sense of the presence of God, whose servant he is, let him claim the attention of his class. Angry rebukes ill become the teacher. Order must be preserved, and, when broken into, restored; not by harshness, but by loving, earnest appeals; therefore, dear fellow-teacher, BE COOL!

2. FIRE LOW. The general who gave this order knew that the enemy he was about to encounter would seek cover from his fire, crouching in the bush: that a shot over his head would be wasted, while one which hit him, although below his head, would take effect. What special fitness this order has for the teacher! Those amongst whom he labours are, mentally as well as physically, little, and there is much danger of shooting over their heads, by using terms and choosing themes beyond their understandings. Not so, however, when he tells in simple words

"The sweet story of old,
When Jesus was here among men;
How He took little children as lambs to His fold."

Therefore, dear fellow-teacher, FIRE LOW!

3. FIRE SLOW. In the Ashantee bush, and in the Sunday school, this order will be found to be intimately allied with the two former. Our field is the school. Let us see to it that we do not, from a false anxiety or lack of prayerful preparedness, do our work so hurriedly, and speak so rapidly, that the little ones are unable to follow, and so we resemble the Fantee "allies" in their wild excited fire on the least appearance of real or supposed enemies. Dear fellow-teacher, as you would labour with profit, FIRE SLOW!

4. CHARGE HOME. What does this mean? In the battle-field, that you should get to close quarters with the enemy. The Roman soldiers were armed with very short swords, but they *charged home*, and made deadly work with them. So should the christian soldier, in aggressive warfare (which surely Sunday-school work is), get into close quarters, and, in the Lord's name, urge the all-importance of the gospel message *individually* on those he labours amongst. Therefore, dear fellow-teacher, CHARGE HOME!

There is one more of Sir Garnet Wolseley's general orders that we would fain add in conclusion: "....drop on the knee." This is enough for the African bush, but in the Lord's battles let His soldiers drop on both knees before Him in prayer, that they may acquit themselves bravely in the field. Therefore, dear fellow-teacher, drop on both knees, then be cool, fire low, fire slow, and charge home.

A TEACHERS' MEETING.

THERE was recently held in the south of London a meeting of about three hundred Sunday-school teachers for prayer and conference. We have thought that it would be of general interest if the main topics touched upon were brought before our readers. We have no formal report, but just jot down from memory.

After earnest prayer,

C. referred to James v. 7: "Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain. Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth near." He enforced our patient labouring on. God would give the early and latter rain, and we should surely reap the fruit. He also drew attention to the near approach of the coming of the Lord, when our labour would be over.

He read also "Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months. And he prayed again and the heaven gave rain and the earth brought forth her fruit." Prayer was *our* great resource. Earnest prayer availed for Elias; and earnest prayer would avail for us. Elias patiently sent his servant *seven* times before the small cloud could be seen; and we must patiently wait for the fruit of our labour, but the early and latter rain would be given, and we should reap the blessing.

W. said that two things had been impressed upon his mind. One was that elder labourers were being taken home (one had gone to his rest the evening before the meeting), and this should stir us up to more abundant labours. If possible *our* work was more important than that of the evangelist, inasmuch as the evangelist had to deal with matured and hardened sinners; while ours was with the young and less hardened.

The second point was the coming of our Lord. We were all looking for His coming, and it might be we should be taken away this night. If we remembered this as we ought, with what feelings of earnestness we should speak to our scholars next Sunday! knowing that it might be our last opportunity of speaking to them. And had we not all the earnest desire that when we ourselves should be caught away, our whole class of four, or six, or eight, or as many as we had, should be caught up with us, to be for ever with the Lord?

J. said that he was reminded of two things of interest, both bearing on the subjects before us. One was a sentence he remembered in a periodical: it was this,

"The work of the Lord *was* progressing; and our fear lest it should not progress proved that it was progressing in us."

The other was an incident that once occurred when an aged and devoted servant of the Lord, much used in His service, had been speaking to Christians in the morning, and it was announced that he would preach the gospel in the evening; one went and asked him if he might announce that he would also speak to the chil-

dren in the afternoon, when the good man said, "Ah that work is *above* me." He could lead on and help the saints, and he could preach the gospel, but he held, in his humility, that addressing the children was above *him*. By God's help that work is *ours*.

M. said that he was impressed with the passage, "According to your faith be it unto you." If we had really faith in God we should have greater blessing. Did anyone ever know of faith in God that was not answered? Some expected blessing so little that when it did come it seemed to take them by surprise. He remembered being told of a meeting in the country where they *always* expected and received blessing, but on one occasion when there was no apparent blessing, they were inquiring one of another as to what could be the cause. Thus should we have faith in the living God, and He would surely give us a blessing.

He did not think that anyone could value rules or order more than he did; but it was the earnest heart that God looked to. We found that God blessed simple faith. Surely we valued God's truth and proclaiming the gospel fully and freely; but we found that God blessed those who had simple faith and trust in Him independent of their amount of knowledge. It was the earnest confiding faith in God that He blessed.

He also impressed the solemnity of the coming of the Lord; whom, he hoped, all were expecting, and that all believed that there was nothing that must take place before He came—nothing to prevent His coming this very night, and what would be the certain condition of those who had rejected the gospel? Scripture

plainly declared that "God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie, that they *all* might be damned who believed not the truth." This should increase our earnestness. But above all, we should have strong faith in God. His word was, "borrow vessels; *not a few*." It was not the oil that failed, but the vessels to contain it. Thus we cannot limit God.

He also stated that our work was not *only* that of evangelists. We had in a measure to do that which the parents neglected to do in training their children. He always succeeded in getting the scholars to learn one or more verses of scripture up to six (one for each day) and to repeat them all on the first day of the week, and thus store their minds with the word of God.

He thanked God that there were so many present —all believed to be converted to God. He knew that in some schools persons not converted were allowed to be teachers in the hope that they *might* be; but he could not believe that any could teach the way of salvation but those who were saved themselves. And so many being saved, indwelt by the Holy Spirit, and all looking for their Lord, with what zeal they should from that night go forth to the work! and he trusted it would be with strong faith in the One who delighted to honour faith and whose word was "according to your faith be it unto you."

After more prayer—several hymns having been sung during the meeting—it was felt that all had been helped, profited, and spurred on in their work of faith and labour of love.

Correspondence.

THE MARKED BIBLE.

Dear Mr. Editor,

The remark made in the February Sunday-school Worker, "Mark it in your Bible," brought to my mind an incident which occurred many years since.

I once lent my Bible to one who was an earnest evangelist, as well as being one who cared much for God's saints, and on its return I found certain strange-looking marks made in the margin of the passage he had been speaking from. On studying these I soon discovered that they were a sort of finger-posts, that directed him along the way he went through the passage. This sort of thing was new to me then; but I have seen many Bibles since, belonging to evangelists and others, whose margins are full of these marks, and I must confess that I also have my marked Bible.

But I write now to recommend this sort of help to those who have not adopted it. I grant fully that it is a sort of crutch for the lame; a sort of artificial memory for those who are deficient in that useful gift; but I believe there are comparatively few who have such good memories that they would not find help from such crutches. Those that do not need them will have cause for thankfulness, when they see how many have need of helps which they can do without.

I recommend them because I have found them *very useful*, and this in various ways. But I must anticipate an objection that may be raised against them, namely, that though they may be useful, have they not the tendency to lessen my dependence upon the Holy

Spirit, both in bringing things to my remembrance, and also in stereotyping certain particular pathways; whereas the Holy Spirit might lead in various other paths, at different times, through the same passage?

Doubtless, a misuse can be made of everything; and if these contemplated marks or finger-posts in any way lessened dependence upon the teaching or guidance of the Holy Spirit, it would be most deplorable. But I believe this is in no way a necessary consequence of their use. If I make certain finger-posts through a psssage, I mean no more by them than that I was once led *that* way to go through it, without in anyway concluding that that was the only way through it, or the only way that I hoped to find on further study of the passage. On my finding another way, I should mark this second way also in the same passage as a *second* way I had been led, but without in any way supposing that I had exhausted the passage. And if I had thus been led by various "lines" through the same passage, it would not in any way hinder my seeking for the further guidance of the Holy Spirit.

But, to my mind, these "finger-posts through a passage" are not the most valuable "marks" I have in my Bible. I count the most valuable those where I have marked alterations of the translation. Where I have a better translation on good authority, and where that translation materially affects the sense of the passage, I mark it in my Bible. And note, that such marks as these are not liable to the objection which some might feel respecting the finger-posts above-named. Any mark that gives me a truer sense of what God has caused to be written would have the sanction, we may

be sure, of God, and would *abide the same continually*, and would be used by the Holy Spirit in teaching me the sense of the passage.

True it is that, with my Bible *thus* marked, I need wisdom to use it aright. With our excellent Authorized translation, with which all are more or less familiar, it is advisable to keep any truer translation in the background—for our own use surely, but not to be constantly brought forward, and thrust before others unnecessarily.

My next valuable marks, as I judge them, are those which help to give the sense of the passage, that I may the better understand it. These, too, where accurate, *are abiding*, may be used by the Holy Spirit, and can in no way hinder His teaching or guidance. But perhaps I ought to illustrate *these* marks, as they are not so self-evident as the above. Well, take Ephesians i. 12, 13.

12. That we should be to the praise of his glory who first trusted in Christ. *Jews*

13. In whom ye also trusted after that ye have heard the word of truth, &c. *Gentiles*

In a similar way we get the same *ye* and *we* in chapter ii. 2, 3.

Again, take Hebrews xii. 35.

35. Women received their dead
* raised to life again; and others were tor-
⋮ tured, not accepting deliverance; that
* they might obtain a better resurrection.

It has often been a question as to what was the meaning of "a *better* resurrection." Refer it to women receiving their dead to life again for a short time only

in this life, and it is at once plain that a resurrection that is to eternal life in glory is worthy of the title a *better* resurrection, wonderful indeed as was the former.

Next to these series of marks I value marginal references. As was said in the "Hints to the Uninstructed," marginal references sometimes mislead; where, therefore, I find them valuable, I underline them; and when I discover any that are not in my Bible I mark them in ink. When we remember that God is the author of the whole Bible, and that there is but one mind running through all, any elucidation that one part gives to another is most valuable.

Lastly, there are the finger-posts, referred to in the commencement of my letter.

The word of God is worthy of all our study, and I consider that any such simple helps as those I have named deserve our consideration. I do not think that any of them come under the head of "commentary," which some might dread to attach to the word of God. But I do want to understand the word, and to this end I want to see its connections, and to get what light I can from one part thrown upon another.

In conclusion, I would warn your readers to do what they do in such a matter only upon *good* authority. I must confess to having had to scratch out some of my marks, which I inserted too hastily on insufficient authority. Because it is the word of God, and because we want to understand it, let us take care how we put one single mark to it which the Spirit of God would not sanction, and which He could not use. May He guide us in all such and similar matters, and praise shall redound to God. M. G.

WEEK MEETINGS FOR CONVERTED SCHOLARS.

DEAR MR. EDITOR,

From time to time there have been articles in our magazine telling of children who have been converted in our Sunday schools; there have also been those seeking to stimulate teachers to ask and expect more blessing at the hands of their Master; and I trust all those engaged in this work see as well as hear of the blessing He is pleased to bestow. These children, I presume, are drafted in tothe Bible class when old enough. But the question I want to ask is, Would it not be desirable to have some meeting in the week specially for those who are *converted?* Do they not require "food" during the week as much as we who are more advanced? We have the prayer-meeting, lecture, reading-meeting, &c., but I do not hear of meetings in connection with the Sunday schools, for the converted children, *during the week.*

I knew of one meeting where a sister used to gather the children together one evening in the week, and many were the happy times thus spent; who can estimate the blessings these gatherings afforded?

I remember, too, on one occasion, that a gifted evangelist came into the neighbourhood, and some of these dear young ones asked that their meeting might be entirely devoted to prayer that God would indeed bless his labours. How pleasing to our Heavenly Father must the simple breathings of these young hearts have been! And if He was pleased to listen would He not also answer their petitions? Some of

these are now teachers themselves, and others have been led intelligently to take their places at the Lord's table. Surely this is a cause for much thanksgiving to God who doeth all things well.

But this is the only instance I know of anything of the kind being done, yet I feel assured that the blessing to be derived from such meetings, where they are taken up in direct dependence upon God, is very great.

Some, I know, would raise objections to them on the ground of the children being kept out late, and thus acquiring a bad habit; but I think even this may be avoided.

In most schools, I suppose, there is at least one teacher able to give up an evening in the week for such a work, and then to have the meeting from half-past six to half-past seven, which would be quite long enough and allow time for the children to be home by eight o'clock. I do not think many parents would object to this.

There may be other difficulties, such as the room being required for other meetings, &c., but I think where the glory of God is the aim, all obstacles will in His time be removed.

O! may He richly bless all engaged in this work, and raise up those who are able and willing to perform this service, and to Him shall be all the glory.

U. K.

[We commend the suggestion of our friend to the consideration of Sunday-school workers. We have known such a class held for many months in a private house, with blessing; but it has since been discontinued.

There are various difficulties. One is the fewness of those who can come on account of, in the first place, not many of each sex being converted in a school; and secondly, that as soon as the scholars are old enough they go out to work and cannot get away in time; so that teachers cannot get together more than two or three at a time. Where this is the case we think it is sometimes the happier way to have but one class for both sexes, with both a male and female teacher to attend to it. The male teacher naturally takes the lead, while the female judiciously asks pointed questions when anything strikes her.

In some places this is impracticable from the teachers themselves being engaged at business too late. In this case we should recommend the converted scholars being invited to attend any reading meeting that may be held in the neighbourhood, taking care privately to tell those who take the leading part at any such meeting that there are present some very young lambs of Christ's flock who need feeding, and we doubt not they would take care to remember such, and they would get blessing.

One thing is certain, the converted scholars attached to our schools need our earnest care and watchfulness. They are surrounded with evil in every form, and they need the warning voice, and they need food and instruction. Surely the good Shepherd cares for and watches over His own; but these He has placed into *our* hands, and to those whom He has gifted for the work He says, "Feed my lambs."—Ed.]

SCRIPTURE DIFFICULTIES.

DIFFICULTIES NOT OBJECTIONS.

It was once well remarked that "a difficulty is not an objection." A difficulty as to any scripture does not amount to more than something which we cannot comprehend, or which, as we comprehend it, we cannot make to harmonize with what we believe to be the teaching of other passages. But this may all be caused by our ignorance. It is something I do *not* know—it is a negative. Whereas, an *objection* is a positive. The objector has something more or less definite which he brings forward *against* scripture. It is not like a difficulty, *not* knowing something; but it *is* knowing something, or professing to know it, which is in some way said to be damaging to the character of the scripture.

It is very important to keep these things quite distinct. Difficulties do not in any way affect the character of scripture; they affect myself. It may be illustrated by a boy going through Euclid. He comes to a problem that entirely conquers him, and he is tempted at first, it may be, to *think* there must be something wrong in the problem; but he seeks for help of the master, and as he discovers the key to the problem, the difficulty disappears. From such experiences he learns to distrust himself, and not to call in question the correctness of the problems. It was himself who was at fault.

And it is important to arrive at this in connection with the scripture; because there is the tendency—doubtless under the temptation of Satan—to suppose

that the scripture is inaccurate whenever I cannot understand it. But a little consideration will surely shew the folly of such a thought. If this would be a right conclusion for one to arrive at, it would be right for all, no matter how ignorant they might be; and it would be treating God's book in a way which no one would think of treating any of the writings of man. Indeed, with man's writings it is the very reverse: the reader commonly says, "It is a very clever book; *I wish I could master it thoroughly.*"

Now, with the scriptures we ought to have faith that it is God's book—and it is this or nothing to us Christians—and then ten thousand difficulties would never shake that belief in the slightest; it would only beget in us the earnest desire to have them removed. And, of course, they could be removed only by *my* being altered, not the scriptures—by *my* growing in knowledge, the word being perfect.

Like a lad at school who receives a letter from his father: in it he finds some difficult words, which he cannot understand. What folly it would be to begin to think that his father did not write the letter at all, or question the correctness of the advice given. Simple faith would do neither. It would seek, by the aid of the dictionary, to understand the difficult words, and get at the full meaning of his father's letter.

This may seem almost too obvious to be insisted on; but many have gone astray on this very point. They have met with things in the scriptures which they do not understand; they have not simply treated them as difficulties arising from their own want of intelligence, but have looked upon them as *objections*, particularly

when it was something in scripture which did not coincide, as they thought, with the known character of God; or something which did not seem to agree with the supposed facts in nature; or where two parts of the word did not seem to harmonize with each other; until they have been led to doubt the inspiration of the scriptures altogether.

But it will be thought, perhaps, that a fact in nature clashing with the word of God is a real bona fide objection, and cannot be treated as a mere difficulty. But we may be sure that the works of God in nature do not clash with God in His word, and we have never heard of such a thing being discovered, and we feel sure we never shall. There may be some things *supposed* to be facts which may *seem* to clash with scripture, such as the time required for forming some of the geological strata. But who can say for certain that these strata *must* have taken so long to form, when God was the Former? And if they took the supposed time, there is room in the first chapter of Genesis to allow for it.

Objections to the scriptures are not to be found in nature, but in men's minds. And we beg of our readers not to let Satan persuade them that any difficulties they may have are in reality objections. As we have said, this is the very point where many slip away from confidence in God and His word, and make shipwreck of faith.

There *are* difficulties—we admit it fully, and an inspired apostle admitted it too—but they should not shake our confidence any more than they shook his. But he tells us that while, in Paul's epistles, there were

"some things hard to be understood," he tells us also that "the unlearned and unstable wrest [them], as they *do also the other scriptures*, unto their own destruction." (2 Pet. iii. 16.) How abundantly this enforces what we have been saying. Notice, it is the unlearned, the untaught, and the unestablished, who stumble at the word. They are ignorant, but if they owned their ignorance, and were teachable, God has said that He gives liberally, and upbraideth not: but they do not own their ignorance, but rather pride themselves on what they know, or what they fancy they know.

Observe, too, the word "wrest." They wrest the scriptures from their connection and meaning, and *torture* them, as we say, to mean what they do not.

The remedy is simple: it is to have implicit confidence in God, to own our want of knowledge, and then let Him be our teacher. And when He teaches and leads on, He makes it so that wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein. How blessed this is for poor simple ones! They are kept steady and unmoved, while the learned and self-confident too often stumble and fall.

NOTES ON SCRIPTURE.

CHAPTER V.

THIS is what is called "The Sermon on the Mount." Here it says Jesus went *up* into a mountain. In Luke vi. 17, where there follows a portion of this same discourse, it says, "And He came *down* with them, and stood in the plain." This was simply a level place on

the mountain. He had been up higher, but was still on the mountain, as in Matthew.

Verses 1, 2. Here we get the *principles* of the kingdom. The kingdom had been proclaimed as at hand, and the disciples must be instructed in its principles, though it seems to have been given in the hearing of the people. It is not a statement of the gospel, not a set of principles to which the unconverted are to attain for salvation. They are the principles of the kingdom. Not that this discourse actually followed as here placed. In Luke we find it comes later and in various places; so that in Matthew, being in general principles of the kingdom, it is doubtless portions of various discourses grouped together. This is not merely an idea of the writer's; but all is arranged of God to suit the character of the gospel in which it is found.

The following nine verses are often called "The Beatitudes" (from *beatitudo*, blessedness) because they are here a group of what Christ declared to be blessed.

Verse 3. "Blessed are the poor in spirit; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." To be poor in spirit, broken-spirited, was the condition suitable for the kingdom: not the haughty and high-minded.

Verse 4. "Blessed are they that mourn; for they shall be comforted." To mourn now in godly sorrow was to be blessed, because evil was now in the place of professed godliness.

Verse 5. "Blessed are the meek; for they shall inherit the earth." To be meek also was in character with the kingdom, as was our Lord. But such should possess the earth. This shews that these beatitudes

are not primarily for the church as such, though their principles also fully apply to us. Being in the church we have no promises attached to the earth; but inasmuch as the kingdom will continue after the church is removed, this promise of the earth will then be literally fulfilled to the meek.

Verse 6. "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled." The most ardent desires of a quickened soul should be satisfied.

Verse 7. "Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy." They were to cherish a forgiving spirit as they hoped to be forgiven. It was not only mercy in salvation, but mercy all through.

Verse 8. "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God." It must be purity in *heart:* outward cleansing was in no way sufficient: they must be like God. "Shall see God." Our Lord said to His disciples, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." (John xiv. 9.) This would not be the case with unbelievers who had seen Jesus; but it was true of His disciples. And in 1 John iii. 6, "Whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him;" whereas of believers he says, "When he shall appear we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is." (Ver. 2.) This is doubtless Christ; but in the text He is not named, but it is God. Again our Lord said, "If a man love me, he will keep my words, and my Father will love him, and *we* will come unto him, and make our abode with him." (See also Job xix. 25, 26.)

Verse 9. "Blessed are the peace-makers: for they shall be called the children of God." God is called

"the God of peace." And if we are peace-makers, we are like God; and as children resemble their father, so we shall be called the children of God.

Verse 10. "Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." These are they who will not do evil when persecuted, and suffer because they refuse.

Verse 11. "Blessed are ye when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely for my sake." Here it is of the highest order—for Christ's sake, and not simply for refusing to do evil. What if evil is spoken against us, it should be false, as it was of our Lord, and as they persecuted the prophets. (ver. 12.) And the reward here is to be "in heaven," not simply in the kingdom.

Notice, that there are in all *nine* "blesseds," and they may be divided thus:

Four (ver. 3–6) characterized by righteousness.

Three (ver. 7–9) characterized by grace and its fruits.

One (ver. 10) answering to the four—righteousness.

One (ver. 11, 12) answering to the three—what following grace may bring.

On the whole, while being the principles of the kingdom suitable for all, and to which we should all aspire, they exhibited, and were magnified by, Christ Himself, in a way that none others could attain unto. He was the one who fully answered to that which should characterize that kingdom, which, while it was *from* God, should also be to His honour and glory.

WATCHWORDS.

No. 9.

COLAPORE.

We take the name of the place where the following incident occurred as the *Watchword* for bringing the instruction to be drawn therefrom to mind.

Among the reinforcements sent to India, at the time of the mutiny of 1857, was a detachment of seventy or eighty of the Third Dragoon Guards. The normal rating of this regiment is "heavy," but for the special duty they were sent upon they were equipped as "light" dragoons. Having landed at Bombay, they rode up to Colapore, and were paraded by a colonel on the station before the British residents. The occasion was one of most stirring interest; many native regiments were in mutiny, and several others were supposed to be disaffected.

The veteran colonel having finished the inspection, thus addressed the ladies among the civilians:—"See the bloom of England on their cheeks; the sight of their faces will be quite sufficient." Then, turning to the captain of dragoons, he asked, "How many rounds (of ammunition) have you served them out, captain?" To which the latter answered, "Thirty." "That's twenty too many," said the colonel. "Ten will be plenty."

The first lesson for Sunday-school workers which we would draw from the foregoing is, that the service on which we are engaged is special and urgent. With the British empire in India imperiled, it was no time to withhold any regiment because its ordinary equipment

was not the best suited for the kind of service required. The necessary alteration was speedily made, and the "heavy" dragoons were sent out as "light." Neither should those who hear of need of help in the field of Sunday-school labour be too ready to withhold their help on the ground that they have no particular aptness for the special work. Little ones are growing up without the knowledge of God and Jesus Christ, whom to know is life eternal. Delay is dangerous, and may be fatal. Unoccupied Christians, think of Colapore.

But when we come to the words of the old colonel, what a lesson do they teach! For many years he had borne the burden and heat of her Majesty's service in India, and from long experience he knew which were the most valuable arms of that service. Let us, then, listen to the words which that experience prompted him to utter—"See the bloom of England on their cheeks; the sight of their faces will be quite sufficient."

Is it so for the enemies of Queen Victoria? How much more, then, with those to whom the gospel is sent! The testimony we bear may be all very clear and sound, but unless the heart be in present communion with God, and the countenance bear witness that we have been with Jesus, we cannot expect much blessing on the word. Oh! that the little ones not only heard His name from our lips, but (so to speak) could read it in our foreheads, with the bloom of heaven on our cheeks. Then the very sight of their teachers would be a sermon to these little ones, as we know is often the case. Thus will ten words take more effect than thirty spoken merely from the head, though never so correct verbally.

The Lord grant that, as His soldiers, we may thus go to the battle, prepared to speak ten words for Jesus in the power of communion with Himself, and with the bloom of heaven on our cheeks, rather than to say three times as much in the coldness of formality. If this be, in any increasing measure, the case, then shall we be the gainers from what took place in 1857 in Colapore.

Correspondence.

BRING THE EMPTY VESSELS.

DEAR MR. EDITOR,

I had the privilege, a short time since, of hearing the gospel preached by a much honoured servant of the Lord. At the end of the meeting he related the following striking incident, which will, doubtless, appeal to the heart of every Sunday-school teacher. I give it in his own words, as near as I can remember.

"I was preaching the gospel, on Wednesday evening, at a room in ——, and was led to take for my subject the widow and her pot of oil (2 Kings iv. 1–6). Besides speaking to the unsaved, I gave a word also to the Christians then present, remarking that each of them, like the widow, possessed the oil, which is the symbol of the Holy Ghost. She sent and borrowed empty vessels not a few. I pressed upon them, one and all, to be looking after empty vessels, that God might use these Christians in filling them. This exhortation, to all appearances, was unheeded by the elder Christians and the more advanced; but there was a little girl present, about thirteen or fourteen years of

age, who listened eagerly, and determined, without waiting for what others might do, that she would do what she could for the Lord.

"The next Sunday afternoon she brought three 'empty vessels' to the school, having been to a lodging-house, and found out three little ragged, dirty girls, and persuaded them to come with her.

"Taking them into a corner of the room, she began to tell them the simple story of Jesus and His love, when suddenly, almost as if it were a Pentecost, the power of the Lord was felt all over the school-room. The teachers were astonished. And the work of conversion commenced, and went on, until more than half the school professed faith in Christ, especially among the elder ones. Out of seventeen elder girls only two remained unmoved. Many, also, of the boys were brought to a knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus.

"No doubt there was a good deal of excitement, but some of these turned out to be the most happy and decided cases of conversion that I have ever met with. One little Irish boy, who was then enabled, for the first time, to say that all his sins were washed away, is now quite an earnest evangelist."

Dear fellow-workers, remember these words, "empty vessels not a few." We do not need any great power or gift; we have all got what the widow had—a pot of oil. Then may we be looking out for empty vessels, and not a few. "According to your faith be it unto you." "She hath done what she could." And although our motive is not because of the reward, yet how sweet will it be to hear those words, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant." M. J.

COPY OF A LETTER WRITTEN BY A SCHOLAR TO HIS TEACHER.

(*Age of the writer*, 10 *years*.)

February, 1874.

My dear Teacher,

I write these few lines to thank you for all your kindness to me, and to tell you that I have found peace through Christ Jesus. Dear teacher, will you please to accept of this likeness, in remembrance of one that you have been an instrument in bringing to Jesus.

I cannot tell you all that I think and feel; I am so happy, and I hope and trust that many more, under your teaching, will be saved through the same precious Jesus.

I remain, your ever loving scholar,

J. I.

"I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh I shall see God."

Happy home above! "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain." (Rev. xxi. 4.)

"We soon shall leave this foreign land,
And cross the flowing river,
And in our Saviour's presence stand,
And sing His praise for ever."

No sorrow there from radiant eyes,
No tears of grief are starting;
No sad farewells, no labouring sighs,
When friend from friend is parting.

No lurking foe, no hidden snare,
Shall evermore beguile us;
No pleasures, false as well as fair,
Shall evermore defile us."

As an encouragement to teachers to speak *individually* to the scholars, we give the following from one converted through the means of the Sunday school.

She writes—"I was telling a dear young Christian to-day how it was I was brought to the Lord, and what it was that troubled me. . . . . At the Sunday-school at —— *you* spoke to me: all that you said was, Are your sins forgiven? and that haunted me; but, thank the Lord, in a fortnight after I knew they were forgiven. There are no days like those days."

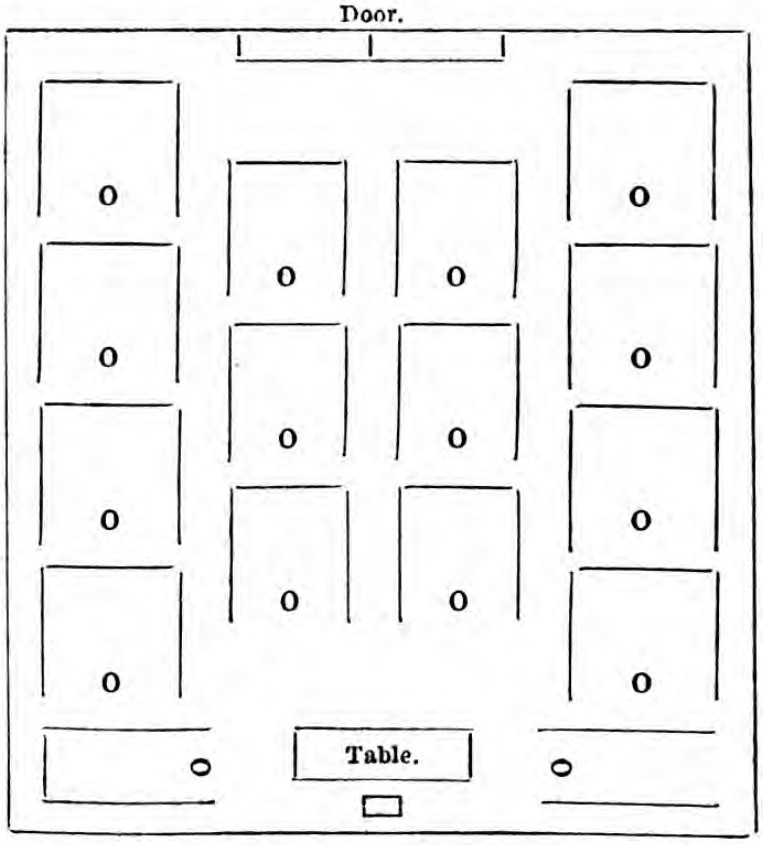
ARRANGEMENT OF CLASSES.

Dear Mr. Editor,

Many Sunday-school workers have found it difficult to place the children for the address, without causing confusion in shifting the forms. Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God, and I believe if we want to get the ear of the children we should also endeavour to get their eye.

To avoid the noise often caused by the shifting

necessary to dispose the school in a proper position for listening to an address, we have adopted a method in our school which we find answers very well. We arrange the forms according to the little sketch given below, which can be readily adapted to almost any room of an ordinary shape. The three lines thus [___ form the class, and the dot o indicates the teacher's chair. The classes are quite separate from one another—a very great thing in keeping the scholars quiet, as very often a class is upset by a boy of one class annoying another in the class next to him.



It will be invariably, I think, found to be conducive to order, to place the girls nearest to the door right across the school, separate from the boys, so that they

shall not be able to interfere with each other. This arrangement will enable the girls to go out first when school is over, without having to walk the length of the room.

The superintendent's table is placed as you see on the plan at the end of the room, and when the bell rings for the address the teacher will place his chair alongside of one of the side forms of his class, and ask his scholars to incline their heads toward the speaker. When the school is closed the teachers will give their scholars their hats and wait until the superintendent tells them to go; they will then walk in front of the class until they have reached the door, and then see the children pass out quietly.

I hope if any difficulty should arise through not having chairs for the teachers, they may make it a matter of special prayer to their Lord whose work they are doing, and count on Him to send them what they want.

If you can spare room in your magazine for these few lines, I shall be glad.

Believe me, yours truly in Christ, J. C. Peckham.

[One great obstacle to the adoption of our friend's plan is that it would require so many short forms, whereas in many schools they are all long ones. We remember years ago a great difficulty was found in a school to form the classes on account of all the forms being long, and the difficulty was only removed by a friend paying to have the forms cut in half. Anyone having to do with furnishing seats for new rooms

ought to remember the Sunday schools, and have the seats made short. They are, besides, much easier moved, and will the better fit a different shaped room, should that be needed.—ED.]

Questions and Answers.

CEDAR WOOD, SCARLET, AND HYSSOP.

DEAR SIR,

Will you kindly allow me to ask for a little instruction, through the pages of the Sunday-school Worker, as to the scarlet wool and hyssop, as mentioned in Hebrews ix. 19. We do not find either of these mentioned in Exodus xxiv., but Hebrews ix. 19 is enough as to that; but what is intended by the *scarlet* wool? and by the hyssop?

Why was it a bunch of *hyssop* that was to be used to strike the lintel and side posts of the houses with the blood of the lamb, at the passover?

Why cedar wood, *scarlet*, and hyssop, at the cleansing of the leper, as in Leviticus xiv.?

Why *these three* in the burning of the red heifer, &c.? (Num. xix.)

A little help as to this will be very acceptable to myself and to others whom I know.

I am, dear sir, gratefully, yours in the Lord,

A SUNDAY-SCHOOL TEACHER.

It is, perhaps, imposible to state with certainty what plant is pointed out in scripture by "hyssop;" but this is comparatively of little importance. It is de-

scribed in 1 Kings iv. 33 as the "hyssop that springeth out of the wall," and is there put in contrast with the cedar of Lebanon; the one representing the largest, and the other the smallest in the vegetable kingdom. Again, the hyssop must have been a very common plant for every family of the Israelites in Egypt to be able to obtain a bunch of it, wherewith to sprinkle the blood on the lintel and side-posts. (Ex. xii. 22.)

From these passages we doubt not that hyssop is typical of "lowliness," not in the sense of humility, but of littleness. Solomon's wisdom extended from the most lofty subject to the most minute; from the cedar to the hyssop. On the other hand, the Israelites had not to climb up to anything above them by which to apply the blood; it grew out of the wall, and reminds one of that passage, "Say not in thine heart, who shall ascend into heaven (that is, to bring Christ down from above), or who shall descend into the deep (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead). But what saith it? *The word is nigh thee*, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach." (Rom. x. 6–8.)

Again, we find hyssop associated with "scarlet." We think a few passages will throw light upon what is represented by scarlet. In Lamentations iv. 5 we read, "They that did feed delicately are desolate in the streets; they that were brought up in scarlet embrace dunghills." Here "scarlet" is clearly put in contrast to abject poverty. We doubt not it is typical of earthly "grandeur" or "glory." In Revelation xvii. the woman sits on a scarlet-coloured beast, and she herself is clothed in purple and scarlet (royalty and grandeur);

and the city, in chapter xviii., is described as "that great city that was clothed with scarlet," that is, clothed in grandeur.

Now this also stands in direct contrast to the lowliness of the hyssop. Hyssop is contrasted with "loftiness" in the cedar, and with "grandeur" in the scarlet.

But "scarlet," as we use the word, is a "colour" simply; but in scripture it clearly signifies a material dyed that colour. In Exodus xxv. 4, 5, it is among the offerings brought for the forming of the tabernacle: "Gold, and silver, and brass, and blue, and purple, and scarlet;" and in chapter xxxix. 3 they made the gold into wire, to work it into the scarlet *material*. Now, of course, a material made of wool may be dyed *after* it is woven, or may be dyed *in the wool*. It is probable that in those days the wool was dyed before it was woven, but it became a common thing to call the woven material "scarlet," as in many places in Exodus. So the *wool* might be called "scarlet wool," or simply "scarlet," when the use made of the wool clearly distinguished it from the cloth, as in Leviticus xiv. 4.

With this before us it is easy to enter into the force of the passage in Isaiah i. 18: "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." That is, though the sins be like crimson or scarlet, the colour should be entirely removed, and the wool made white, as white as snow; a thing which, of course, no dyer or fuller on earth could do. God only could remove the crimson dye of sin.

The word translated "crimson" in this passage is

the same as is translated "scarlet" in Lamentations iv. 5, and is a kindred word to that which is often translated "scarlet" in Exodus and Leviticus. There is another word translated "crimson" in 2 Chronicles ii. 7, 14; iii. 14; but on comparing these passages in 2 Chronicles with the corresponding passages in Kings, it is clear that the "crimson" of the former is the same as the "scarlet" of the latter. So that "scarlet" and "crimson" are kindred words, if they do not, indeed, refer to shades of the same colour.

Where the three names—cedar-wood, scarlet, and hyssop—are grouped together, we doubt not they refer to the loftiness, the grandeur, and the lowliness of *nature*; two of them being attached to the earth by their roots, the other being free from this, exalted in glory, still coming from a worm. All this must be brought down, and be judged in the cleansing of the leper, and in the burning of the red heifer for the purification of defilements by the way.

It helps to see the application of the cedar-wood, the scarlet, and the hyssop, by noticing that they are not named in the sin-offering, or burnt-offering, or peace-offering. They would be out of place in these offerings; but they are introduced into those where *cleansing* is in question, and here there must be the judgment of all that is of *nature*, be it high or low, attached to the earth, or that glory of man in which he delights to soar.

On the other hand, we find another group of words in which the scarlet occurs, namely, "blue, purple, and scarlet." These took a very prominent place in the curtains of the tabernacle (Ex. xxv.), and would here

represent the "heavenly character," the "royalty," and the "glory" of the humanity of our Lord.

Blue is the colour of heaven—the only colour we see when we look up into the sky. Purple, we doubt not, is royalty. It here comes between the blue and the scarlet, and blends the two beautifully together, which would not otherwise harmonize. As *man* our Lord will have glory; and by God He will be invested with royalty. "I have set *my* king upon my holy hill of Zion." Psalm ii. 6.

In the New Testament there are two distinct words in the Greek for 'scarlet' and 'purple' (*kokkinos*, always translated 'scarlet,' and *porphura*, always 'purple'), and yet the robe which Christ was clothed with is said to be 'scarlet' in Matthew, and 'purple' in Mark and John. Doubtless this was so ordered of God in agreement with the character of each Gospel. How the *same* garment could be called both is easily accounted for. In purple, as a colour, there may be much of blue and little of red or scarlet; or little of blue and a great deal of scarlet. In this latter case it might be called purple, or scarlet. In Hebrews ix. 19 it will be noticed that in the margin the scarlet is called purple, though doubtless scarlet is the right word here.

In Hebrews ix. 19 the scarlet wool and hyssop go well together for the sprinkling of the people, as we have already seen, though here it is rather sanctifying the people, setting them apart for God. Sprinkling the *book* may refer to the ratification of the covenant. There was the blood on God's part, and there was the scarlet and the hyssop—the highest and the lowest—on man's part.

OBSERVATION.

THE Sunday-school teacher is often in need of illustrations with which to explain the subject before him. In order to get these, he should always be on the look-out to turn everything to profit that may cross his path in his daily walk through life. For this we need "observation;" not simply the seeing of things, but observing and pondering them with a view to profit. Some are much more apt at this than others; but all may be helped by cultivating the habit of observation.

For instance, I see a boy whipping his top, and I ask, Is there anything to be learnt from that? Let us ponder over it, and see. The top is sometimes in a steady, fast spin—why need the boy go on whipping it? Why will not a top once set well spinning go on without any more whipping? It is said that a stone thrown into the air would go on in a straight course continuously were there nothing to stop it, and I suppose it is true; why, then, should not a top spin on continuously? Ah, there must be some unseen influence bearing upon it with a tendency to stop it. We know a top does stop in a few seconds if there is not a constant additional impetus. Yes, it touches the earth, and this must occasion friction; then there is the attraction of the earth; then there is the pressure of the air all around it.

What do I learn from all this? Is not this an apt illustration of the Christian? *He touches the earth*, and there is the constant wear and tear of necessary things to retard his progress. *He is within the sphere of the attraction of the earth.* As our Lord said, "I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the

evil" (John xvii. 15), and to be *altogether* separated from its evil we must "needs go out of the world." (1 Cor. v. 10.) And then we are surrounded with a poisoned atmosphere, Satan being "the prince of the power of the air." Now the tendency of all this is to retard the Christian in his heavenly progress.

Ah, then he needs a constant addition of impetus or strength, and we turn at once to the means God has provided, by the gift of the Holy Spirit and His word, so we may be *daily* fed and strengthened.

Now such a course of pondering as this is profitable to our own souls, and would be very useful in explaining to a class of young Christians the constant and unvarying tendency of everything down here to hinder the Christian; and also to bring out the absolute necessity of food and strength in order for the Christian to run well.

In this manner may many things occurring around us be turned to good account. They must be seized at the time they are seen—be pondered over, and then stored away in "the treasury" (Matt. xiii. 52), ready to be brought out when occasion requires. Thus an evangelist lately related the following illustration. It had occurred to him months previously, had been pondered over, and put into the treasury, and now was the time it was wanted.

He had been to Dover, and was on the heights one evening, from which he could see the town and railway. All was wrapt in darkness, but amid the darkness he could see a light here and a light there scattered over the place. Thus does God look down upon this dark world, and He is enabled to see here and there a light —a light of His own making, and that will shine for

ever for Him. Ah, He has said we Christians are the light of the world. (Matt. v. 14.) Do we shine for Him in this dark world, or do we hide our light under a bushel? Oh, to shine *for* Him as well as *to* Him in this dark world!

Afterwards the evangelist came down to the railway station, and there he saw a number of lights together on a truck. O what light they throw upon one another, and what a light to all around! So should be the church of God—a number of lights brought together: they mutually enjoy the light of each other, and they should be a great and bright light to all around. What failure where it is not so!

Nature, too, with its varied scenes, may often be turned to good account in the way of illustration. An apt example of this we extract from an American writer, who thus speaks of two rivers, the Arve and the Rhone, near Geneva, which flow into one another:—

"From the overhanging cliffs you gaze down into the deep blue, swift water of the Rhone at your feet; and you can at one view almost trace the river's course from where it issues from the city and the lake to the point immediately beneath you, where the brawling, furious, muddy Arve rushes into it. The Rhone is the biggest river, but the Arve is very pertinacious. The Rhone is majestic in its depth and volume, and as swift and graceful as an arrow in its flight; but the Arve is shallow and noisy, and makes a great sand-bank in the effort to come into the Rhone with as great space and pretension as possible. The Rhone is as clear and delicious an azure as the lake itself, almost as deep and bright, and transparent a colour, as that of the heavens

reflected in its bosom; but the Arve is as muddy as Acheron, and as cold as death. The Rhone comes from the crystal sleeping lake; the Arve from the restless, grinding glaciers.

"The Arve endeavours to rush into the Rhone almost at right angles, and to mingle its muddy, turbulent current with the crystal depths of the lake-river; but the Rhone refuses the mixture, and flies on by itself, so that the Arve is also compelled, though much mortified, to keep on its own side, being able to unite with the Rhone only in little eddies or ringlets. One hardly knows how the Rhone is able to conquer, but the two rivers flow on without mingling, so that you have the cold mud on the one side, and the clear crystal on the other. From the commanding height, where you stand above the banks of the Rhone, you see with the utmost clearness the play, the sport, the coquetry, aversion, and conflict of the waters, the hatred of amalgamation and annexation on the one side, and the desire for it on the other.

"But you feel that the Rhone is clearly in the right, while the Arve is an impudent intruder. The Arve is the child of night and frost, while the Rhone is the daughter of the day and of sunshine. The Arve roars, discoloured and angry, from its black ice-cavern, to the music of the avalanche; the Rhone shoots, like a river of foaming light, from the quiet bosom of the lake, amid the busy hum of industry, to the song of the mountain breeze. Nature has forbidden the banns between the two rivers, and all that the Arve can do is in vain, for his offers and his menaces are both rejected.

"Now, here is a curious symbol of many things, but

I have thought that it shadows forth very fitly the forced union sometimes attempted between human philosophy and the word of God. Philosophy is meant to be the handmaiden, and not the partner, and whenever the marriage is attempted all goes wrong. Human philosophy, apart from revelation, is almost mere mud. It has its origin in the *débris* of creation, amidst frozen glaciers, in the uncertainty of death and chaos, and when it would force its muddy guesses into competition and union with the divine word, the celestial stream refuses the connection, and flows on in its original purity and independence. A man may stand on the banks of the water of life, and drink and fill his pitcher only from that side, and then he has the truth pure and fresh from heaven. Or he may go where the philosophy and the truth are coquetting and conflicting, and he may drink of both together, and fill his pitcher with both together, and then he has generally as much mud as clear water, though he often thinks he has drawn up the truth much clearer than he who drank only of the crystal stream. Or he may go clean on the other side, and drink only of the scientific, metaphysic mud, of the cold stream of human guessings and rationalism; a melancholy sort of drinking, to which, however, men become so much attached, and get their taste thereby so completely perverted, that the mud seems a sweeter and more wholesome draught to them by far than the clear water."

Thus may the Sunday-school worker, by observation and meditation, often find truth illustrated by that which is passing around him, to his own profit, and to the advancement of his scholars.

NOTES ON SCRIPTURE.

MATTHEW V.

Verse 13. "Ye are the salt of the earth." Salt is that which gives flavour and which preserves. This the Christian is to this poor sin-stained earth. The only thing here which God can have pleasure in is a Christian. The earth is to be burnt up, but not till all are gathered home.

"If the salt have lost its savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men." It is not of use even for manure (the "dunghill," Luke xiv. 35); a striking picture of an unsavoury, an unspiritual Christian. If a Christian who has Christ has lost his savour, there is nothing else that can give him savour. He has left the only source of it in leaving Christ.

Verse 14. "Ye are the light of the world." Christ was the light when He was here, and now the Christian is that which God has placed here as the light of the world.

Verse 15. Men do not light a candle to hide it, neither has God lit His light for it to be hid—a plain proof that monasticism is not God's system for the Christian; and wherever God has set a Christian, he should remember that he *is* God's light in that place.

Verse 16. "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." We are to let the manifestation and confession of Christ so shine, that men, seeing our good works, will not have their attention drawn to the one who does them, but to God, who can produce in men self-abnegation and the seeking the good of

others. We are not to strive to let our good works be seen (see chap. vi.), but our light.

Verse 17. "Think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil." This sometimes presents a difficulty, when compared with such passages as Hebrews vii. 12, 18; and it is a common thing to say that sometimes in scripture the "moral" law is referred to, and sometimes the "ceremonial;" and that the "moral" law remains in its full force, but that the "ceremonial" law is abolished. But scripture makes no such distinction, and indeed one passage entirely clashes with it, for it refers to the ten commandments as "engraven in stones," and calls them a "ministration of death;" and though they were introduced by a glory, it "was to be done away." (2 Cor. iii. 7.) Now the law is holy, just, and good (Rom. vii. 12); and though Christ brings the Christian from under it (Rom. vi. 14) by Himself dying for the sinner, He does not destroy the law—He bears its punishment. To destroy the law would be to say, "though a man has broken it he shall not be punished;" whereas it is the very reverse of this. The man must be punished, either in himself, or in Christ as his substitute. Christ fulfilled the law in His life, and fulfilled it in His death by dying for those who had broken it; but it is more than that. The law was the rule of a perfect man: well, here was a perfect Man who added a fulness to it which it had never had before or since.

Verse 18. "One jot or tittle." The "jot," or "jod," is the smallest of the Hebrew letters (י), though the word actually used here is "iota," the

smallest of the Greek letters (ι), and which is in common use amongst us for any minute particle. The "tittle" is believed to refer to the small shoulders or turns which distinguish some of the Hebrew letters one from another. They are so much alike that, but for these turns, one could never be distinguished from another. Thus ב is not the same as כ; nor is ד the same as ר. Well, not one jot or tittle of the law could pass away till all "come to pass" (quite a different word being used here from the "fulfil" of verse 17). All came to pass in Christ.

Verses 19, 20. These verses shew that the righteousness now must be *real*, and touching the "least commandment," and it must exceed that of the scribes and Pharisees, or they could not really enter the kingdom of heaven.

Verses 21, 22. Not merely outward acts are judged now; but the feelings of the heart, and hasty and angry words.

Verses 23, 24. The inward recesses of the heart were now so important, that they must not go on with their religious worship if they knew any one had a charge against them.

Verses 25, 26. Doubtless, here is an allusion to Israel. They were on their way to punishment, and were expected to agree with their "adverse party" (not their "adversary," in the sense of God being their adversary); else they should be trodden under foot of the Gentiles, and in this sense by their punishment have paid the last farthing.

Verses 27, 28. The workings in the heart, and not simply their acts, were now to be judged as sin.

Verses 29, 30. Those in earnest must be prepared to make great sacrifices, but which, in reality, should be "profitable" for them.

Verses 31, 32. The rules allowed by Moses, on account of their hard-heartedness (Matt. xix. 8), must now be put aside for God's original institution concerning marriage.

Verse 33–37. Not "*by* them of old," but "*to* them," and so in verses 21, 27. The four oaths here mentioned were common among the Jews; they were not to swear at all, but were to let their No be No, without equivocation or deceit; and their Yes be Yes, in open truthfulness. The point taken up is their common "communications" one with another: the question of judicial oaths is not touched upon.

Verse 38–41. The law allowed retaliation: the gospel demands a patient submission to oppression.

Verse 42. Do not turn away in selfishness from one whom you can really help either by a gift or a loan.

Verse 43–48. We are not to hate our enemies, but to bless and pray for those who use us ill, that we may be "sons" of our Father which is in heaven: not simply "children," but "sons," implying moral likeness to God. In this sense we are to be perfect, as our Father in heaven is perfect, who sends His good gifts on the evil as well as on the good. We are to be so above the evil that we can do good to the wicked, whenever we can do it without encouraging their wickedness.

The verses 17 to 48 shew forth the new principles of the kingdom brought in by Christ, in connection with, and in some things in contrast to, the law. Christ said, again and again, "Ye have heard that it

was said to those of old," so-and-so; "but *I* say," so-and-so; shewing how far the principles of the kingdom went beyond anything required by the law. These things must have sounded strange to those who thought that in the law they had all they required, but who contented themselves with the outward observance of ordinances, and omitted even the weightier matters of the law—righteousness, &c.

THE FIRST SUNDAY SCHOOL.

We are not about to tell over again the story of Robert Raikes, of Gloucester, or any of the early European gospel labourers amongst the young. That of which we write occurred outside the city of Jerusalem, on the *first Sunday*, as we read in John xx. 1: "The first day of the week cometh Mary Magdalene early, when it was yet dark, unto the sepulchre, and seeth the stone taken away from the sepulchre."

We remember that after His resurrection, the Lord appeared only to believers, while nearly all Sunday-school testimony is towards the unconverted; nevertheless there are the converted amongst the children, and we believe that the same principles apply in most instances to both classes. Let us examine. In Mary Magdalene (with whom were Mary the mother of James, Matthew xxvii. 56–61; xxviii. 1; and Salome, Mark xvi. 1) we have the example of children who come early to school; yet, though they came so early, they found the school open. Affection drew them there, and, although they had so much to learn, they were in the right place to learn it.

They found, then, the school open, but saw not the teachers. That we enter not upon all the interesting and instructive details supplied by the several evangelists, we will for the present follow Mary, as shewn to us by the pen of John. "Then she runneth, and cometh to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple whom Jesus loved, and saith unto them, They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid him." (Ver. 2.) If with reverence we may say so, she told the boys that school was open; and they, too, came and found as she had told them, and saw the sepulchre, with the stone rolled away, the guard disappeared, the grave clothes laid in order, but the body of Jesus nowhere to be seen. Upon this they went away, but Mary remained, detained by love that would not let her depart, and which was so soon to be rewarded by the explanation of the lesson of the empty sepulchre. "But Mary stood without at the sepulchre, weeping: and as she wept, she stooped down, and looked into the sepulchre, and seeth two angels in white, sitting, the one at the head, and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain. And they say unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? She saith unto them, Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him." (Ver. 11–13.) These, then, were the teachers, and this was their lesson, given in fuller detail in Matthew xxvii. 5–8; Mark xvi. 5–8; Luke xxiv. 4–7. In passing, let us notice the example of these teachers, that they spoke to Mary in simple questions (a mode of instruction upon which something has already appeared in the Sunday school Worker). The lesson was given;

but before the morning school was over, there was to be an address. And who will give it? The next verse tells us: "And when she had thus said, she turned herself back, and saw Jesus standing, and knew not that it was Jesus." He repeats the question, "Woman, why weepest thou?" and adds, "WHOM seekest thou?" She recognizes Him not as yet, but answers, "Sir, if thou have borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid HIM, and I will take HIM away," never supposing that it could be misunderstood whom she meant by "HIM." "Jesus said unto her, Mary. She turned herself, and saith unto him, Rabboni," which is to say, my Master. Blessed Sunday-school work—blessed for teachers and learners, when the end of all teaching and learning is *Jesus Himself*.

What did not they lose who had gone away again unto their homes! Morning school was now over, but we find the same principle developed in what may be called the afternoon meeting, recounted in Luke xxiv. 13, 14. Like Mary, the two who journeyed towards Emmaus, and to whose company Jesus joined Himself, knew Him not at the first, though their hearts burned within them while He talked with them by the way, and expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning HIMSELF. He spoke to them also in questions, saying, "What manner of communications are these that ye have one to another, as ye walk, and are sad?" and the same end was accomplished in them as in Mary, when their eyes were opened, and they knew HIM—JESUS HIMSELF (ver. 15).

There is yet the evening school, and again Jesus Himself is the teacher. Again He asks questions.

"Why are ye troubled? and why do thoughts arise in your hearts?" (Ver. 38.) The same glorious subject for the lesson: "Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I MYSELF (ver. 39): then were the disciples glad when they saw THE LORD."

One more thought, and we leave this most fruitful subject. One of the number (Thomas, called Didymus, John xx. 24) was absent from the evening school. But the following Sunday he was in his place, and the Lord took occasion by his loss, now made good, to declare the blessing of such as now in thousands of Sunday schools, though they have not seen, yet have believed in HIM.

Correspondence.

"THE WORK OF THE LORD."

IT is of the greatest importance that we should have right views as to the nature and character of anything to which we put our hand. In nothing is this more important than in the work of Sunday-school teaching, for it is to be feared that many fail duly to consider this great work in its true aspect, and in consequence the teacher and the school are losers.

It is not merely *my* class, or simply an occupation in which I am engaged for an hour or two on Sunday afternoons, but what I am doing is *the Lord's work*—a work He has given me individually, as His servant, to do for Him—a work in which He associates me with Himself; "Workers together with God," with the one object, the one aim, the one desire on which His heart is set—the salvation of poor, lost, ruined sinners.

What a dignity this puts on our work! What grace

and condescension, that He should deign to use such as we are to accomplish His mighty purposes of love!—we who, alas! so often hinder His cause by our unbelief, half-heartedness, and failures.

It is "the work of the Lord;" let us bear *this* in mind when tempted, it may be, to relax a little in our efforts; to let small hindrances, little ailments, friends, or some other object, prevent us meeting our class; thinking, perhaps, "Oh, some one else can take it; it does not matter about my going *to-day*;" or coming in after the school has begun. Do we think of the effect all this must have on the scholars? Do we act thus when engaged in the service of an earthly master? and shall we serve our blessed Lord *less* faithfully? Is not His work worthy of greater earnestness, more zealous attention, than any earthly toil? Surely. He gave *Himself* for us, and love and gratitude should constrain us to devote ourselves to Him with all our powers; and a sense of the honour He confers in permitting us to be labourers together with Him condemns the least coldness and indifference.

Then, again, this word will help us when we consider the scholars themselves. Many of them are very tiresome, inattentive, and indifferent; some, perhaps, almost more than we can manage—it may be, at times, upsetting the whole class. But the thought that *the Lord* has brought that child into communication with me, and that He has some work for me to do with that wayward one, will check the wish that he were gone, while it will bring us to the throne of grace with increased earnestness that the Lord would change his heart, and give us the needed wisdom, grace, and love

to deal with such. "If any lack wisdom, let him ask of God." "My grace is sufficient for thee, for my strength is made perfect in weakness."

What need there is of prayer in such a work as this! Not *our* work, in one sense; for Paul may plant, and Apollos water, but God giveth the increase. It is all His own, from beginning to end, and He loves to be entreated of, and is the hearer and answerer of prayer; waiting and ready to bless. He does not send us to labour alone; as He said to Moses, so He says to us, "Certainly I will be with thee." Let us realize this as we go to our class, for it is not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord, and day by day wait upon Him with more expectant hearts. Surely "we have not because we ask not." And going to the work with prayer, engaging in it with prayer, and following it unceasingly with earnest, faithful, believing prayer, it must prosper. God's own word stands for this—"Be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord." "He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bearing his sheaves with him." "My word shall not return unto me void." Only we must seek to have such happy communion with the Master, "abiding in Christ;" such emptiness of self, that it may be *His* word that we speak; *His* work that we are doing, and not our own. There is no blessing promised to *our* work alone, or our words; on the contrary, "Without me ye can do nothing," and only as "empty vessels" are we fit for the Master's use.

While the consideration of our labour in the Sunday school being "the work of the Lord" pervades our minds with the thought of its solemnity and responsibility, may it likewise animate and gladden our hearts with the certainty of success; for *He* cannot fail. And beyond and above all our failures and shortcomings in His service, and beyond all our poor cold hearts desire or think—whether we see it here below, or not until we have finished our course on earth, and entered His presence—the work of the Lord shall prosper.

G. L.

A NEW TRANSLATION OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.

DEAR MR. EDITOR,

In your correspondent's letter on the "Marked Bible," he speaks of noting down instances of a better translation than the Authorized Version, where they affect the sense, and where those alterations can be had on good authority.

I think that is a good suggestion, or at least for all to be furnished with a good translation, whether they mark the alterations or not; indeed, I should feel a difficulty in being able to mark all I needed in the margin of my Bible. But I value my "new translation" exceedingly, and often refer to it for my own study.

There is a need of the caution not to push forward the better translation of a passage unnecessarily, and a seeming to be always finding fault with the Authorized Version. On the other hand, I doubt if it would be right, at a proper season, to withhold a better translation when I found the Authorized Version was mis-

leading those commenting upon it. But even then, there needs wisdom in doing it. Suppose at a reading-meeting one were to say, "Oh, that is the Authorized Version—that is incorrect; it should be read so and so;" it might make some draw back in defence of the Authorized Version, while it might have the tendency to weaken the authority of scripture in the minds of others. A much better way would be to say quietly, "I have it on good authority that this passage may be more correctly rendered so and so," stating what it is.

To have a correct translation I hold to be of the first importance. Often have I puzzled over a passage, and sought in vain for its meaning, when a better translation has at once turned the current of thought, and the passage has become clear.

Take, for instance, 1 John iii. 4: "Sin is the transgression of the law." If this is a true definition of sin, there can be no sin where there is no law; for where there is no law, there can be no transgression of it. Whereas we read of those who have "sinned without law" (Rom. ii. 12); again, "Until the law sin was in the world." (Rom. v. 13.) The passage in 1 John should be translated, "Sin is lawlessness," that is, man doing his own will. This is sin: when the law came, men transgressed it, and then sin became transgression. This makes all plain; and, as strong confirmatory evidence that the above is correct, it may be noted that the Authorized Version never translates the word in the original found here by "transgressing the law" but this once.

Take another important passage—Galatians v. 17—"The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit

against the flesh, and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would." This seems to teach that, on account of the warfare between the flesh and the Spirit, there *must* be failure: "Ye cannot do the things that ye would;" whereas the reverse is the meaning. There is a warfare, but the Holy Spirit is given in order that we may not do the things which our flesh would prompt us to do. It should read, "in order that ye may not do the things that ye would."

Now, surely such things are of the greatest importance. Through God's grace we have His word, and, having it, we want to understand it; and to this end we want to know exactly what He caused to be written.

But besides such important passages as the above, there are many alterations of single words well worthy of attention. For instance, in some places the Authorized Version translates the same word by different words where they occur in the same connection; indeed, where they are almost in the same sentence. Thus in John v. we have the following:—

Verse 22. "The Father . . . . hath committed all *judgment* unto the Son."

Verse 24. "He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me . . . . shall not come into *condemnation*."

Verse 27. "And hath given him authority to execute *judgment* also."

Verse 29. "They that have done evil unto the resurrection of *damnation*."

Verse 30. "And my *judgment* is just."

In these passages the word is the same for all

those words printed in italics. Why not have them all "judgment?" Those who believe do not come into "judgment;" there is a resurrection of "judgment," but there is also a resurrection of life. One thing is certain, God used but *one* word in all these places, and the one word "judgment" makes the sense much clearer in the whole passage.

These instances—and they could easily be multiplied—I think, will make it plain that a good translation of the New Testament is of great value to all students of scripture, and to all Sunday-school teachers. Before we can teach, we must know what we have to teach, and the more definitely we know this the better. It is not that I wish to disparage the Authorized Version, or in any way to supplant it for general use. As a whole, nearly everyone bears witness to its excellence; but I have found from experience the value of knowing where and what are its faults, and how to rectify them, not only for my own study, but also for the purpose of explaining God's word to others.

I would recommend to Sunday-school teachers the new translation, called "The Gospel, Acts, Epistles, and Book of Revelation, commonly called the New Testament," published by G. Morrish. It may be taken as the "good authority" your correspondent insisted on.

A STUDENT OF THE WORD.

[Through the kindness of a friend, the Publisher is authorized to sell during the month of June to any *bona fide* Sunday-school teacher a copy of the above-named translation of the New Testament at the reduced price of 2s.6d. per copy; or 2s.9d. post free.—ED.]

EVIL DOCTRINE.

DEAR MR. EDITOR,

I am concerned to find that in various parts of London, and perhaps elsewhere, bills are posted about the streets containing the principles of the Unitarians. These bills are of course seen and read by our scholars and I fear will do much harm. They are cautiously worded, and the apparent reverence for God is calculated to mislead. I write to ask if you can suggest any plan by which this evil may be counteracted, holding, as I do, that this error is fundamentally false and destructive of the soul's salvation.

[We think it is the duty of each Sunday-school teacher to be himself well armed against this and other evil doctrines that are prevalent. The best safeguard against error is being well grounded in the truth, and being able to produce scripture for each portion of the truth. We think the scholars may often be warned against error without naming the error as a system. For instance, as to Unitarianism, it might be said, "There are some people who deny that Christ died for sinners, except as an example; they say that if we do our best, God will forgive the rest. But if man could be saved in this way how was it that He sent His Son unnecessarily to die a shameful death? and it would be unnecessary if man could be saved in any other way. No, God tells us that there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved. (Acts iv. 12.) "Without shedding of blood is no remission." (Heb. ix. 22.) And the scholars might be asked to find out the passages that speak of Christ's death as *necessary* to salvation, &c.—ED.]

"LINE UPON LINE."

LITTLE hands cannot hold many things at once, and little minds cannot grasp and retain many subjects. It is far better, we believe, to have one subject, which can be grasped and retained, than several subjects, none of which are remembered. We have asked children, after they have been to the Sunday school, "Well, my dears, what subject have you had this afternoon?" "Oh, I cannot remember." "But what did your teacher talk to you about?" "Oh, lots of things." "Well, try and tell me *one* thing he told you." "Oh, I cannot remember anything in particular. He told us lots of things."

Now it is this "lots of things" which we think stands in contrast to the teacher having *one* thing before his own mind—one thing as a centre to which all his teaching and all his illustrations tend—and one thing which the scholars may be able to grasp and to retain.

Every child of moderate capacity can grasp and retain *one* thought, and this one thought may be the better retained by being repeated, and by being corroborated by various passages of scripture, and by being illustrated and explained; but let it all be to bring home the one thought started with, to rivet that upon his attention and upon his memory.

Now, in order to do this, I must have it well defined in my own mind. It is not that I am going to bring before the class such a verse of such a chapter, and go through the verse with its various lessons and teachings. This may be all right for the Bible classes; but for the juniors I want one thought—one "line"—one

truth—that I gather from that same verse. Sometimes a teacher is apt to think he *is* confining his attention to one truth, because he takes but one verse; but this may be a great mistake. Sometimes a single verse contains several truths; and in other cases several verses may contain but one truth.

Take, for instance, John iii. 16: "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." In this there is, first, the love of God to the world; secondly, the gift of His Son: thirdly, the believing in Him; fourthly, perishing; fifthly, everlasting life. Of course in taking any one of these subjects, the whole would be referred to, and the bearing of each of the other subjects towards this one be looked at; but by taking one, and one only, of the subjects as the prominent feature in a lesson, it would be better understood, and be retained and carried away.

Luke xviii. 1–8 may be taken as an illustration of where several verses teach one truth, namely, that "men ought always to pray, and not to faint."

To have one principal thought for a subject is like driving a nail into a board. Let the nail be a large one, and then give a few preliminary taps till it enters the wood; then every tap drives it further home, and makes it more secure and firm; it thus becomes a fixture, to which I can at any time return, and on which I can often hang other things. This is in contrast with driving in a dozen small nails; a tap to each is sufficient, but all are on a level, and none attract notice, and nothing can be hung on any of them.

So it is with teaching: give the scholars half a

dozen points, and they forget them all. They say, "I cannot remember anything in particular; there were lots of things." Give them *one* thing, make them repeat it; drive it home by any means at your disposal, and they remember it. You can then have line *upon* line; line *added* to line.

But to do this, it must be clear, definite, and distinct in the teacher's mind. He may not like this. It requires more preparation than going on from verse to verse until the bell rings; which, alas! is the practice of some teachers. They begin this Sunday where they left off last Sunday, and have never looked at it since then; have never read it once, nor have meditated upon it. They reckon upon their general knowledge of the word to carry them through, and by going on from verse to verse they can always fill up the time. But if you asked the scholars afterwards what they had had for a lesson, you would be told again "lots of things," and it is very questionable if the teacher himself, or herself, could sometimes give you an answer, other than repeating the text itself.

Now to have a definite subject demands more meditation, more reading, more searching, and comparing. But we believe it is far preferable, and it in no way hinders one from going regularly through a book or gospel, if so led. Surely the One for whom we work is worthy of all the care and all the trouble we can take to prepare our lesson.

We exhort our fellow-teachers not to be satisfied with a vagueness about the truths to be taught. He cannot properly explain what he does not understand. And this is a precocious age. He will be asked some

strange questions, especially by the elder scholars; and they will soon see if the teacher does not understand what he is attempting to teach. We stay not to inquire how he is to seek instruction; it has been touched upon already. We are here only exhorting him not to rest satisfied without, according to his measure, understanding that which he assays to teach: and then not to aim at too much at a time. "*Line* upon *line*" is a good motto for a Sunday-school teacher.

NOTES ON SCRIPTURE.

MATTHEW VI.

VERSE 1. Most of the editors, and apparently on good authority, read "Take heed that ye do not your righteousness before men;" that is, they read "righteousness" instead of "alms." It thus forms a sort of heading for the first eighteen verses. Their righteousness was not to be done to be seen of men, but before the Father. This was an important principle for those who heard this discourse, and for us. We are all apt to seek credit from man. If we do, we *have* our reward in their saying, What a charitable man! or, What a devout man! This is a poor reward truly, but it is all we can get. We lose our reward from the Father, unless we do our righteousness as in secret, yet seen of the Father.

With this verse as a sort of heading, the righteousness spoken of would consist of almsgiving, prayer, and fasting, which follow.

Verse 2–4. Our almsgiving is to be in secret, even our most intimate friend, our left hand, is not to know what we do with our right hand.

Verse 5–8. Our prayers are not to be in a way to draw attention to ourselves; they are to be in secret. Public prayer is not here in question. They are not to consist of vain repetitions, but to be our simple, real desires made known to God. It says *vain* repetitions; all repetitions are not condemned, if in true earnestness. Our Lord in the garden repeated the same prayer three times.

Verse 9–13. This is what is commonly called "The Lord's Prayer;" it would be more appropriate to call it "the disciples' prayer." The question arises, was this intended to be the prayer of all Christians at all times? We think not; and this, not because we could not repeat the whole of it to God, but because when our Lord was here was a transition time; redemption had not been wrought, and the Holy Spirit had not been given. (John vii. 39.) After He was given we were to pray "in the Spirit" (Eph. vi. 18), implying, among other things, we doubt not, that He would suggest our prayers. What Christian is there that would now consider that the Lord's prayer contained all he need pray about? And those who use it constantly make their requests to God *first*, and finish with the Lord's prayer—more, in some cases, we fear, as a sort of *duty*, than as true prayer.

In another place our Lord said to His disciples, "Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name," and yet they had prayed the Lord's prayer, perhaps, every day since they heard it. "At that day ye shall ask in my name," clearly implying that at a future day they were to pray in a different manner: they were to ask, and they should receive, that their joy

might be full. The day there pointed out would be after the resurrection and the gift of the Holy Spirit, and extends to the present time.

The Lord's prayer, then, would form a part of the "principles of the doctrine of Christ" (or rather "the doctrine of the beginning of Christ"), which the Hebrews were exhorted to leave. (Heb. vi. 1.) That is, leave it as a definite form, though each and all the petitions therein might be incorporated in their prayers produced by the Holy Spirit.

"Our Father, which art in heaven." This must have been a new thing for the disciples. It was so different from going to the priests with their offerings; they went now directly to the Father. The relationship, too, was new. We do not find David, in the Psalms, addressing God as Father. This address proves that it was the disciples, as believers in the Lord Jesus, who were to pray; it was not a prayer for the unconverted. "God be merciful to me a sinner" was the prayer of the publican.

"Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth as in heaven." This does not go beyond blessing on earth.

"Give us this day our daily bread." They were still in the wilderness, and owned their dependence on God.

"Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors." This would be, not as the ungodly praying for salvation, but as those already forgiven asking for forgiveness for their failures. They tell God that they are not demanding their rights from man, but are forgiving their debtors.

"Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil." They owned their weakness, and prayed to be delivered from evil.

"For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen." These words the editors omit here upon good authority. They have been inserted, no doubt, with a good intention, but in reality marring God's perfect arrangement. They are not found in Luke.

Verses 14, 15. These verses would seem to give the reason for the form in which the petition in verse 12 is put—"Forgive us our debts, *as* we forgive our debtors. . . . . *For*, if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you;" but if they forgave not, God would not forgive them. That is, that if they were demanding their rights, God would deal with them in like manner, not in any way as touching their salvation, but in discipline by the way.

Verse 16–18. This treats of fasting. They were not to do it to be seen of men, but in secret to God.

In these three things, if done Godward, the doers would be rewarded by Him; if done manward, they lost all value in God's eyes. They *had* their reward already from man, and their deeds reached no farther.

THE HUMBLE BEES' NEST.

THERE is an evil I have noticed in the Sunday school. When the superintendent, or one of the teachers, announces the number of a hymn, or a chapter and verse, to all the school, several children repeat it to one another,

or themselves, so as to disturb the entire assembly by the hum of their voices. Frequent observation of this reminds me of an incident of my childhood. During a holiday, spent in the country, I accompanied a man who was sent into an orchard to gather apples. As he was occupied with his work, I wandered amongst the trees, seeking for amusement, and presently found it in a heap of moss, about the size and shape of a molehill. The singular woven appearance of the moss, and its even shape, struck me, and I touched it with a stick which I carried. A subdued hum issued from the moss. Again I touched it, and again it returned the same sound. Again, and again. Upon this I went to the foot of the ladder on which the apple-gatherer was working, and told him of my discovery. "Oh," he said, "that is a humble-bees' nest." He came down the ladder, and I guided him to the spot. Taking the stick from my hand, he turned over the lump of moss, and laid bare the globular honey-cells, with the humble-bees swarming out from them. Some of the bees flew away, others came buzzing around our ears, but these were soon stricken down by blows of the stick, dexterously applied by the man; and when the honey-makers were disposed of, the finder and securer of the sweet spoil shared it between them, and the bees paid a heavy penalty for their hum. But for it, I should, doubtlessly, not have suspected their presence, and it led to the loss of their sweet hoard for the winter by all, and the loss of their lives by many.

Let this remind children and teachers that nothing is trifling which hinders quietness and attention in the school. "The 148th hymn," repeated in a low voice

by fifty speakers, produces a hum which is most distracting to any one who has first announced it, and to all who wish to be attentive; and thereby calmness of spirit and profit of soul, truths of eternal sweetness, and the hearing which bringeth life, may be sacrificed to the thoughtless habit of the inmates of the Sunday school answering the first touch with a sound like that of the denizens of the humble-bees' nest.

SCRIPTURE DIFFICULTIES.

No. 2.

CONFIDENCE IN GOD.

We have already seen the difference between finding difficulties in the word of God and having objections thereto. We have to do with the former. We have also glanced at the importance of having our minds fully established in confidence in God. When this is held fast, we can afford to look any difficulty quietly in the face: to take it into the presence of God, to ask Him for wisdom, to get what help we can from what He may have taught others, and then to wait calmly for light from heaven.

But our next point is, supposing we wait and wait, and yet cannot meet the difficulty, ought this, in the slightest possible way, to shake our confidence in the word of God? We unhesitatingly say, *not the slightest.*

It must be remembered that it is *God's* book, and He looks for confidence from His creatures. It is not a book written for sceptics, who have no respect for the Writer, and no confidence in Him. This alone makes an immense difference. Take, for instance, any well-known, well-accredited author, who writes a book.

He naturally expects that he will be believed, and so he does not suppose difficulties, and does not stay to meet them.

To take a familiar, but very apt, illustration. Suppose A. starts on a particular day from London to Brighton. He starts, say, at ten o'clock in the morning. After riding for an hour, he meets B. coming from Brighton, to whom he speaks a few words. Almost immediately afterwards, A. remembers that he has forgotten some important paper he needs at Brighton. He at once turns his horse's head round, and returns to London; but he has not travelled far on his return, when he meets C., also going to Brighton. They pass on the road, and A. reaches London, obtains the forgotten paper, and again starts for Brighton. After proceeding a good distance, he remembers he was to have called at a house in Ewell, and again he turns his horse's head towards London, and calls on D. at Ewell. He transacts his business, baits his horse at another house in Ewell, again turns his horse, and proceeds to Brighton; but before reaching Brighton he meets with E., coming from that town.

Now A. writes a book, and he says, on this particular day, while on the Brighton road, he meets B. and E. coming from Brighton. In another part of his book he says also that on this same day he met C. going *to* Brighton; but he does not say one word about his turning back. He does not write for those who would suspect he would tell an untruth. He expects to be believed. And before he can give any explanation he dies.

We can easily see how any one *wishing* to prove this

author to be untruthful would think that he has here a strong case in point. But no sooner is the objection made as to his truthfulness, than his friends determine to search out the matter. And the evidence stands thus: B. and E. are quite clear they were coming *from* Brighton, and they met A. going *towards* that town. On the other hand, C. is certain he met A. going the reverse way; and D. declares that the head of A.'s horse was towards London when he called at his house, and when he left him he proceeded in the same direction. This presents a difficulty; but that the author on that day met some going *to* Brighton, and some going *from*, is at once proved to be true.

We have already seen that there is a very simple explanation of the mystery, but without that explanation, to those who *desired* to find fault, we can easily see that they would have what would appear to be a *prima facie* case against the writer, and they would not further trouble their heads about solving the difficulty. They have discovered a contradiction, they would say; the writer is unworthy of credit.

Those who know the writer better will not admit this for a moment, and they determine to search out the matter further; and, with the above evidence before them, they are able to say that A. must have started to go to Brighton about ten o'clock—he is seen about eleven o'clock going in that direction. About half-past eleven he is seen going the contrary direction—for some purpose he must have turned back. Still, he went to Brighton afterwards, for E. met him near that town much later in the same day. But on his journey he must again have turned back, for he called on D.

with his horse's head towards London. He promised to call on D. on that day, and may have forgotten it till he had passed. And so all could be made to agree, even without having the key to the whole which we have.

Now this will surely shew the danger of concluding that there *must* be some mistake because we cannot make it all agree. Of course, a case might easily occur much more complicated than the above; but if the writer is worthy of credit, we ought not to let such a statement shake our confidence in him. We may call it a difficulty—and it is so—and we may be entirely unable to unravel it. No matter; we have confidence in the writer, and believe he could make it all plain.

Now, if it is so with man, how much more so with God. The question is, should a difficulty, or a thousand difficulties, be allowed to shake our confidence in God? Assuredly not. And yet this, alas! is what men allow them to do. It shakes their confidence in God.

The above simple case helps to illustrate and explain some of the difficulties in scripture—such as the journey of the children of Israel, the incidents touching the resurrection, &c. It is true God may not have given the key in every case, but we are sure there is a key. It is God's book, and it is true; and He has said that in quietness and confidence should be our strength. Isaiah xxx. 15.

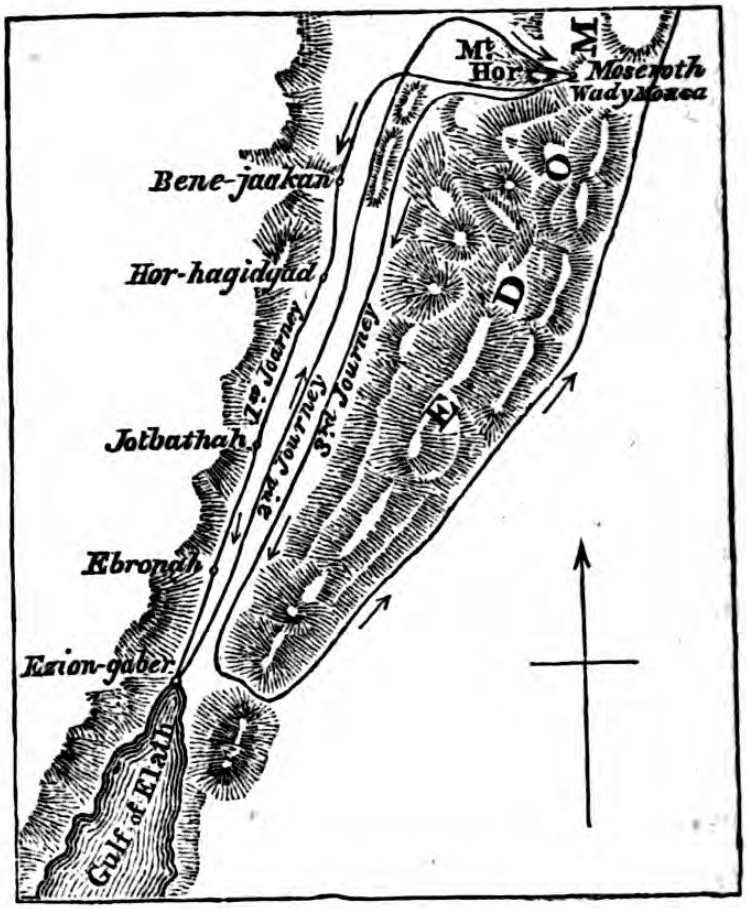
Take, for instance, the death of Aaron. Deuteronomy x. 6 says the children of Israel journeyed from Beeroth of the children of Jaakan *to* Mosera: "there Aaron

died." Whereas Numbers xxxiii. 31–38 says that they journeyed from Moseroth to Bene-jaakan . . . thence to Zin, which is Kadesh . . . . thence to Mount Hor, and Aaron died there. These two statements are said to be contradictory and irreconcileable.

In the first place it is admitted that Moseroth and Mosera are the same place, and that it was the nearest station to Mount Hor; so that it is the same thing to say Aaron died when they halted at Mosera, and that he died at Mount Hor. The difficulty is that in Numbers Aaron sinned near Kadesh, and after this he came to Mosera, and died; whereas in Deuteronomy he died *before* they came to Kadesh.

It must be remembered that the children of Israel journeyed in the wilderness thirty-seven years, so that it would not be at all surprising if they traversed the same ground more than once; indeed we have proof in scripture that this is what they did. In some places the same stations are named, but in the inverse order, proving that they were retracing their steps; whereas other passages clearly point out that they went the same route twice. Take, for instance, Numbers xiv. 25—"To-morrow turn you, and get you into the wilderness by *the way of the Red Sea*" (gulf of Elath, far distant from where they first crossed). In the fortieth year they again came to the border of the promised land, but were denied a passage by Edom, and again returned *to the Red Sea*. "And the children of Israel . . . . came to Mount Hor." (Num. xx. 14–22.) There "Aaron died." "And they journeyed from Mount Hor by the way of the Red Sea, to compass the land of Edom." (Chap. xxi. 4.)

The difficulty is by this entirely removed. The visit to Kadesh, in Deuteronomy x., must have been the *second* visit, and in Numbers xiii. it is the *first*. The following map (drawn up by another) will explain the route.



It must be observed that this gives only the wanderings, from the sending out of the spies to when they proceeded north to compass the land of Edom. It will be seen that they went over the same ground, or nearly the same, *three times*.

A TEACHERS' MEETING.

In the West of London was lately held a meeting of Sunday-school teachers for prayer and conference.

About two hundred and fifty were present. We give the principal topics touched upon.

After prayer, Mc. said that there was an opportunity now given for seeking counsel upon any subject that might be on any one's mind. He hoped they would do so.

He had been informed that some were seeking advice concerning the taking of the children for a day into the country. For himself he thought there was an amount of danger in it. It was what was being done all around. Our distinctive feature was separation, and the question was how the two things agreed. In one way it might be useful in binding the scholars to the school and to the teachers. But he did not offer any judgment in the matter. He must leave it to those engaged in the work.

W. remembered that at Sheffield it was once the custom to take all the schools in the place at one time, with banners, &c. He simply suggested that they should go another day.

M. thought it important to distinguish between the work itself, and the danger incidental thereto. In itself he thought it was a simple natural thing, for recreation, fresh air, &c. are good—if not, none of us, he feared, were free from blame. But there are two dangers specially to be guarded against; one is, lest it should be a premium offered to children to attend the school; the other, lest worldliness in detail be allowed to slip in. They would all feel that it was utterly inconsistent to join with others, with banners, bands, &c. They must guard against these dangers; and let it be done, without worldliness, and in a godly way.

It was an opportunity to get to know the children

better, to observe the character of each scholar. For this purpose he thought the school should go alone, accompanied only by those really helping in the work, and each teacher should, as far as possible, be with his own class. They must have order whether in the school or in the country. They must look to God to keep them as much there as on Sunday.

He rather thought the first "treat" amongst them occurred in a very simple way. He was in the city on a very hot day, and found his thoughts unconsciously turn to his Sunday-school children, many of whom never saw a green field. This led to a few of the teachers meeting together and arranging for a day in the country. He did not think it at all wrong. There *were* difficulties, he admitted; but they must seek grace to overcome them, and avoid the dangers.

C. remarked that in tracing the Lord's life he saw how He used the opportunity of being out of the city. In one place we read that there was much grass in that place. In Mark vi. 31 our Lord said, "Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place and rest awhile." They would all agree that in taking the children into the country the *manner* was important. It must not be in a worldly way, in company with others. "Let all things be done decently and in order." They even sat down by fifties, &c. All should be the subject of earnest prayer, and *blessing* should be sought.

Mc. believed that there was no class of workers in the Lord's vineyard to whom the little word in Galatians vi. 9 applied, more than to those gathered that night. "Let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not." All should remember

that it is now a sowing time. The Lord did give encouragement, but it was as a few drops. There was a harvest time coming; but all needed patience, and therefore needed the word he had read.

There was also a little word in Isaiah viii. 20 very necessary in the present day. It shewed the importance of storing the minds of the children with the word of God. Satan's subtle way was to undermine the scriptures. They were dark days in Israel at that time. Therefore they were recalled "to the law and to the testimony." They were treated as children, and the principle necessary in dealing with children is applied to them in chapter xxviii. 10: "Precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little." The word of God was a *living* word, therefore let them instruct the children in the scriptures. He desired to press the passages in Isaiah. The Lord in the Gospels taught the same things over and over again. Going about the villages it was necessarily the same thing. Though this was wearying, in due time they would reap if they fainted not.

A teacher asked,—that as many schools were increasing in size and libraries were being added,—what kind of books ought they to have for the libraries? There was a library connected with the school where he was; but they found that some of the religious books did not contain the truth, and on that account they had to reject them. He had seen catalogues of other schools which contained the same books which they had rejected. This he thought was wrong. They ought to have a definite line before them.

B. desired to read one or two passages, which he thought would bear upon the subject before them. One was Colossians i. 28, 29; "Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus: whereunto I also labour, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily." Another was Matthew xviii. 10, 11: "Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, That in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven, For the Son of man is come to save that which was lost."

He thought that every one was responsible as to what books he gave away. If they gave a book to anyone they should read it first themselves. It would not do simply to take a general idea of a book. If any one took up a special service the great thing was to ask *whom* did they serve, and then *how* did they serve. To his own master each must stand or fall.

He reminded them that they were called Sunday-school teachers—*teachers*, not preachers. They took up the spiritual education of those in their charge. They needed to understand the way to act towards the children; for each to know the duties of those who stood in the place of parents. The word was, "Bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." One thing was certain that every servant was a *minister*, and the object before them should be to present every child perfect in Christ Jesus.

As to the passage in Matthew, he said that a child was taken to God in virtue of the death of Christ; therefore on that ground they could teach them. He

called upon those present to hold to their name of *teachers*, and to remember the responsibility resting upon them in connection with those placed under them.

M. admitted that the Sunday-school teacher for the time being is in the place of the parent; but this he felt was true in a limited sense only, and did not fully describe his work. He could not say that he was not at the school as an evangelist—certainly when addressing the school he was preaching the gospel.

He remembered that at the first meeting they had of that kind the question was asked, "What authority have we in the word of God for Sunday schools?" "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature" was answered. But this was felt to be incomplete. He must say that he was not sure that their exact work was to be found in the scripture. Certainly the words SUNDAY-SCHOOL TEACHER did not occur. They took up a work in a world the foundations of which are out of course. If parents filled their position rightly, the teachers would have no work; but because the parents did not do so, the teachers could not get rid of their responsibility. Still they were not simply teachers. They were bringing the word of *life* to children, who they often found had their consciences exercised before God about sin.

He remembered a little child scarcely up to his elbow, to whom he had often spoken more in a playful way than as to the state of her soul, coming to him weeping bitterly. And when he asked her the cause of her grief, she said, "Oh I am such a sinner." Yes, he had often seen as real a work in little children as in older people; and no doubt all present had seen

the same at one time or another; at least he trusted such was the case.

Teachers must remember that frequently all the week the work was being hindered, and their teaching contradicted in the children's homes; therefore they must look for *conversion*. In Luke xv. they had those who had wandered; and in Matthew xviii. those who had not actually wandered, and who were yet sinners. For the most part the teachers found that they had to do with those who had actually sinned—those who had lied, stolen, &c. The teachers must seek to bring the consciences of the children into God's presence about their condition before Him, that repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ may be produced.

They needed a deeper sense of the great work in which they were engaged—a more real counting on God, aiming at nothing less, as they had been exhorted, than to present each child *perfect* in Christ Jesus; and to this end now was the time; now was the day of *salvation*. The Lord gives the word; the Holy Spirit applies that word. If they only had a greater confidence in God, what blessing might they not expect! A great responsibility was in their hands if they could exercise it but one hour in the week. And if in any sense they took the place of parents, let them have a parent's heart to yearn over their children. If the hearts of the teachers knew more of this, counting on God what a power it would be, and how they would long to see Christ formed in each one under their care. He prayed God would grant it in His great grace!

With prayers and hymn the meeting closed.

SCRIPTURE DIFFICULTIES.

No. 3.

INSPIRATION.

We have been saying that difficulties in scripture ought not to shake our confidence in God. To this many would say, Amen, who yet in a specious way allow them to shake what we should call full confidence in God.

Take for instance the verbal inspiration of scripture. If I meet with difficulties, and can satisfy my conscience about them only by supposing that God did not so inspire the writers as to prevent their making mistakes, what is this but losing confidence in God Himself? If it is God's book, and He has allowed those who penned it for Him to write what is erroneous, surely it must reflect on God. If any one of us employed a secretary or an amanuensis, should we allow him to put in anything that would damage our character, and to which we should be content to put our name as author? Surely not. Can we then suppose that God would allow His book to be spoiled by those whom he employed to write it for Him? The thought is monstrous, and altogether unworthy of a Christian's thoughts of God.

Still we find that the question of inspiration is intimately linked with the question of scripture difficulties. Many a one who would not venture to cast a slur on the character of God *directly*, does it most surely *indirectly* by supposing that the difficulties of scripture are owing to the faults of those who wrote it. We therefore think it necessary to caution our readers against allowing any such indirect slur upon the *work*

of God in His book. And for a very good reason, namely, that if the difficulties in scripture are to be attributed to the mistakes of the writers, how do we know, or how can we possibly ascertain, *which are mistakes, and which are not?* And what will become of our only sure and certain guide in this dark, dark world? It will no longer be certain, and its counsels will no longer be sure.

This danger, too, becomes the more insidious because it is maintained by many who would declare that they believe in the inspiration of the scriptures. Take for instance the late Dean Alford. He says, "In the last apology of Stephen, which he spoke, being full of the Holy Ghost and with divine influence beaming from his countenance, we have at least two demonstrable historical inaccuracies. And the occurrence of similar ones in the Gospels does not in any way affect the inspiration or the veracity of the evangelists." Inaccuracies do not affect the inspiration of the evangelist! But do they not affect the honour of God? He has undertaken to give us a sure and infallible guide: and if we can solve the difficulties only in this way, alas, alas! for us! If, as we have said, these are "inaccuracies," how can we be sure that anything is accurate, anything sure, anything certain? The whole basis of our faith is shaken to the very foundation. But, thank God, it is not so. Let us resolve, by God's help, that nothing shall shake our confidence in Him, nor in His precious word, which He declares is "settled for ever in heaven." (Ps. cxix. 89.) Only think of a number of inaccuracies being settled in heaven for ever: and this too the work of God! The very thought is monstrous.

But the passage we have quoted is of great importance; because we might quote such passages as "All scripture is given by inspiration of God" (2 Tim. iii. 16), and be met, as we are met, by many, as fully accredited orthodox writers as the above, with the ready assent that the scripture is inspired, but that the writers were allowed thus far to spoil the whole by their mistakes.

We repudiate the theory entirely. God's word is "settled for ever in heaven." "The law of the Lord is perfect." (Psa. xix. 7.) 'Yes, in a general way,' say many, 'but not the *words* used.' Yes, the very words. Our Lord says again and again, "My words shall not pass away." (Matt. xxiv. 35; Mark xiii. 31; Luke xxi. 33.) How can this be, if those words are already passed away, and if we have only the general sense as remembered by the writers? And these passages would more immediately apply to the Gospels, which are the very part of God's word that is so sedulously attacked by many because of the verbal differences in the Gospels. Yes: we must contend, and contend earnestly, that we have the very words of our Lord Jesus, and indeed we must contend for the verbal inspiration of the scriptures altogether.

But we shall be met, we know, with a rehearsal of the many differences contained in the Gospels. We grant it fully, but we say they are designed by God, and are not accidental. But it is said there are some particulars which are perfectly irreconcilable; such, for instance, as the circumstances related as following the resurrection. Thus Dean Alford says, "With the utmost desire on the part of the women and apostles to

collect the events in their exact order of time, some confusion would be apparent in the history, and some discrepancies in versions of it which were the results of separate and independent inquiries; the traces of which pervade our present accounts."* But how thoroughly this shuts out God! What have "independent inquiries" to do with a God-inspired book? A man might employ dozens of agents to gather information for him for some book, but surely, if the book is to bear *his* name, he will take care that one part is not contradicted by another. But God is actually supposed to let them all go, discrepancies and all! Far be the thought!

Now let us look at the accounts given which are said to be irreconcilable. By calmly weighing them the difficulties in a great measure, if not entirely, disappear. It must be noticed that in some places "women" are mentioned without saying whom, leaving room for other women being spoken of besides Mary Magdalene and the other Mary (as in Matt. xxviii. 1; and "women" in verse 5). We know there were other women from Luke xxiii. 27: "And there followed him a great company of people and of women;" and in verse 55, "And the women also which came with him from Galilee, followed after," &c. (See Mark xv. 40, 41.)

Then notice that the words "neither said they anything to any man" refer to *as they went along*, and not that they were sent to tell the disciples, but did not tell them. (Mark xvi. 7, 8.)

We give a list of the events, with the passages, which

* Alford's Greek Testament; Prolegomena, Vol. 1.

removes the difficulties, without saying that all the details were exactly as here placed.

Friday Evening.

Women begin to prepare spices, and rest the sabbath.	Luke xxiii. 56.

Saturday Evening.

Mary Magdalene and the other Mary come to see the sepulchre. ...	Matt. xxviii. 1.
Return and finish their preparation.	Mark xvi. 1.

Sunday Morning.

Resurrection, earthquake, stone removed.	Matt. xxviii. 2–4. Mark xvi. 9.
Mary Magdalene comes to the sepulchre early, while quite dark. ...	John xx. 1.
Returns and tells Peter the stone is removed.	John xx. 2.
Other women arrive at the sepulchre, two angels tell them Jesus is risen, they go to tell the disciples, and say nothing to any *as they go*.	Matt. xxviii. 5, 6, Mark xvi. 2–8. Luke xxiv. 1–9.
Peter and John go to the sepulchre, followed by Mary. Peter and John return to their home, Mary remains. Angels speak to her, Jesus speaks to her: she must not touch Him: He sends her to tell the disciples.	Luke xxiv. 12. John xx. 3–10. John xx. 11–13. Mark xvi. 9. John xx. 16. Mark xvi. 10. John xx. 17, 18.
Jesus meets other women: they hold Him by the feet. He sends them to his *brethren*.	Matt. xxviii. 8–10.

In conclusion, we earnestly warn our readers again against allowing any difficulties of scripture to weaken for a moment their belief in the full inspiration of the word of God. It may be we cannot solve the difficulties: be it so. We have seen that difficulties are only negative—something we do *not* know: they are not objections: while we *do* know that God has given us His word in a "perfect" way: so perfect that it has been settled in heaven for ever: so perfect that we hang our soul's salvation on it, and God helping us we will not give it up, or our full confidence in it though men may be able to discover as they think ten thousand more difficulties than have yet been discovered. "If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?" Thank God, His foundation standeth sure.

LEARNING TO TEACH.

A SCHOOL meeting was held in a certain country village, for the purpose of discussing the point "Whether an Infant-class shall be formed?" The teachers took up the question with spirit, all admitted its importance, difficulties were started, but one by one they were all set at rest, save and except this—"Who is to be the teacher?" Over and over again the question was put. One name after another was suggested, but all begged to be excused. The failure of the plan seemed imminent, and the discussion was on the point of being indefinitely postponed, when up rose a man in one corner of the chapel, who, unobserved, had been sitting musing till the "fire burned." His words were few but earnest: "Sooner than them little one shan't have no

teacher, I'll try it." All eyes were turned on the volunteer. He was a tall, dark visaged, ill-conditioned looking man, and people stood amazed as they recognized in him the village blacksmith. Of all men he seemed the least likely to attract children. His voice was harsh, and his countenance and manner rough, and almost unpleasing. No one could believe it possible that he was in earnest. But he was, and though the smile went round, and the sceptical whispered their doubts, that man went home resolved *to try*.

He did try, and for months, while every one supposed the work abandoned, this teacher was training. He felt his difficulties. He had to learn a new language. He borrowed of a lady some children's books, and, taking some Bible stories, he set himself to work. He read and thought; shutting the book he tried to write the stories out in his own words. Early and late he toiled at these appointed tasks. Often he failed, but at last he succeeded. He had learnt the secret. He had acquired simplicity of thought and expression. He had brought down his mind to the level of a little child's mind.

It was now time to begin. He was a wise man. Not parading his triumph, but humbly watching his opportunity, he made his first attempt. In the dusky afternoon of a November day, some little ones stood at his smithy door, watching the bright sparks shooting out from the glowing embers of the blacksmith's forge, as they were now being quickened into a blazing fire. These children had often wandered there before to feast their eyes on this wondrous scene, and to listen to the roar of the mighty bellows. But some-

times the man had spoken roughly to them, and even now, as they looked, they seemed undecided as to whether they dared to stay. But this time, the blacksmith's face, seen by the reflection of the fitful flame, wore a different aspect, and, as he turned his eyes on them, the children felt more confidence. Edging nearer to the door they gathered courage, and gradually ventured in. The smith spoke. His very voice, no longer gruff and harsh, was kind and pleasant, and now he spoke *to* them not *at* them, as before. They listened as he talked. His heart was encouraged, and their little hearts warmed with strange liking to the altered man. He drew the heated bar from the fire, and laying it on the anvil, the swarthy blacksmith made it the subject of his first lesson to his new Infant class, and the first schoolroom was the village forge. That man has now one of the best Infant Classes in England, and a hundred little ones rejoice to call him friend and teacher.—*Extracted.*

NOTES ON SCRIPTURE.

MATTHEW VI.

Verses 19–21. An important principle is brought out in this, that "where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." If your treasure is in heaven, your heart will be there; if on earth, your heart will be there. Chapter xix. 21 gives an instance of how one could have laid up treasure in heaven, but his heart was down here. "If ye, then, be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God."

Verses 22, 23. "The light of the body" should be read, "the lamp of the body;" that by which the body received light. If this is single, Godward, all is light; if evil, partly upward and partly downward, all is darkness.

"If, therefore, the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness." An important principle. If a man pretends to nothing, he is in a fit state to receive; but if he has light, as he thinks, and that light is only darkness, how great is that darkness! He looks not for light; he says he has it, and yet, alas! it is only darkness. So, also, if a man has a measure of true light, and does not act up to it, or at least aim at it, the light he has becomes to him darkness, and he is worse off than if he never had the light.

Verse 24. "No man can serve two masters." Notwithstanding this plain declaration, thousands of Christians have tried to do what here is said cannot be done. They have tried, but *failed*, however much they may have thought they had accomplished it. If they have *served* the one master, they have as surely despised the other. "Ye *cannot* serve God and mammon," or riches.

Verses 25–34. These verses contain a convincing proof that God, who cares for the flowers, will surely care for His saints. Be not, therefore, careful as to temporal matters.

"Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?" God has given you both life and a body; will He not give you the *lesser* things—meat and clothing?

"Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his right-

eousness"—anything that God calls you to, pertaining to His kingdom—seek that *first*, and *all* the necessary things shall be given to you.

"Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof." The ordinary cares of each day are sufficient, without adding to to-day's the cares of to-morrow.

CHAPTER VII.

Verses 1, 2. Do not entertain a criticising spirit, always ready to judge others, and to suspect evil where it is not manifested, and where there may be none. These verses are sometimes made a bad use of, as if they condemned judging known evil; but other passages clearly press this as a duty. (1 Cor. v.) "Do not ye judge them that are within?" Verse 12.

Verses 3–5. A censorius criticising spirit will be very ready to judge small faults in others, and omit great ones in ourselves. It is the one who judges himself first that is fit to set others right. (The word for "mote" signifies "splinter, or other light matter.")

Verse 6. Wisdom is required not to put sacred things before those who would only trample them under their feet; but this must not be made an excuse for not putting the gospel before the unconverted as opportunity offers.

Verses 7, 8. God has made such ample provision for His saints that if they go bare and poverty-stricken it is *wholly* their own fault. Here is the promise that he who calls, or seeks, or knocks shall receive what he needs. This is not a direction to the unconverted to ask for, seek, and knock for mercy, as it is sometimes used; but for God's people with their Father.

Verse 9–11. God reasons with you, that if a natural father, who is not perfect, will give what is needed to his son, how much more will God, who is perfect, do so to His children.

Verse 12. This verse is a sort of summing up of what has gone before as to our behaviour towards others. It is often called the Golden Rule, and is of immense value in deciding whether or not I am doing rightly towards another. If I ask myself, should I wish him to act thus towards me? it may often discover to me that I am not carrying out this golden rule given by Christ.

Verses 13, 14. These may be used in preaching the gospel to *religious* people, who take the ground of already being on the road. Have they entered in that gate that is so strait or narrow, that they have to cast off their budget of self-righteousness (or anything else that would hinder) in order to get in? The broad road of mere profession is thronged, but leads only to destruction. (The word 'strait' signifies "narrow;' but the word for 'narrow' is 'straitened,' or 'contracted,' and may refer to those paths in the east, which have a wall on either side, such as is named in Numbers xxii. 24, where the angel stood to withstand Balaam.)

Verse 15–20. Takes up the question of false prophets. They may be known by their works. This was especially applicable to the scribes and pharisees who bade the people do what was right, but acted evilly themselves. They were false prophets. This is often a test now. People talk piously but act badly. But this is not always a sufficient test, as Satan can trans-

form himself and his agents into angels of light. The word of God gives ample provision for every case. If even an angel from heaven preach any other gospel, he is to be accursed. (Gal. i. 8.) We are to try the spirits whether they be of God (1 John iv. 1); try them by the word of God. (Verse 15 should commence with the word 'but,' joining it to what precedes. The word for 'grapes' is in the singular: not even a bunch of grapes. The 'corrupt tree,' means 'worthless,' 'utterly rotten.')

Verses 21–23. These verses shew the solemn end of *profession*. Here were people who could speak to the Lord of having prophesied in His name (as Balaam), and of having cast out demons and done many wonderful works (as perhaps Judas; see also Heb. vi. 4–6), but to whom our Lord will confess that He never knew them. (In verse 21 it should read 'the kingdom of the heavens.')

Verse 24–27. These verses shew the result of building on Christ (it should read "*the* rock") on the one hand—nothing can shake it, and on a sandy foundation (anything but Christ) on the other, which building will surely be overthrown. Caution is needed in using this passage for the gospel. We ought not to set the unconverted *building*, as if they had to build up anything, but it may well be used to test *profession*, those who have built up their hopes of eternal life on *something*: is it on Christ, or on another foundation?

Verses 28, 29. The people are astonished at the teaching of Christ. He did not teach in vague indefinite questions: but as one having authority which carried conviction to His hearers.

Correspondence.

ENCOURAGEMENT.

DEAR MR. EDITOR,

Seeing in the May number of the "Worker" letters received from Sunday-school children, I thought it would encourage some teachers who, perhaps, are growing a little "faint" over their work, and thinking that they are doing it in vain, to read one I had last summer from a boy in my class about sixteen years old.

W. was one of the most hardened boys I have ever taught. It is about six years ago since he first came into my class, and I can truthfully say I have prayed for him ever since, and others have done so too; for, with all his naughtiness, there was something about him that interested others.

We have had several seasons of blessing among the children of our school, and while others were weeping and crying for mercy, W. was unmoved; indeed he laughed at them, and said, he would not make such a fool of himself. About sixteen months ago several boys in my class were saved, and even then, while we were talking of the blessing and happiness of being the Lord's, he would be silent, and when spoken to about his soul would laugh, and *appear* indifferent, though I at times thought that the Lord was working. Several times have I come home from school and said, "W. will never be converted," and have felt almost inclined to give up praying for him, for, as one of the other boys said, "It seemed as though our prayers would never be answered, but that he was getting more and more careless."

However the Lord's time came at last, for when I was from home, and a dear servant of the Lord was labouring here, I heard from my mother telling me that W. was saved. Words cannot express my joy on receiving such good news. I wrote to him the same day, and by return of post had the following letter from him.

September 12, 1873.

My dear Teacher,—I now take the pleasure of writing to you, and I am very glad to tell you that I am quite happy now, and as you want to know how it happened, I will tell you.

Mr. H. and Mr. A., and the preacher and me and P. had a prayer-meeting after chapel last Tuesday night, and they all prayed for me; and while Mr. H. was a-praying, all at once I felt so happy, I cannot tell you how happy I felt. I seemed as if I must let the devil go, and so I let him go; and when I let him go Christ filled his place; and I am very glad to tell you so, for I was got quite miserable; but now I can sing "Christ for me," and "Jesus is *mine*;" and I have felt so happy all this week, for I have had so much to think about Jesus. I had the toothache last night very bad indeed; I had it so very bad I did not know what to do; and I thought I would pray to Jesus Christ to cure it, and while I was a-praying the toothache went away, and I felt so happy and I forgot all about the toothache; and now I have found a remedy, I shall always use it. I cannot write any better, so you must excuse it this once; so I must now conclude with kind love,

Your ever affectionate scholar, W.

And now in conclusion may I ask you to pray for him, and also for the other saved ones, that they may be whole-hearted for Christ, shining brightly for Him in this dark sinful world.

Your sister in Christ, A.

UNITARIANISM.

DEAR MR. EDITOR,

In your answer to the question in June, touching Unitarianism, did you go to the root of the evil? Is not their principal doctrine the denial of the Lord Jesus being God? The evil, as your correspondent names, is being propagated largely, and I shall be glad of a few hints of the best way to meet it at its root. Through the Lord's mercy, I firmly believe in the Godhead of our Lord, but I fear, if it came up before my class, I could not deal with it in a way that it certainly deserves, or at least answer all the questions that might be put to me. I do not find the term *Trinity* named in scripture; is it right to use it? And is it right to say that there are three *Persons* in the Trinity —three Persons, but one God? H. B.

[We doubt not that God saw it best to omit the word "Trinity" from the scripture. If it had been there, it would not have prevented this evil doctrine. Men would, doubtless, have taken up the mere name, and given it quite a different meaning to what it was intended to convey, as they do with such words as "atonement," "redemption," &c.

We do not see any objection to use the word "Trinity," as it expresses what we mean, and is well un-

derstood. The same is also true of the expression, "Three persons in one God."

Scripture is plain and definite that there is but one God. "I am Jehovah, and there is none else, there is no God beside me." (Isa. xlv. 5.) "One God and Father of all." (Eph. iv. 6.)

The next point is to shew that, first, the Father is God. This is proved by so many passages, that we need not quote them. The term, "God the Father," occurs over and over again. We suppose no one doubts this part of the subject.

Secondly. The Son is God. This is the point in question here, and which needs careful consideration. Happily, we have abundance of proof in the New Testament.

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and *the Word was God*. . . . . All things were made by him," &c. (John i. 1–3.) "By him were all things created." (Col. i. 16.) "Unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, *O God*, is for ever and ever. . . . . Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the works of thy hands. . . . . To which of the angels said he at any time, Sit on my right hand until I make thine enemies thy footstool?" (Heb. i. 8–13.) "We know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding that we may know him that is true: and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. *This is the true God*, and eternal life." (1 John v. 20.) The Lord Jesus, when walking on the earth, spoke of Himself as "the Son of man who *is* in heaven" (John iii. 13), and "Before Abraham was, I am." (John viii. 58.) More

passages could easily be quoted, but surely these are plain and unmistakable to any one willing to learn.

Thirdly. The Holy Spirit is God. "Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost? . . . . Thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God." (Acts v. 3, 4.) In the New Testament the Holy Spirit is said to do what in the Old is spoken of God or Jehovah: thus, compare Isaiah vi. 8, 9 with Acts xxviii. 25; Jeremiah xxxi. 31–34 with Hebrews x. 15, 16. In Hebrews ix. 14 He is "the *eternal* Spirit;" He moved upon the face of the waters in Genesis i. 2; by Him the new creation is effected (John iii. 5), &c.

The word "Person" is important, especially as regards the Holy Spirit, whom men are apt to look upon as an influence. This personality is brought out in many passages which speak of His coming, going, speaking, &c. Romans xv. 30 speaks of His love: Ephesians iv. 30 of His being grieved; Acts xvi. 7 of His permitting; John xiv. 16 of His abiding; verse 26 of His teaching; and Romans viii. 26 of His interceding.

The "three Persons" are clearly pointed out by baptism being in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit; and in the benedictions, in the Epistles, such as "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all." (2 Cor. xiii. 14.) The Trinity are seen in the baptism of our Lord. The Father spoke; the Son was baptized; the Holy Spirit descended and rested upon Him. (Matt. iii. 16, 17.)

Doubtless, this is sufficient; it is but an outline, which our readers can fill up and enlarge as need may

require. We ought all to be clear on the subject. It is fundamental. If the Lord Jesus were not God as well as man, there is surely no sacrifice for sin, and no salvation for us. The Unitarians see that the two must stand or fall together. They start with the notion that Christ is *not* God; then it follows that His death is *not* sacrificial; and then, to make this fall in with their idea of salvation, they say man is *not* in a lost condition, and needs *not* a Saviour, except as an example. One has well said, their system is a religion of *negatives*. We will add three more negatives: it is *not* according to scripture; it is *not* of God; it will *not* save the soul.—ED.]

FEMALE TEACHERS PRAYING.

DEAR SIR,

Could you kindly tell me your thoughts of that text in 1 Timothy ii. 12, where it says, "I do not suffer a woman to exercise authority over a man"? My reason for an explanation is not for myself, but for a young believer in our risen Lord, who the other day told me that the superintendent of the Sunday school in which she was working had mentioned to the sisters that he thought they "ought to take part in the prayer meetings of the workers in the school." What she meant by taking part was that the superintendent wished them to pray aloud in the meeting, for their scholars *before* the *brothers*. She told me that she could not conscientiously do it, and therefore that verse "whatsoever is not of faith is sin" settled it in her mind, although she could find no warrant in scripture that said she was

not allowed to pray aloud. But for the sake of others who, I think, do it conscientiously, I ask the explanation of the text. To me it is very clear that a woman if she were to pray aloud in the presence of men, would be exercising authority over them. By answering this in our valuable little magazine, "The Sunday-school Worker," I think many would get help by it.

C. M.

[We do not think that for a female Christian to pray aloud before males would be exactly exercising authority over them. It will be seen that in the passage it is linked with *teaching*, and we can all see that supposing a brother had gone wrong, for a sister to rebuke him publicly, or in any way for her to exercise authority in the church, as a teacher might be called to do, would be very unseemly and unscriptural. It says, "I suffer not a woman to teach nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence."

We believe the words "to be in silence" would apply to a sister praying aloud before her brethren. She could not pray before them if she were in *silence*, and this is so peremptory that even for information a sister must ask "at home!" it is not permitted unto them to speak in the church. 1 Corinthians xiv. 34, 35.

We are aware that it will be said, "Yes, this is quite true, but this is in the church, and we are speaking of the Sunday school and of teachers' meetings, which are *not* the church."

But the passage in 1 Timothy does not speak of the church. Verses 9, 10 are about dress, which surely is not confined to the church; neither are verses 11, 12, which speak of a woman's being silent (though of

course it includes the church), and this because of the reason given, which, observe, goes back to the creation: "For Adam was first formed, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression." This is given as a reason why a woman should be silent; and as this is in no way linked with gift or position in the church, we believe it would apply to any meeting. Where men are present we cannot see it right or seemly for women to pray or teach. Of course to a meeting where all are women this does not apply.—ED.]

GOPHER WOOD.

DEAR SIR,

Will you oblige by letting me know what is intended by "gopher wood" used in building Noah's Ark.

A SUNDAY-SCHOOL TEACHER.

[We have no light as to why the ark was made of this particular wood. It is named only in one place (Gen. vi. 14), so that there is no other passage to throw light upon this one. The learned are very much divided in their opinion as to what wood was used: indeed, as the same word does not occur again in the Hebrew, and as it is not to be found in kindred languages, they can do very little more than guess what wood is intended.

May it be that, as the ark is typical of the Lord Jesus Christ, a wood, now unknown, was used for its construction in correspondence with the text, "No man knoweth the Son but the Father"? (Matt. xi. 27.) —ED.]

SCRIPTURE DIFFICULTIES.

No. 4.

FAITH AND EVIDENCES.

It is with some very plausible that the scriptures should be disbelieved because of the difficulties and apparent discrepancies said to be therein. "I must have evidences for everything before I can believe it," says the rationalist; "and if I find anything in the scriptures not borne out by evidences, how can you expect me to receive it?"

Now the simple answer is, that God ought to be believed *because He is God.* Good men have devoted much time in collecting "evidences," external and internal, as to why God and the scriptures should be believed; but, while to some minds they may be useful in clearing up difficulties, we doubt if this is the proper basis on which our faith should rest. We should not allow such a test, even among upright men. Suppose you met with a man whom you knew to be a man of his word, as we say, and he told you he had seen so-and-so; you would at once believe him: but if you said, "Oh, I cannot believe that until I have evidence as to its truth," you would insult the man, and indeed would manifest that you did *not* believe him to be a truthful man.

So it is with God and His word. If I require evidences, it clearly proves that I cannot believe God, or why do I ask for evidences? And if I believe God I do not want the evidences.

We would not underrate *facts;* such facts as that things were prophesied of hundreds of years before

the events took place; nor would we object to such questions as, "Who but God could foretell events with such certainty so long beforehand?" All quite right, but we question if this is the proper basis of faith. When we *have* faith, it is interesting to see how things have fallen out just as God foretold they would; but surely God ought to be believed simply and purely because He is God.

The reception of the gospel is on the same principle, and the apostle Paul was anxious for this. He says, "My speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power; that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God." (1 Cor. ii. 4, 5.)

There may be a dry sort of faith in God because of evidences, but it cannot be real living faith unless it be in the power of God, believing in God because He is God. And we question very much whether those who ask for evidences see the amount of discredit and insult they are offering to God. They cannot believe in God simply on His word and His work, they want *man's* evidence to prove that God is true! They must not wonder if they are never satisfied.

Again, with evidences there is always the question of sufficiency. Have I sufficient proof; and who is to say what is sufficient? Take, for instance, the fulfilment of prophecy. Can it be proved that the prophecies were written hundreds of years before the events took place? And if it can, will the fulfilment of prophecy outweigh all the weighty objections that have been raised *against* the book of God? And if I

judge that the evidences *for* outweigh the evidences *against*, and to-day I am satisfied; what is to prevent fresh evidences *against* the book being brought forward to-morrow, my faith being overthrown, and I making shipwreck thereof?

Whereas, if my faith is in God, evidences are not needed, and nothing can overthrow my faith. Difficulties cannot overthrow faith that stands in the power of God. I am linked with heaven, and difficulties have to do with earth. I know there is One there who can explain all, and I wait quietly and calmly until that time comes when I shall know even as I am known. (1 Cor. xiii. 12.)

Another thing, too, should be noted, namely, that God has told us that "the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned" (1 Cor. ii. 14); so that we Christians ought not to be surprised if an unconverted man sees thousands of difficulties where we see none. He does not see with our eyes. And yet we often find that Christians are disturbed because an unconverted friend or relative brings forward and presses his difficulties, or, it may be, more often his objections. And some have gone so far as to think that perhaps it would have been better had God made His book so plain and so simple, that every unconverted man could understand it, and find no difficulties therein, and thus remove all their pretexts for unbelief.

Scripture supplies us with the answer: "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" (Gen. xviii. 25.) Does any Christian really think he could improve upon

God's book? Remember the solemn and repeated warnings against adding to or taking from God's word. (Deut. iv. 2; xii. 32; Rev. xxii. 18.) It is perfect as it is—it cannot be improved. It must be believed in as it is, and be believed in because it is God's word, and because He is God. Man's simple place and duty is to bow before his God.

How surely, too, may we believe that, if God's word had been made so simple, and as free from all difficulties as some imagine to be desirable, Satan would, doubtless, have devised some other objection to it. He would, perhaps, have said, "Where is there the stamp of God on such a book? There is not a single thing but what man might have written!" Where unbelief wants a plea, it can always find one.

We are anxious that we should see that it is by faith that we receive the scriptures, and not by evidences. God says it is His book. We believe it fully; and that is faith. Man may say, and he does say, that he has abundance of evidence from monuments, inscriptions, &c., that the Bible is wrong here, and wrong there: it shakes not our faith in the least, because it stands in the power of God. If an inscription says different from the Bible, we are certain the Bible is right; the inscription may be wrong, or wrongly interpreted, or what not. We know not who wrote the inscription; we do know who wrote the Bible. It is God, who made the heaven and earth, and we will believe in Him. Our faith is not in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God. We do not believe that the monuments clash with the scripture; in many things they have confirmed it.

NOTES ON SCRIPTURE.

MATTHEW VIII.

VERSES 1–4. *The leper cleansed.* The Lord now proceeded to manifest His power. The leper acknowledges the power of our Lord; he is in doubt as to His willingness, or he submits it to Christ's sovereignty. Our Lord at once responds, saying, "*I will;* be thou clean." Immediately the leper was cleansed. It will be noticed that Jesus touched the leper, which no one could do, according to the law, without being unclean. (Lev. v. 3.) But One was there who was above all moral and ceremonial defilement.

It would appear from the scripture that leprosy was not contagious—at least in its earlier stages; but it came under the head of defilement. In Leviticus xiii. 45, the leper was to rend his clothes, have his head bare, and cover his upper lip, "and shall cry unclean, unclean; . . . . he shall dwell alone; without the camp shall his habitation be." But all this might be because he is declared to be "defiled." In the case of Naaman, though a leper, he commanded the armies of Syria, and he had a wife (2 Kings v.); Gehazi, too, though a leper, now disgraced from Elisha, relates to the king the great things done by his master. (2 Kings viii. 4, 5.)

Leprosy was a very marked type of sin, and is dealt with accordingly. A difficulty presents itself in Leviticus xiii., where it has been taken to mean, that if leprosy is only partial it renders the person defiled; but if it covers the body it renders the person clean. (See vers. 12, 13.) But this could not be if leprosy is a

type of sin, as it surely is. The explanation is, that if it covers the body in the way there described ("all turned white"), it has worn itself out: it was in the skin, but it has spread over the body, and expended itself; the *effect* only is left. The person is clean. We believe this answers to when a person freely confesses his sin—thus enveloping himself with the shame—he is cleansed, though the effects may remain.

If the leprosy of the scriptures be the same as that seen in Palestine at this day, it is the most dreadful disease—indeed it is, as one has described it, a living death, and is thus a very vivid picture of sin. An eye-witness thus describes it—

"The scab comes on by degrees in different parts of the body; the hair falls from the head and eyebrows; the nails loosen, decay, and drop off; joint after joint of the fingers and toes shrink up, and slowly fall away. The gums are absorbed, and the teeth disappear. The nose, the eyes, the tongue, and the palate, are slowly consumed; and finally the wretched victim shrinks to the earth, and disappears, while medicine has no power to stay the ravages of this fell disease, or even to mitigate sensibly its tortures."* The writer goes on to say that he met a crowd of these poor wretches, without eyes, without hair, without toes, without hands, making unearthly sounds. Could any description be a truer picture of the ravages of sin on poor fallen humanity?

If this disease is identical with that named in the scripture, the leprosy of Naaman and of Gehazi must

* Thompson's "The Land and the Book."

have been in its earlier forms, for all agree that its ravages are slow, but certain.

That the Jews knew of no cure for this disease is evident from the distress of the king of Israel, when Naaman came to be cured of his leprosy. "He rent his clothes, and said, Am I God, to kill and to make alive, that this man doth send unto me to recover a man of his leprosy?"

Well, this poor man in the gospels is said, in Luke v. 12, to be "full of leprosy," and yet there was One there could say, "Be thou clean," and immediately his leprosy was cleansed. Surely this was none but God.

"Shew thyself to the priest." The Jewish system was not yet set aside, and our Lord bid the cleansed one go and do as the law enjoined (Lev. xiv. 2), thus acknowledging the law.

"For a testimony unto them"—unto Moses and to the priest, who stood in his place.

Parallel passages, Mark i. 40; Luke v. 12.

Verse 5–13. *The centurion's servant.* A centurion was one who had the command of one hundred soldiers. The main point in this narration is the extent of the centurion's faith. It stands in strong contrast with the cure of the nobleman's son, in John iv. Here the centurion said, "I am not worthy that thou shouldest come under my roof; but speak the word only, and thy servant shall be healed." This was saying, Lord, you need not come; but speak the word only. In John the nobleman "besought him that he would come down and heal his son, for he was at the point of death." Our Lord replied, "Except ye *see* signs and wonders

ye will not believe." But the man was the more urgent —"Sir, *come down* ere my child die." The centurion's faith needed not to see a sign.

Notice that the centurion said, "I am a man *under* authority," as well as having soldiers under him. He was a servant, and yet he was obeyed; how much more would *He* be obeyed to whom he spoke! We doubt not the centurion owned Jesus as God. Who but God could cure a sick man at a distance by simply saying, Let it be done? Christ commends such faith.

Verse 10. Christ had not found such faith in Israel. It was necessary that the Jews should know that the Gentiles, whom they despised, were to share in that grace of God which they were refusing in the person of His Son.

Verse 11. Gentiles, from east and west, should come into the blessing which naturally belonged to the Jews as descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

Verse 12. The Jews, the children of the kingdom by outward birth, should be cast out because of their unbelief.

Verse 13. As always, Jesus answers faith, and the servant is healed.

Parallel passage, Luke vii. 1–10.

The place of these two cures in Matthew should be noticed. They are not placed as they actually occurred, but are grouped together morally. Christ was there ready to heal the worst disease a Jew could have, but there was not faith in Israel; the children of the kingdom should be cast out, and Gentiles from east and west brought into the kingdom.

Correspondence.

CHILDREN'S SPECIAL SERVICES.

My dear Brother in the Lord,

I have had it laid upon my heart for some little time past to send you an account of the Children's Special Services in this place, in the fervent desire that my fellow-labourers among the "little ones" may be led of the Lord to commence a similar service in connection with their meetings. Through our magazine, I would earnestly commend this part of school labour to the prayerful consideration of Sunday-school workers.

About two years ago the Lord laid upon my heart the condition, as lost sinners, of the children who attended the gospel preaching. While sitting with them, I felt that much that was said was necessarily beyond them; and that in speaking to adults, you could not hope to command the attention of the children. The more I saw of this, the more sad I felt, especially as most of the children, from their appearance and ways, shewed clearly, not only that they did not attend any Sunday-school, but that they were without care or thought as to God or their own souls.

This state of things continued for a few months, during which time I endeavoured in some measure to meet the want, by giving them little books and tracts suitable to their age and condition. But this did not meet the Lord's intention, for, while it greatly increased the number of children, still, Sunday after Sunday, as I sat with them, a still small voice said, "Gather them in, and tell them of Jesus."

I then mentioned the matter to a brother with whom

I was very intimate, seeking his counsel as to any action. We agreed to lay the matter before the Lord; and, after waiting upon Him for a month or so, we felt that the Lord had so definitely laid the work upon us, and given us so thoroughly to be of one mind about it, that, in dependence upon Him, we decided to commence as soon as we could arrange the necessary preliminaries. We mentioned our thoughts to two more brethren, who gave us their fullest fellowship, and then we proceeded to look for a room, but this we could not find anywhere in the neighbourhood we wished. After looking for a long time without success, we found a suitable room, but it was engaged for twelve months. We felt it would be wasting precious time to delay any longer, so we commenced on a week-night in our own schoolroom, trusting that the way, ere long, might be made quite clear for a Sunday evening service as well.

I may say here that our desire from the first was for the two services, and we believe that the Lord, who has so abundantly opened the way for and carried on the week-night meeting, will make a straight path for our feet in reference to the Sunday evening meeting.

We laid the desire of our hearts before our fellow-labourers in the school, and were warmly met, and heartily joined, by most of them; and then we met upon several occasions, to commend the opening meeting, and the work in general, to our God. (Phil. iv. 6.) On the following Lord's day afternoon, at the close of school, we distributed about a thousand handbills from house to house, inviting the children for the next Wednesday. The evening came, and with it about ninety children. The following Wednesday we had

twenty more, and so on, week by week, the numbers increasing to two hundred, when, on one wet night, they fell to about one hundred and fifty, from which figure they rose to 297, the highest number we have had, and at least fifty more than we could seat; they average now about 230, which is as many as we can seat with comfort.

These boys and girls are mostly of a low class, not known to us as going to any Sunday-school, many of them poor, dirty, ragged, rough, neglected children, with no knowledge of the truth, and no one to care for them. We fetched them in from off the streets, and out of the courts, and told them of the Saviour, and of His love; with what result, who can tell? Eternity alone will unfold where the seed has taken root and sprung up.

My dear brother, I ask, what are we doing for these poor neglected ones? We know, upon good authority, that in the town from which I write there are at least 60,000 children who are not in Sunday-schools, and whom the present services of the church of Christ do not seem to reach. I say, let us have these week-night services in all our schoolrooms, for I feel that these poor lost ones are to be found in every place. Let us go out in the spirit of our Master, and compel them to come in, that His house may be full. We feel that the work is of the Lord, and that He is with us in a very marked way. The children come week after week, and, with a few exceptions, their attention and behaviour are better than we could expect; indeed, a brother remarked some time back, that his "own would not have been so quiet." It is our firm conviction that this attention and quietness is in answer to prayer.

Now I think I will give you a description of one of our services. We meet at 6.45 for prayer; at 7.15 we let the children into the room, seating the little ones in front, and the bigger boys and girls at the back and at the sides. Silence being obtained, we open at 7.30 with a hymn, followed by prayer; then another hymn, after which a portion of scripture is read and sometimes expounded; then a short address, a hymn, and another address, and the meeting closed by prayer at 8.30, the children being dismissed form by form, and taking home with them the hymn-sheet, and a tract, leaflet, or little book.

Last Wednesday evening, as the children were leaving, we noticed a girl about sixteen years old in tears. We asked her why she cried. She said she was such a sinner. We found that during the service the Lord had touched her heart, and now she was completely broken down, and felt what it was to be a sinner in God's sight. We talked to her, and prayed with her and for her; but she got worse, she was in great distress, sobbing and crying that she was such a big sinner. We told her that it was the big sinners Jesus came to save; but there was no peace for her that night. We commended her to the Lord, and she went home, accompanied by one or two of us. She was visited next day, when we found her happy in the Lord, saying that she believed in the Lord Jesus, and now she could call God her Father. She has been seen again, and we have every confidence that it has been a true work in her soul. She is not the only one whom we believe the Lord has thus blessed. Shall we not give Him all the praise, and, in depend-

ence upon Him, go on, and seek more and more to bring the neglected and neglectful ones under the sound of the gospel news? and thus lead many a poor lost sinner into the presence of a rich, gracious, loving Saviour, to be blessed by Him with that blessing that this world can neither give nor take away: so that, when He shall come, they, with us, may be caught up to meet Him in the air, and join in the song, "Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, be glory and dominion for ever and ever." Amen.

My dear brother, in my next letter, the Lord willing, I will give you a few practical hints as to the way we conduct our meetings, for I trust many will be stirred up to commence similar ones.

Believe me, yours faithfully in the Lord Jesus,

FETCH THEM IN, AND TELL THEM OF JESUS.

"Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord." (1 Cor. xv. 58.)

[Will our friend, in his next communication, kindly say whether they treat these week-night meetings more as a *school* or a *service?* Do they keep a register of those that attend, and do they mark the attendance? or do the children come or not, as they please, or when they can? Are they allowed to come in at any part of the evening, or only up to a certain time? Do girls and boys sit together, or separate? and especially, does our friend consider that giving a "hymn-sheet, and a tract, leaflet, or little book," is necessary to ensure the attendance of the children?—ED.]

THE NEW TRANSLATION.

DEAR MR. EDITOR,

I am thankful for the New Translation of the New Testament, and I hope to make good use of it. But can you throw any light upon the notes? They remind me of an anecdote I once read about some one who wrote a set of notes to Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress, to *explain* that allegory. The author of the notes gave a copy of Bunyan, with his notes, to a plain Christian; and after a while he asked the man how he got on with the Pilgrim's Progress. He replied that he found he could understand Bunyan pretty well, and he hoped, after a time, to be able to master the notes! the notes being found to be far more difficult to understand than the text.

I do not refer to all the notes; many speak for themselves. But what can be the meaning of Luke x. 22? "Tisch. and Alford introduce here, 'and turning to his disciples he said.' So Meyer and De Wette. But they are mistaken as to Elzv. and B. א, B, Vul. It., except Colb., reject it. Eras. (1) and Beza reject it. Steph. has it with A, C. Syr. Pesch., Compl., D, L, have not got it, nor Zacyn. Griesb. rejects it. As these editors had not א, and are mistaken as to B, I have left it out, with T. R., and added this note."

Now I believe T. R. refers to our Authorized Version, under the name of the Textus Receptus; but as to the note, as a whole, I am sure many of your readers are much in the dark. Please explain the various signs used. I have referred to the preface, but cannot find any table of contractions.

A STUDENT.

[In the first place, T. R. does refer to the Textus Receptus, but does *not* refer to the Authorized Version, though what is *mostly* true of the one is true of the other. The Textus Receptus refers to two editions of the Greek Testament, known as the Elzevir Editions (often referred to as Elzv., or Elz. 1624, or Elz. 1633), because the words, *Textum Receptum*, "Received Text," occur in the preface of the edition of 1633. Now our Authorized Version was published in 1611. It is obvious, therefore, that the translators could not have used these editions. This is said in the preface of the New Translation.

But there was an edition by Stephens in 1550 (referred to in the above note as Steph.), and one of Beza in 1582, both of which were used for the Authorized Version; it sometimes agrees with the one, and sometimes with the other. Stephens (1550) is the one that has been commonly reprinted in England, while the Elzevir has been the common text on the Continent.

To the uninitiated it must be explained that, first, there are a great many Greek manuscripts, which differ one from another. These are called *copies*. Secondly, there are several early translations of the Testament into other languages. These are called *Versions*. Thirdly, many early quotations were made by *the Fathers*. Fourthly, men have devoted years to the comparing of all these evidences, and have given their judgment as to what they believe to be the true text in the places where the copies differ. These are *Editors*.

Now it will be obvious that these four classes must be kept quite distinct. A word or two upon each will explain most of the signs used in the notes.

1. COPIES. These are divided into two classes, according to age. The oldest are called *Uncials* (embracing a period till the tenth century), because they were written all in capital letters; the more recent are called *Cursives* (from the tenth century onward); they were written in the ordinary written characters of the various ages. Now it is obvious that all the principal manuscripts need a *name*, so that they can be referred to: these are usually pointed out by the letters of the alphabet—A, B, C, D, &c.—for the uncials; and a, b, c, for the cursives. They have *other* names, some given after the place where they *are* —others where they were found, &c. There is one of comparatively recent discovery, called "Sinaiticus," because discovered at Sinai. This is marked ℵ (the Hebrew A), and some few are pointed out by Greek letters.

A points out the Alexandrian copy (fifth century).

B points out the Vatican (fourth century).

C points out the Ephraem (fifth century).

D points out the Cambridge or Beza (fifth or sixth century), for the Gospels and the Acts; D for Paul's Epistles is the Claromontanus (sixth century).

ℵ points out the Sinaiticus (fourth century).

Porph. refers to a Greek manuscript, named in the preface (eighth century).

Zacyn. refers to a Greek manuscript of Luke only.

Codex means copy. So *Cod. Sin.* would refer to *copy* ℵ; *Codd. Vat. Alex.* would be *copies* B, A; and so on.

Some of the copies contain the Gospels only; others the Epistles, or portions of them; this is why D refers

to a different copy in Paul's Epistles, from what it does in the Gospels and Acts. The copies to which the other letters (E, F, G, &c.) refer, cannot be named without making out a long list; there being, for instance, *three* copies referred to by H: one for the Gospels, another for the Acts, and another for Paul's Epistles. Using the same letters for different copies has led to confusion, but it would be difficult to alter it now.

Many of the copies are more or less mutilated; this explains "A, C fail us" in note to John vii. 20.

In note to Mark vi. 9 is "B * *." This refers to the *second* person who corrected the copy B: the first corrector would be B * or B^1; the third, B^3 or B * * *, &c. Nearly all the old manuscripts have been corrected by several hands.

2. TRANSLATIONS. The New Testament was translated into other languages very early; these translations are very valuable, therefore, for reference. We name a few of the principal ones.

Old Latin (before the revision of Jerome, A.D. 383), also called *Italic* (or *It.*, in the note to Luke x. 22). Of this there are several portions, referred to, as Verc., Vero., Colb., Brix., Corb., Clar., &c. In above note, "It., except Colb.," would mean "the various old Latin or Italic copies, except Colb., agree to reject the addition."

The Vulgate (Vul.). This was the result of a revision of the various Latin copies by Jerome. The Amiatinus (about 541) is considered to be the oldest and most valuable manuscript of the Latin Vulgate.

Though A.D. 383 is the date given for this revision, it is not meant that all the old Latin or Italic copies now

in existence are *prior* to this date; but that every Italic copy has not passed through Jerome's revision, and is therefore an independent witness. The Codex Colbertinus, though called old Latin, or Italic, is of the eleventh century.

Syriac. Of this there are several copies: the Peschito (the second century); and the Cureton (second century), often written Syr. Pesch., or Syr. Cu., are the principal.

Coptic, contracted to Copt., supposed to be the fourth century.

3. FATHERS. These lived in early times: by the quotations they made in their writings, we know what was in the scriptures they used. They are referred to under their names—Ambrose (fourth century), Clement of Rome (first century), Clement of Alexandria (second century), Irenæus (second century), Justin Martyr (second century), &c.

4. EDITORS. Under this head come printed copies, because edited by some one. The principal are—

Complutensian (Comp.), 1514, published in 1522.

Erasmus (Eras.), 1516–1535.

Stephens (Steph.), 1550.

Beza, 1565; his chief edition, 1582.

Elzevir (Elz.), 1624 and 1633.

Griesbach (Gries.), 1775–1806; his best is 1805.

Wetstein, 1751–2.

Scholz (Sch.), 1830–1836.

Lachmann (Lach.), 1831–1845.

Tischendorf (Tisch.),—there are eight editions—1841–1873.

Alford (Alf.), 1849–1870,

Tregelles (Treg.), 1857–1873.

As a rule, the later the editor did his work, the more copies he had at his disposal, through fresh ones being discovered.

This is a rapid outline of the various persons and things referred to in the notes of the New Translation. We hope it may be useful to some, though we expect that the majority of Sunday-school workers will scarcely refer to the *critical* part of the notes, being satisfied with the judgment of the translator in the text, and with those notes, which, as our correspondent says, speak for themselves.—Ed.]

TEACHING PROPHECY.

Dear Mr. Editor,

Is it a right and proper thing to teach the scholars in a Sunday-school prophecy? Is not prophecy exclusively for Christians — God making His intentions known to those who are His own? X. Y. Z.

[We should make a difference between teaching prophecy as a definite subject, and alluding to what is prophesied of, if it were in our subject. This latter is often done in preaching the gospel. The hearers are frequently told that the Lord may come for His saints at any moment. They are always expecting Him, and He may be here before they leave the room. They are also told the fearful condition of those who shall have rejected the gospel, when that event arrives. They are also told of the vengeance of God when Christ shall come to the earth to execute judgment on those who know not God, and those who obey not the gospel.

Now all this is *prophecy*, and we think it quite right to tell the poor world how soon and sudden it may begin to take place, by the catching away the church. (1 Cor. xv. 51, 52.) This very truth has been blessed. We remember hearing of a little boy who, having heard of the coming of the Lord for His saints, was dreadfully afraid one night lest his father should have been fetched by Christ, and *he* left behind; but he found there was still hope for him, for they were still there!

Has it not always been so? Was not the preaching of Noah that there was a flood coming? He was building an ark to be saved from it. So the prophets again and again told Israel what would come upon them if they rejected Jehovah. Jonah foretold the destruction of Nineveh to that great city. Our Lord told to the Jews the coming destruction of Jerusalem. And so the coming wrath may well be used by the evangelist and the Sunday-school teacher in putting the gospel before his hearers.

This, perhaps, is not what might be called "teaching prophecy," and yet it is teaching *facts* foretold by God; and if it lay in our subject, we should not hesitate to enter more into details; such, for instance, as the difference between the judgment of the living (Matt. xxv. 31–46), and the judgment of the dead (Rev. xx. 11–15); Christ coming *for* His saints (1 Thess. iv. 16, 17), and Christ coming *with* His saints (Jude 14, 15)—still not forgetting to endeavour to turn it to good account for the welfare of our scholars, in warning the unconverted, or helping on those whom we believe to be the Lord's. —Ed.]

THE SYMBOLS OF SCRIPTURE.

SCRIPTURE abounds with symbols, metaphors, &c. It is important that we should be able to interpret them rightly. We are convinced that when God uses a metaphor or figure it has some *definite* signification, and that it is not competent for a Christian in any way to put his own interpretation upon a figure, any more than upon a literal statement of truth. This has been done a great deal too much, and especially by those who have supposed certain things to be right, and then sought in scripture for support to those theories. On the other hand, in saying such and such an interpretation is wrong, we ought to be able to shew why and wherefore it is wrong, as well as point out the right interpretation.

Now the question arises, what is our guide in interpreting the figurative and symbolical language of scripture? Unquestionably spiritual intelligence is the first and great thing needed—an intelligence in the scope and context of a passage in which a metaphor is used, so as not to bring in a sense at variance with the mind of God in the scripture; remembering also that the whole word of God is *one*, shewing one great mind over it all, so that no one part clashes with another.

This latter is of great importance, because, as we believe God does not use the same symbol in one part to convey a meaning altogether different from what it has in another place, so collecting all the passages wherein a symbol occurs is of immense help to fix its meaning.

As an illustration we may take the symbol LEAVEN.

In Mark viii. 15, our Lord charged the disciples, "Take heed, beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, and of the leaven of Herod." And in Matthew xvi. 6 they are cautioned against the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees. The disciples thought our Lord referred to their having no bread; but after He had reasoned with them, they understood that He referred to "the *doctrine* of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees." This is still further explained in Luke xii. i.: "Beware ye of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is *hypocrisy*."

Here we might make a mistake, by supposing that leaven signifies "hypocrisy." Leaven in the abstract is not said to be hypocrisy, but the leaven "of the Pharisees" was hypocrisy; the leaven of the Sadducees would be something else, and the leaven of Herod may be something else. Still, all are *evil* in some form or another, of which our Lord warned His disciples.

Now, supposing we have thus far arrived at the conclusion that leaven signifies "evil," the question arises as to whether it signifies evil in every place in which it is used symbolically in scripture.

In the epistles it is thus referred to: "Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. . . . . Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth." (1 Cor. v. 6–8.) And in Galatians v. 9 we have again, "A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump," in connection with their going wrong. From these passages it is plain that in the epistles leaven is used as a symbol of *evil*; "malice

and wickedness" being specially named, and an "old" leaven; all which were to be purged out.

If we turn to the Old Testament, we read, "No meat-offering shall be made with leaven." (Lev. ii. 11; vi. 17; x. 12.) Again, "Thou shalt not offer the blood of my sacrifice with leaven." (Ex. xxxiv. 25.) In the passover, "Seven days shall ye eat unleavened bread; even the first day ye shall put away leaven out of your houses: for whosoever eateth leavened bread from the first day until the seventh day, that soul shall be cut off from Israel." (Ex. xii. 15; xiii. 7.) Here, surely, leaven typifies evil.

There are yet two passages in which "leaven" occurs, but in which its application to evil is not so manifest; one is in Leviticus xxiii. 16, 17: "Unto the morrow after the seventh sabbath shall ye number fifty days; and ye shall offer a new meat-offering unto the Lord. Ye shall bring out of your habitation two wave loaves of two tenth deals: they shall be of fine flour; they shall be baken *with leaven;* they are the firstfruits unto the Lord." Here the being "with leaven" is remarkable; can it typify evil here? We doubt not the fifty days brings us to Pentecost, when the church was set up. The bringing the first-fruits is by the saints, and, inasmuch as their worship is not without blemish, so the loaves must be with leaven to point this out. It must be noted that, though offered to the Lord, they were not to be burnt upon the altar for a sweet savour (chap. ii. 12)—leaven could not thus be burnt for a sweet savour. We doubt not leaven in the above passage typifies evil.

The other passage is in Matthew xiii. 33, and Luke

xiii. 21: "The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened." This is generally taken to signify the gospel, and the effects it produces in a soul; or the quiet progress of the gospel in building up the kingdom. But it presents a grave difficulty to take leaven here as a symbol of good, when both these evangelists use it as a symbol of evil, as we have seen, besides being most certainly used elsewhere to point out evil. We believe that God preserves the same sense throughout, and that it is evil here also. That there would be evil mixed up with the kingdom is abundantly proved by other passages (Matt. xiii. 41; 1 Tim. iv. 1–3; 1 Pet. iv. 17; 2 Pet. ii. 1, 2); and that we see evil to be associated with the professing church is a fact all around us too plain to be denied for a moment. We believe the leaven here points out evil —evil doctrine, we doubt not.

Now such a course of dealing with a symbol—considering all its instances in scripture—we believe to be the way to arrive at a right conclusion as to its meaning. When this is once arrived at, of course we can study the detail. In the case of leaven, there is the secret working which continues until all is brought under its influence. "A little leaven leaveneth the *whole* lump." So a little evil spreads, and influences all within its reach.

Thus any one of the symbols can be studied. We should not be satisfied with a mere opinion as to its signification, but should seek to gather from the scripture the mind of God respecting it. And when we remember how very numerous are the symbols of

scripture, and under how many of them our blessed Lord Himself is represented, we shall not fail to see the importance of being able to interpret them in a manner worthy of God, and in accordance with His truth.

SCRIPTURE DIFFICULTIES.

No. 5.

GOD IS GOD.

It is well for any Christian to know when and where to stop in his inquiries. It is certain that God has not revealed everything, and we must be satisfied with what it has pleased Him to reveal. This is not natural to man. He would naturally like to pry into what is beyond him; and because he cannot do this, he sometimes finds fault with God, and at other times he takes the nearest guess he can; while at other times he will try and reason out by what is revealed as to what is not revealed; or, without a blush, he hesitates not to say what *ought* to be. The confidence which the Christian should have in God would stop him in all speculative questions; he is content to be ignorant of that which God has in His wisdom seen fit not to reveal.

Now scripture lays it down as an axiom that no man can fully find out God. "Canst thou by searching find out God? Canst thou find out the Almighty to perfection?" (Job xi. 7.) He is infinite, and we are finite: He is the Creator, and we the creature. God has been manifested in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in His word; not to forget, too, the lesser

light of His works in creation. With these we must be satisfied, and thankfully worship and adore.

But God in His own being is not all. He tells us "secret things belong unto the Lord our God," while "those things which are revealed belong to us and our children for ever." (Deut. xxix. 29.) Then there are secret things known only to God. Is it becoming of me to try to find them out? or shall I fret myself because God has not told me all? No; they *belong* to God: it is for me to study and profit by what He has revealed, which God equally says *belong* to me.

Of course, since that passage was written God has further revealed His purposes and ways in His word, and has manifested Himself in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ: still, we read in the New Testament that we know now only in part: there is a time coming when that which is perfect will have come, then that which is in part will be done away. (1 Cor. xiii. 10.) We Christians can afford to wait till that time, knowing full well that it will occupy us all our time to understand, enter into, and put into practice, that which *is* revealed.

But perhaps our readers will not see what bearing all this has upon scripture difficulties. It has however the fullest bearing, because there *are* secret things, and there *are* difficulties; and man's mind—and a Christian's mind too—will reason about them; and there is no answer, we believe, to many a question that arises in the mind but the one that God is God, and He doeth right, or, as scripture puts it, "Shall not the judge of all the earth do right?" (Gen. xviii. 25.)

But happily we have an example to the point in

scripture, and God's way of dealing with it. In Romans ix. God is speaking of His own sovereignty. "He saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy. For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might shew my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth. Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth." But this open declaration of God's sovereignty suggests, as we may say, an objection, or a difficulty. "Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth he [God] yet find fault, for who hath resisted his will?" Now notice the answer. There is no explanation of the difficulty; there is not one word in direct reply to the questions asked; but God withdraws, as we may say, into His own place as God. "Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus? Hath not the potter power over the clay of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour and another unto dishonour? What if God, willing to shew his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction: and that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy which he had afore prepared unto glory?" (Vers. 15–23.)

We have quoted the whole passage that it may be seen in its fulness. In a word, the answer is, God is

God; and should the question be raised, "Is there unrighteousness with God?" the answer is, "God forbid." (Ver. 14.) And here we have surely a divine way of dealing with many a difficulty. If we have confidence in God, we shall not reply to God, or question His right, or His righteousness; and if any have not confidence in Him, God reminds him that He is God and the Creator, and the objector is a "man," a "thing formed," a "vessel of clay." He bids him know his place.

We remember years ago being troubled respecting a difficulty that presented itself to the mind, and we sought counsel of an older and a well-taught Christian, in the hope that he would be able to solve the difficulty. Well do we remember the curt but striking response: "How can I tell? Ask God." It was a trouble no longer: God had *not* revealed it, and no one knew; and we were content to leave it thus.

Thus we believe should many a difficulty be met, whether they arise in our own minds, or are presented by others. It should satisfy any Christian: God is God, and there is no unrighteousness with Him. If any are contentious, we need not be careful to answer them. Let the potsherds of the earth strive with the potsherds; but "woe unto him that striveth with his Maker!" (Isa. xlv. 9.)

On the other side all is simple. Man is a sinner, and he no sooner takes his true place as such before God, and trusts in the blood of the Lamb, than all is changed. God is God still, but that God is his Father, and He reveals Himself to us in a marvellous way. True, there are questions we cannot answer, but this is not

strange: we are children, and no child is able to understand everything about his father. But our Father tells us all it is good for us to know. We will rest in His *love*, rejoice in all He has told us, and have confidence in Him respecting all He seeth good to withhold.

NOTES ON SCRIPTURE.

MATTHEW VIII.

Verses 14, 15. Peter had a wife; whence, then, do the Roman Catholics, who say that they have succeeded the apostles through Peter, obtain their doctrine of celibacy? The sick one is healed in such a way as to be able to arise and serve them at once—not a gradual gaining of strength, as when healed by natural causes. This cure follows here in beautiful order. After saying that the children of the kingdom should be cast out, He still goes on with His work *in Israel* in grace.

Verses 16, 17. Many sick are brought who are healed by our Lord; His Godhead also being manifested by the demons being cast out by a word. One stronger than "the strong man" was now among them, and He made His power to be felt. Though the Jews should fail in receiving Him, He fails not in blessing them.

"Spoken by Esaias the prophet." It will be seen that this does not exactly correspond with Isaiah liii. 4, which in the Hebrew reads, "He hath *borne* our griefs, and *carried* our sorrows;" and in the LXX, "He bears our sins, and is *pained* for us." But in Matthew the sense is the same as in the Hebrew. He *bore* their

sicknesses, not simply by curing them, but by entering in sympathy into their distresses.

Verses 18–20. A scribe, calling Christ teacher (rather than "master"), declares that he will follow Him wherever He goes, doubtless expecting a good place with such a teacher, when our Lord tells the startling truth, that He, though their Messiah, had not among them where to lay His head, being worse off in this respect than the foxes and the birds.

Verses 21, 22. Those who have become the disciples of our Lord must not "look back" to their former homes. Those who are spiritually dead must bury the dead bodies of their relatives. This one is told to follow the Lord, far different from the scribe, with his easy profession, named just before.

Verses 23–27. Christ asleep in the storm—a beautiful figure of the Christian in his stormy path down here, having Christ with him therein, if he have only faith to see Him who is invisible. He chides them for their little faith, in supposing they could perish while He was with them.

The shipmen wondered to see a man who could call the winds and the sea into obedience! He is the same Almighty One to still the storms of time for His own.

Verse 28–34. This is doubtless the same as recorded in Mark v. 1–20, and Luke viii. 26–39: the chief difficulty being, that in Matthew it speaks of *two* possessed by demons, and in the other gospels only *one* is named. There must have been two, but it is probable that one was very much more prominent than the other. Of *him* it is said that he was bound with fetters, but which he broke to pieces, and escaped into the moun-

tains, &c., shewing the marvellous power of Satan over man and all his bonds.

Although in Matthew it is said, in the Authorized Version, to be in the country of the Gergesenes, some Greek copies read Gadarenes; whereas in Luke some Greek copies read Garasenes. Still, all refer to one and the same place—some referring, perhaps, more to the city, and others to the district.

The narrative in Mark and Luke brings out the *personality* of the demons in a remarkable way. They besought the Lord not to torment them. The spirit's name was Legion, "for we are many," said it. It then besought not to be sent out of the country, but begged permission to go into the herd of swine. The divinity of our Lord, and His power and authority over the demons, *by their own confession*, is very striking, and forms a very solemn lesson to those poor deluded men who deny the divinity of that same blessed One.

The account in Matthew is shorter. The demons go into the herd of swine, who rush into the sea, and are drowned. Those who saw this fled into the city, and the "whole city" came and besought the Lord to depart out of their coasts.

This is a striking picture of man. He can be happy with the demons and the pigs, but with One who can cast out the demons he is in no way at home. They beg Him to leave them.

Go labour on: ye work for One
To whom you owe your all;
Yea, more, *yourself* you owe to Him
Who you to work did call.

A CHILD'S TESTIMONY AS TO SUITABLE BOOKS.

THE following is the testimony of a child nine years of age. She was very little acquainted with religious story-books; in fact, her mind had imbibed a love for the holy scriptures. At six years old she read the scriptures with references, and devoted to them all her leisure moments. She kept a Bible always under her pillow, that she might read it in the morning before she dressed; and when her parents happened to spend an evening from home, she always requested to have a candle in the parlour for the purpose of reading in preference to playing in the nursery with her brother and sister. A christian friend brought her one day, a collection of stories, detailing the happy deaths or extraordinary experience of young children. She had not read long, when she laid down the book with a look of some perplexity, and sat still, evidently deeply engaged in thinking: her mother at length inquired how she liked the new book. She answered, "I like it, and yet I don't like it." When asked to explain, she said it was very interesting indeed, and very useful for *parents* to read, because it would encourage them to begin religious instruction early; "but I don't think it fit for children." "Why so?" her mother inquired. She said, she thought it calculated to teach children to talk like parrots, and say fine things which they did not feel. "I know I will not read it any longer, for fear I would soon not know whether I was thinking my own thoughts, or only trying to persuade myself that *I was one of the wonderful little children.*"

Correspondence.

CHILDREN'S SPECIAL SERVICES.

Dear Brother,

After reading in the "Worker" the letter in reference to Children's Special Services, I was comforted and strengthened, and encouraged to go on in the same work.

Not like your correspondent, however, with helpers in the work, I have to labour alone, unaided, and, what is more, I have the vicar's eye upon my insignificant attempts at getting at the hearts of the dear children, and in a small provincial town like this it is hard work. The ground is "stony," the land seems parched, and needing the refreshing showers of blessing, which I trust will come ere long.

I have written just to endorse the sentiments of my unknown fellow-labourer, and likewise to urge the need of preaching the gospel to the children, for, when through inability I am shut out comparatively from the work amongst adults, I find a ready door amongst the young.

Many are the reasons why they should be gathered together (and as often as time permitted), which I may (D.V.) be favoured to adduce in my next.

In the mean time, brethren, labour on, for the night is coming!

Yours truly, in Him,

J. F.

My dear Brother in the Lord,

I now send you a few practical hints as to the manner in which we conduct our Children's Special

Services, and I trust that my love for the work may be my excuse if I seem dogmatical in expression, or tedious in detail. I have now before me twelve distinct thoughts as to these meetings, and I give them to you in what I believe to be their proper order.

1. SUPERINTENDENT. We have one brother, who is responsible for making all the necessary arrangements connected with the services; as far as possible he should always be present. He need not be a good speaker, but should be a man with much love for souls, intense earnestness, fair capacity for ruling, and great love for his work. Our superintendent generally opens the meetings himself, gives out the hymns, and sometimes he reads the scriptures, or addresses the meeting.

2. GATHERING THE CHILDREN FOR THE FIRST MEETING. We gave notice of it after school, and sent handbills by our scholars to their parents. We visited all the courts and streets around with bills, and also distributed them after the gospel-preaching, where it also had been announced.

3. THE PRAYERS OF THE ASSEMBLY, AND THEIR HEARTY FELLOWSHIP. This is most important, and very helpful.

4. PRAYER BY THE TEACHERS BEFORE THE SERVICE. We feel this to be of the first importance, and is, we believe, the secret of power, and also of blessing on the service.

5. TIME. On the week night, the most suitable hour for the special locality, and the usual meeting-time on the Lord's day evening. The service should not exceed one hour, as the children will tire, and become restless if the meeting is prolonged past that period.

6. KEEPING ORDER. Order must be obtained and

kept. If you let the children understand this, and never go on while there is any noise, you will soon get the children into quiet ways: resolutely wait for silence. To help you in this matter you will require a teacher to about every thirty children. The children should not have to wait; there should be no pause in the service, unless it be one for silent prayer. We arrange after the prayer-meeting as to who will speak, and so forth, with perfect liberty for the Spirit to use whom He will, but no room for disorder. If any brother, during the meeting, has a word laid on his heart, he communicates with the superintendent, who makes an opening for him.

7. SINGING. The singing should be bright, and a fair proportion of it with good familiar tunes. A good leader is most essential, who should always be there. We use sheet hymns, which the children take home to their parents; and who shall say that the Lord may not use a sheet of hymns, with a few texts of scripture round them, to the salvation of many a careless father or mother?

8. PRAYER. This is a point that I am sure we all need to give more consideration to, and from a lack of so doing we often find children, even if quiet, totally indifferent to our utterances. We feel that our waiting upon God, *during these services*, should be short, simple, and of such a character that the children may perceive that we are asking the Lord for a blessing for them, and upon them. We have two or three prayers by different persons, during which the children sit with closed eyes, as getting up and down in crowded forms is apt to produce confusion.

9. Scripture. We read a short portion from the word, and explain it, the scripture read generally agreeing in character with the addresses which are to follow.

10. Addresses. We have two or three short addresses, not exceeding ten minutes in length as a rule. These should be pithy, pointed, powerful, and full of Christ. Anecdotes and illustrations from real life are useful. Look fixedly at the children, and speak from your own soul to theirs.

11. The Meeting. The character of the meeting should be such that the children feel it is their own, and for them a happy, and yet a solemn, place—a meeting they like to come to, and yet a meeting they often go away from with troubled hearts and consciences; a service where, in simple, earnest language, the Lord Jesus Christ is proclaimed as the Saviour and Friend of little children.

12. After-meeting. If possible have an after-meeting, where you will have the opportunity of presenting Christ to the anxious—only such children to remain. If you have enough help, speak to and pray with them one by one, and thus you come face to face, pointedly and faithfully, with those that the word has touched; and in many cases you have the joy, the solemn, intense, joy of sharing that joy that there is "in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth." May the Lord thus use us, more and more, for His glory in the salvation of souls, for His name's sake.

My dear Brother—I now answer your questions with much pleasure, as it affords me an opportunity of asking one in return.

In reply to "Whether we treat these week-night meetings more as a school or a service?" I would say that we consider them as services, and of a special and peculiar character, entirely different from a Sunday school. They are attended principally by a different class of children, namely, boys and girls from off the streets, whom the present Sunday-school system has not reached, or those whom it has failed to keep, when they became old enough in their own eyes to choose for themselves. As to our manner of treating these services, I think the previous part of my letter will give you the information you desire. We do not keep a register, and consequently cannot mark their attendance. The children come or not, as they please or are able, but the majority attend regularly, though, to our delight, we see fresh faces every week. The door remains open, and therefore they can come in at any time, but, as a matter of fact, they are seated at 7.30, more than ninety per cent. of their number being always present at the opening. Through the door being open, we often catch many stragglers, and have the pleasure of seeing sometimes twenty or so of their parents just inside the room during the last address.

The boys and girls are seated separately, which is easily accomplished by a passage down or across the room.

"Do we consider that giving a hymn-sheet, and a tract, leaflet, or little book, is necessary to ensure their attendance?" Most emphatically we do not. We have proved this question on several occasions, when the children have been unruly, by withholding the books, &c., and the attendance has not been diminished; in

fact, we are having larger meetings than ever—we had over 300 children and young people on several evenings lately.

We have had some few objectors to these books, &c., but none of them have given any scriptural reason for objecting. If any scripture can be produced, we should be glad to meet it, or bow to it. Our objects in giving these leaflets, &c., are that the boys and girls may have the truth set before them in a simple, attractive way; and that these children may be the bearers of the message of life into many homes where sin and death now dwell almost undisturbed. But, even supposing they were given to secure the attendance, and were necessary for that purpose, we feel that we would gladly give them; for surely it is not a light matter to have an opportunity of presenting Christ to the class that attend our meetings, whatever may be their motive for coming. When we see great lads, with their aprons on, just out of their workshops and factories, we can only lift up our hearts in thankfulness to the Lord for bringing them where they shall hear of God's salvation, of the Saviour and His wondrous love — glorious themes, to which the majority of them are perfect strangers.

My dear brother, ere I close my letter I would just like to tell you that the Lord, in His grace and goodness, is refreshing us by continuing to own these meetings with manifest blessing in our midst; to Him be all the praise and glory. May our hearts, tasting more and more of His own love, and filled with His Spirit, go out after the wanderers and the lost, fetch them in, and tell them of Him "who loved me, and

gave himself for me," and so hasten that long-expected day, when we shall see Him as He is, face to face, be like Him, and with Him, to praise Him throughout the countless ages of eternity for His wondrous love.

Yours faithfully in the Lord Jesus,

FETCH THEM IN, AND TELL THEM OF JESUS.

"In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand." Ecclesiastes xi. 6.

[We do not see any objection to the tracts and leaflets being given; but we are glad to find that our friend's judgment is that they are not essentially necessary to such services, simply because the expense might have hindered some from entering on such a work.—ED.]

Questions and Answers.

PIECES OF SILVER.

DEAR MR. EDITOR,

Q.—Will you please explain the following seeming difficulty, as to the "pieces of silver" named in Matthew xxvii. 3, and Acts xix. 19? I find by my concordance that the Greek word is the same in both these passages (*argurion*), and yet it seems to me that to put the same value on these pieces of silver in the two passages cannot be correct.

Thus, suppose we take its value to be the "penny," at an equivalent of about 7½d., while this would suit for Acts xix., and be still a *large* sum (£1,500), yet for Matthew xxvii. it would be but 18s. 9d., a sum too small for the price of our Lord given to Judas.

On the other hand, if its value be taken as that of the shekel, at 2s. 6d., while it would make the money

paid to Judas £3 15s. 0d. (which we may suppose to be correct) it makes the value of the books which were burnt over £6,000, which seems to be too large a sum.

Thus, though the word used is the same, the same value does not seem to suit both passages. Can you throw any light upon the subject?

INQUIRER.

A.—The word used (*argurion*) does not point to any of the known standard pieces of money in use at the time of our Lord. It is the common word for "silver" (as used in Acts iii. 6. "*Silver* and gold have I none; and in 1 Peter i. 18, "corruptible things as *silver* and gold"), but it also signifies "money" (in a similar way to what the word *argent* does in French), and so it signifies "pieces of silver," or, to be more exact, "[pieces] of silver," as it is in Acts xix. 19.

Now this being the case, nothing is easier than for a different value to become attached to the pieces of silver in common use in different localities. And this we doubt not is the explanation. In the case of Judas, it would be in Jerusalem, and there doubtless the "pieces of silver" were shekels, and the value, as above named, would be about £3 15s. 0d. The passage in Zechariah xi. 12, 13 will not fix the amount more definitely; for there also the common word for "silver" is used.

But the scene in Acts xix. is at Ephesus, a Grecian city, and the principal silver coin among the Greeks was the "drachma," usually valued at 7½d. of our money, which gives the value of the books at about £1,500; but by some the drachma is valued as high as 9½d.

THE SYMBOLS OF SCRIPTURE.

THE LION.

In looking at the lion, in its symbolical application in scripture, it may appear to be impossible to give it only one character of interpretation, seeing that it is applied both to our Lord as "the Lion of the tribe of Judah" (Rev. v. 5), and to Satan who, "as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour." (1 Peter v. 8.) But this does not follow; for I may for instance use something as a symbol of *power*, altogether apart from the question of whether that power is used for a good or a bad purpose. The abstract idea of 'power' is all perhaps that is intended, entirely apart from who it is that uses the power, or for what purpose it is used. It is in fact simply *power*, and as we know it may be used for the worst of purposes as well as for the best.

Now let us turn to scripture and endeavour to gather what the lion is typical of. "Judah . . . . couched as a lion, and as an old lion: *who shall rouse him up?*" (Gen. xlix. 9.) Of Israel the language is nearly identical: He is a lion, "a great lion: *who shall stir him up?*" (Num. xxiv. 9.) Three times in Job is the lion spoken of as *fierce*. The psalmist prays to be delivered from his enemy, "lest he tear my soul like a lion, rending it in pieces, while there is none to deliver." (Ps. vii. 2.) In the Proverbs, "the king's wrath is as the roaring of a lion:" "the fear of a king is as the roaring of a lion; whoso provoketh him to anger sinneth against his own soul:" "a lion, which is strongest among beasts, and turneth not away for any." (Chap. xix. 12; xx. 2; xxx. 30.) In Isaiah, we read

of some like lions who "lay hold of the prey, and shall carry it away safe, and *none shall deliver it.*" There will be a way so secure that "no lion shall be there, nor any ravenous beast." (Chap. v. 29; xxxv. 9.)

From all this we gather that the lion is used symbolically for *strength and boldness*, with a *fierceness* such that none care to arouse, and from which, when aroused, none are able to deliver. Of course in some places it may be used more particularly in reference to one feature, and in others to another, and in some places embrace them all.

Now we find the symbol applied to *men*: "lion-like men of Moab" (2 Sam. xxiii. 20; 1 Chron. xi. 22) which is very expressive of their strength and courage. It may be noticed that in the passage in Samuel it reads in the margin "lions of God." The Arabs and Persians call every remarkably strong man *Ariel* (as here) 'a lion of God,' thus attributing their strength to God.

It is applied to kings, and their wrath, as we have already seen; and it well describes the action of those possessed of absolute authority, putting to death whom they pleased and as they pleased, and whose wrath few cared to arouse. This is well illustrated by the wrath of Ahasuerus in Esther vii. 6–10.

It is applied to the righteous: "the righteous are *bold* as a lion." (Prov. xxviii.) This is well illustrated by the answer of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, to Nebuchadnezzar: "We are not careful to answer thee in this matter. If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us . . . . and he will deliver us . . . . but if not . . . . we will not serve thy gods, nor wor-

ship the golden image which thou hast set up." (Dan. iii. 16–18.) Many a martyr has been as bold as a lion, giving similar answers to his judges.

Judah is compared to a lion, which none dared to arouse, as we have seen ; and then connected with this our Lord is called "the Lion of the tribe of Judah" (Rev. v. 5), as being the One who is *strong* to bring Judah yet into blessing, by subduing and devouring all his foes.

There is no difficulty in viewing our Lord as a Lion, if we take the many passages of scripture that speak of His judgments yet to be exercised on the earth : such as "Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron ; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel . . . . kiss the son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little." (Ps. ii.)

With what we have already seen, there is no difficulty in the lion being a fit emblem of Satan, who like the lion in his strength, wanders about seeking whom he may devour. So also Paul applies the term to the emperor Nero (2 Tim. iv. 17), who well deserved the name in a bad sense.

There are still a few passages that demand attention. In Ezekiel i. 10, the living creatures had "the face of a lion on the right side." (See also x. 14.) Here in symbolical language the attributes of God, connected with His throne, work out His providence on earth. The face of the man points out *intelligence ;* the lion, *strength ;* the ox, *patient endurance ;* the eagle, *swiftness.*

In Daniel vii. 4, the first beast was "like a lion, and had eagle's wings." This typified the *strength* of Babylon, and the swiftness of her conquests.

In Revelation ix., in the coming judgments the locusts have teeth as the teeth of lions; and the horses, heads as the heads of lions. (Vers. 8, 17.) Teeth which for strength nothing could resist, and heads that for boldness nothing could affright or turn aside.

We believe this points out the symbolical use of the lion in scripture. We doubt not it bears the same character throughout, and that the application of the symbol in one part throws light upon it in another. Thus, if we are Christians, we are delivered from the *strength* of Satan (Col. i. 13), but are warned against his *wiles*. (Eph. vi. 11.) By grace we willingly bow to the Lord Jesus now, and we know Him as the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world, and so we shall not be called upon to feel His power when He comes forth as the Lion to take vengeance on those that know not God and obey not His gospel. To His name be all the praise.

NOTES ON SCRIPTURE.

Matthew ix.

VERSES 1–8. Jesus "came into his own city"—that was Capernaum (Mark ii. 1), where He mostly resided and where He did many of His mighty works. On this city He pronounced the most fearful woe because they received not His testimony. (xi. 23.) Our responsibility must go along with our privileges.

They bring one sick of the palsy; and "Jesus seeing *their* faith," He healed the man. This is a great encouragement to any who in faith bring the unconverted into the presence of Jesus, either to the preaching of

the gospel, or at the throne of grace. There is not a word about the sick man's faith, but Jesus saw *their* faith, and graciously answered it in saving the poor man.

Jesus now manifests Himself as the One who had power to forgive sins, and becomes a test to the scribes. When Jesus said, "Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee," the scribes at once thought, "This man blasphemeth." Our Lord knowing this, reasoned with them, and then in order that they might know that He had authority on earth to forgive sins, He said to the paralytic, "Arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thy house. And he arose and departed to his house." Now at first sight it is not easy to see how Jesus telling the sick man to arise and go to his house could convince them that He had power to forgive sins. It need be remembered, however, that this was said to the *scribes* who were supposed to be familiar with the Old Testament scriptures. Now therein it had been foretold that Jehovah would both forgive their sins and heal their diseases. (Ps. ciii. 3.) Consequently if there was One there who could heal their diseases in a manner far beyond the power of man, it was a proof that Jehovah was there in the person of Jesus, so that when they could not believe that He had authority to forgive sins, He at once proved to them that He was the same blessed One by healing their diseases. This the scribes ought to have known at first, and ought to have bowed to when He thus demonstrated who He was.

But, alas, we do not read that it had any effect on the scribes, such was their hardness of heart: and as to the multitudes, "they marvelled and glorified God

which had given such power to men," without apparently discerning who the Man was to whom such power had been given.

Verse 9. The call of Matthew. He is also called Levi in Mark ii. 14, and Luke v. 27.

"Receipt of customs." This was the tax-office, where the taxes paid by the Jews to the Romans were received. The call of a tax-collector to be an apostle was another test to the religious guides, as we shall see in what follows.

Verses 10–13. From Mark ii. 15, we find it was in the house of Matthew that our Lord sat down to meat. With Him were His disciples and "many publicans and sinners." The Pharisees ask how it is that Jesus eats with publicans and sinners.

The scribes were stumbled before, and now it is the self-righteous Pharisees. God has His lesson for them as well as the scribes.

The publicans (so-called from the Latin *publicanus*, 'pertaining to the public revenue') were those who not only collected the taxes, but who mostly farmed them, so that it was to their interest to get from the people by extortion as much as they could. The payment of the taxes was at all times galling to the Jews, who looked with the greatest contempt on those who enforced them and made a living thereby. There seems to be some good ground for the contempt with which these people were held, by the passage in Matthew xviii. 17, where if a man would not hear the assembly, it is said, "Let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican"—one to whom you would not even speak. Though this might be the general character of the tax-

gatherers, there were doubtless exceptions; as in the case of Zaccheus, who was a chief among them.

Let them be however as bad as they might, our Lord was now sitting at table with them, as well as with the sinners—the common people who made no pretence to be scribe or Pharisee. He explains His position to the Pharisees by telling them that He is the Physician, and thence publicans and sinners are the *sick*. All were thus in their right place. *They* had taken the place of being whole (well or strong) and did not need Him as the Physician. If He had called a publican, it was quite right, He had come to call such. *They* had taken the place of being righteous: He came not to call the righteous, but sinners. (The words "to repentance" are omitted by most Editors.)

The lesson to the Pharisees is brought out in a further sentence, full of meaning: "Go ye and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy and not sacrifice;" that is, our Lord came to *give*, and not to *receive*—to give mercy, and not to receive sacrifice. This is a principle of immense import, not only to the Pharisees in those days, but to all *religious* people in all times, to the children of religious parents, &c. It seems innate in all that they must first *give* something to God. It may be money, or time, or service, or worship. But this entirely subverts the order of God, who says, "I will have mercy, and *not* sacrifice." Of course, when we have received the mercy, then, but not till then, we are to present our bodies a living sacrifice, which is but our reasonable service. (Rom. xii. 1.)

A LESSON FOR THE LITTLE ONES.

"THE PEOPLE ARE GRASS."

CAN anyone tell me why the people are said to be grass? (No answer.)

Does anyone of you know what grass is? (Many of them do.)

What is it? Would you call it long narrow strips of green?

Yes, teacher.

Where does it grow?

In the gardens. In the fields.

Who are people?

We are. Men and women. We see them walking about the streets.

Well, now, scripture says the people are grass. Can you see why the people are called grass? (No one knows.)

Did you ever see anyone cut the grass?

Yes. I have. I have seen my father cut it.

How did they cut it?

With a long knife. With a large pair of scissors.

Was it soon done? Did one draw of the knife cut down a lot?

Yes. A small garden is soon cut.

Then if you saw it growing to-day, and went there to-morrow you might find it—What?

All cut down.

And when it is cut down what is done with it?

Eaten. Some is made into hay.

Then grass may be growing to-day; but be cut down and eaten to-morrow: is that so?

Yes, teacher.

Then if you go by a garden and see the grass growing, can you tell how long it will be before it is cut down?

No. We can't tell. If we see it in the morning, it may be cut down in the afternoon.

Dear me! so sudden as that! Now tell me did you ever know any person die suddenly?

Yes, my uncle did. A man dropped down dead in the streets, teacher. A little boy fell into the canal and was drowned.

Then do you mean to say that a person may be walking about the streets to-day, and dead to-morrow?

Yes, teacher.

Then if you see a person to-day, can you tell how long it will be before he dies?

No. He may die before the day is over.

Then are not people very much like something we have been talking about?

Yes, teacher. The grass.

In what are they alike? What may happen to the grass to-day?

It may be cut down.

And what may happen to the people to-day?

They may die.

May I or you die to-day?

Yes, teacher.

How important then to be safe in the arms of Jesus. Do you know how to be safe there?

By believing on Him.

Yes; He took little children up in His arms, and blessed them; and He is as ready now to bless and

save all who come to Him. Once there, we are not frightened to read that "the people are grass;" for if we die before to-morrow, we are safe; we shall go to Jesus, and be with Him for ever. Let us sing

"Safe in the arms of Jesus,
Safe on His gentle breast,
There by His love o'ershadowed,
Sweetly the soul shall rest."

Correspondence.

A TEACHERS' MEETING.

My dear Brother,

It may be acceptable to some of your readers, if I send you a few details of a Teachers' Quarterly Meeting, held at B—, on the 22nd of September. After a happy hour at tea, we commenced our meeting, looking to the Lord that a suited blessing might be given us.

Mr. C. S. first spoke a little on Sunday-school work generally. He thought it most important that every teacher should have his own commission *from* the Lord, and should feel his own responsibility *to* the Lord in his service; that Sunday schools were not a *mere* organization, but a line of things in which we individually serve the Lord; that each should have his or her own class in distinct and constant remembrance in prayer, *expecting* a blessing; not satisfied with merely being *teachers*, but as *servants* of the Lord we ought to expect immediate results to our labour. He then suggested inquiry as to the best means of retaining the elder scholars connected with our schools. He said they had endeavoured to meet the question at G. B.

by opening week-night classes, one for boys and one for girls, which to a certain extent had proved successful.

Mr. James S. then read several portions of the word, and made some remarks fraught with much instruction and encouragement, as bearing upon Sunday-school work, and the much discussed question of success therein; a few of which I give and commend to the special consideration of my fellow-labourers.

He pointed out very clearly the difference between teaching and evangelizing, or *sowing* and *reaping*, referring to Mark vi., Christ teaching the crowd. He said the Lord was emphatically a teacher, a sower, *not* a reaper; that there were comparatively few souls really gathered—reaped—during the three and a half years of His ministry; yet the Lord loved the crowd, and was always delighted to teach them whenever and wherever they gathered around Him; and although the crowd was not converted, it would be a mistake to suppose that His ministry did nothing for them. It did much for them; the Lord was going before, preparing the ground and putting in the seed ready for the sickle, in the hands of those who were to follow after.

Here a passage from John iv. was very happily applied. "I sent you to reap that whereon ye bestowed no labour." He said we were not to suppose that Peter's first sermon was the alone cause of the three thousand being converted. He was only reaping where the Master had sown. That wondrous ingathering took place in the very scene of the Lord's ministry. And so in nearly every place into which the apostles carried the gospel, the Lord had been before them preparing

the ground. The lesson intended for those of us who are labouring in Sunday schools was, that if we were only sowers of the word, and saw no apparent fruit to our labour, we must not be discouraged, nor even think that nothing was being done. It might be the very thing was being done which the Lord Himself did when here upon the earth; but if we would have reaping as well as sowing our hearts must be up unto the Lord, to raise up evangelistic power for the gathering in of those in whom the word had been sown, so that both sower and reaper might rejoice together.

Mr. E. B. said he felt it was a comfort to find that what we were doing corresponded in any measure with the word of God. He heartily agreed with what Mr. S. had said, and what we had been doing in our own school seemed to bear witness to the truth of it. For some years we had been sowing with but little reaping. We had had, it was true, some few cases of conversion in many years, but during the last six months, perhaps as the result of the sowing, but most certainly as the effect of special evangelistic effort, we had had the joy of reaping some ten or more souls.

A few stirring words followed from Mr. W. B., who thought we ought always to meet our classes as though it was the last time. He said the Lord was coming quickly; we should want our crowns then, and we ought to be satisfied with nothing less than seeing our scholars brought to Himself.

Mr. J. G. followed, and read from 1 Corinthians xv. 51, 52, "changed in a *moment*." He said that was the hope we had before *us*. Our scholars must either be brought to Christ, or we must leave them behind. We

should labour as those who are *going away*. This ought to be our attitude towards our children. He also referred to our elder scholars, and said that *to bring them to Christ* was the only true and effectual way of retaining them, as well as our only hope of so doing; for the world held out its many attractions to them, and unless they were in the enjoyment of something better, we must expect to lose them. He thought we had proved this in some instances in our own school, and this should increase our earnest desire for their salvation.

Mr. W. W. then said he thought we ought to look for fruit; the promise was, "according to your faith, be it unto you," and if we had faith to count upon God there would be blessing.

Mr. Joseph S. then made a few pointed and practical remarks. He said we had spoken of the Master, of the field, and of what was growing in the field; of the service, and of the best way of doing it; but what about ourselves as servants? What was our individual state? and were we before the Lord in the spirit of humility and self-judgment? Were we purging ourselves from everything that would hinder our being vessels unto honour, sanctified and meet for the Master's use? Were we, like one of old, choosing the good part, sitting at the Master's feet, and hearing His word?

Mr. J. B. said he felt thankful for what he had heard that night, especially for what was said about sowing and reaping. He thought love to Christ should be the motive power in our service, and if we had this, we should not need any other commission.

After this a little questioning followed between Mr.

D. and Mr. C. S. as to whether our service should take the character of sowing the seed and instructing the mind, or whether our *first and chief aim* should not be to lead them as sinners distinctly to Christ. Mr. C. S. thought the *latter* was our chief business, and referred to what had already been said as to the "time being short;" and said we ought to be satisfied with nothing less than the conversion of our scholars.

I have given the above almost entirely from memory, and therefore must crave the kind forbearance of the speakers if I have been in any measure inaccurate.

These meetings have been commenced in this district in the hope that the Lord may use them for the instruction, encouragement, and mutual help of those who are engaged in the service of the Lord amongst the young.

Yours in Him that is true,

"YE SHALL REAP, IF YE FAINT NOT."

"It is not the will of your Father, which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish." (Matt. xviii. 14.)

OUR AIM.

DEAR BROTHER IN THE LORD,

Since our happy and profitable meeting, I have thought a good deal on the subject which engaged much of our attention, namely, the primary object to be aimed at by Sunday schools; and the more I think of it, the more am I confirmed in the opinion I then expressed so crudely, as it was totally unprepared, and what I said was wholly unpremeditated, namely, that

Sunday-school efforts should be zealously, prayerfully directed towards the *immediate* conversion of the scholars, rather than to their instruction in the things of God, with a view to such instruction being used in after life by God's Spirit to their conversion.

In urging my view of this our work, I made use of the Lord's *speedy* return to take His saints, and consequently to close the door of mercy and the dispensation of His grace, as the principal argument in its favour; and is it not a powerful one, dear brother? Does it not awaken our poor feeble hearts and set them aglow at the very thought? And if this be the case with us, if our Lord's return be a *reality*, should we not be instant in season and out of season with dear little ones who have been intrusted to our care by our blessed Master, seeking by speaking earnestly and faithfully *to* them, and praying without ceasing both earnestly and faithfully *for* them, to bring them to a sense of their ruined state and the necessity for their *immediate* acceptance of God's proffered mercy? I feel myself that it should act thus upon us now, especially as fresh tokens of the last days force themselves on us from time to time; when one gifted brother points out that the cry "Behold the Bridegroom cometh" has gone out far and wide for more than forty years, and that both the wise and foolish virgins are astir, the fresh activity of the religious world to "buy oil" being fully displayed all around in the increased observance of ritual, and the revival of pilgrimages. Another, that the church has passed through the various stages of its declension as foretold in Revelation ii., iii., and arrived at its final state almost before our day. And a third, from the

political state of the nations around us, especially the increasing importance of Egypt, which must come about before the last days, when the "king of the South" shall again possess power now forfeited for many centuries, shews that the Lord must indeed be at hand.

And I might greatly increase the instances of prophetic fulfilment were it needful, but these solemn warnings should be sufficiently powerful however even had we not our Lord's own thrilling words, "Behold *I* come quickly."

Now for the contrary view which contemplates the instruction rather than the conversion of the children; it is quite true that God has owned the instruction received in youth, and blessed it in many instances in after years and may still do so if the Lord tarry, but who can guarantee that He will tarry? As I have already said, all the signs of the times point to His immediate return, and I hold that we must work in view thereof, adjusting our labours to the times in which we find ourselves, the seed-sowing time has been sufficiently long now in Sunday schools without much reaping, as the latter was not considered a part of Sunday-school labour by the good old-fashioned people who hardly thought that children could be really converted, and I must confess that I thought thus myself in a great measure, looking either to teach my pupils what might be used to them later on, than to seek their present conversion; but the events which have occurred here during the last three months have caused me completely to change my mind.

During this time the Lord has been graciously

pleased to own increased evangelical efforts to the conversion of about sixteen children of all ages, and to arouse the sense of the need of a Saviour in many others. I cannot say that I am personally acquainted with all these cases, but those with which I am, fully convince me that we may look for real turning of the heart to God at a very early age with the proper results, namely, fruit-bearing, and this of a very decided and refreshing character.

Let us then seek to reap all the seed sown which may have found a home in good ground, at the same time of course not neglecting to sow broadcast the word of life, lest the Lord of the harvest come, and that on which we have bestowed our labour be reaped by the devil and his angels. When the reapers know that their labours must soon end, they make short work of what remains in their field unstacked. Let us imitate them, and each Lord's day as we enter our class remember that it may be our last, and that ere another opportunity occurs, we may be caught up to meet the Lord in the air, with those of our scholars who have been already garnered, but those who have been instructed only will be left to a more horrible doom than if they had never been the hearers of gospel truth.

I am, dear brother,

Yours affectionately, W. G. B.

["Behold, *now* is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation." "The *harvest* truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few; pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest."]

CONVERTED SCHOLARS.

DEAR MR. EDITOR,

I desire, in a little feeble measure, to bring before my fellow-workers in the Sunday-school, a subject which, though spoken of some time since in our magazine, I feel assured is too much neglected by us. It is the gathering together of the *converted* children in our Sunday schools during the week. Much has been said of late about Special Gospel Services, but I do not find much about the converted scholars. I feel assured that both the scholars and the teachers lose much on this account. Everyone will agree, I think, that we lose much through our want of taking advantage of little things. In our intercourse with our fellow-creatures how often we fail to speak a word for the Lord when we have the opportunity. But where I think we miss so much in Sunday-school work is in this want of caring for the young converts.

Let us take a case. The teachers of a Sunday school are united in prayer and knit together in the bonds of fellowship, anxiously looking to the Lord for blessing. The Lord in His mercy graciously answers prayer—children are converted. But is this sufficient? Do they not want even more care bestowed upon them now that they are "born again?" Surely they do, and yet, alas, how few there are who really get "the leading on," the "building up," the "milk" they require. What is the effect of this? It is well known that people and things retrograde if they do not advance.

They must either be growing or they are declining.

And this is exactly the case with the scholars, in many cases, for want of a little care being taken with them, they grow cold and dead; and, if I may use the expression, have to be converted over again.

This I feel assured is the effect experienced through lack of a bible class specially for the converted scholars *during the week*.

Many are the instances, I fear, that our superintendents could tell us of, where there seemed to be a work going on in the souls of some, and which, for a want of nurturing and watching over, have been lost to us. And in this way seed, which ought to be springing up, and rejoicing and encouraging our hearts to be still going on, is lost.

But, beloved fellow-workers, in the midst of it all, notwithstanding all our failure, is it not sweet to know that the Lord knows them that are His, and to hear those words of our blessed Lord, "My sheep shall *never* perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand."

There are one or two suggestions I should like to make, if they meet your approval.

1. That if possible, for the forming of such a class, the meeting should be held in a private house. The meeting room is too large, and the meetings become cold and formal generally.

2. That as far as possible each one should be made to "feel at home," and be encouraged to ask questions. I am convinced that where they do this, the interest is sustained better, and they enjoy it the more.

3. That it be taken up as a work for the Lord, and in dependence upon Him. I am aware that many ob-

jections will be raised (some of them really valid reasons), but I do feel that where the importance of such a meeting is seen, God will in His goodness open up the way for it.

No doubt we shall have to give up something for this (such as being able to go to some other profitable meeting for ourselves), but one must remember that this is not our resting-place. That even as Christ pleased not Himself, so we should not be too careful in self-pleasing.

May the Lord in His mercy grant, that as the time grows shorter and the day of His appearing grows brighter, we may be more alive to what will be pleasing to Him, and what will help on His little ones, for His name's sake. ERIN.

SCARLET AND CRIMSON.

DEAR MR. EDITOR,

Will you kindly inform me why sins are described as scarlet, and red like crimson, in Isaiah i. 18. By so doing, you will oblige

A SUNDAY-SCHOOL WORKER.

[We doubt not that the scarlet and crimson are used to point out the indelible nature of sin. No one could remove these colours from a fabric once dyed with them. The power and value of the blood of Christ are thus manifest in removing all stain of sin. You must take the whole verse to see the beauty of it. "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as [undyed] wool." See further remarks on scarlet and crimson in the May number of the "Worker."—ED.]

MATTHEW ix.

VERSES 14–18. The disciples of John came to ask why Christ's disciples did not fast as the Pharisees and the disciples of John did?

The answer is very simple. Christ the Bridegroom was still with them; His disciples, "the children of the bridechamber," would have to fast when He was taken away. Remark, that they are not called *the bride*, as the church is, for the church was not formed till Pentecost and they were not yet a part of it; but they were the children of the bridechamber.

Verses 16, 17. Here a new principle is put forth; new wine must be put into new bottles, and an old garment must not be mended with new cloth. The truth taught is that new principles cannot be put into old forms. Christ did not merely take up Judaism and add something to it; nor did He take up the old forms and mould His new principles into them. The whole thing must be new. We must be new creatures. Old things must pass away, and all things become new.

The new cloth referred to is 'unfulled' cloth, that is undressed; it is the rough cloth as it leaves the loom. If this were sewn on to a garment much worn it would tear the old stuff, and (not "the rent is made worse," as authorised version but) "a worse rent is made."

The bottles referred to are of course the leathern bottles of the East. *New* wine would require new elastic bottles, to allow for the fermentation of the wine. Old bottles became inelastic, and were unsuited for new wine. From the earliest times bottles were made of

the skins of animals, as is proved from a passage in Job: "My belly is as wine which hath no vent: it is ready to burst like new bottles." (Chap. xxxii. 19.) With very new wine a vent had to be left for the fermentation, or the bottles would burst.

In Joshua ix. 4, leather bottles are alluded to. The Gibeonites, to deceive, said that the bottles were new when they left home; now they were old, rent and bound up.

The Egyptians also used the same sort of bottles, as is proved by existing monuments; though they also used bottles of earthenware or baked clay. These latter were not unknown to the Israelites; for in Jeremiah xix. 1 we read of "a potter's earthen bottle." For travelling and other purposes the leather bottles were very convenient. A string, tied to both ends, enabled the bottle to be slung over the shoulder and carried on the back. In the East such bottles are still constantly in use and are carried in this way.

To make the bottles, sometimes an animal was selected, its head tail and legs were cut off and the skin pulled off without being cut open. The holes left by the legs, &c., were then sewn up; and the opening at the neck formed the mouth of the bottle. It was tanned into leather. Larger animals were skinned in the usual way, and then the skin sewn up into a bottle.

Small bottles were made of earthenware in very early times: the psalmist says, "Put thou my tears into thy bottle." (Psa. lvi. 8.)

HOW TO GET SCHOLARS TO WEEK-NIGHT SERVICES.

Some are perhaps hindered from commencing week-night services because of the fear that the children will not come. But God has the hearts of all in His control, and *faith* in Him can get a good attendance. God may lead His servants to use means, and then He blesses the means; or He may give strong faith without means, and then answer the faith.

There is a beautiful instance of the gospel seed being sown in a Roman Catholic city, by means of an evangelist opening a school, not for the sake of the school, but for the sake of the opportunity of preaching the gospel.

We do not give it as a model for others to copy, though some may take a hint from it; but to shew that where there is a love for souls, difficulties are nothing to faith.

"Farel could not give up Geneva. He called a fellow-labourer, Froment, and expressed a wish that he should go and labour to gain that city. Froment was a young man, and had heard how Farel had been treated there, and he drew back in alarm. Farel let the matter rest a little while and then again endeavoured to arouse his fellow-labourer. He reminded him of how he had begun at Aigle as a schoolmaster, and how the work had spread. Froment at length consented, and went to Geneva. He wandered through the town, and no door opened to him. He visited the Gospellers Farel had told him of; but they were not "taken" with him. This was a city of importance; they needed a scholar, and not a rustic. They did not in this manifest the

Spirit of Christ. Froment returned downcast to his inn, paid his bill, and left Geneva. But he had not gone far when he felt himself arrested. Must he leave? Was he sure he was doing right? He felt constrained to go back. Then he prayed for guidance and felt he should have it.

"He heard of a room fit for a school near the Molard, at an inn of the sign of the Croix d'Or. Terms agreed upon, he went to his inn, and wrote out some bills, saying that children and adults would be taught to read and write French in a month. Where the scholars were not successful in learning he would ask no pay; adding at the end 'many diseases are also cured gratis.' The bills were posted and his doors opened.

"A number of children came. He gave them lessons, never neglecting to read a portion of scripture, and explain it. He gave also some simple medicines where needed, for ailments of the body. News of the strange schoolmaster soon spread abroad, and the stories he read out of the Bible, and adults would often drop in to hear for themselves. This increased, until all over the city the fame of the strange schoolmaster increased more and more, and the seed sank into the hearts of many. Froment seemed to have confined himself to preaching the truth, without stopping to attack error. Such a change was wrought in some that others often spoke of Froment as an enchanter.

"A remarkable conversion cheered the heart of Froment. Claudine Levet, wife of a citizen, was a bigoted Romanist, but was invited by her sister-in-law to go and hear the schoolmaster. She took care to anoint herself and to put on her charms to secure her-

self against the 'enchanter.' Claudine sat down in her pride, taking care to let her faith be seen by repeatedly crossing herself and muttering her prayers. Froment had opened his New Testament, and read his portion, and was telling of the love of God to sinful man. Her crossings continued, but presently something arrested her ear, and her prayers ceased, and with her eye fixed on the schoolmaster, she drank in every word he uttered. A deep struggle seemed to be going on within her, as if to say, Can it possibly be true?

"The address over, she kept her seat till all were gone, and then asked the preacher, 'Is it true what you say?' He assured her it was. 'Is it all proved by the gospel?' It is. 'Is not the Mass mentioned in it?' It is not. 'Is the book from which you preached a genuine New Testament?' It is. She begged Froment to lend her the book. This he gladly did, and she retired.

"In her own room for three days she studied the word—not even coming to her meals. The Spirit of God had sent His shaft into her soul, and there was a dreadful struggle as to giving up Rome and receiving the gospel. But God, who had begun the work, completed her salvation. She saw her sins forgiven through the sacrifice of Christ, and joy filled her soul. She called for Froment and told him the good news. He thanked God, and took courage. His labour had not been in vain.

"The conversion of Madame Levet was real. It soon told in her manner of life, and having moved in good society, as it is called, it attracted attention. She was the means of other ladies hearing the gospel and

being saved. But the friends of Rome now awoke to the nature of Froment's work. If the gospel was successful, it was to their ruin. Then such an opposition was raised to the schoolmaster that, though he left off his work and took to weaving as a servant for protection, he was soon obliged to leave the city. But the gospel seed had been sown and many had been converted."*

Geneva had thus been stormed. The Reformers returned, and the city was gained to the gospel.

Correspondence.

"AFTER MANY DAYS."

"Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain. Be ye also patient." (James v. 7, 8.) "Cast thy bread upon the waters, for thou shalt find it after many days." (Eccl. xi. 1.)

Beloved fellow-workers; knowing how prone we are to be cast down at not seeing the fruit of our labours in the Lord's vineyard, I trust that one instance may encourage some fainting worker to persevere in sowing the seed, though the hand be weary, and the heart sick with disappointment at the apparent want of result.

An invalid lady was once staying in a little village, very lovely in its natural beauty, but where the enemy had plenty of opportunity of sowing tares. Though her stay was uncertain, yet she determined to use the time given her to speak of Jesus to her poor neighbours.

* "Lights and Shadows of the Reformation."

They made her very welcome; many a sick bed did she cheer, the weakness of her own frame drawing out her sympathy, specially to those who were suffering; and the love shed abroad in her heart impelled her to tell of that gracious Saviour who "Himself bare our infirmities and carried our sorrows."

Not much fruit did she see, but was content to wait upon God for a blessing. It occurred to her that some children might be gathered into a little class for instruction in her own home, and she gave her heart prayerfully to the work. Many years afterwards to her great joy in quite an unexpected place and way, she found some of the seed sown in that brief visit springing up to God's glory. She was unexpectedly called to the bedside of a young mother in the last stage of consumption, who proved to be one of her scholars, in whose heart she was permitted to sow seed which had been for sixteen years buried and apparently lost, but now was springing up to eternal life. The poor woman was deeply awakened, with an earnest desire for her soul's salvation. She bewailed all her past indifference to the instruction she received, and blessed God for again being brought in contact with the friend of her youth. She was shortly after "Absent from the body, present with the Lord."

What encouragement such facts afford to continue casting our "bread upon the waters." "After many days"—yes, the word of God holds true, and we have to wait patiently for the accomplishment. There may be no sign that the seed is taking root downwards, to bear fruit upward to the praise of the glory of His grace; but suddenly perhaps the loosened soil discloses

the first faint effort of life, and presently the fruit of the long waiting appears. The "husbandman hath long patience." He knows the need of it, but he knows that he will not be utterly disappointed. Even though all the seed sown does not spring up to reward the effort, there yet will be an abundant harvest.

We are too often like the little ones, expecting to see the flowers as soon as we have sown the seed, forgetting that we must wait for the "early and latter rain," the blessed sunshine and refreshing showers. It is our part never to grow despondent, nor yet to sit hopelessly down because the seed seems lost.

Let us not be discouraged, remembering the One for whom we are working. We may have but few in number, or they may be very troublesome, almost unbearable; but oh, the value of one immortal soul! Is the reader one that has left his class for such an excuse? Pause and consider! You have the privilege of enjoying Christ in your soul, and are you going to leave those Christless, those precious souls, preferring an hour's walk or sitting by the fireside? Experience makes me speak of this. May we know more of what it is, "with purpose of heart, to cleave to the Lord;" Himself our object; and if so, surely the hand of the Lord will be with us and many will be turned unto the Lord. (Acts xi. 20, 21.) E. G. W.

LOVING-KINDNESS.

It was my privilege some time since (while spending the Lord's day in one of the suburbs of London), through the absence of the regular teacher, to take one

of the most interesting classes I have ever met with. It consisted of seven or eight lads, varying in age from sixteen to nineteen; but though so advanced in years, they did not appear to have lost in any measure their interest in the Sunday school.

What particularly struck me, and I may say charmed me too, was to see these young men handing up to me the little reward tickets they had received the previous Sunday, and repeating the text on it which they had learnt during the week. I was a little surprised at this. I have usually found that lads at this age are "above" saying lessons at all, much more of repeating the text off the little pasteboard tickets; and I looked about in search of anything that could tend to such a result.

I noticed that all the teachers seemed very happy together; that each appeared to take real interest in the others' work; that in fact they were quite knit together in the bonds of fellowship. I could not help thinking this was the grand secret of the attention of the scholars. Every one from the youngest to the eldest seemed thoroughly happy and at home.

Doubtless, some of your readers will say, But is not this the case in every school? I reply, I am not so sure that it is. I fear I may say there is not *always* this hand-in-hand fellowship among the teachers; that we sometimes forget that a little kind inquiry—the repetition of some precious promise from God's word, or the hearty shake of the hand—is enough to cheer a fellow-worker on the road.

I remember being in a meeting at which I incidentally smiled. After the meeting a brother came

across to where I was sitting, and said, "You don't know what a load it lifted off my heart to see you smiling just now." It is these *little* things that help another on, and it is in these that I feel we are most lacking.

May the Lord give us to be more watchful in helping our fellow-workers; and earnest in seeking opportunities of bearing their burdens, for His own name's sake. E.

REPENTANCE.

Dear Mr. Editor,

Is it right and proper to preach repentance to Sunday-school children, according to Luke xxiv. 47, and if so, how is it to be done? how am I to preach repentance to the scholars? and how am I to make it fit in and agree with my pressing on them the simple acceptance of God's forgiveness? F. F.

[There is always a danger, when we leave one extreme, of running into another; repentance has often been made too much of, or rather pushed out of its place and misinterpreted; and in avoiding this, we are apt to fall into the other extreme and make very little of it or give it no place at all.

The first thing of importance is to see that it is according to scripture. The passage referred to says, "Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day; and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem."

The words "among all nations" prove its universal applicability. And further, though Paul speaks of "my gospel," as implying that the gospel committed to him was linked with the revelation of the mystery of the church (Rom. xvi. 25), yet Paul said to the elders of Ephesus that he had been "testifying both to the Jews and also to the Greeks repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ." (Acts xx. 21.)

This therefore establishes that it is right to preach repentance. Let us now endeavour to ascertain *how* to preach it.

In the first place, we cannot find that scripture puts it in the place of something that man is to do *before* he accepts the grace of God; or that God requires man to put himself in any position or state in order that Christ may have mercy upon him; nor that God makes it in any way a condition that before any one can come under the privileges of grace he must have a godly sorrow for his sin. On the contrary, the invitations are to all the weary and heavy laden (Matt. xi. 28); to whosoever will (Rev. xxii. 17); and whosoever comes, Christ will in no wise cast out. (John vi. 37.) The hymn is true which says,

"Just as I am, without one plea
But that Thy blood was shed for me,
And that thou biddest me come to Thee,
O Lamb of God, I come!"

This point being well guarded, we must turn to ask what then is it to preach repentance? and how does it agree with the free offers to mercy? One or two passages will help us. In Acts v. 31, Peter said that God had exalted Christ to be a prince and a Saviour to *give*

repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins. Again in chapter xi. 18 we read "Then hath God also to the Gentiles *granted* repentance unto life." Again in Romans ii. 4, "the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance." 2 Timothy ii. 25 also speaks of God *giving* repentance. Now it will be seen that all this is the reverse of God *demanding* repentance in the sense of man's fulfilling a condition before he can be saved, for He *gives it*, and His goodness *leads* to it.

On the other hand there are passages that *demand* repentance. And these we may divide into two classes: one is addressed to the unconverted, and the other to the converted, or at least, to those in the place of profession. For the first, take Acts xvii. 30, referring to a by-gone age, "the times of this ignorance God winked at [in the sense of "sin is not imputed when there is no law"]; but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent." Man is now required to judge and correct his ways; for he will be called into judgment for all his deeds.

Again we find it linked with the gospel. Our Lord preached the gospel thus, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel." (Mark i. 15.) Paul too declared that he had preached to Jews and Gentiles "that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance." (Acts xxvi. 20.)

The other class of repentance we find often spoken of in the addresses to the seven churches. Such as "repent and do the first works;" "be zealous therefore and repent," &c. (Rev. ii. 5; iii. 19.)

With the latter, blessing is *conditional* on repentance

—we do not say salvation, but blessing—thus "Repent; *or else* I will come unto thee quickly" (Rev. ii. 16); "I will . . . . *except* they repent." (Ver. 22.) All this is simple enough, God will not fully bless His church while it is mixed with or practising evil. They must repent to be blessed.

The only difficulty is, how far is repentance *conditional* when linked with the gospel? We could not say that in any sense is salvation put as conditional on repentance. The many passages that speak of salvation without a word respecting repentance, prove this; such as "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life" (John iii. 36); and many others.

On the other hand, may we not say that repentance is an invariable accompaniment of belief? We never knew of a conversion without repentance. Even the thief on the cross, who had been reviling our Lord, turned to rebuke his fellow-malefactor and to justify the suffering Saviour.

Neither is this fact of the constant presence of repentance without its importance, in judging of conversion, especially in these days when the gospel is preached so freely. We have heard children in their play singing,

> "Only believe, and you shall be saved,
> And heaven is yours for ever."

And it may be, if you asked them (or adults), they would tell you that they did believe. And here would come the importance of repentance. Have they repented? And if not, how could you credit them as believers? It may be shallow at the time according to the sort of gospel preached, and have to be deepened afterwards, but we cannot conceive of a believer going on in

his sins just as he did before. The apostle James puts it in a similar way: "What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man *say* he hath faith, and have not works? Can faith save him?" (Jas. ii. 14.) It is also illustrated by the rocky-ground hearers, who "when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root; which for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away." (Luke viii. 13.) An importance also is given to repentance in that the joy of angels is said to be over every sinner that *repenteth*." (Luke xv. 7.) We can know the genuineness of belief only by repentance or by works the fruit of repentance.

Still the questions return, what is repentance, and how is it to be preached?

We doubt not that too much stress has been laid upon the literal meaning of the word, which is said to be 'change of mind,' as if this were all. We do not deny that in repentance there is always a change of mind, but it does not stop there. Nineveh is an instance. They put on sackcloth and fasted, calling mightily unto God, and the king commanded "Let them turn every one from his evil way and from the violence that is in their hands. . . . . And God saw their works that they turned from their evil way." (Jonah iii. 10.) This is called in the New Testament repentance. (Matt. xii. 41.) Repentance has been defined as "a judgment of ourselves and our ways as in the presence of God." It was this in the case of Nineveh as far as it went, produced, if you please, by a change of mind; but there must be the *work* of turning from evil.

As to preaching it, we believe that this may be effectually done without using the word "repent," though

we do not know why it should not be used if we are careful not to be misunderstood. If we speak to our scholars of the sins of mankind, or of *their* sins, and point out that such things are hateful to God, and can never come into His presence; if we tell them that they do not sin ignorantly, but they do wrong knowing it is wrong, and for which, if unsaved, God will bring them into judgment—*we are preaching repentance to them.* There is a charging sin home upon the conscience and bringing it into the presence of God. Peter did this in Acts iii. It was not simply his calling on them to repent that was preaching repentance, but it was detailing to them their sin in denying and killing the Lord Jesus. It brought them into the presence of God. For they killed the Prince of Life, "whom *God* raised from the dead."

Thus, we doubt not, many a preacher and Sunday-school teacher has preached repentance many a time without having recognized that he had done so.—ED.]

WOULDST THOU HAVE A WORD FOR JESUS?

John vii. 37, 38.

Wouldst thou have a word for Jesus?
Lean upon His tender breast;
Then tell heavy-laden sinners
Where to find eternal rest.

Wouldst thou have a word for Jesus?
Waiting, sit at His dear feet,
And in the savour of that presence
Go those weary souls to meet.

Wouldst thou have a word for Jesus?
Dwell in fellowship divine;
With the brightness of that glory
E'en thy very face shall shine.

Wouldst thou have a word for Jesus?
Ponder on His mighty love;
Think how He, to save poor sinners,
Left His glorious throne above.

Wouldst thou have a word for Jesus?
Drink of that life-giving stream,
Till thine heart with joy o'erflowing
Cannot fail to speak of Him.

Of no coldness then complaining,
Thou a joyous song shalt raise;
His own love thy heart constraining,
Thy whole life shall speak His praise.

Soon thou'lt be at home with Jesus,
And He'll speak these words to thee,
"Well done, good and faithful servant,
Enter into joy with me." A.

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